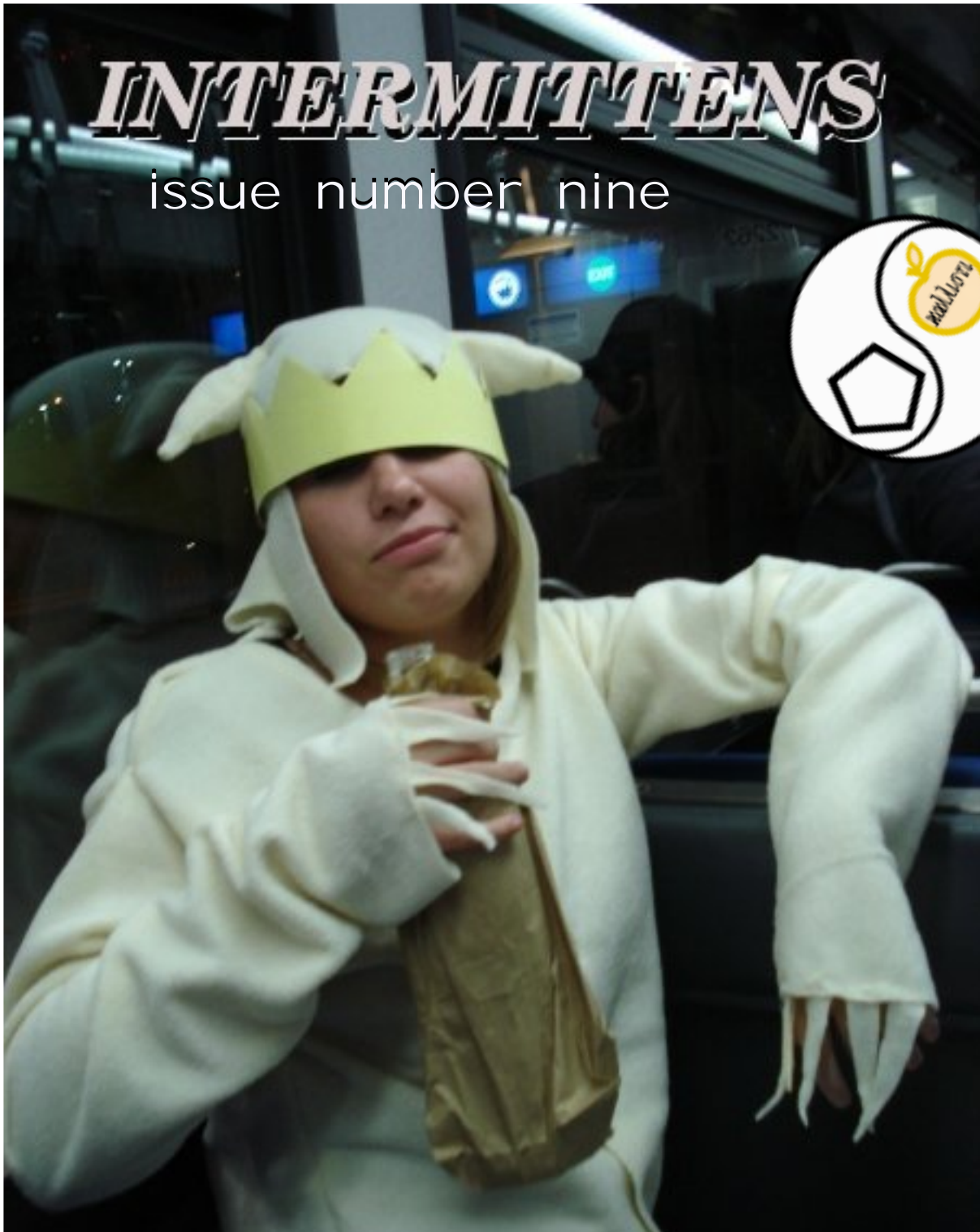


PHOBIA



*I suffer from Arachibutyrophobia (Fear of
peanut butter sticking to the roof of the
mouth)*

23 skidoo

There is a DANGER

to our nation, and our very way of life, that lurks just beneath the radar of ordinary society...An organization of chaos-worshippers which has as its goal nothing less than the utter destruction of the American way of life.

These degenerates call themselves “Discordians”, and they openly admit that they worship a pagan Goddess by the name of Eris. Eris was, as those with a classical education will know, an evil crone who was associated with Ares, the Greek god of war. In mythology, Eris was prone to destroying civilizations for her own amusement (The Trojan War was - in legend - started by her, simply because she wasn’t invited to a party).

Wikipedia states:

Discordianism recognizes chaos, discord, and dissent as valid and desirable qualities, in contrast with most religions, which idealize harmony and order.

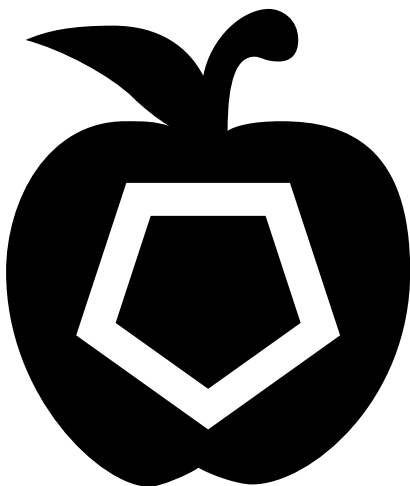
Wikipedia also states that the exact number and organization of these deviants are unknown.

Are these the kind of people we want running around loose?

Their idea of “worship” is, according to their own website (<http://principiadiscordia.com>), playing stupid pranks and vandalizing things, and their stated goal is the destruction of our nation and all “normals” and “merehumans” (“mere humans”) they can catch. If you are unconvinced, check out the forums at the site. These are not just another group of neo-hippies or “pagans”, they are a genuine threat to America as a Christian nation...or a nation at all.

Write your congressman, your senator, and/or the editor of your local paper and demand that something be done about this menace. It’s bad enough that we have to deal with foreign terrorists out to end our way of life, but now we have a menace lurking like a snake in the grass, composed of our own “citizens”...as if anyone intent on the demolition of a nation can be called a citizen of that nation. They must be rooted out and exposed, before they destroy us all.

- The Good Reverend
ROGER



A close-up photograph of a woman with dark, wavy hair, wearing a white t-shirt, smiling and holding a bright green apple in her hands. The background is plain white.

*To
The
Prettiest
One*

Eris militaris



intermittens dot org

An irrational fear of discordian quasi-periodicals?

I have a lot of irrational fears:

- 1) answering the door*
- 2) meeting people I know while out in public, like shopping*
- 3) being raped and murdered while my kids are raped and murdered, in our home*
- 4) dying on the highway in a car crash*

<http://www.kelbournwoolens.com/giveahoot.html>



*pattern designed by
Jocelyn Tunney*

Pēleus
Knight of the banana-shaped table
Last Great Pope of Seattle

OWLY MITTENS TO:

@mollyfaraday(cover), , Jenne, Bone Jangles(comic), TGRRoger, TRRNigel, ladycryingsoul, Enki(jabberwocky & wumpus), BrokenAI, Hoopla, 1CG(Carol & Max), 000, publicdomainpictures dot net, pdclipart dot org, eeemo dot net, ourecohouse dot info, wikisource dot org, Code2000



'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
 Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:
 All mimsy were the borogoves,
 And the mome raths outgrabe.



"Beware the Jabberwock, my son!
 The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!
 Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun
 The frumious Bandersnatch!"

He took his vorpal sword in hand:
 Long time the manxome foe he sought --
 So rested he by the Tumtum tree,
 And stood awhile in thought.

And, as in uffish thought he stood,
 The Jabberwock, with eyes of flame,
 Came whiffling &rough tttt ulgey wo'rd,
 And bzzzzzz zzz zzz zzz!

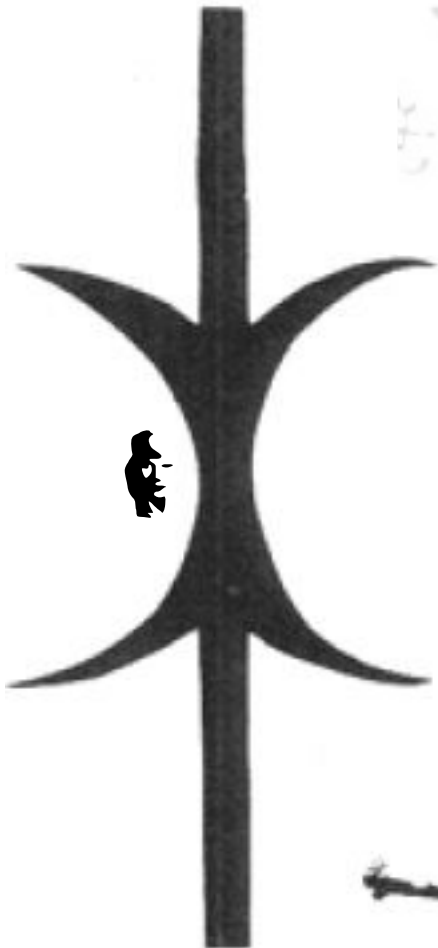
One, two! One, two! And through and through
 The vorpal blade snicker-snack!
 He leapt & fled, and with its speed
 He van'ished lump@#%&T B@ck.

"And, has thou s'ff'ed the Jabberwock?
 Ttyle to my arm: w'f f'ff'ed'ed' soy!
 O frabjonn! >A>I kAAk00+! kAllay!"
 He chortled in his joy.

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
 Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;
 All mimsy were the borogoves,
 And the mome raths outgrabe.

*Log Off. Go Outside.
 Live Life Deeply, Passionately,
 and without Reservation.
 Somewhere out there is the fun,
 funny, irrational and enlightening
 experience you speak of.*

**A jug of wine,
 A leg of lamb
 And thou!
 Beside me,
 Whistling in
 the darkness.**



Nyarlatotep... the crawling chaos... I am the last... I will tell the audient void....

I do not recall distinctly when it began, but it was months ago. The general tension was And it was then that Nyarlatotep came out of Egypt. Who he was, none could tell, but he was of the old native blood, and looked like a Pharaoh. The fellahin knelt when they saw him, as if he were a god, and a danger widespread and all-embracing, such a danger as could not be imagined only in the most terrible phantasms of the night. I recall that seven centuries, and that he had heard messages from places not on this planet. Into the lands of civilisation came Nyarlatotep, swarthy, slender, and sinister, always buying prophecies which no one dared consciously repeat or acknowledge to himself that he had strange instruments of glass and metal, and combining them into instruments yet stranger. He spoke much of the sciences — of electricity and psychology — and gave exhibitions of power which sent his spectators away speechless, yet which swelled his fame to exceeding magnitude. Men advised one another to see Nyarlatotep, and shuddered. And where Nyarlatotep went, they vanished; for the small hours were rent with the screams of nightmare. Never before had the screams of nightmare been such a public problem; now the wise men almost wished they could forbid sleep in the small hours, that the shrieks of cities might less horribly disturb the pale, pitying moon as it glimmered on green waters, and old steeples crumpling against the choking sickly sky. My friend had told me of him, and of the impelling fascination and allurements of his revelations, and I burned with eagerness to explore his uttermost mysteries. My friend said they were horrible and impressive beyond any most fevered imaginings, and what was thrown on a screen in the darkened room prophesied things none but Nyarlatotep dared prophesy, and in the sputter of his sparks there was taken from men that which had never been taken before yet which shewed only in the eyes. And I heard it hinted abroad that those who knew "static electricity." Nyarlatotep drove us all out, down the dizzy stairs into the damp, hot, deserted midnight streets. I screamed aloud that I was not afraid; that I never could be afraid; and others screamed with me for

HE COMES!!!

HE COMES!!!



To invoke the hive-
mind representing
chaos
Invoking the
feeling of chaos
Waiting for order
The Neo-
mind of chaotic
hive-
mind
Waits
The Wall.
HE COMES!!!



BONE JANGLES

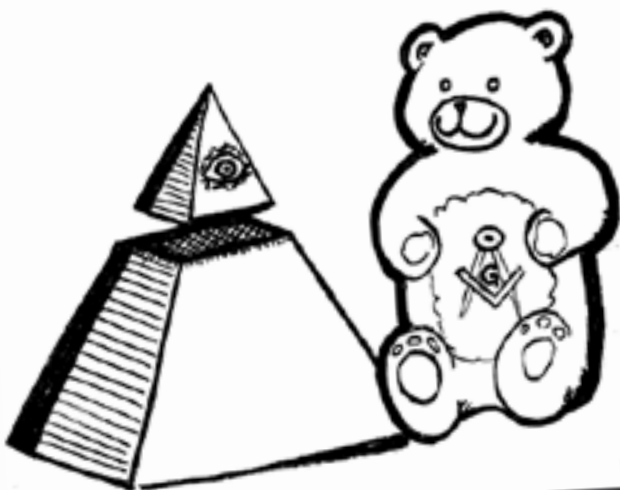
The trouble with looking for a deeper meaning is that you find it wherever you look.



And it isn't always pleasant. There's a conspiracy behind everything, really.



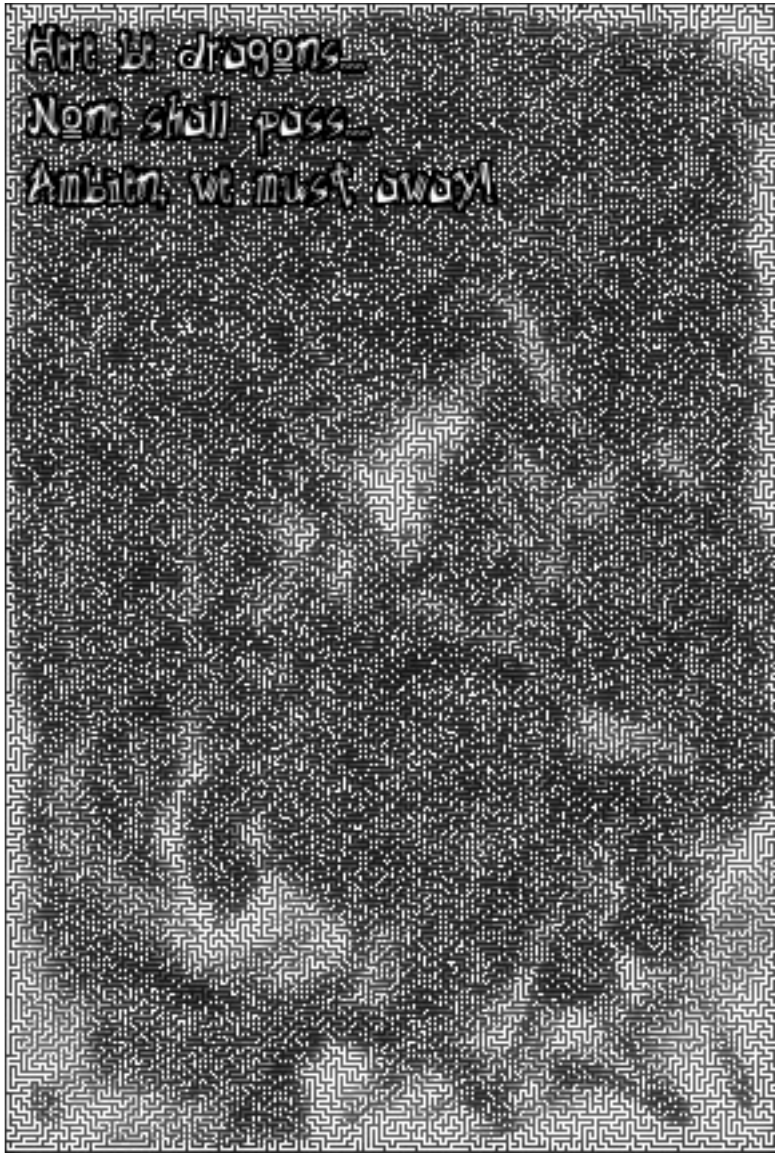
We all know that global finances are just controlled by the Build-a-Bear group anyway.



Who knows how deep this rabbit hole will go?

∴ YOU ARE IN ROOM 3 - TUNNELS LEAD
TO 2 4 12

The sweat drips down my brow, the draft from the nearby pits not calming me. I'm down to my last crooked arrow.



Shoot, or move?

The stench of the wumpus is overpowering. I had been attacked by bats three times already on this hunt. I had wasted my arrows on ghosts. Coming to this cave initially in the hope of feeding my family, my goal is now to stay alive.

Shoot, or move?

I shoot, and I have one shot. If it misses, I'm as good as dead. I could go back from whence I came. I think that was tunnel two. But, they all look alike, and I certainly can't get home now that the bats have made me lose my sense of direction. If I'm right, either tunnel four or tunnel twelve contains the bottomless pit -- and the other contains the wumpus. If I'm wrong, or if the bats are migrating again, turning back could be just as immediately fatal.

Shoot or move?

Regardless of my choice, my chances are slim. "Wait until you see those bats," they sneered in the village. A fool, I ignored them. In the dark dry warmth of the wumpus caves, I could not survive long indecisively -- the only creature who lives here is the wumpus, outside of the bats which are hardly edible and impossible to catch. I might succumb to dehydration first, the geothermal heat dessicating my body and serving as a warning for the likes of me, foolish boys who know not the wily ways of the wumpus caves.

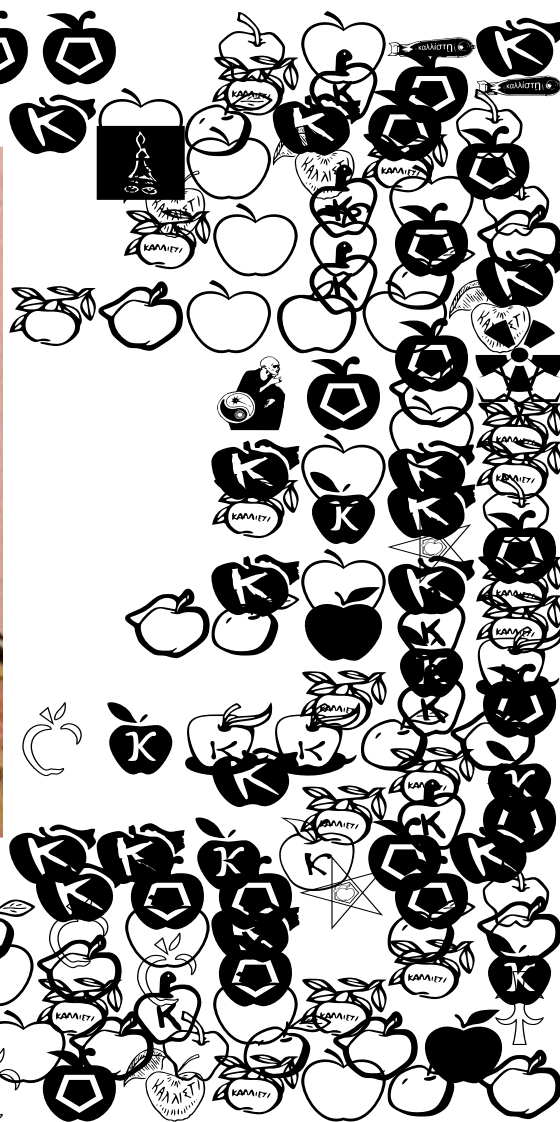
Shoot or move?

I draw my last arrow, choosing tunnel four.

I hear a clunk -- I shot into the pit.

Fleeing to the second tunnel, I feel a sudden sense of dread -- but

TOO LATE. *I come face to face with a ...*



The news anchor is a comedian

who delivers grim stand-up with a straight face.

Some reel back in terror.

Some are numb.

Some laugh through the horror.

This makes them poor victims.

To tell a bad joke

with a straight face,

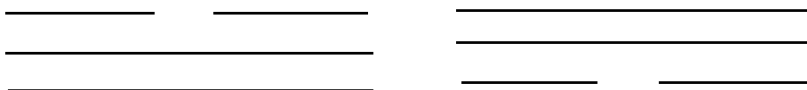
one must master seriousness.

To live in a bad joke

with a straight face

one must master humor.

The Discordian wears many masks.





I HAVE BEEN TO THE MOUNTAIN TOP.

I've been above the tree line, where nothing grows but lichen, and nobody's really sure if that counts as life or not anyway. The air is thin up there, but you can see a long, long way. You can see your house, you can see your car, you can see the roads we draw in the sand, and how pitiful they are, stretching on for miles but barely scratching the surface of an inhospitable landscape. You can see the hills and the mountains, crawling silently toward the cities; the rivers, slowly carving out the graves of civilization.

To be sure, a lot of things are happening, most of it just slightly beyond the edges of our perception. And while it all happens we are down here, scampering back and forth confused little ants, never really sure what we're doing (or why), but carrying on like there's no other way. Yes, you can see a lot from the top of a mountain. I guess that that's all I'm trying to say.

I also have something to say about PD. Much like a hometown, PD is the place where many of us first realized something very important, whatever it might be. It is a place that somehow (and honestly I have no idea how, exactly) is able to leave an impression. It's just SMF with some fancy emoticons and higher quality spags, but for some reason many of us find it to be a place that, in our increasingly cardboard world, really feels like somewhere. There is a first time for everything, and PD has seen a lot of things have their first time. It saw the first time I ever shouted my guts up about something and, instead of a virtual room filled with vacant applause or uneasy agreement for a few moments, there was a room filled with discussion about topics I thought nobody would ever be able to discuss.

PD is also like a hometown in that eventually you want to leave. It could be for any reason; maybe Roger's pants are on too tight one day and he looks at you funny. Maybe some noob has infiltrated Apple Talk and is spamming the place up. Maybe there is a gigantic Sociological Experiment going on and you're secretly the butt of some ass-tard's half-cocked scheme to get a few cheap yuks at your expense. Or maybe, like me, you just start feeling like the magic is gone and you haul off blaming everybody around you for that, like it's their job to make you feel like a fucking princess.

Anyway, the point is that eventually, you might want to leave PD, in spite of the fact that is magical, wondrous, and basically the best thing on the Internet (aside from Russian porno). In fact, the more impressed you are with PD at first, the higher the chance is that later, you will want out for some reason.

But I will also tell you that there is no escape. Out there in the world, where you are but gear being ground to a pulp in the Machine, where there is no light except whatever comes dripping out of late-night TV, while you sit there with a death grip on every space between inconsequential decisions, wondering to yourself why your life has no direction and why nothing makes any sense and why there is nobody to talk to about it; out there where Discord is bad, and nobody likes you making fun of their dead Aunt's funeral dress. Out there, you'll find your way back here faster than you think. Because PD isn't just a website, it's the gaping maw at the end of every

Discordian's quest for meaning.

(advertisement)
infocalypse.ignorelist.com



sad but true, christians after they destroyed the ancient world, they



turned upon each other, I guess you are already aware of this. Still here in Greece, they are

against all the other religions and special against 12 gods

I have a fear of making telephone calls. No problem receiving them, no problem making them on behalf of someone else, I just hate calling people on my own. To the point that if I have to make a bunch of calls in a row I'll get some heart palpitations and irregular breathing. That is annoying, since I generally have excellent conscious control over my heart and breathing rates.



(Advertisement)



Sacred Chao Tattoos
206 Elm St.
Valparaiso, IN

219-531-2020

Mention this ad for 23 cents off



Jury of Peers

(c) 2008 Cramulus

Travis Monicker sighed to himself. It was subtle; the audience didn't even notice. His eyes were twinkling with drama, his teeth bared in a rictus of excitement. "Paul, your case has been made, and you've been judged by a jury of your peers." Travis spoke slowly, drawing out the anticipation of the verdict. All the studio lights were on Paul, a balding middle-aged man from Pasadena. His eyes anxiously darted left and right.

"The public has spoken--" Travis held up his reader to the camera, showing the results of the internet poll. "--and they think you should take a dip."

"No! Please!" begged Paul, eyes wide with fear. The tears from his emotional moment had barely dried. Paul's fists banged against

the plastic tank as Travis hit the DUMP HIM button. Paul looked anxiously as the diving board he was standing on slowly retracted into wall. When he had only a few inches left, Paul took a big breath and stepped into the pit of vermin.

Travis Monicker, the voice of the people. Travis hosted a weekly game show called Jury of Peers. It was a popular show, and had just been renewed for its fifth season. Similar to courtroom reality TV shows, each of the contestants was "on trial" for one reason or another. Some had been cheating on their lovers. Some had borrowed money and squandered it. Others were simply disgusting people. The contestants weren't being tried for crimes, per se – that was for the law to handle. They had broken social rules, customs, or taboos. The sentences were often mildly painful, humiliating, or disgusting. The verdict of the trial was determined by an internet poll. Literally millions of people showed up on the Jury of Peers website

and cast their vote for what should happen to this week's lineup of hapless defendants.

Paul, a germaphobe, thrashed around, choking with disgust. The tank was filled three feet deep with worms, cockroaches, centipedes, spiders, all sorts of crawly nightmarish things. Paul coughed until he vomited, his eyes red with tears. Bugs had gotten into his hair. The spotlight on the tank flashed as the intense music ramped up. In order to escape, Paul had to find a key at the bottom of the tank. Some contestants spent upwards of ten minutes suffering in their own personal hell before mustering up the nerve to escape.

Travis, numb to the horrific display, watched listlessly. He would be off camera for the next few minutes, enjoying the break at the climax of the trial. He took a long, slow drag off his cigarette. Paul yelped a shrill shriek as a big mamma cockroach crawled up his leg and into the darkness under his shorts.

Jury of Peers was relatively formulaic. Travis would introduce the plaintiff and the defendant. Both sides would make opening remarks. Then, Travis would unveil this week's horrible torture device, some sick contraption designed by the show's writers – a pack of depraved and sadistic individuals. The defendant and the plaintiff would argue with each other. The producers tried to complicate matters by making each contestant as strung-out and emotional as possible. They'd be deprived of sleep and food during the "rehearsal", then given lots of alcohol and caffeine before the

show. Sometimes there'd be physical challenges designed to win the adoration of the public. Even emotionally abusive parents had been found not-guilty if they were able to eat a live centipede, or stand barefoot on the hot plate for the length of the show's theme song.

If the defendant succeeded, the plaintiff would be subjected to this week's torture. Travis thought this underscored a basic law of human civilization: when all's said and done, somebody's gonna get it.



One time, a pretty 18-year-old college freshman had accused her English professor of teaching the Bible. It was a

topical issue-- there had just been some church vs state supreme court ruling which was a hot topic in the media. The girl was right, but she came across like a spoiled Jewish Princess. The professor carried himself well and remained calm. The public found the professor not-guilty, and the Jewish Princess was blasted with a fire-hose and made to sit in a cold meat locker with fans blowing on her while she frantically tried key after key on the lock. When she finally emerged, pale and shivering, tears running down her face, her nipples could have cut glass. The public hooted and hollered. They loved to see a pretty girl get it.

The crowd doesn't really want justice, thought Travis, the crowd wants punishment.

"Next up," Travis said to the camera, "we'll talk to someone accused of hating his mother." The "boo" light went on and the audience hissed obediently. They cut to commercial and Travis walked off-stage.

Hal, the producer of Jury of Peers, walked alongside Travis.

"We're doing good tonight," said Hal, hunched over his clipboard. "I'm worried about the next segment though."

"What do you mean?" asked Travis, "The anti-mother thing always goes well. Everybody loves their mother."

"You remember what happened last time we dunked a mother in the dip?"

They shared a chuckle. Travis hadn't seen an audience so outraged since the first season. Dunking that senescent old woman in pigs blood wasn't nice, but it was good television. Due to all the press attention it got, it might have the best thing to happen to the show. Front page news, ratings went through the roof.

Travis went outside to the parking lot behind the sound stage. Commercial breaks ran long these days. Ever



since they introduced the "commercial plot arc", audiences were much more willing to put up with nested layers of extended advertisements. Travis had a few minutes to smoke and slug down some bourbon. He opened the fire exit and stepped into the darkness.

"Christ," muttered Travis under his breath. They were waiting for him.

A handful of protestors had wandered away from the throng in front of the building. Young, granola looking kids, probably college students. Not one of them was older than 25. When they saw Travis step outside the group power-walked, determined, towards the loading dock.

"Panderer!" one yelled.

"Prick!" yelled another.

Travis stood on the loading dock, smoking his cigarette and looking down with contempt at the protestors below. "Judgmental punks," he sneered.

The crowd began to move towards the loading dock like a slow moving fist. There were about a dozen of them. The fist hit the loading dock with a dull, vaguely insulting roar. Travis licked his lips.

A cute, brown-haired girl climbed up onto the dock to confront him. This was usually where Travis would hit the button in his pocket and a burly security guard would arrive just in time to rough up some college kid with messy dreadlocks. Somehow, Travis didn't think this girl would threaten him physically. She



stared fiercely at him, fury in her doe-brown eyes.

"Why?" she asked, her voice determined, but with a subtle tone of pleading.

"Why not?" he countered, bored, not really understanding the fragment of a question.

"Millions of people watch your show," she said. "Why do you show the worst parts of humanity? Why do you make them think it's normal to judge and torment and condemn each other?"

Travis smiled, blowing smoke. "Like you're doing now? You think that's not normal?"

She was flustered. It was clear that she'd spent a lot of time mentally rehearsing these questions. Startled by the opportunity to meet the devil face to face, the words had gotten all backed up in her throat.

"No," she stammered.

Travis cut her off, "I know, I know.

You think my show is bad and evil and wrong. We turn man against man, society against the family, the family against the individual, man against God..." the girl nodded emphatically. "What's your name?" Travis asked suddenly, relying on a sudden personal question to put her off guard.

She hesitated, then said "Diana."

"Diana," he repeated, taking her small hand in his, "we serve a very real need, you know. Are you familiar with the idea of catharsis?" She stared at him like a deer in head lights.

"Yeah," she whispered, the fire temporarily gone from her face. "You go see horror movies and tragedies because it ultimately makes you feel better to experience those emotions. It frees you from the shit in your life."

"Right," he said, "And why did the Romans show up in droves to watch men get torn apart by tigers in the arena? Why did medieval man turn out in scores to watch tortuous public executions? Why do we pay so close attention to what we hate the most?"

"Sex sells," she sneered, pulling her hand out of his.



"Necessity," said Travis, "People need it. If there was no violence to watch on TV, people would seek it out. They'd be murdering each other in the streets. Reality TV is just the modern equivalent of the Roman gladiator pit."

"That's bullshit," spat Diana.

"Boo hoo, I'm a victim of the tyranny of the majority," he said sarcastically, taking a swig from his flask. "Hey, if people didn't like seeing this stuff, they wouldn't watch. And our ratings indicate otherwise."

"That's bullshit!" she repeated. Dead in the water.

"I'm going to take a stab in the dark," said Travis. "You watch my show every week."

"Yeah, but not because I like it," she said vindictively as Travis smirked. "It's base, primitive, and barbaric," she went on, "It appeals to the lowest common denominator. It's prime time trash."

"Are there any other shows that make you feel like that?"

"No," she said with disgust. "Yours is the worst."

"So you don't feel those emotions any other time than when you're watching Jury of Peers. Interesting. And you don't think that's why you watch it?"

Diana blinked.

"You've gotta know your audience, love," said Travis. "Have you seen the middle of America? I don't mean the Midwest - I mean the statistically average person. The people that watch TV for four to six hours a day? They're base, primitive, barbaric. They tune in because they like to feel hate, and they like to feel justified."

"I have always believed in the nobility of the human being," said Diana.

Travis shook his head, "They go through boring days, clock in, clock out. The winning survival strategy is to feel no emotion at all. Then they get home and want to let it all out. They want to feel something. I exist because they exist." Travis spiked his cigarette on the ground.

"Would you like to be on the show?" he asked suddenly.

"What?" stammered Diana. "Why?"

The protestors standing by the loading dock erupted into chaos. "Corporate stooge! Sadist!"

Travis spoke over the din, "We've got a segment coming up where a man has never ever called on Mother's day. His mother is taking him to trial for it. I've met the woman, she's pretty overbearing, and I think she's going to get dumped into a tank of bugs."

Travis batted away a diet soda can lobbed at him by a bearded college kid. Without pausing, he continued, "Anyway, my producer doesn't like it. I'd rather tag in a pretty young thing with a cause." Diana scowled. Travis leaned in, his whisper like sandpaper, "If you're brave enough, you can come crucify me on live TV. It'll be you versus me. You win, I'll take a dip."

"No way," Diana said defiantly.

"Suit yourself," said Travis. "You and your friends," he gestured dismissively to the rabble behind her, "Can continue your little campaign from the parking lot."

Diana looked at her shoes, biting her lip. Travis tightened the cap on

his flask. her to protest your show."

"I'll do it." From where she was sitting, Diana couldn't see the boo light go on, but she could hear the audience roar at her.

Hal was furious, as usual, but he calmed down when he saw the cute college chick Travis had recruited. There was no time to get Diana prepped. She wasn't wearing any makeup, just a small black beret. Squinting in the bright stage lights, Diana felt very small. They didn't have time to give her the personality survey, only to ask her a few brief biographical questions and have her sign the ponderous waiver. She sat behind a podium, brow furrowed as Travis introduced her and set up the trial.

Travis quieted them down, "Now now," he chided, "Let's give her a fair chance and listen to what she has to say."

"I'm here to make a point," said Diana. "While it may be entertaining to watch people suffer, it's not right."

"And I," said Travis, eyes twinkling, "will be the defendant." The audience gasped. "That's right my friends and neighbors, I will defend this show and its viewers. Diana will make a case against us, and I will try to refute it. Is Jury of Peers good or bad for the public? You," he said, pointing at the camera, "will go to our website and vote on who you think is right. Whoever loses will take a dip in the tank." The camera panned over to the vermin chamber before fading to commercial break.

"The purity movement is the latest revolution," she said, "Most of today's youth are children of indulgent parents. We don't believe we need to destroy ourselves to be unique. So no tattoos, no piercings, no drugs."

Across the nation, people crowded onto couches. Rowdy bars quieted down. Families chewed their TV dinners, their eyes reflecting the flickering TV light. Some people cheered for Diana, others cursed at their screens. The website burned through bandwidth. Jury of Peers was putting itself on trial.

"Do you drink?" inquired Travis. Diana paused. "Only a little, at parties," she confessed, blushing, immediately wishing she had lied. Travis winked at the camera. Diana was a lamb in the wolf's den.

Diana was sharp.

"Diana, when you came down to the station tonight, you didn't expect to be on our show, did you?" "Television shows like Jury of Peers are turning the average person into a member of a lynch mob. People tune in every week to help judge someone for breaking social rules? This is America, supposedly a nation founded by

Diana shook her head. "No, I came

rebels and free thinkers. Individuality is supposed to be praised, not punished!" Diana's eyes were fierce. She hadn't prepared this speech; she was speaking from the heart. The audience listened in rapt attention.

"Every week, you condemn someone for not conforming to the will of the majority. You reinforce the idea that the individual is supposed to fall in line and act like everyone else. It's madness."

"Madness?" asked Travis, "Do you know what insanity is? It's the lone gunman, the crazed protestor, the lunatic fringe. It's the terrorist who throws rocks at institutions. Our viewers are the bread and butter of America. The law isn't empowered to persecute social deviants, but we can. We come together to try and make America better. More pure."

Diana was flustered. "Make America better? By punishing a few people for things which aren't even against the law?"

"We live by many more rules than legal ones. There are rules to every organized system," replied Travis coolly. "For example, there are tons of ways you can get fired from a job without breaking the company policies. These social rules are just as real as the laws we all live by. But social rules aren't enforced by police, they're upheld by every person that participates in them. Jury of Peers is a natural extension of an everyday occurrence."

Diana reeled as if she'd been punched. "At my university, there's a guy who is in love with a personality-construct. It's a robot with human feelings, basically.

Well after seeing your show last week about the guy who left his wife for a personality-construct, some fratboys at my campus decided to go smash his terminal and apparatus. They killed his lover and broke the law for your 'social rules.'"

Travis responded with disgust. "Are you seriously defending robosexuality?" He was smirking like a jackal.

"Who cares who he's in love with if it's not hurting anybody?"

"Everybody," Travis scoffed, "If everybody fell in love with robots, our population would decay and our economy would plummet. A nation needs new babies. You can't just go around pretending that robots are people. I'm sorry, but the person we had on our show last week was deluded, and delusions like that need a reality check." The audience responded with light applause.

Diana was getting worked up. She bared her teeth to Travis, "So now we've gotta put our society first and our hearts second?"





The Dreaming is a roleplaying game which is played in 3D Live Action. The characters are members of a society which exists in the Dreaming, the place where we go when we sleep. Events in the game world are coordinated via a social networking site similar to facebook.

Players pick areas of the real world which would be good spots to play. They use Dreamscaping rituals to give these places a special meaning, and then gather other players there for feasts, tournaments, or adventures. Characters can put curses on each others territories, or steal them from each other.

When a number of characters gather, they can go on adventures called Dream Walks. The game's website website hosts a number of Dream Walk scripts you can print out and play. People in your party will become the monsters and characters you encounter during the adventure.

The Dreaming involves a form of collaborative storytelling. Players document game events by posting blogs, pictures, or videos to the social-networking site. Adventures and folklore can be written by other players too.

Sometimes you'll fight monsters or other players. You can get into real-time sword fights using safe foam "boffer" weapons. Some characters can cast spells by throwing little props called "spell packets".

There are four unique races to choose from, each with their own flavor and motivations. The game's story is up to the players - you can choose your role within the Dream society. The Dreaming is a great excuse to get out, meet some new people, and experiment with new ways of having fun. Come play - we are excited for you to be a character in our story!

(ADVERSTIVEMENT)

Travis dismissed her with a wave, "Diana dear, people are dominated by their base animal instincts. What makes us human is that we can resist them. That's one of society's benefits: it helps us overcome our animal programming. Were it not for society's conditioning, people would be defecating in the streets. There would be crime and murder. We wouldn't be human."

"That's not what I'm saying," she hissed. Travis was twisting her words to piss her off and it was working. Diana collected herself – she had learned how to resist peer pressure and temptation. She just had to focus on resisting the urge to respond emotionally. She'd sublimate that fire and temper her tongue.

"Let me ask you something Diana," said Travis. "You and your friends watch Jury of Peers every week, don't you?"

"Yes, but that's because we hate it. We're collecting data to make a case against it. Right now I'm writing a term paper on how shows like yours are shaping the American narrative into an Us versus Them mentality."

"I'm guessing Jury of Peers gives you more of an emotional reaction than anything else on TV."

"I don't watch a lot of TV," said Diana with pride, "so, you could say that."

"And Jury of Peers makes you angry enough to come down here and protest it?"

"I think a good person has to fight against what he or she thinks is wrong," replied Diana.

"Well then you're our target audience," said Travis with a smile. The audience laughed. "You're a person who's frustrated with the decay of civilization, and you want to do something about it. I don't see anything wrong with that. You're wrong, but I think it's wonderful that my show has motivated you to do what you think is right."

Diana blinked. "I'm not wrong. It's wrong to condemn others just because they don't follow some imaginary societal rules. It's irrational mob justice designed to punish nonconformity and unpopularity."

"I am offended," said Travis gravely, "that you would characterize our audience as an unthinking mob. They are capable of deciding what's wrong for themselves. We give them a choice, after all. And if they don't like either option, they can choose to change the channel and watch something else." Off stage, Hal the producer palmed his face.

"You," continued Travis, "want people to change the world, but only if they agree with you. You think you have

the only correct view point, that Jury of Peers is evil and wrong. You think it's destroying America, but I've got news for you – it is America."

"No," snapped Diana, finally losing her temper, "America is like this because it's been spoon fed crap for so many years they don't know what real food tastes like. You're feeding them scraps of hamburger meat when they're hungry for steak. It's because of shows like this that nearly all public discourse has devolved into finger pointing and name calling. A radical showcase, or a showcase for radicals? It's all tits and beer, flashing lights, violence and fear. What happened to the enlightenment, the renaissance? What happened to the information age?" Diana squinted at the audience, her lips pursed with anger, "You could be a nation of poets and philosophers!" she shouted at them, "Stop being serfs!" There was an uncomfortable silence.

Travis licked his lips. “If people didn’t want this culture, they’d reject it. But look around – they embrace it.” Diana was surprised that he didn’t disagree with her. Travis continued, coolly, “And what would you say to those that don’t want to live in your ivory tower? Too bad? Your opinion doesn’t matter? You must live in a world where nobody gets hurt? Where nobody gets piercings or tattoos? We made this materialist bed, and it’s comfy as fuck.” The audience roared, some of them standing up and cheering from their tattered couches across the country. Others booed. Nobody changed the channel. They’d have to bleep the “fuck”, this was network TV after all.

From off stage, Hal gestured to Travis, indicating it was time to wrap it up. Diana sighed and mumbled something,

“What’s that?” Travis asked, leaning in.

“The tyranny of the majority,” she said, looking into the bright stage lights. “Non serviam.”

Travis addressed the camera. “Remember to log into our website and cast your vote for who gets to take a dip.”

During the commercial break before the verdict was announced, Diana sipped water. “I’m fucked.”

Travis, perspiring under the stage lights and bourbon, raised an eyebrow. “Nervous about the results?”

“If people agree with me, they won’t participate,” she said. “If I convinced people that it’s wrong to participate in this mob justice, they won’t vote. So I’ll lose.”

Travis took a long, slow drag off his cigarette.

“People are predictable animals,” he said. “In the end, somebody’s gonna get it.”

They website was bustling with activity. The forums raced as millions of votes were cast. The tech guys struggled to keep the website up as record numbers of people jabbered in capslock. Did Diana blow anyone’s mind? Would Travis, the executioner, be executed? The audience had never seen that before. Even Travis didn’t know how it would turn out.

The lights came up. The numbers came in. Hal’s eyes bugged out – this had to be some kind of record. Travis stood before a rapt audience.

“Tonight,” he said, “we’ve put ourselves on trial. Not just Jury of Peers and its charming host,” he said with a wink, “but the audience itself.” The camera across the sea of faces staring intently at Travis, then slowly zoomed in on his face as he spoke.



“Tonight we’ve asked you to characterize yourselves. Do you tune in every week to see suffering? Or justice?” Travis paused. “Are you a jury? Or a lynch mob?”

The TV cut back and forth between Travis and Diana, who was standing on the platform atop the tank of bugs, her nose crinkled with disgust. If she won, she’d be hoisted out of the tank and replaced by Travis in his expensive suit. If she lost, she’d be taking the plunge into the horrible tank.

“And tonight,” he said, “a record number of people have has spoken.” He paused as the voting chart was “And Diana is taking a bug bath.”

cast their vote. The public displayed on the screen.

Across America, the audience roaring. Diana screamed like movie as she plummeted into

rose to their feet, she was in a horror the filth. Catharsis.

The cameras stayed on her, every twitch, every thrash, every tear. The bugs crawled all over her Travis smoked in silence.

documenting twist, every body as



Hal, a silhouette, appeared beside Travis.

“Big turnout this week,” he said.

Diana felt like she was in a suffering put on display for all to participate in. In olden times, they’d come by to throw rocks and piss on her. Today they’d turn up the volume. medieval pillory, her

“I think,” said Hal, “that a lot of the viewers that don’t usually vote probably bit down and did it.”

“Yeah?” asked Travis, drunk, watching quietly, “Then why did she lose?”

HAL SHRUGGED

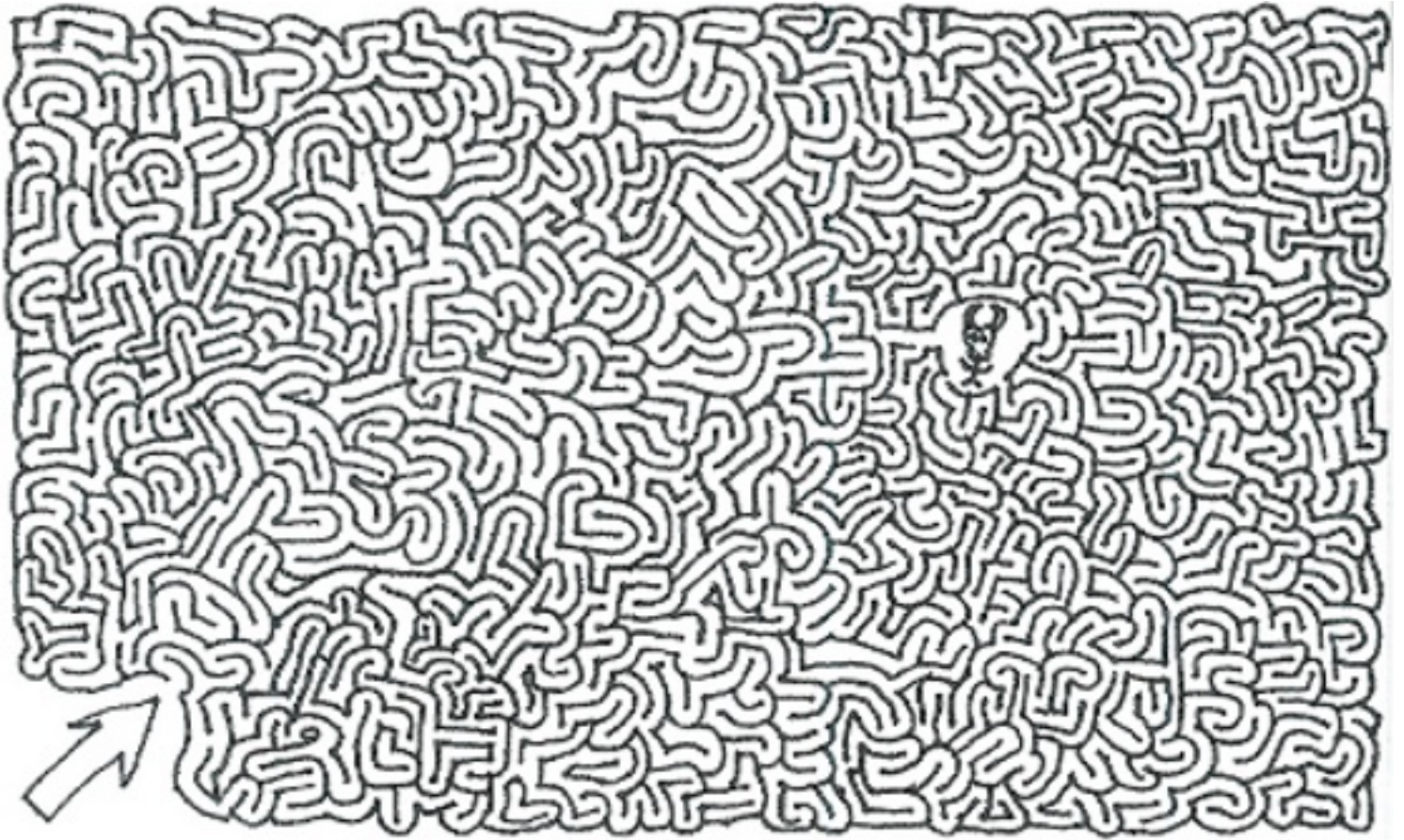
TRAVIS ASKED, “DID YOU FUDGE THE NUMBERS?”

HAL WAS A WORLD AWAY, POKING AT THE DIGITS OF HIS PHONE.

TRAVIS SIGHED, FEELING DIZZY. “WAS IT CLOSE?”

... “NEVER MIND. I GUESS I’D RATHER NOT KNOW.”

**Bees,
I fear them. And
bears. And
hooved animals.
But mostly bees.**



**I have an irrational
fear of people
knocking on my door,
or ringing my
doorbell. I believe it
stemmed from my
mother, who was also
the same way. She
would have us turn
the stereo or tv down,
and she would watch
from a window until
they left. I have no
idea where her fear
came from.**

