

THIS MAY, EVERYTHING GOES BOOM.

prelude to a

**SUPER
AIRPLANE**

an important reading book by

BRIAN SPAETH

foreward by the movie director BRAD RADBY

ALSO FROM LASTERDAY ENTERTAINMENT:

A BROADBAND MOTION PICTURE

WHO SHOT MAMBA?

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BRAD RADBY'S BRAD RADBY

THE COMPLETE FILMOGRAPHY (1999-2023)

This is a work of fiction.

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Fourth edition, coach class.

E

PTGA

*To Julie, for being my special airplane friend,
and to my family, for putting up with me.*

2012

BRAD RADBY'S FOREWARD

as told to
BRYNEE BROWNE

Singularly unique.

A force of nature.

Unfairly gifted.

Irresistibly attractive, and deceptively muscular.

Awesome and a really cool dude with fun stories who I like so much.

These short and simple phrases describe the author of this book.

As a famous movie director, I've had countless reading books, screenplays, video games, amusement park rides, pitches, and vague ideas cross my huge, super-cool wood desk. I love them all. It is a rare occasion that something crosses my huge, super-cool wood desk like what you are about to read inside this reading book.

Prelude to a Super Airplane quite literally changed my career in ways you can only imagine, unless you've been to one of my amazing parties at my huge, super-cool house, where I dazzle my guests by telling them about how *Prelude to a Super Airplane* did this.

That said, how it's changed my career pales in comparison to how it's changed my life. How it's changed *me*.

I hope it does the same for you.

NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR:

What follows are one hundred and four (104) wholly random, separate, simple, and unrelated thoughts about airplanes.

When pieced together, they form an intricately detailed and complex airplane story.

It was written in a period of seven (7) days.

prelude to a
SUPER
AIRPLANE

PART ONE

“My love! My greatest love!
From first I saw you, with the angst in
my eyes, I knew the truth. The angst was mine,
and you were my salvation. Furthermore.”

-Handsomar Horsebuck
*Andreanna Marsupial and the
Journey to the Golden Valleys*

1

The father watched the future of airplane riding take off from the largest runway at Chicago O'Hair International Airplane Station.

He was but one among a massive crowd that was staring in awe at the beautiful, huge machine leaving the ground. Those who weren't staring were cheering, because everything would be different now. The whole scene was beautiful and huge, and for the father, it was also sad.

It was sad because his two sons were aboard the future of airplane riding, and they, along with everyone else aboard, were going to die. This had to happen, the father knew, so that the flying car could take its rightful place as the future of airborne leisure and transportation.

The sounds coming from the future of airplane riding were thunderous, and booming, and also made a lot of noise. Gusts of wind caused by the launch of the beautiful machine made the piece of paper in the father's hand twitter and flinch.

He looked at this paper, and the father felt regret, because this was his youngest son's piece of paper.

In this moment, before his youngest son was about to die aboard the future of airplane riding, the father was sure the son wished he had the paper, or however that sentence was supposed to be worded.

The piece of paper was from a story his son had written. His youngest son had never written a story as epic, pretentious, and stupid as this one before, but now he had, and the father was quietly proud of this fact.

It was December 25th, 2012, and the father couldn't help but think how he had come to be in this place, on this day when everything about airplane riding was going to change forever.

"Merry Christmas," he said to himself.

PTSA 2012

2

I know it's against book writing tradition to have the intro-to-the-author stuff *after* the ominous, foreshadowing-impending-doom stuff, but when doing the first rewrite on the airplane book, I thought it needed to start with a little more punch and/or intrigue.

Anyway, my name is Brian Spathe¹, I wrote this book, and if you didn't figure it out from my note a few pages back, I think about airplanes like, all the time. When I'm not taking airplane rides, or talking to family and friends about airplanes, or lifting weights, you can probably find me somewhere by myself, simply thinking about airplanes.

I understand that you probably have some questions about me, including, but not limited to, how you can meet me in person. I promise – by the end of this book, you'll have many, many answers about many things, including that. Let's run through a few preliminary questions about me, and then I want to ask you a few things, too.

How do I have time to think about airplanes so much?

Not having a real job is probably the greatest contributor to my ability to do this, although a raw, savage passion for airplanes helps. Want something hard enough for yourself, and it will come true, they say. Well, some time ago, I decided I wanted to spend a lot of time thinking about airplanes, and now I do.

Another excellent question that I often get:

How do I earn money when all I do is lift weights and think about airplanes?

The boring truth is that I work in the entertainment industry.

This is mainly due to a serious lack of any kind of a formal education. You see, the thing that's great about working in the entertainment industry is it requires no qualifications at all, save for walking around saying that's what you do.

My dealings in the entertainment industry require me to wear three hats – an acting hat, a writing hat, and a producing hat. As a result of this three-hat-wearing lifestyle, I get to take many airplane rides, which is pretty ironic. Perhaps my career choice was subconsciously by design?

Short of finding true love, I find myself more or less satisfied with my life, at least when looking at it narrowly. In the bigger scope, I'm at a point where things are getting conflicted, and I'll explain that a bit later.

My life also involves a lot of looking in the mirror to make sure I look handsome and strong. I often wear t-shirts inside out, so they lay on my shoulders better – but not *too much* better. I don't want the results of my weight lifting to be too apparent, lest I'm misunderstood, and thought to be arrogant.

Let's talk about you, though. Do you think you would like to meet me in person?

My answer to this is yes – I'll bet you would. However, I'd really like to help you to discover this on your own, rather than just taking my word for it.

Because of this book writing I've done, I've become well versed in both psychiatry and scientific methodology. As such, I've developed a short personality quiz for you – the results will tell me exactly, within 27%, how much you'd like to meet me.

Later in the book, I've left space for you to answer the following five questions. I'll stress to you once, and only once, DO NOT take the quiz until you've reached the workbook page. I'll know if you cheated, and then you'll lose the quiz.

Okay, here are your questions.

- 1) If we had a one-week long airplane thinking contest, who do you think would win, and why?
- 2) List five things that you like.
- 3) Pick one of those things to be the only thing out of those five you're allowed to continue to like. Explain why.
- 4) Which of the following five words is misspelled: car, apple, dog, computer, fork.
- 5) Are you a good-looking, athletic girl under the age of 25, with a cutesy pop / rock singing voice and dark brown hair? Yes or no is fine here.

Again, DO NOT take this quiz until you reach the workbook page, which will explain how to tally your results.

¹ – You'll note I've cleverly disguised my name here inside the narrative. Call me a coward if you must, but I don't want to be at risk of my family (or me, for that matter) getting some lawyering person to sue me for what I'm about to say about them. This way I'm safely covered under parody or fiction or whatever real authors cover themselves² under.

² – My spelling/grammar check program is telling me this is supposed to be "them". I refuse to change it, but am open to the possibility it's wrong in some way.³

³ – I've never written a book before, but I personally feel this kind of healthy and honest exchange of ideas, between author and reader, is perhaps what's missing from modern literature?

3

Russell Slanteer was young and naïve and excited, because it was May of 1996, and he'd just discovered what he was going to do with the rest of his life.

Using an exciting new invention he'd learned of, the online internet, he'd gotten an airplane engineering internship at Southwestern Airplane Rides, one of the biggest airplane ride companies in These United States of America.

Russell had interviewed with a young management trainee named Michael J. Mikolay, who was the son of the company's owner, and whose first duty in his management-training program was to hire as many interns as humanly possible. Russell Slanteer became one of these interns, and because of this, one might say that airplane-riding history was made.

Russell Slanteer liked Michael J. Mikolay instantly. Like Russell, Michael was young and naïve and excited about his future. Unlike Russell, and this was part of what made him so interesting, Michael had many good stories about being the son of the owner of Southwestern Airplane Rides.

He also liked Michael because Michael worked as hard as any young man he'd ever met, and was determined to do every kind of different management trainee job in his father's company, in order to best learn the airplane riding industry.

In fact, in the first of many years that Russell Slanteer worked as an engineering intern at Southwestern Airplane Rides, it was Michael who was his airplane ride engineering manager.

Russell Slanteer and Michael J Mikolay bonded over that summer, more than any two people on Earth had ever bonded. They spent countless numbers of nights at the Southwestern Airplane

Rides offices, having sleepovers, and telling jokes and stories, and eating hamburgers, and playing a promotional, early release version of *Vegetable Trivia Game* on the TruthBox360.

(Michael's father was an early investor in Macrosoft, the company that owned the TruthBox360, which is why he always had promotional, early release versions of the most popular video games.)

Toward the end of that summer, Michael J. Mikolay was preparing to move on to the airplane waitressing portion of his management-training program at Southwestern Airplane Rides.

This made Russell Slanteer miss him before he was gone, and the morning after their eighty-seventh sleepover at the Southwestern Airplane Rides offices, Russell asked Michael to give him a positive reassurance of some kind.

"Hey, man..." Michael J. Mikolay put a hand on Russell Slanteer's shoulder, as a show of heterosexual friendship. "It looks like everything is gonna be perfect forever, huh?"

"Yeah, until the airplane ride industry is threatened by some exciting new invention and implodes on itself." Russell Slanteer knew Michael would understand his joke, because they had shared so many jokes that summer, and thus knew the intricacies of each other's senses of humor.

Michael J. Mikolay and Russell Slanteer laughed, because they were young and naïve and excited, and they knew that they were friends no matter what, and they knew what they were going to do with the rest of their lives.

What they didn't know is that they were wrong, and when the airplane riding industry, threatened by an exciting new invention, one day began to implode on itself, the method by which they would try to save it would damage their friendship in no small way.

4

The Acting Hat is probably my favorite hat to wear in the entertainment industry.

There are lots of reasons for this, but most of them come down to more money, more girls, and more fun. Now, a singularly unique actor is difficult to cultivate, which is why people trying to do acting should perfect the two techniques I use in my work.

The first of these techniques is to not blink at all after the director screams 'action'.

The second technique is something I call the "slow head turn to camera, with an angry/confused/amazed-to-be-in-this-situation squint, dramatic and slow head turn". This isn't an easy maneuver to execute, but the good thing is you can practice this in your real life, even when you're not doing your acting. It looks that natural.

What you need to do is slowly turn your head toward the camera (or mirror, or friend), while putting an angry and confused and amazed-to-be-in-this-situation squint in your eyes. Make sure to do it slow.

Other than that, doing acting is as simple as pretending to be a person you're not in real life, and then saying words in front of a camera. Ironically, my favorite acting performance I've ever done *was* executed in real life.

It took place at an airplane station, where I acted that I was the ghostwriter for the best selling author in the history of These United States of America. This was funny, because at the time, I'd never written a book before, and had to make everything up as I went along. (In acting, we call this "doing improv".)

The whole reason I did this was because while I love the airplane station, the last twenty minutes before you get on the airplane are awful. You've surely been there, inside this strange game you play with your fellow airplane riders. There's lots of tension, and positioning, and et al, etc.

You try your best to not sit directly next to anyone, and if you do, you hope dearly that they're not your airplane seatmate once you've boarded the airplane.

Since you didn't talk to them out there, you don't want to have to exchange that, "oh geez, it's you..." look.

(To great effect, I've used my "slow head turn to (airplane seatmate) with an angry/confused/amazed-to-be-in-this-situation squint, dramatic and slow head turn" for this before.)

Anyway, back to my acting story, which actually just took place last week. As I waited to board an airplane ride at LAZ, the main airplane station in Los Angeles, a young woman named Jennifer Cormier had sat down next to me.

Jennifer was good-looking, and athletic, and under the age of 25, with a cutesy pop/rock singing voice and dark brown hair – Jennifer Cormier was everything that scared and excited me in a woman. She was also way too talkative for the airplane station, which is why I dismissed her as my soul mate immediately.

When I say she was too talkative, I mean it. She talked to everyone; especially me, I assume because we were sitting right next to each other.

"I'm going here. What's there to do there? Is there anything historical there to go see? I'm a fitness model of some note in the fitness modeling industry. I like cookies."

Because her fitness modeling stories conflicted with her enjoyment of cookies, I decided that Jennifer Cormier was lying, and as such, concocted my own tale – the one about being a ghost-writer for the best selling author in the history of These United States of America.

We both enjoyed our web of lies, and got on the airplane, never to speak again.

After taking my place in seat A1, I felt a tap on my deceptively muscular shoulder.

Of course, it was Jennifer Cormier, and she was to sit next to me on the airplane ride. Jennifer Cormier was my airplane seat-mate.

Yes, her name was Jennifer Cormier, and against all odds, she actually *was* a fitness model of some note within the fitness model industry. She showed me her fitness-modeling portfolio, a few articles from the fitness modeling online internet gossip blogs, and other evidence. After awhile, I came to terms with the cookie enjoying conflict that had bothered me so much before.

Because I didn't want her to think I was a liar, I stuck with my story about being the ghostwriter for the best selling author in the history of These United States of America, and we spent the next four hours together.

By the time the airplane ride ended, we'd fallen deeply in love.

5

Army Captain Peter Ovaire was an ambitious soldier, with large ambitions.

In the heat of battle, he would often, not unlike a professional athlete, picture himself winning the battle. Peter Ovaire felt this visualization technique was an essential part of his many and varied Army Captaining successes.

Peter Ovaire wasn't shy about sharing this technique with his men, and they often stood in awe, as Peter dazzled them with his ability to both fight a battle *and* picture himself winning that same battle, all at once. He found this amusing, as Peter Ovaire had always been able to do two things at the same time – perhaps this was why he had become the top young Army Captain in this, America's Secret War With Brazil.

Captain Peter Ovaire was attempting his visualization technique on the morning of September 14, 1973, as he drove his grounded Army Battle Airplane through a one-foot thick solid gold barrier – the barrier that surrounded the headquarters of the Brazilian Warlord, Horatio Rodriguez.

Being inside the headquarters of Horatio Rodriguez was exciting for Peter Ovaire, for he had now done in seven days what the entire Marine Corps had been unable to accomplish in seven *weeks*.

Still, apprehension loomed, for in front of Peter Ovaire stood a second solid gold barrier, and this barrier was *two* feet thick. Peter did the math, and noted that the new barrier was twice as thick as the first.

(His airplane navigator, an aspiring scientist named Markush Von Vendervan, was supposed to be doing these calculations,

but he was currently having visions of what he would later say was his “scientific destiny”. The co-airplane driver was similarly useless, having passed out in fear before they had even finished their initial airplane crashing maneuver.)

Peter Ovaire noted several other things, including, but not limited to, twelve additional solid gold barriers that still lay ahead of him and his grounded Battle Airplane. These barriers were each a full foot thicker than the one that preceded them, and all were made of solid gold.

It was helpful to see these at this time, for it assisted Peter Ovaire in visualizing himself busting through each and every one of them in his Battle Airplane, which was now on fire. The fire originated from the five thousand men and children that made up Horatio Rodriguez’s El Elite Warrior Squad, who were now shooting Peter Ovaire’s Battle Airplane with flame throwers, and grenades, and handheld missiles, and special boulders, which exploded upon impact.

Regardless, Peter Ovaire was the best and brightest young Captain in the entire Army, and for this reason, he and his Battle Airplane pushed forward without hesitation, and penetrated the inner hot tub party war chamber of the Brazilian Warlord, Horatio Rodriguez.

In this moment, Peter Ovaire knew that he had won America’s Secret War With Brazil for These United States of America, and he also knew that this would propel him into the national spotlight as a war hero, even though America’s Secret War With Brazil was a secret.

Peter Ovaire sat back in his Army Battle Airplane seat, ignoring his babbling young scientist of a co-airplane-driver, Markush Von Vendervan. For in this moment, Peter Ovaire thought of his large ambitions.

Captain Peter Ovaire, in fact, was using his visualization technique to see the day that he would become President of These United States of America.

6

Wearing my Producer Hat is the hardest, most complex thing I have to do when working in the entertainment industry.

Ironically, there's a simple reason for this: answering the question "What does a producer actually do?" is nearly impossible, and it's asked of me more than any other thing.

My dad will ask me this question at least once, without fail, on the rare occasions we speak. My usual answer is, "The producer makes the project happen. He gets it done. Goodbye." It's vague, but also the truth.

The Producer Hat is a "no matter what" hat, and usually involves either asking for money to get a project made, or screwing people over. Often both. For example, let's say you needed a music track for a project, and knew of two composers who could do the job.

The first step is simple in concept, but difficult in execution: you have to get an investor to give you the money you need to fund the production of your project. (Without the project, you don't need the music.)

Like I said, this part is a "one plus two equals three" procedure, and primarily involves telling your investor they're all but guaranteed to make their money back, when in reality, there's a 99.99% chance they'll never see it again. (If that sounds risky to you, don't worry – there are all kinds of lawyering tricks you can use to avoid getting sued.)

This part is especially hard for me, because the potential investor usually starts asking stupid questions like, "How do you plan to make money on this?" or "Do you have any sort of business plan I can look at?"

It gets me all flustered and angry, because they're blatantly trying to destroy my artistic vision.

Anyway, let's assume you have your funding, because you found somebody smart enough not to mess with the details of why you need their money. Now you put on your Producer Hat, and deal with your two music composers, who you want to create an ominously, impending-doomy track for the climax of your project.

This is where the fun starts. You might have both of them work on it, telling each that they have the job. Then, you may use subtle trickery to manipulate events, causing each composer to find out about the other one. This makes them both even more desperate to get the job.

In the end, you have *two* ominously, impending-doomsy tracks, and you get to pick the one you like better, telling the other composer that "things are delayed a bit".

Be sure to stress that you'll be in touch, because this thing will get going again soon, and you have a lot of other things coming up, too. You say this even if you have nothing coming up.

I'm not sure how or why I became good at this, but I've always thought my older brother was wearing a metaphorical Producer Hat for most of his childhood. I'm man enough to admit I was, too. We were constantly screwing each other over.

In retrospect, this was probably our mom's fault – she'd raised us as twins, even though he was older by four years. (I know what you're thinking, and yes, the whole family eventually agreed she was crazy.)

My brother's name is Tim, and growing up, Tim had two loves – airplanes and Star Trek. How and if these two loves connect to one another, I'll never know, but his love of them was equal.

A third love was pencil sketching, a skill in which Tim had singularly unique talent, yet no desire to pursue beyond the

recreational level, which I've always thought was a shame.

When Tim learned he would never be able to command his own fictional starship, he turned his career attentions to his other love, airplanes.

This is skipping ahead a bit, but today, Tim is a Colonel in the Airplane Riding Marshall Taskforce Agency, or ARMTA, where he makes both his peers and his underlings refer to him as "Colonel T".

(ARMTA is an important part of how our country's airplane rides run safely. I read one study that said without ARMTA, airplane rides would be +/-4000% more at risk of crashes, resulting in a vastly increased number of fiery, crashy, airplaney fireballs falling to the Earth. These fireballs would be full of dead airplane riders, who died from being on fire.)

Like I said, our mother raised Tim and I as twins, which always made things awkward for my *actual* twin sister, Kristin. There's not much to say about her, really. It seems in the twins-gestation process, I received what looks, personality, and talent were available to be gestated.

Maybe this contributed to my mom's madness – this dual-twins game she'd set up. She'd often have to tell people we were triplets, while focusing on the fact that Tim and I were twins, when *really* Kristin and I were the twins.

Back to my big brother – Tim and I were close, which meant I learned a lot about Star Trek, and even more about airplanes, since the continuity and mythology of Star Trek baffled me. For example - how could Mr. Spok talk if he had pointed ears *and* he was an alien?

Colonel T and I haven't spoken for years – in fact, I haven't seen Tim since I was 12, when he ran away forever.

When Tim ran away, I stayed behind, substituting "thinking about airplanes" for "playing with my brother" in my little kid daily planner.

Wow.

That was supposed to be all about wearing a Producing Hat, and it turned into a story about my estranged brother. It appears I'll need to acquire an Editing Hat.

“And oh! What a fine hat it would be!” he declared, feeling it was a very literary thing to write in his airplane book.

PTSA 2012

7

The Studio Head was aging upward in his years, and this often made him tired in his legs.

On many of the movie sets he visited these days, the Studio Head would rest his legs by sitting in one of the fancy directors chairs provided for the primary cast and above-the-line crew.

These were not ordinary directors chairs, like the ones that were stacked up haphazardly at the end of a day's shooting. No, these directors chairs were made of an exquisite Australian wood, and needed to be massaged with an expensive oil once every six hours.

This added over a million dollars to the budget of each movie the Studio Head would green-light, but the Studio Head knew that artists, by nature, were crazy. By providing them with such a perk as these directors chairs, they would do better work for him in his studio's movies.

The Studio Head, who still liked to promote his alpha dawg status despite his advancing years, normally made it a point to sit in the directors chair of the director of the movie whose set he was visiting. On this day and on this particular set, however, the Studio Head knew that sitting in that chair was disrespectful, and would be wrong.

It was July of 1998, and the set that the Studio Head was on today was the set of the finest film that would ever be made in the history of Hollywood. He knew this already; even before the editor and his by-the-book editing process would attempt to destroy the director's artistic vision.

The director was a young ingénue by the name of Brad Radby, and this was his very first job as a movie director.

The Studio Head had plucked the young director from near obscurity, handing him an impeccable, gloriously written screenplay of epic drama and scope, two a-list movie stars, and a budget of one hundred and fifty million dollars.

The Studio Head had done this because he was aging upward in his years, and before he passed on to purgatory, he wanted to see a *film* again.

Brad Radby's parents were on the set this day, the final day of filming, and the Studio Head noted the wide-eyed dazzle in his mother's eyes, and the fascinated confusion in his father's. Surely, he thought, Brad Radby must have had an interesting and scary childhood, and perhaps this is why he had decided to become a movie director.

The Studio Head knew then what he must do, and it made him sad.

He would need to manipulate a grand series of events, so as to ensure that Brad Radby became a famous movie director.

Yes, Brad Radby would have to become very rich and famous.

Brad would be a rock star of a director – one who never stopped working for a moment, and would always be distracted by the vast numbers of average screenplays crossing his desk. This, because he would be heavily, obnoxiously overpaid to make those average screenplays into average movies.

The Studio Head's legs suddenly became very tired, and he sat down in Brad Radby's directors chair, so that he may rest them.

8

Ah, ye ole Writing Hat – this one is simple, because a writer is a person who does writing.

Movie scripts entail the vast majority of my writing work, and I've been told that I have a singularly unique ability best described as, and I quote, "an a-hole-like ability to take anything and turn it into a screenplay".

(The fact that you're reading this book makes this ironically true.)

Additionally, at various times and for various reasons, I've written songs, and for a brief window, I attained godhood in the professional basketball online internet blogosphere.

(There were six months in my early 20s wherein I illegally drew up contracts for a large lawyering firm in Cleveland, Ohio. They paid me under the table, which for that and other obvious reasons, I won't elaborate on. I don't even know if that counts as writing.)

What you're doing now is reading my first attempt at writing a reading book. I've never done this before, and I hope it doesn't affect the text and/or clarity of this reading book, as it is my first attempt.

As such, I think you can probably expect repetitive phrasing, amateurish melodramatic prose, incorrect grammar and syntax, overwritten prose, adverb abuse, bad prose, over-identification of characters, and a host of other poor book writing indicators, including, but not limited to, completely making up new words, and giving up on certain sentences wholesale.

There are also a host of words, phrases, and extra commas I use all the time that I'm 90% sure I'm using wrong or whatever.

A few I can remember in this moment:

- any and all forms of "ironic"
- raw, savage
- the whole "and I/and me" thing
- fingering
- ,
- or whatever

As a gift to you, and in an attempt to mask my amateur book-writing status, I'll try to keep in mind the best writing advice I've ever gotten: KEEP IT SIMPLE.

That said, in this moment, one thing I know I'll do is enhance sentences with stuff like "furthermore," or "in this moment," just to make things sound more like critically acclaimed literature should sound.

Now that I've described my various entertainment industry hats, we can probably get on with the heavy lifting of the narrative. I do want to go over one more thing, and please know that the following words came to me in a dream – a dream I'll never, ever talk about.

This is some raw, savagely honest stuff, so turn away if you're sensitive. Call this a reading book mission statement.

My name is Brian, and I think about airplanes.

I've been called many things in my life, by many people, and will continue to have these things said about me in the future, no matter where I take myself, and what I achieve.

At various times, I've been told I am irresistibly attractive, unfairly gifted, deceptively muscular, and more than anything, people who meet me tell me I'm a force of nature, and singularly unique.

For many years, I've tried, often with great success, to suppress the animalistic need I have to embrace my vast power as a superior human being.

And perhaps this is why, in my most private moments, I hurt inside, sad.

With a sadness.

I have no idea why I centered that, but it was effective, yes?

Welcome to the first reading book that I've ever written. I'm not even sure what this reading book is about yet – I just love the title.

It sounds epic and pretentious and stupid all at once, and if I were going to write a book, that's exactly what it would have to be like.

PTSD
2012

9

Forty-seven floors.

The airplane had forty-seven floors. Each one of these was a wonder of technology and function, and a singularly unique creative vision of the future of airplane design.

The first floor of the airplane was the airplane's airplane baggage cargo hold. This was an unexciting place to be, except that inside this chamber was the best place to hear the airplane's sixty-two pairs of airplane wheels doing their ascending and subsequent descending upon the take-off and landing of the airplane.

On the second floor of the airplane, above the first floor, which was the airplane baggage cargo hold, was a gas station. This was so that the airplane could refuel itself without stopping. The airplane ran on gasoline, because its creator was a man, and he believed that real men built things that needed crude oil to operate.

The third through fifth floors were the common airplane cabins. These three common airplane cabin floors were not unlike a traditional airplane's, albeit much more luxurious and futuristic, in both appearance and function. There were both stairways and escalators between these floors, to allow for varied methods of traveling between them. Dual fire station-style action-poles were installed down the middle of the third through fifth floors, and this was simply an aesthetic design choice by the creator. Although not actually conducting electricity, these poles were labeled, "DANGER: HIGH VOLTAGE".

The sixth floor of the forty-seven floor airplane was a retail and entertainment extravaganza complex, and included everything one could want or need on an airplane ride, including, but not

limited to, a grocery store, a butcher shop, a hot and trendy dance club, a weightlifting gym, and a ye olde blacksmith's shoppe.

There was parking for exactly twenty-three cars on this floor, and everything was connected by holographic hover-ramps. These ramps hovered at varying levels, anywhere from four to six feet over a giant aquarium, which had a retractable glass cover, and was filled with sharks.

Nobody knew what was on the seventh floor, because it was a secret, and had a large pad-locked door at the top of the rusted, industrial-style stairway leading up to it.

Above that were forty additional floors, each one filled with luxurious condominiums, which exclusive and important people were permitted to lease for vast amounts of money.

There was an option to buy the condominium, but only after a three-year lease term was completed. The creator of the airplane was adamant that only those who were serious about living on the airplane be permitted to buy a condo on it, and this leasing agreement was his way of ensuring that.

There were also forty-one private, hologram-powered elevators on this airplane, each one a private conduit to the condos of the passengers who chose to live there. The forty-first elevator led to the observation deck on the roof of the airplane, which was huge, and dangerous, and exciting to be on.

The cockpit of the airplane was not unlike the bridge of a prominent science fiction television show and movie series. This was primarily because of the design aesthetics of the airplane, and not because it was necessary. Because of the many advanced systems and technologies that ran the airplane, only the airplane Captain, who would also be the airplane driver, needed be in this cockpit, or bridge, for the airplane to fly.

Before boarding the airplane with forty-seven floors, all airplane riders would, on the runway, be entertained with a reunion concert from the original members of Gunz N' Rozes, who would

play their classic hit, "Welcome to the Junglez". This would happen before each and every airplane ride the airplane would take.

Accompanying the performance would be a dance number by the twenty thousand airplane employees, who were all beautiful girls with athletic bodies, and under the age of 25. Their uniforms were sultry, seductive cheerleader outfits, adorned with the logo of the company that owned the forty-seven story airplane. Half the employees would have their hair in pony-tails, the other half pigtails.

Regardless of their ownership of a condominium, during take-off and landing, all airplane riders were required to reside in their non-assigned seats inside one of the common cabins, as was required by the safety standards of ARMTA, an important governing body of airplane riding.

Only Mac-based personal computers would be permitted aboard this airplane, and anyone found using a Windows-based machine would find it unable to boot. All airplane riders also had to sign agreements that upon boarding, they would only use the metric system, even when thinking to themselves.

Immediately before take-off, each airplane rider would receive a visit from their personal, jet powered airplane waitress, who would give them an autographed photo of their airplane Captain and driver, Bruce Willis. (He was to be the only male airplane employee on the airplane.)

In the photo, Bruce Willis was wearing his airplane driver uniform, and using a reverse-flamethrower to extinguish a fire. You couldn't tell what was on fire, because the reverse-flamethrower was unshooting so many massive flames. There was also a big sound effect that said, "THRAWSHWARRR!!!"

This enhanced the effect and imagery of how large the thing that Bruce Willis was unsetting on fire actually was.

Each airplane rider would get to spend time with their autographed airplane driver photograph until the airplane reached

its cruising altitude, after which their jet-powered airplane waitress, who was wearing her sultry and seductive cheerleader uniform, would take it back. She would then seal it inside an airtight protective sleeve for the duration of the airplane ride.

What the airplane rider did with it when they got home was up to them, but nobody would be permitted to leave the airplane with a tarnished photo of the airplane driver, Bruce Willis.

Every day would be Christmas Day on the airplane with forty-seven floors, and riding on it also came with certain other raw, savage guarantees.

One was that it would be the most exciting, privilege-filled, important airplane ride one would ever take. Another was that nothing one could do in life would ever be as exciting or important as that airplane ride. A third was explicit – this airplane ride would be exciting. Finally, a lavish, seven-course Christmas Day dinner would be served on each and every airplane ride, regardless of length.

These guarantees were engraved on solid gold, four-foot tall hologram plaque-bots, one of which was on each of the airplane's forty-seven floors. The 47 solid gold hologram plaque-bots controlled the vast majority of the airplane's functions with their advanced, holographic artificial intelligence and their sultry, feminine robotic voices.

One last thing that made this airplane unique was its reinforced hull, internal gravity system, and external laser cannons. In times of peril for the planet Earth, these attributes allowed the forty-seven-story airplane to travel into outer space for up to six hours at a time.

Yes, this was an airplane built by a man. For men. And women. It was built for everyone, and it had forty-seven floors and was exciting and important to ride on.

It was about to change everything, and its creator named it *The Super Airplane*.

10

The witch was sitting on her broom, reading a paperback reading book, which appeared, from the intensity of her reading, to be of great importance to her.

Floating in the air behind her were exactly thirty-nine candles, and the light from their flames helped her to read the words inside the important reading book.

Even though she was but thirty-two pages in, the witch had become engrossed in this reading book. This surprised the witch, because when her reading group had put forth the book, she'd found the title ill conceived.

This was because, in the witch's opinion, the title of the reading book made it sound epic, pretentious, and stupid, all at once.

After many years of reading her reading books, and because of her membership in several reading groups, the witch knew a book such as one fitting this description was not possible – it was contradictory, and outside the grasp of normal human ability. And so, when presented with the book in her reading book group, she assumed the book, with its ill conceived title, must be poorly written.

Knowing all of this, and despite the poor writing, she was enjoying the book immensely.

She'd even taken to periodically emailing the author, who readily (and stupidly, she thought) provided his online internet email address inside the book - airplanebrian6@gmail.com.

Because of this, the witch feared he was possibly just another in the long line of charismatic, good-looking idiot savant types she tended to attract.

The witch closed the book, for at this time another member of her coven/reading group was contacting her by way of a telepathy spell.

“Abracadabra!”

The witch needed to say this in order to cast her reply telepathy spell. (She laughed to herself, as she thought of all the foolish humans that thought this was a word only for magicians, who didn't even cast real spells. The irony!)

This went on for 55 minutes – the back and forth telepathy between the witch and the other witch. The one from her coven/reading group.

When the telepathic conversation was over, the witch looked to the moon, basking her witch-face in its soft glow. She thought about the two vitally important new witch-tasks she had to do tomorrow afternoon, and she was happy.

The witch fingered these new tasks into her Blackberri Tornado mobile telephone's calendar, placing them after lunch, but before her trip to the tattoo parlor.

She then swirled the thirty-nine candles in dizzying circles around the ceiling - a spontaneous and girlish show of glee! This surprised her, as she had not been a girl in quite some time.

In fact, when she was reading her reading books alone by candlelight, or when she went out to the hot and trendy dance clubs, the witch often felt quite old...and alone.

But now, because of the epic, pretentious, and stupid book from her reading group/coven, and because of the two new tasks in her Blackberri Tornado, everything had changed, and perhaps work would not be so unbearable the next day.

11

I'm as excited about the election as anyone.

I wouldn't paint myself as a political junkie – to be honest, I've never even voted. But look – how could you not be into all this “flying cars vs. airplanes” stuff?

The country hasn't been this divided since The Civil War, and that was like, a long time ago or whatever.

Plus, for the first time in I don't know how many years, we've got two over-60 white males running for President of These United States of America. This is historic stuff, and I'm not going to exclude myself due to apathy and ignorance again. Not this time.

Now, whom exactly will I vote for? At this point, I'm sure you know it's going to be whichever candidate is more pro-airplane.

While the current Democratic President has done a phenomenal job in all arenas – the economy is back, foreign relations are wide-open, racism is all but extinct, he's cured sickness – there's one thing about him that I can't really vibe with, and that's his stance on airplane ride safety.

I swear to you, this has nothing to do with my brother's position with ARMTA. Remember, we haven't even spoken in over a decade and a half, furthermore.

It's just that with the number of airplane rides I take, airplane ride safety is of the utmost importance. Even if I'm not a rider on a given airplane ride, I might be thinking about it, and the last thing I want to do is think about a fiery, crashy, airplaney, airplane ride crash.

There's nothing sadder than a broken airplane wing, and if there's a bunch of dead airplane riders all over it and/or around it, it's even worse.

Here's a quote our current President gave last week, referencing his proposed 46% cutback of ARMTA funding:

"We haven't had a major airplane ride crash in the seven years I've been in office. Frankly, I think airplane ride crashes are extinct, and with the potential to see flying cars within the next two to four years, we may be approaching the day when people don't take airplane rides at all."

You can see my fears in every single word of that statement, except for "airplane ride", provided its taken on its own and out of context. I need not remind you - the liberal hippie running for President on the left shares his view.

Summing up, in conclusion, not only is the Democratic Nominee ready to make airplane rides more dangerous, he's also ready to usher in a world *without any airplane rides at all*.

I think you know where I'm leaning, and that's with a no-nonsense, pro-airplane President. Namely, Republican Nominee Peter Ovaire. Oh, and he's also a big-time war hero, and nobody even knows why. That's how much he's respected!

In conclusion again, Peter Ovaire's my man, and he's got my first-ever vote.

12

Jennifer Cormier was born into fitness model royalty.

Her father was the famous fitness model, Julian Cormier, and her mother was the even more famous fitness model, Jennifer Cormier, Sr. That her parents shared a last name was pure coincidence, but caused there to be no shortage of jabber in the fitness model gossip newspapers when they married.

Jennifer's younger brother, Julian Jr., was also a fitness model. He was practically a clone of their father, and the jabber in the online internet fitness model gossip blogs was that he actually *was* a clone of their father. The distribution conduit had changed, but Jennifer's parents always laughed that the industry hadn't: fitness models loved their gossip.

Current jabber also focused on Jennifer, because rumors were rampant that Jennifer Cormier was working outside the fitness modeling industry under the alias of Jewel Dopplepop, the lead singer of the children's pop/rock trio, The Boppin' Dopplepops.

The Boppin' Dopplepops were the biggest thing to hit children's entertainment in at least nine months, and tonight, in a sold-out arena in her hometown of The New York City, Jennifer Cormier, aka Jewel Dopplepop, was thinking about the mess of lies her life had become.

That she was able to do this while singing the Boppin' Dopplepops' biggest hit, "Doople Dopple Down to the Zoo," was nothing short of a miracle. Of course, Jennifer had sung this song, by her rough estimation, somewhere just north of seven hundred times this month alone.

It wasn't just the heat from the fitness model gossip blogs that

was distracting Jennifer Cormier tonight, though. She was becoming used to the gossip blogs running their side-by-side photos, meticulously comparing the toned, athletic, and eerily similar bodies of Jennifer Cormier and Jewel Dopplepop.

Why, just before going on stage with the Boppin' Dopplepops' opening number, "Who Popped the Dopplepops? (The Happy Song)", a young reporter by the name of Eastham Way had drilled her with more pointed questions regarding the controversy than she'd ever encountered.

Eastham Way, she'd learned, was working freelance for one of the bigger online internet fitness model gossip blogs, and Jennifer Cormier knew her combination of an all-too-calm "no comment" and a paranoid "where'd you hear that, don't say that out loud" responses would ignite a fresh week of speculation and jabber.

Of course, Jennifer Cormier was able to compartmentalize the thoughts of her dual lives, because in this moment, all she could think about was the irresistible young actor/writer with whom she'd fallen deeply in love on a recent airplane ride.

Jennifer Cormier sensed that he, like herself, was singularly unique, and that he, also like she, was struggling to come to terms with his power and status as a superior human being.

After all, Jennifer Cormier, who as Jewel Dopplepop, was one of the most famous people in the world among 2-7 year old children, was *also* a fitness model of some note.

Who was she to have a clouded mind regarding her true worth and value to the world? Wasn't she a force of nature? Isn't this what Johnny Joe Dopplepop, the lead guitarist of the Boppin' Dopplepops, told her all the time?

Knowing of this controversy, confusion, and self-torment would disgust Jennifer Cormier's poor mother and father and (allegedly) cloned brother, were they to find out these things.

What a silly girl she was – with her secret airplane love affair with a Hollywood actor/writer, and her dual life as children’s pop/rock star Jewel Dopplespop!

Oh! But what the jabber in the fitness model gossip blogs would be, if they could verify their suspicions with viable evidence of some kind!

PTSA 2012

13

“What do you mean you’ve never voted?”

Despite being seemingly irresistible to everyone I’ve ever met, I’ve never been able to sustain a long-term, lasting relationship.⁴ It usually came back to that question – the one Jennifer just asked me.

Her phrasing was weird, but they all seemed to do it – the “What do you mean...?” portion.

I’ve tried to think of a thousand million different ways to say it, so they understand better, but always come back to thinking that “I’ve never voted” was about as clear and concise as I could be. What exactly does she think I meant?

“Well. I think this will be our first fight.”

Jennifer had come to visit me from The New York City. After the four hours we spent on that airplane ride together, there was no way we wouldn’t see each other again. Magic is magic, and we’d hit magic on that airplane ride.

Four hours of like, amazing conversation, mixed in with the occasional perfect silence, and even some non-awkward, accidental handholding when I dropped my *Entertaining Weekly* magazine.

We’d read that issue together, and it was the first time I’d ever done simultaneous, out-loud magazine reading. I’d always felt it a bit taboo, and man...it is. Sultry and seductive doesn’t do it justice.

It didn’t hurt that the cover story was about the *Andreanna Marsupial* book series – turns out we’re both huge fans.

I tried to play coy when she told me Handsomar Horsebuck was her favorite character. She, in turn, played coy during the Boppin' Dopplepops article, as some sort of retaliatory flirtation technique.

Anyway, I had name-dropped my brother's government so I could meet Jennifer at the airplane gate, and the magic picked up right where we'd left off.

We went to airplane baggage claim, got her airplane bag and this awesome pink guitar she'd brought, and...I don't know – it was indescribable. This was the woman I would marry, hands down, no doubt, 100%.

I carried her to my car, symbolic of her being my future bride, and we left the airplane station.

That's when everything went bad. Worse than that - it was a disaster. We couldn't look at each other without it being awkward, and anytime we tried to start a conversation, there was no common ground. If she said the sky was blue, I said it was *not* blue, and vice versa.

The voting thing was the last straw for her. And for me. We were out of straws. Both of us. Together.

Jennifer stayed for one night, changed her flight, and left. It was by mutual decision – Jennifer and me just didn't work.

Our love was simply two moments in time – one on an airplane ride, and the second during an airplane station pick-up. That was all it would ever be.

⁴ – *I did have one very serious, sustained, long-term, lasting relationship, but since the girl it was with utterly destroyed my heart, and any chance of having a second sustained, long-term, lasting relationship, I try not to think about it.*

14

Dr. Ramie Fromica stared at the walls and walls of books that lined her fancy, five-walled psychiatry office.

She loved to read, which is why she had so many walls. Without this vast amount of wall space, there was no way she'd have room to store all her books.

Nathan Hamm was lying on her fancy psychiatry sofa, and Dr. Ramie Fromica was thankful that his hour was almost up. Nathan Hamm was, in Ramie's eyes, a raw, savage human being, not unlike her husband.

The doctor knew that Nathan owned a large beverage company of some kind, and was very stressed, and that this often caused him to talk loudly, and that it was her job to help him fix these things, and that he paid her well to do this, and...it was, as it was on most days, all quite unbearable.

She sighed to herself, but out loud, so that her patient could hear her frustration with his presence in her fancy psychiatry office. Was this all there was? She also said *this* out loud, and to her surprise, Nathan Hamm began to answer this question, in detail, and of course, at a high volume.

In this moment, Dr. Ramie Fromica was glad that Nathan Hamm talked with his boisterous volume, because it allowed her to finger her Blackberri Tornado, which was far more important and interesting than whatever he was speaking of.

(The irony of this was not lost on Ramie Fromica, because Nathan Hamm had been speaking all day of a disastrous, fiery series of explosions that had taken place at his company, setting great numbers of his employees on fire.)

And so, if it was not already clear enough, Dr. Ramie Fromica was feeling unsettled in her life, despite her efforts to shoot metaphorical injections of excitement into her day-to-day doings.

She was planning a new tattoo, and had joined a new reading group, and was suggesting ill-conceived courses of action to her patients, so that their problems became larger than hers.

Nathan Hamm was incoherent in his ramblings now, and so Dr. Ramie Fromica picked a list of prospective new patients, and chose one at random. To Dr. Ramie Fromica's dismay, her choice was a young fitness model of some note with a "dual identity issue, and also a unique, airplane-based relationship problem".

She sighed out loud to herself again, and imagined the pathetic and predictable first meeting, during which the fitness model would surely ask for a prescription within minutes, as all her other entertainment industry patients did.

Nathan Hamm was now standing on the fancy psychiatry sofa, screaming and swearing about his employees, and their tendencies to start large fires. Dr. Ramie Fromica sighed, and waved her hand at Nathan Hamm, wishing it would cause him to fall down and go to sleep. She was unsurprised when he did exactly that.

Dr. Ramie Fromica saw that she was, for all intents and purposes, alone in her office now, and she supposed this was by her own doing. At least she still had her walls, she thought to herself, out loud.

Her five walls, with all of their reading books.

15

I'm not going to turn this book into an analysis of the various airplane ride companies, but I do want to take the time to send some business to my favorite one.

Surely you've heard of Southwestern Airplane Rides, but have you ever taken an airplane ride on Southwestern Airplane Rides? It's not the most expensive or fancy airplane ride company – in fact, I think it's the cheapest.

But they do one thing that I simply love, and that's self-seating.

Being tall and deceptively muscular, it's difficult to find an airplane seat that's totally comfortable. The goal, therefore, is to get into either the front row or the middle row, where there's more legroom for someone like myself.

With Southwestern Airplane Rides' self-seating, they make my task that much easier. I just have to make sure I use their online internet website to check-in from home, absolutely as early as it's permitted.

This gives you an "A" designation, which means you get on the airplane first. Following the logic – if I get on first, there are more seats open, often including those I desire.

Simple, yes?

Perhaps I'm easily pleased, but being able to do this outweighs the mountain of corners Southwestern Airplane Rides cuts in all areas of the airplane ride experience.

These are too numerous to list here, and you could probably write an entire book just about these cut corners.

Oh, the other thing I love is their slogan, because it doesn't try to fool or dazzle you – it is what it is:

Our Airplane Rides Are Good Enough, and Get You From Point A to Point B, Safely and On Time

What more or less could be said than that?

Southwestern Airplane Rides also has celebrity endorsements, with straight-to-the-point commercials featuring those celebrities. They go all out on these, and get famous movie directors to bring their unique concepts and sensibilities to them, and I admire that.

Summing it all up, they get you where you're going in one piece, let you pick your own seat, and support the arts. That's all I could ever want from an airplane ride company.

PISA
2012

16

The moon probe drove along the surface of the moon, doing the important moon probing activities and duties for which it was created.

These activities and duties were programmed into the moon probe's robotic brain, and the moon probe was glad for this.

Should these activities and duties not be in its brain, or should those activities and duties need not be done any longer, then the moon probe would become quite confused and sad, and perhaps would even go insane.

The moon probe knew this, and so in its own robotic way, it was happy with its life.

One of the moon probe's primary duties was to keep the moon's holographic billboard's sensors clean, so that the holographic billboard's advertisements projected correctly into the Earth's atmosphere.

Right now, in this moment, the holographic billboard was displaying a holographic advertisement for the newest *Andreanna Marsupial* reading book, which was also the fifteenth and final *Andreanna Marsupial* reading book.

This, the moon probe knew, was a very important thing back on Earth, where it had been built.

It knew this because it was a curious moon probe, and when it wasn't performing its various activities and duties, the moon probe kept up with the latest jabber of the online internet pop culture blogs back on Earth.

The moon probe's connection to the online internet was vitally important to the ongoing maintenance and performance of its moon probe logic circuits, and so when this connection was suddenly broken, the moon probe experienced fear.

Its fear soon turned to greater fear, and then confusion, then anger, then angry confusion, then a moment of confused, fearful reflection, and then finally, after 0.00461 seconds, the moon probe's logic circuits began sparking.

It was in this way that the moon probe stopped performing its moon probing activities and functions, and instead began setting the moon's holographic billboard projector on fire.

PTSA
2012

17

“Big Daddy Paleface get that part wrong. Hrrggg.”

Mudjukee needed to shift his weight. He’d been squatting in this tree for several hours, and his left leg had fallen asleep, to the point of total and complete numbness.

This made him distraught, because Mudjukee knew those prickly feelings would be coming as soon as he got his circulation going again. He didn’t understand the prickly feelings, because he was an honorable and traditional Cherokee Indian, and refused to become wise to the medicines and terminologies of the paleface doctors.

Below him, a father was camping with his two sons. The boys were close in age – perhaps fraternal twins, Mudjukee reasoned.

“Hrrggg...”

Mudjukee had been making this sound of frustration a lot the past three nights, listening to Big Daddy Paleface tell Mudjukee’s now legendary story to his two paleface sons.

Mudjukee scraped another note into the tree with his axe – he’d been keeping a detailed list of all the liberties Big Daddy Paleface was taking with the narrative.

Before they went home, Mudjukee planned to invite the three of them up into the tree to go over, point-by-point, where Big Daddy Paleface had perhaps misunderstood Mudjukee’s tale.

He could’ve done this earlier, but Mudjukee was fed up, and wanted to get every single piece of misinformation in chronological order, so that he could make a reasonable, organized presentation, and have a healthy exchange of ideas with the

palefaces. Mudjukee had no desire, unlike his Cherokee ancestors, to get into a confrontation.

Besides, he liked this particular family – they seemed sensible, even if one of the boys had an eerie fascination with the pale-faces' big, loud, metal birds.

This was something that had been happening for the past several years now – fathers bringing their sons out to these woods, telling them the tale of Mudjukee. The details, of course, had now gotten so twisted that it didn't resemble Mudjukee's story at all, beyond the name.

"Hrrggg..." Mudjukee rubbed his temples – now Mudjukee's wife was dead, too? Where did Big Daddy Paleface get this stuff?

Mudjukee had had enough for one evening. He gathered up his things, swung his axe over his shoulder, and hopped down out of the tree, into the shadows.

"HRRGGG...!"

He'd landed awkwardly on his sleeping leg, at the exact moment when the prickly feelings were sweeping in.

Mudjukee signaled to his horsey, Pencils, to quietly follow him. Because Pencils, whose name had also been tarnished by the palefaces, was an intelligent and loyal horsey, he did as Mudjukee asked, and walked on his tippy-toes.

Mudjukee nodded his thanks to Pencils, and walked away as carefully as he could, taking one step, and then dragging his sleeping leg behind him, hoping it woke up sooner rather than later.

The prickly feelings were bothering Mudjukee so badly, for a moment he was actually able to forget about this latest, bastardized adaptation of his life story.

18

Somehow Senator Joseph Piperbraum had never been in this particular airplane station goods shop before, despite his many important Senatoring travels.

That's what made his purchase of items at the airplane station goods shop so exciting. It was exciting because it was new. His arms were bursting with a variety of items – some he needed, some not as much, and some he had no use for at all.

Senator Piperbraum brought his mother on this trip, and she noted that the prices here in this airplane station goods shop were higher than in other goods shops, such as the regular one, near her home in a suburb just outside of Akron, Ohio.

“Mother, please,” he had a way of chiding her that was both loving and warm. “I’m a United States Senator now.”

“Senators don’t worry about money?” she had this same loving and warm demeanor, and it was clear he had inherited it from she, as they were related.

“Senators don’t have their mothers telling them how to spend the money they have, be it a little or a lot.”

He winked at her. She winked back, and they both laughed. His mother had raised him alone, and thus Senator Piperbraum had a special bond with her. It was special because he didn’t have this bond with anyone else. Just with her, his mother. He was a Senator.

They winked at each other for forty-five minutes, alternating eyes each and every time. An airplane station goods store employee noted this – first with amazement, then annoyance.

Senator Piperbraum had in his hands the airplane station goods store's last copy of that week's *Entertaining Weekly*, and several customers had asked for said periodical. There was a shortage of the issue nationwide, as the cover story was all about the fifteenth, and final, reading book in the *Andreanna Marsupial* series.

The airplane station goods store employee tapped the Senator on the shoulder.

The Senator turned his head to this uninvited guest to his world slowly, and with a squint in his eyes that conveyed anger and confusion, and an amazement to be in this situation. It was not unlike what Bruce Willis would have done in one of his many famous movies.

"Mister, you gonna buy that EW or what?"

The Senator's mother began to speak, but her son was quick to hush her with an ever-so-slight wave of his hand. Being a Senator brought perks, such as this air of natural authority. Joseph Piperbraum liked to think he was singularly unique in this way, but of course, there were one hundred and five other Senators in These United States of America, as well.

"I'm a United States Senator. Show me your finest airplane neck stabilizing cushion, and I shall purchase it today."

He hesitated, and it was effective.

"Without hesitation."

Senator Joseph Piperbraum was enjoying this airplane station goods store indeed. He would be coming back to this place, and he would bring his mother with him, because they had a special bond, and he knew this bond would never be broken.

No matter what.

19

The airplane was shaking. Perhaps it was from the rain outside, or perhaps it was something more.

Perhaps something was *inside* the airplane. Perhaps it was the oft-whispered of airplane monster, *Monstero*.

The legendary creature was said to have four legs, each one longer than the last.

This gave *Monstero*, so the legend said, an awkward gait/limp; almost like each of its legs were of different lengths.

To further describe what this would be like, the legend said to imagine that the first leg was 2 feet long, the second was 2.5 feet long, the third 3 feet long, and fourth leg was a full 4 feet long. Therefore, so it continued, *Monstero's* fourth leg was two feet longer than the first.

A difference in leg length, even in people, was really scary, so one could only imagine how frightening *Monstero* was, with his monster face and uneven leg length.

Everyone in the plane listened intently as the airplane driver described the above, as is procedure during extreme airplane shaking.

(ARMTA regulations were explicit in this way, as they feared the repercussions and lawsuits should *Monstero* attack. Being that part of their mission statement was to protect the airplane ride companies from the lawyering of the legal companies, ARMTA officials felt this was important.)

“How can it be so fast with those different leg lengths?” one woman said, trying to ask how *Monstero* could be so fast if his

legs were so different in length.

“Because it’s a monster,” her airplane seatmate replied. She was the adopted daughter of a dead scientist, so she knew about physics, and geography, and monsters.

“I’ll have the bacon and...” said a third airplane passenger, this one so petrified they couldn’t finish their sentence.

The shaking was getting worse.

A small, freshly orphaned boy in the very back of the airplane, who had introduced himself to his airplane seatmate only as “M. Jones”, stood up. He was in the very back because he was an orphan, and couldn’t afford a computer. Had he a computer, M. Jones would surely have used it to check in early enough to garner a better choice of seat on this airplane.

“MONSTERO!!!” he declared, jutting his orphany chest forward, as he imagined a real man would. “SHOW YOURSELF!!”

M. Jones made two fists, and put them in front of himself, like a street brawler from 1927. Everyone thought that looked dumb, and started laughing at him.

Embarrassed, M. Jones sat down in his airplane seat, and wept. He would have to wait for another day to show what a man he was, it seemed.

He also did this because the airplane shaking had stopped, and the airplane driver was apologizing for scaring everyone with his tale of the legendary Monstero. This apology was also per ARMTA regulations.

20

A good friend of mine from back in high school actually runs a company that sells airplane rides.

When I told him I was writing this book, he agreed to submit to an interview. This was done over Facebook instant messaging, so that I could copy/paste, rather than transcribe. I've fixed typos and edited things down, so that it's a smoother read.

I'll pick up the conversation at that point wherein we actually started chatting about airplanes.

His name is Michael J. Mikolay, and yes, I know how ironic it is that he owns my favorite airplane ride company, Southwestern Airplane Rides. (I swear, I've refused any and all free airplane ride tickets during the writing of this reading book.)

BRIAN: I've always been curious if you think about airplanes as much as me. Being that you're in the business, logic would say you must think about them quite a bit. Along that same conduit of thought, you must want to *not* think about them when you go home, since you think about them all day at your airplane ride selling office. What do you think? A simple yes or no answer is fine.

MICHAEL: I'm not sure what the question is, B.

B: YES OR NO – do you think about airplanes as much as I do?

M: I don't know how much you think about them.

B: YES OR NO? omg lol

M: So I'm just supposed to guess if I think about airplanes as much as you do?

B: Yeah.

M: Don't you write movies?

B: Yeah.

M: Are you writing something right now?

B: Yeah, this book.

M: Are you going to try and make the book into a movie?

B: Yeah I'm writing a book and then turning the book into movie.

M: Why don't you just write the movie?

B: I thought you had to be smart to run an airplane ride company lol lol

B: j/k

M: brb I got a call.

B: Is the call about an airplane? Just so you know, I'm thinking about airplanes right now. So like if you're talking to your wife or something, I'm winning.

M: Sorry, I'm back. I gotta go soon though.

B: Did you see where I said I'm winning? lol

M: I didn't read back – what are you winning?

B: I was thinking about airplanes while you were on the phone with your wife and/or child. lol

B: I just read back – why did you call me “B” up at the top – you never called me that in high school ever.

B: wtf?

B: j/k it’s no big deal lol

B: Mike – yo yo yo yo yo yo yo. ATTENTION MICHAEL J. MIKOLAY!

M: I have another call – can we do this tomorrow maybe?

B: I’m on a deadline.

M: Cool – soon, I promise.

B: Real quick before you go - do you want to invest in a movie? I’ll put you in my book if you do – you’ll get famous, I promise. I have a web series too – we’re talking to a huge company about it. Just let me know – talk to you soon – thanks yo –

M: Okay.

B: I’ll send you a rough draft of the book so far – I’m like 50 pages in and it’s awesome lol. I say that objectively lololol

B: j/k it’s subjective

B: I mean whichever one is right. lol rotf ttyl lol

B: That’d be the best if I wasn’t laughing out loud and I was just rolling on the floor for no reason lol

Michael J. Mikolay is offline.

B: wtf??

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