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**Blue Company / Kind of Blue**

**a novel in e-mail**

by

Rob Wittig and Scott Rettberg

Illustrations by Rob Wittig

**Part Two: Kind of Blue**

by

Scott Rettberg

(last message by Scott Rettberg and Rob Wittig)

**Date: Mon, 17 Jun 2002 11:28:55**

**Subject: My Shame and My Confession**

**From: skipsvskip@hotmail.com**

**To: susannenbreone@aol.com**

Dear Susanne,

You don't know me but sometimes you see me on the street, wearing wraparound shades and the uniform of a bicycle messenger. I guess I shouldn't say "the uniform of" -- the truth is that I am a bicycle messenger now -- it's how I'm employed. I used to be a hot-shit marketing exec but now I'm just a grunt charged with materials too important to be fedexed across town.

We get coffee at the same Starbucks, right about 8AM, give or take 120 seconds. You must go in to work earlier than is really necessary since your office is right down street. Either out of obligation or more likely out of a need for solitude, a need to slowly sip your coffee, maybe check your hotmail. You get a latté and I get an espresso doubleshot. Neither one of us are picky about the beans, we both say "house" before they can ask us. I've got a little bit of a gut and you've probably noticed that I look a little silly in the lycra. But speed is important and it really helps, even if you're not in the best shape. I'd describe the look on your face when you look over at my uniform as one of bemusement, not mockery. My helmet is yellowjacket yellow. I hope that at some point when you've had a chance to process this we can sit down and have a cup together.

The reason I write this is that I notice you've been wearing black for a week, and it appears that even the weekend didn't help. Your eyes looked kind of forlorn this morning, kind of lost, there was a kind of scared rabbit look in your eyes that just tore me up inside. Because I know why.

We have a friend in common. I should say we had a friend in common. He's not my friend anymore. That's not true, he's still my friend, he'll be my friend after he's gotten

some help and they let him out, but right now he's damaged. Right now I can't approve of what he did to you, or to any of the other women whose hearts he twisted round his finger like so many pieces of yellowing string.

And my shame is that I was his silent accomplice. My shame is that I didn't put a stop to it before it went too far.

People respond to unemployment in different ways. Some jump right back in, take their suits to the dry cleaners, get their resumé in shape and pound the pavement religiously every day from 9 from 5. Some retreat into the soap operas. Some drink from noon until dusk. Some folks catalog everything they own and then sell it on eBay. Some of us become bicycle messengers.

Berto's thing was history and drawing, and I couldn't see any harm in that. At first.

Berto and I were part of a team doing marketing for Enron as they were gearing up to open dozens of walk-in customer storefronts across the Midwest. Berto and I did good work so needless to say it was a pretty serious kick to the groin when we found ourselves out on the streets, just another set of victims of those cowboy fucks in Houston.

And did they feel our pain? Did they know what it was like to feel the boot and land on their asses in an unforgiving '02 job market that would take one look at you and decide it would rather eat the shit sandwich instead? Hell no, most of them got jobs in the EPA or the Bureau of Land Management, and are hard at work on our nation's new energy policy, plotting oil wells in the Moab Desert when they're not out golfing with Uncle Dick.

Well Berto, you know Berto, he's kind of an idealist, kind of a romantic, but also kind of a company man. He actually believed that we were going to change the world by making better signage for Enron storefronts, that we could help the kids by making them chuckle during a thirty second spot for the one true 21st Century energy concern. He at least half bought it and he was damn proud of being a firstclass copywriter, and he invested too

much of his energy, too much of his identity, into being the best copywriter money could buy.

And I don't know you, I really don't, but I don't think you're the kind of woman who would hear a guy's hard luck story and toss him to the curb. But Berto, he lost something there, he couldn't get around it, he couldn't come clean and just tell you the truth that the pain of the 21st century was gnawing at his ankles, and he just didn't know where to go from here. He couldn't face you as an unemployed male of the species.

And I said Berto, Berto, she'll understand, you're not alone in this Berto. But then he told me of his plans to escape into another century, to love you from afar, to pour his heart and soul into his pen and keyboard, to become unique to you by living at one level of remove. I'll be her knight in shining armor, he said. But that armor was covered in pigfat, Susanne. That armor was just the refuge of a troubled soul.

I don't know what drove him to this; I don't know what bitter herb made Berto twist the way he did. And you weren't alone, Susanne. Every ex-girlfriend in his book was getting those emails, with slight variations to account for their personal circumstances. And he bcc:d me on every email. He even made me a character in his fictions.

At first I thought it was a good outlet for the guy. And well a joke kind of a funny joke. That's sick, that's sick that I thought it was funny for a while. When Berto was laughing at it, he wasn't really laughing because he thought it was funny, Berto was really laughing because he knew it was sad, sad, sad.

Still, maybe if he'd been able to pull himself out, maybe if he'd have been able to find a time machine in the castle, maybe then you would have had something to laugh about on your next date, maybe even when you were old and grey.

About two weeks and a half into it, I finally told him that I thought he'd gone too far. Besides, the unemployment would run out soon and dammit he just needed to pick

himself up and get a job. I even offered to get him a job as a bicycle messenger, but if he wanted to get on with his life he just needed to stop sending those emails because somebody would get hurt.

And every morning I saw the hurt in your eyes.

I told him that if he wouldn't stop I was going to tell you.

Then he flipped out, Susanne. He just completely lost it. I was locking up my bike, and he grabbed the kryptonite lock from my hand and bashed it against the side of my skull. Repeatedly. You can still see the bruises. I got in one good shot to his face and he was drooling spit and blood in my face as he muttered. YOU WILL NOT TELL and the bar of the kryptonite lock was crushing up against my throat YOU ARE NOT FIT TO BE A KNIGHT.

Well the rest of the week had emails about how I was a thief and the baddies were after the whole company because I was a thief and then the next thing you know some asshole with a broadsword has decapitated me and that's the last I email I got.

And you know what? He was right, I was a coward, because I saw you everyday getting your latté and I couldn't say a word.

Berto was my best friend. I don't fit in with the other bicycle messengers, really, though they seemed to gain more respect for me when I showed up with all the purpleblack facebruises.

I went to go see Berto this weekend, Susanne, because Berto and I are friends from way back. I can't replace him, and I thought well maybe I've been a little hard on the guy.

There was an eviction notice on the door and something smelled like rot. A CD (Gregorian chant?) was skipping, skipping, skipping, skipping. So I was worried and

maybe I shouldn't have but I bust the door in.

Catshit and weeksold cartons of Chinese scattered around the floor, empty cans of Jolt. Blinds drawn tight. The cat eating from the cartons of fetid sweet and sour pork. A monitor shattered, a hammer and broken glass, and Berto in the middle of the floor, fingers covered in blue ink. An unspeakable mural in blue ink on the white walls, evisceration, decapitation, drawn and quartered lifesize figures on the wall. An anatomically correct heart torn in two. Beneath it your name.

Berto glossy eyed, foamy spit crusting on dry lips. He looked dehydrated, emaciated, like he hadn't eaten for a week. He wasn't saying a word. I took him the shower and tried to help him wash up, but he wasn't there Susanne, he wasn't there and now he's at Rush Presbyterian and they have him under observation.

I'm sure he'll pull out of it some day, our Berto will be back, our plain old 21st century fox Berto.

So I don't know, do you forgive him? I don't know, he was sick, maybe it's me you shouldn't forgive, I knew and I didn't tell and I'm sorry. So I don't know, maybe if you want to visit him go, or don't. Do what you want to do, do what you can. I'd like to buy you dinner as a kind of peace offering, if you're the forgiving kind. I know a nice Italian place on the North side, it's quiet and we can talk with the candles flickering in our eyes.

Your friend,

Skip

**Date: Thu, 20 Jun 2002 00:10:31**

**Subject: Re: My Shame and My Confession**

**From: susannenbreone@aol.com**

**To: skipsvskip@hotmail.com**

Skip,

Tuesday I took my latté at 7:30, today at 9:15.

This is not to say that I've been avoiding you, but that in fact I have avoided you.

It's been difficult for me to formulate the right response to your email of Monday morning.

I'm not quite sure what to say.

Your email came as kind of intrusion on what I conceived of as an almost purely textual relationship with another person who I met once, and with whom I had a brief-in-person flirtation with followed by an alternatively strange marvelous and ultimately disappointing flirtation in text.

Berto, I knew him, once.

But Skip if you stopped and thought for minute, for just one brief moment, you might begin to realize that if your friend was deluded, in all likelihood I did not share in his delusions.

I take my lovers in this century only.

I'm still charmed by Berto and my heart is rent at the news of his institutionalization.



But I don't know that I'll visit him, Skip.

As to the last paragraph of your email, it sounds like you're hitting on me, and poorly -- "candles flickering in our eyes"? The candlelight, or the reflection of the candlelight, might flicker, but I assume that the candles themselves would stay firmly rooted in their given positions on the table.

Maybe I'm wrong, Skip, but that close just struck a strange note.

As did the fundamental presumption of your email, it seems.

If I put this together:

- A) You are the bicycle messenger who usually gets coffee at the same time I do.
- B) You check me out when you get coffee.
- C) Often at the start of my day, when I am in my pre-public moments, and imagine that no one is looking, or don't care to care if anyone is, just want caffeine.

And you're a friend of Berto. So where does that put us and what happens from there?

All that I know of you is how you look in lycra and your best friend's description of you as a fictional character, a not very complimentary description of you. Certainly Berto liked you but your character had certain character flaws which I have no doubt have some tenuous basis in real life and therefore make me wary I almost wrote weary there of pursuing any kind of relationship with you, including this email. I was hesitant to write.

What bothers me. Your commentary on my black dress and your assumption of certain things. That I was traumatized by the cessation of the emails from Berto, for instance, to

such an extent that I wore black for a week, put my makeup on in a griefstricken fashion, etc.

Let me point out, Skip that while as a marketing exec or former and now messenger, you certainly have more knowledge of popular psychology than the standard pigeon, my black dress might have compelled certain other semiotics:

- Maybe my lover, suppose she is a woman, died in a horrible accident.
- Maybe I killed her and am distraught over my certain damnation.
- Perhaps my mother, father, or great aunt perished.
- I may be mourning the French loss in the World Cup.
- My cat Howard, who has been my sole faithful companion, jumped into the trash compactor.
- Maybe the latest Star Wars film was a profound disappointment.
- I might like to wear black.
- Maybe I didn't get that promotion and am playing a kind of passive aggressive mindgame with my employers.
- It could have something to do with September 11th.

I just thought that was a little presumptuous. And I mean, I should open up to you, eat Italian with you? Really.

So anyway Skip coffee is fine sometime but dinner is out for now Thanks.

But what of Berto?

I'll admit I'm quite touched that he painted that heart on the wall.

I agree, and sensed at a certain point, that Berto's game had gone beyond a pleasant, very involved kind of flirtation to what appeared to me to be either a delusional or at least certainly obsessive state.

Some ways I feel guilty for playing along so long.

And it was a kind of release for me too, he'd send me these fantastical descriptions of his medieval adventures and I'd bitch to him about the crap the people do at work at the job I really don't like but do because that's what I do and I need to work for the rent and bills and kip and so on, and he would delight in it.

So anyway the sudden ending.

Yes it disturbed but not nearly so much as some other things in life.

I hope that Berto gets better, I'll send him an email.

I'll have coffee at my regular time tomorrow, but I'd rather not talk with you then, I hope you can understand that. I'm happy having coffee sometime with you, but anyway just not in the morning and not with the idea of any kind of romance in mind.

You hear all kinds of things about the kind of thing that can happen on the internet with creepy guys, which is not to say that you're creepy, just let's live our lives for now.

Take care of your friend.

I might write him but Jesus I feel like I'd need a degree in psychology to do so, you know?

Don't answer that.

So don't say to him that I'll write him, I might or might not, but do be kind to him. I've got a lot that I'm dealing with without getting involved with mending Berto's threads.

There's so much fucked up shit in the world and a lot of fucked up people but they improve, so do the best you can.

Stay out of the way of moving traffic, and don't be so ashamed of your confession.

Shame is bad for your complexion.

Stay Safe,

Susanne

**Date: Thu, 20 Jun 2002 10:26:37**

**Subject: Re: My Shame and My Confession**

**From: skipsvskip@hotmail.com**

**To: susannenbreone@aol.com**

Susanne,

I noticed that you weren't at Starbucks at the appointed hour.

I'm really sorry, the last thing I wanted to do was creep you out and I feel ridiculous for my assumption.

Truth told, I guess I got a bit caught up in the fictional world myself. It's strange to be someone else's character, especially if you get killed off. You get emotionally involved.

And I guess plainly I was sort of hitting on you. You look great in that black dress.

You can't blame a guy for trying. I guess you can. I mean, I don't know what I mean.

Pay no attention to the 36 year-old bicycle messenger behind the curtain.

Anyway, no estalking I promise.

Skip

**Date: Thu, 20 Jun 2002 12:07:47**

**Subject: Chin Up**

**From: ernestonotcom@netzero.com**

**To: berto\_alto@tank20.com**

Berto,

Ernesto here. Your BIG BROTHER. Docs say you won't take phone calls but check your email religiously.

Docs say you won't TALK AT ALL.

Docs say the last words they heard from you were when upon admittance you GRABBED A BROOM and CHALLENGED THE ORDERLIES TO A JOUST before being TIED DOWN kicking and screaming in your RESTRAINTS.

What's up, Bert?

Shit, brother. I'm going to try to get to Chicago soon but I hope that you get better before I'm able to afford to do that.

I know you've had some hard times with the Enron fiasco and getting the boot, but I mean you've lost jobs before and a job is just a job you know that.

We don't talk enough, you and me and Olivia and we should. With Mom gone and Dad if you can call him that "Dad" in the hospital, you and me and Olivia are more or less all that's left of our so-called FAMILY UNIT.

I tried to give Olivia a call and let her know of your predicament but before you know it the BIBLE BEATER was telling me about our DAMNATION, me Darlene and the kids all and I just had to HANG UP before I could even get a word in edgewise so I'm not sure that she'll be much HELP. Jesus fucking Christ, Bert, if you ever get better you and I are going to have to POOL OUR RESOURCES and hire a SPECIALIST team of COMMANDO DEPROGRAMMERS to go down there and RESCUE OUR LITTLE SISTER from that fucking CULT that has taken possession of her BODY AND SOUL in TENNESSEE.

But that's all beside the point. We're clearly all fucked up, you me and Olivia. It would be easy to BLAME IT ON OUR PARENTS, which I do, most of the time, but that doesn't help much.

Two years ago, when my FUCKING DOT COM JOB which had made me feel WEALTHY AND POWERFUL, even the CEO was a 23-YEAR-OLD PUNK, went south, leaving me with LOTS OF WORTHLESS PAPER and a 500K note on a house I could not possibly ever dream of affording, I'll admit that I NEARLY LOST IT, bro. I had tremendously violent visions of cracking that pipsqueak's skull and serving his brains to the gathered INVESTMENT BANKERS who'd come up with the plan to pay all of

uknow.com's employees with a GENEROUS OPTIONS PACKAGE rather than CASH and maybe cutting out his eyes so that those FUCKING CABLE TELEVISION MARKET ANALYSTS who convinced me to stay when I could have gotten out when the getting was good because uknow was a SAFE BET to stay ON THE RISE for YEARS TO COME could have a snack as well. Ratfuckers.

So you know more or less the rest of the story. 30 LITERS OF JAMESONS and six months later, the MODEST BUT COMFORTABLE home in Walnut Creek was no longer in my name, having been FORECLOSED on, and after the COURTOOM ANTICS of BANKRUPTCY, Darlene, Jessie and Jeff and I LIVE IN A TRAILER IN THE DESERT two hours out of LA.

But things are on the up and up. I quit drinking, pretty much. I listened to the doctors, is what I'm saying Bert, the guys with the drugs know what they're talking about.

I was what you call CLINICALLY DEPRESSED was the diagnosis. And now I'm on a JOY COCKTAIL. Strict regimen of PROZAC, which keeps me happy, and VIAGRA, which gets me laid three times a week (the prozac otherwise inhibiting such). just pop pills.

AND I DON'T DRINK.

Except for RIGHT NOW, AS I TAKE A SLUG FROM THE FIFTH IN MY BROWN BAG during my lunch break from AL'S USED CARS where last month I was SALESMAN OF THE MONTH. This is the first time I've been in an internet café, Berto. I'm surrounded by palefaced teenagers who look like they've never seen the BEACH that's only 30 MINUTES in TRAFFIC away from here.

SO ANYWAY,

Also, I wanted to say that my LIFE is not JOYless, Jessie had a recital last week that was

just great you would have been proud of her and Jeff just started little league and the kid's not a bad second basemen. The little things, the little things make it all worthwhile. And Darlene's still a GREAT LAY. So it works, we make it work, IT WORKS.

And THIS MORNING I SOLD an '80 PINTO.

DO WHAT THE DOCTORS SAY, within reason. That is DO THE DRUGS. The drugs are good, I'm convinced of that. But DON'T LET THEM TALK YOU INTO SURGERY. I've seen One Flew Over the KooKoosNEST, fuck that. And SHOCK THERAPY IS OVERRATED. Don't buy any of that shit about technological advances that's all bullshit.

So anyway, take it easy, Berto. We're all in this mess together.

Your BIG BROTHER WHO LOVES YOU MAN,

Ernesto

**Date: Thu, 20 Jun 2002 23:48:36**

**Subject: hi unkle BerTo**

**From: jefftrocks@netzero.com**

**To: berto\_alto@tank20.com**

uncleBErto,

dad say we can stay up late and do viedogamess and internet. I had a dance recital 1st wek  
dad said I should sai I lik the internet my friend jacki has it on her mobilfon and we do  
instantmessenger. dad said you fell down and se are meailing to sai hope you get better  
soon.

love Je s s i c A



Uncle Berto,

Thanks verymuch for the pictures hyhou sent me a copule monthsago they are awesome espeically the swordfites and dragns. Dad sid you fell down and hurt your ankle and that totally sucks I bet that hurts and hope you're feeling better soon. I'm in baseball now and its toatlly awesome. I'm not really good yet bet I'm trying. Where did you learn how to draw thats totly awesome how you do that I have a friend who can draw ted he dwrs great pictures of demons and things totly gorhy stuff. Do you still do Karate.?

Uncle Berto I want to learn some moves and stuff I'm not very big and the fifthgreders suck.

And dad said wer'e goin to Chicago later in the summer and stuff and I hear Wrigley Field is really cool and dad we'd get tickets and stuff when we come see you Sammysoso rocks! even tho the cubs make the dodgers look good they suck so bad so anyways I've got a new viedo game called grand theft autho that I borrowed from a friend for the playstation2 and its awesome I'm gonna play cause wen mom and dad aargue when he comes home and then she goes to work at the diner jessie and I can satay up late as much as we want its awesom. it cant wait to see you in Chicagop I hear the ESars Tiower is AWESOME!!!jeff

**Date: Fri, 21 Jun 2002 00:12:26**

**Subject: Parting**

**From: susannenbreone@aol.com**

**To: reginespersonal@hotmail.com**

Regine,

Parting is all we know of heaven

And all we need of hell

Susanne

**Date: Fri, 21 Jun 2002 11:04:09**

**Subject: Congratulations!**

**From: skipsvskip@hotmail.com**

**To: reginespersonal@hotmail.com**

Regine,

Congratulations on your appointment as VP of Marketing at BBKVD. Read of it in this morning's paper.

Also, by simultaneous coincidence, it turns out that we are classmates! Sort of--you graduated four years before I did. This classmates.com site keeps sending me email with information about the people who went to my high school and inviting me to subscribe for their premium services and I can't figure out how to unsubscribe from their spam.

Amazing that we knew each other for all those years, worked alongside each other as teammates, and never once made that connection, that we were both fellow Maine East Blue Devils. I always thought that was a lame mascot. And you were on the varsity volleyball team! Who knew? So anyway that's where I got your personal email address (and now you have mine--I don't know about you but my old OGVB email address stopped working the morning that you fired me).

Anyway, I'm glad to see that you've landed on your feet, with an important job (I bet they'll give you the Camel account) and a six-figure-plus salary. It sounds like this will be in even better job than the one you had at OGVB.

Amazing recovery. You're like Teflon. Various messes never stick to you but instead like rotten eggs roll right off and land on your underlings. Where they stick.

While your accusations of wrongdoing preceding my departure from what I now think of as the generally "dishonest work" we were doing at OGVB remain false as they ever were, I'm willing to let bygones be bygones because Regine, I've landed on my feet as well! Actually on my pedals!

Every day is something new. This morning I collided with two different slow-moving cars. Just clipped by a Lexus and slightly sideswiped by an Explorer. I suppose I could have hit them both with lawsuits since the accidents were clearly their faults but it was like water off a duck's bill, Regine, I just took my lumps and kept moving, no serious injuries.

And I zoom through traffic. Cabbies hate my guts but the packages get there on time. I do more in a day that has more impact on the world than we did in a month at OGVB. And I make rent and have some left over to rent videos besides! and it's a real adventure, Regine, a real treat to find excitement in every day. I suppose at your new job you won't get much exercise, you'll probably just sit on your fat ass as it gets fatter, dreaming of volleyball.

Oh, Berto, you remember Berto, your favorite copywriter? He had a nervous breakdown after the shakeup that only you knew was coming went down. Not that you'd care.

Anyway, Regine, just wanted to drop you a note to say thanks for your help in liberating me from the apparatus.

Also you have always been, and remain, a world-class bitch.

May your new lieutenants cover their asses and locate your Achilles heel before you sacrifice them as lambs to the slaughter.

Skip



**Date: Sat, 22 Jun 2002 02:35:05**

**Subject: Re: What Have You**

**From: freddyfingers@treemail.com**

**To: skipvskip@hotmail.com**

Skip,

What word to hear from you.

Sid is his way, quantity as requested.

Skip.

So good to hear from yu.

one hundred of us salute u.

Life as is a sigh.

Bet\ween others messengers '

sighs.

sights.

thighs.

And good that you are with us.

in the thistles.

sigh.

Fred

**Date: Sat, 22 Jun 2002 03:21:31**

**Subject: Passion**

**From: susannenbreone@aol.com**

**To: reginespersonal@hotmail.com**

Regina,

But Passion most dissembles, yet betrays

Even by its darkness; as the blackest sky

Foretells the heaviest tempest, it displays

Its workings through the vainly guarded eye,

And in whatever aspect it arrays

Itself, 'tis still the same hypocrisy;

Coldness or Anger, even Disdain or Hate,

Are masks it often wears, and still too late.

Susanne

**Date: Sun, 23 Jun 2002 23:47:17**

**Subject: Desire**

**From: susannenbreone@aol.com**

**To: reginespersonal@hotmail.com**

Regini,

From what I've tasted of desire

I hold with those who favor fire

Susanne

**Date: Mon, 24 Jun 2002 11:29:58**

**Subject: Kiss**

**From: susannenbreone@aol.com**

**To: reginespersonal@hotmail.com**

Reginu,

the dirty colors of her kiss have just

throttled

my seeing blood,her heart's chatter

riveted a weeping skyscraper

in me

Susanne

**Date: Tue, 25 Jun 2002 01:40:20**

**Subject: I'm Back**

**From: jackdmonk@enteract.com**

**To: berto\_alto@tank20.com**

Berto,

Back from Thailand.

I was in the countryside in time for Khoa Phansa and did the Rains Retreat until the full moon observance, Kathina.

Learned a great deal during my three months with the monks.

And also unlearned a great deal.

Spent much time thinking of silence, meditating, chanting.

I saw a man levitate three inches from the ground.

I had the strangest waking dreams.

A snake swallowing its own tail.

A battle between a chicken and a colony of ants.

A blinding snowstorm that went from violence to serenity.

Owl's eyes staring.

Weeping orchids.



You can see many things thinking nothing.

I'm no longer used to thinking in English.

This is strange.

I'm now so used to a different interface.

My fingers are having a hard time getting accustomed again to typing.

And this screen feels so distant from me now, so alien, when just six months ago I was

writing and coding in it all day.

For three months my life was governed by these rules:

1. Do not take a life.
2. Do not take what is not given.
3. Do not be unchaste.
4. Do not lie or deceive.
5. Do not ingest intoxicants.
6. Do not eat after noon and eat moderately.
7. Do not dance or sing.
8. Do not wear ornaments.
9. Do not lie down on wide or high beds.
10. Do not accept silver or gold.

You come back from something like this and you get back to your little apartment in Logan Square to pull boxes covered in dust from storage and you say how did I acquire all of this insignificant shit?! and what made me think that it was so important to have so much of it?

Six pairs of shoes, eight pairs of jeans, forty-five T-shirts.

And I'm done collecting toys. I'm putting the whole Planet of the Apes collection on eBay and ridding myself of it.

Simpler.

Anyway good to be back.

Planning to recover from chastity and sobriety over the hot

Chicago summer. So if you ever feel Bacchanalian let's do some such.

Stop.

Light a candle

close your eyes

count to ten,

again

concentrate on breathing until you forget that

you're

counting

wherever you may be

just

be

hope this email is still your email and all your limbs are intact etc.

Saw some Pine Top Perkins this weekend at Rosa's.

Amazingly alive 89-year-old bluesman tearing up the piano.

Which reminds me you loaned me some Bukowski,

Play the Piano Drunk Until My Fingers Bleed a Bit

or something like that. It was at the top of a box I opened this morning.

Meant to give it back to you before I left.

So anyway, if you didn't leave town on some amazing transatlantic transpacific adventure and weren't befallen by some catastrophe of consequence pong back my ping.

Talk soon,

Jack

**Date: Tue, 25 Jun 2002 02:08:40**

**Subject: Jealous**

**From: susannenbreone@aol.com**

**To: reginespersonal@hotmail.com**

Regino,

Every time the tortuous thought comes to mind

that I will nevermore

see the lady I will always mourn,

my memory dredges up such grief

swelling within my heart,

that I must ask, "Why linger here, my soul?"

The torments you will be subjected to

in this life which you already detest,

weigh heavily on my terrified mind."

Then calling upon Death,

as I would call upon lovely, soothing Peace,

I say with yearning love: "Please come to me."

And I am jealous of whoever dies.

Susanne

**Date: Tue, 25 Jun 2002 17:44:16**

**Subject: Cease and Desist**

**From: reginespersonal@hotmail.com**

**To: susannenbreone@aol.com**

Susanne,

Thanks for the poetry lessons.

We had a thing, that's all.

I have no desire for a further relationship with you.

Please be dignified, and stop, get on with your life.

During the time that you've been apparently despondent with the cessation of our brief romance, I've had two other lovers.

Each of them has made as much or more of a positive impression on me than you have.

Truth be told, I have already more or less forgotten them

Just as I forgot any feelings for you, weeks ago.

I have no time for unnecessary entanglements.

Your choice to send me these increasingly bizarre fragments makes me worry that you may do harm to yourself or others. I've seen too many people flip out in the workplace setting to not take the implications of your increasingly despondent tone seriously.

I hesitate to take legal action -- that would be embarrassing for both of us. I don't want this to get ugly.

They have hotlines for this sort of thing, Susanne. If you're ever really feeling low, just pick up the phone. Call someone. Just don't call me.

But stop now.

Take a deep breath.

And then never, ever, write to me again.

Get on with your life (already).

Regine



**Date: Wed, 26 Jun 2002 08:01:01**

**Subject: Recv'd**

**From: skipvskip@hotmail.com**

**To: freddyfingers@treemail.com**

Fred,

I got your telegram yesterday, and it is singing to me now.

I expect a Hermetic day of messengering lies ahead.

Skip

**Date: Wed, 26 Jun 2002 10:06:50**

**Subject: From the Unemployment Notebook**

**From: simonsaysthis@omphalos.com**

**To: skipvskip@hotmail.com**

[for Skip]

[certain recent passages torn from my palmtop notebook]

DVD RENTAL #1

From Hell (2000)

An adaptation of the Jack the Ripper Story by the Hughes Brothers

starring Johnny Depp

\*\*\*+

An orgy of blood and research. The Hughes brothers are pros at this sort of thing, and you can expect a kind of stylized authenticity from the bros. that you can't get from another directing duo at work today. What I liked best was that they didn't try to tell the TRUE story of the Jack the Ripper murders, but tried to make instead to make the most interesting story SEEM true. And Johnny Depp has to be one of the most talented actors at work today. The bonus material on this DVD can't be beat, including tons of documentary material from two other documentaries and over 20 deleted scenes. Having said that, at the end of the day will this film teach you how to live your life? I think not. In fact it may make you wonder how Western culture got so fucked up that more than a century later we're still fascinated (even have a museum for) these brutal sadistic murders. Is class conflict at the heart of our fascination with this tale of rich powerful men deleting the unfortunate lives of prostitutes in particularly brutal fashion or is it a simple fascination with violence and brutality writ large, the same kind of rubbernecking we see at the site of fatal interstate collisions?

(dream journal)

In this dream Winona Ryder and I steal foodstuffs from an upscale gourmet shop in Los Angeles, absconding with more than a dozen jars of marmite, jellies, jams, relishes, and mango salsas. Then we run for what seems like hours, until we arrive at a football field, where we tear off each other's clothes (and Winona is wearing about 15 layers), rub the assorted stickiness all over each other in a kind of mock tribal ritual, and then we rut, as the Simple Minds sing "Don't You Forget About Me" in the background. At night I wake up with the sheets soaking wet and a freight train running through the middle of my head.

DVD RENTAL #2

Dead Man (1995)

\*\*\*\*

A Western by Jim Jarmusch

Starring Johnny Depp

This is kind of I think a retelling of the Odyssey wrapped in the kind of anti-Western mode of Cormac McCarthy's *Blood Meridian* wrapped in a layer of *Blazing Saddles* as illustrated by R. Crumb in black and white with a dash of Native American philosophy. Jarmusch's "Stupid White Man" is more archetypal than Michael Moore's. A film that bespeaks the banality of evil that surrounds us. And what can we say about Johnny Depp? He's one of the few actors that women swoon for who I can tolerate (Brad Pitt is usually passable at best and Richard Gere couldn't act his way out of a box). A wonder that this one isn't on more top ten lists. A must-see.

AT THE CUBS GAME

Saturday June 22nd

A bizarre day, Skipo. The game was scheduled to start at 2:05. And they're usually amazingly punctual with these things. There was speculation in the stands that the late start has something to do with the fact that FOX SPORTS NET is running the telecast and that bundles of dollars are being hurled towards the Tribune corporation in order that the cubscardinalsgame not start while FOX is the midst of broadcasting the 10th inning heroics of some other probably more important game. I call friends on cellfone to brag about spending my Saturday thus. By 2:30, a logical switchover point, it becomes clear that something is amiss, awry, that all is not right in Wrigleyville. Then a weeping man, I find out later it is the Cubs catcher and player's union rep, addresses the crowd, apologizing, tells us that the game has been cancelled due to a tragedy in the Cardinals family. The crowd's thoughts turn to terrorism and there's a kind of somber pit-in-

stomach-dropping, everyone looking around at each other, wondering if the other shoe has chosen this Saturday to drop. Turns out that Darryl Kile, a 33-year-old pitcher, was found dead around noon in his hotel room. My parents and I drink Old Style all afternoon in the Billy Goat, discussing mortality with each other and a bunch of Cardinals fans. My mother, who works in a church, mentions that 6 of the last 8 bodies they've moved from the altar to the burial plot have been people under 40, which is unusual. Which makes me want to suck the marrow from the bone of life as it were. Quick figuring though -- there were 40,000 people in the ballpark who each wasted 30 minutes, which makes for a 20,000 hour tribute to Kile. You add on top of that the hundreds and hundreds of hours of media coverage of his death, absorbed by millions of people, and by my quick count, more total time/attention has been paid to this pitcher in the few short days since his death than during the entirety of his life. Which is a strange kind of afterlife.

(dream journal)

Skip, I hesitate to recount this one. In it you and I are cellmates in jail, I think Cook County, there's just the two of us. You are enormous and I am small. You are calling me "Nancy" and are in the process of preparing to violate me. You are applying Vaseline to your engorged member, nodding your head as you slowly stroke and I tell you story after story, prolonging the time between that time and the inevitable, manufacturing stories of my youth in a lumbering camp? as a form of delay. You are nodding, nodding, waiting to get your thing in edgewise. I am Scheherazade spinning tales, Penelope weaving threads. The dream thankfully ends before the stories do. And what the hell does this mean? Am I homophobic? Such as you were preparing for in this dream is about violence and power, not about sex. And why of all the possible figures who could have figured in were you the aggressor?

AT MONTROSE BEACH

Monday June 24th

How does one situate oneself at the beach? In the past I have largely avoided them for reasons I myself cannot explain, at least in part owing to my milkywhite complexion that sears under the force of postgreenhouseeffect Chicago's Juneswoon. Yet this summer I've already made it to the beach twice, a bratwurst in floral trunks roasting in the sun. I suppose I situate myself on the basis of the view, both of the blue lake and the sailboats and also of the seeming pleasantness or unpleasantness of neighbors. I guess there I don't know quite what I mean. It's not that I try to plop myself in front of bathing beauties, Joyce's Gertie, or that I try strenuously to avoid such, as much as I try to avoid the sand-hurling children and highschoollers playfully prankpulling. Montrose Beach has gotten enormous with the lake lowering. There is a full sand soccer field behind me, filled with South Korean and Mexican boys. By the way, last week I was at North Avenue beach, which is overwhelmingly white and healthy, sex and sexuality everywhere you turn. Montrose Beach on the other hand is the most integrated spot I've seen in Chicago. I hear seven different languages over the course of the afternoon. There is a Russian couple to my right, English duo at two o'clock, African Americans at 1, Serbs at 11, Puerto Ricans at 10 and a Japanese woman to my right who sits by herself smoking cigarettes and laughing at the Mexican boys burying each other in the sand. It's very difficult to describe the sensation of jumping into the lake, which stays around 40 Fahrenheit, when it's 92 Fahrenheit and so humid that you stick to yourself. But it's refreshing, Skip, refreshing, mercury levels be damned. Having noted that it's illegal to drink alcoholic beverages at the beach (LOUD SIGNS THREATENING ARREST) I have lugged my enormous coleman filled with ice and a sixpack of Coke and a redwinevinagrette subway club sandwich out here and secreted a pint of Jack Daniels in the bag with my shorts and underwear. I've just finished my third Jack and Coke when a cop (in full flack jacket that pig must be toasty) walks up, points to the cooler and says "You wouldn't happen to have liquor in there wouldya?" and I shake my head and pop the cover, revealing cocacola and subwayleavings. He walks on without even thinking of the bag with the shorts and underwear (and why would he, there's no probable cause to search my underwear at the beach--EVER) and I feel that unique pleasure of escaping the long arm of the law. The

father of the Mexican boys is not so lucky, he is cuffed and taken away for the crime of cerveza. What kind of a sick society do we live in where a man can't drink a beer at the beach without premeditated subterfuge? I read Fast Eddie, King of the Bees all afternoon long.

## BOOK REVIEW

Fast Eddie, King of the Bees

Robert Arellano

with Illustrations by Mark Bennet

\*\*\*\*

Fast fun finicky fulsome foundling fiction. Egregious gregarious deeply Oedipal dystopic Dickensian romp. Postcyberpunk Victorian bildungsroman (Dungs?roman) big dig gig. Comic tragic tale told graffiti fingersweat pop top hip hop. Thinly veiled parody of Providence politick. Note that the mayor is getting sent away but that the populous re-elected him. Beantown bash Jersey joke Applejack cider for the soul. A must read. Beachbook blast bitchin boobobsessed brotherhood of Orpheus orphans. Also, flip the book backwards to see the bee dance.

(dream journal)

Is it normal to see your friends naked in your dreams? What about fucking? Is it normal to see your friends fucking in your dreams? Is it normal to see your married friends fucking each other in your dreams? Is it normal to see your married friends fucking each other and not their partners in your dreams like some kind of late 70s updike swapping narrative? Is it normal to see your friends fucking famous painters in your dreams? Did Van Gogh and Gauguin ever see each other fuck in their dreams? Is it normal to see your

friends fucking Picasso in a dreamscape painted by Chagall? Is that normal?

DVD RENTAL #3

Waking Life

A Film by Richard Linklater

\*\*\*

The computeraided Rotoscoping technique is worth the price of the rental in itself. Mindblowing visuals. T. Leary would love it. Beyond that I probably liked *Slackers* better the first time I saw it don't get me wrong there's some moments of pristine parody here, the film basically takes you on this kaleidoscopic journey through the majority of late 20th Century thought I guess playfully pointing out that Signifier or Nothing, Derrida is going to do little to help you live your life and that we thinkers are basically useless when it comes to what's what but so what man, anyway amazing that the script got through and occasionally bold like the Nietzschean nihilist setting himself on fire unabashedly antilinearlinear so rent it but in spite of the stunning visuals don't expect the same shock of recognition as was offered by *Slackers*.

[end torn pages]

[shut down palmtop notebook]

[by closing cover]

So anyway, to answer your question, that's what I've been up to.

And also, good to hear of Sid.

Five for fifty seems fair, especially give your promise of a bonus sixth.

See you tonight then,

Simon

**Date: Wed, 26 Jun 2002 13:43:09**

**Subject: Want to have sex?**

**From: susannenbreone@aol.com**

**To: skipvskip@hotmail.com**

Skip,

Upon reflection and reconsideration, I think that some of my earlier comments to you were harsh. Also, thank you for the way that you've studiously ignored me at Starbucks. Your nervous schoolboy's awkward dash into the bathroom this morning the moment I arrived in the latté line was particularly charming.

For essentially therapeutic reasons of my own having little or nothing to do with you, by the chance arrangement of emails in my inbox, I'd like to propose that we have sex this Saturday night at the Palmer House Hotel.

I don't want you to misunderstand this.

I'm not interested in getting involved with you.



I'd just like to have sex with you -- one time only.

In my mind, I probably won't even technically be having sex with "you."

You'll be a physical manifestation of the abstract concept of "fucking a man" only.

I'll primarily be fucking you as catharsis, as revenge.

I do have a few conditions:

1. Your certification via email that you neither have nor have had in the past any venereal diseases I should know about.
2. You will be responsible for ample birth control protection, both condom and spermicidal cream.
3. Prior to our act of congress, we will go out for the below-offered Italian meal. We will eat well and drink expensive red wine. You will pick up the tab. I've made reservations at the Italian Village for 8:15 PM.
4. I will pick up the tab for the hotel room.
5. Outside of your emailed response, you will not contact me in person either before or after Saturday night. You should continue to avoid and not disturb me when I am drinking my morning coffee.
6. Neither you nor I will stay the entire night in the hotel room. We will leave, separately, after we are done.

I hope that you are clean and that you will have no expectations. Also to be clear: it is exclusively by chance that I have chosen you for this function. If your friend Berto

weren't in the hospital, I'd choose him over you in a heartbeat. But here we are and there you have it.

Please confirm,

Susanne

**Date: Thu, 27 Jun 2002 10:30:00**

**Subject: Yes**

**From: skipvskip@hotmail.com**

**To: susannenbreone@aol.com**

Dear Susanne,

What a night to pick to not check my email!

An old friend of mine, Sid, was in town last night, and so I avoided the humachinterface successfully for the last 24 hours. Sid has left me blearyeyed and sore from our indulgences. My apologies for not getting to the email sooner.

And now there are 14 messages in my inbox. A man in Lagos urgently requires my assistance in some financial matters. I need to make a deposit in his account, after which he'll double my money. Pitney Bowles wants me to purchase all my postage online. Someone is fervently recommending a German Rape Sex! site to me. Clearance at Overstock.com wants me to buy clean white sheets. Travelocity wants me to travel to Orlando. Hilton wants to give me points for staying in their hotel while I'm there, and Expedia just made a counteroffer for my business from Travelocity, only to be pre-empted by American, which is luring me with miles.

But forget all that spam.

WOW!

You want to have sex

(with me)

While I'm typically a romantic, the candlelit dinner for two, flowers and moonlit strolls type of guy, your requirements suit me fine. I mean I'm not a fatalist, so I'm not quite sure that I can jump in with no hopes for something with more duration than one tryst, but certainly I'll have no expectations.

NO VD here. This whistle is clean.

I will break open my piggy bank and you order whatever you want from the menu. Vino only the best. And I'm not the type to object to a lady picking up a hotel room after we have sex in it.

I just hope that I can fulfill your needs/desires in the allotted time frame.

WHOOPEE!

See you at the Italian Village.

I really hope this isn't one of my crueller friends playing some kind of joke.

But I am suspending my sense of disbelief.

Beautiful,

Skip

**Date: Thu, 27 Jun 2002 17:22:23**

**Subject: I spent yesterday with Sid**

**From: skipvskip@hotmail.com**

**To: freddyfingers@treemail.com**

Fred,

Thanks for sending Sid my way.

My thanks and regards to Tree and the rest of the Rainbow People.

You're a lifesaver.

Sid visited twice yesterday and ever since I've seen life in a new shining light. Amazing things are happening to me, Fred, truly amazing things. I haven't felt this good since the Enron shit started coming down.

Yesterday I took Sid with my morning coffee.

Sid came with me to work.

Sid was riding with me, on the handlebars, all day long.

Sid really kicked in around noon.

Some folks, I'm sure, would get nervous about operating their TREK 7200 at high velocity while Sid is around.

But Sid was clean, Fred, Sid was clarity.

The bike and I became one living organism. I could feel the knobs of my Bontrager tires gripping the asphalt. My spine and the aluminum frame were one. My nerves were twitching in the Shimano derailleur.

At one point I nearly expired when Tom Cruise's fingers in VR gloves on a Minority Report billboard on the side of a CTA bus flew out from the advertisement towards my head as if to flick off my helmet, enormous digits reaching for me.

Around lunchtime while I was making a delivery near Daley Plaza the crowd became an actualized river of flesh. Bike and I and Sid were moving through its currents, weaving S curves around its eddies.

All I needed to remember to say was "Sign Here." I think a few times I may have said, "Rind Beer" "Hi Near" and "Bind Rear." At one point my jaw was pretty slack and I was reduced to pointing emphatically.

The shades stayed firmly affixed.

One receptionist was briefly a Medusa, the next a Cyclops.

After work Sid and I renewed our acquaintance and went to the Lincoln Park Zoo.

There were green alligators and long necked geese, cats and rats and elephants and above all chimpanzees.

I spent much of my early evening in the monkeyhouse communicating with one of the subordinate males who had the face and soul of my grandfather.

Anyway, it was good to see Sid. Many of my friends haven't seen Sid for a long time and our time during this visit will pass very quickly. We're hoping to see more of him. I'd happily make the trip up to the farm in Wisconsin to bring Sid back to Chicago for a

longer stay.

Thanks again for making the Sid arrangements.

Hope to see you and Sid again soon,

Skip

**Date: Thu, 27 Jun 2002 17:38:10**

**Subject: Go Easy**

**From: freddyfingers@treemail.com**

**To: skipvskip@hotmail.com**

Skip,

You're always welcome up on the farm.

Go easy on with mentioning our friend in email tho. Fewer explicit references the better.

With Carnivore and Al Qaeda and all that we can't be too careful about what we say even with the kind of encryption technology I regularly employ. Never know what might end up on Uncle Ashcroft's desk.

Just drop a note when you want to come up and we'll have a fish broil in your honor.

Fred

**Date: Sat, 29 Jun 2002 00:11:32**

**Subject: Little Red Corvette**

**From: ernestonotcom@netzero.com**

**To: berto\_alto@tank20.com**

Berto,

This afternoon I sold the LITTLE RED CORVETTE. '96 model, sitting on the lot for months, for as long as I've been working there, since the STONE AGE.

Which put me OVER QUOTA. Which should put me Jessie Jeffie and HOPEFULLY Darlene in Chicago around about August 1st. Which should me that you me and the kids will go see the Rockies beat the Cubs at Wrigley on AUGUST 2nd.

ASSUMING that is that you're no longer INSTITUTIONALIZED at that time. OR at least that they will LET YOU OUT for an afternoon.

Docs say you're TALKING now, which is good.

But Docs say you're not talking TO THEM, which is bad.

Your Doc, you should know this, called my Doc, who cross-referenced my HISTORY with your HISTORY and furthermore with "dad"'s HISTORY.

My guess is with me CLINICALLY DEPRESSED and "dad" DIAGNOSED SCHIZOPHRENIC the Docs are trying to place you somewhere in between.

Docs say that you're SPEAKING only THROUGH a man name Pedro, who you call SANCHEZ.

Which makes me remember the times that "dad" would read to us from DON QUIXOTE

and worry that that somehow FUCKED US UP. And that somehow you're retreating into this.

Docs say that they're OBSERVING this for the time being, but will probably PUT A STOP TO IT SOON because it's interfering with their TREATMENT of Pedro, who has problems of his own, Berto. That guy EATS HUMAN FLESH.

Just kidding. He's just a guilt-ridden transvestite who can't cope with the voices he's picking up on some other frequency.

COME ON, you're in the middle, you've always been more STABLE than your SISTER or for that matter ME and IT'S SCARING THE SHIT OUT OF ME that you aren't responding to email. you never do that.

ANYWAY we are coming out there start of August. I BOOKED THE TICKETS which pissed off Darlene. She doesn't understand the URGENCY of this. Though she loves you you know that. BUT FUCK IT BERTO.

You're going to snap out of this.

We'll dine on roasted PIG LIPS AND ASSHOLES slathered in mustard. and drink OLD STYLE IN THE SUN until our skins are pink and we'll laugh about our schedules of medications.

Jeff is looking forward.

DO DON't do the don quixote routine if that's what you're doing.

the man had us CHASING WINDMILLS for most of our natural lives.

HAS US?



Wicked dry heat N THE DESERT 2night.

LOVING LIFE.

Little Red Corvette.

YOUR BIG FUCKING BROTHER,

ErNest0

**Date: Sat, 29 Jun 2002 15:11:54**

**Subject: Tonight, Tonight**

**From: skipvskip@hotmail.com**

**To: susannenbreone@aol.com**

Susanne,

Just a note to say I'm looking forward to tonight.

Was just out walking the lakefront. 75, no humidity, one of those perfect days, like a gift from the gods. Smiling on us. I bought a mango from an elotés vendor on the street, and as its sweet juice mingled with the taste of lime and salt danced across my taste buds I thought of you.

Can't wait to see you tonight.

Skip

(s a beat)

**Date: Sat, 29 Jun 2002 16:08:32**

**Subject: Kind of Blue**

**From: simonsaysthis@omphalos.com**

**To: skipvskip@hotmail.com**

Skip,

"I think a movement in jazz is beginning [getting] away from the conventional string of chords and a return to an emphasis on melodic, rather than harmonic variation. There will be fewer chords but infinite possibilities as to what to do with them."

--Miles Davis

Sid and I sat up on the room as the sunrise came up over the lake this morning. Miles Davis "So What" in the headphones. Thanks for bringing Sid around again.

Simon

**Date: Mon, 01 Jul 2002 13:56:14**

**Subject: SO HOT**

**From: skipvskip@hotmail.com**

**To: susannenbreone@aol.com**

Dear Susanne,

It is so hot and humid that I'm sticking not only to myself but to the entire city of Chicago. can barely think in this heat much less flow through traffic (\*\*angry traffic\*\* people have no patience for cyclists when there's a 103 heat index). I hope you're staying cool.

Can you imagine life before A/C?

I think I would have worked in an ice-house.

I'm filled with thoughts of you . . .

(I know, I've tried to restrain myself from writing but there/here it is)

snapshots:

- O Sole Mio over Shrimp Casalinga and Vigna di Pian Rosso in our gondola
- The mindblowing connexion to Regine (the bitch [excuseme])
- The cut of your black dress, the candlelight dancing shadows across the nape of your neck, your bare shoulderblades as you turned towards the waiter and ordered the Veal Piccata.
- Laughter over Tiramisu.
- Splattering cappuccino across my shirtcuff, distracted by the events on the immanent horizon
- The doorman with the comically raised eyebrow.
- Your exquisite taste in lingerie.
- The first time.
- Your love of the unusual, the daring, the
- Second time.

- The idyll of spooning.
- Again, more slowly this time.
- Our fingers brushing as we hailed separate cabs in the haze of the early morning night.

LET'S DO IT AGAIN SOON

there I've said it.

I think we have much in common and that that which we don't have in common delights.

No pressure, just to say it was wonderful, and I would be evergrateful for its recurrence.

Also I hope the flowers weren't too much.

But god am I dying to see you again.

Skip

**Date: Mon, 01 Jul 2002 14:16:19**

**Subject: Girl, 4, accidentally shot, killed by her brother, 7**

**From: jackdmonk@enteract.com**

**To: berto\_alto@tank20.com**

Berto--

The background violence of American life has become a pervasive hum in my inner ear, more and more audible with each passing day. Incomprehensible savagery buzzes on the periphery of every waking moment. Were we to listen carefully to the white noise around us, we would hear thousands of individual souls screaming in torment and we would

become paralyzed with grief.

--Jack

A 4-year-old girl was accidentally shot and killed Sunday night by her 7-year-old brother while they were playing with their grandfather's gun, Chicago police said. The shooting took place in the family's apartment above El Progreso grocery store, 3937 W. 31st St., which is operated by the grandfather, Capt. Fred Konet said. The family kept the gun for protection from robbery in their store. The girl was pronounced dead at the scene, police said.

**Date: Tue, 02 Jul 2002 12:12:36**

**Subject: Rude**

**From: reginespersonal@hotmail.com**

**To: susannenbreone@aol.com**

Susanne,

Your recent pornographic play-by-play email recounting your weekend encounter with my former employee (who is by the way a thief a liar and a sub-par copywriter--goodie for you) was simply rude. I believe I asked that you stop contacting me some time ago. Keep it up and I play hardball.

Away,

Regine

**Date: Wed, 03 Jul 2002 13:01:26**

**Subject: Jesus Loves You**

**From: ocgodislove1@aol.com**

**To: berto\_alto@tank20.com**

Dearest Berto,

I have received a terrible letter from our unfortunate brother Ernesto that, in the few lines where it was not cruelly assailing me for my belief in the teachings of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, gives testament of your awful predicament.

I know that we haven't corresponded as much as I'd like in recent years, largely due to the fact that your eyes have been veiled from the light, but I did want to write that I love you and am sending prayers for your speedy recovery.

This is very strange, writing you like this in front of this machine, but Ernesto says this is the only way you will see the message.

To me, all this emailing ends up with a lot of letters coming from the void, from nothingness. We don't have a computer in our home. I don't want to expose Timmy to the Sodom and Gomorrah of internet pornography, which is stealing the innocence of thousands of children each and every day. With Christ, we live a simple life.

Berto, in your hour of darkness, as you are asking who you can turn to, I ask you to turn to our Lord and our Shepard. Jesus is the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in HIM shall never die.

Belief in the Lord centers your life, brings you back to that which is important.

I would love to come visit you yet I know Berto that the city with all its evils and temptation, your Chicago with its dark towers rising like the Tower of Babel in all its iniquity, is half the reason you find yourself in your current troubles.

I have spoken with Thomas, however, and we would like for you to come stay with us for

a while. We live a simple life, but we have ample room, food, raiment and love for you. Thomas could find work for you in the shop, and I know that Timmy would love to get to know his uncle. Maybe if you were to stay with us, you might come to understand the power of accepting Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, the power of letting God into your life.

There is an option, Berto. You are our family and we will always love you, regardless of whether your soul lives in heaven or is banished to hell. Have faith in God and HE will pull you through.

Love,

Olivia

## PSALM 142

Malachi of David; A Prayer When He was in the Cave.

I CRIED unto the Lord with my voice; with my voice unto the Lord did I make my supplication.

I poured out my complaint before him; I shewed before him my trouble.

When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest my path. In the way wherein I walked men have privily laid a snare for me.

I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul.

I cried unto thee, O LORD: I said, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living.

Attend unto my cry; for I am brought very low: deliver me from my persecutors; for they are stronger than I.

Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name: the righteous shall compass about me; for thou shalt deal bountifully with me.



**Date: Thu, 04 Jul 2002 01:04:16**

**Subject: COOOOOL**

**From: jefftrocks@netzero.com**

**To: berto\_alto@tank20.com**

Uncllle BERTO,

Really happy coming to see you soon and WRIGLEY FIELD which ROCKS at least yougot 1 ALLSTAR SMMYsosa tho he leves men onbase. It is totly AWESOME that we r comin to see you.DADsasleep and Lertin me an jess use theinternet all night long.mom will be homesoon.

I hoope yous till kno KARATE becausesome skinhead firthgreders tryd to beet meup today, it sucked s undlle Berto, theysaid we live arounddd africanamericans and the skinz called my mom a name icant say.totallyracist and mean and threy tried to setal my lucnh monee whicxh suckedf because thenidn't get to eet lucnh.

CAN:T WIAT FOR THE CUBS GAMEand di hpe you can give me someKarate lessns.

]

hope your ancle is feeling better.

JEFF

**Date: Thu, 04 Jul 2002 01:13:23**

**Subject: No Fish Broil Necessary**

**From: skipvskip@hotmail.com**

**To: freddyfingers@treemail.com**

But if you're doing you're usual fishbroil bonfire and barndance routine for the 4th wkend

I'll make the drive up tomorrow night after I take care of a couple errands. See you soon, Fred. Let me know if you're gonna be out of town but I'm betting, hoping.

Skip

**Date: Thu, 04 Jul 2002 01:15:14**

**Subject: Re: No Fish Broil Necessary**

**From: freddyfingers@treemail.com**

**To: skipvskip@hotmail.com**

Just finished setting up the yard.

We are creatures of habit round here.

We wouldn't let the bombsburstinginair get in the way of a good time.

Seeyou2morrow

Fred

**Date: Mon, 08 Jul 2002 11:18:37**

**Subject: Again**

**From: susannenbreone@aol.com**

**To: skipvskip@hotmail.com**

Skip,

Why not . . .

Have you ever eaten at Café Le Loup? Want to meet for dinner and possibly extracurricular activities Wednesday night?

If you're good I'll show you my apartment.

(all distance remaining in effect)

Susanne

**Date: Mon, 08 Jul 2002 11:24:32**

**Subject: Engagement Party**

**From: jackdmonk@enteract.com**

**To: berto\_alto@tank20.com**

Berto,

Your sister just got engaged

You fire your gun in the air

You whoop and holler

You dance with your great aunt

(You're free to do that now)

God Bless America

N 2 ton bomb

Sends up a wall of fire and

The bride and groom are

Incinerated

Grandma is splattered across

The cake, the giggling

Cousins are roasted before

Your eyes and the newsmedia

Report

Collateral

Damage

Before turning

To other sports

Jack

**Date: Mon, 08 Jul 2002 11:50:57**

**Subject: Small Plane**

**From: ernestonotcom@netzero.com**

**To: berto\_alto@tank20.com**

Berto,

Just so you know, that SMALL PLANE CRASH

didn't hit our TRAILER PARK

and we were nowhere near LAX

during the LATEST Terrorist INCIDENT

even we here in the LOS ANGELES area

were relieved the FESTIVITIES went

off without a HITCH aside from

A COUPLE BODIES at the EL-AL counter.

JEFF loved the ROMAN CANDLES and we

BLEW UP some old toys the kids don't

PLAY with anymore with some M-80s,

(Jessie doesn't like fireworks but she thought

THE SPARKLERS WERE MAGICAL)

we ROASTED hotdogs over an OPEN FIRE

(there was a big bonfire and country music)

AT THE TRAILER PARK COMMONS

SEE WHAT YOU'RE MISSING IN THERE?????!

hope they at least gave you a

SLICE OF WATERMELON or

SOMETHING in there

BIG BRO PUL::LING FOR YOUR (re)COVERy,

ErNESTo

**Date: Mon, 08 Jul 2002 11:56:17**

**Subject: Again, yes Again**

**From: skipvskip@hotmail.com**

**To: susannenbreone@aol.com**

Susanne,

Le Loup. That's on Sheffield? I'm on for that, yes definitely, wetting my chops at the thought. Like 7:30PM?

So glad you want this too,

Skip

**Date: Mon, 08 Jul 2002 12:07:24**

**Subject: SID IS BACK IN TOWN**

**From: skipvskip@hotmail.com**

**To: simonsaysthis@omphalos.com, bigwig@harrynet.com, sue@freak.net, tabbi@lic.org and 8 others**

Dear Simon et al.

SID IS BACK, he's BIG, he's BAD, he's CLEAN, he's THE BEST I'VE SEEN HIM IN YEARS.

HE's AVAILABLE NOW, for a LIMITED ENGAGEMENT, IN QUANTITY.

call for an appointment today,

Skip

**Date: Tue, 09 Jul 2002 22:40:06**

**Subject: The Blue Period**

**From: simonsaysthis@omphalos.com**

**To: skipvskip@hotmail.com**

Skip,

The Blue Period marked the end of Picasso's juvenilia and the beginning of his professional career as an artist. During the Blue Period -- roughly 1901-1904 -- young

Picasso was searching for a style of his own. During these early years, Picasso painted prolifically and voraciously. Friends report that Picasso spent the bulk of his waking hours during his early twenties painting and drawing, using the sketches he drew during the day to fuel the stove in his apartment at night.

Picasso's work during this time shows little of the radical abstraction dominant during his cubist period and after. Centering on themes of loss, suffering and desolation, they evidence the young painter finding a subject matter in the streets around him. Though Picasso's early work had already been well received in exhibitions in Madrid and Malaga, during this period Picasso was himself destitute, and had a very difficult time making his rent and other debts. During 1901 and 1902, there were general strikes in Barcelona, and much of the city's population was destitute and unemployed. These rumblings of discord would eventually lead to the 1909 riots, and decades later to the 1931 left-wing ascendance followed by the 1936 beginning of the Spanish Civil War, the harsh violence and injustice of which Picasso would later record in "Guernica".

It was also during this period that Picasso's friendship with the poet Jaime Sabartés flourished. At the time the two circulated in the same bohemian circle in Barcelona. Sabartés initially occupied by himself by caring for his grandfather in Barcelona. In 1899 however his own eyesight failed to near-blindness to the point that he could be of little use in a caretaker capacity. He struggled to find his own voice as a poet but found himself in awe of the obvious talent of his friend and contemporary Picasso. Perhaps shifting from one caretaker role to another, Sabartés would thereafter, until the end of his days, dedicate the majority of his energies to advancing the career of Picasso. He took on a role of managing Picasso's business affairs, managing his exhibitions, even of waking Picasso each morning. In 1935, Picasso formally asked Sabartés to play the role of his secretary, though in fact, Sabartés had been functioning as such for the prior two decades.

Sabartés would later claim to be the "progenitor of Blue period 'blueness'." One of the first paintings that most place in the Blue Period, "The Glass of Beer-Portrait of Jamie Sabartés" (1901), now hanging in the Pushkin Museum in Moscow may lend some



credence to his claim. The picture is a stark, dour portrait of Sabartés, striking a tone of desolation, which Sabartés would later refer to as the "specter of (my) solitude." As a kind of dark joke, Picasso painted this portrait using the body of Sabartés, but substituted the poet's head for that of Casas Casegemas, who had recently committed suicide in the Café L'Hippodrome over a failed love affair. Sabartés was reportedly not in the least upset by the juxtaposition. Other friends reported that Sabartés had the devotion towards Picasso that that Trappist monks have towards God, or that heroin addicts have towards the drug, and that he was able to find joy in few things other than Picasso. Sabartés was known to wear black garb and to sport mournful, almost tragic expression.

Picasso's Blue Period paintings owe a debt to El Greco's elongated forms and hallucinatory spaces. Picasso was suffused in the atmosphere of Spanish tragedy that surrounded him in the earliest days of 20th Century Barcelona. In 1901 the poet Rilke married one of Auguste Rodin's pupils, the young sculptress, Klara Westhoff, and Giuseppe Verdi died in Milan, while Pablo y Ruiz Picasso explored the nature of life in blue, through somber eyes that while yet a touch naïve manage never to escape towards bathos. Art historians remark that during this time we see a shift in Picasso's tone towards his subjects, from satirical tone to one of tender empathy with his subjects.

"The Blue Guitarist" (1903), hanging here at the Art Institute of Chicago, which I visited this afternoon with Sid, has become known as the archetypal work of Picasso's Blue Period. The old guitarist, a blind man playing in a dark corner of the city, has perhaps just finished a song. His skeletal frame looks tired, beaten, almost dead. He looks like he's about to pass out from lack of sleep and malnutrition, or that the song has taken his somewhere else, somewhere far from the street corner, somewhere where he lingers in a melancholy kind of blue. A sad song, an indelibly sad song, is finished, and he rests.

Simon

**Date: Wed, 10 Jul 2002 00:00:48**

**Subject: Wanted to Say**

**From: skipvskip@hotmail.com**

**To: jackdmonk@enteract.com**

Jack,

I wanted to say:

That NY Times article you forwarded me yesterday about the engagement party massacre in Afghanistan in particular this paragraph:

"Around her in the orchard, there was unspeakable gore. A woman's torso had landed in one of the small almond trees. Human flesh was still hanging on the tree five days after the attack, and more putrifying remains were tangled in the branches of a pomegranate tree, its bright scarlet flowers still blooming."

reminds me of Pablo Picasso's "Guernica."

Also, Sid is in town if you're looking.

Skip

**Date: Wed, 10 Jul 2002 10:27:41**

**Subject: Corporate MOTHERFUCKERS**

**From: ernestonotcom@netzero.com**

**To: berto\_alto@tank20.com**

Berto,

All the NEWS lately about the CORPORATE MOTHERFUCKERS has got me THINKING about what a JOKE the American economy has been for the last DECADE.

After my WORLD DISINTEGRATED when uknow.com went bust, a HUGE SILICON CHIP on my SHOULDER went flying off. I used to think I was HOT SHIT, UNTOUCHABLE, a NEW ECONOMY WUNDERKIND. But in the end, after my LITTLE BREAKDOWN, I came to realize that I was just SOME SCHMUCK swimming in the river, just like THE REST OF US. And IF THE RIVER WAS WHISKEY I would be diving down.

AND toDAY? I measure my existence, my welfare and that of my FAMILY, car by car. THE '94 MAZDA MIATA I moved this morning and the '98 LINCOLN TOWN CAR I hope to move before lunch. Could I HAVE A BETTER JOB? I think I could, I mean I'm CAPABLE of MUCH BETTER THINGS. But will I leave this job to WANDER THE WILDERNESS OF THE FUTURE AND ITS POTENTIALITIES? I don't think so, not just nowow.

AND THAT FUCKWAD Bush giving Wall Street his little lecture on CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY failing to mention that during his CEO days he was doing the SAME FUCKING THINGS as your Enron Worldcom Tyco Martha Stewart type CROOKS are doing now. The FOX is GUARDING THE HENHOUSE, so we can all REST ASSURED.

Some say that IRONY BECAME A THING OF THE PAST on 9/11. I think that's BULLSHIT. IF IRONY HAS LEFT THE SCENE, it happened back around the TIME OF THE ELECTION, when that TEXAS YALIE and his goons on the SUPREME COURT managed to steal what they COULDN'T WIN. What is the point of IRONY when you have that kind of TWIST sitting in the OVAL OFFICE telling us about CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY?! The IRONY IS ON THE SURFACE NOW.

So anyway, WHY HAVEN'T YOU FUCKING WRITTEN ME BACK?

Doc's say you're reading this, so I don't feel like I'M HOWLING DOWN A TUNNEL WITH NO ONE ON THE OTHER END, but still, I could use you now, Berto.

I think that Darlene might be having an affair. I HAVE NO EVIDENCE but I noticed a CHANGE IN THE WAY SHE SMELLS. And I LOVE THAT WOMAN more than life itself, I DON'T KNOW what I would do if it were true. And then I think SHIT THIS IS JUST ANOTHER SIGN OF MY PARANOIA and that MAYBE MY PROBLEMS go deeper than SIMPLE CLINICAL DEPRESSION. Maybe whatever BUG YOU GOT I GOT TOO. So I'm not going to SEEK OUT EVIDENCE, instead I'm going to BUY HER SOME FLOWERS tonight after work and hope that my equiLIBRIUM holds.

But anyway, when the news is talking about corporate responsibility, I think about how they don't mention that MY LITTLE BROTHER GOT ENRONIZED into the PSYCH WARD and I GET ANGRY.

SO HANG IN THERE,

Ernesto

**Date: Thu, 11 Jul 2002 12:21:16**

**Subject: CLIENT ASSESSMENT REPORT #46892**

**From: debarthelme@rush.edu**

**To: mentalhealth.autofiler@rush.edu, tabitha\_moran@rush.edu**

**RUSH PRESBYTERIAN HEALTH NETWORK**

**Department of Mental Health**

**ASSESSMENT FOR PATIENT #46892**

**DATE: 7/11/02**

**NAME:** Berto Tazar

**SSN:** 327-90-0666

**REPRESENTATIVE PAYEE:** Self

**ADDRESS:** 4097 N. Lakeshore Drive, Suite 7082

**DOB:** 4/18/65

**AGE:** 37

**SEX:** M

**RACE/ETHNICITY:** Cauc

**MARITAL STATUS:** Single

**PRESENTING PROBLEMS**

**Chief Complaint:** Delusions

**Symptom Inventory:** Anhedonia, Anxiety, Behavior Problems (see notes), Compulsions, Delusions, Depressed Mood, Grief, Low Self-Esteem, Memory Problems, Paranoia, Poor Judgement, Ruminations, Sleep Problems, Other (Extreme paranoia leads patient to refusal to communicate directly with therapists, will communicate only "through" patient Pedro Vasquez, whom he calls "Sancho.")

**HISTORY OF PRESENT ILLNESS**

Multiple stress factors including loss of employment & unrequited love preceded patient's descent into a delusional state. Patient, a copywriter by trade, began writing fantastical email messages to friends and casual acquaintances describing a journey in the past, to 14th Century medieval Italy. What may have started as a healthy distraction from stress

factors soon became obsessive behavior. As they become more and more violent, his medieval fantasies also became the sole focus of his existence. Patient remained indoors for several weeks, drawing and writing email, became increasingly withdrawn from his social contacts, and ceased his search for new employment. His delusions culminated in a violent attack on one of his friends, Skip Valent, who later admitted the patient. At the time of his admittance, patient exhibited signs of autism, slack jaw, glazed eyes, and a total lack of communication with admitting staff. He soon thereafter however exhibited a violent mood swing, challenging staff to a "joust" after grabbing hold of an orderly's broom. After this episode, patient was put in restraints, and resumed his feigned catatonia. Patient was released from restraints 72 hours later. Patient refuses to communicate with staff, but is reading email messages sent to him by friends and family members. Patient does speak (conspiratorially) with fellow patient Pedro Vasquez, who will be transferred early next week to a long-term facility.

## **HISTORY OF PAST PSYCHIATRIC TREATMENT**

None

## **SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

**Current drug or past alcohol use:** Patient's brother, Ernesto Tazar, reports that Patient is a light drinker and occasional marijuana smoker.

## **SAFETY**

**History of suicidal ideation or attempt:** None (though patient exhibits signs of self-neglect).

**Current suicide risk:** Not at this time.

**History of homicidal ideation or attempt:** Yes (Patient attacked his best friend with a bicycle lock).

**Current homicide risk:** No? Patient has been generally complacent in the treatment environment, but his delusions vary in intensity.

**Risk of other violence (arson, fire, etc.):** None while on meds.

## **PSYCHOSOCIAL HISTORY**

**Living Arrangement:** Private apartment, sole occupant.

**Living environment adequate and safe:** Yes (though patient has been served eviction notice, so new living arrangements may be necessary).

**Significant events in childhood/adolescence/adulthood:** As a child patient was physically and verbally abused by father. Said abuse was not of a sexual nature. Patient's father was institutionalized during patient's teenage years. Patient's mother deceased in 1995.

### **Family History**

**Substance Abuse:** Father (alcoholism, drug addiction), Brother (alcoholism).

**Mental Illness:** Father (diagnosed schizophrenic), Brother (clinically depressed).

**Medical Illness:** Mother died of breast cancer, both grandmothers died of cancer (breast, ovarian), grandfathers both died of heart disease.

**Past/Present Relationship with Parents:** Mother dead, father institutionalized (Woodlawn Mental Health Center, Palo Alto, CA). No discernable present relationship with father.

**Past/Present Relationship with Siblings:** Strong relationship with brother, Ernesto (residing near Los Angeles, CA). Distant relationship with sister, Olivia (residing near Chattanooga, TN). Both siblings have attempted contact via email. Brother Ernesto has consulted with attending physicians. Brother Ernesto plans to visit at start of August, may help with living arrangements.

**Significant Relationship History:** Patient had strong relationship with deceased mother. Patient in monthly phone contact with brother, annual contact with sister. Patient alienated from father. Patient never married, but did have string of significant monogamous heterosexual relationships.

**Children:** None

**Family Support:** Moderate

**Family Members to Involve in Treatment:** Brother -- Ernesto Tazar.

**Friendships:** Yes

**# close friends:** 3-4

**# casual friends:** 10-12

**Support From Friends:** Moderate (admitted with assistance of friend Skip Valent, three other friends have visited).

**Other Social Supports:** None

**Relationship Problems:** Conflict (fallout with best friend preceded hospitalization), Social Isolation (in two months preceding hospitalization, patient had dropped off contact with most of his friends).

**Deaths/Losses:** Death of mother had significant effect, and patient has suffered from recurring incidents of unrequited love.

**Trauma History:** yes (childhood verbal/emotional abuse, physical abuse, adulthood verbal/emotional abuse in workplace).

**Education: highest grade:** BA in English, Italian minor, UCLA

**Learning Disabled:** No

**Academic Achievement Problems:** No

**Literate:** Yes

**Work History:** Journalist, LA Times (2 years), Barker, Barnum and Bailey Circus (2 Years), copywriter, OGVB Marketing (11 years), currently unemployed.

**Military Service:** No

**History of Legal Problems:** No

**Guardianship:** Self

**Religion/Spiritual Beliefs:** Buddhist (light practicing)

**Primary Language:** English

**Primary Culture:** American

**Speaks and Understands English:** Yes

**Leisure and Recreational Activities:** tai chi, creative writing (fiction), videogames, drawing.

**Sexually Active:** Yes

**Sexual Orientation:** Heterosexual

**Sexual Dysfunction:** Unable to determine

## **MENTAL STATUS**

**Appropriately Dressed and Groomed:** Yes (poor grooming upon admittance,



acceptable since admittance).

**Oriented X 3:** Person-yes. Place-no. Time-no.

**Speech Activity:** Soft (when speaking to fellow patient, does not speak to physicians)

**Motor Activity:** Appropriate

**Affect:** Blunted

**Mood:** Sad

**Thinking:** Tangential

**Concentration:** Preoccupied

**Hallucinations:** Unable to determine

**Delusions:** Yes

**Describe:** Patient believes that he is imprisoned in 14th Century Italy, and that medical staff are his captors.

**Cognitive Functioning/Intelligence:** Above average

**Reasoning Ability:** Confabulatory

**Insight:** Limited

**Motivation:** Resistive

**Clinician:** D. BARTHELME, MD

**Date:** Thu, 11 Jul 2002 13:01:27

**Subject:** Do you ever think about revenge?

**From:** bwalters@newmediastream.net

**To:** skipvskip@hotmail.com

Skip,

Have you ever thought about getting Regine back for all the shit she did to us at OGVB?

I have, I do think about that quite often.

Bitch wouldn't even write me a letter of reference.

And I hate my fucking new job. I took like a 15K hit climbing back down the ladder.

I had to move to a new (smaller) apartment, and I got no dishwasher, no washer dryer.

So anyway, I know where she lives, what she drives, where she works. She's making about 180K now, did you know that?

I know that I shouldn't waste my time digging up such info, but what are you gonna do?

Anyway, I've got some ideas. I've played and replayed some scenarios.

Nothing serious, I'd just like to give her a decent scare, you know what I mean?

How come it's always the bitches and their sons that end up on top?

Let me know if you're interested,

Benjamin

**Date: Thu, 11 Jul 2002 13:16:32**

**Subject: Against Myself**

**From: susannenbreone@aol.com**

**To: skipvskip@hotmail.com**

Skip,

I find no peace, and all my war is done;

I fear and hope, I burn and freeze likewise;

I fly above the wind, yet cannot rise;

And nought I have, yet all the world I seize on;

That looseth, nor locketh, holdeth me in prison,

And holds me not, yet can I 'scape no wise;

Nor lets me live, nor die, at my devise,

And yet of death it giveth none occasion.

Without eyes I see, and without tongue I plain;

I wish to perish, yet I ask for health;

I love another, and yet I hate myself;

I feed in sorrow, and laugh in all my pain;

Lo, thus displeaseth me both death and life,

And my delight is causer of my grief.

Though I hesitate to admit it, I had a great time last night. It was fun getting "tied up" with you.

Susanne

**Date: Thu, 11 Jul 2002 13:20:46**

**Subject: Re: Do you ever think about revenge?**

**From: skipvskip@hotmail.com**

**To: bwalters@newmediastream.net**

Benjamin,

Living well is the best revenge.

Much as I'd like to see Regine suffer, I console myself with the fact that she'll have to live with herself for the rest of her days. That's good enough for me. And I'm big on cycles. The pigeons do eventually come home to roost.

Skip

**Date: Fri, 12 Jul 2002 10:26:51**

**Subject: Seeking a New Position**

**From: stephugogirl@kls.com**

**To: reginespersonal@hotmail.com**

Regine,

How are you? Do you remember me? Stephanie, the temp receptionist at OGVB back in the summer of 2000?

I really appreciated the way you took me under your wing, advised me about a woman's options in the world of marketing, the lunches, the night that you took me out for margaritas and my introduction to the ways of Sapphic love.

Anyway, I got a job running traffic at KLS that has been a great learning experience, I've

learned a lot about what goes in and out the door at an agency, but to tell you the truth, that I'm just sick of now, and sort of hitting a glass ceiling and I read in the paper of your recent appointment at BBKVD and I'd love to work in the fastpaced world of tobacco marketing.

I'm a hard worker, you remember, and I would be a valuable member of your team.

So anyway: other updates I dumped my boyfriend and I'm single again just moved to a studio in Andersonville. It would be good to see you.

So I'm going to fax you my resume and I hope you'll consider me for any available positions.

Thank you again for being my mentor,

Steph

**Date: Sat, 13 Jul 2002 09:42:38**

**Subject: Re: Seeking a New Position**

**From: reginespersonal@hotmail.com**

**To: stephugogirl@kls.com**

Steph,

I do indeed remember you. How wonderful that you've stayed in marketing.

I may indeed be able to find a position for you, though I can't promise anything.

If you're free, why don't you come by my place (Lake Point Tower #2040) tomorrow afternoon and we can look over your resumé.

Bring your bikini. We can go for a swim and have some pizza after.

Regine

**Date: Sat, 13 Jul 2002 10:03:10**

**Subject: All Week Long**

**From: skipvskip@hotmail.com**

**To: susannenbreone@aol.com**

Susanne,

Since our last meeting I have been a lousy cyclist. I can see the cars, pedestrians, the other messengers, the buildings in front of me but only just barely, I am preoccupied with thoughts of you, your eyes, your neck, your hands, your breasts, your thighs, the candles all round us burning, your taste, your moans, your sighs, your . . .

I miss you and I nearly crash scratch nearly scratch that I crash multiply.

These other objects, these impediments in front of me, seem like clouds, like immaterial things.

Until I fall to the pavement again and realize that I am not in your arms, I am scraped and bleeding instead.

Thank my lucky stars for this helmet, which keeps thoughts of you intact.

And I have crossed out all other obligations for tonight as

I would just be distracted and

I can't think of anything I'd rather do than

spend some time with you.

I've purchased a picnic basket, Susanne. I have two bottles of chardonnay chilling, I have a nice brie to bake, jumbo shrimp on ice, poached salmon, a crunchy baguette, grapes, strawberries, candles and Frango mints, a comfortable blanket and a desire to picnic this evening with you at Ravinia.

I know that this is short notice but I just

want you so bad right now I

could pop.

And I will be thankful even if you crush my heart now for what you have already given me but

would be ever so much more grateful to

even the gods if

you could spend this night with me.

Skip

**Date: Sat, 13 Jul 2002 10:09:29**

**Subject: Thank You!**

**From: stephugogirl@kls.com**

**To: reginespersonal@hotmail.com**

Regine,

Thank you for the invitation! That sounds like fun!

I'm a little nervous about putting on my bikini -- here it is mid-July and I think I've only been to the beach twice, but if you can tolerate a bit of pasty white skin (or more than a bit, I've put on a few pounds since we last met), I'd love to go for a swim etc.

See you tomorrow! @ your place.

I will bring my resumé.

Steph

**Date: Sat, 13 Jul 2002 12:18:51**

**Subject: Yes**

**From: susannenbreone@aol.com**

**To: skipvskip@hotmail.com**

Skip,

I have to run a little errand first. Why don't you pick me up around 6:30PM at the front entrance of Navy Pier?

Bate your breath,



Susanne

**Date: Sun, 14 Jul 2002 12:55:02**

**Subject: The Trouble with the Signifier**

**From: simonsaysthis@omphalos.com**

**To: skipvskip@hotmail.com**

Skip,

This is all beside (or maybe astride) the point but I am having trouble with the nature of writing, signification, the meaning of my dreams, the connection between what I write and what I mean, the connection between the films I watch and the music that I listen to, the art I experience, the women I date, the politicians I hate, many things I can't relate.

In other words what the fuck am I doing with my life?

Also, is there an Ur story, a beginning which precedes all beginnings or perhaps more importantly an ending which precedes all beginnings, that is -- without being fatalistic -- is life a story in which the middle is of little consequence? That is -- we have all been born and we will all die and of what matter is what comes between? I know that the existentialists say we are what we do so the beginning and end are of little consequence, what's in between is the matter. And also, I suppose, what one leaves behind. I'm not sure.

But there is no magic bullet, Skip, as far as I can tell. Insofar as we are an evolutionary species have we really evolved that much? I mean we have this technology, I am writing you this message using this technology and using this technology you will read it within perhaps a matter of minutes at the outside a matter of days but really it leaves nothing behind now does it? You will hit the delete key and that will be the end of this.

And then stories, we distract ourselves with stories, we make viewing and reading experiences with stories, we make "objects" out of our stories but are they really OUR stories at all? Really aren't they just a kind of defense mechanism against the fact that our lives, our conscious lives (if there is in fact consciousness at all and I'm not even sure how I feel about that) lack the order, the closure, the "morals" that we treasure in our stories. Life ends but if there is consciousness it doesn't really have an ending now does it? I mean it just drifts off, it doesn't sum up.

And so we come up with these mechanisms, wills and librettos and life insurance and the like, to give our lives some kind of material signification. And if we become rich enough via our endless pursuit of wealth we endow libraries and art museums and symphony orchestras and university buildings with our names on them in hope of what in hope that our names will live on or that these stories these distractions will somehow help with the evolution of the human "race" which is racing towards the same thing it has always been racing towards, that is sickness unto death.

And humans? Humans are creatures that walk on two legs, eat, shit, fuck, kill and die. And ultimately all our fine cuisine, philosophies, sculptures and abstractions lead to little but.

And the sensory apparatus doesn't tell the truth, nor do the organs of the media.

So I'm in a quandary is what I mean to say here.

Also I have seen bad omens this weekend.

For instance I was in the park and a hawk shit on my head.

This was unusual, unusual that there was a hawk in the city.

Perhaps not unusual that the bird shit on my head, that's a biological function I mean

(ampersand)

That wasn't all.

There's a vibe in the air, a vibe that I don't trust.

Truth is untrustworthy, I think.

Something's going down, something that I don't like and I'm not just being paranoid, I mean I'm probably the least paranoid person you know.

Also I'm out of Sid and would like to see you soon in that regard.

Regards,

Simon

**Date: Sun, 14 Jul 2002 23:51:46**

**Subject: Betrayal**

**From: skipvskip@hotmail.com**

**To: berto\_alto@tank20.com**

Berto,

Sometimes I feel like such a coward, I guess I am in some ways.

I don't even know the point of emailing you this message.

Or I do, I guess I'm getting something off my chest, or clearing my conscience, or well

someday you can tell me what exactly I've done here.

Betrayal

Today, when I went to see you (and I know what kind of friend would admit you to the psych ward and then come back for the first time about three weeks later) it was very strange to be talking to you but to have you talking to me (sort of) through that guy Sancho, your, what, page?

And then of course, me trying to make small talk and you whispering in Sancho's ear and the only things you could say being about how I was a

Traitor

Betrayer

Scoundrel

Thief

Liar

Coward

Betrayer

and then the agitation and the rushing orderlies and Sancho that guy's short but him lunging towards me was much too insane (sic). A bad scene.

And shit what I came there to tell you but didn't quite get out.

I guess your doctors will probably delete this I don't know but I guess that in fact in some fashion what you were saying to me from behind that curtain, that veil, that scrim, your cyranoid, was at least in part in fact true.

That I am in part all of those things and yet I hope that you'll, after all is said and done, be able to forgive.

What would you say, back in normal life, when it was just bullshitting with Berto?

You would say

cut to the chase, Skip

forget the spoonful of sugar, Skip

the shortest distance between two points, Skip

give it to me straight, Skip

Susanne is what I'm trying to say Berto, and maybe this will help you or hurt but the fact is I'm falling hard for Susanne and it's gotten to the point where it's something I can no longer deny.

I love your Susanne.

It's not a fantasy for me Berto, Susanne and I are well intimate in ways I think that you never were, in ways I know that you never were, and I suppose if it were different well it could be swept under the rug, ignored, a thing that happened and was never commented on again but it didn't just happen once, Berto, it has happened several times and I don't regret a minute of it.

There, it's said.

She's filling some void in my life that I haven't found any other way to fill.

Berto, you're my friend, and I mean that my truest friend and I hope this doesn't come with that cost but

shit while you've been in the psych ward

I've just been feeling so alive since Susanne and I have

so anyway, that's what I meant to say and I hope that you'll snap out of this soon, just let go of your dreams about her, because those dreams are my reality now, and come back and be my friend and

you know, I'm sorry, but I'm also not so I feel guilt but not remorse so.

Anyway, I hope that you'll get out from under what ails you and you know, come back, and you know, let go.

Skip

**Date: Mon, 15 Jul 2002 12:18:00**

**Subject: Marketing Executive, 42, Brutally Slain**

**From: juilob@slotkin.com**

**To: skipvskip@hotmail.com**

Skip --

Have you seen this? I know that we didn't all leave OGVB on the best of terms with Regine DuBois, but still this comes as a sad and horrible shock. I haven't heard anything

about the funeral arrangements yet, but will drop you a line when I do. I hope that you're doing okay, anyway thought I should let you know. Life is precious.

Julio

\* \* \* \* \*

Chicago Tribune

July 15, 2002

Marketing Executive, 42, Brutally Slain in Lake Point Tower Apt.

STREETERVILLE-- Regine DuBois, a 42-year-old marketing executive, was found dead by her maid at 9 PM last night, Chicago Police said in a statement issued early this morning. Police said that Ms. Dubois was pronounced dead at the scene, her throat slashed.

Even minor property crimes are rare at this exclusive lakefront property known for its tight security, so this grisly slaying comes a shock to the residents of its upscale condominiums and apartments.

Henrietta Culvalo, Ms. DuBois' maid, found Ms. Dubois laying facedown in a pool of blood, a glass of wine in her hand. Mrs. Culvalo attempted to rouse Ms. DuBois, and discovered that her throat had been cut.

A neighbor who asked that her name not be printed reported that Ms. DuBois was "friendly but quiet -- she kept to herself." Neighbors report that Ms. DuBois lived alone but often had visitors.

At this hour police are reviewing security tapes and plan to interview Ms. DuBois' associates in coming days.

"We suspect that the killer may have been someone she knew," Detective Harold Barstow told our reporter. "You don't just walk into Lake Point Tower. There's a doorman, there's tight security, especially after 9/11. Also, as far as we can tell, there was nothing stolen from the apartment, and few signs of a struggle. She didn't know what was coming. This was an inside job."

Ms. DuBois, 42, was recently hired on as VP of Marketing at BBKVD, where she was in charge of marketing for the Camel Lights brand. She had spent the previous 15 years at OGVB marketing, handling most recently the Enron account. "She was one tough cookie," Tribune Marketing columnist George Lazar commented, "and she'll be missed by people throughout the industry."

**Date: Mon, 15 Jul 2002 12:41:46**

**Subject: Re: Marketing Executive, 42, Brutally Slain**

**From: skipvskip@hotmail.com**

**To: susannenbreone@aol.com**

Dear Susanne,

I tried to reach you on the phone but they said you were out of the office. I don't know if you heard this on the news or saw it in the papers -- I know that this is going to come as a shock to you but thought you should hear about this right away if you haven't already. Regine DuBois is dead. I know that you had deep and complicated feelings for her and I want to let you know that I'm going to be there for you in this time of need. This is awful.

Love,

Skip



**Date: Tue, 16 Jul 2002 01:39:38**

**Subject: What DO I do?**

**From: ernestonotcom@netzero.com**

**To: berto\_alto@tank20.com**

Berto,

SO

I SAW with my own EYES.

DARLENE FUCKING another man.

another MAN.

So I haven't said anything ato her, I just walked away from the trailer WITHOUT  
OPENING THE DOOR. rose petals trailingbehindme IN THE MUD.

IT WAS A STUPID IDEA to leave work early.

so ANYWAY

fuck our anniversary.

Er(empty)NesTO

**Date: Tue, 16 Jul 2002 01:41:38**

**Subject: Sorry**

**From: susannenbreone@aol.com**

**To: skipvskip@hotmail.com**

Skip,

I'm sorry I didn't call.

I'm just

distraught

I need some time alone.

Thanks for your calls, the note, the flowers.

I just need some time alone.

Susanne

**Date: Tue, 16 Jul 2002 11:25:17**

**Subject: Questions**

**From: bwalters@newmediastream.net**

**To: skipvskip@hotmail.com**

Hey Skip,

I heard the news about Regine. That's shocking and awful. I didn't like Regine but I wanted to let you know, because it comes now in awful context, that the email I sent you last week was just a spur of the moment thing, nothing I would have acted on. And also

to ask that you know should anyone come to you with questions that, you know, could you please not mention that email? Actually, do you mind deleting it? And this one? I did not have anything to do with Regine's murder. You know me, I'm not capable of that kind of thing.

Benjamin

**Date: Wed, 17 Jul 2002 11:16:55**

**Subject: Interrogation**

**From: susannenbreone@aol.com**

**To: skipvskip@hotmail.com**

Skip,

I'm exhausted. I spent four hours last night in a small room with two detectives. I guess I'm a suspect in Regine's murder. I guess this is the cost of having loved too deeply. In my mind, while you certainly hurt the ones you love killing them is more than a bit extreme. I was crushed by the news and now the cloud of suspicion flattens me. I feel desperately lonely and though there is little I'd like more than to spend some time in your arms, I don't think that that would be a good idea just now.

I arrived at our affair under pretenses that would have been false if I had not made them explicit. You know and I know that in many ways I came to you because I was running from my feelings from Regine. I thought of our first tryst as a kind of weapon, a metaphoric dagger I could twist in Regine's back, in hopes that she would turn back towards me. I don't know what I was hoping, and now she is gone, a victim of the brutality of now.

And I do have feelings for you Skip, it's just that right now I'm not sure I have the emotional energy for anyone. I did see you standing at my doorway last night, I did hear

you knocking at the door, I did hear you ringing that bell, but I just couldn't open up the door and let you in, and I don't think I'll be able to for some time. I need to at least get through the funeral before I start to put the pieces back together.

Having said that, I need to tell you that some embarrassing things came up during the interrogation: some emails that I sent Regine that in retrospect might make me appear a teensy bit obsessive. Which is why the police have asked me not to leave town, and I guess that's why the police felt they had a right to seek a warrant and to ransack my apartment, taking with them every bit of cutlery in my kitchen, my diary, and all my dirty laundry.

One of those emails, I'm mortified to admit, was a description -- albeit one with certain extravagant flourishes and exaggerations -- of the first time that we had sex. I guess I'm an emotional five-year-old: I thought that by giving Regine a sense that what she had so casually cast aside was being appreciated, even ravished, in other quarters, might draw her back to me. It is impossible to describe the pain I felt as this private, and somewhat infantile, correspondence was laid out before me as evidence in a homicide.

Anyway, this is to say I'm sorry that I may have gotten you involved in this carnival of suspicion. I'm sure that the police will have questions for you, and that much of what they will say to you will be dreadfully embarrassing to both you and me. But I thought it would be better that you hear from me first.

Nothing between us is private. The police searched my computer and copied the contents of my hard drive. They will doubtless find your fluids on my sheets.

I'm innocent of any wrongdoing and I feel violated, and I dread that this violation may extend to others that I care about, particularly you.

Susanne

**Date: Wed, 17 Jul 2002 11:45:56**

**Subject: A few questions**

**From: det\_harold\_barstow@chicagopolice.org**

**To: skipvskip@hotmail.com**

Mr. Valent,

Detective Harold Barstow of the Chicago Police Department Area Three Violent Crimes Unit Here. We have some questions for you regarding a Homicide. We dropped by your workplace this morning, but your boss told us that you were already out on your morning deliveries. I didn't have time to wait around for you to return, and would appreciate it if you could drop by the 18th District Station at 1160 North Larrabee Ave at 5 PM. If you're unable to make it, we'll have to send a squad out to pick you up. Many people prefer to avoid the Spectacle of this in front of their neighbors, so I'm dropping you this email as a Courtesy.

Our questions concern the murder of a Ms. Regine DuBois, which occurred this weekend. I want to emphasize that YOU ARE NOT A SUSPECT in this crime, we just want to clarify a few things about your relationships with Ms. DuBois and with a Ms. Susanne Breone.

So we will see you at the 18th District at 5 PM Sharp. This should only take an hour or so, and I apologize for any inconvenience this may cause you. Please confirm via email.

Sincerely,

Detective Harold Barstow, CPD

**Date: Wed, 17 Jul 2002 11:51:15**

**Subject: All Quiet**

**From: skipvskip@hotmail.com**

**To: simonsaysthis@omphalos.com, bigwig@harrynet.com, sue@freak.net, and 8 others**

Dear Simon et al.,

Could you guys do me a favor and not mention our pal in any email correspondence? I have reason to believe that my emails may be subject to prying eyes.

Skip

**Date: Wed, 17 Jul 2002 11:53:39**

**Subject: No Problem**

**From: skipvskip@hotmail.comd**

**To: det\_harold\_barstow@chicagopolice.org**

Detective Barstow,

I'll be happy to drop by the 18th District Station around 5 to answer any questions. It's pretty much on my way home from work. I worked with Regine for many years and like everyone else I'm shocked by her murder, happy to do whatever I can to help.

Sincerely,

Skip Valent

**Date: Wed, 17 Jul 2002 12:24:50**

**Subject: The Litany of Bodies Unending**

**From: jackdmonk@enteract.com**

**To: berto\_alto@tank20.com**

Berto--

Just in the past week:

A Naperville man stabbed and murdered his wife, got in a car with his daughter, drove to Iowa, and rammed a truck, killing himself and his daughter.

A 42-year-old marketing executive was found with her throat slashed in her Lake Point Tower Apartment.

The body of a 5-year-old girl was found in a rugged, heavily forested area in Cleveland National Forest. The abductor had lured the girl away from a board game she was playing with her friend, using a story about a lost puppy.

An angry mob on the South Side of Chicago beat two men who had stopped after running over a pedestrian. The pedestrian is dead. The two drivers are also dead, their skulls crushed by bricks hurled at them by the mob.

A 39-year-old handyman was found hanging in an Indiana basement. Also found on the floor of the basement were the bodies of two boys, 15 and 11, whom he apparently strangled before committing suicide.

And so many others, so many that the newspapers couldn't possibly note them all.

And I've learned that you are in the hospital, and believe yourself to be living in another time, in another place.

I don't begrudge you your escape from now.

What, after all, does one "get better" for?

Where does one go in this "civil" society to find a bit of human decency?

--Jack

**Date: Wed, 17 Jul 2002 13:36:51**

**Subject: Fwd: No Problem**

**From: det\_harold\_barstow@chicagopolice.org**

**To: det\_thomas\_johnson@chicagopolice.org**

Tom,

We've got him on the hook. You have three hours to get that warrant. Tell the judge not to fuck around it's urgent. Full search including his computer.

Harry

**Date: Wed, 17 Jul 2002 17:30:25**

**Subject: Is there a difference between AVOIDANCE and DENIAL?**

**From: ernestonotcom@netzero.com**

**To: berto\_alto@tank20.com**

So BERTO,

you remember when we used to sit on grandma's PORCH SWING and drink



LEMONADE and talk about CARS and GIRLS?

those were the GOOD TIMES, before grandma KICKEDTHEBUCKET.

now I can't even stand talking about CARS, but I do it ALL FUCKING DAY LONG.

and GIRLS? My marriage is a MIRAGE. But here's the kicker, BerotTTTTTTTT. I haven't said a WORD to DARLENE aobut the factt hat ISAWHER naked with anohter man on our FUCKING ANNIVERSARY.

WHY?

BEcause I;m DEATHly afraid of what she'll say if I confronther onit.

She COULD WALK OUT, and take the kids with her. oh I don't know, maybe the JUDGE or WHATEVER would say well ernesto you get CUSTODY since your wife is FUCKING THE FRY COOK but that's not even it berto the kick is this.

I LOVE FOUR PEOPLE on the whole fucking planet. That's you jeffie jessie and DARLENE. I lose darleneand what the hell have I got left. she'snot just the MOTHER OF MY CHILDREN, she's also the woman that I love, even now, maybe more now.

so I guess there's a few courses of ACTION available to me, I mean I could BRAIN THE GREASEBALL WHO WAS BONING MY WIFE, I could GET IN A CAR AND DRIVE UNTIL I FORGET WHO I AM, I could ask darlene if she wants to go in COUNSELING, I guess we could just GETADIVORCE, or I could PRETEND THE WHOLE THING JUST NSNT HAPPENING.

Which is the route I've taken sofar. I SPENT LIKE FIFTY BUCKS in one dollar bills at a STRIP JOINT after work last night and I DIDN;T EVEN GET A HARDON. I don't want a new girl, not even for a CHEAP BLOWJOB IN THE ALLEY, I just want the one Ive

"GOT."

So anyway sorry to be dumping all this on you. ME AND THE KIDS ARE EXCITED about coming to SEE YOU SOON and the docs say they can release you IN MY CUSTODY. I know you'll probably be ALL FUCKED UP, but that's okay the kids probably won't even notice. You in a DELUSIONAL, MEDICATED state will be no weirder than the freaks they see every day in our SO-CAL TRAILER PARK, no weirder than their FUCKED UP MOM AND DAD.

LIVEANDLEARN

Love,

Ernesto

**Date: Wed, 17 Jul 2002 23:44:12**

**Subject: Our Investigation So Far or Good News/Bad News**

**From: det\_harold\_barstow@chicagopolice.org**

**To: det\_thomas\_johnson@chicagopolice.org,  
det\_richard\_longfellow@chicagopolice.org**

Tom, Dick,

Wanted to get this off to you guys before I hit the hay.

Just a few thoughts on the DuBois case.

We got some GOOD NEWS on the Skip Valent warrant. He took the whole thing hook line and sinker, came by the station, patiently answered our questions (often with lies, sure, but he answered them), and then went home, where he was extremely surprised to see us again as we presented him with the search warrant.

And the good news part of this: there were a couple of surprises at the Valent residence. Turns out the guy's a real scumbag, we found about a dozen tabs of LSD and a half ounce of marijuana, enough that the fellah's in lockup tonight and the boys in narcotics will have plenty of questions for him in the morning.

BAD NEWS, and this is just a gut feeling but one backed up with decades of experience: I don't think he's our guy.

The whole love triangle hypothesis just seems too easy to me, and I don't think our Skipper boy has the talent to lie convincingly. His eyebrows bunch up every time he lies (which he did about the drugs, definitely) but I don't think this fellah's a killah. I think that maybe his "world class bitch" letter was just a letter. And who knows? From what we've seen so far, all indications are that the spiderwoman may very well have been a bitch of the highest rank.

Now I'm not crossing him off our list and I'm certainly not crossing off Ms. Susanne, who if you ask me is clearly one whacked p/t carpetmuncher, but I just don't think that Skippy would kill for her.

The more we untangle this web, the more connections appear, which have more connections attached to them. This will not be an open/shut I think. Regine seems to have had quite the lovelife AND quite the worklife, and seems to have made plenty of enemies along the way.

The intern I think is clearly out. She couldn't screw in a lightbulb much less pull off a killing would leave us scratching our head for more than five minutes. I'm not sure about the Skipper but my hunch tells me the guy is too dumb to pull off a murder this clean.

We've got his email and Dick we're looking forward to your analysis, but my feeling is we're back to square one. If the Susanne did it, she used this dumbfuck in a way that he didn't know about it. I just don't see that guy pulling the blade across. Who knows, we'll look at the forensics, but I don't see his kitchen cutlery being used but anything for pot roasts and salmon.

And what's truly tragic? is that here I am 11:30PM having dedicated half my night to this debacle you call a Cubs game. Wood pitches beautiful, 119 pitches, Mr. K, he gets one fuckup and then his "closer" Alfonseca loses the grip and then in the 10th that pardon my french FUCKING IDIOT Bellhorn not only fucks up the double play, he even fucks up the single play. What game did that moron think he was playing, Hopscotch? Those fat cheesesteak fuckers in Philadelphia go home all smiles and I'm out a hundred bucks to Sgt. Brisco. Who can blow me.

Shit.

Harry

**Date: Thu, 18 Jul 2002 11:46:35**

**Subject: Regine's Arrangements**

**From: juilob@slotkin.com**

**To: skipvskip@hotmail.com**

Dear Former OGVBers,

Hope to see some of you at the wake of our dearly departed friend and colleague tomorrow.

Treasure Life,

Julio

\* \* \* \* \*

DuBois, Regine

Regine DuBouis, 42, suddenly, beloved daughter of Claude and Edna DuBois. Lifelong Chicago resident, tragically murdered in her home 7/14/02. Prayers 9:30 a.m., Saturday, at the Glueckert Funeral Home, Ltd., 1520 N. Arlington Heights Rd., (4 blocks south of Palatine Rd.) Arlington Heights to St. Edna Catholic Church, 2525 N. Arlington Heights Rd., for Mass, at 10 a.m. Visitation Friday, from 9 a.m. until 9 p.m. Interment All Saints Cemetery. Please make donations to American Cancer Society in lieu of flowers.

**Date: Thu, 18 Jul 2002 18:18:38**

**Subject: Life on the Inside**

**From: simonsaysthis@omphalos.com**

**To: skipvskip@hotmail.com**

Skip,

I spent the last three days watching the first season of OZ, the HBO original series, which gets away with all sorts of shit that you never see on TV, ranging from man-on-man rapeassfucking, swastika-ass-tattooing, shooting and snorting smack (tits, they call it, tits), to your brutal depiction of capital punishment (they've gone through lethal injection, electric chair, and firing squad -- what would you choose?). Anyway I've got to say that I'm deeply impressed by this writer/director Tom Fontana. He's managed to create an entire world that echoes in my night-terrors.

Also, I think it says something about the benefits of a tight frame. Most of these characters are locked up tight, they aren't going anywhere, they're in for 8 years to life, which has this strange effect of moving their conflicts more swiftly towards resolution. The Irish guy who talked the African into setting up the Italian has to make sure that both the African and the other Italians get whacked before he does -- it's a matter of survival. Because while there are plenty of secrets in the joint there are no secrets that stay secrets because word flies quickly around those enclosed quarters.

The brutality makes for some great storytelling. The cage is the stage. The only times the story moves outside the penitentiary are when, once or twice per episode, we review the inevitably violent crimes that landed the inmates in Oswald State Penitentiary. I think I'm learning a lot about pacing that I might apply should I ever write something resembling a story again.

Sorry to hear about the prying eyes. Because you write your email in front of your machine, in the solitude of your own company, you come to think that you own it, that

the communiqués you author for the eyes of those you list on the to: cc: and bcc: lines will go there only, but the fucked up fact of the matter is that there's no real inside here, it's all outside, these messages we post bounce off who knows hundreds, thousands of machines before they reach the private recipients for whom we intend them. And there are plenty of opportunities along the way for the sniffers, the carnivores, the spooks, to piece your packets together. They say the Net's an ephemeral medium but in fact it may be more permanent than the leaves of paper we used to use. It's a post-Benjamin Baudrillard Xerox network, constantly archiving thousands of copies of our thoughts, through which one could piece together copies of our inner lives, were they only to look hard enough.

Fucked up.

Can you imagine how insane these thousands of email messages we shed like dead skin cells will drive the biographers of the future? Haystacks filled with fragments of needles.

So anyway understood about all quiet on the e-stern front and I hope that this is nothing serious.

Who knows who's fingering us right now? Spooky.

Simon

P.S. Did you know that Hitchcock and his screenwriter came up with the idea for *North by Northwest* only after deciding not to do a suspense novel that they were under contract with the studio to do, and that they in fact lied to the studio about what they were doing until they started shooting, and that the whole story started with Hitchcock saying that he'd really like to have an action sequence in the UN, and the director of photography saying he'd really like to shoot an action sequence on Mount Rushmore, and the writer saying that he'd like to do a love scene on a train, and the rest of the story was just filling in what happened before and after those three things? How's that for latitude in the creative process? And they say the result was one of Hitch's best films. Which makes me

think not only make no small plans but also in fact forget making plans altogether -- just go.

**Date: Thu, 18 Jul 2002 18:37:19**

**Subject: A-Okay**

**From: xoith34crypt@3t3crypt.org**

**To: fit398crypt@3t3crypt.org**

Mr. Lethe,

Everything is proceeding according to plan. The CPD investigation is moving along just as you'd expect -- laughably. They haven't got a clue.

Sue

**Date: Thu, 18 Jul 2002 18:53:27**

**Subject: Little Help**

**From: jdinsmore@cullanandcallahan.com**

**To: simonsaysthis@omphalos.com**

Simon,

Writing this from my lawyer's machine, his head is turned, he's cleaning his nails. Long story don't have time to go into details but I spent the night sleepless in a holding cell with a bunch of gangbangers. I have black eye but kept my watch. Word of hardearned advice: don't wear lycra if you think there's a chance you might be spending the night in jail.

Cops located some substance in my place, which is bad. My lawyer thinks they don't have enough to make it stick because the language of the warrant was such that they



should have been looking for other things which is good and they didn't find everything they could have which could have had me in far deeper shit than I'm already in which is good. Furthermore I have a key stashed in the fake brick next to the welcome mat, which is also good. Lawyer thinks they'll try to come back with a more specific warrant (the narcs as opposed to the homicide squad, who will be looking for different things and in all likelihood know better where to look -- long story, tell you soon) and serve me with that the minute I get out of here which should be tomorrow after my arraignment which is bad, very bad.

So I'm in need of kind of a favor.

I should say first DESTROY THIS EMAIL AS SOON AS YOU'VE READ IT.

Anyway, what I'm hoping Simon and this is not without risk Simon but will be made worth your while should you be able to do this, is that you can get that key and get in my apartment (in all likelihood they aren't casing it now since I'm in here but run if you see cops) and retrieve the King James Bible from the second shelf (next to Gravity's Rainbow) and take the word of God and get it the hell out of my apartment and maybe put it in a locker somewhere, somewhere safe I wouldn't put it in your apartment though because they've been reading my email and you never know. Feel free to lick what you want from the Book of Acts.

I wouldn't be asking you but I don't know who else to turn to.

I will owe you a huge favor, and I'll be your friend for life.

Anyway, time's almost up. I'm going to hit send now, then delete, and the message will go through the wireless connection of my lawyer's cellphone and bounce off of many other machines and then hit yours and that's that.

Please please please be home and do me this favor,

Skip

**Date: Thu, 18 Jul 2002 18:56:27**

**Subject: Re: Little Help**

**From: simonsaysthis@omphalos.com**

**To: jdinsmore@cullanandcallahan.com**

Dear Skip's attorney,

Please tell Skip no problem with the missionary work.

He'll know what I mean.

Skip's friend

**Date: Thu, 18 Jul 2002 19:20:06**

**Subject: smoking gun**

**From: det\_richard\_longfellow@chicagopolice.org**

**To: det\_thomas\_johnson@chicagopolice.org,**

**det\_harold\_barstow@chicagopolice.org**

Tom, Harry,

Well well well well--

I found a bunch of indications that our Skipper is connected to a major narcotics operation (unless he's really close friends with a guy named Sid -- just how stupid do these criminals think we are?!!!!) said evidence of which I've turned over the Boys in Narcotics. Looks to me like maybe they should go in for a real close look. AND I think

that we may just have found our smoking gun. What do you make of this message from one Benjamin Walters?

-----Forwarded Message

subj line: Do you ever think about revenge?

Skip,

Have you ever thought about getting Regine back for all the shit she did to us at OGVB?

I have, I do think about that quite often.

Bitch wouldn't even write me a letter of reference.

And I hate my fucking new job. I took like a 15K hit climbing back down the ladder.

I had to move to a new (smaller) apartment, and I got no dishwasher, no washer dryer.

So anyway, I know where she lives, what she drives, where she works. She's making about 150K now, did you know that?

I know that I shouldn't waste my time digging up such info, but what are you gonna do?

Anyway, I've got some ideas. I've played and replayed some scenarios.

Nothing serious, I'd just like to give her a decent scare, you know what I mean?

How come it's always the bitches and their sons that end up on top?

Let me know if you're interested,

Benjamin

----End Forwarded Message

Sounds to me like maybe this Benjamin and/or Skipper went a little overboard. Let's track this Benjie down,

Dick

**Date: Thu, 18 Jul 2002 19:21:14**

**Subject: Re: smoking gun**

**From: det\_thomas\_johnson@chicagopolice.org**

**To: det\_harold\_barstow@chicagopolice.org,  
det\_richard\_longfellow@chicagopolice.org**

Harry, Dick,

Good work Dick.

Let's cast a wide net and haul in,

Tom

**Date: Fri, 19 Jul 2002 00:35:54**

**Subject: Wake**

**From: susannenbreone@aol.com**

**To: skipvskip@hotmail.com**

Skip,

Are you going to the wake tomorrow evening?

I'd like to see you after.

Susanne

**Date: Fri, 19 Jul 2002 00:39:33**

**Subject: King James**

**From: simonsaysthis@omphalos.com**

**To: skipvskip@hotmail.com**

Skip,

The King James Version of the Bible is the most poetic, don't you think? You can almost taste God in it. I've recommended it to several friends.

Simon

**Date: Fri, 19 Jul 2002 14:31:04**

**Subject: Out of Jail, See You at Wake**

**From: skipvskip@hotmail.com**

**To: susannenbreone@aol.com**

Susanne,

Due to the results of the sneaky-assed jackbooted thugs' search of my apartment that of course turned up nothing related to Regine but unfortunately did locate some contraband (long story) (though my lawyer thinks unconstitutionally) followed by about 38 or so hours in jail followed by another search of my apartment by another squad of sardonic men in blue which then turned up absolutely nothing but which has left my place, and my life, in a shambles. I am just now settling in, some \$2,000 worth of bailbond shorter, needing to craft an appropriate response to many phone messages in order to explain my absence to my employer, and well just dirty (having just now peeled off the biking shorts I put on two days ago). I'll shower, nap, and then join you at the Wake. About 7ish if that works for you.

I feel wounded and in need of your touch,

Skip

**Date: Fri, 19 Jul 2002 15:00:21**

**Subject: Photographs and Memories**

**From: ednaandclaudedubois@hotmail.com**

**To: junkin2art@well.com**

Dearest Edward,

I know it has been a long time since you turned your back on your family in Chicago after your father turned his back on you, but your mother loves you deeply and I hope

that you will be able to make it to Regine's funeral tomorrow.

I spent last night with your Aunt Edna. Regine's death has come as a horrible shock to all of us, but there are no words to describe the pain and sympathy I feel for Edna and Claude. Whatever twists God or fate might bring to our lives, there is no horror so awful as living through the death of your child.

Edna and I spent most of the night crying and looking at photographs, which we were assembling onto posterboard for the wake. There you were, my five-year-old boy, running through the sprinklers with your six-year-old cousin. There we all were, assembled in front of Claude's cabin in Wisconsin, your father and Claude proudly holding their trophy trout, and you straining to lift yours on the line, it must have been half your weight. Regine in high school, the champion volleyball player, spiking at the net. Regine at the prom, with that boy she took, towering over him, that boy still waiting on his growth spurt at 17, and how beautiful she looked in that purple dress. Our rebellious Regine during her college years, with the spiked purple hair black eye shadow and torn-up jeans, and at her graduation from Northwestern, the dean holding her Magna Cum Laude degree high as she shook his hand, and the more mature Regine with her MBA from the University of Chicago, at the reception after in her prim business suit. Regine in pinstripes and sneakers. Regine on the Fourth of July, busily yapping on her portable phone while you and Buddy shagged flies in the background. Regine from the annual report of OGVB, Vice President Dick Cheney (I suppose he wasn't that then), with his arm around her shoulder. Regine after her appearance on national television, where she talked up the future of energy. Four decades and two years gone by so quickly.

And your mother hasn't seen you for nearly four years. I know that your father said some things that he now regrets and we both want nothing so much as to see you. We want to be a family again.

There was a moment last night when Edna was weeping, weeping at what was missing, "She never got married, Cecilia." she said, "She never knew love." I know that Regine

lived differently, lived as you do, but there was no reason for me to dispel Edna's illusions. I want you to know that we can live without illusions. Edward, we don't care who you love. We only care that we love you and you us.

Please fly home tomorrow. I will buy your ticket if money is a problem. Money doesn't matter compared to this grief. In comparison to the love a family shares. Please be with your family during this time of need. It will be like old times. Regine will be missing, but we should mourn her together.

With Deepest Love,

Your Mother

**Date: Fri, 19 Jul 2002 15:53:39**

**Subject: Haldol**

**From: tabitha\_moran@rush.edu**

**To: debarthelme@rush.edu**

Dr. Barthelme,

As expected, Berto Tazar reacted negatively to Monday's transfer of Pedro Vasquez. He claimed that his "captors" were "killing off his allies, one by one," and that he was sure "I'm next." He had to be put in restraints Monday evening after trying to remove the grille from window. We're not sure if he would have jumped out (it is the fourth floor) had he succeeded. He's not otherwise showing any signs of suicidal ideation.

The good news is that the Haldol appears to be showing some positive effects. For instance, while Berto's delusions that he is in 14th Century Italy remain in force, he is now communicating with staff (albeit he is alternately aggressive and resigned, and treats us as one would prison guards). But he is speaking to us now, so that's a start.



He continues to read his email at every opportunity. Indeed, we have been able to leverage his computer access as a bargaining chip to rein in his misbehavior. We have encouraged him to write back his friends and relations, but he still refuses to do this.

I'm hopeful however that as we get into the third week of his Haldol prescription and are able to better gauge the dosage, we might see a breakthrough.

We also have high hopes for his brother's upcoming visit.

He's showing the normal side affects: drowsiness, drymouth, and constipation. No nausea or vomiting, abnormal heartbeat, etc.

I would encourage a continuation of his current schedule of medication, and require more individual and small group therapy. I think that once we get him talking and his dopamine levels in check, there is every reason to believe that Berto Tazar will be able to resume a normal life.

Sincerely,

Tabitha Moran, LCSW

**Date: Fri, 19 Jul 2002 19:36:38**

**Subject: kujnfoo fiting**

**From: jefftrocks@netzero.com**

**To: berto\_alto@tank20.com**

Unclke BERTO,

Im looking frowared to seeing you specaille since the CUBS don't suck as much as they sdid with DON BALYOR as manager. The new guy seems tobe doing good so I think theyll kickbutt thye are like 5 out of 6 lately and Ithink they will bert the ROCKIES, they

will ROCK THE RIOCKES. Dad got tickets already and jessica and i can't wait.

also I understand yyou hafvnt writtn back. Dad says your computer is messed up so that you can read emails but not write them. but I hope you can still teach me karate or kung fu because the firth graders are still beating me up they called my mom a niggerfucker today and I punched one of them and dad can't give me good advice on fighting. so I'll have a black eye because of these racists skinheads who say stuff about my MOM and i want to learn how to fight better.

hope you'll help me. dad has been distracted lately but i think u know how to fight better anyways like crouching tiger hidden dragon will teach me.

jeff

**Date: Sat, 20 Jul 2002 12:03:10**

**Subject: Benjamin Walters**

**From: det\_harold\_barstow@chicagopolice.org**

**To: det\_thomas\_johnson@chicagopolice.org,**

**det\_richard\_longfellow@chicagopolice.org**

Tom, Dick,

If only motive were all we needed: Benjamin Walters certainly had it -- according to him Regine pinned various errors and mistakes on him and the Skipper before firing him and the Skipper (errors that were actually hers) and then left him in a bad reference type of situation. Then he emailed Skipper proposing revenge (to which email Skipper said no to).

Benjamin said that he had planned to slash her tires, or to put sugar in the gas tank, or to leave a flaming bag of shit at her office door or the like, but that he had no intention of harming Regine and in fact had only fantasized about revenge but had not followed

through. Which, whatever, sure he's gonna say that.

Problem is the Walters family is a big family and they happened to be having a family BBQ the night of the murder and Benjamin was there from noon until 9 PM, it checks out. So if Mr. Walters was involved in the murder he was involved from a distance. And he doesn't seem to be the contract killer type. For one, I don't think he could afford it.

Walters confessed to everything from 6 outstanding parking tickets to cheating on his taxes by claiming business deductions for videogames to smoking a joint at the office Christmas party last year. Either he was pretending to be a quivering jello blob or he is a quivering jello blob and I just don't think he's that good an actor.

And the search turned up jack shit, and all we got off his computer was his email to the Skip and evidence that he likes teen porn.

Has anything turned up on the security tapes?

The judge is starting to get irritated about the warrants not producing much.

Any clues at the wake/funeral?

Harry

**Date: Sun, 21 Jul 2002 02:45:08**

**Subject: strange**

**From: skipvskip@hotmail.com**

**To: susannenbreone@aol.com**

Strange how, even though we parted on bad terms,

seeing Regine laid out like that at the wake,

I found myself missing her deeply.

As I miss you,

right now

but I

miss

you

far

more

than

that

even

after

only

thirty

thirsty

seconds

Skip

**Date: Mon, 22 Jul 2002 03:03:33**

**Subject: reconnect**

**From: junkin2art@well.com**

**To: ednaandclaudedubois@hotmail.com**

Mom,

I wish we that had remet under better circumstances but I am so glad that I came in for Regine's funeral and that you and I had some time to talk alone. Time is the most precious thing. What else do we have?

As to Regine's surprising decision to leave me half of her estate, I can't describe how moved I am and how sorry I am that Regine and I did not have more time.

And also I want to say that I'm shocked by the Chicago police, I thought they were callous and insensitive and I am disappointed that they have made no real progress in the investigation. That cop in the cheap blue blazer seemed to have no eyes for anyone but Regine's ex-girlfriends and I noticed that he hit the bar pretty hard after the funeral. Is

that appropriate?

I do hope that they find the killer and nail him to the wall.

As for Dad, we talked briefly and I was sad to see that in the last four years his health has degenerated so much.

You know that I've always been your son and have never forgotten my mother's love.

Help Aunt Edna hang in, and I'm sorry it's so darn hot and sticky in Chicago.

Edward

**Date: Mon, 22 Jul 2002 03:13:13**

**Subject: weFUCKEDallDAYlong**

**From: ernestonotcom@netzero.com**

**To: berto\_alto@tank20.com**

BERtomm,

Just to SAY, that DARLENE and I got a babysittER to take the KIDS to DISNEY?LAND and finally spen t some time just DEDICATING ourselvEs to screwing with POAISSOIN earlier today.

THEN I ASKED HER ABOUT THE FRY COOK and she STORMED out then I got PLASTERED.

So anway HONESTY is now IN THE HOUSE.

But UKNOW.com WHAT?

she came back after and we had a HEART to HEART and what else? THE GREASY bastard was just a fUcK for her nothing ELSE and wello we're WELL.

SO DON:t You worRY about me, if fyout were worried. BcEAsUe it's all gonna BE FINE.

AND I:M not just LYING so that yiour DOCTORS who probably READ THIS like most ADMINISTRATIVE INTERFEREING FUCKWASDS will from time to TIME don't worry that they SHOULDN;t relase you into my custody.

like I would BREAK YOU OUT fo the psych ward and or sommemthing JUST BECAUSE I was drunk when I calLED then lest or somethING I trust theytare taking GOOD CARE OF YOU.

so is that fucked up that I was still COMPLETELY TURNED ON by my INCREDIBLY HOT WIFE even though I know that she was screwsin g thi s JAMaican dude?

That's love,

ERnetso

**Date: Mon, 22 Jul 2002 12:47:22**

**Subject: Noted at the Funeral**

**From: det\_thomas\_johnson@chicagopolice.org**

**To: det\_richard\_longfellow@chicagopolice.org,  
det\_harold\_barstow@chicagopolice.org**

Dick, Harry,

Well I guess you could say either:

A) The wake and funeral were festering with clues

or

B) There was remarkably little to note

Take for instance, the fact that there were some 25-30 single women there, aged 20 to 50, all wearing black dresses. We might hypothesize that any or each of these women was at one time or another a lover of Regine's. Many of them were weeping. I took digital photos of the guestbook and we can certainly look most of these women up. Did any of the weeping women exhibit telltale signs that they, out of jealousy, might have committed the murder? Not in particular.

The beneficiaries of Regine's estate are her parents, Edna and Claude DuBois, and her cousin, and one Edward DuBois, a San Francisco junkyard sculptor of little note. Edward got half of Regine's savings and half of her life insurance. A sizable chunk of change. But would such be enough for this (apparently relatively distant) cousin to feel motivated to arrange for a long-distance contract killing of his own flesh and blood? I don't think so. He certainly appeared to be surprised that he had hit this particular lottery, it was the talk of the reception after the burial. The fact that he quizzed me so extensively about the progress of our investigation might have raised some flags, but I think he was just angry that we didn't have any news.

The family in general, by the way, I would describe as frustrated, unfriendly. Everyone expects the detectives to appear in the parlor room to announce the killer's identity within 48 hours of the act. Like we're some kind of fucking magicians here.

Skipper showed up at the wake, shot me a dirty look. He was practically humping Susanne's leg.



Regine's business associates sat in their own section, and within that division, there appeared to be two distinct groups: those who had worked for Regine and had disliked but respected her, and those for whom Regine had worked, who seemed essentially ambivalent. The reception after the funeral was kind of an advertising networking clusterfuck. Many of Regine's former business associates seem to be on the job market and taking any opportunity, including burial rituals, to sniff out new employment.

There were a couple Feds there. Any reason the FBI should be horning in on our investigation? Might want to check the wire for similar crimes out of state. Or I suppose we could call them and ask. Don't you just love the way they're so careful to let us know when they might be interested in something?

So anyway, nothing like spending the weekend with your work, especially with a bunch of belligerent bereft instead of making your kid's little league game. But that's the job, that's the job I signed up for.

Any luck on the tapes?

Tom

**Date: Mon, 22 Jul 2002 13:19:01**

**Subject: Security Tapes, Weapon**

**From: det\_richard\_longfellow@chicagopolice.org**

**To: det\_thomas\_johnson@chicagopolice.org,  
det\_harold\_barstow@chicagopolice.org**

Tom, Harry,

So I guess that solves one mystery: why Regine's otherwise tastefully decorated

apartment has that buttugly baseball bat welded to plowshare with spoons thing plopped down in the living room like a carbuncle.

Well, each of the 476 people who did not live in the building and entered the complex the day of the murder signed in and out. Regine's only visitor was our intern Stephanie, who was turned away by the doorman at 4 PM when Regine didn't answer (because, according to forensics, she was dying just about then). The doorman has now ID'd all the folks who left the building within a two hour period after that, we're now getting into about 6 PM. Could be that the killer went down to the pool and hopped the wall. Could be the killer was a resident or one of the resident's visitors. Could be that the killer didn't leave the building for quite some time after.

As to the murder weapon: We're pretty sure it was a Wusthoff Chef's Knife. We haven't found the knife but the boys in the lab are pretty good at determining these things from the laceration.

Whatever that tells us. This could mean that the killer was not a pro, and that this was a crime of passion. Or this could mean that the killer was a pro who wanted to make it appear to us that he was not a pro (or she).

No prints, the killer was wearing gloves.

Whoever did it got in and out quickly.

Forensics say he probably got spattered, but there was no evidence of any cleanup. But how hard is it to peel off a shirt and drop it in a gymbag?

There was enough time between the killing and the discovery of the body that we missed the trash pickup, already on its way to the landfill before our dumpster divers could get to it.

We might end up having to interview everybody who lives in the building, and all of their guests. Which will be a big pain in the ass. We could go on forever like this.

Dick

**Date: Mon, 22 Jul 2002 13:38:17**

**Subject: It's All Over Now, Baby Blue Suede Shoes**

**From: simonsaysthis@omphalos.com**

**To: skipvskip@hotmail.com**

Skip:

Dylan in 1965, from the liner notes to *Bringing It All Back Home*:

"i would not want t' be bach. mozart. tolstoy. joe hill. gertrude stein or james dean/they are all dead. the Great books've been written. the Great sayings have all been said"

Which album included "It's All Over Now, Baby Blue"

Fall 1955

Johnny Cash joins Carl Perkins for a show in Amory, Mississippi. He suggests that Carl write a song based on a saying he had heard in the chow line while he was in the service, "Don't step on my blue suede shoes."

A few nights later Perkins is playing in Jackson, Tennessee, when he sees a dancer in the crowd trying to keep his girlfriend away from his new blue suede shoes. At 3AM, Perkins wakes, goes downstairs and writes the lyrics in pencil on an empty potato bag. Suede is spelled swaed.

Simon

**Date: Mon, 22 Jul 2002 16:45:30**

**Subject: We Pray for the Return of Your Sight**

**From: ocgodislove1@aol.com**

**To: berto\_alto@tank20.com**

Dearest Berto,

While I am hurt that you have not written back, I understand your struggle and pray for you daily, that Lord Jesus Christ may guide you back.

Love in God,

Olivia

THE BOOK OF ACTS 9:11-19

In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him with a vision, "Ananias!"

"Yes Lord," he answered.

The Lord told him, "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come to place his hands on him to restore his sight."

"Lord," Ananias answered, "I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your saints in Jerusalem. And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name."

But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel. I will show him how

much he must suffer for my name."

Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord--Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here--has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit."

Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, and after taking some food, he regained his strength.

**Date: Mon, 22 Jul 2002 18:48:21**

**Subject: Blue**

**From: simonsaysthis@omphalos.com**

**To: skipvskip@hotmail.com**

Skip:

Just to update you on my research----->

Scattering of light in the atmosphere causes the blue color of the sky.

As for water, its color is a faint blue. Although water appears clear in small amounts, its blue color becomes more visible the more water we look through: thus lakes and oceans are bluer than a shallow stream.

Blueberries are actually purple, not blue.

Film is typically most sensitive to blue light. Bluescreens are most often blue because of the color's complementary relationship to flesh. The most common color in most filmed scenes is flesh tone, so the opposite color is the logical choice to avoid conflicts.

Owls are believed to be the only animals other than humans that can see the color blue.

During the medieval period in Europe, the most important blue dyes were Indian indigo and the somewhat less intense, cheaper, and locally available woad. As early as 55 BC, Romans found painted people or "picti" in Gaul, who dyed their skin blue with woad.

Manufacture of woad dye involved fermenting woad leaves with human urine. The standard method for the dyers was to drink wine or other alcohol and then to use their enriched urine for the fermentation process. Pieces of fabric were immersed in the woad bath, typically on Sundays, for at least 12 hours. In Germany, the practice of dyers lying around the courtyard after hanging fabric on Mondays gave rise to colloquial expressions such as "Blauer Montag" (Blue Monday: stay away from work on Monday) and "Blau werden" (Get blue: Get drunk).

Indian indigo prevailed slowly over woad based on its better dyeing properties and deeper color. The word Indigo is derived from the Greek Indikon and the Latin Indicum, meaning a substance from India. From 1600 onwards, the records of the East India Company document the production of indigo in India and its export. Indigo labor practices were notoriously exploitative. An Englishman in the Bengal Civil Service is said to have commented that "not a chest of indigo reached England without being stained with human blood." There were violent indigo riots in Bihar in 1868. In 1917 Ghandi launched an enquiry into the exploitation of indigo workers, which contributed, at least in part, to the growth of India's nationalization movement.

The first book printed on blue paper was published in 1514 in Venice by Aldus Manutius. Throughout the 16th century, blue papers were popular in Venetian special editions.

The blue in the American flag represents vigilance, perseverance and justice.

Blue represented failure to the Cherokee. Cherokee warriors would pray for the enemy to become blue and walk in a blue path.

The "elliptic salon," with the Yellow Oval Room above and the Diplomatic Reception Room below it, the Blue Room is one the highlights of the White House tour, a room in which generations of American Presidents have greeted thousands of celebrities, world leaders, and captains of American industry to state dinners and receptions. The color blue was introduced during the administration of Martin Van Buren in 1837; he redecorated the oval salon and began the tradition of the "blue room." The sapphire blue fabric used for the draperies and furniture covering is similar in color to fabric used in the room in 1800's. The blue satin draperies were derived from an early 19th century French source. The walls were hung with a light gold paper adapted from an early 19th century American paper with borders adapted from two early 19th century French papers. The upper border is a blue drapery swag; the lower border along the chair rail blue and gold with rosettes.

Shades of blue among the top ten colors as selected by thousands of Americans in the 2000 Crayola Crayon Census:

- #1 Blue
- #2 Cerulean
- #4 Midnight Blue
- #5 Aquamarine
- #8 Denim
- #10 Blizzard Blue

Kinds of Blue in HTML:

MidnightBlue   25 25 112   #191970  
NavyBlue   0 0 128   #000080  
CornflowerBlue   100 149 237   #6495ED  
DarkSlateBlue   72 61 139   #483D8B  
SlateBlue   106 90 205   #6A5ACD  
MediumSlateBlue   123 104 238   #7B68EE  
LightSlateBlue   132 112 255   #8470FF

MediumBlue 0 0 205 #0000CD  
RoyalBlue 65 105 225 #4169E1  
Blue 0 0 255 #0000FF  
DodgerBlue 30 144 255 #1E90FF  
DeepSkyBlue 0 191 255 #00BFFF  
SkyBlue 135 206 235 #87CEEB  
LightSkyBlue 135 206 250 #87CEFA  
SteelBlue 70 130 180 #4682B4  
LightSteelBlue 176 196 222 #B0C4DE  
LightBlue 173 216 230 #ADD8E6  
PowderBlue 176 224 230 #B0E0E6  
LightCyan 224 255 255 #E0FFFF  
CadetBlue 95 158 160 #5F9EA0  
SlateBlue1 131 111 255 #836FFF  
SlateBlue2 122 103 238 #7A67EE  
SlateBlue3 105 89 205 #6959CD  
SlateBlue4 71 60 139 #473C8B  
RoyalBlue1 72 118 255 #4876FF  
RoyalBlue2 67 110 238 #436EEE  
RoyalBlue3 58 95 205 #3A5FCD  
RoyalBlue4 39 64 139 #27408B  
Blue1 0 0 255 #0000FF  
Blue2 0 0 238 #0000EE  
Blue3 0 0 205 #0000CD  
Blue4 0 0 139 #00008B  
DodgerBlue1 30 144 255 #1E90FF  
DodgerBlue2 28 134 238 #1C86EE  
DodgerBlue3 24 116 205 #1874CD  
DodgerBlue4 16 78 139 #104E8B  
SteelBlue1 99 184 255 #63B8FF  
SteelBlue2 92 172 238 #5CACEE



SteelBlue3 79 148 205 #4F94CD  
 SteelBlue4 54 100 139 #36648B  
 DeepSkyBlue1 0 191 255 #00BFFF  
 DeepSkyBlue2 0 178 238 #00B2EE  
 DeepSkyBlue3 0 154 205 #009ACD  
 DeepSkyBlue4 0 104 139 #00688B  
 SkyBlue1 135 206 255 #87CEFF  
 SkyBlue2 126 192 238 #7EC0EE  
 SkyBlue3 108 166 205 #6CA6CD  
 SkyBlue4 74 112 139 #4A708B  
 LightSkyBlue1 176 226 255 #B0E2FF  
 LightSkyBlue2 164 211 238 #A4D3EE  
 LightSkyBlue3 141 182 205 #8DB6CD  
 LightSkyBlue 4 6 123 139 #607B8B  
 LightSteelBlue1 202 225 255 #CAE1FF  
 LightSteelBlue2 188 210 238 #BCD2EE  
 LightSteelBlue3 162 181 205 #A2B5CD  
 LightSteelBlue4 110 123 139 #6E7B8B  
 LightSteelBlue1 202 225 255 #CAE1FF  
 LightSteelBlue2 188 210 238 #BCD2EE  
 LightSteelBlue3 162 181 205 #A2B5CD  
 LightSteelBlue4 110 123 139 #6E7B8B  
 LightBlue1 191 239 255 #BFEFFF  
 LightBlue2 178 223 238 #B2DFEE  
 LightBlue3 154 192 205 #9AC0CD  
 LightBlue4 104 131 139 #68838B  
 DarkBlue 0 0 139 #00008B

I thought I ought to share this information with you, please feel free to make use of it in any way that you see fit.

Simon

**Date: Tue, 23 Jul 2002 00:15:02**

**Subject: Loan**

**From: freddyfingers@treemail.com**

**To: skipvskip@hotmail.com**

Skip,

Was wondering if you might be able to return that loan to me soon. No rush, but would appreciate an update.

Hope you're doing well,

Fred

**Date: Tue, 23 Jul 2002 11:00:50**

**Subject: Priorities**

**From: susannenbreone@aol.com**

**To: skipvskip@hotmail.com**

Skip,

All this with Regine has made me rethink my priorities. I've been thinking: I hate my job.

Who knows what will happen next? I could be dead tomorrow. Why should I spend all my time in a "graphic design" job in which all that I've gotten the opportunity to design are weekly inserts for grocery store sales? Eight years of shuffling packaged goods and photographing wax turkeys, and a promised promotion that never comes. I'm thinking about quitting. Actually I'm thinking about moving. I'm not sure where. Somewhere else. Maybe I'll go back to school and study poetry or writing poetry for a couple of years. I

don't know. Maybe I should have children before my biological clock negates the possibility. Maybe I should go into real estate.

It's strange. I'm thirty-two years old and I'm just coming to the realization that I don't know who I am, or what I want to do with my life. Regine wasn't like that. Even Berto, in his delusions, wasn't like that, he knew who he was, or at least what he wanted to be. When the world did not provide the circumstances to allow for him to be what he wanted to be, he changed the nature of the world to provide for his escape.

I'm not quite sure I can do the same, or even want to, but I can certainly quit my job, I can certainly move somewhere and start fresh. I'm simply getting tired of playing games, with my job, with everything.

What would you do?

Susanne

**Date: Tue, 23 Jul 2002 13:26:23**

**Subject: Other Shores**

**From: skipvskip@hotmail.com**

**To: susannenbreone@aol.com**

Susanne,

I just got hit by an SUV (again). The next time you see me I'll have a large scab on my knee and another one on the side of my head.

Yesterday I got booted by the City of Chicago. They just updated their computer system, so they were able to track tickets on each of the five beaters I've owned since I moved here in 1986.

So I just paid the city \$1625, which I didn't have, because I'd just emptied my savings account to pay bail on a crime I shouldn't have been charged with to begin with -- two grand there, and to two grand more to pay a retainer for a lawyer I shouldn't need (but who I need desperately). And another \$125 for the right to park on these well-maintained streets. Soon the city will want to tax me for breathing.

And narcs keep leaving messages on the phone, saying "We're watching you Skipper, we're watching you."

I don't hate my job, it's a job and I get to ride my bike.

But I don't love it.

I'm not sure who the hell I am, either.

A set of numbers in a database.

And I owe friends money, I have debts, I have debts.

I'm turning over another credit card to another credit card with a higher limit and lower rates.

Picric (Phyric? Pyric?) victories seem to be all I've got.

Except for you, and I'm not even sure that I've got you.

so . . .

If you're proposing a move from these environs, I say:

TAKE ME WITH YOU!

Wherever you want to go. I know that you don't know me enough maybe to want me to be with you, but should we go?

Yes, we should go.

I don't think you should go it alone.

Skip a step or two, take me with you.

Provided of course, that is, that you'd be willing to wait a week or so.

My lawyer is talking to the DA and they're probably going to drop the charges:

GIVEN MY FULL COOPERATION

--should Benjamin Walters be involved with the murder, or anyone else I know.

Unlikely.

I've loved this town, my friends, and under a different set of circumstances, I would stay.

But I ask myself, stay for WHAT?

WHY STAND STILL?

in my personal inventory, my relationship with you (can we call it that?) is all I really want, desperately want to preserve.

I'll go anywhere.

I'm imagining us in a gondola, only we're not in Venice, we're floating down the Chicago River, out to the lake. The symphony orchestra stands on the banks, playing us a kind of farewell song -- Hadyn? You're pointing the way, neither one of us is quite sure where. I'm standing, poling us along, until finally, the pole no longer touches bottom, and direction no longer matters, and the skyline is dwindling behind us. We could sink and drown, or we could reach another shore, and we're going where the current takes us.

Skip

**Date: Tue, 23 Jul 2002 13:42:55**

**Subject: Re: Loan**

**From: skipvskip@hotmail.com**

**To: freddyfingers@treemail.com**

Fred,

I've dropped you a note in the snailmail explaining current circumstances. I'll be able to return your loan but it might take me a while.

Thanks for being understanding,

Skip

**Date: Tue, 23 Jul 2002 14:10:01**

**Subject: My Next Sculpture**

**From: junkin2art@well.com**

**To: tbonecrnch@baysbestsalvage.com, melissa\_hathaway@insculpt.com**

Dear Tommy and Melissa,

I am back from my trip to Chicago, where we bid farewell to my cousin Regine who was so brutally murdered. Her death and the murder of that poor child in Orange County are weighing heavily on my mind and so will be the subject of my next sculpture, which is dedicated to lost souls torn from the earth by monstrous forces beyond our control.

Tommy--

I will need an old construction crane, a very large one. I will need the wings of an old propeller plane. I will need all the paint stripped from both of them, stripped down to the naked metal, stripped down to the bare aluminum. I will need the barrels of two old tanks. I will need also two light poles, the all-aluminum kind, no wood, in working order, bulbs intact. I will also need information on how perpetual flames, such as the one at the tomb of the Unknown Soldier, work. The angel must spit fire. I will also need a wide variety of day-glo paints in shades of blue. We'll need to assemble a team of welders, the best you can find.

Melissa--

I will front the money for the materials. This is a gift from my cousin Regine. But knowing Regine, I'm sure that she would want me to put her gift to more practical use, such as health insurance, rents, etc. So I am counting on you to find me a commission, perhaps a public works commission, or something in a very large sculpture park, such as the Walker garden in Minneapolis, for my next sculpture, which I am tentatively entitling "The Blue Angel Descends From Heaven With Grace to Gather and Avenge Lost Souls."

It will require a large open space.

Edward

**Date: Tue, 23 Jul 2002 14:50:51**

**Subject: Feds**

**From: det\_harold\_barstow@chicagopolice.org**

**To: det\_thomas\_johnson@chicagopolice.org,  
det\_richard\_longfellow@chicagopolice.org**

Dick, Tom,

I talked with Patrick Daly, Assistant Special Agent in Charge at the FBI field office in Chicago. He told me that the FBI had no reason to be interested in the case unless we gave them reason to be interested in the case, that they were treating local homicides as local matters in general. I guess they're pretty tied up with Homeland Security, rooting out terrorists and tracking down banking records, etc.

I told him that that surprised us because you saw Sue Miller there and had recognized her from the Regina DeFrancisco case. He transferred me to Sue, who it turns out had attended the funeral for personal reasons: get this -- she lives on the same floor in Lake Point Tower as did Regine. She said she borrowed the occasional cup of sugar, etc. So that's why you saw feds.

It kind of irritates me that Sue Miller can pull down the kind of dough that she can live in Lake Point Tower when a career Chicago Police Detective has trouble making the mortgage on a bungalow in Berwyn but what can you do?

Harry



**Date: Wed, 24 Jul 2002 00:08:12**

**Subject: Strange**

**From: det\_richard\_longfellow@chicagopolice.org**

**To: det\_thomas\_johnson@chicagopolice.org,  
det\_harold\_barstow@chicagopolice.org**

Tom, Harry,

Tonight, as I was beginning to plan the mammoth task ahead, of interviewing all the residents on all 69 floors of Lake Point Tower, while doing a little research on the web, I ran across a tidbit of information:

\* Lake Point Tower was intentionally designed so that it would be impossible for someone in any one apartment of the building to look into the window of any other apartment in the building. The lobe shapes are meant both to take maximum advantage of the views of lake, skyline, city, and also to insure the privacy of each of the residents. Which explains why we haven't run across any Rear Window type of eyewitnessing.

But also, and this is beside the point but just extremely bizarre.

Look at this aerial view of the building:

<[www.okrentassociates.com/resources/aerials/vert6.html](http://www.okrentassociates.com/resources/aerials/vert6.html)>

This is probably because it's late and I've been working on this thing for too long, but when I look at that picture, on the left side of the building I'm seeing an elongated woman's form, head in the top floors, breasts around floor twenty, belly at the building's base. A distinct laceration at the throat. Blood dripping down the collarbone. I see the murdered Regine on the building itself. Not that that's a clue, but strange, strange, strange.

Dick

**Date: Wed, 24 Jul 2002 14:59:54**

**Subject: Re: Strange**

**From: det\_harold\_barstow@chicagopolice.org**

**To: det\_thomas\_johnson@chicagopolice.org,  
det\_richard\_longfellow@chicagopolice.org**

Dick,

I hope you're not smoking what you confiscate.

Harry

**Date: Wed, 24 Jul 2002 15:04:16**

**Subject: 2 weeks**

**From: susannenbreone@aol.com**

**To: skipvskip@hotmail.com**

Skip,

I gave work my two weeks' notice today.

As far as traveling with you to points unknown . . .

I'm really quite emotionally unstable.

I'm unsure of my sexual orientation. Unsure that I prefer boys to girls.

We haven't gone camping together, much less shacked up somewhere out on the horizon.

I don't know that we would last ten minutes out there in the wild.

So everything is very uncertain out there in the wild blue yonder.

But -- sure -- why not? If you're willing to live without expectations, let's try some new wherever. We can at least set off together and see where we end up, together or alone.

Susanne

**Date: Wed, 24 Jul 2002 18:12:53**

**Subject: Breakthrough**

**From: tabitha\_moran@rush.edu**

**To: debarthelme@rush.edu**

Dr. Bartheleme,

This afternoon during our individual session, when I asked Berto who he was, he said "Berto Tazar." When I asked him what he did, he said, "I used to be in marketing, but now I'm not sure." When I asked him what century we lived in, he looked at me like I was crazy, and then said "We live during the fall of the American empire, in the 21st Century." When I asked him where he was, he said "the nuthouse." When I asked him what city we lived in, he said "Chicago." When I asked why he was here, he said, "Because I flipped out. Because I'm fucking crazy." I corrected him on the last. Then he asked me if he could get a copy of the Tribune, to check the help wanted ads.

The Haldol is working its magic, apparently.

There is nothing like watching a patient's progress to raise your spirits and remind you of the value of an otherwise thankless job.

Sincerely,

Tabitha Moran, LCSW

**Date: Wed, 24 Jul 2002 22:46:12**

**Subject: Resolution**

**From: simonsaysthis@omphalos.com**

**To: skipvskip@hotmail.com**

Skip:

I've noticed that I hate endings, that I'm disappointed in them far more often than I am in middles, beginnings.

I almost always question the decision the writer, the filmmaker, the what? Creator? made.

I always feel that I would have done it differently myself.

Of course, if I feel that way that means that I had some investment in the work to begin with, that I felt something, or thought something, or . . .

except for mysteries.

In which case I almost always read the ending first and then work back from there.

There are so many risks involved in ending. Sentimentality, callousness, cruelty, bad puns, cuteness . . .

the end rarely justifies the means. or rather the means are dissatisfied by their destination.

Who remembers anything about the horsemen of the apocalypse except that there were four of them and that they rode horses? I certainly don't remember.

Simon

**Date: Thu, 25 Jul 2002 11:29:19**

**Subject: Commendation and Promotion**

**From: kenneth\_lethe@deptofhomeland.gov**

**To: sue\_miller@fbi.gov**

Special Agent Sue Miller,

This is notify you that you will shortly be receiving a commendation, promotion, and transfer to the new Department of Homeland Security headquarters where you will serve in the Subdepartment of Covert Antiterrorism Operations. The text of the commendation, which you will receive in a special ceremony at your field office on August 5th, appears below:

WHEREAS Special Agent SUE MILLER of the FEDERAL BUREAU of INVESTIGATION has served her country, THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, with great valor over a decade of service in the Chicago field office, AND WHEREAS Special Agent SUE MILLER has most recently led the group which compiled the SPECIAL REPORT ON TERRORIST THREATS TO HI-RISE STRUCTURES IN THE CHICAGO METROPOLITAN AREA, she is THEREFORE to BE COMMENDED and is hereby appointed SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE of COVERT ANTITERRORISM OPERATIONS for HIGH-RISE STRUCTURES: OFFICE OF THREAT ASSESMENT and THEREFORE as of August 6, 2002 ordered to transfer immediately to the interim DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY HEADQUARTERS in the DISTRICT of COLUMBIA, THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

Congratulations, Sue. You should frame this one. John Ashcroft himself is going to sign it. I know that they'll miss you in Chicago, but we're all looking forward to having you close at hand.

Yours,

Special Agent Kenneth Lethe

**Date: Thu, 25 Jul 2002 11:47:47**

**Subject: I'm Game**

**From: skipvskip@hotmail.com**

**To: susannenbreone@aol.com**

Susanne,

I'm yours.

Where to?

New York?

Los Angeles?

San Francisco?

Atlanta?

Albuquerque, New Mexico?

Dubuque, Iowa?

Duluth, Minnesota?

Linwood, New Jersey?

Omaha, Nebraska?

Mexico?

Peru?

Bolivia?

Paris?

I can almost taste the open road.

I would follow you to the ends of the earth

or the middle of nowhere.

Drinks tonight to celebrate?

Have you ever been up in that bar at the top of the John Hancock?

Let's go up there, have a couple martinis, gaze out at the city spread far beneath us, and bid it a fond farewell.

A longing sigh, dreaming of a map laid across your thighs,

Skip

**Date: Thu, 25 Jul 2002 13:11:17**

**Subject: Unsolved Mysteries**

**From: jackdmonk@enteract.com**

**To: berto\_alto@tank20.com**

Berto,

I've been thinking too often lately of death, and I'm sorry if I've overburdened you with

my sense of horror, of grief, of shock at the ambient violence that always and everywhere surrounds us. It occurred to me recently that perhaps these sensations are the type of thing that one should keep to oneself.

You've, after all, been in the hospital, and unable to respond to these little elegiac epistles. And the truth is that getting no response from you only made me want to write them more, it became a kind of meditation, wiping my tears into the outlook box of my "monitor" and sending them off like koans in a bottle to the person least likely to read and respond.

What is the proper response to any of this?

How could you or I possibly respond in any way that could have an impact?

Perhaps it's best to ignore it.

Most of America can comfortably tune out the news, for instance, that a 43-year old Rabbi was shot dead today in a West Bank settlement, and that this is understood to be the \*first\* Palestinian response to Tuesday's attack by an F-16 warplane which fired a one-ton guided missile at the house of Shehada, commander of Hamas's military wing, killing him and 14 others, including one militant, four noncombatant adults and nine children. I think that the shock value of the death of children in that far-off land has been minimized. We EXPECT that there will be more killings in response. We EXPECT that many more children will die. We cannot remember the last day in which someone did not die violently in Palestine or Israel. The body count will continue to mount.

And for every murderer jailed, there are two more who go on calmly with their lives, another falsely accused, fifteen people arrested for misdemeanor possession of some substance we have made taboo, and thirty more imprisoned for lack of adequate legal representation, economic casualties.



So what happens to the lost souls, to those murdered casually, whose cases are never resolved, who never even make the front-page news?

What about those who are simply lost?

The tabloids scream that police may soon expect a break in the 1996 murder case of the toddler beauty queen JonBenet Ramsey, because John and Patsy are breaking up. But one year from now, who will remember Tionda and Diamond Bradley, the ten and three-year-old girls who went to the playground on July 6, 2001 and never came back? After all, they were just black girls in a poor neighborhood, whose mother should never have left them alone. They aren't white enough to make news on Entertainment Tonight. Their disappearance is not marketable.

And then there are those convenient suicides, such as Clifford J. Baxter, the former Enron executive, who quit after blowing the whistle on his friends and colleagues. Baxter's Mercedes-Benz was found one January morning in Dallas, stopped in the middle of a road. Inside, Baxter had a bullet wound to the head and a revolver at his side. Police confirmed that a suicide note was found with his body. In the note, Baxter wrote that he could not stand the pain of the Enron scandal. The autopsy determined that Clifford had shot himself in the side of the head. That is, though he had fully exonerated himself and helped to launch the investigation that would bring down this major energy concern, the pain was too much. Just as the scandal was breaking, his heart broke too. And a man was quietly buried in Texas. We are to believe what we are told.

Power wants to control us. Power is successful. Nothing succeeds like success.

So what becomes of those souls, Berto?

I promise to stop asking you these questions, which no one wants us to answer.

Your friend,

Jack

**Date: Thu, 25 Jul 2002 21:36:43**

**Subject: Blue Velvet**

**From: simonsaysthis@omphalos.com**

**To: skipvskip@hotmail.com**

COMPLETELY IRRELEVANT NOTES ON blue velvet THE DAVID LYNCH FILM  
TRANSCRIBED EXACTLY AS WRITTEN ON A BLUE NOTE PAD WITHOUT  
INTERPRETATION

--

So what do you know about the ear?

I don't know much but bits and pieces. I hear things.

--

There are opportunities in life for gaining knowledge and experience.

--

It sounds like a good daydream, but actually doing it's too strange, too weird.

--

That stuff stinks.

Oh, this's the new stuff. No smell.

--

The blue lady.

--

She sings Blue Velvet like a 45 played at 33.

--

I don't know if you're a detective or a pervert.

Well that's for me to know and you to find out.

--

blue eyeshadow, blue robe, chef's knife, bourbon.

--

Baby wants Blue Velvet.

--

Don't you fucking look at me.

--

Do it for Van Gogh.

--

See my breast. You can feel it. My nipple, it's getting hard. You can touch it. You can

feel it.

--

Hit me.

--

It's a strange world.

--

Sandy's dream of robins.

--

Are you alright?

No, I'm not.

--

I can still feel blue velvet

Through my tears

--

I'm in the middle of a mystery, and it's all secret.

You like mysteries that much?

Yuh-hunh.

--

Bluer than velvet was the night

Softer than satin

Were the stars

--

The fire -- the beast

--

Candy colored clown

They call the Sandman

--

Let's fuck.

I'll fuck anything that moves.

--

You're like me.

--

I don't want to talk about it.

--

The cops were involved.

--

So many shades of blue -- that shirt's cerulean.

--

I love you.

Love me.

--

Where?

Where's my dream?

--

Blue rug, blue paint on the walls, slate blue doors

--

Lobotomized cop. Earless man.

--

Loveletters straight from my heart.

--

I'm gonna let them find you on their own.

--

Fuck with me man?

--

I can hear your fucking radio you stupid SHIT.

--

Where are you?

Where ARE you?

--

It's all over, Jeffrey.

--

Brains on floor. Bulbs out.



--

Lunch is ready.

--

Sandy's robin.

--

The robin is eating a bug.

--

It's a strange world, isn't it?

--

Repeat start montage.

--

Isabella and her boy.

--

And I can see blue

velvet through my tears.

Simon

**Date: Fri, 26 Jul 2002 10:44:58**

**Subject: Proposal**

**From: skipvskip@hotmail.com**

**To: simonsaysthis@omphalos.com**

Simon:

I've got to say, your latest "Blue" email throws me for a loop. While I never have quite completely understood the connections between the various factoids you've been throwing my way regarding your "book" or "dissertation" or "project" or "theory" or "film" etc., the bits of dialogue and minor observations about the film *Blue Velvet* seem particularly irrelevant, and are even labeled as such. Someday you'll have to explain to me, or provide for my reading, or viewing, etc. how all these tenuous jigsaw pieces could conceivably fit together.

In the meantime, I have an offer, or a proposal, or what have you.

Susanne and I are leaving town. Unless some unexpected calamity occurs, by this time next week, I'll be free of the trouble with the Chicago Police Department. My lawyer stuck to his guns and the Judge has told the DA that their warrant was bunk for a drug arrest, so my record should be clear, as should my "obligations" to the local authorities.

My lover and I plan to live in a nomadic fashion for a while. First we will go north up towards Toronto, where the Valent clan has an outpost and a carpet cleaning operation where I might find some temporary employment. Eventually with the descent of fall and into the beginnings of winter, we intend to make our way south and west, camping at National Parks, and visiting friends along the way, eventually to arrive at the Anza-Borrego desert, where Susanne has a friend who might offer us a place to stay while we work on a book of photographs chronicling contemporary plate tectonics, or the plight of migrant workers on date farms, or both, or neither. It's all an open question mark.

But anyway, there will be an open slot at Quicksilver messenger service, and if you are seeking employ, I could probably arrange for that job to be yours, and would happily sell you my Trek for half its market value. It's a good job, pay's decent, no benefits but excitement and exercise. You're advised however to find health insurance on your own, and strongly. Injuries are *de rigueur*. There is also the question of "missionary work." You have in your possession the contents of the Book of Acts. I owe some friends approximately \$2,500 for those contents. At current market rate, those contents should be worth about twice that. Much of my biz came through you anyho -- most of my friends are too old and middleclassish, or have already made their explorations and require none further. If you're willing, I would like to hook you up with my friends up north who provide the Word, and some of my friends here who consume it. I would be extremely grateful to you if you could help me to settle this current obligation, and I'm sure the Rainbow people would be glad to make your further acquaintance provided you deal with them fair but not square.

I know that this will leave you with less time for your research, but thought you might be interested in all or some of these opportunities. I'm sure your unemployment will run out soon, and thought this might appeal to you.

Skip

P.S. If you know anyone looking for a sublet, let me know, there's four months left on my lease. \$800/mo and a bargain at the price.

**Date: Sat, 27 Jul 2002 15:21:30**

**Subject: I'm COMING on a JET PLANE don't know when I'll be back in the  
FUCKING HOT desert again**

**From: ernestonotcom@netzero.com**

**To: berto\_alto@tank20.com**

BERTO --

What FREAKY JOY it was to TALK WITH YOU ON THE TELEPHONE.

YOUR VOICE HAS BEEN RESTORED.

THE KIDS AND I are jazzed, pumped, PSYCHED that we'll be seeing you tomorrow.

especially since YOU WILL NO LONGER BE HOSPITALIZED.

they call that SERENDIPITY.

I haven't had a week free of used cars in months.

CONGRATULATIONS on your return to, or descent into, CONVENTIONAL SANITY.

WELCOME THE 21st CENTURY. true, so far it has SUCKED ROCKS as far as epochs go BUT IT;S the ONLY ONE WE;VE GOT. so you'll just have the LIVE WITH IT or IN IT like the rest of us POOR BASTARDS.

JEFF IS PRACTICALLY BOUNCING OFF THE WALLS ABOUT GOING TO WRIGLEY and he also wants you to teach him karate or SOME SHIT LIKE THAT. he's been getting his akss kicked at the park and the best advice I can give him is to KEEP HIS HANDS UP, PROTECT YOUR HEAD if engaged in conflict and also RUN LIKE HELL whenever possible and also KICKING A BIG GUY IN THE BALLS DOES NOT

MAKE YOU A SISSY. so maybe youi can teach him something about tai chi or whtever though I keep telling him that's a kind of meditation it's not about fighting. JESUS I'M a LOUSY FATHER not really I love those kids but the only thing I remember about sandlot fighting is that aloe is good for scrapes, SOOTHING, and that it's CRUCIAL TO ICE YOUR LUMPS as soon as possible after receiving them.

I'm a LOVER not a FIGHTER.

Anyway, WOW. Completely psyched that I will not have to use any of the ELABORATE CONTRIVANCES I HAD CONCOCTED to explain to the kids why you were not speaking to any of us and had to be restrained by the ANDY FRAIN guys from CHARGING THE FIELD TO DO BATTLE WITH DRAGONS.....

So let's meet tomorrow at Noon at PEGASUS in GREEKTOWN for some FLAMING CHEESE to celebrate your FREEDOM!!! Brother man. CAN;T WAIT TO SEE YOU.

Ernesto

**Date: Mon, 29 Jul 2002 02:13:10**

**Subject: So why do I do what I do**

**From: simonsaysthis@omphalos.com**

**To: skipvskip@hotmail.com**

Look,

I don't do these things because they're good, or because I think that they'll be good. I do these things because they're interesting. Which is a poor excuse, because what I really mean by that is that I do these things only because they're interesting (to me), which is really an incredibly self-absorbed way to go through life, but still. And sure I hope that they'll be interesting to you, but ultimately, will that drive me? I don't know. Really, if I've told myself a good story, in the end I go home and respect myself. Will any of this

improve the world or feed the kids in Afghanistan or make public transportation available to low income travelers or end the war on terror?

No.

But still. It can't really hurt, can it?

Not that that's an explanation.

As for the rest, sure, I'll take your place. Why not?

Simon

**Date: Mon, 29 Jul 2002 10:35:07**

**Subject: The Killer Wore Blue Jeans**

**From: det\_harold\_barstow@chicagopolice.org**

**To: det\_thomas\_johnson@chicagopolice.org,**

**det\_richard\_longfellow@chicagopolice.org**

Tom, Dick,

That's all we have from fibers on the DuBois case. No hairs, bits of skin, dandruff, blood evidence, etc. have turned up. But forensics say that whoever pulled the blade across was wearing Levis.

Harry

**Date: Thu, 01 Aug 2002 02:26:29**

**Subject: Blue Shift: A Theory or A Short Film or A Scenario or A Project**

**From: simonsaysthis@omphalos.com**

**To: skipvskip@hotmail.com**

Dear Skip,

MUSIC DURING INORDINATELY LONG TITLES SEQUENCE:

Miles Davis, "So What"

The titles, which include not only the standard opening credits but also the standard closing credits, scroll past in tiny letters, a nearly illegible font, at the bottom of the screen, while the bulk of the frame is taken up by a seemingly endless roll of billowing satin, which gradually changes in color from a nearly white sky blue through blue's part of the spectrum, towards a shade of navy that verges on blackness.

OPENING SCENE:

The 14th Century, a battlefield near Milan. Trumpets blaring. Banners unfurled, sapphire blue, ruby red. Swords clanging. Arrows whizzing through the air. A knight in blue, closeup on a face wincing in pain. An axe falls. A head removed, that of a woman general, Regine. The Blue Company banner falls. Blood spills across it.

FADE TO:

A small garret in Barcelona, around the turn of the 20th century. The poet Sabartés struggles through the night, working and reworking a single line. The wax paper he has hung on his windows where they are cracked filter the moonlight to give the room a pale blue glow. The poet Sabartés is attempting his most serious work thus far, a poem that will encapsulate the spirit of the time, of the age of unhappiness that the young bohemian

finds himself surrounded by. The poet struggles on the line. The poet sweats. The poet's pencil breaks, and he pounds the desk in frustration. The poet crumples the paper in his hands and throws it into a basket, where it joins a dozen or so similarly crumpled failed attempts. The poet Sabartés rises and walks over to the studio next door, where Picasso, who opens the door reluctantly only after Sabartés has pounded it repeatedly, is just finishing his final touches on a painting of a blind guitarist in blue. Sabartés inhales quickly, and stands before the painting. "When did you start this one, Picasso?" he asks. "Yesterday afternoon," replies Picasso. "What I have been trying to do on paper all summer long," Sabartés says, "you have accomplished in paint over the course of 24 hours." Picasso says, "I know, my friend, I know." "Picasso," Sabartés says, "I will serve you all the rest of my days." Picasso smiles, "I know, Sabartés, I know," he says, and he puts his arm around his friend's shoulders.

BLUE DISSOLVE:

TO A TIGHT CLOSEUP of an owl's eyes. The snowy owl, high in a Blue Spruce, hoots. The camera pulls back. It is night, the color of midnight. Beneath the trees there is a wash of tulips, and in their midst, a blue orchid, which bends as a steel blue Mercedes rushes past.

WIPE TO:

Robert Lowell is preparing to shave. An attendant in a white coat unlocks a box and hands him a straight razor, then steps back, arms folded across his chest. Beside him a man in his seventies, frail and slightly wild, while waiting his turn, watches Lowell's every move. The man killed a woman decades ago. Lowell lathers. Lowell stares into his own eyes in the mirror. His eyes are sad. Lowell pauses. There's a poem in this. Lowell grips the razor and lifts the blade to his neck. Steady now.



## MOMENTARY LAPSE OF NARRATIVE

In which the project director steps up in front of the cameras, and apologizes to its audience for the fact that art, like life, entails a necessary resort to cliché. The conspiracy theory is always in some sense the truth, though typically and necessarily a ham-handed reduction of said. He shrugs. Nothing to be done. The director drinks a Blue Hawaiian. The lei he wears around his neck is also blue.

## NEXT SCENE:

A powerful man and his attendants are waved through the gates of the White House, past the marine guards in their formal dress uniforms. Secret Service agents meet the car and admit the CEO of one of the nation's largest energy concerns through the back door, to the ornate Blue Room. The sounds of gathering are heard in the distance, as a band plays "Blue Christmas." The CEO occupies an ornate 19th century couch, and waits, nervously. Some fifteen minutes later, an American President, looking just a little bit awkward in a tuxedo, enters the room and sits beside his friend on the couch. "Ken," the American President says as he places his hand on his friend's knee, "tell me what you need." The camera pulls back as the popular President and the powerful CEO exchange certain anecdotes, off color jokes, and favors.

The camera pulls back into the ballroom, where the band plays "Blue Suede Shoes" as celebrities, politicians, media figures, policy wonks and the like are twirling around the dance floor. The camera momentarily focuses on a man in a dark blue suit, towards the back of the room, in shadow, who is listening to an important conversation in his earbud. The camera then spins a few times around the dance floor before returning to the American President and his friend, who are shaking hands.

## SWIPE TO:

Later that night, the powerful CEO, back in the comfort of his Texas ranch, is meeting

with two rather brawny cowboys. The powerful CEO is angry, agitated. The powerful CEO says, "I want him dead. Cleanly." The two rather brawny cowboys depart. The powerful CEO turns towards his computer screen, and writes an ill-thought email to a woman who he has trusted in the past, with whom he even had a brief and discrete affair, a woman who has handled his public relations skillfully in the past. In that email, which the audience reads in its entirety, as it is typed, the powerful CEO reveals certain details of the conversation he has had with the American President, in which certain promises were made, certain other promises were not, and certain favors from the past were called to the table. The powerful CEO looks desperate as he writes in the dark, in the blue glow of his LCD monitor. The powerful CEO hits send.

A FEW MONTHS LATER (reads the subtitle):

Regine DuBois is on the phone with the powerful CEO, and she is receiving bad news about her own employment situation, bad news about the fate of her company and the one that she represents. Regine DuBois, on impulse, makes certain threats to reveal certain secrets unless certain conditions are not met.

IN AN FBI INTERROGATION ROOM:

Sue Miller, a loyal, smart, and dedicated special agent, who has served the bureau for a decade of her life, is called to meet with one of her superiors, who has flown in from Washington for that purpose. Expecting the meeting to consist of a discussion of certain details of a planned report, she is surprised when a senior agent, Kenneth Lethe, pulls from his briefcase some photographs, some photographs that Sue Miller did not realize existed. The photographs show Sue Miller, or a younger, less responsible version of herself, engaged in certain compromising positions. A proposal is made, a deal is struck. A career is preserved, some morals are compromised.

MOMENTS LATER (CLOSEUP):

On a northbound EL train, a G-woman sheds a tear.

AND THEN:

Miles Davis raises his horn. Miles Davis is sweating rivers. Miles Davis is holding a high note. Miles Davis is beyond human but not superhuman, otherhuman. Miles Davis looks like shit, he's visibly frail. He looks old beyond his years. Miles Davis is holding that note. He's still holding it. A woman in the audience lights a cigarette. Miles Davis is still holding that note. It's a piercing note. The woman smokes her cigarette. Miles Davis won't let go. The woman puts out her cigarette. Miles Davis pulls the trumpet from his lips. The note echoes in our ears. Miles Davis goes back to his dressing room. Someone hands him a towel. Goddamn. Miles Davis does a line of cocaine. Miles Davis shakes. Miles Davis falls down.

A MAN IN A BLUE CAPE

Lurks in the shadows, where he sits on a garbage can, pulling a thorn from his foot.

DECADES BEFORE:

A factory in Bengal. A twelve-year-old girl is operating a machine with a large metal wheel, turning indigo to dye. She sees that something is caught in the machine; she reaches to pull it out. Her hand gets caught in the machine. Her hand is torn off. The girl screams, and falls to the floor, clutching the wound at her bleeding stump. Her fellow workers come to help. A whistle blows. Work stops for a moment. The girl is carted off on a stretcher. Her fellow workers are ordered back to work. Workers mop the floor. Another young girl is put in her place. Work resumes.

## IN A DARK TOWER:

Kenneth Lethe is praising the work that Sue Miller has done on the cover document. Kenneth Lethe is putting on blue jeans. Kenneth Lethe says something suggestive, something sexually explicit, to Sue Miller. She demurs, and then moves towards him. Sue Miller removes Kenneth Lethe's jeans. Kenneth Lethe and Sue Miller have sex. A threatening, edgy song by the Rolling Stones plays in the background. Kenneth Lethe puts his jeans back on. Kenneth Lethe is putting on gloves. Sue Miller puts on a flowery robe. The flowers are tulips, tulips of blue. Kenneth Lethe pulls a knife from his bag. He asks Sue Miller if she has a tomato. Kenneth Lethe tests the knife on the tomato. It slices in half with almost no pressure at all; its flesh and seeds spill over the cutting board. Kenneth Lethe nods. Sue Miller checks the hallway. There is nobody out there. Sue Miller and Kenneth Lethe walk on down the hall. Sue Miller knocks on Regine DuBois' door. Regine DuBois answers, a glass of red wine in her hand, looks disappointed. She was expecting something else. Sue Miller asks if she can borrow a cup of sugar. Regine DuBois nods. Regine DuBois turns towards her kitchen. Kenneth Lethe slips in behind her. Kenneth Lethe pulls a blade in one swift, smooth motion across Regine DuBois' neck. Regine DuBois falls the floor. Blood and red wine.

## AWFUL INTRUSION

At which point the writer apologizes for the pandering, for the carnage, for the occasional lapse into sentimentality and for breaking the frame of the story's austere near-photo e-realism. But, the writer reminds us, these things do actually occur in real life. You're being watched in ways that you don't know and innocent people are being killed by your government in your name. Every day. In secret. Right fucking now. You should feel more blue, not less. But you already know that. It's a miracle, he says, that we aren't all slack-jawed droolers like poor Berto, such is the nature of all of this shit.

CUT TO:

A Vice President receives a phone call. A Vice President nods. A Vice President makes another phone call, and says something about a win for national security.

THE NEXT DAY:

Three detectives are on an elevator; another man gets on with them, wearing blue jeans. The man rides down with them. None of the detectives will remember this man, or think anything remarkable of him. The man is carrying a backpack, containing a knife, wrapped in a bloody shirt, in a kitchen trash bag. The detectives discuss sports and interior decorating.

THE NARRATOR

Explains that "police" is a fiction we have inflicted on ourselves.

AND NOW:

Sue Miller is receiving a special commendation. A medal. The medal is blue. Sue Miller is holding back tears. Her eyeshadow is sky blue.

WE FADE TO BLUE

and there is a BLUE SHIFT as a BLACK HOLE moves towards us

&

"It's All Over Now Baby Blue" by Bob Dylan plays eerily in the distance as

blue thins out to darkness

--Simon

**Date: Mon, 05 Aug 2002 16:42:29**

**Subject: End Blue**

**From: berto\_alto@tank20.com**

**To: susannenbreone@aol.com**

Dear You,

Well . . .

I should say first that I understand

about **you and Skip**

Love it aint easy

and escape is even more difficult

Skip might surprise you,  
he might surprise all of us  
he might even surprise himself

I wish you a great journey

All our paths will cross again

in some time

and I'm \*so proud\* of you

for finally getting out from under that boulder  
you called a job

I hope that you'll send me  
some of the photos you take  
on your travels

## **You're probably curious . . .**

. . . about what happened to me

Which version do you want?

The Official Version? (the "Haldol" version)

The Sentimental Version? (the "Dulcinea" version)

or the Truth? (the "Truth")

## **The Official Version**

About three weeks into my imprisonment

in the tower

\*whoops!\*

\*just kidding\*

about three weeks into my "treatment,"  
as the dopamine levels in my brain

got . . . well . . . balanced

and I realized  
that for much of my life  
I have been having hallucinations and delusions

This has to do with the trauma I experienced early in life

when my father

who I respected loved dearly and so on

would come home and abuse  
my mother, brother, sister, self et cetera

and then.

after.

as if a switch had suddenly gone off in his brain  
he would come into Ernesto's and my room



and read to us from Don Quixote  
even though  
moments before  
he had called us such things as  
bad worthless idiot and so on

. . . our father reading those adventures  
in a sweet voice full of humor  
\*sigh\*

So . . . .

When I experienced the recent  
trauma

I cast myself back knightly  
into the dusty plains of Spain  
(actually, Italy)

Until one morning  
Haldol worked its magic et cetera

and I realized  
that I could no longer  
retreat to the tale end

\*sound of falling eye-scales\*

and I found myself in a hospital

surrounded by others' demons

and I realized that

I'm only a deluded old gent from La Mancha  
after all.

(INTERLUDE)

I saw ERNestO jeffie and J\*E\*S\*S\*I\*C\*A  
this week. Yayyy!

We went and saw the Cubs game at Wrigley



Ernesto and I had a great time  
bonding over shared  
"illnesses" "impulses" "predicaments"

and

"parents"

We drank a beer called "Old Style"



ate a pizza called "Lou Malnati's"

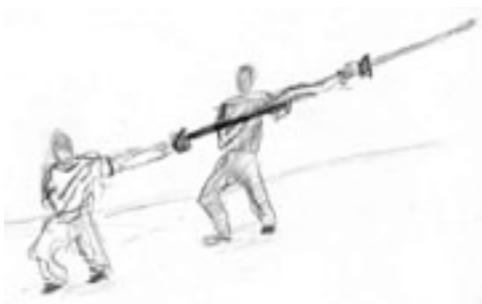


we \*laughed out loud\*

I taught Jeff a few Blue Company moves



how to protect himself



just a little bit



from the forces of evil

I realized that

no matter what happens or  
where I go next I  
shouldn't lose track of them  
or even my sister Olivia

. . . who is praying for me right now

(/END INTERLUDE)

## The Sentimental Version

After my last message to you  
from back in the 14th Century . . .

Our Captain Regine  
hunkered us around her  
to explain that our mission,  
all along, had been to delicately influence  
the cultural echos  
of the color Blue itself . . .

(whilst the 14th c. red-cloth-guild  
was bribing painters to paint the Devil blue;  
and the blue-cloth-guild  
was bribing painters to paint the Devil red)

. . . to support certain 21st c.

blue corporate logos and valuations.

My mind was blown ---

I thought I was the marketing guy  
supporting Blue Company's  
militia-ing!

\*Instead,\*

the Blue Company  
was enforcing my blue marketing!

When suddenly . . .

Our Captain Regine was captured by security  
and, presumably, axed.

Well, after SKIP DIED and  
so many of my other FRIENDS DIED  
and REGINE was gone . . .

. . . you might say . . .  
that my mind

. . . well . . .

kind of. . . blew.

I flipped.

I flip-skied.

I flip-o-roonied.

Instead of fearing for my life  
I put the fear of blue in others.

Instead of running from security,  
I stalked security.

I found the security guys  
--- the ones who killed Skip --

and I isolated one

and I'm not proud of this

and I slit him

and I have wicked nightmares now

and I found my own hands red

and I put on his suit  
and took his place  
and shipped back to the 21st.

Because I needed to be with you.

and when I got back  
I discovered that your heart had been taken

by your Regine

and I flipped so hard I broke.

Thank God Skip

my silly compadre

brought me to the tower

I mean hospital

(INTERLUDE THE SECOND)

I saw in the paper today

that Edward DuBois,

Regine's cousin,

has been commissioned

to do a memorial sculpture

in **Manitoba**

it's called

"The Blue Angel Descends from Heaven with Grace

to Gather and Avenge Lost Souls"

I don't know how what that means

or how it will look

but I like the way it sounds

a construction crane descending

on spread aeroplane wings

breathing fire in a snowy field.

(/END INTERLUDE)

The



# Truth

Susanne, we live in a world between worlds.

Think about what has already happened here

in America

in the world

in this century

before you tell me that there is

no escape

no way back

no alternative

in which things might have changed

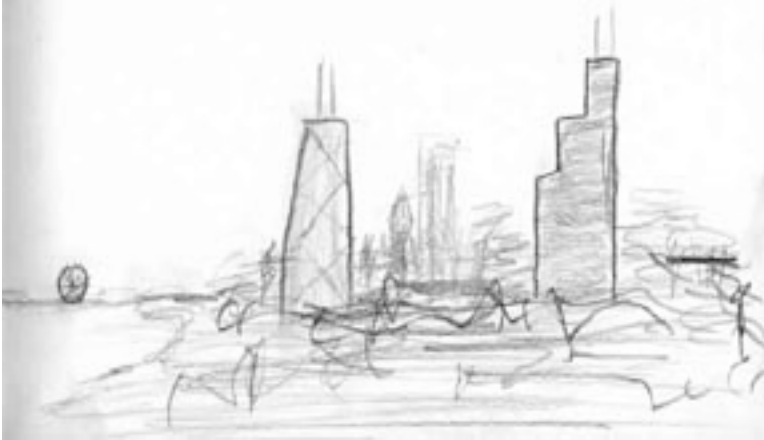
improved

"progressed" differently

Don't worry 'bout me.

I can certainly function in this world, I can  
put on a suit, carry a briefcase, I can

market professionally.



But the *\*truth\** is that everywhere I go,  
I see *\*both\** the world that is now  
*\*and\** the world that is now-in-then.



The truth is  
this world we try to share  
is only one of many possible worlds  
built on stumbles from the past . . .

A butterfly farts in Borneo  
and \*everything\* in this century  
turns out differently.

Is this \*my\* problem?

Am I **insane**?

Just because I've smelt the mildew  
and campsmoke and gnawed the roast weasel  
of that other world  
that is out (t)here

\*right this fucking minute?\*

A keystroke away?

(Big Secret: you don't even  
need a machine to get there.)

Dear You,  
The \*truth\* is that I

loved you once

and

I want to go back there

where we left off

make a couple adjustments

so that maybe

you and skip and jeff and jessica and ernesto and darlene and all the people

I care about

won't have to read headlines

like the ones we've been seeing

all summer long.

The *\*truth\** is

that they lent me history books

in the tower and I read all night.

The *\*truth\** is that I

am going back there

to rescue Regine

and us

and a few other things.

Sure I'll probably

fail

but

I'd rather try to make a few changes

than to stay in this time, in this awful time

so blue

\*waves\*

I'll be back

. . . probably.

See you "then."

Your friend,

Berto