

WORTH//4.10

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Cover by Lucas Adams at
cheeseburgersinthesky.com
and therumpus.net

DEPARTMENT OF SALUTATIONS



Uh, yeah, I know what you're thinking. I've been here before. Some people come in and take your beloved business model and start shaking it. I was once like you, a grain of salt being shook. Now I'm the one doing the shaking. Shaking things up.

I'm Adam Kinkaid of Yucatan XV, a new equity fund from the Dakota Atlantic Group. After the recent government dissolution of hPharma, we took on several of their assets, from a pill bottle production factory in Singapore to a smelting repurposing plant in upstate Pennsylvania. As a throw-in, we got Minutiæ Publishing. I know what you're thinking, and I am on the same wavelength. We are riding the wave together. The theme for this month is **Worth**, and I can already see where we can put some Xtra Value in this magazine.

First off, the name Minutiæ is too narrowly focused. In my lifetime, I've turned several low performing businesses into superstars simply with a name change that better reflects what the consumers want. We're losing the first six letters – now it's just called *Æ*. People are going to be at the newsstands, wondering, "How do I pronounce it?" It's the same thing that worked for ING (It used to be called BOING).

Secondly, we'll be introducing *ÆSp@çæ*, our very own social networking site where you can connect, inspire and grow. Believe me, you're right, this is going to kick it all into high gear. People want to be connected all the time in this high-octane gear-kicking modern world we live in. If you're not plugged in, then you'll be left in the dust by others with more gears. How can this be

the future if the future is the present? Self-fulfilling prophecy.

Finally, a lot of people talk about pushing the envelope, but we're going to reinvent the envelope entirely to fit the needs of today's modern business shaker. When you shake today's envelopes, grains of sand fall out. *Æ* is going to be the Fort Knox of envelopes in relation to sand. You can try pushing these new envelopes, but they've been engineered to such a newer, higher paradigm, well... let's just say we've shifted the sands of paradigm. I know what you're thinking, and yes, I'm thinking the same thing, because I've been here before. I'll see you at *ÆCøn* 2011. ♦



MINUTIÆ #3

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AGENCY OF CÖRRESPONDENCES + COMMUNIQUEÉS

Gentlemen, I have amassed over 14,000 Minutiae Points, but I cannot figure out how to redeem them. My wife insists they are worthless, but then how come I was able to spend more than \$500 on acquiring two hundred more Minutiae Points? Please say I have enough to acquire the Minutiae Points Reimbursement Catalog.

Richard Armstrong
New York City, New York

Gentlemen, I am responding to your open letter from the recent "Fleet" issue. Yes, we do have elephants for sale. No, they are not trained to operate classified aeronautic equipment. Please find enclosed the requested tusks. We consider the matter closed.

Frank Dreffer
Director of Publicity and Denial
Ministry of Shadows
Location Unknown

Gentlemen, after decoding the map from the May 1998 issue "Whisper," I set off on a fantastic voyage into the heart of the Amazon. I was, along with my guide Raij, taken prisoner by a band of tribesmen. I have spent the last decade eating bug skin and enduring nightly spear prodding. I only recently escaped (R.I.P. Raij), and have caught up on your periodical. My question is whether I am still eligible for the "2-4-1" subscription promotion from 2005?

Dennis Lays
Co-Founder, Frito-Lays

Gentlemen, I am writing on behalf of my sickly father whose dying wish is to find the bubble gum that you included with your magazine from 1954 to 1958. I beg you to send the name of the manufacturer before his last breath.

James Franklin Jr.
Laredo, Texas



SECOND THOUGHT

Who's at the door? Is it Lady Liberty begging for shelter from the night stalkers in your municipal park? It's time for us to start reconsidering what is going on this Liberated United Federation we live in. Can we consider, for a moment please, who is behind the downfall?

Every day we let our governesses step down to pursue a lifetime of glad handing and baby patting in Hollywood, if that place is not just an invention of the Hollywood Elite. Did I say that? Are they to blame for our current economic and cultural tumbling? And, are we ignoring the obvious? IS THIS COUNTRY LOSING ITS VALUES?



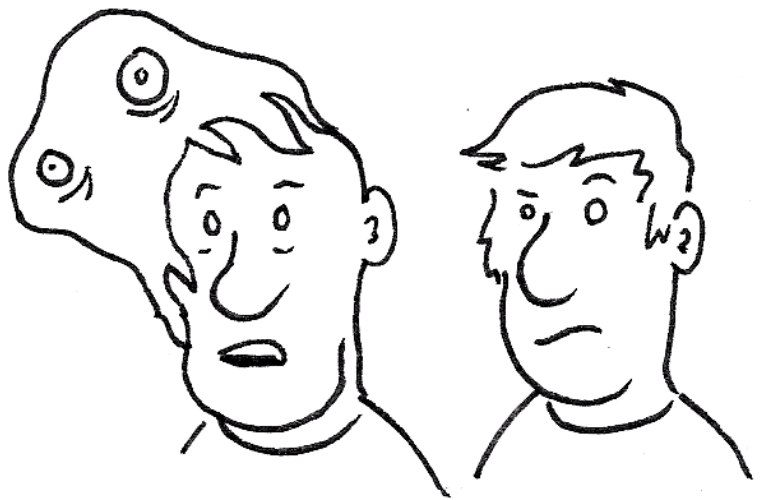
Where do the train tracks run afoul? Let's just consider how difficult it would be to reorder the letters in Helsinki to read Pakistan. Is it possible? I didn't make any claims. I don't want to weigh down our national pride with burdens of proof. No, I am just a concerned member of this Union. I am a Minuteman on the forefront of keeping ourselves above water. And who is draining that faucet? Is it the Ron Paul Jihadists? I didn't say that. I'm just asking the questions.

What I am saying is that the truth is layered like double-ply. Are there rumors of Ron Paul and his fundamentalists infiltrating YouTube? Could there be rumors as to that fact? In a simpler world, we would not need to pose these questions, but we cannot sit at home and wonder if the next Ron Paul is going to be YouTube. Is YouTube a member of the Underground Bourgeois? I didn't say

that, but let's suppose that fact is truth. The rabbit hole opens wider. Follow.

When was the last time you saw quinoa being put on your sandwiches at Subway? How many terrorist cells exchange messages at farmers' markets? Is that Jihadist serving you an apple? By extension, is the witch in *Snow White* a high ranking member of Al-Qaeda? If so, are the seven dwarfs the Coalition and the princess herself the helpless Afghani people? Along the same lines, did Walt Disney have access to a crystal ball or a set of highly tuned convex lenses that allowed him to peer into the future and inject what he saw into the 1937 animated classic? Is *Dumbo* Mr. Disney's warning of the homosexual elite's plans to eradicate the Republican party?

I didn't say that, but it's your **Second Thought.** ♦



Well, at least I'm
not alone anymore.

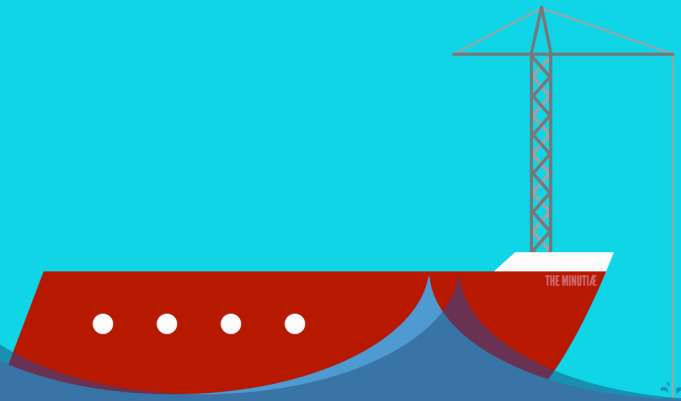
CORRECTION We regret we said we'd meet at the Sam Goody on the first floor of the mall, knowing well the Sam Goody had gone out of business years ago. We were at the food court the entire time, but our cell phone was dead.

SUNKEN TREASURE

IN MAY OF 2007, THE ODYSSEY EXPLORER ANNOUNCED IT HAD DISCOVERED OVER \$500 MILLION IN SUNKEN TREASURE FROM THE SUBMERGED HMS *VICTORY*.

YET, THIS MOST RECENT DISCOVERY IS NOT EVEN CLOSE TO THE HIGHEST VALUED FINDS EVER.

BELOW, THE LARGEST OCEANIC RECOVERIES, FROM SALVAGE MISSIONS TO PIRATES, PLOTTED CARTESIANALLY BY DEPTH AND VALUE.



HMS VICTORY
\$500 MILLION

MOSES' NAME TAG
\$700 MILLION

CRATES OF
UNICEF PENNIES
\$2 BILLION

MERMAID JUNIOR
HIGH SCHOOL
\$1.3 BILLION

ARCTIC
REINDEER MAUSOLEUM
\$3.8 BILLION

EARHART SKULL
\$1.1 BILLION

BARRELS OF
HIGH & DRY NO. 9 IPA
FROM ATLANTIS PROHIBITION ERA
\$3.2 BILLION

FROM CANVAS TO CASH

HOW VALUE IS CREATED IN THE ART MARKET



AN UNKNOWN ARTIST
PAINTS HIS FIRST
MASTERPIECE.



PIECE IS SHOWN IN
"UNDERGROUND"
GALLERY.



A COHORT OF THE GALLERY
OWNER ADVISES A YOUNG
BROKER TO BUY THE PIECE.



THE ART DEALER TAKES OUT A HIT
ON THE ARTIST, YOUNG BROKER
& THE COHORT; VALUE SKYROCKETS.



THE ART DEALER BUYS
THE PIECE FROM THE
YOUNG BROKER.



THE COHORT CALLS UP
FRIEND, THE ART DEALER.



THE ART DEALER IS SEDUCED BY
A YOUNG FRENCH THIEF.



THE YOUNG FRENCH THIEF
REPLACES THE PIECE
WITH A FORGERY.



THE YOUNG FRENCH THIEF
EXCHANGES PIECE WITH MENTOR
FOR HER FATHER'S LIFE.



PIECE SITS IN WINE CELLAR
FOR THIRTY YEARS.



MENTOR RETREATS TO
MONACO WITH ORIGINAL.



AT AUCTION, FORGERY
IS FOUND TO BE FAKE;
ART DEALER HAS HEART ATTACK.



DISCOVERED DURING INTERPOL
RAID OF MENTOR'S ESTATE.



INTERPOL TRADES PIECE WITH
SERBIAN MOBSTER
FOR INFORMATION.



BOUNTY IS PLACED ON
SERBIAN MOBSTER.
FLEES TO U.S. WITH PIECE.



PURCHASED BY MELINDA GATES.
PLACED IN THE GUGGENHEIM.
ALLPOSTERS.COM SELLS PRINT TO FRESHMAN.



SERBIAN MOBSTER IS BROKE.
PUTS UP PIECE AT AUCTION THROUGH SOtheby's.
WORLD IS STUNNED BY RETURN OF ELUSIVE PIECE.

GUIDANCE AND ADVICE

Susan Alan-Wenswick is a prolific Life Specialist, working in the metro Miami area. She has written several books, including most recently You Are the Champion: How to Empower Yourself in a Changing World.

I just moved to a new town and don't know anyone. What's the best way to meet people and make new friends?

Don't worry—it seems harder than it is to meet potential new friends (and single men) in your area.

The easiest way is to try new hobbies! You could join an intramural sports team, take tango lessons, or take an art class. There's nothing better to fill empty shelves in a new condo than your own pottery. Having common interests makes conversations — and relationships — easy to start.

I just turned 40 and I've been feeling really down about myself. I feel like I've done nothing with my life. What advice do you have for someone in my position?

Remember that you are your own grain of sand in the great beach of the universe. You are just as important as your boss, your neighbors, or your ex-husband's new wife.

When I'm not feeling my best, I like to work on my Vision Board (See Chapter 16 of my book *Winning Alone*). I go through my old copies of *Marie Claire* and *USA Today* and cut out pictures that represent the future I want to have. I paste them on my bulletin board and just sit back, looking at the great years that are yet to come!

Speaking of your future plans, I hear you're going to lead a local Girl Scout Troop.

I guess good news travels fast! Indeed, a few months ago I submitted my application to the Girl Scouts of America Council of Tropical Florida, Inc. I haven't heard back yet — the council and I have been playing a never ending game of phone tag — but I'm fully confident that very soon I will be helping girls to achieve their full potential!

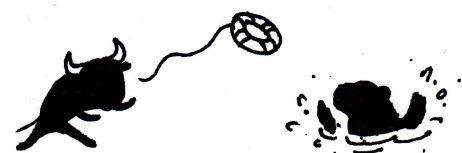
That's weird, because one of my friends heard back a few days after she applied.

Well, your friend must have had some sort of “in” with the council. I'm overqualified if anything! I'm sure it's just taken them four months to find the perfect spot for me.

But, you're right, it is weird that no one has acknowledged my calls, emails, or Edible Arrangements... I can't argue with you there. But, come on, we're all busy, right?

There's no way they would reject me. I'm a catch by anyone's standards. I have so much time to commit to those girls. To teach them not to make the same mistakes I did, like drinking schnapps at prom or marrying too young. I'm a published author, for crying out loud! Someone at the Girl Scout Council should be reading this, because I am a catch!

Seriously, though, if you are reading this, call me back. My number's on those embroidered goose feather pillows I sent you in January. ♦



“comic strip”

The Value of Human Life in Dollars and Cents by Daniel



W/M '10

NOBLE KING!

Noble King! I return to You as a man humbly soaked with the blood of Your Enemies. Your bidding, as our Lord on Earth, has been done. I have taken Your Armies across these plague-ridden lands. I have conquered cities and toppled empires in Your Name, yet I know I am not worthy.

Having brought peace and knowledge to the heathens that riddle Your Lands, I return with the most exotic spices and silks from the East, cured meats from the Moors, and from their finest artisans, tapestries of purple and gold by in Your Image to lay at Your Feet. Yet, still, I am not worthy.

I have walked these many cubits of Your Lands with neither leather nor fur to cover my feet. I have traveled barren foot in battle, over the broken arrows, swords, spears and cracked bones of those who do not see Your Light. I went, without shield nor protection from the elements, up the tallest cliff, to the tallest mountain, against the tallest giants, and placed Your Flag upon the peak. I did this, even so, I am not worthy.

The child I bore with my wife I named with Your Name. And when you asked me to kill him, I did so. You were right that no warrior could be pledged to two people with the same name. As an extra measure, per your guidance, I banished my wife, as no warrior could love two people concurrently. Yet, as the wind knows, I am not worthy.

Now I find myself, after three long years, back at the feet of Your Throne. I bring You treasures of gold and the crowns of the once-emperors who are no more. All that exists is Your Kingdom. Your Lordliness, I bring you my soul. I beg for Your Holy Blessing, to finally be granted nobleness in Your Eyes. ♦

GOOD SIR

GOOD SIR, your spices are quite exotic, yet they compare not to the spices of fine purity here in the capital city. FINE PURITY, you see? Your spices are TOO ORANGE. TOO ORANGE, you see? Be gone with the spices of the tiger's fur!

And these tapestries, they have My Figure all wrong. I have not a nose that long or arms that flappy. BE GONE WITH THEM! Our tapestries here are of much finer purity. The thread is thinner and the color is bolder and they hang more evenly. I care not for the foreign images that INSULT my likeness. BE GONE WITH THEM!

I hear your tale of travels to mountain tops, placing the flag of the NOBILITY upon them. Yet, you should have checked back in first. The flag has changed. Instead of a Lion's paw we went for the ENTIRE LION. It's a lot nicer now, much more BLUES. MUCH MORE FINE AND PURE.

FURTHERMORE, I had found your wife toiling in the mud, and she was of even-bone-ed-ness. Therefore, I took her to be my chamber maid and have confounded a child within her even-bones. This child is of much more HIGHER PURITY than your dead child, who bore the same name as me and the child I have with your former wife.

Your Lord understands and appreciates the lengths and toils you have taken for Him, yet where were you? He waited for three years! I have lost complete interest in the glorious conquest I had originally sent you out upon. Yes, My enemies are captured, and I have a vast kingdom that is now more vast, yet I am far more interested now in alchemy and falconry than archery and foreign lands. These are more noble pursuits that are of course, MUCH MORE FINE AND PURE. ♦

LETTERS FROM ABROAD

It is I, Dr. Cyclone, beaming off my private Soviet satellite from deep within the tundra of Serbia. This, sadly, might be my last message if things don't pick up soon. For you see, even the most sinister of all super villains is still affected by the economic meltdown.

You may wonder, as someone who is no stranger to theft or heist, how the global financial could negatively affect Dr. Cyclone, the most reviled villain of the UN? The materials for my many doomsday devices or the highly reflective cloth for my henchman are produced on a very grand scale. When people are laid off from their jobs, it means they are spending less, thus fewer goods are made and fewer parts are produced. Bottom line being I can't get any damn transistors anymore, and damn it if the cost of cleaning agents for the pool that houses hyper-intelligent death-dolphins went up three thousand percent. Three thousand percent! That's insanity. It makes me want to kill even more!

Air travel has also taken a huge hit in the past decade and it's all culminating now. I can't send my right hand man Reggie "Fist Twist" Yorkova to drug any super spies anymore throughout Europe. I miss the 90s when I could snap my fingers at dinner and have a CIA agent laying under a laser beam the next morning. Now it costs an arm and a leg just to check a bag, and Jesus if Fist Twist can get more than three ounces of ether through security anymore. I mean, yeah, he can buy it in Croatia, but I might as well flush money down the toilet. We've got nothing to do.

I'm evil, but I'm not a dick. Let me be clear: I've had to let go half my workforce off and I feel terrible about it. They were alright people, and

now I look like a jackass making my own coffee in the morning. I truly resemble a goddamn jackass sitting in the break room with a needs-to-be-dry-cleaned black velvet cape waiting for some damn Foldgers to brew. A goddamn jackass. These cut backs are killing me. I have an image to maintain.

On top of all this, it is costing me a fortune to maintain this highly reflective dome lair. I used to have a few guys in here every morning to polish and dust, but now I've got some dumpy woman coming in a few days a week, maybe, incompetently leaving marks everywhere. I mean, for Christ's sake, I've had to monitor my electricity usage, and you know the first thing to suffer are the rows of insanely fast spinning razors that slowly inch closer to my enemies as I carefully reveal my motivations. You know how threatening it is to see Dr. Cyclone in mittens because Dr. Cyclone can't afford his goddamn subterranean Siberian heating bill? Not very. There is no fucking insulation in this underground dome. It's like we built right under a pocket of fucking nothing!

Though, not everything is bad. Usually, I'm stuck with some bottom-feeders for henchmen, but with all of these high level managers getting laid off, I have a former CEO of Wachovia Bank in charge of security holdings and acid application. And I do appreciate actually getting my hands dirty again. I had forgotten why I got into this super villain business to begin with. I'm writing my own before-death rants again and it feels great, and you can tell that the old school guys, like secret ops, they really appreciate that hand made touch.

Lastly — ah, damn it, this satellite is costing me like 30 bucks a minute. Never mind. ♦

A pixelated, low-resolution portrait of a man with dark hair and a mustache, wearing a blue shirt. The image has a retro, digital art style with a limited color palette.

BOWELS OF TIME

ATTACHMENTS

HE HAD EVERYTHING A BOY COULD WANT.
WHAT WENT SO WRONG FOR BRIAN LEIB?

Today, north of San Gabriel Valley, nearing his 30th birthday, Brian Leib sits alone in a fading mansion at the northeast corner of his 900 acre estate. The building is a mausoleum to childhood innocence and the 1990's dot-com boom.

While appearing on the Today Show in October of 1993, Brian explained to Katie Couric: "It was really obvious what e-mail could do. I thought, 'What if I could send packages, like in the real mail?' and I started to work on the encoding and decoding of .bmp's and .wav's... different types of files. My favorite thing to send is a Simpsons quote that my friends and I send around to each other."

"Thinking back," Brian says today, "I would trade every cent for a moment of clarity. I just stopped learning. Literally. It wasn't that I made mistakes that I could avoid. I became slow... I was walking down the wrong direction on a one way street. That's a metaphor, I think.

"I really did it by accident. I mean, I was just the first to find out how to do it by accident. It was bound to happen really soon. I was thirteen, I didn't know what I was doing."

In July of 1993, Brian Leib was thirteen years old when he single-handedly revolutionized human communication: inventing the e-mail attachment. His father, a patent attorney, was quick to protect it, and seemingly overnight the son was worth an estimated \$27 million. *WIRED* magazine ran a cover story on him dubbed "Delivery Courtesy of the World Wide Web Wunderkind." He appeared on the Today Show, giving Katie Couric a demonstration of how to use e-mail.

Immediately, the family moved to a mansion in Castaic, about an hour's drive outside of Los Angeles, previously inhabited by the aging Prince of Cairo. The mansion was a 13 year-old boy's

dream. Where stairs should've been, Brian insisted that roller coasters be placed instead. A massive 14-foot television was set into the wall, extending for thirty yards behind it. The backyard, previously an award winning botanical garden, was converted into a go-cart racing track. Brian's crowning achievement was the basement food court: a TGI-Fridays and a fully staffed McDonald's that was open seven days a week, 365 days a year.

This is where I met Leib in January. Seventeen years later, the stucco walls are chipped and sun burnt, and the front lawn is a mix of dulled dust and vivid patches of bright orange-brown blades. After cutting himself off from the world in 1998, following a string of personal and financial woes, Brian finally agreed to an interview with me so that, in his words, he "[could] share how I ruined my life and maybe people can learn from me... like when they let doctors mess with dead people. Maybe I'm still worth something then."

He walked me through the mansion as it stands now. The giant television is still there. The food court, presently with only a rundown Dairy Queen, sat idle except for a hot plate on a table in the middle of the room, connected by several frayed extension cords run together. There was also a large pile of discarded food containers in a corner of the room.

"I still have stairs. Some nights I just sleep on the couch, because I don't want to take the roller coaster up to my bedroom. I'm stuck, and I can't even remember how I got here."

While his younger brother Henry and sister Lily reënrolled in school in Castaic, Brian was taking meetings with Steve Case and having lunches with Tim Berners-Lee. "I just figured that I would be better off. I didn't have any friends of my own. When Henry or Lily's friends would

come over, I would kind of watch them play from around the corner, but I had no idea how to deal."

Brian's father James was completely caught up in the fantasy life as well. James would accompany Brian to all the business meetings. He was convinced, as evident in the *WIRED* article where he called his son "a genius not seen since the likes of Da Vinci," that his son was incredibly special, and the discovery of the e-mail attachment was not a fluke. "Maybe I could've learned how to do some cool stuff, but I wasn't home-schooled or anything like that. I stopped learning when I was thirteen."



Before anyone could realize it, a year had passed and nothing else had been invented. Despite receiving millions of dollars in payments on the patent, it all went toward failed investments and the mansion upkeep. Tensions arose in the family. Henry and Lily were constantly being picked on at school. James continued not with his own financial pursuits, but in proving that Brian was not a dud. All of this put an incredible strain on Sarah, the matriarch.

Sarah soon left the family with Brian's two siblings. In a statement released by the family's publicist at the time, she said "I cannot sit idly by and see the people I love destroy themselves, but I am powerless to do anything, so I am leaving." It was now just Brian and James in the huge mansion alone. It was also at this time that the TGI-Friday's closed and the McDonald's was turned into a cheaper-to-operate Dairy Queen. There were several burglaries that followed from disgrun-

tled laid-off employees. The most dangerous part, however, was the increasingly strained relationship between father and son.

"I remember having shouting matches," Brian explains while we take a break in the living room on couches draped in white sheets, "and they would last for hours. About all kinds of stuff, really. It was about who made Mom leave and who made the bad investments and... it was so much blaming. I think that if we lived near anyone else, they would've called the cops. But no one could hear anything." Brian insists that neither he, nor his father, were ever in physical danger of each other, but he did point out to me a deep crater in the wall against which lamps had been frequently thrown.

Things continued along these same lines over the next few years. Brian and James would continue to try to keep aloft their failed business ventures with the money coming in from the patent. James insisted that all the businesses be e-mail-based, despite the popularity of web pages.

They attempted delivery of books, but the cost of hiring a staff to respond to the e-mails before the days of outsourcing, was too much. Around that same time, Amazon.com launched. And an attempt at a music sharing service based on a song per e-mail attachment method failed quickly, while only a few years later Napster hit it big. A recipe e-mail exchange service was used by few because, as they found out. And those who had access to internet in 1997 didn't care about cooking and those who cared about cooking didn't have internet access in 1997. After sixteen failed business ventures and numerous patent submissions that were never granted (amongst them colors in e-mail and e-mail via postal mail) the Leib family's value fell lower and lower.

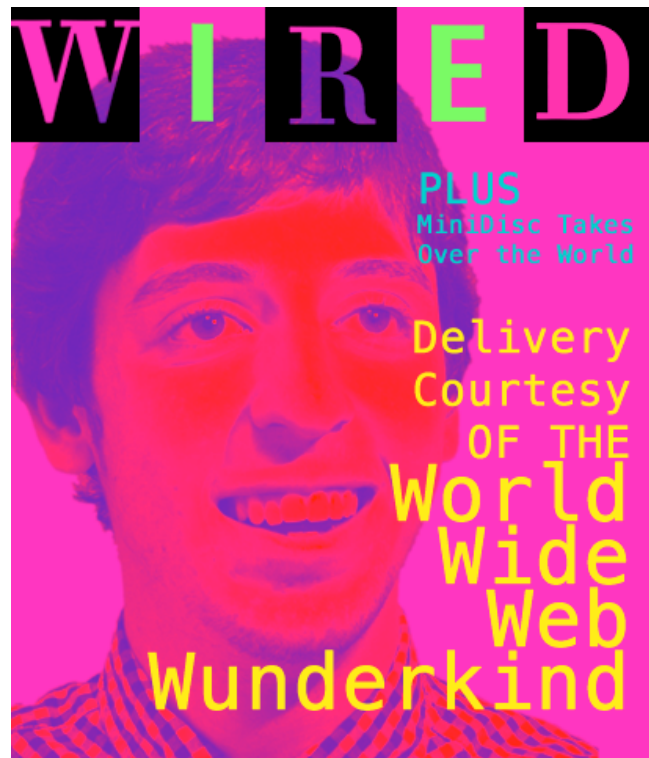
Still, all of this wouldn't have been such a hard blow if that fall Netscape had not brought a case against Brian. It was alleged that the patented was invalid on the basis that the Internet was built by the government, along with e-mail, and thus the attachment could not be patented as it would infringe upon the government's own rights. Knowing that this could be a fatal attack to the family's well-being, James hired a succession of extremely expensive lawyers.

However, nearing the end of the case and fearing he would lose, James began to inject himself into the decision-making of the legal team. Being a patent lawyer himself, James figured that he could do something about it, yet he was no match for the combined legal prowess of Netscape and the Federal Government. The legal costs soared and after seven months, the Leibs folded.

"I remember that day really clearly because when we got back to the house he jumped on the roller coaster and about ten minutes later rode back down with two huge suitcases. Then he left. I didn't realize it until years later – remember I'm slow – that he was ready to leave even before the government rescinded our patent."

After abandoning Brian, James had tracked down his estranged wife and children, and began to make amends. He found the family living next to Boise, Idaho in Garden City. Sarah had become a real estate agent and Henry and Lily were in high school. James started working as a substitute teacher, and Sarah accepted him back after living in a studio apartment for two years.

Speaking to James over the phone, he explains his actions. "I wanted everything, but Brian was just not good at anything. I was completely blind to just how insignificant he really was. It was a fluke. Even his birth was a fluke, really. But, yeah,



things got crazy. I blame my actions during that time on Percocet, so it wasn't really me. I was buying it off one of the kids who worked in the food court.

"Sarah had rebuilt her life and she was generous to allow me to follow her. When the scandal with the girl broke, I couldn't allow him to infect me and my own future. His failure is infectious, you know. I had gotten out just in time from that Nestcape thing. For a while, Sarah and I, had discussed trying to figure out a way to protect Brian from his idiocy, but then the scandal happened and we just thought that quarantine was the best thing for the Henry and Lily. They had futures." James took a long pause and then asked a question he had mistakenly assumed was the reason I called: "How'd he die?"

The "scandal with the girl" James was referencing had beginnings as innocent as the discovery of the e-mail attachment. In June of 1998, after his 18th birthday, a new round of summer staff came

to work at the Dairy Queen. One was 16-year-old Jocelyn Adams, who went to nearby William S. Hart High School. Brian became completely enamored with her.

"The entire thing was a mess, just... so wrong," Brian tells me as we look over a pile of broken RC racers, bleeding battery acid. "I hadn't been in the same room with a girl in forever it felt like. So, there she was, making dip cones, and I would just sit and talk to her for hours. Everyone knew what was going on, even she did. In the beginning, maybe she liked me or just felt sorry for me, but then I started to buy her presents. Really nice presents, like necklaces and gift certificates.

"But it was my fault. I gave her stuff and she wasn't a bad person, so she'd stay after her shift was over, and watch TV with me or something. And I guess we started dating, but I don't even know if I would call it that. All the staff in the house knew what was up... I wouldn't even be telling you this if I still had any pride. I didn't think what I did was illegal and no one was ever hurt. I

blame my ignorance, but that's all I have, so I just blame me. I had never been around a girl before, so things just got creepy fast."

The story goes that one evening Jocelyn had come over to the mansion to watch *Batman & Robin* with Brian. Forty minutes into the movie, Brian attempted to lay his head on her shoulder. Frightened, overwhelmed, and disgusted, Jocelyn jumped up and ran. Brian attempted to call her at her house, to hear her voice or just to apologize, but was refused by her parents.

What followed a potential summer romance was a very public scandal in the news. Jocelyn's parents had brought a suit against Brian for harassment, as well as wrongful termination. Against his lawyer's wishes, Brian insisted that the case be brought to court because he "wanted to see her one more time." Jocelyn never appeared in court and the entire event ended with the Adams family receiving a \$7 million settlement.

Watching the video now of Brian's lawyer talking to the press shows Brian standing to the side,



holding his hands, the tears held back only by fear and confusion. You can see his eyes move across the crowd, submissively for a friendly face. I ask if I could show Brian the video on his giant television, but he explained it didn't work anymore and anyway caused significant vision problems.

"I wore my glasses for just one day" Brian admits, "That's why all the mirrors are covered up."

After the sex scandal, things got worse for Brian. He shut himself off from the world. By the time the new millennium had come around, he had gained seventy-five pounds. He was twenty years old and slowly eating away at his investments. The IRS loved to audit him. Every year they would shake him down for estate taxes or heavily adjust his rates. After 2004, though, they just began to take pity on him and have since left him alone. In fact, for the past three years they've sent an auditor just to check on him.

"I tried to do a lot of things, but most of the time I spent just trying to figure out how to use the Internet. I really hadn't sat down at a computer for years. I was watching TV or playing games or sitting through meetings that I couldn't follow. I tried doing online college for a little bit, but I really need to go back to junior high, or just start over, but it's just too late for me."

According to his accountant, Brian will be completely bankrupt in less than three years. In 1993, he had most of his money in equity funds and blue chips centered around his personal interests. The last of his misguided investments became completely valueless over the last few years. Leib Amusements, which failed to open a single park in the nine years of its operating history, was sold to Westfield in 2003. (The lot that Leib Amusements had purchased in Georgia became a squatter's village for meth addicts and

Confederate-sympathizers. Now it sits as a bulldozed dust field waiting for a parking lot to be built.)

We stood on the back patio, looking over the broken up go-cart track, layered with discarded Dairy Queen Blizzard cups. It was a graveyard of youthful dreams, torched by the sun and the lack of life. Through the crackled pavement, one can easily imagine Satan's hand reaching up to grab Brian's swollen ankle to mercifully pull him down.

"I wasn't trying to deceive anyone, ever. I really just wanted the McDonald's in my house, I thought that was cool. But it's like momentum, right? That this one thing causes a lot of other things. Am I using that word right?"

I asked him why he doesn't sell the house and move. "At first I couldn't sell the house because I was thinking that then people would find out that I don't really know much. But, then I guess this housing thing happened, and I have no real skills, and if I were to sell it, I'd want to make sure I would have enough money for the rest of my life just so I can live without bothering anyone. I've lost my self-respect, but I pray to god that one day my family will call to see how I'm doing, and maybe I could start over with them."

Yet, for all his shortcomings, Brian knows the truth, and he'll admit it: It is without question too late for him. The boy who stumbled upon the ability to send electronic packages around the world cannot send himself another chance to be a part of it.

"I'm just stuck here. I can't drive, which didn't used to be a problem, because I had the driver, but that's gone now too. I could walk to places, but it's like an entire day spent just going to get milk. I just get stuff delivered. Thank god for the Internet, otherwise -" Brian gave pause. ♦

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