

The Artist Against the Syndicate

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You're an unemployed artist.

The year is 2061. A series of bombings has rocked the Capitol in the Western White House District, which is located in the heart of Hollywood. The Eastern seaboard is uninhabitable, owing to a mysterious GMO accident, which rendered all plant life in that region poisonous...

Reality is a nasty syndicate operation. The technical side is put together by high-IQ idiots. They like to fiddle. They like the con. They like to torpedo the mind.

The syndicate is the Reality Manufacturing Company.

You buy a ticket to Disneyland, which encompasses the area from San Francisco to Tijuana, go through the big gate, and book a small hotel room in Graphene Village.

A note is taped to the back of the toilet, where you've been told to look. It's unsigned. You read it while you're preparing supper: powdered eggs, water, and a squirt of SweetHeaven:

"Greetings, GuestL28. This to warn you the pillars of the community, the people who are supposed to be 'doing good,' are up to their necks in the operation. They're hustling reality like porn."

"At the upper levels, we've even got the STE Command, peddling the space-time-energy continuum everyone is so fond of. Only one tin can and we're all in it, biological machines 'doing our best to get along.'"

"Until recently, there was a sense that artists knew something about all this and were exposing the Syndicate. But now, propaganda is eating into their psyches, or their work isn't finding the light of day. Some have been conned into high-flying rhetoric about saving humanity and working together to build a better world inside the prevailing political framework. There is no better world inside the prevailing political framework."

"The artist should be ripping away masks, exposing the Syndicate employees. Adorning some fake religion promoted by the State, like the current MaR, isn't his job."

"Overthrowing the reality-con is the work of the artist. He's got to take to it like a duck to water. He has to like it. He has to use his weapons, all of them."

"The Matrix is built on the need to reduce thought. Props called spiritual leaders emerge out of the woodwork."

"Our glorious New Age, so-called, is THOUGHT REDUCTION. It fails, and the aftermath is ugly. People become contortionists and end up eating their own."

"I'm from the Movable Underground Museum. The Syndicate calls us dangerous because we've found a way to dismantle their product."

"I can't give you details in an open message. So far, we've laid out two new universes. They're empty. Lots of room for adventurous souls."

"Here's something to keep your eye on. The Syndicate's reality is breaking down. You may see seams in the sky. Don't point

them out to other people. A seam is usually a long thin blue line. If it pops far enough, you'll see a different kind of space behind it. Stay calm."

"For the past two weeks, a big seam has been exposed at the corner of Sunset Boulevard and Vermont Avenue in LA. Don't try to go there. Crowds were gathering. The DHS came in and hosed them down with a version of glypho. Upwards of six thousand people were arrested, and DHS has the area cordoned off with tanks."

"If you can still pick up SubNet8 on your mobile device, you can see pictures. The white light streaming through the gap in the seam? It's been shopped in. It isn't really there. Neither are the UFOs or the voices. That's the Syndicate. They're staging a 'virtual drill' in the area. Lots of phony religious content. It's a cover. They've built a temp church in Silver Lake to handle the overflow of new believers."

"If somebody approaches you with an offer to travel to Mexico, then sneak back into the US and apply for benefits, don't bite. Tomorrow morning, before nine, walk to the Mickey Pavilion, turn left and keep going for about a mile. On your right, you'll see a small shed painted green. Behind the shed is a cheap water ride. Take out a boat and row to the Secret Tunnel."

"Take it. When the little train has been in the tunnel for a minute, you'll see a dim corridor on your left. Hop off the train and walk along the corridor. You'll come to the back of the Obama Mountain. At the base is a service door. It's unlocked."

"Go through and you'll be standing on the corner of Ashbury Street and First Avenue. A day's walk east will take you out into the desert. The fences are broken. Get out into the desert and head toward the Nevada Hills. You'll see it. It's a huge white hotel about five miles in."

"A mile before the hotel, you'll come to a wide crack in the desert floor. It's not a crack. The Simul is breaking down there. It's an exit. Use it if you have the courage."

You burn the note, sit and eat your powdered eggs and watch the news. You think about what you're going to do. Or not do.

A few sentences float in from somewhere. They were written by Philip K Dick, an ancient writer whose works have been outlawed:

"Because today we live in a society in which spurious realities are manufactured by the media, by governments, by big corporations, by religious groups, political groups...So I ask, in my writing, What is real? Because unceasingly we are bombarded with pseudo-realities manufactured by very sophisticated people using very sophisticated electronic mechanisms...And it is an astonishing power: that of creating whole universes, universes of the mind. I ought to know. I do the same thing."

The artist on trial against the State

June 9, 2071, Ohio 27-b: the region designated as the seat of all hearings and trials of artists accused of crimes against the State.

No jury, no attorneys.

On this day, His Honorable and Sacred Hayakawa L. Schwartzbaum, Magistrate of Federal Dispensations, on loan from The CIA-Harvard University, sat behind his table. He was an expert in the history of history.

In shackles, an artist was led into the room by three federal policemen wearing the gray high-buttoned uniforms of the Motherland-Fatherland Department of Internal Security and Distribution of Goods and Services for the Benefit of All.

One of the policemen rolled in a large object covered by a shroud.

Judge Schwarzbaum looked down at a file and rapped his gavel on a plaque displaying the universal symbol of a hermaphrodite eagle.

"Order," he declared.

The prisoner, in a tattered red jumpsuit, stood before him.

"Well," the Judge said, "uncontrolled display...no license to practice art. No prior approval for a work. No plan submitted to the State. No established source of funding. No preliminary scan by the Council of Art. No declaration of philosophic position. Status: potential precursor to terrorist activity. Surveillance data reveals the artist is a smoker and brews medications which have never undergone approval by the FDA. How do you plead?"

The artist nodded.

"Your Honor, I would like to submit one item of evidence. The work itself."

The Judge said, "Were it not for the Artist Act of 2040, I would deny the request. But since I am bound by law, submission approved."

The guard who had rolled in the shrouded object uncovered it.

It was a brass sculpture standing six feet tall. It was a series of twisted interlocking shapes.

"Yes," the Judge said. "Incomprehensible. Who in his right mind could fathom the sense of this?"

"Look a little closer, Your Honor," the artist said. "If you would."

The Judge put on a pair of glasses and stared at the object.

"Meaningless," he said. "That's the last time I'll deign to acknowledge it."

"Meaningless? Then what is the problem? What harm could it cause?" the artist asked.

The Judge smiled.

"We must have meaning," he said. "Because then we can judge its quality. Otherwise, we lose control of the situation. We must know, and be able to assess, the significance of the work. This piece of nonsense does not rise to that level. All you offer are...curving masses."

"The piece has meaning for me," the artist said.

"Perhaps, given your state of mind, that is true. But art is public. It is a social undertaking. It gives something to the Community."

"Your Honor," the artist replied, "I believe you're missing an opportunity here. If, as you say, my work is meaningless, consider its effect on the public, were it to be installed in a heavily-trafficked venue. People would be confused and bewildered. Isn't the induction of such a state of mind a forerunner to mind control?"

The Judge rubbed his chin and stared at the ceiling.

"Are you suggesting," he said, "that you could go to work for us?"

The artist nodded.

"Yes, sir. I could execute many sculptures of this kind. I want exposure. You want MKULTRA. We're on the same side, in a strange way."

"Amusing, possibly interesting," the Judge said.

"You see," the artist said, "there are two ways to look at

mind control. On the one hand, you attack aggressively, with propaganda, to plant specific messages. But on the other hand, you prepare consciousness by placing it in a state of extreme puzzlement. If you would, sir, look at the work again.”

The Judge frowned and shook his head. But he gazed at the brass sculpture. This time, something else happened.

He saw a twisted tree. It had been burned by a fire during the riots of 2036, but it still stood. It put out a sprinkling of new leaves every spring. One day, when he was a small boy, he was taken to it and he climbed out along the dark branches to the buds, which smelled sweet to him...it was the last time in his life something was that sweet...now, in the courtroom, he shuddered as he felt tears run down his cheeks...

The rebel artist vs. the android

On January 12, 2082, President Winston Smith made a quick campaign stop in the Northeast corridor to address the Coexistence Group in Gates Town.

The Coexistence Group was a remnant of the coalition formed between Bayer IG and organic farmers in the state formerly known as New Hampshire.

The President, dressed in a silk rainbow robe, donated to him by the Cosmic Guilders of Carpentry at the Rockefeller Estate, lit a candle at the Memorial of the Drifting Gene, to commemorate the inevitable triumph of genetically modified agriculture in America.

He then gave a short speech, during which he pointed out that all food products in America were now labeled GMO because of the Gene Drift, and although such labeling was redundant, it was “ritualistically correct,” because it signified the right of the consumer to know what he/she was eating.

A supper followed at the Inn of the Bill Melinda. The meal consisted of ceremonial gluten-free organic genetically modified soy-peanut burgers and GM whey cola.

During the supper, a local artist stood up from his seat, toasted the President, and suddenly asked, "What phase of brain programming do you now enjoy, Mr. President?"

A dozen Secret Service agents deployed in the room and at other locations in the Inn immediately drew their weapons. But the President waved them off with a smile.

"It's all right," President Smith said. "This citizen has every right to address his Commander-in-Chief."

The President then offered these off-the cuff remarks:

"Actually, sir, there is no 'I' anymore or 'you.' There is only 'we' because the programming is common to us all, if we volunteer for it. And 67 percent of us do. We are all connected to the same Google/Kurzweil/NSA Plasma Cloud Formation. That, as you probably know, is the artificial superbrain."

"We receive input from it every second of every day. In other words, we are all obtaining correct answers, the same answers, to problems we face."

"Phase Four, which improves connectivity and reception, and takes in expanded subjects of interest and vital concern, is the current application. I, which is to say, we, participate in Phase Four."

"In Four, stress levels are reduced considerably."

"We no longer need to take vacations, except for pilgrimages to sites where monuments celebrate our Nature Is All and Technology Is All and All Is One Everything religious faith.

"And you, sir," the President continued. "Are you with a

Program Phase?"

The artist burst out laughing.

"No, Mr. President. I'm a holdout."

"Ah," the President said, "an outlier. Let's see. Downloading now. Profile. We perceive you're an artist, your name is Diego Jose Siqueiros. Yes, the information is coming through. You formerly lived in the small city of Ashland in the Northwest corridor, and you received a number of commissions to build structures there."

"After twelve years, you designed and erected so many unique buildings, the city fathers feared that, if left to your own devices, you would 'take over' Ashland. In the interest of fairness and sharing, they ceased funding your work. You drifted down to the Los Angeles Complex, where you created a website called Versus the Moron. Eventually, you settled here in the Northeast."

"That's right, sir," the artist said. "A question. Do you remember a time when you weren't connected to the superbrain in any way?"

The President nodded. "We used to remember such a time, but no longer. Those memories became unproductive. Now we are here With the Program. We operate inside it."

"So you don't miss being free?" the artist asked.

"Oh, we are free, Mr. Siqueiros. We are free to obtain the right answers through the Program. Having correct data and valid conclusions is quite liberating. The sense of struggle is gone. Struggle is an ancient appendage which technocratic evolution makes extinct."

"Sir," the artist said, "I would enjoy debating that point. But I'd rather talk about the individual invention of unprecedented and unpredictable realities."

"Oh," the President said. "Another fanciful notion from the past. We've discovered that all art and in fact all so-called unique creations of the 'I' are delusions. The superbrain can 'create' anything. It merely arranges and rearranges data in various configurations. It produces closed systems. For example, it can design a thousand buildings in less than a second."

The artist frowned.

"No," he said. "The superbrain spits out random shapes on command. That's machine-life."

"Machine-life?" the President said. "I'm receiving mild warnings now."

"Meaning what?" the artist said.

"We are in the presence of a stubborn defective 'I' who is scorning the Group. That would be 'you'."

"Mr. President," the artist said. "Were you born of a human mother and father, or are you a virtual artifact of the superbrain?"

The Secret Service agents in the room took a step forward.

The President's face turned red. He rose from his chair.

"How dare you say that to me!" he shouted.

"Why? Because I'm flipping your cover?"

The artist then enunciated a long series of sounds. The declaration came out, as one attendee later put it, like a "gray river."

"Emwgrtyonefiftyfruntsillgreenefsevenlenstayeightcricrimescene ..."

Apparently, it was a code-trigger that had been hacked from

the Program. And the code ran.

A loud hum filled the room.

The President collapsed back into his seat. He flopped around like a doll and then went still. His eyes stared at nothing.

“As I expected,” the artist said. “He’s a four-D printout from the superbrain. An agent.”

A voice came from somewhere inside the President.

“Allen Dulles A MKULTRA...”

Silence.

Then a gentle man who manufactured a product called We Love You Organic Bayer Cherry Vanilla Roundup Cookies said:

“It’s all right, everybody. There’ll be another President along in a few minutes. I’m sure of it. We’re in coexistence mode. Don’t worry. All One. Unity. The Tao. Yin and Yang. Night and Day. Harmony.”

And the room burst into wild applause.

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