

Heavier Than A Death In The Family

by Chris Okum



Onwards To The Wall

Being alone is nice. You don't have to listen to people scream into their phone as they walk in the middle of the street at ten o'clock at night when you and the person screaming into their phone are the only two people around. You don't have to look at young men trying

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to look scary with their sunglasses and their hoodies up over their heads like they're possibly going to shoot you in the back as a protest against an unjust society. You don't have to watch out for cars blowing through stop signs at 70 miles an hour on a residential street that is also a school zone where children walk to school every day and cross the same crosswalks that the very same cars run through at freeway speeds in their expensive electric cars invented by sociopathic Afrikaners who want to cull the population of planet Earth as a way to protect the people in the future who haven't even been born, a noxious ideology which seems to have been magically transferred from the mind of said inventor into the car itself. You don't have to listen to Russians who have escaped from Russia because they don't want to serve in the Army and kill Ukrainians lecture you on why all Ukrainians should be killed. You don't have to watch out for joggers running full tilt while you're trying to walk to the supermarket so you can spend 100 dollars on two chicken breasts, two potatoes, a gallon of milk, and some Dove Bars. You don't have to listen to your 50-year-old neighbor fuck her 30-year-old-boyfriend who believes she's actually 39-years-old. You don't have to listen to dogs that are somewhere in the distance bark all day and night. You don't have to listen to the same EDM song that every single person driving around with their windows down seems to be listening to. You don't have to look at all of the people you will never get to know because you are certain they have no interest in getting to know you. You don't have to pretend not to look at the young women sunbathing in their bikinis in the middle of a public park while you're surrounded by other men who are also trying their hardest not to look. You don't have to worry about someone sneaking into your apartment building in the middle of the night and choosing your apartment as the one they're going to sneak into so they can stick a buck knife straight into your heart. There are many more things you don't have to worry about when you're alone, which, like I said, is nice. But being alone doesn't mean you have nothing to worry about. You do. Sure, there's only one thing you have to worry about, but that one thing is the one thing you can

never get away from, which is potentially more irritating and destructive than all the aforementioned things combined. And that one thing? You.

Get It

From *The Semantics of Nothing: How A Small Group Of New Age Scam Artists Prepared The Baby Boomers For Fascism*, by Dr. Barry Levine, University of Pittsburgh Press, 2023: "The prevailing socioeconomic ethos of the last 50 years ('If you're poor it's your fault. It's not the system. It's you. Everything wrong with your life is your fault. The system is set up so that anyone can succeed. If you haven't succeeded then you have no one to blame but yourself') betrays a mass psychological manipulation project which was birthed from the more dubious and outwardly patriarchal formations of the counterculture (gurus, communes, cults, etc.) and then codified in popular culture through self-help seminars such as EST, Lifespring, and Insight, among others. An entire generation that at first rejected the tenets of their parents as they entered the late 1960s, had, by the mid-to-late 1970s, decided that it was time to pay penance for their symbolic act of parricide, and did so by locking themselves into hotel ballrooms for long weekends with con artists posing as life coaches, usually men, who refused their paying customers bathroom breaks and whose entire program consisted of browbeating people into admitting that not only were they assholes, but that everyone they knew was an asshole too. The point was to break down these spoiled, overgrown children until they cried mercy, at which time they were set free to go home, wiser about their shortcomings, ready to preach the gospel of individual accountability as a path towards success, and ready to engage in the dog-eat-dog world of late capitalism that their counterculture had not destroyed, but amplified. The Baby Boomers had entered late adolescence and early adulthood wanting a complete break with a post-war society they saw as conformist, stultifying, sexless, and vicious. Eventually, they did get their break, but it was not the break

they expected. Instead of gathering into alternate communities and becoming one with nature, the Baby Boomers were splintered into a hundred million pieces and scattered to the wind. They were told there was no more society, there was only individuals, solitary, responsible for only him or herself. If the 1960s had seen the beginnings of a generation trying its best to create a sense of solidarity, the 1970s saw that very same generation turn against each under the berating tutelage of faux-patriarchs using nom de guerres, who encouraged them to see the person sitting next to them as nothing more than reflection of themselves, who promoted the philosophy that we are all alone, together. What happened during the 1970s was akin to an cultural atom bomb. It had taken one set of authoritarian figures to pull the Baby Boomers apart, and decades later, it would take another set of authoritarian figures to pull them back together again, for if there is one surefire way to cure narcissists of their isolation and loneliness it is unification through violence and scapegoating. The Baby Boomers were born in a garden tilled by Fascists, and back to this very same garden they will go to become golden one more time before turning into stardust."

Entertainment For All

"I was married for two years before I realized that I also wanted to have relationships with women," said Penny Baker, Playboy's Playmate of the Month for January 1984, as well as the magazine's 30th Anniversary Playmate. "And at first my husband was very supportive. But the more and more I spent time with other women the more and more jealous he got. And then I fell in love with a woman named Kathy. She was Brazilian. She introduced me to nudity at the beach. I have never been nude at the beach before, and it's different than being nude under some hot lights in a studio with some man with a camera and a fresh perm barking at you to act sexy. Kathy never told me to act sexy. She never told me to do anything. My husband couldn't stop telling me what to do. He didn't

like it if we went out in public and I wasn't in full make-up, wearing some revealing dress, and acting like I was on a shoot. He told me, he said, 'I thought I married a Playmate, not a regular woman.' But I am a regular woman. That's what my husband could never understand. So I left him. Not for Kathy. I left him for no one. I just woke up one morning and decided I had to leave. So I did. I left. And I thought I was free. But then he found me. I wasn't ready to be found. And so now he's dead. If only he'd let me be lost. I know he thought he loved me. But he didn't love me. He loved the image of me. I'm not the only Playmate whose had this problem with their spouse, as I'm sure you're well aware of. I can count on two hands how many former Playmates I know whose husbands have tried to kill them. I know this sounds strange, but I really don't think what's wrong with these men has anything to do with me or any of the other girls. The problem is with the men. They can't handle not being able to possess us, not because it's us they want to possess, but because losing what they consider to be their prize possession makes them look weak to other men. That's what this is all about. It's about men using women like me as a weapon against other men, as a way to dominate other men, subdue them, make them do what they want. I've always known this. My husband treated me like a gun, or a knife. So eventually I came to see myself as one, which my husband learned, much to his eternal detriment."

The Stuff Of Ritualistic Communion Among Inarticulate Bores

In almost every movie about groups of men there is always a scene where one of the men is telling a long story and the director is focusing on how intently the other men are listening and then one of the men will interrupt the man telling the story and tell the man who's telling the story how full of shit he is. I don't understand other men. But then again, I've had approximately three close male friendships in my entire life. I think that's because I don't enjoy the casual cruelty men enact on each other. Or the random insults. If I was sitting around with a group of men and one of the men told me

that he thought my wife was a loudmouth pig I would do one of two things: 1) I would start crying hysterically and run out of the room; or, 2) I would attempt to fight, lose the fight quickly, and then I would start crying hysterically and run out of the room. When I'm around other men I feel like I'm around a bunch of gorillas. I don't want to act like an animal. I don't find it funny. What I want to do when I'm around other men is have cordial conversations about things we find interesting. But that's not what other men want to do. What other men want to do is express the aggressive tendencies and if you don't also want to do that they want to punish you as quickly as possible and then laugh about it. I used to have a friend. He was my best friend. And he was having a bachelor party at some restaurant one of his other friends owned. I wasn't friends with my best friend's friend, but that's the way it's always been with me, I can only be friends with one person at a time, even if that one person isn't just friends with me. The bachelor party started off normal, just a bunch of men standing around a dimly lit, mostly empty restaurant, drinking and talking loudly about what new fancy, expensive thing they just bought, or how they just cheated on their wives or girlfriends with a wife or a girlfriend of another man, or what deal they just closed, and on and on and on, until the man who owned the restaurant walked over to the front door, locked it, and told the rest of us to make a circle with the chairs and sit in the chairs, which we all did, just like children, just like our teacher had given us a command that was not to be questioned. So I'm sitting in a chair and I'm watching all of the other men grinning their shit-eating grins, or lighting up their cigars, and in walk two strippers, right into the center of the circle we've all just made. The owner of the restaurant then said, "Alright, gentleman, take out your cocks." and that's exactly what all the other men did, they unzipped their pants and let their dick hang out of their slacks. All the other men except for me, of course. I got up from the chair and said I had to use the bathroom. I made a beeline straight for the back door of the restaurant and was just about to exit when my best friend stopped me and asked me why I was leaving. "I don't want to take my dick

out in front of everyone," I said. My best friend asked me why not and I told him that I didn't feel comfortable getting naked in public. My best friend said we weren't in public, that we were in a private restaurant. He also said that we weren't getting naked, just taking our dicks out so that the strippers could do their thing. But I didn't want the strippers to do their thing on me. I didn't want to sit around in a circle and watch as the strippers did their thing on the other men. All I wanted to do was leave, and this is what I told my best friend, who said whatever and then walked away from me. I think I talked to my best friend once or twice after that night. I haven't spoken to him in almost twenty-five years. Since then he's gone on to make a whole bunch of movies about groups of men driving fancy, expensive cars very fast. I saw him once at a flea market about ten years ago and as he walked towards me I waved at him. He didn't wave back. He didn't even look at me. It was like I was a ghost. I've made one male friend since then, and whenever I tell long stories (like the time I was at my best friend's bachelor party and two strippers showed up and we were told to take out our dicks) he's very courteous and never tells me I'm full of shit, even when I am. Especially when I am.

