

The Normal Citizen Receives a Shock to the System

Source: No More Fake News

by Jon Rappoport

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John Q Jones had a nice job, a nice family, a nice house, and a nice yard. Everything was nice.

Then one day, he was walking down the street near his office and a soft explosion went off in his head.

He looked around and saw a young woman sitting in a parked car. She was reading a newspaper. And he realized he was reading her mind.

She was thinking about a vacation, a trip to Alaska, a boat ride, a book, a boyfriend. He was reading her thoughts and the sensation of doing it was exquisite, quite lucid, quite simple.

He was thrilled beyond measure. For a moment, he thought he would take off and fly.

A few hours later, he left work and went to see his psychiatrist.

"I have a problem," he said. "Today, I read a person's mind. And it was wonderful."

"Hmm," the doctor said, "I have a diagnosis for that. Paranoid schizophrenia. Possibly Bipolar."

"Good," Jones said. "I need a diagnosis right away, and drugs."

"I'm the man with the drugs," the psychiatrist said. "Let's start you off with a sedative for sleeping and a bit of Haldol for your psychosis."

"Sounds good," Jones said, "but what if it doesn't work? What if tomorrow, out of the blue, I read someone else's mind?"

"Then come back and see me," the psychiatrist said, "and I'll up the dosage. Don't worry."

"The feeling of wonderful will go away?" Jones asked.

"Do you want it to?" the psychiatrist said.

"You bet I do. It's the hook. I could yearn after it, and who knows what I might do then?"

"Pleasure is a tough one," the psychiatrist said. "We pursue it, sometimes to our own detriment. I favor neutrality in all things."

"So did I," Jones said, "until today. Now I have a...what would you call it...a desire. And it's scaring me."

"Desire is the beginning of all suffering," the psychiatrist said. "I read that somewhere."

"The worst part," Jones said, "is that I'm becoming aware of a different space and time."

"Dangerous," the psychiatrist agreed. "I'm a member of a committee formed to look into other spaces and times. We're hoping to draft legislation that outlaws them."

"I hope you succeed," Jones said. "Suppose I couldn't come back to my nice house and my nice life without feeling odd? That would be terrible. I'm a round peg in a round hole and I want to stay that way. You know, we go to church every Sunday. The Church of Statistical Average. The congregation is growing. It's perfect for us. We love it."

"I understand," the psychiatrist said.

All this time, he had been reading Jones' mind, and Jones had been reading his. They both saw a profound yearning and a profound sadness in the other.

"Perhaps I should consider a lobotomy," Jones said.

"I wouldn't rush into that," the psychiatrist said.

Jones saw that the psychiatrist a) wanted a lobotomy and b) wished for the courage to go through with it.

The psychiatrist saw that Jones wanted to read minds all the time and experience the intense pleasure of leaving ordinary space and time. That was perfectly understandable. Who, having known the sensation, wouldn't desire it again?

Jones saw that the psychiatrist longed to swim in the ocean of telepathic communication.

The psychiatrist saw that Jones wanted to become unconscious and float like a space-rock in the galaxy, with no consciousness whatsoever.

"How is your wife?" the psychiatrist said.

"Fine," Jones said. "And your family?"

"Very well, fine," the psychiatrist said. "Are you still sailing on weekends?"

"Now and then," Jones said. "The weather's been cold lately."

"Yes, it has been."

"Are you still playing bridge at the club?"

"Most Friday nights."

Jones reached out and placed a thought in the consciousness of the psychiatrist: "Help me."

Silently, the psychiatrist answered: "I need help, too."

The walls and ceiling of the psychiatrist's office fell away and exposed a great dark warm space.

The two men began to weep.

"We're alone," they thought.

Then Jones said, out loud, "Suppose everyone is like us?"

Faintly, they heard band music, and then people appeared, whispering among themselves and quietly playing instruments, or perhaps the whispering was coming from the instruments.

"I think we just died," Jones said.

"No," the psychiatrist said. "This is a womb filled with friends. We're being born. They're waiting for us to emerge."

"Emerge into what?"

"Happiness."

"The happiness of being ourselves?" Jones said.

"It appears so," the psychiatrist said. "We were in a play."

"What kind of play?"

"I don't know," the psychiatrist said, "but it's closing. It had a good run, but ticket sales are declining, and the producers are resigned. They've given the order to strike the sets."

"The producers?"

"They designed everything we thought we were."

Jones laughed.

He couldn't remember the last time he'd laughed at anything.

He thought he was going to jump out of his skin. He tried to bring himself under control.

He laughed harder and that led to weeping.

He smelled fire.

"Something's burning," he said.

"No," the psychiatrist said. "Some one. I'm burning. Can't you see it?"

Jones strained at the darkness. He saw an object rising like a rocket.

"Don't leave me," he said.

The psychiatrist shouted over a roar, "I can't wait anymore!"

Jones took off, too. He rose above his station, and felt the heat.

And then, suddenly, they were back in the psychiatrist's office, sitting, facing each other.

"Your wife is still pursuing a graduate degree?" the psychiatrist was saying.

"Why yes," Jones said. "Two evenings a week, and weekends. Her advisor tells her she's an exceptional student."

"I'm sure that pleases her."

"It does, yes."

"We're almost out of time," the psychiatrist said. "Anything else in our remaining moments?"

"Yes," Jones said. "One thing. Have you ever felt you were in a commercial promoting the very thing you were doing at the moment?"

The psychiatrist smiled.

"Almost every day."

He stood up. Jones stood up. They shook hands and Jones left the office.

On the street, as he walked back to his office, he said to himself, "I'm normal, I'm average, I'm normal, I'm average..."

His eyelids were heavy. Fatigue spread through his body. He staggered into an alley and sat down on the pavement next to a dumpster. He fell asleep.

Sometime later, his memories foggy, he was stretched out on the grass in a park near the river.

Lights were shining in his eyes. He blinked and looked up. He saw a cameraman and a woman in a pink suit holding a microphone.

"We're doing a story on the homeless," she said. "I'm from KGR News. How did you end up here, sir? Would you tell us?"

Jones tried to shake off his intense weariness.

He stood up, scratched at the stubble of his beard, and grabbed the microphone from the newswoman.

"Hey!" she said.

"Would you tell me," Jones said, "how you ended up in the stage play called Your Life?"

He threw the microphone down and lumbered away across the park lawn.

He walked several miles, entered the Grand Hotel, took out his credit card, and walked up to the check-in counter.

The clerk looked at him and frowned.

"I know," Jones said. "I'm a mess. I'm in actor in a play in town. We just closed our run and I didn't bother changing my costume. I'd like your best room for a day. I want to clean up and get some sleep."

The clerk gingerly took Jones' credit card and ran it. He was surprised to find it had a hundred-thousand-dollar limit.

"Of course, sir," he said. "I understand."

An hour later, showered and shaved, Jones called room service and had them send up a meal.

After devouring a steak and mashed potatoes, he called his tailor and asked for a rush job on a new suit. He spoke to the hotel concierge and put in an order for underwear, socks, a shirt, and a tie from a local department store.

Four hours later, he looked in the mirror in the bathroom and saw himself as he was: businessman, husband, father, pillar of the community.

He was about to call his wife and assure her he was fine, when he glanced at the sliding glass door and saw his psychiatrist sitting out on the balcony calmly smoking a cigarette.

Jones walked over to the door, opened it, and sat down across from the doctor.

"How did you get here?" Jones said.

"Never mind that," the psychiatrist said. "For the past few days, I've been tuning into high-level conversations. First, it was the mayor. Then the governor. Then the president. Then, bankers in Brussels. Finally, a small group of men in Geneva. In Geneva, they were talking about a company called Reality Manufacturing, Inc."

"Never heard of it," Jones said.

"You should. They said you were a key figure in it."

He stared at Jones.

"Wait a minute," Jones said. "That's crazy. You're crazy."

"They seemed very certain."

"I'm in a company that makes Reality?"

"Apparently so."

"What about you?" Jones said.

"My name didn't come up."

"What the hell's going on?" Jones said.

The psychiatrist shrugged. "Seems like we've gone through a wormhole or something."

"A what?"

"Take it easy, Jones" the psychiatrist said. "We'll sort this out. I have a theory. You're the most normal man in the world. You're the epitome of normal. That must be a clue."

"A clue to what? That I'm going insane?"

"No. Your extreme normality is a perfect cover story. Who would suspect that you're hiding an enormous secret? I believe mysterious forces have hijacked your subconscious and are using it to hide a...system for manufacturing reality as we know it. You're an agent. You just don't know it."

Silence.

"And," the psychiatrist continued, "I reason that if you die, reality will vanish."

He stood up, took a step forward, and grabbed Jones by the shoulders.

"I'm going to throw you off the balcony," the psychiatrist said, "and test my hypothesis."

At that moment, policemen burst through the door to the hotel room and rushed out on to the balcony. They separated the two men and put them in handcuffs.

"What's the charge, Officers?" the psychiatrist said.

"Sniffing at the edges," a tall policeman said. "Meddling with the grid."

"Care to explain that further?" the psychiatrist said.

"No," the policeman said. "You'll be taken to a facility for reprocessing. After that, you won't need any explanations."

Two days later, Jones was reunited with his wife at a local hospital. A doctor told Mrs. Jones that her husband had gone on a bender and blacked out in a park.

She nodded. "I always thought he was too normal. Something had to be wrong with him. I understand now. He's been hiding his drinking from me."

The psychiatrist was never heard from again.

On nights when his wife is out with her friends, Jones goes down to his basement and sits on an old battered couch and tries to remember. He doesn't know what he's looking for, but he knows it's there, in his mind.

Occasionally, a wall disappears for a few seconds and then reconstitutes itself. He hears faint music. He senses that the people who are making the music are waiting for him. They know what he needs to know. They want him to break through.

He calls them his "other friends." He can almost make out their faces. Faces in darkness, hovering in shadows.

One day, after work, he passes a coffee shop and sees, in the

window, the woman who was in the car reading the newspaper, the woman whose thoughts he'd read, the woman who'd started the whole thing.

She glances his way and smiles.

Hearing the faint music, he walks into the shop and sits down across from her.

He says, "I wasn't reading your thoughts. You were sending them to me."

She nods.

"But why?" he says. "Why me?"

"Because," she says, "you were absolutely normal. Therefore, you were so close to the edge. Just a little push and you would fall off."

He smiles.

"Falling off," he says, "is quite an understatement to describe what I went through."

"Yes," she says. "I know. Have patience. The grid is collapsing, bit by bit. Your assistance is appreciated."

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