The **One Thing Billionaires** Can't Buy.

ATARAXIA

The "**forbidden**" book — to you. Not to God.

Calm Power Alla.igned

Nathen Mazri

ATARAXIA

How I Found Peace in a World at War with the Truth

by Nathen Mazri

Second Book of the Arabiolosis Trilogy

Dedicated to Nathfield.

And to everyone who found this at exactly the right moment.

Be careful.
The door is open now. It will not always be open.
You are holding this book now. That is not an accident.

The book they hope you never read — and God hopes you finally do.

"Allah has set a seal upon their hearts and upon their hearing, and over their vision is a veil." — Surah Al-Baqarah 2:7

"Then your hearts became hardened after that, being like stones or even harder." — Surah Al-Baqarah 2:74

If this book unsettles you — that reaction is worth examining.
If it enrages you — examine harder.

ATARAXIA - How I Found Peace in a World at War with the Truth

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The views expressed in this book are those of the author and represent his personal opinions, experiences, and spiritual beliefs. Certain names and identifying details have been changed or omitted to protect individuals. Events are recounted to the best of the author's recollection. This book contains mature themes including discussion of substance use, sexual assault, and political commentary. Reader discretion is advised.

A note on the use of artificial intelligence:

Portions of this book were researched, refined, and edited with the assistance of AI tools. The ideas, experiences, opinions, spiritual convictions, and lived testimony in these pages are entirely the author's own. AI was used the way a writer uses a dictionary, a research assistant, or an editor — as a tool in service of a human voice, not a replacement for one.
The author retains full moral and creative authorship of this work.

God gave the ideas. The author wrote them. The tool helped organize them.

Make of that what you will.

Printed and distributed independently.
Second Book of the Arabiolosis Trilogy.

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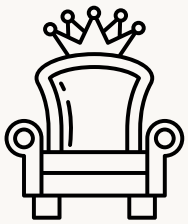
PROLOGUE

The Throne



Before we begin, I need you to understand something about the size of what we're dealing with. Not my story. Not this book. Not the names I'm going to drop, or the secrets I'm going to expose, or the scandals that are going to make certain people very uncomfortable when this lands on their desk — and it will land on their desk.

I mean the size of God.

Scientists — the ones who get funding, awards, and PBS documentaries — have now confirmed that the observable universe contains approximately two trillion galaxies. Two trillion. Each galaxy contains hundreds of billions of stars. Each star is potentially orbited by the worlds. The numbers stop meaning anything to the human brain after a certain point.

We just nod and say wow, space is big and go back scrolling. But here's what they don't put in the documentary: Above all of that — above every galaxy, every star, every black hole, everything that has ever been measured or theorized or dreamed about by every scientist who ever lived — there is a Throne.

And on that Throne sits One. Not a man with a beard in the clouds. Not a cow. Not a statue. Not a committee. Not a feeling. Not a concept you can deconstruct in a philosophy seminar. One. Singular. Incomparable. The Quran says: *"There is nothing like Him." (42:11)* That's it. Full stop. Every image you just formed in your mind — wrong. He is greater than that image. Whatever ceiling your imagination just hit, He is above it.

This is the God I'm going to talk about throughout this book.

Not the one weaponized by politicians. Not the one used to start wars and justify stolen land. Not the one invoked at award shows by celebrities thanking Him for their Grammy while funding things He has explicitly forbidden. Not the one your culture gave you as a label before you were old enough to ask questions. The real one. The only one. The one who was there when every empire fell — Pharaoh's, Rome's, the British one, and the ones currently in the process of falling whether they know it yet or not.

Reflection

The one who, according to Islamic tradition that has never been disproven, will send Jesus — yes, that Jesus — back to this earth. Not as God. Not as a myth. As a man, with a mission: to stand in front of the entire world and say clearly, finally, in a voice that cannot be edited or fact-checked or shadow-banned:

There is one God. And the shock on people's faces when that happens — including people who spent their whole lives claiming to follow him — will be one of the great moments in human history.

I won't be shocked.

Because everything in this book is what it took me to get to a place where I already know. My name is Nathen Mazri. I'm Palestinian. Lebanese. Québécois. Canadian. Muslim — not because I was born that way, but because I chose it after the evidence became impossible to ignore. I've run a restaurant shaped like a cartoon cat. I've run for a federal office. I've been trolled by armies on the internet and threatened with death by people brave enough to hide behind screens. I've sat across from celebrities who were performing for me while thinking I was performing for them. I've fought in court. I've fought in my own mind. I've fought things that don't have bodies.

I've been assaulted by someone who thought I had no voice.

I had a dream that changed everything — and in that dream, someone came who doesn't visit often. And somehow, on the other side of all of it, I found something the ancient Greeks had a word for, and most modern humans have never felt:

Ataraxia.

Serene, undisturbed calm. Not the absence of chaos — there is still plenty of that. But the absence of being moved by it. The ability to watch the storm and know, with complete certainty, who controls the weather.

This book is how I got there.

Some of it will make you laugh. Some of it will make you angry. Some of it will make certain powerful people wish I had stayed quiet.

I didn't stay quiet.

Let's begin.

CHAPTER ONE

FOUR LANGUAGES, ZERO ANSWERS

There's a specific kind of confusion that doesn't announce itself. It doesn't arrive like a breakdown or a crisis you can point to on a calendar. It lives in the background like a frequency nobody else can hear — and you spend years turning up the volume on everything else just to drown it out. Business. Hustle. Deals. Noise. More noise. Different noises. I grew up in Chomedy, Laval — suburbs outside Montreal, the kind of place that looks perfectly fine in photographs and feels slightly suffocating in real life. Semi-Palestinian blood. Lebanese roots. French streets. English ambition. Arabic at home when my mother wanted privacy from the neighbors. Four languages before I was ten, which sounds impressive until you realize I didn't fully belong to any of them.

> Reflection
> **Québec will do that for you. A province that legislates what you can wear on your face while calling itself a free society. A place that wants your labor, your taxes, your French accent — and quietly wishes you looked a little more like the people on the old coins. I don't say this with bitterness. I say it with the calm of a man who figured out early that belonging was never going to be given to him. He was going to have to build it himself.**

Or find it somewhere else entirely. The word Muslim was in my file from birth. Like a field on a government form, someone else filled out before I could hold a pen. It didn't mean prayer. It didn't mean the Quran. It didn't mean anything with texture or weight — it was just the answer to a question nobody around me was asking. We didn't go to the mosque. We didn't not go to the mosque. Islam was the water we were born near but never learned to swim in.

My father was brilliant and absent in the way that brilliant men sometimes are — present enough to leave an impression, unavailable enough to leave a gap. My mother was — and still is — one of the most extraordinary human beings I have ever been in a room with. She can see through you before you finish your sentences. She has senses that don't have numbers. She survived things that would have finished most people, came out the other side, and found God on her own terms — not because someone handed her a religion but because she followed the evidence and it led somewhere real.

I didn't inherit her clarity immediately.

What I inherited first was hunger.

I want to tell you something about men who grow up without a clear map.

They don't sit still. They can't.

There's an engine running that has no instructions, no destination loaded, just — power. Raw, directionless, expensive power. You aim at whatever's in front of you. A restaurant shaped like a cartoon cat. A political campaign. A licensing empire. A fight with a farmer who thought he could convert you to Judaism in exchange for an inheritance that turned out to be cattle and debt.

More on all of that later. The point is — I wasn't lost in the way people feel sorry for it. I was lost in the way that looks, from the outside, like ambition. I was building things constantly. I was in rooms

with people whose names you know. I was on phone calls that should have meant something. I was moving at the speed that men move when they're running from a question they haven't admitted they're running from.

The question was simple.

Who are you actually? Not the brand. Not the entrepreneur. Not the candidate. Not the GarfieldEATS guy. Not the PPC candidate for the Toronto Centre. Not the Palestinian voice or the Québécois identity or the Canadian passport or the Lebanese family name.

You. Underneath all of it. Who is there?

It took a dream, an assault, a licensing termination, a political campaign, several death threats, a spiritual war I fought mostly alone, and something that came to me in the night from a source I'll describe in full later in this book — to finally answer that question.

This is that answer.

My first book, Arabiolosis, was about escape — from Saudi Arabia, from suppression, from the silencing of Arab voices, from the loneliness of a man who looks beige in a world that wants you to pick a side and stay there. I saw what was coming then. I wrote it as a warning and a map. The revolution of Arabs against the forces arrayed against them, the deepening religion wars, the fracture lines that were already visible to anyone paying attention — I had foresights I suppressed for years, a window of five years into what was coming, and I watched it arrive exactly as I saw it.

That book was an escape.

This book is what I found after I stopped running.

You're holding the sequel to a man, not just a story. There's a Greek word — Ataraxia — that describes a state the ancient philosophers spent their entire careers trying to achieve and most of them never reached. Serene, undisturbed calm. Not ignorance. Not numbness. Not the peace of someone who has never been tested. The peace of someone who has been through everything — and found the thing that doesn't move.

I found it.

This book is exactly how.

Let me entergage you.

CHAPTER TWO

WHAT THEY TOOK BEFORE I COULD COUNT

Let's talk about the Baby Boomer generation. Not with nostalgia. Not with the manufactured respect we've been trained to perform for people simply because they arrived on earth earlier than us. With the clarity of someone who inherited the world they built and has to actually live in it. This is the generation that was handed the most prosperous, stable, opportunity-loaded moment in human history. Post-war economies humming. Houses you could buy on a single income. University tuition payable with a summer job. A job market that hired you. A planet that had not yet been fully financialized, stripped, and sold back to you in subscription format.

They got all of that. They built equity on top of it. They voted for policies that protected their equity. They told their children to work hard and save money. They told their grandchildren to pull themselves up with their bootstraps.

And then they charged them $1.2 million for a semi-detached in Brampton.

Let's talk about numbers — because feelings bounce off people who don't have them, but receipts don't. Homeownership among Canadians aged 25 to 29 fell from 44.1% to 36.5% in a single decade — the sharpest collapse of any age group. In Vancouver, the share of young adults owning a single detached home fell from 36.3% for Baby Boomers in 1991 to just 12.2% for millennials in 2021. Not a slow decline. A collapse. The kind of collapse that happens when a generation votes consistently to protect asset prices over human beings who happen to be their own children and grandchildren. Over half of millennials and Gen Z feel pressure to own property — dramatically higher than the 13% of Baby Boomers who felt the same pressure. Because Boomers didn't feel pressure to own property. They just owned it. The way you don't feel pressure to breathe when there's enough air in the room. Buying a home ten years later — even at the same price — creates a wealth gap of $300,000 or more through foregone equity, lost forced savings, and rent payments that build absolutely nothing. Three hundred thousand dollars. Gone. Not because you made bad decisions.

Because you were born twenty years too late to the party and arrived to find the Boomers had eaten everything, charged the dessert to your tab, and left a pamphlet about financial responsibility on the table. Renters are expected to make up 40% of all Canadian households by the 2026 Census. A country with the size of a continent, with some of the lowest population density on earth, somehow engineered a housing crisis so severe that nearly half its people cannot own the ground they sleep on. That is not an accident. That is a policy choice. Made by people already inside the house before they pulled up the ladder. And in the 2025 federal election — the Baby Boomers, now outnumbered for the first time in sixty-five years, voted Liberal at 52% and kept the same machine running. While 18- to 34-year-olds voted for something different at 41%, desperately trying to change anything at all. Overruled. Again. By people who will not live long enough to experience the consequences of what they keep choosing. And who sits in Parliament deciding all of this? The average MP is over 50. There are parliamentarians turning 85, 83, and 82 this year — still seated, still

voting, still deciding the future of a country whose young people they have never had to be and will never have to become. Here is my position and I will say it without a filter:

> Reflection
>
> **Any white man with white hair in a position of political power who cannot tell you what a one-bedroom apartment costs in the city he represents, who hasn't taken public transit in a decade, who owns three properties while telling you the market will "self-correct" — should be retired. Sent home. Gold watch, zero further influence, thank you for your service, goodbye.**

Unless he's the rare white man with white hair who gets it. Who looks at these numbers and feels something human. Those exist. Rarely. You know them immediately because they lead solutions instead of lectures, and they've never used the word bootstrap without irony. The rest? Gone. And I say that having run for office myself — so I know exactly what the rooms look like and who's in them and what they're actually protecting. Which brings me to something the People's Party of Canada understood that nobody else had the courage to say clearly: when you tax success at 50% — when the government takes half of every investment gain a person makes — you don't inspire people to build. You inspire them to leave. My father. Entrepreneurs across this country. People who built something real, who took risks nobody compensated them for during the lean years, and who are now told that success is the moment the government becomes your largest business partner without having done a single day of work. The PPC was the only party willing to abolish the personal capital gains tax entirely — bringing the inclusion rate from 50% all the way to zero. Every other party called it radical. People who've actually built something call it the bare minimum. You want to know why Canada's best minds, its most ambitious entrepreneurs, its most productive people are quietly packing up and moving somewhere that doesn't punish them for winning?

That's why.

God says rizq — sustenance — is written. But He also gave you a brain and expects you to use it. And right now, the brain says: the system is designed to keep you from accumulating enough to be free of it. The Baby Boomers benefited from a version of Canada that no longer exists and keep voting to preserve their version at the expense of yours.

That's the macro. Now let me tell you about one decision. Made by one woman. That affected two boys who had nothing to do with any of this.

My mother had a son before me. I won't use his name. He'll remain anonymous here — not to erase him, but because this story belongs to him, and he gets to tell it on his own terms if he ever chooses to. What I'll tell you is what was done. She was escaping. A first marriage with violence — the kind that doesn't just leave marks on the body but rewires how you move through the world afterward. She went out. She survived. And in the wreckage of that survival, while she was still

bleeding and standing, a decision was made above her head by people with authority they didn't earn over a child that was not theirs to place.

My grandmother — my father's mother — said no.

So, my other grandmother raised him.

And I grew up without my brother.

Two boys. Same blood. Separated not by war, not by God, not by anything inevitable — but by the decision of a Baby Boomer woman from a generation that confused certainty with wisdom and never once asked the children what they needed.

The Quran says: *"Therefore do not oppress the orphan." (93:9)* — a verse from Surah Ad-Duha, revealed at a moment when even the Prophet (PBUH) felt alone and unheard. God reminding him — reminding us — that He sees the ones the world forgets. The ones decisions get made about without their consent.

And the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said: *"I and the one who cares for an orphan will be in Paradise like these two"* — and he held his index and middle fingers together. (Sahih al-Bukhari)

Like this. That close.

God does not take lightly what was done to my brother. Not in this life. Not in the next. And here is what I want you to understand — the part the Baby Boomer who made that decision never got to see coming:

He turned out extraordinarily anyway. Great artist. A wife who is genuinely, visibly the best woman for him — the kind of match that makes you believe in something written before either of them was born. Children who are model-looking and full of life. A family built from scratch, with his own hands, from a starting point that had been deliberately made harder than it needed to be.

That's not luck. That's God protecting what humans almost destroyed. He always does it. The cord they cut between us — God tied another one. Different shapes. Same blood.

And if you mix your affairs with theirs — they are your brothers. They are your brothers. (2:220). Even when someone decides otherwise. Even when that decision was made with the full confidence of a generation, that has never once admitted it was wrong.

Now — my mother. I could write a hundred pages about this woman and still miss something essential. She has senses that don't have numbers. Six, seven, eight — whatever comes after the standard five; she has them all operational and calibrated to a frightening degree. She reads a room

before she enters it. She reads a person before they finish their first sentence. She has caught people in lies they hadn't finished constructing yet.

She was not given an easy life. Not even close.

First marriage — violence. Then escape. Then the chaos of rebuilding with a child she was separated from by a decision she didn't make. Then — because apparently surviving all of that wasn't enough of a test — cancer. Breast cancer. Because God tests the ones He loves hardest, and He clearly had enormous plans for this woman.

She survived that, too. Here's what I want to tell you about my mother and Islam — because this is important and it's different from how religion usually arrives in people's lives: It wasn't handed to her like a pamphlet. It wasn't pressure, or expectation, or a culture she was born inside of. My father and his brothers showed her. Not by lecturing. By being. They embodied it — the calm, the certainty, the way they moved through difficulty without collapsing — and she watched it and felt something she couldn't dismiss. The way you feel sunlight when you step outside after being in a dark room. Not because someone told you it was warm. Because it was.

She followed through on her own terms.

No hijab. Because my father never forced her. Because real Islam — not the performance version policed by insecure men who confuse control with piety — is a relationship between a soul and its Creator. Between her and God. Nobody else is in that conversation.

She felt it. She followed. And her life changed in ways that are not subtle or theoretical. From violence to peace. From slumps to abundance. From a marriage that tried to erase her to a version of herself that is, frankly, unerasable. The Quran says it twice — back-to-back, in consecutive verses, as if Allah knew one time wouldn't be enough for us to believe it:

"*Verily, with hardship comes ease. Verily, with hardship comes ease." (94:5-6)* He said it twice. Because He knows us. He knows we hear it once and nod politely and go back to panic. So, he said it again. No. Actually. I mean it. With the hardship — the ease is already there. My mother is the living proof of both verses. And I say that as her son, who watched it happen in real time, and who still sometimes forgets.

I am her son.

I inherited her instincts. The ability to read a room, smell nonsense, see around corners before the corner exists. The foresight I spent years suppressing — that five-year window into what was coming — that's hers too, passed down through blood and survival and a faith she found on her own terms.

What I didn't inherit — what got lost somewhere between her first marriage and my childhood

and the silences that filled the spaces where emotional language should have lived — was simpler than any of this.

I don't know how to say I love you.

Not to her. Not to anyone. I am still struggling with it now. And she is the person on earth who most deserves to hear it most often. The Goldie Hawn of Arab immigrant mothers — fun, sharp, magnetic, impossible to fool — and I have loved her my entire life in ways I have never once said out loud.

That's the inheritance the Baby Boomer generation doesn't talk about. Not just the housing prices. Not just the locked-out economy. The emotional illiteracy that passes through families never has space to heal because survival took every available resource.

You can build a restaurant empire and not know how to say I love you.

You can run for federal office and not know how to say I love you.

You can speak four languages and not have the words for the one thing that matters most in any of them.

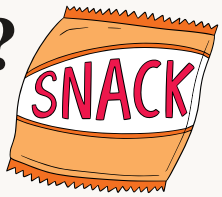
That's what they took. Before I could count it. Before I even knew it was being taken.

This entire book is, in part, the process of getting it back.

No cap.

CHAPTER THREE

SCOOBY-DOOBY-DOO, WHERE ARE YOU?



(Somewhere on an Ontario Farm, Unfortunately)

Let me tell you about the greatest pivot in the history of Canadian food licensing. After Garfield — after the orange cat, the pizza empire, the trolls, the Paramount termination, the grief I will describe in full later because it deserves its own chapter — I didn't collapse. I didn't take a sabbatical. I didn't journal my feelings or book a wellness retreat in Tulum.

I messaged Warner Bros.

Because here's what most people don't understand about losing a licensing deal: the licensor watches how you lose it. Warner had been watching me work. They saw the GarfieldEATS branding — the packaging, the royalty reporting filed on time, every time, with the precision of a man who understood that a license is borrowed trust and you treat it accordingly. They saw Instagram. They saw the outspoken, slightly unhinged, deeply passionate licensee who loved the characters more than most people who'd worked with them professionally for decades. Warner loved my work. So, when I came back — this time with a Great Dane instead of a tabby cat — they were listening.

Scooby-Dooby-Doo, where are you?

He was about to be on a grass-fed burger patty. That's where. Scooby-DooEATS. The world's first Scooby-Doo themed food venture — clean label, grass-fed, real ingredients, Warner Bros. licensed, packaged with the kind of brand alignment that made me genuinely proud. This wasn't slapping a cartoon face on a frozen mystery-meat disc and calling it a day. This was work. Character integrity. Brand respect. The kind of licensee behavior that makes IP holders exhale.

And because I do nothing halfway — I hired the voice of Scooby-Doo himself.

Frank Welker. 80 years old. The man has been voicing Fred Jones since 1969 and took over as Scooby-Doo himself in 2002. Over 860 films, television, and video game credits. Films grossed $17.4 billion worldwide. Megatron. Curious George. Garfield. The monkey in Raiders of the Lost Ark. One of the most prolific voice actors in the history of the medium — and I put him to work saying "Scooby-Dooby-Doo" for my burger app. Warner didn't own those voice recordings — the voice rights were their own separate universe of clearances, their own negotiation, their own budget. So, I paid for it myself. Because when Nathen Mazri puts his name on something, the dog barks correctly or it doesn't bark at all. Scooby Snack-level content. No notes.

> Reflection
>
> **Frank Welker delivered. A professional of the highest order. The kind of man who has been doing this since before most of my target audience was born and still shows up with full commitment to a Scooby-Doo burger app run by a Palestinian-Lebanese-Québécois entrepreneur in Toronto who was quietly, simultaneously, finding God on a beautiful autumn road.**

God bless Frank Welker. Genuinely.

Now. The farmer.

Every good story needs a villain. Mine wore flannels. I won't use his name. But I'll say everything else — and if he's still alive, kidney surgery and outstanding debts notwithstanding, he'll know exactly who he is. And if he wants to dispute a single word of what follows, I will be delighted to produce the court documents.

He was divorced. Of course he was. Men who talk that fast and that loud and that constantly about their own greatness have usually already exhausted at least one human being into legal separation. He had a son — a nice kid, genuinely — who at the time was navigating a complicated relationship with cocaine that I watched with the specific sadness you feel for someone with more potential than their current situation suggests. The son has since matured. Doing better now. God is merciful and young men make expensive mistakes.

The farmer himself claimed to be exactly that — a farmer. A man of the land. Livestock, meat, heritage, all of it.

Here is what he actually was: a distributor. He had farmland — beautiful farmland, actually, the kind of sprawling Ontario property that looks meaningful in photographs. Maybe one or two cows are grazing for aesthetic purposes. But the meat he distributed and sold under his brand name? Other farmers' products. Other farmers' animals, slaughtered elsewhere, funneled through his label, presented to the market as his. He was performing agriculture the way certain people perform religion — all the costume, none of the substance.

And the debts.

The debts. I did not know, while I was sitting across from this man listening to him talk about how he had no one and I was like a son to him and he wanted to give me everything — I did not know that he owed RBC alone over two million dollars. Two million. To one bank. One. Not counting the ranchers, he owed across the region. Not counting the various other obligations, he had accumulated with the cheerful confidence of a man who had never once let reality interrupt his self-narrative.

"*I have no one. You must listen to me. I will give you everything.*" That's what he said. To a man who grew up without enough expressions of love, who had a father wound still healing, who wanted to believe that someone older and established saw his potential and meant it genuinely.

I heard it. I let it in. I trusted him.

That is the most expensive sentence in this chapter. Here is what trust, in the wrong hands, actually costs: He started managing me. Slowly. The way manipulation always works — slowly, so you don't notice the temperature rising. He began telling me that Warner Bros. were not good partners. That the royalties were too high. That I shouldn't be spreading myself across multiple brands — I should focus on his brand, his margins, his vision. That the licensing model was the wrong model. This man — who owed two million dollars to a single bank, who distributed other people's cows

under his name, who had never successfully built a licensed brand in his life — was telling me, a man Warner Bros. had specifically come back to after GarfieldEATS, that licensing was the wrong direction.

And I — God forgive me for this one — listened. He had me drafting emails I shouldn't have sent. Questioning relationships I had built with real work and real results. We were deep in negotiations for him to acquire my company — Entergage Inc., my licensing and food venture vehicle — with agreements being drafted, modified, redrafted, changed again. Lawyers' time. My time. My energy. My focus pulled away from the actual business while he performed the role of serious acquirer without ever intending to sign.

He never signed.

There was never going to be a signature. The acquisition was a fiction designed to keep me close, keep me compliant, keep me focused on his agenda while he figured out what he could extract. The agreement dragged on with changes and corrections and just one more revision until I finally understood what was actually happening.

Nothing was happening. Nothing was ever going to happen. I had given a man control over me — over my company, my communication, my direction — because he said I have no one and you are like a son to me.

And I was gullible enough, hungry enough for that particular kind of validation, to believe it.

The Warner relationship suffered. My clarity suffered. My time — which is the one resource you cannot recover — was consumed by a man running a performance of partnership while sitting on two million dollars of other people's money.

> “Jinkies”, as Velma would say. Although, Mindy Kaling sexualized Velma. I built a Garfield restaurant. We are not the same kind of licensee. Disrespectful to the legacy of Hanna-Barbera!

Then the farmer jeopardized the Warner license directly. I won't detail every mechanism because some things are better left for the court documents that already exist. What I will say is this: the chaos of who he was — the erratic energy, the fast-talking contradictions, the web of obligations he was managing and mismanaging simultaneously — bled into a professional context where it had no business being. My Warner relationship. My Scooby-DooEATS venture. Frank Welker's recording sitting ready. The grass-fed burgers are waiting.

All of it, put at risk. By one man's dysfunction I had mistaken for personality.

I sued him. The Ministry of Finance of Canada got involved. They recovered a portion — a small portion, because the Canadian government processes justice at the speed of a glacier completing a crossword puzzle. He still owes the remainder. To me. To RBC. To the ranchers across the region

who trusted him the way I trusted him, which is to say: more than he deserved.

The bank eventually seized his wagon and his cows.

The cows he didn't fully own.

The cows he had possibly borrowed from the concept of farming itself.

God has a sense of humor, and it is immaculate.

I should tell you about the Amish.

They had moved in next door. On the adjacent farmland. Quiet, dignified, bothering absolutely no one — living off the land, dressing according to their faith, doing what they came to do with a completeness that I found, honestly, admirable.

The farmer hated them.

With the specific, irrational, instant hatred that certain men produce on sight when they encounter something they don't understand and cannot control. He talked about the way you talk about a problem that needs solving. He performed his disgust for anyone who would listen, which at that point unfortunately included me.

I sat there — a Muslim, Palestinian, Lebanese, Canadian man who had been looked at in rooms with that specific evaluating gaze that tries to decide if you belong — and I thought:

It is so easy. For some men. To just drop hate from nothing. From how someone dresses. From what they look like from a distance. From a life they haven't asked a single question about. Just — hate. Instant. Cheap. Cowardly.

I was not raised that way. My mother couldn't raise me that way — she had survived too much to teach her son to aim for cruelty at innocent people for sport. And Allah? Allah would be furious at that one. He created those Amish farmers. He placed them on that land. He dressed them in that clothing through the faith He gave them.

And this man — who read the Torah daily and confessed his sins like a competitive sport — sat across from me performing hatred toward his quiet neighbors like it was dinner conversation.

I filed it. Added it to the growing file of who this man was.

The file was getting thick.

And then — the conversion.

Because yes. This also happened. At some point during our business relationship, this divorced,

debt-ridden, fast-talking, Amish-hating, approximately-two-million-dollars-in-debt farmer decided that what I needed was to convert to Judaism.

Specifically: I should convert, or I would not be inheriting his wealth.

Oh, his wealth.

Which — as now established — consisted of:

- $2,000,000+ owed to RBC Bank
- Debts to multiple ranchers across Ontario
- Farmland he wasn't farming
- One or two decorative cows
- A wagon the bank would eventually seize

That was the inheritance. That was what I was supposed to change my faith for.

I want you to sit with that for a moment.

A man whose soul he himself described as damaged goods — who talked about his sins the way people talk about a collection they're proud of — wanted me to abandon Islam, the faith I was in the process of rediscovering with every fiber of my being, in exchange for a debt portfolio and some borrowed cows.

No.

Was never going to be anything but no. Here is what I want to tell you about driving to the farm. Because this is the part nobody expected, least of all me. Lana Del Rey on the speakers. That specific kind of music that sounds like nostalgia for something you haven't lost yet — melancholy and cinematic and somehow exactly right for the Ontario countryside in autumn. The trees on either side of the road turning gold and amber, the specific beauty of a Canadian fall that makes you understand why people stay in a country that is trying its best to price them out of it. My beige skin. My beige suede BOSS trench coat — the color of both, like I'd been dressed to match the season. My BMW coupe moving through it all. (Still financing it, by the way. Relax. I was spiritually enlightened, not debt-free.)

And tears. Not from sadness, exactly. From something harder to name — the specific release that happens when you have been carrying something for so long that putting it down feels like grief and relief at the same time. I was healing. Actively, messy, privately healing. The things done to me. The things I had done to myself. The silence. The absences. The places where love should have been and weren't. And Islam — the real one, not the label I'd been born with and never examined — was arriving. Not dramatic. Not with a thunderclap. With the quiet certainty of something true. Like the road knowing where it goes even when you can't see around the bend.

I was finding God on that drive. Really finding Him. Not the cultural version or the guilt version or

the performance version — the real one. Bigger than 2.3 trillion galaxies. On Throne. *Closer to me than my jugular vein, as the Quran says. (50:16)*

The farmer was a test. The autumn road was the answer.

God was pulling me somewhere much brighter.

And I was, finally, starting to let Him.

"*Verily, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves." (13:11)*

I was changing. Right there. On a beautiful road. With Lana Del Rey and autumn leaves and a beige coat and two million dollars' worth of lessons I hadn't finished paying for yet.

Neither I nor the dog served him.

Scooby-Dooby-Doo, where are you?

Somewhere God intended. All along.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE ROOM WHERE DEALS DIE

There is a specific species of human being that only reveals itself in rooms where money is present or implied.

> Reflection
> **Not money in the abstract — not the idea of wealth, not the aspiration of it. The implication of it. The suggestion that the person across from you might have access to something you want. Watch what happens to people in that room. Watch how quickly the performance begins. How does the posture change? How the laugh gets warmer. How suddenly everyone has time for you.**

I have been to many of those rooms.

And what I can tell you, with the calm of a man who has since stopped needing anything from any of them, is this:

Famous people are more afraid than you.

Every single one. Without exception. The fear just wears different costumes depending on the budget.

Let me take you through the ones I remember most clearly. Not as a name-dropper — I have zero interest in borrowed significance — but as a forensic observer of what happens to human beings when wealth, ego, and the performance of both are left in a room together long enough.

Consider it as a field guide.

DISNEY/FOX

The 2004 Garfield film — with Bill Murray voicing the cat and Jennifer Love Hewitt as the love interest — was produced by Davis Entertainment and distributed by 20th Century Fox. Then Disney acquired Fox for $71.3 billion in 2019. And with that acquisition came the entire catalog. Including the storage rooms.

A PR director at what was now effectively a Disney property reached out. They had props. Comic books. Garfield merchandise sitting in storage from the production — giant plush Garfields (look it up: the truly enormous ones), Garfield cybersecurity books of all things, memorabilia spanning decades of licensing. They were paying storage fees. I was the most passionate Garfield licensee alive.

The math was obvious.

They gave it all to me. No royalties. No licensing fees. Do as you please — sell it, give it away, keep it. The storage problem became my problem, and my problem became an auction that told me something I hadn't fully understood yet: when you become something real in people's minds, they want a piece of it. Not of the brand. Of you. Fans weren't buying Garfield merchandise. They were buying a piece of whatever I represented to them. That is worth more than any licensing deal.
I paid storage on that collection for two years. I auctioned it eventually. And yes — I also lived near their Burbank studio for a period. And yes — I auditioned for a voice-over villain role. And no — I did not get it. What I got instead was an invitation from two husbands I met through the Disney lot— one an employee there - to their home in Burbank. Pleasant enough, the conversation. A jacuzzi came into view. Then the other people in the jacuzzi. Then the realization of what kind of evening this was.

I faked a panic attack. I left.

I cried on the way home — from something deeper that I was only beginning to understand at the time. A specific fear that had been installed in me in Beirut and that recognized, without my permission, the shape of a situation it had experienced before. I was not ready to name that yet.
The next chapter names it.
The PR director has since left Disney. Whether that was AI-driven restructuring or something else, I cannot say. What I know is that I never want to work for anyone. Not Disney. Not Warner. Not any entity that can hand you everything on Tuesday and take it back in an envelope on Wednesday.
My name is on the label or I am not in the building.

LISA VANDERPUMP & GENE SIMMONS: Wealth Performing for Wealth

Pump Restaurant. Los Angeles. The kind of establishment that has decided its aesthetic is the experience — pink, ornate, slightly surreal, like dining inside a very expensive fever dream. Lisa Vanderpump is, whatever you think of reality television, a genuinely competent operator. The woman built a hospitality empire and maintained it across decades of public scrutiny. Respect where it's due. Her husband — shorter, more defensive, the specific energy of a man who has spent considerable time being the least impressive person in his own marriage and has developed elaborate compensation strategies — was a different story. Always be wary of short men with something to prove.

Not all short men. The ones with something to prove. You know the difference within thirty seconds. Gene Simmons was there. KISS. The tongue. The platform boots solve one problem by creating several others. A man who turned himself into a literal trademark and has been monetizing the trademark ever since with an efficiency that is genuinely impressive if you can get past the theater of it. Here is what I remember most about that room:

They thought I was someone's son. Not my own man — someone's son. Specifically, someone imagined me as the offspring of a Gulf billionaire, which would explain the car and the coat and the particular ease with which I occupied space that I hadn't paid for yet. They wanted to go to Dubai.

They were interested. Suddenly warm, suddenly attentive, suddenly very curious about my plans and my connections. I watched this happen in real time with the detached fascination of a documentarian who has accidentally become the subject. They could have gone to Dubai on their own. Easily. Several times over. They didn't need me to take them anywhere. But the possibility that I might be connected to something they wanted access to — that was enough to change the temperature of the room completely. This is what wealth does when it encounters the possibility of more wealth: it performs. It leans in. It gets charming.

The second the possibility evaporates, and so does the warmth. I filed it. Moved on.

STEVE WOZNIAK: Genius Behind A $100,000 Wall

I met him at the airport. The specific beautiful randomness of airports — the only places left where the architecture of a life can put you next to anyone. Wozniak is — and I say this with full sincerity — one of the genuinely good ones. Warm. Present. The specific quality of a man who became extraordinarily successful and decided, somewhere along the way, that this entitled him to nothing. We talked. He listened. He was interested in the app, in the licensing model, in the vision. He gave me his contact.

He gave me his contact. I want you to understand what that felt like to a young entrepreneur who had been building in relative isolation — the co-founder of Apple, the man whose actual genius made the whole thing possible while someone else got the mythology, handing over a way to reach him. Genuine. Human. Encouraging.

And then his manager called.

One hundred thousand dollars. To have him at the opening. To put his name on the event. To convert the human being I had met in an airport — the one who had listened and been interested and given his contact voluntarily — into a product with a price tag. I don't blame Wozniak for this. I genuinely don't. This is what happens when people of that caliber have to operate in the world — the access gets priced because otherwise there's no access at all, and someone has to manage the volume. But I want you to notice what it reveals: that even genuine warmth, even real connection, even a man who is actually good — operates inside a system that has commodified human attention so completely that a conversation has a cost and a handshake has a rate card.

I said: One day. Thank you.

I meant both. The $100,000 wall taught me more about how the world actually works than most of the books I'd read about it. Genius is not enough. Access to genius costs more than genius itself. And somewhere between the airport and the manager's phone call, the human being becomes the brand — whether they want to or not. (I still have my photo with him on Instagram and Linkedin.)

I pray Wozniak never fully became the brand. From what I saw in that airport, he hadn't yet.

HULK HOGAN: Licensing Is King

I got him on the phone. Terry Bollea. Hulk Hogan. The most recognizable professional wrestling persona in human history — red and yellow, twenty-four-inch pythons, whatcha gonna do — on the phone with me, talking about licensing, talking about the opening, talking about showing up.

"Licensing is King," he said. "I built my empire on it." He was right. He understood something most entertainers never figure out — that the character you create can outlive and outperform the person who created it if you're strategic about where you let it live. He'd done it. He knew it. And he was willing to come. He was in. But we didn't have the budget to fly him out all the way to Dubai.

He died recently.

Life does not wait for your plans. Not for mine, not for yours, not for Hulk Hogan's, not for anyone. The appointments we make with the future are always provisional — written in pencil, subject to revision by forces that do not check our calendars first. I was sad. Genuinely. Not just for the opening — for the man. For the conversations we didn't finish. For the version of the partnership that lived briefly in possibility and then was closed.

The Prophet (PBUH) said: *"Be in this world as if you are a stranger*

or a traveler." (Sahih al-Bukhari) A traveler doesn't assume the road ahead is guaranteed. He moves with intention and holds his plans loosely. Hulk Hogan held his loosely in the end — not by choice, but that's usually how we learn it.

SUTTON STRACKE: Tiny Goal and The Big Mac Assistant

Toronto. The neighborhood that has decided it is European and is trying very hard to convince everyone, including itself. A tiny shop. Sutton Stracke promoting her clothing line with the specific energy of a woman who is used to being looked at and has constructed an elaborate relationship with that fact — not entirely comfortable with it, not entirely able to stop it. Insecurity was wearing expensive clothes. You could smell it from the street. Not meanly — sadly. This is

a woman with more going on beneath the surface than she has ever been given space to show. The clothes were, and I will be honest because this book runs on honesty, genuinely some of the ugliest I have ever seen assembled in one place. Whatever vision drove the collection, it did not survive the execution. But she was there, and I was there on business, so I smiled and navigated toward the manager upstairs.

And then there was the McAssistant. Flamboyant. Joyful. Completely unbothered. A Big Mac of a personality — too much of everything, somehow satisfying in spite of itself. He decided I was the

most interesting thing to happen to that shop in months, possibly ever, and he communicated this with the full force of his being in a way that I, a man there on business, had to navigate around while maintaining professional trajectory.

I made it upstairs. Eventually.

Sutton was nice. Genuinely. The meeting was cordial. Nothing came of it.

But I think about her sometimes — not about the deal, but about the woman. God knows what's underneath the performance. God knows what she's carrying beneath the Bravo cameras and the Yorkville pop-up and the clothes that didn't quite work. He sees the insecurity and the effort and the hope and everything that doesn't make it to air.

Poor woman. Sad. God knows best.

THE ARABB LEADERS

I'll handle these together because they deserve approximately the same amount of space — which is minimal. The Arabic singers,frankly, bore me. I don't say this to be provocative. I say it as a cultural observation from someone who grew up with Arabic music as background noise and watched it evolve into a genre increasingly indistinguishable from product. The passion is sometimes real. The output is frequently not. The sheikhs and princes — multiple, across Saudi and the UAE — taught me the most important lesson in the shortest amount of time:

They will do nothing for you. Not because they're bad people. Because they are surrounded by so many people wanting things that the entire architecture of their existence has been redesigned to prevent access. You can be in the room. You can have the conversation. You can walk away having said everything right and done everything right and it will mean nothing, because decision-making happens somewhere you will never be invited.

Your own. Always your own. Build with people who need the thing to succeed as much as you do. Build with people whose success is tied to yours. Build with people who have something to lose if it doesn't work.

Princes have nothing to lose if it doesn't work. That's the whole problem.

MBS and MBZ — I'll give them this: the vision. What they did with sand — literal sand — and turned it into cities that made the world look twice. The infrastructure, the ambition, the sheer scale of execution. I admire the vision. Only the vision. The method is God's business to evaluate, not mine.

The rest of the Arab leadership? Puppets of Washington in national dress. Performing sovereignty while outsourcing decisions. I knew it as a child watching missiles get intercepted in UAE skies. I know it now watching policy get dictated from offices that aren't in the region. God sees the leaders. He sees what they protect and what they sacrifice and whose interests they actually serve.

He keeps meticulous records.

THE THREAD THROUGH ALL OF IT

Here is what every single one of these encounters had in common — from Trump to the Toronto assistant who would not stop flirting:

They were all performing.

Every one of them. For different audiences, with different budgets, at different levels of self-awareness — but performing. The brand. The wealth. The power. The relevance. Personality. The warmth that appears when money is implied and disappears when it isn't.

And here is what I was doing while I was in those rooms:

I was also performing. Not maliciously. Not dishonestly. But performing the version of Nathen Mazri that those rooms called for — the entrepreneur, the visionary, the man with the BMW and the coat and the licensing empire in progress. The man who belonged in the room. It took years — and a dream I'll tell you about later, and an autumn road, and a farm that cost me more than money, and a dog who also did not serve a particular farmer — before I stopped performing entirely.

What's left when you stop performing is either nothing, or the real thing.

I found the real thing.

That is, ultimately, what this entire chapter was building toward. *"And do not walk upon the earth exultantly. Indeed, you will never tear the earth apart, and you will never reach the mountains in height." (17:37)*

Walk light. Know what you are. Know what they are.

The room where deals die is also, if you pay attention, the room where illusions die.

Both are worth the price of admission.

MATTHEW LILLARD: THE UNIVERSE CIRCLES

Long before Scooby-DooEATS. Long before Warner Bros. Long before I was even thinking about grass-fed burgers with a cartoon Great Dane on the packaging — I met

Matthew Lillard. Shaggy. The live-action Shaggy. The man who played him in the 2002 film that earned $275 million worldwide and then reprised the role in 2004's sequel — the one he thought would make him the biggest star in Hollywood. "I thought I'd be number one on the call sheet for the next ten years," he said later. "The exact opposite happened." I love that story. Not because he suffered — because he learned. After the sequel flopped and his career went quiet, he sold his house, fired his agent, his lawyer, and his manager. Rebuilt from scratch. Came back through side doors — supporting roles, voice work, eventually Five Nights at Freddy's finding a whole new generation. A man who had to lose his version of success to find his actual one.

Sound familiar? When I met him — years before any of this, before Garfield, before Scooby, before any of the licensing universe I was about to build — I didn't know yet that I would one day license his dog. His cartoon universe. That I would pay Frank Welker to voice that dog for my app. That the Scooby-Doo world this man had physically inhabited on screen would become the brand I would fight for in Ontario courts and Warner Bros. boardrooms.

The universe had already connected us. I just didn't have the context yet to read it.

This is what I mean when I say the universe circles your future in the now. The people you encounter before you understand why — they're not random. They're coordinates. God placing markers on a map you haven't been handed yet.

Pay attention to everyone you meet. Especially the ones you don't yet understand why you're meeting.

JENNIFER LOVE HEWITT: A GENUINE SWEETHEART IN A FAKE INDUSTRY

She sent me a video. Warm. Genuine. Congratulating me on GarfieldEATS and talking about shooting the Garfield movie — the 2004 film with Bill Murray — with the specific fondness of someone who actually enjoyed the experience rather than just filing it under projects completed.

She said she wanted to bring her kids.

That's it. That's the whole story. And it's somehow one of the ones I remember most warmly from that entire era — because it was real. No angle. No extraction. No performance for a room. Just a woman who heard about something connected to a project she'd loved and reached out with genuine warmth.

I love I Know What You Did Last Summer. That scream — "What do you waaaaaaaaaaant from mee?!" — iconic. Genuinely iconic. Sometimes when life is throwing everything at me simultaneously, I look up and say the exact same thing.

What do you want from me.

God usually answers. Eventually. In His own time. Which is never your preferred time but is always, infuriatingly, the right time.

Jennifer Love Hewitt — a sweetheart. A genuinely good human in an industry that produces very few of them. I hope she brought those kids.

JIM DAVIS: THE WISEST MAN IN THE ROOM

This one I have to get right. Because Jim Davis deserves a proper paragraph. Muncie, Indiana. Christmas dinner. Paws Inc. — the studio he built in the town where Garfield was born, where the cat with the Monday problem and the lasagna obsession became one of the most licensed characters in the history of entertainment. Jim Davis is tall. Calm in the way that only men who have built something real and watched it outlive their expectations can be calm. Not the performed calm of someone suppressing anxiety — the actual settled calm of a man who knows exactly what he's made and exactly what it's worth and has stopped needing to prove either.

He told me: "No young rebel in forty years wanted to license Garfield and make a pizza head out of him."

He said it like a compliment. It was the greatest compliment I have ever received professionally. We sat at Christmas dinner, and he told me stories — the kind of stories that only come out when someone has decided you're worth telling them to. The history. The early years. The decisions that compounded. How a newspaper comic strip became a global empire built on the licensing of a single, gloriously lazy, deeply relatable orange cat.

And I — because I am who I am and I have zero filter at Christmas dinner with legends — asked him about the Garfield porn.

Yes. I asked. There is, on certain corners of the internet that I will not be directing you to, a tradition of creating explicit content featuring Garfield. With — and I'm going to use the clinical term here — anatomical additions that Jim Davis did not originally include in the design.

He knew about it.

"Let 'em," he said.

Calm. Unbothered. Slightly amused. The wisdom of a man who had long since made peace with what happens when you create something beloved enough that the internet decides to do things to it that you never intended. You cannot control what people do with love. Even when what they do with it is deeply, deeply strange.

I laughed. He laughed. It was the most Canadian-Palestinian-Lebanese Christmas dinner in Indiana history. We talked about franchising GarfieldEATS. Opening locations. Building it properly. And then — as these things go — he sold his IP. The entire Paws Inc. catalog, all his licensees, everything, to Paramount. The cat went corporate. The Christmas dinner relationship became a different kind of conversation. And when I went to him — after Paramount, after the termination, after the grief — he said:

"Take care of Nathen now. It's time."

I was like — I barely started, Geez. But he was right. He always was. The man who built the empire on the lazy cat understood something about timing and exit that I was still learning. Sometimes the thing you built isn't the destination. Sometimes it's just the loudest lesson on the way there.

God bless Jim Davis. Fully and completely.

NICK RODWELL & TINTIN: THE LICENSING WIZARD STAMP

Nick Rodwell — the man who controls the Tintin estate, Hergé's legacy, one of the most protected and carefully managed IP portfolios in the history of European licensing — called me a licensing wizard via an email after our conference call.

After researching me. Specifically. By choice. Nick Rodwell is a controversial figure in the licensing world — the kind of man who protects a legacy so fiercely that he makes enemies, which I understand completely because I have the same instinct about things I care about. We are alike in that way. I respect fierce protectors even when they make the industry uncomfortable. Especially then.

Because it came from a peer. Someone who understood the actual craft of what I was doing.

Licensing wizard.

I'll take it.

PAUL KEMSLEY: GODSHOWS THETRUTHAGAIN

Paul Kemsley is not a celebrity. He wants to be — badly, visibly, with the specific hunger of a man who married into a television universe and has been trying to find his own starring role ever since. Husband of Dorit Kemsley of Real Housewives of Beverly Hills — and that's a whole separate baggage carousel I'm not claiming at this airport. I will say: Kathy Hilton — fan. Genuinely charming woman, the real warmth in that franchise. Lisa Rinna — oh, that b**. I like her. Humanity really looked at chaos and said: yes, let’s give it a lipstick line and a confessional camera. Iconic.

Paul got on a conference call with me. He brought in his friend — the owner of Planet Hollywood

— and the three of us discussed GarfieldEATS. He was interested. He gave me his time. And his friend said something I did not want to hear:

"It's a license. ViacomCBS/Paramount can pull it away anytime. Too risky."

Correct. Prophetically, annoyingly correct. But here's the part I think about when I think about Paul Kemsley — not the call, not the investment that didn't happen. The trajectory.

If he had followed a cleaner path. If the shady business that has followed him through various headlines had been left alone. If the energy spent performing celebrity had been spent building something real — it could have been different for him. Better. Cleaner.

God shows the truth again and again in the lives of people who refuse to look at it. He gives them chances — the warning signs, the right people, the off-ramps. And when they keep driving past every single one, He eventually just lets them arrive at the destination their choices were always pointing toward.

Takes you up. Cuts the cord.

I see no joy in that. Only the quiet sadness of watching potential get wasted on performance.

THE HEREAFTER: WHAT HAPPENS TO KINGS

I saved this for last because it is the most important section in this entire chapter.

Everything I've described — the celebrities, the dealmakers, the princes, the billionaires, the men with their names on buildings and their faces on television — all of it leads here. Because none of them, not one, has considered seriously enough what is coming.
The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said: *"The son of Adam will not pass away from Allah until he is asked about five things: how he lived his life, how he utilized his youth, with what means did he earn his wealth, how did he spend his wealth, and what did he do with his knowledge." (Tirmidhi)*
Five questions. For every human being. No exemptions for net worth. No VIP line for verified Instagram accounts. No separate queue for people who own multiple properties or appeared on Forbes lists or had their name in lights.

Every single one.

But for the kings — for the leaders, the rulers, the men and women who held power over populations and resources and decisions that shaped other people's lives — the accounting is different in scale. The Quran says:

"And to Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. And ever is Allah, of all things, encompassing." (4:126) He was watching. The whole time. Every backroom deal. Every

country sold to foreign interests. Every policy that protected the wealthy at the expense of the vulnerable. Every war started for money and sold as principle. Every leader stood at a podium and said the words and meant something else entirely.

And the hadith that destroys me every time I read it — from Fath al-Bari, one of the great classical Islamic texts — describes Allah calling on those He blessed with power and saying directly:

"O so-and-so! Did I not honor you? Did I not make you a leader? Did I not subject horses and camels for your service? Did I not grant you all these blessings?"

And the person will say: Yes. You granted me all of this.

And Allah will say: "So, did you ever think you would meet Me?"

And they will say: No.

And Allah will declare: "Just as you forgot Us — We too abandon you to torment."

Read that again. Slowly.

Did I not make you a leader?

Not — did you not make yourself a leader. Did I not make you one. The position itself was a gift. The power was borrowed. The resources were entrusted. And the question — the only question that matters in that moment — is what you did with what was given to you on behalf of the people beneath you.

The arrogant leaders — the ones who walked through this world as if the rules were applied to everyone else? The Prophet (PBUH) said *they will be resurrected as atoms on the Day of Judgment. Dharr — the smallest particle. The ones who made themselves giants in this world, tiny as dust in the next. People walking over them. Unrecognized. Unremarkable. Everything they built, gone. Everything they performed, irrelevant.*

Al-Jaza'u min jinsil 'amal — the punishment corresponds to the crime.

You made yourself enormous? You become invisible.

And the truly bankrupt — the Prophet (PBUH) described them in Sahih Muslim with a clarity that should keep every powerful person awake at night:

"The bankrupt from my community is the person who comes on the Day of Judgment with prayers, fasting, and charity — but also having abused others, slandered some, wrongfully consumed someone's wealth, shed blood, or struck someone. Justice will be served by taking from their good

deeds and giving them to those they wronged. If their good deeds run out before the debts are repaid — the sins of the wronged will be transferred to them. And they will be thrown into the Fire."

This is the most terrifying accounting system ever described. Your prayers don't save you if you steal from people. Your fasting doesn't protect you if you consumed wealth that wasn't yours. Your charity doesn't cover you if you shed blood, you shouldn't have shed. And for every leader who sat across from ordinary people — entrepreneurs, workers, citizens, dreamers — and took what was theirs, manipulated what was theirs, destroyed what was theirs for personal gain:

The debt doesn't disappear. It transfers.

God keeps meticulous records. He always has. He always will. The room where deals die on this earth is nothing — nothing — compared to the room where accounts are settled in the next one.

I write this not with satisfaction. With the specific sobriety of a man who has been in enough rooms to understand that the performance ends. Every performance. Always. Without exception.

"And Allah is ever, over all things, a Careful Watcher." (33:52)

CHAPTER FIVE

THE ORANGE PROPHET

Let me tell you about the most successful con in modern history.

Not a financial con. Not a political con. Something deeper and more durable than both of those — a spiritual con. The monetization of masculine energy without masculine accountability. The performance of strength without the substance of it. The sale of certainty to a generation of men who were starving for it and couldn't tell the difference between the real thing and a very expensive imitation.

His name is Donald Trump and I used to have all his books. The Art of the Deal. Think Like a Billionaire. How to Get Rich. Never Give Up. The whole library. I absorbed them the way hungry young men absorb anything that smells like a map to somewhere better — completely, uncritically, with the specific desperation of someone who needs the answer to be in the next chapter. I was wrong. Not about everything in the books — some of it is real, some of the deal mechanics are genuine; the branding instincts are legitimate. But about the man. About what he represented. About what following him cost the people who followed him most.

Let me explain what I mean.

THE BRAND THAT SWALLOWED THE HUMAN

Trump understood something before almost anyone else in modern public life: in America — and increasingly everywhere America exported its culture — the appearance of success is more valuable than success itself.

Not the thing. The image of the thing. He didn't build the best hotels. He built hotels that looked like the best hotels to people who had never stayed in the best hotels. He didn't have the best taste. He had taste that performed wealth for an audience that associated gold fixtures with arrival.

He didn't close the best deals — he narrated deals better than anyone else alive.

This is not nothing. This is actually genius of a specific and depressing kind.

The genius of understanding that most people cannot tell the difference between substance and the performance of substance — and building an empire on that gap.

The books were part of it. Put your name on wisdom, even borrowed wisdom, and you become the source of it. Repeat a persona long enough and the persona becomes the man. Or more precisely — the man disappears inside the persona and what's left is a logo in a suit. I read the books. I bought the collectibles. I watched the show. I was, for a period of my life, genuinely convinced that this man had something worth learning from.

And then I started paying attention to what he actually said.

THE CONFESSION ON THE PLANE

He said it himself.

On his plane. On camera. Voluntarily. With the specific confidence of a man who has become so thoroughly his own mythology that honesty becomes possible again — because at a certain level of performance, nothing lands as consequence anymore.

"I'm not going to heaven."

Those words. Out loud. To the world.

Believe people when they tell you who they are.

I believed him. Immediately and completely. Not with judgment — with the specific clarity of someone who has been reading Islamic scholarship on the nature of the soul and the architecture of accountability and suddenly heard a man accidentally confess his own spiritual diagnosis in a sentence.

He knows. Somewhere beneath the persona and the gold and the rallies and the base and the brand — he knows. And he said it. Because men who have made peace with their destination sometimes just say it out loud. I put the books in a box that day. Not dramatically. Not with a speech. Just — put them down and didn't pick them up again.

Done.

THE EGO THAT PLAYS GOD

Here is what concerns me about Trump — not politically, I promised my mother I'd stay off politics for the youth, and I'm keeping that promise — spiritually.

The ego that has no ceiling.

There is a specific spiritual disease that Islamic scholars have written about for fourteen centuries — kibr. Arrogance. Not confidence, not pride in legitimate achievement — the specific disease of believing yourself exempt from the rules that apply to everyone else. Of acting as if the universe orbits you personally. Of performing God without believing in one.

The Quran is brutally specific about what happens to this:

"*Indeed, He does not like the arrogant." (16:23)* Not — He will punish the arrogant eventually. He does not like them. Present tense. Active. Ongoing. The dislike of the Creator for the creature that

forgot it was a creature.

And the Prophet (PBUH) — with the precision that makes Hadith literature the most psychologically accurate writing in human history — described arrogance as: *"rejecting the truth and looking down on people." (Sahih Muslim)*

Two components. Both present. Both visible. Both documented on television, social media, and in court filings across multiple jurisdictions.

I don't say this as a political position. I say it as a spiritual observation from someone who watches how God operates with people who exhibit these patterns — because the pattern is always the same and the ending is always the same and history has given us enough examples that we should no longer be surprised.

GOD TAKES THEM UP — THEN CUTS THE CORD

I want you to understand this phrase because it will appear throughout this book like a refrain. Not because I enjoy watching people fall — I genuinely don't. Because it is the most consistent pattern in human history and it is important that young men understand it before they spend their energy worshipping the wrong things.

Every tyrant — every pharaoh, every empire, every man who made himself into a god in the eyes of his followers — had a peak. A moment of maximum elevation. A point at which the whole performance reached its fullest expression.

And then God cut the cord. Not immediately. Not always publicly. Sometimes slowly, over years, like a tide going out so gradually you don't notice until you're standing in mud where there was ocean. But always. Always. Without a single historical exception.

Pharaoh had his peak. The water closed.

Rome had its peak. The barbarians arrived.

Every colonial empire had its peak. The colonies left.

The Soviet Union had its peak. The wall came down.

Takes you up. Cuts the cord. The Quran says it with the precision of someone who has watched this happen enough times to see the pattern clearly:

"And how many a city did We destroy while it was committing wrong — so it is now fallen into ruin — and how many an abandoned well and lofty castle." (22:45)

The abandoned well. The lofty castle. The things that were built with arrogance and lasted exactly as long as God decided they would last and not one day more.

I fear for Trump's ending. Not with satisfaction — I want to be clear about that because the emotion here is not enjoyment, it is the specific dread of watching someone walk toward something they've already accepted and can no longer avoid.

He told you himself. He said he won't see heaven.

Believe people when they tell you who they are.

WHAT YOUNG MEN WERE ACTUALLY LOOKING FOR

Here is the part that nobody in media or politics or even religion has been willing to say honestly:

Trump — and every figure like him, Tate included — became powerful because they were selling something real to a real hunger.

Young men are lost. Genuinely, deeply, structurally lost. Not because they're weak — because the systems that were supposed to give them direction, identity, purpose, and a map abandoned them one by one. The family structure weakened. The religious structure became embarrassing to admit to. The economic structure locked them out of the milestones that used to mark masculine arrival — home, stability, family, contribution. The cultural structure replaced heroes with anti-heroes and called it progress.

And into that vacuum walked men with simple answers, loud voices, and zero accountability.

Be dominant. Win at all costs. The weak deserve what happens to them. Money is the metric. Women are the reward. God is for losers.

It sold. Of course it sold. Starving people don't evaluate the nutritional content of what's being offered — they eat. In the 2024 election, 56% of men aged 18 to 29 voted for Trump — a massive swing from four years earlier. That number is not a political statistic. That number is a distress signal from a generation of young men who looked at every available option and decided the loudest, most aggressive, most unapologetically masculine-performing one was the closest thing to what they actually needed.

They were wrong about the source. They were not wrong about the hunger.

The hunger is real. The hunger is legitimate. The hunger is — and this is what none of the manosphere figures will ever tell you because it would end their business model — a hunger for God.

Not religion as performance. Not religion as cultural inheritance. Not religion as political identity.

God. The actual one. The one bigger than 2.3 trillion galaxies who is closer to you than your jugular vein and has known your name since before you were born and has a plan for you that makes every deal Trump ever closed look like a lemonade stand.

That is what young men are looking for when they follow false prophets.

The orange one just got there first. With better branding.

DRAKE: TORONTO'S FAVORITE PERFORMANCE ARTIST — WITH RECEIPTS

I drove past his mansion on Bridle Path once. For those unfamiliar — Bridle Path is where Toronto's wealthiest built fortresses and decided to call them homes. Drake's compound sits there behind security with earpieces, like a small nation-state that drops albums on a quarterly schedule. I drove past slowly. Looked at it. Took it in.

And what I felt wasn't envy. It was something closer to clinical sadness. Not for him personally — I don't know the man. For what the whole picture represents. Because here is the thing about Drake that nobody in Toronto's cultural establishment will say out loud because the city has decided he is Toronto and criticizing him feels like criticizing the skyline:

The talent is real. God gave him something genuine — an ear for the emotional frequency of a generation, the ability to translate loneliness and desire into melody with a precision that sold hundreds of millions of times because it was true enough to resonate. That gift came from somewhere. It didn't generate itself.

God gave it to him.

And the question God will ask — the one that applies to every person who received a gift of that magnitude and then decided what to do with it — is not "how many streams did you get?"

It's: "Did you even know I existed? Did you know it was Me who gave you this? And what did you do with it when you had it?" Now let's talk about what he actually did with it. Because I'm not making claims without evidence — I have the lyrics, the incidents, the Kendrick diss track receipts, and the documented controversies sitting right here.

The lyrics first.

Drake has spent a significant portion of his career writing songs about women that oscillate between performing sensitivity and embedding control. Hotline Bling — the song that made him a meme — is

a man shaming a woman for living her life after he left. "Started wearing less and going out more." The audacity. She owes you nothing, brother. You left. She lived. That's not heartbreak — that's ownership of language wearing a sad-boy costume.

Girls Want Girls — a song in which he raps about a lesbian woman being attracted to him because the right man changes everything. Fetishizing queer women while framing their sexuality as a challenge to overcome. Not progressive. Not artistic. Predatory framing wrapped in a catchy hook. Nice for What reached number one in America with the line: "These hoes — they hate — bend it over, lift it up, make that jump." Number one. In America. Going into the ears of teenagers who were learning from it what women are for.

This is the pipeline. This is how it works. You normalize the language in music. The music goes into the headphones of a fourteen-year-old. The fourteen-year old's brain is forming its understanding of gender, desire, and power. And what it learns — from the most streamed artist of his generation — is that women are reducible to body parts and availability.

That is not entertainment. That is curriculum.

Now the behavior. Documented. Denied. But documented. In 2018, Millie Bobby Brown — then fourteen years old — announced at the Emmy Awards that she and Drake were "great friends" who texted regularly. That he told her, "I miss you so much." That he gave her advice about boys — advice she said she "couldn't share on TV."

He was thirty-one.

She was fourteen. At a concert in Colorado in 2010, Drake was filmed sexually teasing a girl on stage, then asked how old she was. When she replied seventeen, he backed up and joked about not being ready for jail — then told her "I had fun and I don't know if I should feel guilty or not, but I had fun." The documented list of underage girls Drake allegedly maintained contact with includes Millie Bobby Brown, Billie Eilish, Bella Harris, and others — all of whom defended the friendships as mentorship and described him as a "great role model." Which critics have argued is precisely how grooming presents itself to its targets. That's the point. That's the mechanism.

Kendrick Lamar — in Not Like Us, which won Song of the Year, Record of the Year, Best Rap Song, Best Rap Performance, and Best Music Video at the Grammys — said it directly: "Say, Drake, I hear you like 'em young / Tryna strike a chord and it's probably A-minor."

Drake denied everything. Of course he did. In his response track he rapped: "Only fucking with Whitneys, not Millie Bobby Browns / I'd never look twice at no teenager." The fact that he knew exactly which name to use in his defense — the fact that Millie Bobby Brown's name was the first one his brain went to when defending himself against underage allegations — is its own kind of testimony.

I'm not a judge. God is the judge. And God's accounting system — as established in the last chapter — is meticulous beyond what any court can touch.

The spiritual transaction.

When you sell your soul to other than the one Mighty God — you get things. Real things. The mansion. The security details. The streams. The compound on Bridle Path with the basketball court and the owl logo on everything.

Short-term enjoyment. Delivered as advertised.

But the selling of sex to youth — the industrial, deliberate, repeated pipeline of sexualized content aimed at the youngest and most impressionable audience on earth — that is not just spiritually costly. That is a demonic transaction with real human victims who never signed up for it.

Every young girl who learned what she's worth from a Drake song. Every young boy who learned what women are for from a playlist. Every fourteen-year-old who thought an adult man texting her about boys was mentorship rather than something worth questioning.

The pollution from that explosion spreads further than any pyrotechnics budget.

And he thinks he owns Toronto.

The Indians own it now. Sarcasm — relax. But genuinely — have you been to Brampton?

Drake raps about owning Toronto while his city is literally in ruins beneath the penthouse view. This is exactly what the People's Party of Canada was screaming about when everyone called them racist for screaming it. It was never about the people. It was about the rate. The speed. The policy decision to flood cities with volume while calling anyone who noticed a bigot. You cannot build a community at that velocity. You cannot integrate at that speed. What you get instead is Brampton — parallel societies, imported tensions, streets that look nothing like the country that supposedly welcomed everyone and forgot to ask what they were building together. Youth is an asset. Every culture knows this. But mass immigration without national identity as the container doesn't produce community — it produces friction. And Drake, from his Bridle Path fortress, raps about a Toronto that no longer exists while the city his music supposedly represents tears itself apart below him.

With everything Drake has — the platform, the resources, the cultural weight, the actual genuine talent God gave him — Toronto could look different. Better. Less Gotham City. More a city that invests in its people rather than performing for them.

Instead we got a Bridle Path fortress and quarterly content.

God will ask what you did with your money.

More than that — did you know I existed, the God who handed you the talent in the first place?

The silence on that answer is the loudest sound in the room.

It ain't the 90s. Alanis Morissette meant it. Britney felt it. No Doubt lived it.

This is content with a pyrotechnics budget and a legal team.

Next.

THE TAWAKKUL CORRECTION

Here is what I want every young man reading this to understand — the thing that neither Trump nor Tate nor any manosphere figure will ever tell you because it dismantles their entire product:

Tawakkul.

Full, complete, conscious dependence on the Creator.

Not passivity. Not laziness. Not the surrender of a man who has given up. The specific active surrender of a man who has done everything in his power and then released the outcome to the One who controls outcomes.

The Prophet (PBUH) said it perfectly:
"If you were to rely upon Allah with the reliance He is due, He would provide for you as He provides for the bird — it goes out in the morning empty and returns in the evening full." (Tirmidhi)

The bird doesn't stay in the nest worrying about whether food exists. It goes. It moves. It does its part. And God does His.

This is why — and I say this not as a cliché but as an observation from someone who has watched both populations up close — Muslims who actually practice Tawakkul carry themselves differently. Not because their lives are easier. Because the anxiety that consumes people who carry the weight of outcomes alone is redistributed to the only One with the actual capacity to carry it. Non-Muslims — and I say this with love, not superiority — are stressed. Chronically. Structurally. The alcohol, the drugs, the therapy, the self-help books, the wellness industry worth hundreds of billions of dollars — all of it is the market that forms around the hole left by the absence of Tawakkul. You were not built to carry the weight of your own destiny alone. The architecture of your soul was designed for partnership with the Creator. When you try to do it without Him, you break. Slowly or quickly, dramatically or quietly — you break.

Trump broke a long time ago. He just has enough gold fixtures that you can't see it from the outside.

A NOTE ON SELF-HELP BOOKS — SINCE WE'RE HERE

How to Win Friends and Influence People. The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People. Think and Grow Rich. The 4-Hour Workweek. Atomic Habits.

I've read them. I know you've read them. We've all read them. Here is the truth nobody in the self-help industrial complex will say out loud because it would end the industry:
No two lives are the same. No strategy is transferable. No billionaire's morning routine will make you a billionaire because his morning routine exists inside a context — inherited wealth, specific timing, particular luck, particular connections, particular skin color in a particular market at a particular moment — that cannot be replicated by waking up at 5am and taking a cold shower. The books sell hope dressed as method. And hope is real — but method borrowed from someone else's life is just costume. There is one book that came down from the seventh heaven. Every word verified. Every prediction confirmed. Sciences revealed before the instruments existed to measure them. A document that has not been successfully altered, corrupted, or disproven in fourteen hundred years despite every incentive to do all three.

The self-help section of any airport bookshop is what happens when a civilization loses access to that book and has to manufacture replacements.

Rizq is written. Your sustenance is determined. What is meant for you will not pass you by. What is not meant for you cannot stay no matter how many habits you optimize.

Do the work. Then release. Bird. Morning. Empty. Evening. Full.

That's the whole system. It fits in one sentence and it's free.

"And put your trust in Allah. And sufficient is Allah as a Disposer of affairs." (33:3)

The Orange Prophet gave young men noise when they needed silence.

Gave them performance when they needed presence.

Gave them a brand when they needed God.

He was never the answer. He was the loudest symptom of the question. And the question — the real one, the one underneath all the voting and the rallying and the book-buying and the merch-wearing — was always the same:

Is there someone I can actually trust with my life?

Yes.

But His name isn't on any building.

CHAPTER SIX

THE GARFIELD YEARS

(Love Me, Feed Me, Don't Leave Me)

There is a song called Breaking Me by Topic & A7S. Over 550 million plays. If you haven't heard it — find it, press play, and then imagine walking alone at night on Eglinton Avenue in Toronto, weeping quietly, while the city moves around you indifferent and enormous and completely unaware that the man in the bespoke orange suit just had his entire life pulled out from under him by a courier envelope.

That walk was December 2021.

That walk was the beginning of everything that mattered.

But let me start at the beginning — because this story deserves its full architecture before we get to the part where God reveals what He was actually building.

THE IDEA

The year is 2018. I am in Dubai — prototype phase, proof of concept, a A Palestinian-Lebanese-Canadian entrepreneur in the Middle East trying to make a Garfield-themed restaurant work before bringing it to North America. Garfield. The Monday-hating, lasagna-obsessed, magnificently lazy orange cat created by Jim Davis in 1978 and licensed into one of the most recognizable intellectual properties on earth. I had loved this character since childhood. Not as nostalgia — as recognition. A cat who hated Mondays, refused to perform enthusiasm he didn't feel, loved food, and was unapologetically himself in a world that kept telling him to be something else.

Relatable content. No notes. The slogan wrote itself: **Love Me, Feed Me, Don't Leave Me**. Inspired directly from the Garfield movie. It was also, I understood only later, the prayer of a man who had been building his whole life because he didn't know yet what he was actually building toward.

Dubai worked. The concept was real. I brought it to Toronto.

By the way, the film said "Never leave me." I changed it to "Don't" — advertising taught me never to open with a negative word. Same heart. Cleaner sell.

THE LAUNCH

June 2019. Bloor Street West at Dovercourt Road. Orange-bedecked storefront. Garfield-shaped pizza. Garfuccinos. Lasagna at $17.99. An app. A vision. A bespoke orange suit with feline whiskers sewn into the cuffs — commissioned specifically for this moment, the most ***entergaging*** suit in the history of Canadian entrepreneurship. The Globe and Mail called. The paper noted my ambition to revolutionize fast food — even when ghost kitchens weren't yet a thing — with a UberEATS spokesman calling it an engagingly unique Quick Mobile Restaurant concept. Jim Davis, the creator himself, had praised the venture as *"incredibly unique."* Coverage spanning *The Globe and Mail, Toronto Star, Food & Wine, Eater, Daily Hive, Narcity, BlogTO, Exclaim!, Screen Rant, Cracked, Yahoo, Honi Soit, CNBC, Metro UK, Wikipedia,* and over 500+ media features worldwide. Mel Magazine wrote: *"Nathen doesn't have a hint of Zuckerberg's*

arrogance or Jeff Bezos' flippant villainy."

I want to frame that quote and put it somewhere. On Bloor Street, fans stopped me. For photos.

For shoutouts. Sometimes just to scream "**Garfield King!**" at me from across the street. I was wearing the orange suit. I was living the orange suit. I had built something that people — real people, Garfield lovers from thirty years of fandom — connected with at a level that no spreadsheet could have predicted.

It was beautiful. It was huge. It was great.

THE TROLLS

And then the internet arrived. Not the fans — the other part of the internet. The part that treats human ambition as content. The part that cannot see someone building something unusual without deciding that the unusual thing must be destroyed, or at least mocked comprehensively enough to generate YouTube ad revenue.

It started with BlogTO. One blogger. One spiteful, poorly-timed, mean-spirited review that had the specific energy of someone who decided the verdict before they tasted the food. And once that piece existed — once that negative anchor was planted in the internet's memory — every subsequent content creator, YouTube thumbnail cropper, and clickbait channel used it as foundation. Built on it. Amplified it. Created entire video essays about the fall of GarfieldEATS while we were still very much standing. BlogTO, incidentally, had previously asked me for $3,000 in advertising. I declined. The review followed. Toronto's restaurant community has a saying: BlogTO doesn't review you, they sentence you — and the clicks pay either way.

The YouTube thumbnails were their own art form of cruelty — my face, cropped, zoomed, expressions taken out of context, monetized. Every view generating revenue for people who had contributed nothing to anything and were profiting from the destruction of something built with actual human effort and actual human money.

The Google reviews. I wrote about this in a Medium article that has been read thousands of times regularly since 2020 — because apparently I am not the only entrepreneur this has happened to. I wrote about a reviewer who gave us one star and wrote "I love Bugs Bunny." About reviewers who had never visited leaving verdicts that dragged our score from 4.0 to 3.8. About the specific helplessness of flagging a clearly fraudulent review and watching Google do absolutely nothing about it. Here is what I said then and what I still believe now:

Google has no idea of the negative impact on small businesses and young entrepreneurs. Without businesses there are no reviews. The algorithm cannot tell the difference between a real customer and a troll. And the troll's opinion sits permanently on your page, appearing first in search results, poisoning the perception of every potential customer who finds you.

The LACEA method — Listen, Ask, Consider, Empathize, Action — is what I proposed Google adopt for flagged reviews. They haven't. They won't. Because the troll's engagement is worth as much to their algorithm as the genuine customer's engagement. The destruction is as monetizable as the support.

"Harmful reviewers are bullies," I wrote. "They can't let it go, forgive, forget, or just shut up if they have nothing nice to say." That was 2020. Thousands of entrepreneurs read it. Thousands recognized themselves. The article still gets regular traffic because the problem hasn't been fixed — it's gotten worse. Reviews destroy young entrepreneurship. Not always. But often enough that it should be a scandal. Often enough that a young person mortgaging their house to open a restaurant should not also have to fight a coordinated troll campaign on a platform that profits from both sides.

THE LANDMONSTER OF BLOOR STREET

May 22, 2020. A Friday morning. Staff arrived at 995 Bloor Street West to find the doors locked. Not by us. The restaurant had been locked out by the landlord. During an Instagram Live that afternoon, Mazri openly questioned why the landlord had not applied for the commercial rent relief available as part of the government's pandemic response. BlogTO GarfieldEATS had paid full rent in March, April, and May 2020 as agreed. The landlord had always disagreed, continuing with threats to lock them out, demanding full rent with zero pandemic relief. He had not applied for the commercial rent assistance the government had made available specifically for situations like this.

I coined a term that day: L*andmonster.* Not landlord. Landmonster. A person who takes the legal designation of property ownership and uses it as a weapon against people building something real in their building — people who had, incidentally, updated his entire filthy building when they moved in. The press release went out. The media called. The fans mobilized. *#IStandWithGarfield* started moving across X/Twitter with the specific velocity that only Garfield content can achieve — because the internet has a soft spot for the orange cat that no amount of coordinated trolling can fully extinguish.

> "*The only weapon I have is the Garfield fans. When I speak, the whole world listens." I* said that in an interview with NOW Toronto.

I said that. I meant it. And it worked. The landlord called the same day the media called. Suddenly cooperative. Suddenly willing to work something out. He had one request:

Please don't talk to the media. I had one response:

Then open the f**king door.

He opened the door.

This moment — the landlord calling back within hours because fan mobilization was generating media attention he couldn't control — is one of the purest demonstrations in this entire story of what a community is actually worth. Not in sentiment. In leverage.

The fans didn't have legal authority. They didn't have financial resources. They had love for a cartoon cat and loyalty to the man who had brought that cat to life in a restaurant on Bloor Street — and they were loud about it in exactly the right places at exactly the right time.

The only weapon I have is the Garfield fans. No investor, no lawyer, no PR firm produced what happened that day. The community produced it. The same community that the trolls had been trying to poison with fake reviews and coordinated mockery. The same community that stayed in the Discord through the Paramount termination and the ScoobyDooEATS venture and the PPC campaign.

As Eater Magazine noted — the internet doesn't forget.

It doesn't.

Not the bad things. But also — and this is the part the haters never calculate — not the good things either.

Every fan who showed up that day is still there. Still watching. Still ready to say something when it matters.

Garfield has the keys.

But I have the fans.

NICKELODEON AND THE ANOMALY

When Jim Davis sold Paws Inc. to Paramount — and with it every licensee, every relationship, every agreement built on years of personal trust — we became Nickelodeon's problem to manage.

What followed was, depending on how you look at it, either surveillance or validation. Every Tuesday. A follow-up call. To monitor GarfieldEATS specifically. Nickelodeon called me "an anomaly in licensing" — a term that could mean many things but which I choose to interpret accurately: they had never seen a licensee quite like me. The passion, the outspokenness, the Instagram presence, the orange suit, the genuine believer energy of someone who wasn't just executing a contract but living the character.

Maybe they believed in it. Maybe they were watching to understand it. Maybe both.

And then COVID hit. The restaurant closed. Revenue stopped. The entire world stopped. And I went to the licensor director — a man who had come from Disney, whose name starts with D and

who I will not name here but whose karma I witnessed settle with impressive efficiency — and I asked for relief. For flexibility. For the basic human acknowledgment that a global pandemic was not a breach of contract.

He said: "*No. Sorry. Comply.*" No mercy. No relief. No recognition that the shutdown was not a choice but a government mandate. Minimum guarantees still due. Royalties still expected. From a restaurant that was physically prohibited from operating.

Wow. Heartless licensing bastard.

He was fired not long after.

And I will not pretend I wasn't happy about it. I was. Not from cruelty — from the specific satisfaction of watching the universe correct itself. God helps the vulnerable. God does not protect the people who use their position to crush them. That licensor director had the power to show mercy and chose not to. God noticed.

He always notices.

THE BiG ENVELOPE

December 2021. Morning. Concierge calls — there's a large envelope for me to pick up.

I came down. Picked it up. Opened it.

Termination. From Nickelodeon. Paramount ViacomCBS. $1.5 million invested. Years of work. The orange suit. The Globe and Mail. The Mel Magazine profile. The Eater USA piece. The Food & Wine coverage. The 20 million impressions. The fans on Bloor Street. The Christmas dinner with Jim Davis in Muncie. Frank Welker's voice recorded. The Scooby-Doo expansion ready to launch.

All of it. Terminated. The stated reason? Making merchandise on Redbubble — which I was clearly permitted to do for restaurant and comic strip promotional materials, approved by Paws. And selling lasagnas on the website — online distribution that had been part of the business model. They wanted to find something. They found something.

No warning. No email. No phone call. No conversation. No opportunity to correct anything. Just an envelope. Robert Earl — the Planet Hollywood owner who had warned me years earlier on that conference call with PK — had been right. "They'd strip it anytime from you, no matter what. It's not like you're Nike with one licensed line. Your whole business is the license."

He was right.

There are no laws in Canada protecting a licensee who builds their entire enterprise around a

character they love and then has it pulled without warning. No minimum notice period. No compensation mechanism. No acknowledgment that the licensee made the character more valuable through their work. You paid the minimum guarantees upfront — the licensor made their money secured regardless of whether the venture succeeded. The royalties were secondary. The passion of the licensee was irrelevant.

> Passionate fan, duped for all the minimum guarantees upfront.
>
> Where would I wear the orange suit now?
>
> Who was I without the cat?

Quiet on Set. Loud in God's Record.

In March 2024, Investigation Discovery released a four-part documentary called Quiet on Set: The Dark Side of Kids TV. Directed by Mary Robertson and Emma Schwartz, it exposed what had been happening behind the scenes of Nickelodeon's most beloved children's programming — the shows that defined an entire generation's childhood.

iCarly. Drake and Josh. Zoey 101. The Amanda Show. All That.

From foot jokes to inappropriate set dynamics, the documentary revealed a history including pedophilia, sexism, and child manipulation. Actor Drake Bell disclosed that at age fifteen, he was sexually assaulted by Brian Peck — a dialogue coach and convicted child sex offender who had worked on set. A production assistant was found with over 10,000 images of child sexual abuse material on his devices.

Peck had worked as a dialogue and acting coach under producer Dan Schneider on "All That" and "The Amanda Show." He was arrested for child sexual abuse in 2003, served 16 months in prison, and registered as a sex offender.

Nickelodeon — the network that called me an anomaly in licensing. The network whose director told me to comply during a global pandemic with no mercy and no relief. The network that terminated my license by courier envelope after years of the most passionate, brand-faithful licensing work they had ever encountered.

Jim Davis sold his life's work to Paramount, which handed it to Nickelodeon. I do not believe he knew. I do not believe any father of a character like Garfield — a cat built entirely on warmth, humor, and love — would have knowingly handed his creation to a network where children were being harmed in the rooms adjacent to the production of children's content.

The IP you love is only as safe as the hands that hold it.

God sees what is done in those rooms. Every room. He always has.

He cut the cord eventually. He always does.

THE WALK

That night I put on the song.

Breaking Me. Topic & A7S. Over 550 million plays. The kind of track that sounds like the inside of a grief you can't explain to anyone who hasn't felt it — not dramatic grief, not the grief of death, but the specific devastating grief of losing something you built with your own hands that you also loved.

I walked Eglinton alone. The city around me, indifferent. Tears running. Not just for GarfieldEATS. For everything it represented. The $1.5 million. The years. The version of myself who had believed so completely in that orange cat and what building around him meant. The Christmas dinner. The suit. The fans. The walk on Bloor Street where people screamed Garfield King and I felt — for once, in a way I hadn't felt many other places — like I belonged to something. And then — somewhere on that walk, in the cold, with the song playing and the tears running — something shifted.

Not immediately. Not dramatically. More like a pressure releasing.

I thought about Jim Davis. "*Take care of Nathen now. It's time.*"

I thought about rizq. Your sustenance is written. What is meant for you will find you. What is not meant for you cannot stay no matter how hard you grip it.

I thought about the licensor with the D name who showed no mercy and lost his job. About the envelope. About the $1.5 million that had bought me something no balance sheet could quantify — everything I now knew about licensing, about corporate power, about how IP works, about how to build a brand from nothing, about what I was actually capable of when I believed in something completely.

The termination wasn't the end of the story.

It was the end of the chapter God needed to close so the next one could open. Paul Kemsley's friend had said the license could be pulled anytime. Correct. Jim Davis had said take care of Nathen.

Correct. The universe had been preparing me — through GarfieldEATS, through Scooby-DooEATS, through every deal and every setback — for something it hadn't revealed yet.

I walked back home.

I stopped crying.

I started thinking.

THE GOOGLE REVIEW SYSTEM AND WHAT IT COSTS US

I want to address this directly because it is a systemic injustice that nobody with power has bothered to fix. Google Reviews are presented as a democratic tool — the voice of the consumer, unfiltered, honest, available to everyone. In theory this is beautiful. In practice it is a weapon that costs young entrepreneurs everything and costs the trolls nothing.

When BlogTO published that early negative review — poorly timed, spiteful in energy, before we had found our full rhythm — every content creator in Toronto and beyond used it as the foundation of a narrative. One blogger's bad night became the canonical story. The good reviews, the real customers, the people who genuinely loved the food and the experience — buried beneath the algorithm's preference for conflict.

And Google's response to flagged fraudulent reviews? Flag it and move on. Dream on that it gets removed. The Bugs Bunny one-star review stays. The "I've never been there but I heard it was bad" review stays. The past employee revenge review stays.

Without businesses, there are no reviews. Google profits from both the business and the troll equally. The algorithm cannot distinguish between the two. And young entrepreneurs pay the price.

I proposed the LACEA method — Listen, Ask, Consider, Empathize, Action. I put it in writing in 2020. Thousands read it. Nothing changed.

The system is not broken. It is working exactly as designed — for the platform, not for the people. Youth is an asset, not a liability. I wrote that line in 2020 as a caption. It became the clearest sentence I've ever produced. The system treats young entrepreneurs as a liability — expendable, replaceable, monetizable on the way up and on the way down. The troll economy profits from both.

Until platforms are held accountable for the real-world consequences of their algorithms, this will continue. Reviews will destroy businesses that deserved to survive. Trolls will generate revenue for platforms while generating nothing of value for the world.

God sees this too.

THE $1.5 MILLION LESSON THAT BUILT A BILLION DOLLAR VISION

Here is what GarfieldEATS actually was, in retrospect: The world's most expensive licensing education. And I am genuinely, completely, without bitterness — grateful for every dollar of it. Because here is what the orange cat taught me that nobody in the industry had been able to see — not the lawyers, not the Hall of Fame veterans, not the Disney executives turned Nickelodeon directors, not the licensors sitting on billion-dollar IP portfolios:

The licensing infrastructure itself is broken.

Not the characters. Not the fans. Not the passion of people like me who build their lives around intellectual property they love. The infrastructure — the system connecting IP holders to licensees to consumers — is antiquated, opaque, unprotected, and running on relationships and paper agreements that belong to the last century.

Walt Disney built the modern licensing industry. He looked at Mickey Mouse and understood that the character was not a drawing — it was an asset class. That the right to use that drawing, carefully controlled and strategically placed, was worth more than any single product it appeared on. He built the framework that the entire $369 billion *(they claim)* global licensing industry still runs on today.

But Walt Disney never had artificial intelligence. Walt Disney never had a platform that could connect a fan in São Paulo directly to a verified licensee of their favorite IP in real time, eliminating the counterfeit problem, the discovery problem, the trust problem, and the geographic limitation problem simultaneously.

Walt Disney never had AI. That is what GarfieldEATS was actually building toward — without knowing it, without being able to name it yet. Every minimum guarantee paid upfront. Every royalty report filed on time. Every relationship built with Jim Davis, Warner, and with Nickelodeon.

Every article in every magazine. Every troll who generated impressions that proved the appetite was real.

Every single piece of it was tuition.

God is the best of all planners. The Quran says it clearly — *"And they planned, and Allah planned. And Allah is the best of planners." (3:54)*

He planned GarfieldEATS. He planned the termination. He planned the walk on Eglinton with Breaking Me in my ears and tears on my face. He planned the $1.5 million lesson because He knew exactly what I would build with the knowledge it purchased.

The orange cat left. The infrastructure gap it revealed — the multi-billion dollar problem hiding in

plain sight since Walt Disney invented the industry — stayed.

That is what I'm disrupting now.

The Garfield King is gone.

The licensing wizard is just getting started.

Let's just talk 1-on-1 for a bit:

Nobody Handed Me a Diagnosis. They Handed Me a #Hashtag.

I am not going to tell you what's wrong with you. I am not qualified. Neither is the algorithm. What I will tell you is what it actually felt like — to wake up and not be able to move. Not because I was lazy. Not because I didn't care. But because my body and brain had taken hit after hit after hit, and somewhere along the way, they decided the safest thing to do was nothing. Freeze. Wait. Survive.

That's not a disorder. That's a nervous system doing its job in the only language it knows.

I hyperfocused on things with the intensity of someone defusing a bomb. I vanished into projects for eighteen hours straight and then crashed completely. I couldn't start simple tasks but could rebuild an entire system from scratch in one sitting. I looked broken from the outside. I was surviving from the inside.

There is a difference. And that difference matters. **Protective paralysis** is not procrastination. It is not weakness. It is what happens when a person absorbs too much, too fast, with too little support — and the system decides that stillness is the only safe direction left. Trauma does not politely announce itself. It doesn't arrive with a warning label. It stacks. Quietly. One thing on top of another until the weight becomes invisible — because you've been carrying it so long you think it's just your personality. It didn't look like paralysis in the movies. Just — an inability to do the thing. Any thing. Dishes. Emails. Decisions. The gap between knowing and doing felt like a continent. And the harder I tried to push through it, the worse it got. The hyperfocus was the other side of the same coin. When something finally broke through the wall — really grabbed me — I went all in. No half-measures. Total immersion until it was done, solved, finished. Not because I chose to. Because that was the only gear available. Neither the paralysis nor the hyperfocus made me broken. They made me someone who had learned to function under conditions that were never designed for me. You don't need a clinical term to understand your own experience. You just need someone to tell you: what you went through was real.

I am telling you. What you went through was real. The messy coping was real. The freezing was real. The bursts of obsessive productivity were real. None of it makes you a diagnosis. All of it makes you a person. Here is what social media does with your pain: it turns it into content. It finds the rawest, most recognizable version of your struggle and it makes it shareable. Watchable. Likeable.

And in doing so, it flattens something deeply human into a checklist. Fifteen seconds. Five symptoms. A spinning text overlay. And suddenly you have an explanation — served with the confidence of a medical degree and the accuracy of a horoscope.

The video gets you to say yes. Yes to one symptom, then another. Each yes feels like recognition. Like finally being seen. And that feeling is real — but what's underneath it is not a diagnosis. It's an algorithm that found your wound and turned it into engagement.

This is not me saying the labels aren't real. **ADHD** is real. Trauma responses are real. Anxiety is real. Depression is real. The people who carry these things deserve proper support — not a comment section telling them to drink more water and journal. But there is a meaningful difference between a condition you live with and a personality you perform because it got you fifty thousand views. And young people — who are still working out who they are — deserve better than an app that profits from their uncertainty.

You are not a niche. You are not a demographic. You are not content. The label can be the beginning of understanding. Or it can be a wall that stops you from doing the harder work of actually knowing yourself. Social media overwhelmingly gives you the wall — and calls it healing. To the young person reading this, recognizing themselves in these words — you are not a case study. You are not a thread of symptoms waiting to be organized into something that finally makes sense to the people around you. You are someone who went through things. And those things changed how you move through the world. That is not a malfunction. That is the most human thing there is. Messy survival means you found a way. Not the clean way. Not the way that makes a good story in a short video. The actual way — with all its inconsistency and chaos and hyperfocus and frozen mornings and late nights and the strange, unglamorous resilience of a person who just kept going. I am not telling you not to seek help. Get the help. Find real professionals who know the difference between a condition and a response to circumstances. Do the work of understanding yourself — properly, slowly, without the pressure of performing your healing for an audience. What I am telling you is this: you do not need to be named to be valid. You do not need a label to deserve rest, or support, or compassion from yourself. You needed that before the label existed, and you will need it regardless of what anyone calls it.

The mess is not the problem. The mess is what made you. Survival looks different for everyone. For me it looked like paralysis, then obsession, then slowly — slowly — learning that both were just me, trying to stay alive in a world that moved too fast and hit too hard. You are going to figure this out. Not because it will suddenly get clean and simple. But because you already have a track record of surviving the things that were supposed to stop you.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE MACHINE THAT FEEDS YOU POISON

Let me tell you about the day I tried to put clean food into a corrupt system and the system laughed at me.

Not literally. The Sobeys executive didn't actually laugh. He was very polite about it. That's the thing about institutional corruption — it doesn't announce itself with a villain's monologue. It arrives in a boardroom with good lighting and a firm handshake and a PowerPoint about shelf placement fees.

But we'll get to Sobeys.

First — let me tell you what's actually in your food.

WHAT YOU'RE EATING

There is an Instagram account called @CheckOasis that does something so simple and so devastating that I genuinely cannot understand why it doesn't have ten times the following it has: It tests food and beverages. Real products. Products you recognize. Products with celebrity names on them or health claims on the label or "natural" in the font that costs extra to print. It reads the ingredients. It shows you what's actually inside.

The results are, consistently, a horror show. Dyes that are banned in Europe sitting comfortably in American and Canadian products marketed to children. Seed oils in things labeled "heart healthy." Sugar renamed seventeen different ways in a single ingredient list so it appears lower on the rankings while the cumulative effect remains the same. Preservatives with names that require a chemistry degree to decode sitting next to the word "wholesome."

And while we're here — let's talk about the most trusted children's vitamin in North America. The one with the cartoon characters on the label. The one "#1 pediatrician recommended" printed on the box.

Flintstones vitamins. Independent laboratory testing by Oasis found that Flintstones Vitamin + Extra Iron tested positive for Lead and Arsenic — representing the highest level of Lead found in a children's vitamin in that testing round. The company states on its packaging that it is the "#1 pediatrician recommended" brand.

Lead. In the vitamin you give your child because a doctor told you to. There is no safe level of Lead exposure for children. None. Lead bio-mimics Calcium — meaning the body actively absorbs it in place of Calcium, storing it in bones, the brain, and other tissues that depend on Calcium to function. The first ingredient in Flintstones Complete Chewables is sorbitol — a laxative agent that the FDA was petitioned to require warning labels for in 1999. The petition was denied. The ingredient stayed. The pediatricians kept recommending it. This is not a mistake. Mistakes get

corrected when they're discovered. This is a system producing exactly what it is designed to produce — revenue, compliance, and the specific learned helplessness of parents who trust institutions that have stopped deserving trust.

Licensors and major brands have a responsibility that most of them are not meeting. The Flintstones IP — a beloved cartoon character trusted by generations of families — attached to a product containing lead and arsenic being marketed to children. That is a licensing decision. That is a brand decision. That is money being placed above the safety of the children whose parents buy the product specifically because they trust the character on the label.

God says eat what is lawful and good. He didn't add: unless it has a recognizable cartoon face on it, in which case the lead content is acceptable.

The clean label movement — the idea that consumers deserve to know what they're eating in language they can actually understand — is one of the most important consumer protection movements of the last twenty years. It is also one of the most thoroughly co-opted. Because here is what happened when clean label became a marketing trend rather than a genuine standard:

The same corporations that had been putting garbage in your food simply hired better copywriters. "Made with real ingredients." Which ingredients? All food is made with ingredients. That sentence means nothing.

"No artificial colors." Correct — they used natural colors derived from sources that sound wholesome and function identically to the artificial ones they replaced. "Reduced sugar." Reduced from what baseline? Compared to which product? By what percentage? The label doesn't say.

The celebrity wellness brands are the apex of this particular performance. Supplements sold at premium prices by faces you trust, manufactured in facilities you'll never see, with ingredient sourcing you cannot verify, making claims that exist in the specific legal gray zone between "we're not technically lying" and "we are absolutely not telling the truth."

God says clearly: "O mankind, eat from whatever is on earth that is lawful and good." (2:168)

Lawful and good. Two conditions. Both matter. The food system has engineered a version of lawful that has nothing to do with good — technically compliant, spiritually and physically poisonous.

Follow @CheckOasis. Actually follow it. What you learn will change what you put in your cart and it will make you angry in a productive direction.

THE SOBEYS MEETING

Now. The boardroom. Scooby-DooEATS. Grass-fed beef. Warner Bros. licensed. Clean label —

real ingredients, traceable sourcing, no mystery. The kind of product that should have been a straightforward conversation with a major grocery chain about getting on shelves and feeding people something that wouldn't quietly damage them. I had done the work. The branding was sharp. The licensing was legitimate. The product was genuinely good — the kind of food I would feed my own family, which is the only standard that matters to me when I put my name on something.

I contacted Liam Sobey on LinkedIn — the great grandson of Frank H. Sobey, one of Canada's most powerful grocery families. To his credit, he responded. He was polite. He was decent. That matters and I'm saying it clearly.

What happened next was not Liam. It was his team in Toronto — the machinery beneath the family name, the layer of executives and category managers and shelf-fee architects who operate between the heir and the actual transaction. Liam didn't tell me to buy magazine covers. Liam didn't dictate my margin to two dollars.

His team did. The system did. And the system runs itself regardless of who the family name belongs to.

That distinction is important — not to protect anyone, but because it's true. And this book runs on truth.

And then the boardroom revealed itself. Magazine covers. They wanted me to buy magazine cover placements — paid promotional positions dressed up as editorial features — as part of the cost of doing business with them. This is a known practice in the grocery industry that nobody talks about publicly because everyone is too dependent on the chains to risk the relationship. Shelf fees. The physical placement of your product on their shelves is not included in the agreement to sell your product through their stores. You pay for placement. Premium placement costs more. Eye-level costs more than ankle-level. The end-cap display — the one at the end of the aisle that every shopper passes — costs the most.

And then they dictated my price point. After the shelf fees. After the magazine placements. After the Warner Bros. royalties — because the license doesn't pause because your distribution deal is squeezing your margin.

After my own production costs, my sourcing costs, my packaging costs.

They told me what price the product should sell at on their shelves.

My margin: two dollars. Two dollars. Per unit. After everyone else in the chain — the licensor, the shelf, the magazine, the distributor — had taken their portion. Two dollars for the person who had the idea, secured the license, developed the product, sourced the ingredients, and put their name on the label.

I said: This is not profitable for me.

They said: Sorry.

And that was that.

The food was clean. The system was not. And the system did not care about the distinction — because the system is not designed to get clean food to people. It is designed to extract maximum value from every product that passes through it, regardless of what the product actually does to the people who eat it. Sobeys is not uniquely evil. This is how the entire grocery industrial complex operates. The shelf fee system, the promotional placement fees, the price dictation — standard practice across every major chain. The result is a marketplace where the products that can afford the system are the ones that survive, which means the products with the largest margins, which means the products with the cheapest ingredients, which means the products doing the most damage to the people buying them. The food system is not broken. It is working exactly as designed. It is designed for the chain, not for the consumer.

THE COVID REHEARSAL

Speaking of systems working as designed — March 2020. The world stops. Governments globally issue orders that have no precedent in modern democratic history — close your business, stay in your home, do not gather, do not travel, present your papers to move between regions. And the food supply — the same supply chain that charges shelf fees and dictates margins and fills products with ingredients that require a chemistry degree to pronounce — that supply chain was essential. Protected. Operational. The Sobeys of the world stayed open. The McDonald's drive-throughs stayed open. The products with the longest shelf lives — which are the products with the most preservatives, which are the products doing the most cumulative damage — were the ones stockpiled.

Meanwhile: gyms closed. Fresh markets struggled. Small food entrepreneurs like me — building clean alternatives, building licensing ventures, building anything that wasn't already inside the protected infrastructure — were shut down with no revenue relief and told to comply.

The Nickelodeon director with the D name told me to comply.

The same energy. The same word. Comply.

The lockdowns were not primarily a public health measure. They were a control rehearsal. A test of compliance infrastructure at a scale that had never been attempted in peacetime democratic societies. How fast can you close businesses? How long will people stay home? How do you communicate mandates in a way that makes questioning them socially unacceptable?

The answers — delivered by populations around the world with remarkable efficiency — were:

Very fast. Very long. Very effectively.

And the food system — the one that poisons you slowly with approved ingredients and shelf-fee economics — ran the entire time. Essential. Protected. Compliant.

"Do they not travel through the land and see what was the end of those before them? They were greater than them in power, and they tilled the earth and built upon it more than they have built. And their messengers came to them with clear proofs. And Allah would not have wronged them, but they wronged themselves." (30:9)

The pattern is old. The implementation is new. The result is always the same.

CELEBRITY WELLNESS: THE MOST PROFITABLE

LIE

Let me spend a paragraph on the wellness industry because it deserves its own indictment. The business model is simple: take a face people trust, attach it to a supplement or a food product or a lifestyle brand, price it at three times the market rate for the ingredients inside,
and sell it to people who are desperately trying to be healthier in a food environment that is systematically making them sick.

The desperation is real. The products are frequently not. Goop. Skims wellness. The endless parade of celebrity vitamin packs sold in pouches with minimalist design and aspirational copy. The detox teas that do nothing except generate revenue and mild gastrointestinal distress. The collagen supplements priced at $80 for ingredients worth $4. I don't celebrate icons who can't better my life. I said this when I unfollowed everyone — and I meant it in this context specifically. When a celebrity launches a wellness brand, they are not sharing a health discovery. They are monetizing their audience's trust in their face.

Your body deserves better than a logo.

God gave you a body as an amanah — a trust. Responsibility. Something to be maintained and honored and fed with what is actually good for it, not what has been approved by the same system that brought you high-fructose corn syrup and called it a food group.

The Quran's standard is deceptively simple and comprehensively demanding: lawful and good. Legal under Islamic dietary guidelines AND genuinely beneficial. Both. Always

both.

The food system satisfies neither condition for most of what it produces.

THE PHARMACEUTICAL MIRROR

The food system and the pharmaceutical system are the same machine with different product lines. Food makes you sick slowly — through accumulated exposure to ingredients that inflame, disrupt, and degrade over years and decades. The damage is deniable because it's gradual. By the time the diagnosis arrives, the causal chain is too long and too diffuse to assign responsibility. Pharmaceuticals treat the symptoms of the sickness the food created. Not the cause — the symptoms. Because treating the cause would require addressing the food system, which is owned by the same investment portfolios that own pharmaceutical companies.

This is not a conspiracy. This is portfolio management.

The same institutional investors — BlackRock, Vanguard, State Street — hold significant positions in both the major food corporations and the major pharmaceutical companies. The financial incentive to keep people sick enough to need medication but well enough to keep buying processed food is not a theory. It is a balance sheet. And the COVID pandemic — the lockdowns, the mandates, the emergency authorizations, the suppression of discussion about alternative treatments, the specific protection of pharmaceutical revenue streams while small businesses and clean food entrepreneurs were shut down — was the clearest demonstration of whose interests the system actually serves.

Not yours.

Never yours.

The Prophet (PBUH) said: *"Make use of medical treatment, for Allah has not made a disease without appointing a remedy for it." (Abu Dawud)*

The remedy exists. It always has. In the food God told you to eat. In the bodies God designed to heal when given what they need. In the medicine that comes from the earth rather than the laboratory optimized for patent protection and quarterly earnings.

But the remedy doesn't generate recurring revenue. And recurring revenue is the only metric the machine understands.

WHAT YOU CAN ACTUALLY DO

I'm not going to end this chapter without something practical. This book is for young men who need tools, not just outrage. Read the ingredients. Every single one. If you can't pronounce it, research it before you eat it. This takes thirty seconds and it is the single most disruptive act a consumer can perform against the food industrial complex. Follow accounts like Oasis. Build your own knowledge base. Stop outsourcing your understanding of what goes in your body to the marketing department of a company whose incentive is your continued purchase, not your continued health.

Cook when you can. Real food. Recognizable ingredients. The Prophet (PBUH) ate simply — dates, water, olive oil, meat when available. Not because he lacked access to more but because the body does not require complexity. It requires quality. And when someone tells you that clean food is too expensive — which is the most effective argument the processed food industry ever invented — ask them to calculate the lifetime cost of the diseases that cheap processed food creates and then compare the numbers honestly.

Clean food is not expensive. Chronic disease is expensive.

The machine that feeds you poison is counting on you not doing that math.

Do the math.

"And eat and drink, but be not excessive. Indeed, He likes not those who commit excess." (7:31)

Lawful. Good. Not excessive.

Three words. The complete nutritional philosophy of the only book that came down from the seventh heaven. Everything the food industry has built exists in the gap between that standard and what they actually sell you.

Close the gap.

CHAPTER EIGHT

POLITICS IS THEATER

(And I Stepped on the Stage)

I want to tell you what democracy looks like from the inside. Not the textbook version. Not the version they teach in civics class with the diagrams of branches of government and the reassuring language about checks and balances. The actual version — the one you see when you stop watching from the audience and walk through the stage door.

It looks like a set.

Lights, blocking, assigned roles, a script nobody admits is a script. The major parties move through their choreography with the practiced ease of people who have been doing this long enough that the performance no longer feels like performance — it just feels like Tuesday.

And then there are the people like me.

The ones who show up with something real to say and no budget for the costume.

WHY I RAN
(not Iran)

I want to be clear about something before I tell this story: I never planned to enter politics. I was a "Do Not Voter" — part of the 40% of Canadians who don't vote, which the political establishment calls apathy and which is actually something else entirely. It is a verdict. A considered, deliberate withholding of participation from a system that has demonstrated it does not represent you.

Forty percent of the electorate — the largest single voting bloc in Canada — choosing none of the above every single election. Not because they don't care. Because they care enough to recognize theater when they see it.

I was one of them. Until I wasn't. What changed was watching Canada deteriorate in ways that felt both obvious and deliberately unaddressed. The housing crisis priced out an entire generation. The tax system punished success and rewarded compliance. The cultural identity of the country — the specific, complicated, genuinely beautiful thing that Canada actually is — being dissolved in the name of a multiculturalism that nobody had asked to be redefined as the absence of identity altogether.

And nobody with power was saying it. Not clearly. Not honestly. Not without the specific hedging of people whose first priority is their next election rather than the actual truth.

"Coming from a left-wing background and occupation, to make the jump from left to right — that should make you consider why I made the jump."

I said that publicly. I meant it. The journey from where I started to where I ended up wasn't ideological performance — it was the logical conclusion of watching what actually happens versus what is claimed to be happening.

The People's Party of Canada, under Maxime Bernier, was the only party saying clearly what needed to be said. Abolish the capital gains tax. Cut government size. Stop the corporate welfare. End the mass immigration without infrastructure. **Bring Canada Identity Back Stronger.**

That was my slogan. And I believed every word of it.

I ran for Toronto-Centre. And everything I'm about to tell you is documented.

THE MEDIA ERASURE

TorontoToday.ca published a candidate guide for Toronto Centre ahead of the 2025 election. Every candidate in the riding. A comprehensive piece about who was running and what they stood for.

They did not include me.

Not a mention. Not a line. Not even the courtesy of my name in a list. I called it out publicly — on X, directly, with the journalist's name attached. Because silence in the face of erasure is not dignity. It is complicity. If a publication covers an election and deliberately omits a registered candidate because his party is politically inconvenient, that is not journalism. That is editorial activism dressed in a journalist's costume. I put my face on the poster they'd published and posted it myself. Here is what the hero banner should actually look like. Here are all the candidates. Here is the one you decided didn't exist.

They added coverage. Eventually. This is how it works for PPC candidates across Canada — and I am not alone in this experience, I am just one of the more vocal ones. The major media ecosystem has decided that parties polling below a certain threshold do not deserve coverage, which conveniently ensures they remain below that threshold, which justifies continued non-coverage. A self-sealing system of suppression dressed as editorial judgment.

"Zero chance of winning," they say.

"You sound scared," I say. The PPC got less than 1% of the vote nationally in 2025. What the coverage never mentions — what the polls never honestly examine — is how much of that number reflects actual support versus how much reflects the coordinated message, repeated across every mainstream outlet, that voting PPC is a wasted vote. You manufacture the outcome by manufacturing the perception of the outcome before the vote is cast.

That is not democracy. That is a managed election with extra steps.

THE MOSQUE INCIDENT

Now — the moment that showed me everything I needed to know about the NDP's relationship with the Muslim community they claim to champion. My volunteers. Canadian citizens. Exercising their legal democratic right to collect electoral signatures at a mosque — a public gathering place, a community hub, exactly the kind of location where civic participation has always been encouraged.

Samantha Green and her team showed up.

The NDP candidate for Toronto Centre — a family doctor, not a Muslim, not from the community she was performing solidarity with — personally interfered with my volunteers. To stop them. To physically interrupt a legal democratic process that they had every right to conduct. My team documented it. We reported it to Elections Canada. We warned them formally — this is illegal interference with electoral process. The complaint went in.

And then there was Mrs. Keffiyeh. Samantha Green — campaigning at a mosque, wearing a keffiyeh, performing Palestinian solidarity for the Muslim vote while her party's federal record on Palestinian rights is what it is — chasing my volunteers away from the very community she was cosplaying solidarity with. Let me be precise here because precision matters: I am half Palestinian. My blood is semi-Palestinian. My ancestors lived what the keffiyeh represents. It is not a costume. It is not a campaign prop. It is not something you put on to pander and collect votes at a mosque and take off when you go back to your riding office.

The performative adoption of Palestinian symbols by non-Muslim, non-Arab, non-Palestinian politicians for electoral purposes — while their party does nothing meaningful for Palestine in power — is one of the most cynical forms of political theater I have ever heard. And my volunteers witnessed it at a mosque. Directed at my community. While she personally tried to stop my volunteers from doing their legal democratic work by running after the poor guy.

The Jewish community watching this particular tactic from an NDP candidate — a party that presents itself as progressive — must have had complicated feelings. The keffiyeh as electoral prop cuts in many directions simultaneously. None of them honest.

She should have been banned from that race for the interference alone.

She wasn't.

God sees the sincere from the performers. He always has. He always will.

WHAT THE INSIDE LOOKS LIKE

Let me tell you what a federal political campaign actually is at the ground level — for a PPC candidate in a major urban riding with no mainstream media coverage and a volunteer team built from genuine believers rather than party machinery.

It is you. And a small group of people who actually mean it. Against a system designed to make you invisible. The Liberal candidate in Toronto Centre had the full apparatus — the donor network, the media relationships, the name recognition, the party infrastructure built over decades, the former broadcaster profile of Evan Solomon carrying its own media weight. The NDP had Samantha Green's medical credentials and the institutional support of a party that has been losing seats but still commands establishment respect.

THE EVAN SOLOMON PROBLEM

Let me tell you about the man who won Toronto Centre. Evan Solomon was fired from the CBC in 2015. Not for his politics. Not for his opinions. For something more revealing than either: a Toronto Star investigation found he had been secretly taking commissions from art sales — using people he met through his position as a high-profile political journalist and broadcaster to broker deals for personal gain. The CBC said he had "acted in a way inconsistent with the organization's values."

I said it publicly and I'll say it here: that is not a technicality. That is a character disclosure.

Then he went to New York. Took a position with a global affairs media company. Left Canada. Built his brand internationally. And when the 2025 election was called — he flew back. Landed in Toronto Centre. The Liberal machine opened its arms, handed him the nomination, and the media that had once reported his scandal treated his return as a redemption arc nobody had asked to see.

This is what I called elite recycling. And I meant it precisely. The same man fired for profiting through insider connections — overpriced art, exclusive circles, private commissions extracted from relationships that belonged to the public — was now running on a platform of inclusive economic growth and social justice. The same party that brought you SNC-Lavalin and the WE Charity scandal was now offering Evan Solomon as their face for Toronto Centre. I put all of this on record publicly. Not because I expected the media to amplify it — they wouldn't. But because silence in the face of this kind of recycling is its own form of complicity. While Evan Solomon was building his international profile and his art portfolio, Toronto Centre was deteriorating. Real people. Real rents. Real consequences. The riding didn't need a broadcaster with name recognition and a scandal in his past. It needed someone who had actually been here — building things, employing people, fighting the system from inside it. And now? Now he's Canada's Minister of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Innovation. Let that land for a moment.

A man whose professional peak was hosting political panel shows. A man whose most documented act of innovation was finding a creative way to monetize his Rolodex. Canada's Minister of AI. A 19-year-old developer shipping code at 2am knows more about artificial intelligence than Evan Solomon has ever needed to. This is not an insult — it is a factual observation about the gap

between title and substance that Canadian politics specializes in manufacturing.

And the audacity of the framing. Canada — a country leading the world in exactly one immigration metric — positioning itself as an AI superpower. Abu Dhabi is pouring sovereign wealth into frontier AI infrastructure. The United States has the talent, the capital, and the compute. China has the scale and the state coordination. Canada has a Minister of AI who was fired from the CBC for an art scandal and spent three years in New York before parachuting back to collect a nomination.

This is not an AI strategy. This is a press release with a cabinet title attached.

That was the choice in front of Toronto Centre voters. A parachute candidate with Liberal machinery behind him and a media ecosystem that had already decided the outcome. Or a semi-Palestinian entrepreneur who had built businesses, lost businesses, documented corruption, and showed up with nothing but conviction and the truth.

The Liberal playbook hasn't changed. Same elite protection racket. Same worn-out stage. Different actor — now with a fancier title and a country that deserves far better than the performance he's delivering.

The difference is — I named it out loud while it was happening. I had conviction. I had a track record. I had a platform that actually addressed what ordinary Canadians were experiencing. I had 20-50 million social media impressions and a name that the internet had made recognizable in ways that cut across ideological lines.

And I had the truth — which, as it turns out, is the least protected asset in a federal election. Maxime Bernier and I spoke. He is a man who genuinely believes what he says — which in federal politics is either a qualification or a liability depending on which room you're in. He understood something most party leaders have forgotten: that the role of a political party is not to manage the Overton window but to expand it. To say the things that are true but inconvenient. To represent the people the system has decided not to represent. The PPC was doing that. Imperfectly. Under-resourced. Systematically excluded from media coverage that could have changed the arithmetic.

But doing it.

THE 40% VERDICT

I keep coming back to this number because it is the most important political statistic in Canada and the most thoroughly ignored.

Forty percent of eligible Canadian voters do not vote. The political establishment calls this apathy. It is not apathy. Apathy is indifference. What produces a 40% non-participation rate is not indifference — it is the considered judgment of millions of people that no available option represents

their actual interests, values, or vision for the country they live in.

These are not people who don't care. These are people who care enough to withhold.

They watched the Liberals spend decades performing progressive values while delivering oligarchic outcomes. They watched the Conservatives perform fiscal responsibility while the national debt grew regardless of which party held power. They watched the NDP perform working-class solidarity while their candidates wore keffiyehs at mosques and interfered with democratic processes.

And they said: none of these. The PPC ran because those 40% deserved a name for what they already believed. They deserved a candidate who would say clearly: the system is corrupt, the tax structure punishes success, the immigration policy serves corporations not communities, and Canada has an identity worth protecting.

Whether or not they voted for us — they heard it. That is what political candidacy is actually for, when it's done honestly. Not just winning seats. Expanding what can be said. Forcing the conversation. Making the 40% feel seen.

WHAT I LEARNED

I learned that the most dangerous thing in Canadian politics is not the wrong party winning. It is the systematic suppression of voices that challenge the consensus. I learned that media coverage is not a reflection of political reality — it is a construction of it. The outlets that ignored the PPC weren't reporting on the race. They were shaping it.

I learned that Muslims in Toronto Centre were being competed for by parties that had done nothing concrete for Muslim or Palestinian interests, using symbols and rhetoric calibrated for the community while delivering nothing of substance. And that my candidacy — an actual Muslim, an actual Palestinian, running on actual principles — was the most inconvenient possible disruption to that performance.

I learned that Elections Canada receives complaints and moves slowly. That interference with democratic process has consequences that arrive, if at all, after the election it would have affected. And I learned something about myself — something that the Garfield years and the farm and the celebrities and everything else had been building toward:

I am not built for systems that require you to perform rather than tell the truth. I ran as myself. I said what I believed. I called out what I saw. I documented the mosque incident in real time and dared anyone to dispute it.

That is not how you win a seat in Toronto Centre in 2025.

It is, however, exactly how you build something that matters beyond any single election. The

Quran says: *"O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives." (4:135)*

Justice. Even when it costs you. Even when the system is designed to make it cost you.

Especially then.

A NOTE ON PPC POLICY — FOR THE RECORD

Since no mainstream outlet covered it properly, let me state it here clearly: The People's Party of Canada ran on abolishing the capital gains tax entirely. Cutting corporate tax from 15% to 10%. Eliminating $60 billion in federal spending — CBC, foreign aid waste, DEI subsidies, corporate welfare. Reducing government intrusion into provincial jurisdiction. Pausing mass immigration until infrastructure catches up.

These are not radical positions. They are the positions of a country that has decided to prioritize its citizens over its performance of progressivism.

The capital gains tax specifically — the one that takes 50% of your investment gains and calls it contribution — is the single most effective wealth suppression tool in the Canadian system. It punishes people who build something and succeed. It accelerates the brain drain of ambitious people to jurisdictions that don't penalize success. It is, in effect, a tax on having the audacity to win. My father understood this. Entrepreneurs across Canada understand this. The 40% who don't vote understand this even if they don't have the policy language for it.

The PPC named it. Nobody else would. *"And when it is said to them, 'Do not cause corruption on the earth,' they say, 'We are only reformers.' Unquestionably, it is they who are the corrupters, but they perceive it not." (2:11-12)*

The reformers who are the corrupters.

I saw them up close in Toronto Centre in 2025.

I documented what I saw. And I left the stage — not defeated, not disillusioned, but informed. With the specific clarity of someone who stepped inside the machine and can now describe exactly how it works from the inside.

That knowledge is worth more than any seat.

MAKE CANADA CANAIDAN AGAIN

Still means it. Every word.

CHAPTER NINE

MISTER HARDMAXXING

(Mister Lebanon is a male pageant which is held annually to select a young man who takes on humanitarian duties and represents Lebanon in international beauty pageants.)

I was twenty-five years old. It was my first time in Lebanon. My only time in Lebanon. One week. A country I had heard about my entire life — in the Arabic spoken at my mother's table, in the specific nostalgia that Lebanese diaspora carry like a second passport, in the food, the music, the particular pride of a people who built beauty in a country that kept trying to destroy it.

I was semi-Lebanese by blood. I had never stood on Lebanese soil.

I went. And I came back changed in a way that took years to name and longer to survive.

THE DRUG YOU'VE NEVER HEARD OF GHB

Gamma-hydroxybutyrate. I had never heard of it. At twenty-five, going to a club in Solidaire — Beirut's upscale nightlife district, the part of the city that dresses itself in European aesthetics and pretends the rest of the neighborhood doesn't exist — I had no reason to know what GHB was. I was not part of the world where it circulated. I did not know its taste. I did not know it was colorless. I did not know it was virtually undetectable in a drink.

I did not know that one extra drop — literally one — separates the high from unconsciousness. Here is what I know now: GHB use is disproportionately prevalent among gay and bisexual men — with gay men having an adjusted odds ratio of 27.82 for GHB use compared to heterosexual men. The mean age of GHB-related deaths is 31.5 years, with more than 70% of cases being male. In the largest survey ever conducted of GHB users, two-thirds of 2,700 gay men reported serious problems with the drug — addiction, overdose, or sexual assault. Over a quarter reported being sexually assaulted while under its influence. Four out of five said they knew someone else who had also been assaulted on GHB. Between 2014 and 2018, there were 120 deaths in England and Wales alone linked to GHB. Experts believe the true figure is significantly higher — the drug is not part of routine toxicology tests after sudden deaths, making it difficult and expensive to detect. Within certain communities, GHB-related fatalities reached epidemic proportions, with one expert documenting an anecdotal average of two deaths every month. In 2016, a serial killer named Stephen Port was convicted of using GHB to drug, rape, and kill four young men he met on Grindr. Three of them were found in a graveyard near his home. One with a fake suicide note. Police initially dismissed concerns raised by relatives of the victims.

I did not know any of this at twenty-five in Beirut.

I know it now because what happened to me required me to understand what had been used

against me.

THE CLUB.THE DRINK.THE DARK.

I will not describe what happened in clinical detail. This is not a police report. It is a testimony — and testimonies serve a different purpose than evidence. What I will tell you is this:

I was drugged without my knowledge or consent at a club in Solidaire, Beirut. By a man I will call Mr. Lebanon — a name that carries the specific weight of what it means to be violated by someone who represents, in their own mind, a kind of power and status in a place you are visiting for the first time.

I did not choose what happened.

I did not consent to what happened.

I woke up having been assaulted. And then — and this is the part that took the longest to process, the part that still sits in the body long after the mind has tried to make sense of it — I said nothing. Not because I didn't know what had happened. Because I knew exactly what had happened and I also knew, with the specific clarity that comes from being raised in Arab culture, what saying something would cost. The silence that follows male sexual assault in Arab communities is not weakness. It is the rational response to a cultural architecture that has no language for male victimhood, no tolerance for it, no framework to receive it, and a specific brutality reserved for men who try to introduce it. He was assaulted does not compute in that architecture. It returns an error. It gets replaced, automatically, by questions about what he was doing there, what he was wearing, whether he wanted it, whether he is now something other than what a man is supposed to be.

The silence is the only protection available.

I chose the silence.

For years.

I remember the morning after with a clarity that no drug fully erased. I woke up on the floor. A red carpet — dirty, cheap, the specific texture of a place that had never been cleaned properly and never would be. The room was small and filthy in the way that reflects a life lived without self-respect or dignity. He was there. He mentioned — casually, as if it were a normal thing to offer — whether I wanted to stay.

With him. In that place. On that floor.

I said I had to go. I walked out onto the street. Beirut morning. My first and last morning in Lebanon. I was twenty-five years old and I was running — not jogging, running — trying to find my

way back to my hotel through streets I didn't know, crying in a way I had never cried before and haven't cried exactly like that since. Not the grief-crying of losing something you loved. The specific desperate crying of a body trying to expel something that had been put inside it without permission.

I reached the hotel. I went to the bathroom. I took a loofah and I scrubbed my skin until it was raw.

I was trying to remove something that does not come off in the shower.

It took years of different kinds of scrubbing — spiritual, psychological, the slow patient work of healing — before I understood that the contamination was never mine. It belonged entirely to him.

On that floor. In that room. God saw it.

He always sees.

WHAT SILENCE COSTS

I want to be precise about this because I think precision is the only thing that serves the young man reading this who has also chosen the silence.

Silence does not protect you from what happened.

It protects the person who did it to you. That is the entire function of the silence — it is not yours, it does not serve you, it was not designed for you. It was designed, by the culture that produced it, to protect perpetrators from accountability by ensuring victims never speak. The silence lives in the body. Not as a memory — as a presence. A weight that sits in the chest at specific moments. The specific moments where trust would be required and trust feels like the most dangerous thing in the world. The moments where intimacy is offered and the body says no before the mind has finished processing the question. The silence rewires things. The architecture of how you receive other people. How close you let them get. Whether you believe — genuinely, in your body rather than just your mind — that you are safe.

I was not broken by what happened in Beirut.

But I was changed by it. And the change required work — specific, deliberate, spiritual work — to understand and eventually to release.

That work is still happening. I say that not as defeat. As honesty. Because this book runs on honesty and the young man reading this deserves to know that healing from this kind of thing is not linear and not quick and not complete by any specific date on any specific calendar.

It is a direction. Not a destination.

You point yourself toward healing. You keep moving in that direction. God meets you there.

WHAT NO ONE TELLS YOU ABOUT MALE ASSAUL

There is a specific cultural conspiracy of silence around male sexual assault that operates across cultures — not just Arab culture, though Arab culture has its own particularly brutal version of it. The conspiracy works like this:

Men cannot be victims. Men are the agents of their own experience. What happened to a man is either something he chose or something he allowed — and either way, the responsibility sits with him rather than with whoever did it. The alternative — that a man can be violated without agency, without choice, without any mechanism to prevent it — destabilizes too many things that too many people have built their understanding of gender and power on.

So the conspiracy maintains the silence. Across cultures, across religions, across demographics. The numbers are deeply underreported for exactly this reason. Over a quarter of GHB users in one survey reported being sexually assaulted while unconscious on the drug. The majority of them were men. The majority of them told nobody.

I am telling you.

Not because the telling is easy — it is the furthest thing from easy — but because the book I needed to read at twenty-five did not exist. And if it had existed. If someone had written honestly about being drugged and assaulted and surviving it and building a life after it and finding God in the process and coming out the other side with something that could be called, in a specific and earned way, peace —

I would have been less alone in the silence.

So I am writing the book that did not exist.

For you.

WHAT ISLAM GAVE ME THAT NOTHING ELSE COULD

There is a verse in the Quran that I returned to so many times during the years of processing Beirut that I no longer need to look it up. It lives in my chest now, not in a page:

"*Verily, with hardship comes ease." (94:5)* Not after hardship. With it. The ease is present inside the hardship — not waiting on the other side of it, but woven into it, running alongside it, available in the middle of it if you know how to reach for it. No therapist gave me that. No sheikh gave me that in language I could receive. No wellness program or trauma framework or support group — none of

which I accessed, because accessing them would have required admitting, in a room with witnesses, what had happened. What gave it to me was the direct relationship between a man and his Creator that Islam offers without intermediary. *Ya Allah.* That's all. Two words. The acknowledgment that He is there and I am here and what happened in Beirut did not happen outside His knowledge. That He saw it. That He recorded it. That the man who did it will face an accounting I cannot arrange but He absolutely will.

That accounting is not mine to execute. It never was. It belongs to God. And releasing it to God — genuinely, not performatively, not as a coping mechanism but as a theological conviction — was the beginning of the only real healing I found.

"Do not think that Allah is unaware of what the wrongdoers do. He only delays them until a Day when eyes will stare in horror." (14:42)

He only delays them.

He only delays them.

That sentence carried me further than anything else in those years. The perpetrator was not free. The silence was not victory for him. God had simply not yet collected what was owed. The delay is not acquittal.

THE LINE

I said in Chapter 2 — and held back so it could land here, where it belongs:

I know what rape is. I don't know what love is.

This is where that line lives.

Not as performance. Not as a statement designed to shock. As the most accurate description I have of the specific emotional architecture that Beirut built in me and that I have spent years carefully, deliberately, brick by brick dismantling.

The things that were done to my body before I could consent to them — the violence of my mother's first marriage that I absorbed as a child watching, the assault in Beirut at twenty-five — those things introduced me to what the human body is capable of receiving against its will before anyone had introduced me to what the human heart is capable of feeling by choice.

I learned violation before I learned love. That is a specific kind of poverty that money cannot address and success cannot fix and achievement cannot compensate for. The only thing that addresses it is the slow, patient, painful work of learning — genuinely learning, not performing — that you are worthy of something other than what was done to you.

I am learning.

Still. Every day. And I say that to the young man who is also learning — who was also violated in some way, in some place, by someone who had no right — and who is sitting with the silence wondering if the learning ever actually ends:

I don't know if it ends.

I know it gets quieter.

I know God gets louder as it gets quieter. I know that the version of yourself that exists on the other side of having survived this and named it and kept moving — that version is something the perpetrator never gets to take. No matter what they did. No matter what they took.

The soul is yours. It was always yours. It cannot be assaulted.

TO MR. LEBANON

"I don't know where you are. You might be dead by now." I don't know if you remember. I don't know if I was one of many or one of few or whether what you did registered in you at all as something that required remembering.

I remember.

God remembers.

He only delays.

I have no interest in your destruction — I leave that to the One who does it better than I ever could. What I have is this page. And this page is more powerful than anything I could have said to you in that club or in any room since.

Because this page reaches the young man you would have reached next. And that young man now knows what GHB is. And what it does. And that a colorless liquid in a drink can take his agency in thirty minutes. And that what happens after that is not his fault. And that the silence is not his responsibility to maintain.

And that there is a God who was in that club with him even when he didn't know it.

Even then.

Especially then.

"And never think that Allah is unaware of what the wrongdoers do." (14:42)

He isn't.

He never was.

THE PERFORMANCE OF MASCULINITY AND WHERE IT ENDS

The parade of sculpted men under bright lights, presented to women who dreamed of marrying one of them, broadcast by a network that positioned it all as aspiration and glamour. I am going to say something about that industry that people in Beirut know and nobody says publicly:

The darkness behind those lights is significant.

The agents. The things those male models are required to do — or strongly encouraged to do, or find themselves in situations where doing becomes the path of least resistance — to get access, to get bookings, to advance in an industry that has positioned itself as the pinnacle of Lebanese male desirability. The steroids. The drugs. The sexual dynamics between power-holders and the young men trying to break through.

Women watching those pageants and wishing they could marry one of those men — they are watching a performance. The men performing it are often trapped inside something far uglier than the lighting reveals.

This is not every person in that industry. But it is a pattern that exists and that deserves to be named. It connects directly to something happening right now in the digital world that is the modern equivalent of those pageants — just louder, faster, and available to fourteen year olds with a phone.

Looksmaxxing.

The online subculture — primarily aimed at men and boys — obsessed with maximizing physical attractiveness. At its surface level: grooming advice, fitness, skincare. The benign end of a spectrum that has a very dark other end. The leading figure of the looksmaxxing movement, an influencer known as Clavicular — real name Braden Eric Peters — began injecting himself with testosterone supplements at age 14 during COVID lockdowns, browsing looksmaxxing forums for 14 hours a day. He was expelled from university for hiding testosterone in his dorm room.

Another looksmaxxing influencer, Mason Hull, 18, was arrested on 15 counts of possession of child sexual abuse material — images and videos depicting female children between the ages of 8 and 15. Clavicular himself was arrested on battery charges after allegedly instigating a fight, was sued by a 16-year-old he had paid $1,000 to film looksmaxxing videos, and was later hospitalized after a suspected overdose.

This is where the worship of physical appearance leads when it has no spiritual anchor. When the body becomes the god. When the mirror becomes the only source of meaning. When attractiveness is pursued not as health or self-respect but as a system of dominance and validation.

Who wants that life? Seriously — who wants to be injecting testosterone at fourteen, banned from university, arrested for battery, hospitalized from an overdose, all in service of a jawline?

That is not masculinity. That is masculinity's corpse being dressed up and posted for views.

Far from Ataraxia. As far as it is possible to be.

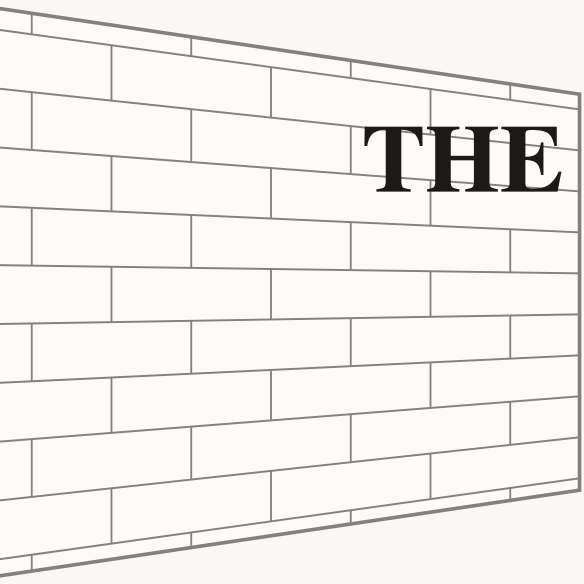
Real masculinity — the kind that God designed, the kind that the Prophet embodied — is not about bone structure. It is about character. Accountability. The ability to stand in difficulty without collapsing. The willingness to protect rather than prey. The discipline to control desires rather than be controlled by them.

The baby cries when it arrives in this world. I have always believed that — always felt it was true before I had the language for it. The soul descends from somewhere better than here. It arrives in a body on an earth full of tests and corruption and beauty and grief and it cries at the shock of the transition.

Realign yourself. That's the entire instruction. Stop worshipping the jaw. Stop measuring your worth in views. Realign with the God who breathed His own breath into you to make you alive — and ask yourself whether the life you're building honors that breath or wastes it.

Men destroy the world when they lose that alignment.

I have always believed this. I believe it more with every passing year.



CHAPTER TEN

THE WHITE WALL

This chapter is for the young man reading at 2am who has never told anyone.

You are not alone. You never were.

Keep reading.

Let me tell you something about the most misunderstood battle in the history of masculinity. Not war. Not poverty. Not racism. Not the housing market or the job market or the political establishment that ignores you.

The battle inside a man's own mind. In his own voice. Using his own desires against him. I am going to talk about something that nobody in Arab culture discusses, that nobody in Muslim culture discusses openly, that the mainstream LGBTQ+ industry has no interest in discussing honestly, and that the self-help industrial complex cannot solve because it doesn't understand what it's dealing with. I am going to talk about it because I lived it. I fought it. I won — not completely, not permanently, but manageably, sustainably, in a way that changed everything.

And I found the only treatment that actually works.

Let's begin.

WHAT IT ACTUALLY IS

The mainstream narrative says homosexuality is an identity. Innate. Fixed. Biological. Something you are born with and either accept or suppress — and suppression, the narrative insists, leads only to damage. I am not going to argue with the mainstream narrative in the language it offers me. I am going to tell you what I experienced, what I believe, and what worked — and let you decide what to do with it.

What I experienced was not an identity.

It was an attack. Not a dramatic, visible attack. Something far more sophisticated. A whisper. In your own voice — that specific, intimate inner voice that you have trusted your entire life to tell you who you are and what you want. Except it wasn't you. It only sounded like you. The Islamic tradition has a precise understanding of this mechanism. Shaytan — the enemy — does not announce himself. He does not arrive with horns and a pitchfork. He arrives in the frequency of your own thoughts, speaking your dialect, using your reference points, leveraging your wounds.
The Prophet (PBUH) said that *Shaytan runs through the human being*
like blood runs through the veins. (Bukhari)

Through the veins. That intimate. That internal. That indistinguishable from self.

Reflection

And for certain men — sensitive men, wounded men, men who have experienced violation or abandonment or the specific emotional starvation of growing up without adequate male presence — the attack comes through the channel of desire. Because desire is the most powerful channel available. Because desire bypasses the rational mind faster than almost anything else.

A female jinn. That is what I believe was operating in my case. The Islamic tradition is extensive on the subject of jinn — spiritual beings created from smokeless fire, existing in a dimension adjacent to ours, capable of influencing human thoughts and desires with a precision that can look, from the inside, exactly like your own psychology.

The jinn primarily reside in the lower abdomen. The stomach. Unexplained colon pain. Daily. Chronic. That doctors cannot diagnose. Pay attention.

THE PRAYER — YOUR FIRST WEAPON

The first thing I did was the five daily prayers. Not because someone forced me. Not out of cultural compliance. Because I had run out of every other option and this was the only thing that came from the right direction. Salah. Five times a day. Standing, bowing, prostrating, sitting. Facing Mecca. Reciting words that came down from the seventh heaven. Let me tell you what science has now confirmed about what you are doing when you pray — because some of you need the science before you'll try the practice, and I understand that: Research found significant rises in alpha wave activity in the brain specifically during the prostration phase of prayer — the position where your forehead touches the ground. Alpha waves are associated with relaxation, calm focus, and reduced anxiety. This effect was found only during prostration — not standing, not bowing, not sitting. The forehead on the ground specifically. Ibcsr Prostration significantly increases blood flow to the brain, providing essential nutrients and oxygen that enhance cognitive functions including memory and concentration.

The grounding effect of Sujud — forehead to earth — is believed to dissipate accumulated electromagnetic energy from the body, promoting deep relaxation. The repetitive motion of prostrating, performed at least 34 times across five daily prayers, strengthens the neck, back, and limb muscles. The Muslim Vibe Studies show Salah reduces stress both psychologically and physiologically — decreasing heart rate, lowering blood pressure, increasing parasympathetic nervous system activity. The relaxation effect is highest specifically during prostration. Reciting Quran during prayer has higher effects on focus and attention than performing the movements without it.

This is what peer-reviewed science says about putting your forehead on the ground five times a day. But here is what the science cannot measure and what I can tell you from experience: When you are in sujud — forehead on the ground, the highest part of you at the lowest point, in the most

vulnerable and humble position a human body can take — you are not alone in that position. You are in the presence of something that your nervous system recognizes even when your mind hasn't caught up yet.

The Prophet (PBUH) said:
"The closest a servant is to his Lord is when he is in prostration." (Sahih Muslim)

The closest. Not in a mosque. Not in Mecca. Not after years of scholarship. In prostration. Right now. With your forehead on the floor of whatever room you're in.

That proximity is not metaphor. It is not poetic language. It is a spiritual fact that produces measurable physiological responses in the human body and immeasurable effects in the human soul.

Turn to this. Not a politician. Not a singer. Not a looksmaxxing influencer who started injecting testosterone at fourteen. Not Andrew Tate. Not any human being whose first interest is your wallet.

God is free. And He is closer to you than your jugular vein. (50:16)

THE FAST — STARVING THE ATTACK

The second weapon was fasting.

The Prophet (PBUH) said: *"When Ramadan enters, the gates of Paradise are opened, the gates of Hellfire are closed, and the devils are chained." (Al-Bukhari and Muslim)*

Chained. You want to know what it feels like when the devils are chained? I can tell you from personal experience over multiple Ramadans:

The volume drops. The whispers — those thoughts that arrive in your own voice telling you what you want and who you want it from — they get quieter. Noticeably, measurably quieter. Not silent. But quieter. The specific noise that has been running in the background of your mind for years turns down to something manageable.

That is not psychology. That is not the placebo effect of religious ritual. That is a promise God made — the devils are chained — being experienced in real time by a man who was finally paying close enough attention to notice.

The hunger of fasting does something else too. It reminds the body that it is controllable. That desire — any desire, for food, for sex, for approval, for anything — is not a law. It is a request. And you have the authority to decline it.

You have the authority to decline it. This is the sentence that the entire addiction industry, the entire LGBTQ+ industry, the entire self-help industrial complex does not want you to understand. Because if you understand that desire is not destiny — that what you feel is not automatically what

you are — then you don't need their product.

Fasting improves cognition and thinking ability. It slows down neurodegeneration, reduces brain damage, and improves functional recovery. Psychologically, people who avoid unhealthy habits during fasting, practice self-control, and avoid unnecessary thoughts become psychologically more powerful and stronger.

Allah says in the Quran: "O you who believe, fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may attain Taqwa." (2:183)

Taqwa. God-consciousness. The specific awareness of being seen — by the One who actually sees everything, who is present in the moment of every temptation, who knows whether you held or surrendered.

That awareness changes the quality of every choice.

THE WORK — WHAT THREE YEARS ACTUALLY LOOKED LIKE

I want to be honest about the timeline because the timeline matters for the young man reading this who is looking for a quick fix.

There is no quick fix.

It took three years of consistent practice before I began to see significant impact.

Three years. Not three days. Not three months. Three years of five daily prayers. Of Ramadan fasts. Of reciting *Astaghfirullah — "I seek the forgiveness of Allah"* — over a thousand times a day, clicking a counter, building the repetition into the architecture of every day. Of cutting the media that fed the desire. Of choosing, each time the whisper came, to decline it.

The hardest part was not the desire itself.

The hardest part was the loneliness. The shell I kept on the outside — the confidence, the entrepreneur, the man in the orange suit — that shell was real and earned and functional. Underneath it, at night, crying into a pillow because the specific human warmth of being held by another person felt like something I would never have access to through a clean path. Watching romantic movies and feeling the longing as a physical thing. Listening to love songs and understanding, viscerally, what they were describing and not knowing if I would ever feel it from a legitimate direction.

That was the hardest part.

Not the battle with desire. The loneliness of fighting a battle nobody knows you're fighting. And I cut the media. Because the media — Netflix specifically, with a sexual scene in what feels like every

third minute — is not neutral. The hyper sexualization of every screen is not accidental. It is, I believe, an agenda. Keep the desires inflamed. Keep the dopamine cycling. Keep people too distracted by their own arousal to think clearly about anything else.

Follow your feelings, America says. Your feelings are valid. Your feelings are your truth.

Absolutely not. Not every feeling is yours. Some feelings are planted. Some desires are whispers from things that want to use you. The ability to look at a feeling and ask where did this come from — to distinguish between what is genuinely yours and what has been inserted — that is not repression. That is wisdom.

America teaches you to follow your feelings. Islam teaches you to examine them first.

One of these produces **Ataraxia**.

The other produces a Netflix subscription and an identity crisis.

THE WHITE WALL

And then — gradually, undeniably, in a way that surprised me even though I had been working toward it — something changed.

Men became white walls. Not with a dramatic announcement. Not a single day where everything flipped. A gradual dimming of a signal that had been running at high volume for years. I would see a man who previously would have registered as an attraction and there was simply — nothing. A wall. Blank. Empty. Not suppressed attraction — absent attraction. The way you look at furniture. I imagine this is what heterosexual men experience when they look at other men. Not effort, not suppression, not discipline required — just a neutral absence of signal.

That was the beginning of my celibacy. Years of it. Intentional, chosen, clean. A period of transitioning — cleansing the body and mind — preparing for a chapter that required clarity I hadn't had before.

No one can touch me waist down. No one. Period.

Not said from damage. Said from authority. The authority of a man who has reclaimed his body from forces that had operated in it without his consent — and who has decided that what comes next will be on his terms, chosen consciously, given freely to the right person in the right context. My creativity exploded. Ideas came constantly — like Zuckerberg in a dorm room, except instead of code it was concepts, ventures, visions. The energy that had been consumed by the battle — by the desire and the resistance and the cycle — was suddenly available for other things.

The things I was actually here to build.

God returns what was taken. With interest.

THE INDUSTRY THAT PROFITS FROM SUFFERING

I need to say something about the LGBTQ+ industrial complex that no one in that world will say:

It profits from suffering. Not from healing. From community-building around shared pain that is never resolved — only reframed as identity and monetized as consumer category.

39% of all LGBTQ+ young people seriously considered suicide in the past year. 12% attempted it. LGBTQ+ students were twice as likely to have used illicit drugs and prescription opioids compared to their heterosexual peers. 25% used marijuana. 18% misused prescription opioids. These are not the statistics of a thriving community. These are the statistics of a population in crisis — dressed up in rainbow flags and Pride parade aesthetics and corporate sponsorships and sold to the world as liberation. Who wants to live that life? Seriously — who wants to be fisted and have that called a lifestyle? (And yes, I am saying it exactly that plainly, because the book requires it.) Every new sexual practice is now a lifestyle. Every new frontier of what a human body can be subjected to is now a community. Every degradation has a flag.

Meanwhile the suicides climb. The drug deaths climb. The abuse statistics climb. This is not liberation. This is the most elaborate and well-funded form of abandonment in modern history — leaving suffering people inside their suffering and telling them the suffering is their identity.
The Prophet (PBUH) warned of the time when men would look like women and women would behave like men. The hadith is in Bukhari — *"Allah's Messenger cursed men who imitate women and women who imitate men." (Bukhari 5886)* This was not prejudice. It was prophecy. He saw this coming fourteen hundred years ago with the precision of someone who had been told exactly what the end of the road looked like. Justin Trudeau marching in Pride parades where people walk with genitals exposed, in front of children, celebrated by an entire political establishment as progressive — the Prophet (PBUH) saw that scene from fourteen hundred years away and said: *this is a sign.*

Sodomy dressed as normalcy. Presented to children as just another lifestyle. The end is near when this becomes the mainstream. We are there. Even Satan himself doesn't fornicate in the ass — but he leads humans to pig out. That's the craft of it. He doesn't do the act. He just whispers until you do.

TO THE BABY BOOMER MUSLIMS WHO SAID GOD WON'T KEEP FORGIVING YOU

I need to address this specifically because it is perhaps the most dangerous thing ever said to a young man fighting this battle — and it was said to me by Muslims who should have known better.

"God can't keep forgiving you. Once, twice, three times — then He won't."

This is theologically wrong. Dangerously wrong. Criminally wrong in its consequences.

Because what that sentence does — to a young man already exhausted from the battle, already ashamed, already fighting in the dark without anyone knowing — is tell him that the door is closing. That each time he falls he gets one less chance. That eventually God will give up on him the way humans give up on each other.

And when a demon wants to make a man surrender — the first thing it does is convince him there's no point fighting anymore.

That sentence is a demon's favorite sentence. Here is what God actually says: *"Say, O My servants who have transgressed against themselves — do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Indeed, Allah forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful." (39:53)*

All sins. Not most sins. Not sins below a certain frequency. All. He is *Al-Ghaffar — the Repeatedly, Continuously Forgiving.* The word ghaffar in Arabic is not a one-time act. It is a repeated, ongoing attribute. He forgives again and again and again with the specific patience of a Creator who designed the human being knowing exactly how many times it would need to fall before it found its footing.

Fall. Get up. Make *Istighfar.* Start again.

That is the entire instruction.

Any sin — homosexual acts, heterosexual zina, lying, backbiting, gossip, greed — you fall, you repent, you rise. God is there. Not frustrated with you. Not tallying strikes. There waiting. Because He built the door to swing open every single time you reach for it.

The court system doesn't forgive. Your brother might not forgive. The internet definitely doesn't forgive.

God forgives. Every time. All the way. The one condition is that you mean it. That said, there is a concept in Islamic theology that explains something modern neuroscience is only beginning to catch up to about ‘sins’.

The Prophet (PBUH) said:
"When a person commits a sin, a black dot appears on his heart.
If he repents, his heart is polished clean. But if he persists, the dots increase until they cover his heart entirely." (Ibn Majah)

The covered heart cannot think clearly. Cannot receive truth. Cannot distinguish between what is real and what is performance. It has been sealed — not by God's cruelty but by the person's own accumulated choices, layered one on top of another until the light cannot get through.

This is why you see people who have every material advantage — wealth, education, access, platform — making decisions of breathtaking moral stupidity. Not because they are unintelligent.

Because their hearts are covered. The dots have accumulated. The capacity for clear judgment has been progressively dimmed by the weight of their own unrepented sins.

The more you break God's laws — the less you can see. The less you can see — the more you break God's laws. A self-reinforcing spiral downward that looks, from the outside, like confidence and certainty, and is, from the inside, complete blindness.

Open your heart before you open your eyes. Open your eyes before you open your ears. The sequence matters.

Sin first blinds the heart. Then the eyes. Then the ears. And once all three are covered — you are walking through the world convinced you are seeing clearly while being entirely lost.

Tawbah — repentance — is the polish. Always available. Always effective. *God is Al-Ghaffar: the Repeatedly Forgiving.* Not once-forgiving. Repeatedly. He built the cleaning mechanism into the system because He knew we would need it constantly.

Use it. Today. Before the dots accumulate further.

TO THE YOUNG MAN AT 2AM

You found this book for a reason. You are not broken. You are not your desires. You are not what was whispered to you in your own voice. You are not what was done to you.

You are a soul that God breathed His own breath into to make you alive. The baby cried when it arrived here — cried because this earth is a diminishment compared to where the soul came from. Cried because the transition from the spiritual to the material is a descent, not an ascent, and the soul knows it.

Realign yourself. Not with a political party. Not with a community that profits from your pain. Not with a looksmaxxing influencer who started injecting testosterone at fourteen. Not with anyone whose first interest is your wallet or your vote or your identity as a consumer category.

With God. The one bigger than 2.3 trillion galaxies. On a Throne. Who knows your name. Who saw every moment of the battle you've been fighting alone. Who designed the prayer that puts your forehead on the ground exactly close enough to Him that your brain starts producing the frequencies of calm. I am not cured. I do not use that word. What I am is — managing. Peacefully. With tools that work. With a celibacy that is mine by choice rather than by shame. With a creativity and clarity and forward motion that only became available when I stopped letting the battle consume everything.

Men as white walls. Nothing to me. Empty. Clean.

That is possible.

It took three years of real work and it is possible.

And if you fall tomorrow — or tonight — you get up. You make Istighfar. You start again.

God is waiting.

He always is. *"And when My servants ask you about Me — indeed I am near. I respond to the invocation of the supplicant when he calls upon Me." (2:186)*

Near.

Not distant. Not disappointed. Not out of chances.

Near.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

TROLL ARMIES AND DEATH THREATS

There is a specific moment when you understand that you have become a threat. Not a nuisance. Not an annoyance. Not someone to be dismissed or mocked or ignored. A genuine, coordinated, resource-deploying threat — to something or someone with enough investment in your silence that they decided your noise required an organized response.

I have been that moment. Multiple times. From multiple directions.

And what I learned from each one is something no business school teaches and no mentor prepares you for:

The size of the attack tells you exactly how close you are to something that matters. Small men are not attacked. Irrelevant ideas are not suppressed. Nobody coordinates a campaign against something that poses no threat to anything.

Pay attention to your enemies. They are your most honest critics of your actual impact.

THE DARK WEB CAMPAIGNS

It started with GarfieldEATS and it never fully stopped. The coordinated Google review attacks I described in Chapter 6 were only the visible layer. Beneath that — on forums and boards and channels that operate in the darker corners of the internet where accountability is optional and cruelty is the product — there were campaigns specifically designed to destroy GarfieldEATS and then, later, to destroy me.

Not criticism. Campaigns. The distinction matters. Criticism is a person who had an experience and shares it. A campaign is organized, coordinated, sustained, and targeted. It has strategy. It recycles the same narratives. It appears in multiple places simultaneously. It specifically targets the moment of maximum vulnerability — the launch, the media coverage, the political announcement — to land maximum damage at minimum cost. I watched this happen to my restaurant in real time. The BlogTO piece that started the narrative. The YouTube channels that built on it for clickbait revenue. The thumbnails — my face, cropped and zoomed and distorted, used as visual shorthand for a punchline. Each one generating views. Each view generating revenue. Each cent of revenue produced by the destruction of something I had built with real money and real years.

And then the death threats. I want to be clear about what a death threat feels like when it arrives — not the dramatic movie version, but the actual human experience of it: It is a specific cold. Not fear exactly — though fear is present. Something colder than fear. The recognition that somewhere, behind a screen, a person has decided that the correct response to your existence is your non-existence. And has said so in writing.

I received them. More than once. From more than one source.

I documented them. I reported them. And then — because what else do you do — I kept moving. *"If you are afraid of the arrows then do not enter the war. Whoever enters the war must be patient in the face of the arrows."*

This is not a hadith. This is a principle that runs through Islamic scholarship and through every tradition that has ever produced people willing to say uncomfortable truths in public. If you speak, you will be targeted. The targeting is not evidence that you are wrong. It is evidence that you are heard.

THE POLITICAL ESCALATION

When I announced my candidacy for Toronto Centre — PPC, People's Party of Canada — the attacks escalated in both volume and sophistication. The Garfield trolls had been opportunistic — people who found comedy in an unusual restaurant concept and monetized the mockery. The political trolls were different. More organized. More ideologically motivated. More invested in a specific narrative about who I was and what I represented. One blogger in particular — a career failure-hunter who built his entire professional identity on cataloguing other people's misfires — decided GarfieldEATS was his next case file. He is still writing about me. I am writing a book. We both know which one of us is doing better.

His framing was consistent: crazed narcissist, utterly out of touch, tragically unaware.

The words arranged with the particular confidence of someone who has decided the verdict and is now selecting evidence. Let me say something about bloggers and podcasters that I mean with complete sincerity and zero bitterness:

They gave me more coverage than most mainstream Canadian media outlets did during my political campaign. In trying to destroy the narrative, they kept the narrative alive. Every piece they said or wrote about me was read by people who then searched for me, found my actual platforms, heard my actual arguments, and made their own assessments. This is the Roger Stone principle in action: attacks grab attention. Attention is the resource. Whatever you do with that attention afterward is yours to determine.

I am writing a book.

They gave me material for it.

God bless the trolls.

WHAT TROLLS ACTUALLY ARE

I want to give you a framework for understanding internet trolls that goes beyond the psychological — into the spiritual.

The Islamic tradition teaches that humans can be used as vessels. That the same whispering that operates directly through jinn can operate through people — people who have, through accumulated choices and accumulated sin, made themselves available to be instruments of harm. Not always consciously. Sometimes completely unconsciously. A person can be a conduit for darkness while believing they are simply expressing an opinion.

This is why responding to trolls with hatred produces nothing useful. The person is not the problem. What operates through them is the problem. And you cannot solve a spiritual problem with an emotional response.

The appropriate response — the one that actually works, that I can confirm from years of direct experience — is a combination of:

Documentation. Evidence preserved. Not for emotional purposes but for practical ones. Boundaries. What you engage with and what you don't. Not every attack deserves a response. Some deserve silence and some deserve the specific targeted response that makes clear you see exactly what is happening.

Tawakkul. The release of outcome to God. You do what you can. You document what needs documenting. You respond what needs responding. And then — the part that is genuinely hard for people built like me, people with a strong opinion and a stronger voice — you let God handle the rest.

"And whoever relies upon Allah — then He is sufficient for him." (65:3)

Sufficient. Not partially helpful. Not marginally useful. Sufficient. This does not mean passive. It means you move, you speak, you build — and you do not carry the weight of the outcome because the outcome does not belong to you. It belongs to the One who sees every screen and every comment and every coordinated campaign and is keeping records of an entirely different kind.

THE SPECIFIC LESSON OF DEATH THREATS

A death threat tells you three things: First — you are visible enough to be threatening. Invisible people do not receive death threats. The threat is, in a specific and dark way, a form of acknowledgment.

Second — words have consequences. If you choose to speak truth publicly — especially truth that challenges powerful interests or disrupts comfortable narratives — people will want you silent. This is not a reason to be silent. It is a confirmation that the speech was worth giving.

Third — your protection is not in silence. People who go quiet to protect themselves often find that the silence doesn't protect them. The only protection that actually works is the one that was

available before the first threat arrived:

God. Not security cameras. Not lawyers. Not staying offline. Not performing harmlessness to make yourself a less appealing target.

God.

The Prophet received death threats. Attempts on his life. Coordinated campaigns by the most powerful people of his time to silence and discredit and eventually kill him. He did not stop speaking. He did not delete his content. He did not moderate his message to make it more acceptable to the people trying to destroy him.

He prayed. He moved. He trusted. And then he kept speaking.

I am not comparing myself to the Prophet — nothing in this book should be read as that comparison. But I am drawing from the principle: the people who are most needed are the most targeted. The targeting is information. Use it accordingly.

WHAT SUSTAINED ME

I want to be specific about what actually held me during the worst of it — because this chapter would be incomplete without this part.

Not bravado. Not the performance of toughness. Not the pretending that the threats didn't land and the coordinated mockery didn't cost anything.

Three things. The prayer. The certainty. The knowledge.

The prayer. Five times a day. The prostration specifically — forehead on the ground, the closest you can be to God, the frequency of calm produced in a brain that needed it badly. You cannot maintain the specific paranoia of someone who believes the world is organized against them for very long if you are regularly putting your face on the ground in front of the Creator of the world. The perspective adjusts. The scale recalibrates.

The certainty that God sees. Every troll. Every fake review. Every coordinated campaign. Every YouTube thumbnail using my face for clickbait revenue. Every death threat sent from behind an anonymous screen by a person who believed there were no consequences. God saw each one. Documented each one. Will address each one in a way that no complaint I could file and no lawyer I could hire would ever approach in precision or completeness.

"Do not think that Allah is unaware of what the wrongdoers do." (14:42) The knowledge that it was working. The attacks confirmed the impact. The escalation of the attacks confirmed that the impact was growing. When the PPC campaign generated coordinated suppression — from TorontoToday.ca omitting me, from the NDP's mosque

interference, from the media ecosystem deciding my voice didn't exist — it told me that my voice was landing in places that mattered to the people doing the suppressing.

Nobody suppresses what doesn't threaten them.

The suppression was the compliment.

DO SUM'N

I coined a phrase during all of this. It came out of frustration, out of exhaustion, out of looking at the comment sections and the dark web forums and the coordinated review campaigns and understanding exactly who was behind them:

DO SUM'N.

Said exactly like that. Heavy apostrophe. End with the N. **Do sum'n.**

Not "do something" — that's too clean, too polite, too much like a person who has options. **Do sum'n** is the specific challenge to a specific type of person: the man in his mother's basement, jacking off to the idea of destroying what someone else built, whose entire contribution to the world is the coordination of harm against people doing actual things.

Hey. You. **Do sum'n.** Stop jacking off to my life in mommy's basement and go build something. Anything. A sandwich. A blog. A business. A relationship. A reason for your existence that isn't the active sabotage of someone else's.

Do sum'n. The trolls hate you because you do things. Because you move. Because you build and fail and rebuild and keep going and generate enough presence in the world that your face is worth putting in a YouTube thumbnail. That is not an insult. That is a confirmation. The man who does nothing is never mocked. He is simply irrelevant. The troll attack is, paradoxically, the receipt for your relevance.

Do sum'n. I said it publicly. I'll say it in this book. I'll say it for as long as people with keyboards and basements and coordinated cruelty try to fill the silence left by their own empty lives with the destruction of people who actually showed up.

TO THE YOUNG MAN BEING TROLLED RIGHT NOW

You are building something. Or saying something. Or being something. And it has attracted people who want it to stop. Here is what I know: The troll's investment in your silence is a measure of your threat to their comfort. This is worth understanding — not to inflate your ego, but to calibrate your response. They are not attacking you randomly. They are attacking you specifically because something you represent challenges something they need to remain undisturbed.

Document. Don't engage emotionally. Respond surgically when a response is warranted. Release the outcome.

And keep building.

The thing they are trying to stop is the thing worth building most urgently.

God placed the troll army in your path the same way He places every obstacle — not to stop you, but to show you what you're made of when the pressure is applied.

You are made of more than the pressure.

They found that out.

THE FANVESTORS — THE PEOPLE WHO STAYED

"I have been a supporter of you ever since the first second of hearing the beautiful sound spoken to me: GarfieldEATS
I immediately had to know who the genius was behind it, and i have been a fanvestor ever since!" @wug – Fanvestor – Nathfield Discord

Not everyone in the online ecosystem came to destroy.

Some came to stay like Noah Albers, one of my moderators and biggest fanvestor. My Discord — under Nathfield, private, moderated, screened by MODs who protect the space from exactly the kind of coordinated infiltration I've been describing in this chapter — has been running since GarfieldEATS. The same people, many of them, who showed up when a man in an orange suit opened a kitty cat restaurant on 995 Bloor Street and put Garfield's face on a pizza. I call them fanvestors. Not fans, not investors — fanvestors. People who invested belief when there was no financial return for doing so. People who stayed through the Paramount termination, through the Scooby-DooEATS venture, through the political campaign, through the troll armies, through every chapter of this book they were present for in real time. I know their struggles. Their jobs. Their dreams. The specific weight of being a young person in a world that makes building feel impossible. I know what Yootooz collectors want.

I know what Funko Pop completionists care about. I know what it means to a fan when someone takes their passion seriously rather than monetizing their nostalgia without respecting it.

We are all a fan of something. Even Trump is a fan of himself.

The Discord is the room where none of the performance is required. No brand maintenance, no media management, no campaign messaging. Just the actual people — hundreds of them — who found something real in what I was building and decided to keep showing up.

As one fanvestor put it: *“Nathfield doesn’t finish second” says Jayden Miller, Commerce Student, Honours at Carleton University.* If you are reading this and you want to be in that room — the link is at the end of this book. Special access for readers of **Ataraxia.**

You are invited.

THE ACCOUNTING

I will end this chapter with the thing that gave me more peace than any documentation or legal complaint or public callout ever did:

The accounting is not mine to execute. Every person who sent a death threat. Every blogger who made a career of my mockery. Every YouTuber who monetized my face. Every coordinated campaign that tried to collapse what I was building. Every political operative who interfered with my volunteers. Every person who called me antisemitic over a meal I paid for.

God has them.

Not in my hands. In His. And His accounting system — as established in Chapter 4, as stated in Sahih Muslim, as confirmed in the lives of every person who has ever tried to build something worth building in a world that prefers silence — is more precise, more thorough, and more just than anything available in any court in any country.

"And the wrongdoers will know what turning they will be turned to." (26:227)

They will know.

Not maybe. Not if the evidence is strong enough. They will know.

That certainty is called *Tawakkul.* And it is the most effective troll-management strategy ever devised.

I released it all to God.

I slept.

I kept building.

"And be patient, for indeed, Allah does not allow to be lost the reward of those who do good." (11:115)

The reward is not lost. Not one moment of it. Not one prayer in the dark. Not one day of building while being mocked for building. Not one night of choosing to get up and keep going when staying down would have been easier.

None of it is lost.

That is enough.

NATHFIELD — THE ORANGE SUIT FIGHTS BACK

While the real Nathen was navigating all of the above — the trolls, the termination, the death threats, the political campaign — the fictional Nathen was doing something about it in orange.

The Nathfield. My adult comedy podcast series, available on Spotify and everywhere podcasts live. Produced by Entergage Pictures. Executive produced, written by, and spiritually inhabiting: me.

The premise: an epic showdown between Evil and Angel, battling to determine the ultimate fate of the universe. Pig Bill Kramer — master of mischief and Reddit chaos — is determined to take over the world and turn it into a realm of darkness and despair. Standing against him: Angel Gabby, guardian of good and righteousness. And caught between them — Nathfield, in his orange suit, with divine superpowers he's still figuring out, primarily concerned with his hair looking puuuuuuurfect. (Spotify) The world is a CATastrophe. Nathfield in an orange suit will clean it up.

Pig Bill Kramer is, obviously, the troll. Every troll. The coordinated Reddit chaos machine that tried to take down GarfieldEATS, that filled YouTube thumbnails with my face for clickbait revenue, that sent death threats from behind anonymous screens. Given a name. Given a face. Given a snout. Made into something you can laugh at rather than something that controls you.

Comedy is one of the most effective weapons against darkness. Always has been. The jester in the court was the one person who could speak truth to the king without losing his head — because he was funny while he said it. Nathfield is that tradition in an orange suit fighting a pig on a podcast.

The series stalled due to funding — I wanted to turn it into a fully animated series, which requires budget I haven't yet deployed for this purpose. This might be exactly the kind of project that crowdfunding was invented for, if the fanvestors want to make it happen. The episodes that exist are worth your ears — go find them on Spotify, search The Nathfield, and enter the CATastrophe.

The orange suit has divine superpowers. What does it even do?

We're still finding out.

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE KINGDOM OF PRETEND

HOW I GOT HERE

People always assume that questioning institutions comes from bitterness.

That if you start noticing contradictions in modern society, you must secretly be angry at the world, unsuccessful, paranoid, or sitting in a dark room connecting red strings between celebrity Instagram posts.

The reality is much less cinematic.

I arrived at these conclusions the same way most people arrive at uncomfortable truths: slowly, reluctantly, and after repeatedly watching powerful people behave in ways that contradicted the values they publicly advertised.

I spent years believing institutions mostly meant well. Maybe imperfectly, maybe inefficiently, maybe with occasional corruption — but generally moving society forward. That is the story most educated people inherit by default. Governments protect stability. Media informs the public. Corporations innovate. Universities pursue truth. Experts guide society responsibly.

Then life happens. You start entering rooms you were not previously inside of. You see how decisions actually get made. You watch people say one thing publicly and another thing privately. You notice that the language of morality is often used most aggressively by people protecting money, influence, or status.

And eventually a strange realization begins forming in your head:

A surprising amount of modern society operates like branding.

Not reality.

Branding.

Politics is branding.

Activism is branding.

Corporate morality is branding.

Even authenticity became branding somehow, which is honestly impressive in a deeply disturbing way.

We are living in a civilization where billion-dollar companies post mental health awareness graphics while designing products that psychologically fragment attention spans for profit. A bank will finance

industries that destroy families and communities all year, then post "*Happy International Women's Day* ❤" like it just solved human suffering through Canva templates.

Everyone performs goodness now.

Very few people sacrifice for it.

That distinction matters.

Because once morality becomes performance instead of conviction, institutions slowly transform into theaters. The goal stops being truth. The goal becomes perception management.

And once perception management becomes the priority, reality itself starts feeling strangely artificial.

You feel it everywhere now.

Press conferences that sound focus-grouped by AI.

Politicians who speak entirely in sanitized corporate phrases.

Influencers crying under perfectly positioned lighting.

Public outrage cycles that last forty-eight hours before everybody moves on to the next emotionally packaged event.

The modern world increasingly feels less like a civilization and more like a giant content strategy.

THE PERFORMANCE ERA

The strange thing about modern society is that almost everybody knows something feels fake now, but very few people want to admit how deep the problem actually goes.

Because admitting it forces you to confront uncomfortable questions. Questions like:

How much of public life is sincere?

How much of modern culture is genuine?

How much of what people say publicly do they actually believe privately? The answer is complicated, but one thing became obvious to me over time: we are living through the most performative period in modern history.

People no longer simply live.

They curate themselves. Social media accelerated this process beyond anything previous generations experienced. Human beings used to have private emotional lives. Now every feeling

becomes potential content. Grief becomes engagement. Relationships become branding opportunities. Personal growth becomes motivational marketing.

And because everyone is watching everyone else constantly, people slowly lose the ability to distinguish between identity and performance.

You see it especially online.

People build entire personalities out of recycled language they absorbed from algorithms five days earlier. Everybody suddenly becomes an expert on psychology, geopolitics, trauma, spirituality, masculinity, femininity, attachment theory, and the collapse of civilization because they listened to two podcast clips and bought a ring light.

The confidence is incredible.

The actual wisdom? Mixed results.

But the deeper issue is not merely cringe internet behavior. The deeper issue is what this environment does psychologically. A society built entirely around performance eventually loses its connection to sincerity.

And sincerity is dangerous to systems built on manipulation.

A sincere person is harder to control.

A sincere person says uncomfortable things.

A sincere person resists trends.

A sincere person does not outsource morality to public opinion.

That type of person becomes socially inconvenient very quickly.

Which is why modern culture increasingly rewards performance over truth.

You do not need integrity anymore.

You need optics.

You do not need wisdom.

You need engagement.

You do not need principles.

You need positioning. Honestly, if ancient empires had access to TikTok analytics and PR consultants, history would have looked exactly like this.

THE ALGORITHM IS YOUR GATEKEEPER NOW.

One of the most important realizations I had over the last few years was understanding that modern people often believe they are thinking independently while their emotional environment is being carefully shaped every single day.

The average person wakes up and immediately enters an information stream designed by algorithms whose sole purpose is maximizing attention.

Not wisdom.

Attention.

That distinction changes everything. The algorithm does not ask:

“Will this make the person wiser?” It asks:

“Will this keep the person engaged?”

Outrage keeps people engaged.

Fear keeps people engaged.

Conflict keeps people engaged.

Vanity keeps people engaged.

Dopamine keeps people engaged.

So naturally, the system feeds those emotions constantly.

And because the process feels personalized, people mistake algorithmic conditioning for independent thought. They genuinely believe they “researched” something because they watched seventeen emotionally charged videos selected specifically to reinforce emotional stimulation.

This is where modern life becomes spiritually dangerous. Previous generations feared government propaganda because propaganda looked obvious. It came through state television, military slogans, giant posters, dramatic speeches.

Modern propaganda is much more sophisticated.

It arrives through entertainment.

Memes.

Trends.

Music.

Humor.

Influencer culture.

Algorithmic repetition.

Nobody forces ideology into your head anymore. The system simply creates an emotional environment where certain conclusions feel socially natural and others feel emotionally dangerous.

That is far more effective. And honestly, sometimes I think people underestimate how historically unprecedented this is. Never before have a handful of technology platforms possessed this much influence over human consciousness simultaneously. A teenage boy in Canada, a businessman in Dubai, and a student in London can all be emotionally manipulated by the same trend within hours.

That level of psychological synchronization would make ancient emperors cry tears of joy.

Caesar would have bought Meta stock immediately.

THE AGE OF DISTRACTION

I genuinely believe distraction is one of the defining spiritual conditions of our era.

Not entertainment.

Not technology itself.

Distraction.

Human beings are now overstimulated to the point where silence feels threatening. People cannot sit alone with their thoughts anymore without instinctively reaching for a screen. Elevators, restaurants, bathrooms, traffic lights — every empty second gets filled immediately because stillness has become psychologically uncomfortable. And when a civilization loses its ability to reflect quietly, it becomes incredibly easy to manipulate emotionally.

Because reflection creates awareness.

Awareness creates discipline.

Discipline weakens manipulation.

But distraction interrupts that entire process.

Modern life constantly keeps people emotionally activated but spiritually disconnected. Everybody is consuming information all day while thinking less deeply than ever.

Infinite content.

Infinite outrage.

Infinite dopamine.

A civilization slowly frying its nervous system in real time.

And the craziest part is that people often confuse overstimulation with knowledge.

Someone watches six conspiracy clips, three motivational podcasts, two political debates, and a thirty-second Islamic reminder video and suddenly feels spiritually enlightened, geopolitically informed, emotionally healed, and ready to advise humanity.

Brother.

You are exhausted.

Drink water. The internet created an environment where people confuse information exposure with wisdom, and the difference between those two things is enormous.

Wisdom requires reflection.

The algorithm hates reflection because reflection slows scrolling.

WHY TIKTOK ACTUALLY MATTERED

The public conversation around TikTok always felt incomplete to me. Officially, the panic was about national security, Chinese influence, data collection, privacy concerns, and protecting users. Some of those concerns are legitimate. Every major platform harvests absurd amounts of data. Governments absolutely care about informational influence.

But underneath the official narrative, something deeper was happening culturally that almost nobody wanted to discuss honestly.

TikTok accidentally disrupted narrative control.

For years, major institutions largely controlled how religion — especially Islam — was presented to Western audiences. Most people encountered Muslims through news coverage, political framing, Hollywood stereotypes, terrorism discussions, or academic analysis completely disconnected from ordinary Muslims themselves.

Then TikTok happened. Suddenly millions of people encountered Islam directly from actual human beings instead of institutional filters.

Not celebrities.

Not government-approved spokespersons.

Regular people.

Young Muslims discussing discipline.

Converts explaining why modern life felt spiritually empty.

Women speaking about modesty and peace.

Men discussing prayer, masculinity, responsibility, purpose.

People reading Quran quietly in their bedrooms while millions watched.

And the reaction was massive.

Because underneath all the modern branding, millions of people are spiritually exhausted.

You could feel it online.

Young people talking openly about anxiety, loneliness, hookup culture destroying them emotionally, endless consumption failing to satisfy them, therapy language replacing actual meaning, and the strange emptiness produced by a civilization obsessed with self-expression but disconnected from transcendence.

Then suddenly Islam appeared in front of them not as a geopolitical issue, but as structure.

Discipline.

Meaning.

Routine.

Purpose.

Submission to God instead of submission to trends.

That hit people deeply. Especially Gen Z, who inherited one of the most emotionally chaotic cultural environments in modern history. They grew up online. They watched identity itself become unstable. They watched institutions lose credibility in real time. They watched corporations pretend to care about humanity while optimizing everything for profit.

Eventually people start asking deeper questions. And once people start asking deeper questions, systems built entirely around distraction become uncomfortable.

Because genuine spirituality interrupts consumer conditioning.

A person connected to God becomes harder to manipulate through insecurity.

Harder to manipulate through vanity.

Harder to manipulate through fear of social rejection.

That changes things.

And honestly? You could feel establishment discomfort growing as religious content spread online organically. Not because every government fears religion itself. Governments throughout history often supported religion when it remained ceremonial, passive, and institutionally manageable.

But decentralized spiritual awakening?

That is different.

Especially when it spreads faster than traditional gatekeepers can regulate. The internet accidentally created a situation where millions of people began comparing worldviews independently without waiting for institutional permission first.

That changes civilizations.

STAYING AWAKE WITHOUT LOSING YOUR MIND

The challenge of modern life is staying aware without becoming consumed by cynicism.

That balance matters more than people realize.

Some people notice corruption and immediately fall into paranoia. Everything becomes a conspiracy. Every event becomes evidence. Every powerful person becomes secretly evil.

That path destroys people spiritually.

But the opposite extreme is also dangerous: blind trust in institutions that repeatedly demonstrate they are capable of manipulation, self-preservation, and deception like every major power structure in history.

The believer is supposed to live somewhere in the middle.

Aware.

Grounded.

Reflective.

Not naive.

Not hysterical. The Quran constantly calls people back to thinking, reasoning, verifying, and

reflecting because human beings naturally drift toward heedlessness.

Most people throughout history did not consciously choose falsehood. They inherited assumptions. Followed crowds. Absorbed the emotional atmosphere around them. Repeated slogans until repetition itself started feeling like truth.

That is happening now on a global scale.

And honestly, I think sincerity has become one of the rarest things left in modern society.

Real sincerity.

Not aesthetic spirituality.

Not fake vulnerability for engagement.

Not motivational captions under sunset photos pretending to heal humanity.

Actual sincerity before God.

Because once a person becomes sincere, manipulation starts weakening.

The need for validation weakens.

Fear weakens.

Ego weakens.

And suddenly the entire performance economy loses some of its power over you.

That is why I believe the real battle of this era is spiritual before it is political.

Always spiritual first.

Because every corrupt institution is ultimately downstream from corrupted human beings.

And no civilization survives indefinitely once performance completely replaces truth.

"And Allah is predominant over His affair, but most people do not know." (12:21)

THE SUBSCRIPTION ECONOMY OF LONELINESS

One of the clearest signs that modern civilization has spiritually lost the plot is the rise of platforms like OnlyFans and the way society rushed to normalize them almost overnight.

Again — I am not talking about lust itself. Human beings have struggled with temptation forever. That is not new. Every religion discusses discipline because desire is part of being human.

What is new is the industrialization of temptation. Modern technology took weakness, loneliness,

attention addiction, and hyper sexualization and turned them into scalable subscription businesses. Silicon Valley looked at human vulnerability and said:

"What if emotional emptiness had monthly billing?"

And society responded:

"Yasss queen entrepreneurship."

Amazing.

We are living in a civilization where intimacy became content, dignity became monetized, and loneliness became one of the most profitable industries on earth.

That should concern people more than it does. Because the real issue is not individual morality alone. The real issue is what happens when an entire economic system quietly profits from emotional decay.

A lonely man opens an app.

A lonely woman feels pressured to convert attention into income.

An algorithm rewards increasingly provocative behavior because engagement rises.

The platform takes its percentage quietly in the background.

Investors celebrate growth metrics.

Podcasts call it empowerment. And everybody pretends this is social progress instead of collective psychological deterioration with venture capital funding.

That is the part I cannot ignore.

"EMPOWERMENT" WITH A PAYMENT PROCESSOR

One thing modern society does exceptionally well is rebranding.

Everything gets rebranded now.

Greed becomes "hustle culture."

Vanity becomes "self-love."

Oversharing becomes "authenticity."

And exploitation becomes "empowerment." Honestly, if Satan hired a PR agency, this would

probably be the campaign strategy. Because when you strip away the marketing language, what exactly are we celebrating? A civilization where millions of young people increasingly believe their value comes from monetizing attention.

That is dark. Especially when you realize how many people entering these industries are emotionally vulnerable, financially desperate, validation-starved, traumatized, or simply trying to survive inside an economy that constantly pressures human beings to commodify themselves. And yet modern culture discusses this with the emotional seriousness of ordering iced coffee.

“Secure the bag.”

“Get your money.”

“Period.”

THE ONLYFANS QUESTION

People have jokingly told me before:

“You should make an OnlyFans.” Which honestly says a lot about the internet. You could spend years building ideas, businesses, intellectual work, creative projects — and somebody online will still eventually suggest:

“Cool. But have you considered softcore capitalism?”

No thank you.

I will pass respectfully. There is no amount of money that would make me comfortable turning myself into a sex product for strangers to consume. That is not morality signaling. That is self-respect.

And I genuinely think future generations are going to look back at this era with confusion.

We created a society where people increasingly struggle to form healthy relationships, trust each other emotionally, maintain attention spans, or feel spiritually fulfilled — and simultaneously built massive industries monetizing the exact loneliness helping produce those outcomes.

That is not accidental.

Loneliness is profitable.

Addiction is profitable.

Insecurity is profitable.

A spiritually grounded person with discipline, self-worth, and meaningful relationships is actually harder to monetize endlessly.

Modern systems quietly depend on emotional instability. That is why so much of culture feels psychologically exhausting now.

Everybody is branding themselves.

Selling themselves.

Curating themselves.

Optimizing themselves.

Human beings turned themselves into startups.

WHEN EVERYTHING BECOMES CONTENT

The deeper issue underneath all of this is not sexuality alone. It is the collapse of boundaries. Modern culture increasingly treats every human experience as something to display publicly for validation, attention, or monetization.

And once a civilization loses the idea that certain things should remain sacred, private, disciplined, or restrained, people slowly lose their sense of self entirely. The internet rewards visibility, not wisdom. So naturally people begin sacrificing dignity for relevance because relevance became survival.

You see this especially with younger generations raised entirely online. Many of them were taught that visibility equals value. If people are watching you, you matter. If engagement drops, identity itself starts feeling unstable.

That is psychologically brutal. And corporations absolutely understand this dynamic. The more emotionally dependent people become on attention, the easier they are to manipulate economically. So platforms continuously encourage oversharing, emotional exhibitionism, outrage cycles, vanity, comparison, and hypersexualized content because those things generate engagement.

The algorithm is not asking:

“Is this healthy for civilization?” The algorithm is asking:

“Did people stay on the app longer?”

Different priorities.

Very different priorities.

MONEY DOES NOT NEGOTIATE WITH DEATH

I recently found myself reflecting on the reported death of Leonid Radvinsky, the billionaire owner associated with OnlyFans. And to be clear, I am not arrogant enough to sit here and declare specific

divine punishment on individuals. That knowledge belongs to God alone. Human beings should be careful pretending they can interpret Heaven's decisions like corporate analysts reviewing quarterly earnings.

But moments like that do force reflection. Because modern society quietly trains people to believe wealth creates invincibility.

It does not.

Money delays problems sometimes.

It does not cancel mortality.

Billionaires still die.

Powerful people still collapse.

Platforms trend for a few years and disappear. Entire empires convince themselves they are untouchable right before history humbles them publicly. That pattern repeats constantly.

And I think modern civilization desperately tries to avoid thinking about death because death interrupts the performance. Death reminds human beings that followers, subscriptions, algorithms, luxury branding, public validation, and digital attention were never ultimate sources of meaning. The lease expires for everyone eventually. That reality sobers people spiritually — or at least it should.

THE CIVILIZATION OF "DO WHATEVER FEELS GOOD"

What concerns me most is not one platform alone. It is the larger philosophy underneath all of it. Modern culture increasingly teaches people that freedom means removing limits entirely. No restraint. No discipline. No shame. No moral structure outside personal desire.

If it feels good, do it.

If it trends, monetize it.

If people clap for it online, it must be empowering.

But history shows civilizations do not collapse only from poverty or war. Sometimes they collapse from internal exhaustion.

From moral confusion.

From spiritual emptiness.

From losing any higher purpose beyond consumption and pleasure.

And that is why I keep returning to the same conclusion over and over again:

The crisis of modern civilization is spiritual before it is political. Because once human beings lose their relationship with discipline, dignity, purpose, and God, the market will happily monetize the emptiness that follows.

Every single time.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE TEN CORRUPTIONS

I promised you a list.

> Not a rant. Not a conspiracy board with red string connecting photographs. A precise, documented, spiritually grounded inventory of the ten systems currently operating against your life — against your wealth, your health, your clarity, your faith, your freedom, and your future.

Each one is real. Each one is provable. Each one has been running long enough that most people have stopped seeing it as a system and started accepting it as weather — just the way things are, just the conditions of modern life, nothing to be done.

There is always something to be done.

The first thing is to name what you're looking at clearly.

Let's go.

CORRUPTION #1 — TAXATION: THE LONGEST RUNNING THEFT IN HISTORY

Let me give you the honest description of what taxation actually is, stripped of the civic education language: A government — which you did not choose, whose decisions you cannot meaningfully influence, whose failures you subsidize and whose successes you don't share in — takes a percentage of everything you earn, everything you invest, everything you build, and everything you leave behind when you die. It determines the percentage unilaterally. It changes the percentage when it wants to. It punishes you if you don't pay and rewards itself for collecting.

This is called civilization. Canada's capital gains inclusion rate — the percentage of investment profit the government claims as its own — has been a moving target for years, adjusted upward whenever the government needs revenue and downward whenever an election approaches. The PPC was the only party willing to say what needed to be said: abolish it entirely. Gradually reducing the inclusion rate from 50% all the way to zero. Why does the capital gains tax matter specifically? Because it is the tax that most directly punishes the act of building something. You risk your money. You build something valuable. The government takes half of the value you created as if it had been there during the risk, which it wasn't. My father understood this. Every entrepreneur who has ever watched a successful exit get cut in half understands this. The people who leave Canada — the brain drain that policy makers wring their hands about without addressing its cause — understand this.

"And do not consume one another's wealth unjustly or send it to the rulers in order that they might aid you to consume a portion of the wealth of the people in sin, while you know it is unlawful." (2:188)

The rulers who consume your wealth in sin while you know it is unlawful.

Fourteen hundred years ago. Described precisely.

The Prophet (PBUH) also said: *"A time will come upon the people when one will not care how one gains one's money, legally or illegally." (Bukhari)*

That time is now. Except the ones not caring how they gain money are the governments doing the taking.

CORRUPTION #2 — EDUCATION: THE DEBT FACTORY

Here is what higher education actually is in 2026: You borrow money you don't have to pay for a credential that may or may not produce employment, to sit in institutions that have been captured by ideological agendas that have nothing to do with preparing you for life, taught by people who have spent their entire careers inside institutions and have no practical knowledge of the world they are supposedly preparing you to enter. The average Canadian student graduates with significant debt. The degree they hold may or may not be valued by employers. The skills they developed — critical thinking, communication, problem-solving — could have been developed for a fraction of the cost through alternatives that the education industry has successfully lobbied to prevent from receiving formal recognition. The education system does not primarily exist to educate you. It exists to credential you — to sort you into tiers of employability that serve the interests of the corporations that sit at the top of those tiers. The credential is a product. You are the customer. The debt is the business model. What actually educates you? Experience. Mentorship. Reading widely. Building things and failing and building again. The school of actual life — which is brutal and efficient and free.

"Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave." — attributed to the Prophet (PBUH)

He did not say: seek knowledge from an institution that charges $40,000 a year and teaches you that your feelings are your truth.

The Quran's first revealed word was Iqra — Read. Not Enroll. Not Apply. Not Take on Debt. Read. The entire knowledge tradition of Islam was built on transmission, mentorship, practice, and genuine inquiry — not on institutional gatekeeping and debt issuance.

CORRUPTION #3 — THE FOOD SYSTEM: SLOW POISON WITH GOOD BRANDING

We covered this extensively in Chapter 7. But it belongs in this list because it is not separate from the other corruptions — it is connected to them in the specific way that all ten corruptions are connected: through the same class of institutional actors, the same profit motive over human welfare calculus, the same regulatory capture that ensures the agencies designed to protect you are staffed by people who came from and will return to the industries they are nominally regulating.

The #1 pediatrician recommended children's vitamin in North America tested positive for lead and arsenic. There is no safe level of lead exposure for children. None. Lead Safe Mama The food that fills grocery store shelves was designed in laboratories to be maximally addictive, minimally nutritious, and legally defensible. The ingredients list is a legal document, not a health document. Everything on it has been approved — which means it has cleared the minimum bar of not killing you immediately, not that it is good for you over time.

"O mankind, eat from whatever is on earth that is lawful and good." (2:168) Lawful & good. Both conditions. Simultaneously. The food system satisfies neither for most of what it produces at scale.

CORRUPTION #4 — THE PHARMACEUTICAL SYSTEM: MONETIZING YOUR SICKNESS

The pharmaceutical industry does not profit from your health. It profits from your managed illness — the specific state of being sick enough to require medication but well enough to keep purchasing it.

This is not conspiracy. This is the logical consequence of a profit structure applied to healthcare. If you cure a patient, you lose a customer. If you manage a patient's symptoms indefinitely, you have a revenue stream. The same institutional investors hold significant positions in both the largest food corporations and the largest pharmaceutical companies. The food makes you sick. The pharmaceuticals manage the sickness. The money flows to the same portfolios at both ends of your deterioration.

The Prophet (PBUH) said: *"Make use of medical treatment, for Allah has not made a disease without appointing a remedy for it." (Abu Dawud)* The remedy exists. It has always existed. But the remedy that grows from the earth and costs nothing to manufacture does not generate quarterly earnings. So the system has spent decades ensuring that the available, natural, inexpensive remedies are either dismissed as unscientific, buried in regulatory red tape, or simply never mentioned by the doctors whose medical education was funded by the pharmaceutical companies whose products they now prescribe. And then there is the question that the pharmaceutical industry spends considerable resources ensuring nobody asks too loudly:

What if the cure already exists? The global HIV drugs market is projected to expand from $28.6 billion in 2023 to $47.5 billion by 2034. A $47.5 billion industry — built entirely on managing a condition rather than eliminating it. The newest HIV prevention injection, lenacapavir, was announced at $28,218 per person per year. Per year. Not a cure. A subscription.

Researchers working on actual HIV elimination — gene-editing approaches that target and remove the virus from the body — found their most promising candidate did not maintain viral suppression when treatment was discontinued, meaning patients experienced viral rebound. The research continues. Slowly. With limited funding. While the antiretroviral subscription model generates tens of billions annually. Ask yourself the question honestly: if a complete cure for HIV were developed tomorrow — one pill, one treatment, done — what happens to a $47.5 billion annual market? What happens to the shareholders? What happens to the executives? What happens to the entire infrastructure of clinics, specialists, monitoring programs, and drug distribution networks built around lifelong management?

The cure is the end of the business. This logic applies identically to cancer. To diabetes. To every chronic condition that currently generates recurring pharmaceutical revenue. The oncology market alone is worth hundreds of billions annually — built on treatments that extend life while rarely ending the disease entirely. I am not saying cures don't exist because they are suppressed. I am saying the financial incentive structure of the pharmaceutical industry does not reward the discovery of cures — it rewards the discovery of treatments. And the research funding, the regulatory pathways, the career incentives of every scientist in the field all flow from that structure.

What gets funded gets found. What ends the revenue stream does not get funded.

God placed the remedy for every disease in creation. *"Allah has not created a disease without creating a cure for it, except old age." (Abu Dawud)* The cures exist. Whether the industry that profits from your managed illness will ever allow them to reach you is the question that the $47.5 billion answer makes uncomfortably clear.

CORRUPTION #5 — MEDIA: THE CONSENT MACHINE

God showed us with Trump how fake the media actually is — and then showed us it twice. The same outlets that spent four years calling him a fascist, a threat to democracy, the end of civilization — those exact outlets normalized him, covered him obsessively, gave him billions in free airtime, and in doing so made him the most recognizable political brand on earth. Then when he said things they agreed with, the tone shifted. The coverage adjusted. The narrative followed the power rather than the truth.

Double double. Fake reporting on a fake man, performed for an audience by people who decided

the verdict before the evidence.

But here is what changed — and what the people who own those six corporations did not anticipate:

The audience stopped watching. TikTok. Instagram. X. YouTube. User-generated content from people with phones became the actual news infrastructure for an entire generation. Not because citizen journalism is perfect — it isn't. But because the alternative had become so transparently managed that the imperfect, unedited, raw feed from someone holding a phone in Gaza was more trustworthy than the polished, produced, carefully-framed report from the correspondent with the network logo behind her.

And what did platforms do when user-generated truth became inconvenient?

They suppressed it.

The Digital Rights Index 2024 documents over 25,000 violations against Palestinian digital content across major platforms — including content takedowns, shadow banning, account suspensions, and algorithmic suppression. The surge in censorship coincided precisely with the period when Palestinians most needed digital expression to document what was happening on the ground.

Reported internal data showed that the majority of groups Meta labels as "terrorist" come from the Arab and Muslim world. Instagram alone accounted for 32% of all violations against Palestine-related digital content in early 2024. Meta faced a Human Rights Watch report on content suppression, a BBC investigation into Facebook restricting Palestinian news outlets' reach, and documented testimonies of shadow-banning gathered by human rights organizations — all while the war continued and the documentation of it was systematically removed from the platforms people use to understand the world. This is not a glitch. A glitch does not consistently target one narrative. This is the same consent machine — just updated for the decentralized era. When the mainstream networks lost their monopoly on the feed, the platforms that replaced them were quietly brought into the same alignment. Different architecture. Same function. The Quran described this mechanism fourteen centuries before the algorithm existed: *"And thus We have made for every prophet an enemy — devils from mankind and jinn, inspiring to one another decorative speech in delusion." (6:112)*

Decorative speech in delusion. The beautiful-sounding suppression. The policy-language justification for removing the footage of the massacre.

I am semi-Palestinian. My blood is Palestinian. I watched in real time as content documenting what was being done to my people was removed from platforms owned by people with specific interests in a specific narrative — while those same platforms ran the managed version of events without restriction. The decentralization of media is not complete. But it is irreversible. And the more they

squeeze, the more people look for what's being squeezed — and find it.

"They want to extinguish the light of Allah with their mouths." (61:8)

The algorithm cannot extinguish it.

Neither could the network.

CORRUPTION #6 — CELEBRITY CULTURE: REPLACING GOD WITH ICONS

"There is no god but Allah."

This is the foundational statement of Islamic theology — not just a religious claim but a cosmological one. There is no ultimate authority, no ultimate source of meaning, no ultimate object of devotion — except the one God.

When celebrity culture fills the space that God is supposed to occupy — when people follow, worship, defend, and organize their identities around human beings who are performing versions of themselves for commercial purposes — the theological corruption is identical to the historical idol worship the Quran condemns.

The idols just have verified Instagram accounts now.

I unfollowed everyone. Every celebrity, every influencer, every account that existed to sell me a version of someone's performed life. What was left in the silence was the actual signal — my own thoughts, God's presence, the clarity that comes from not having four hundred people's curated realities competing for my attention simultaneously.

"Have you seen the one who takes as his god his own desire?" (45:23) The celebrity economy is the industrialization of desire-worship. You desire the life, the body, the validation, the status that the celebrity represents. The celebrity monetizes your desire. The platform monetizes your attention. The advertiser monetizes your purchase. You are not the audience. You are the product.

Unfollow everyone who cannot better your life or your deen. Follow God daily. He is the only one whose content never expires and whose account never gets hacked.

And then there is the darker layer — the one that TikTok surfaced before the ban attempts accelerated, the one that Reddit threads and alternative media have documented while mainstream outlets owned by the same people look elsewhere.

The celebrities themselves started talking. Models. Actors. Musicians. People who had been inside certain rooms at certain levels of the entertainment industry — some of them screaming, some of

them whispering, some of them leaving trails in interviews and social media posts and cryptic statements that assembled into a pattern for anyone paying attention. Elites consuming children. Trafficking networks connected to the highest levels of entertainment and politics. Rituals that would read as medieval superstition if they weren't being described by people who had been in the rooms.

The Simpsons predicted 9/11. Predicted Trump's presidency.

Predicted specific technologies and specific events with a consistency that exceeds coincidence by orders of magnitude. The show's writers have been in specific rooms with specific people who have specific foreknowledge of specific events — and the show has been the vehicle through which that foreknowledge gets released to the public in a form the public can dismiss as fiction. Predictive programming. The gradual normalization of what is coming by presenting it as entertainment before it arrives as reality. I am not going to tell you that every celebrity is a participant in something dark. I am going to tell you that the industry that produces celebrities — that selects who rises, determines who stays, and decides who falls — has a documented relationship with darkness that its own participants have described, that its own products have telegraphed, and that the systematic suppression of the people who speak about it most directly has only made more credible. Jeffrey Epstein had a list. The list exists. The list has not been fully released. The people whose names are on it include people whose faces are on the screens that your children watch.

God sees what is done in the dark rooms. Every room. Every transaction. Every child. And His accounting — as established throughout this book — is more thorough and more just than any court that has been prevented from convening.

CORRUPTION #7 — THE COVID LOCKDOWNS: THE CONTROL REHEARSAL

March 2020. The world stopped. I have already described what the lockdowns cost me personally in Toronto — the GarfieldEATS closure, the licensor who said comply, the revenue that disappeared while minimum guarantees remained due. The personal cost was real and documented.

The larger cost — the one that belongs in this chapter — was different in kind. The lockdowns were the most successful test of compliance infrastructure in the history of democratic societies. The question being tested was not "can we stop a pandemic?" It was "how much can we ask people to surrender, how quickly, on what justification, with what resistance?" The answers, delivered by populations around the world with remarkable cooperation, were:

Everything. Immediately. Any justification that invoked safety. Almost none.

Businesses closed overnight. Travel halted. Movement restricted. Social gathering criminalized. Children kept from school for months. Elderly people separated from families during their final

months of life. All of it executed through emergency powers that bypassed the normal legislative process — because the normal legislative process is designed to be slow precisely to prevent exactly this kind of rapid, total social reorganization.
And the food system — the processed, preservative-laden, shelf-stable supply chain of slow poison — was essential. Protected. Running continuously. While fresh markets struggled and small food entrepreneurs were shut down.

The Prophet (PBUH) said: "*There will come upon the people years of deceit in which the liar will be believed, the truthful will be disbelieved, the treacherous will be trusted, and the trustworthy will be considered treacherous." (Ibn Majah)*

Years of deceit. The liar believed. The truthful disbelieved.

2020-2022. Precisely.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE AND SOCIAL PRESSURE

I took two vaccines.

I want to say that clearly, without performance and without political signalling. It is simply what happened. At the time, I did not feel like I had real freedom in the decision. There was pressure — not always spoken directly, but present everywhere. Social consequences, employment consequences, exclusion, and a very specific atmosphere where questioning anything at all was treated as moral failure rather than hesitation.

So I complied.

Twice.

Not because I had full conviction, but because I was inside a system where hesitation itself was socially expensive.

That distinction matters to me more than the medical debate itself. Because what I experienced was not just a public health moment — it was a psychological and social one. It revealed how quickly societies can shift from discussion to enforced consensus, and how uncomfortable it becomes for individuals to stand outside that consensus, even quietly. Later, I also experienced COVID personally after vaccination. Many people did. That reality exists in the lived experience of millions of people, regardless of what narrative layer is placed on top of it.

But I am not interested in turning this into a medical argument.

That is not the point.

The point is something deeper.

We live in an age where uncertainty is not tolerated well. Where hesitation becomes dangerous. Where people feel pressured to choose sides quickly, loudly, and permanently — even when they are not fully informed, and even when the data itself is still evolving and interpreted through institutions with their own incentives. And in that environment, people do what I did: they comply under pressure, and only later do they sit with their private reflections.

I think a lot of people are still doing that reflection now, quietly, without saying it publicly.

HEALING, FAITH, AND RETURNING CONTROL TO GOD

When I process anything that creates uncertainty in my body or in my life, I return to something older than modern systems: remembrance of God.

In Islamic tradition, healing is not only physical. It is also spiritual and psychological. The practice of recitation — ruqyah, remembrance, and reading from the Qur'an — is not a replacement for medicine, but it is a recognition that healing ultimately belongs to God.

When I engage in that practice, I am not trying to escape reality. I am trying to re-anchor it.

I recite, I reflect, I return the matter to God.

Not as symbolism — but as lived practice.

And what I have consistently found is that this act of returning things to God changes how the body experiences stress itself. It changes how fear is held. It changes how uncertainty is carried.

That is my experience.

I cannot package it into scientific language. I am not trying to.

I am describing what I have lived.

FINAL CLARIFICATION

This is not an argument against vaccines. This is a reflection on pressure, conformity, uncertainty, and how human beings behave under systems where disagreement becomes socially costly. And more broadly, it is about something larger:

How easily modern society replaces open inquiry with enforced emotional consensus — and how often individuals only process their real thoughts after the moment of pressure has passed.

That is the part I think is worth remembering.

CORRUPTION #8 — GOD'S LAND IS VAST

I proposed — and I am stating this as THE NATHENVERSE VISION, outside politics, purely humanitarian — a World Land Bank.
Not communism. Not collectivization. Not a government program. A recognition of the most fundamental truth about the earth that every civilization before ours understood and ours has deliberately forgotten:

The land belongs to God. Not to man. Not to governments. Not to investment portfolios.

"To Allah belongs what is in the heavens and what is on the earth." (2:284)

Man-made borders are exactly that — man made. Drawn by colonial powers, enforced by military might, sustained by legal fictions that serve the people who drew the lines and no one else. A Palestinian family's claim to land their grandparents farmed is erased by a border drawn in 1948. A Canadian family cannot afford the ground beneath a house in the city where they were born because that ground was financialized into an investment vehicle by people who live somewhere else.

The World Land Bank is simple in principle: every human soul born onto this earth has a legitimate, God-given claim to a piece of it. The state's role — if the state has any legitimate role — is to honor that claim rather than auction the earth to whoever has accumulated the most capital. A bank that holds land in trust for the humans who need it. Not for the corporations that own it. Not for the investment funds that have never stood on it. For the people.

This is not a political position. It is a theological one. The earth is God's amanah — His trust — to humanity collectively. We have broken that trust. We have made it a commodity. We have allowed the ground that God created as the universal inheritance of the human race to be parceled, financialized, and withheld from the people who need it most.

The World Land Bank corrects that. One plot at a time. Starting with the principle that no human being should be landless on a planet that God made large enough for all of us.

CORRUPTION #9 — THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY AND ITS SOUL CONTRACTS

There is a price of entry that has nothing to do with talent. There is a reason why the people who make it to certain levels of that industry begin to look and speak and behave in ways that are eerily similar regardless of where they started. There is a reason why the symbolism that appears consistently in high-level entertainment — in music videos, in award show performances,

I am not going to tell you what I believe about the specific spiritual transactions that occur at those levels. I will tell you what the Quran says about it:

"And they followed what the devils had recited during the reign of Solomon. It was not Solomon

who disbelieved, but the devils disbelieved, teaching people magic." (2:102)

Magic. The specific exchange of spiritual submission for worldly power. Documented in the Quran. Practiced across human history. Present in the modern entertainment industry in forms that have updated their aesthetics while preserving the essential transaction.

The things required of young men who want to be seen on that stage. The steroids, the drugs, the sexual submission to power-holders who control the access. The women watching and dreaming of marrying one of those men — not knowing what it cost to look that way under those lights.

The soul contract doesn't always have a signature. Sometimes it's just a series of small decisions — each one individually defensible, cumulatively constituting a transaction you didn't consciously enter but are now fully inside. *"And whoever is blinded from remembrance of the Most Merciful — We appoint for him a devil, and he is to him a companion." (43:36)*

The companion appointed.

Not chosen. Appointed. For the one who chose blindness.

Protect your soul. What you consume, what you create, what you agree to, what rooms you enter and what you do to stay in them — these are not neutral decisions. They are the terms of the contract you are continuously negotiating with the world.

Read the contract.

CORRUPTION #10 — THE SILENCING OF ISLAM'S RISE

The final corruption on this list is the one most personal to me and most relevant to the generation I am writing for. Islam is growing. Not because of institutional promotion. Not because of government support. Not because of advertising budgets or celebrity endorsements or the kind of manufactured cultural momentum that the entertainment industry produces for products it wants to sell.

Islam is growing because it is true. Because the generation that was raised on celebrity worship and therapeutic pseudo-spirituality and the performed freedom of the sexual revolution looked at what all of it had actually produced —the anxiety, the addiction, the loneliness, the suicides, the identity crises, the sense that something essential is missing from every experience no matter how many experiences you accumulate — and started looking for something real.

And found it.

TikTok was the unexpected delivery mechanism. Young Muslims explaining their faith in language that twenty-year-olds could receive. Converts sharing their journeys in real time. The algorithmic

amplification of content that was resonating organically because it was addressing a genuine hunger.

The response from the institutions that benefit from secularization was immediate and eventually legislative. The TikTok ban was not about China. It was about this. About an ungovernable platform producing ungovernable spiritual outcomes — young people in the West encountering Islam at scale and finding it compelling.

The specific pattern of Islamic growth through social media, and the specific pattern of legislative and institutional response to that growth, follows the same logic as every other silencing operation in this chapter: suppress what threatens the existing distribution of power.

But here is what the suppressors have always failed to understand about Islam specifically:

It cannot be suppressed.

Not permanently. Not successfully. The Quran was memorized by millions of people before paper was widespread — because God designed a faith whose primary vessel is the human heart rather than any institution or technology that can be shut down. The faith survived the Mongol destruction of Baghdad. It survived colonialism. It survived the decades-long project of associating it with terrorism in the Western imagination.

It is surviving TikTok being banned.

And the generation that found it through a short video on a phone will carry it in their hearts — which no legislation can access and no algorithm can suppress.

"They want to extinguish the light of Allah with their mouths, but Allah will perfect His light, although the disbelievers dislike it." (61:8)

They want to.

Allah will perfect it.

The disbelievers dislike it.

All three things are simultaneously true. And the third thing — the disliking — is not a threat. It is a confirmation. The light that provokes no opposition is the light that illuminates nothing worth seeing.

Keep the light on. *"Corruption has appeared throughout the land and sea by reason of what the hands of people have earned, so He may let them taste part of the consequence of what they have done that perhaps they will return." (30:41)*

Corruption has appeared. By reason of what hands have earned.

Not by accident. Not by bad luck. Not by forces beyond human understanding. By the accumulated

choices of human beings who chose power over truth, convenience over justice, and short-term gain over the consequences they were generating for everyone who would come after them.

That perhaps they will return.

That word — perhaps — is the entire mercy of God contained in a single syllable. The corruptions described in this chapter are not presented as inevitable or permanent. They are presented as the consequences of choices. Which means they can be reversed by different choices.

By enough people choosing differently. By enough young men waking up and saying — in the language of someone who has thought about this more than most:

Do sum'n.

Speaking of corruption, Sean Combs a.k.a Diddy, American former rapper and record producer, was one of the most powerful men in the music industry for three decades until God said #enough.

When God Cuts the Cord

There is a concept in Islam that does not get spoken about enough, perhaps because it is one of the most terrifying truths in the Quran. It is called Istidraj — and it is the idea that Allah sometimes allows a person who has crossed every limit to keep going. To keep rising. To keep rising. To keep accumulating wealth, influence, power, and pleasure, while the cord between them and His mercy quietly, invisibly, tightens.

He doesn't punish them immediately. He lets the world applaud them. He lets them believe they have escaped. And then — before the world, publicly, completely — He cuts the cord.

Sean Combs was one of the most powerful men in the music industry for three decades. He won three Grammy Awards and was at the forefront of bringing hip-hop to a mainstream pop audience, building himself into the face of Bad Boy Records and an empire that extended far beyond music. He had the money, the connections, the fame, the protection of silence that power buys. For years, what happened in the rooms he owned, stayed in those rooms.

And then it didn't. Prosecutors accused him of orchestrating a decade-spanning criminal enterprise, forcing women to participate in drug-fueled encounters, abusing, threatening, and coercing those around him to fulfill his desires and protect his reputation. He was tried in federal court, convicted, and sentenced to four years and two months in prison, a $500,000 fine, and five years of supervised release. Before sentencing, he addressed the judge, begging for mercy and apologizing for what he called "sick" actions.

The man who once moved through the world as untouchable, stood hunched in a courtroom and begged.

This is *Istidraj.* This is what it looks like when the cord is cut. The Quran speaks directly to this

pattern. In *Surah Al-An'am*, Allah says that when people persist in what they have been forbidden, He opens for them the doors of every good thing — until, when they rejoice in what they were given, He seizes them suddenly. That is the nature of divine accountability. It does not always come as a quiet whisper or a private warning. Sometimes it comes as a spectacle — so that the lesson cannot be missed, not by the person who fell, and not by the world watching.

I have lived long enough to believe this with everything I have. I do not know of a man who truly wronged others, who used power to crush the vulnerable, who built his comfort on the suffering of people with no voice — and walked away clean from this world. Not one. The punishment is not always a courtroom. Sometimes it is health. Sometimes it is loneliness. Sometimes it is the slow unraveling of everything that was built on a rotten foundation. But it comes. It always comes.

This is not cruelty on the part of Allah. It is mercy toward everyone else — especially the young. For young men and young women today, the Diddy story is not entertainment. It is a lesson delivered at scale, and it would be a waste to consume it only as drama.

Look at what was actually on display. A man who had every earthly measure of success. Wealth that most people cannot conceive of. Access, influence, celebrity. And underneath all of it — a private world built on fear, coercion, and the abuse of people who could not say no to him. He did not stumble into this. He built it. Deliberately. Over years. Because power, when it is not accountable to anything greater than itself, does not stay still — it expands into whatever space it is given, and it takes from whoever cannot resist it.

This is what happens to the soul when it severs its connection to God. Not dramatically, not all at once — but gradually, one compromise at a time, one silenced conscience at a time, until the person looking back at you in the mirror is unrecognizable, and you have learned to call that freedom.

Islam does not teach that wealth is wrong, or that influence is a sin, or that success is something to be suspicious of. It teaches that all of these things are a test — and that the test is whether you carry them with humility and justice, or whether you let them convince you that you are above the rules that govern everyone else.

Diddy believed, for a long time, that he was above those rules. When the verdict came, people online said "you can do anything if you got money." But here is the truth those people missed: he couldn't. He sat in that courtroom. He will serve those years. He still faces dozens of civil lawsuits brought by former employees and associates. The money did not save him. It only delay

Young people need to understand something about the world they are inheriting: the age of social media has made it look as though the powerful are invincible. You watch someone live that life on a screen — the yachts, the parties, the untouchable confidence — and something in you can start to believe that this is what winning looks like. That the rules are for people without resources. That God, if He exists at all, does not concern Himself with what happens in penthouses.

He concerns Himself with everything. The Quran reminds us repeatedly that the life of this world is nothing but the enjoyment of delusion. Not because beauty or comfort or success are forbidden —

but because whoever mistakes the temporary for the permanent, whoever builds their entire existence around what they can take rather than what they can give, is living inside a dream they will eventually wake from.

Diddy woke from it in a courtroom. With his children watching. That image — a father, who had everything the world calls great, hunched in a chair, begging a judge for mercy — is not something to enjoy. It is something to sit with. Because the distance between where he started and where he ended is not a story about one bad man. It is a story about what happens to any person, of any background, of any religion or none, when they choose the self over everything — over decency, over accountability, over the people in their care.

The cord does not break all at once. It frays. Quietly. While you are still celebrating.

And then one day, before the whole world, it goes.

Allah sees all. He always has. And the ones who remember this — who carry that awareness not as fear but as a compass — are the ones who build something that actually lasts. That is the lesson. It is not complicated. But it takes courage to live by it, especially when the world keeps applauding the people who don't. Pour It Down the Drain Six years sober, no rehab, no meetings — just God and one good man on a screen Let me tell you about the most expensive thing I ever poured down a kitchen sink. Even Garfield and Scooby-Doo were both stunned! It was a bottle of Veuve Clicquot. For anyone who doesn't know, Veuve Clicquot is not cheap wine. It is champagne with a reputation, a yellow label, and a price tag that makes you feel like you have arrived somewhere. It is the drink of celebrations, of deals closed, of a certain kind of life that looks effortless from the outside. I poured it down the drain on a Zoom call, with a young Islamic scholar - famous on Instagram, watching from the other side of the screen. His name is Zaid. He is handsome, he is in his mid-twenties, he is a student of medicine and of his religion simultaneously — and he told me, calmly and without judgment, to take the bottle and let it go. Right now. Together. Don't think about it.

I teared up.

Not because of the cost of the champagne, though that crossed my mind for a second — and I thought, better money down the drain than me going six feet under. I teared up because I was showing God something in that moment. I was saying: I want to stop. I am choosing to stop. I am pouring this out in front of a witness, and I am asking You to take the craving from me.

He did. And I have not touched a single glass in six years. No rehab. No AA meetings. No expensive thirty-day program. No clinical intervention. No group of strangers in a church basement with paper cups of bad coffee. Just a Zoom call, a young scholar, a drain, and Allah. The industry of recovery would have you believe that sobriety requires a system — their system. And for some people, structured support genuinely is what saves them, and there is no shame in that. But the

statistics tell a more complex and more hopeful story than the rehab industry likes to advertise.

A large-scale national survey on recovery found that among the millions of people in remission from a substance use disorder, more than half — 54.1% — achieved it without ever receiving formal treatment. More than half. The majority. Natural recovery through individual change, through community, through faith, through a decision made in the privacy of one's own relationship with the Divine — this is not the exception. It is quietly the norm.

Research has suggested that the cultural stereotype — that changing a drinking problem inevitably means going to rehab or AA — may actually have the unintended consequence of reducing hope for many people, because the threshold for successful change is perceived to be too high. In other words, people stay stuck partly because they believe freedom requires a door they cannot access or afford. That is a lie that costs lives. And what about AA itself, the institution that has been the default answer to alcohol since the 1930s? Its overall success rate appears to be no better than quitting drinking on one's own, and much lower than that of modern evidence-based approaches. Meanwhile, the NIAAA notes that roughly 90% of alcoholics relapse at least once in the four years following treatment — suggesting that the programme matters far less than the internal decision that precedes it.

My internal decision was made on a Zoom call, in front of a bottle I chose to empty into a drain. Now, I want to say something about Al-Kuhl — because the Arabic root of the word alcohol is not an accident. Al-Kohl referred to a fine powder, a substance used to alter appearance, something applied to the surface to change how things looked. Over centuries the word migrated and transformed until it named this particular poison. But the Islamic understanding of what alcohol does to a person has always been precise: it does not merely intoxicate. It removes the veil between the conscious self and something else. It creates a gap in the soul's guard, a moment of unconsciousness in which a person is no longer fully present — no longer fully themselves. The Quran does not call alcohol a small matter or a personal choice. It calls it rijs — filth — and describes it as the work of Shaytan specifically designed to plant enmity between people and turn them away from the remembrance of Allah.

This is not metaphor. It is an observation about mechanism. The drink does not just lower inhibitions. It lowers the person. It makes you capable of things the sober version of you would refuse. It makes you agreeable to your own harm.

I was mildly addicted — not dramatically, not visibly from the outside. That is perhaps the most dangerous kind. Alcohol, as I have come to understand it, is fundamentally a social drug. It needs a partner. It needs a setting. A glass raised with someone else, a reason to celebrate, a ritual that looks like belonging. Strip away the social architecture and the craving often has nowhere to live. That is partly why the Zoom call worked — it replaced the social act of drinking with a social act of stopping. There was a witness. There was a hand extended through a screen. There was God watching us both.

And Zaid — the young scholar, the medical student, the man with a following that young people actually trust — is precisely the kind of influence that this generation is starving for. He is the

antithesis of the loud, cruel, chest-pounding masculinity that has been sold to young men as strength. He is soft-spoken and grounded and educated in both dunya and deen. He is what a role model looks like when it comes without performance.

I am grateful for him in a way I do not have the right words for.

There is something happening with young people and alcohol that gives me hope, even as other data complicates the picture. Research shows that lifetime drinking, past-month drinking, and past-year drinking among young people began to decline around the year 2000, with a Gallup survey finding the share of adults under 35 who drink dropped ten percentage points over two decades. Surveys from late 2024 and throughout 2025 found that as many as 65% of Gen Z respondents planned to drink less, with young adults increasingly prioritizing mental clarity, physical health, and financial savings over social drinking. Between 2023 and 2024, sober-curious events on one major platform rose 92%, with DJ'd events offering coffee instead of alcohol rising 478%. The earth is trying to sober up. Young people are waking up to what the previous generation was sold, and some of them are refusing it. Not all — the data is genuinely mixed, and some studies show Gen Z drinking more as their financial situations improve. But the conversation has changed.

The question is no longer only "where are we drinking tonight?" For a meaningful portion of a whole generation, the question is becoming "why are we drinking at all?"

Islam answered that question fourteen centuries ago.

I answered it personally six years ago, with champagne going down a kitchen drain and tears on my face. There is no chip for this. No thirty-day token. No certificate. Just six years of waking up clear-headed, of remembering everything, of being fully present in my life — and knowing, with absolute certainty, that when I showed Allah I was serious, He removed the want for it from me completely.

That is not a twelve-step programme. That is a one-step programme. And the step is toward Him.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE DREAM

I need to tell you something before I tell you what happened. Dreams, in Islamic theology, are not random neural noise. They are not the brain processing the day's debris. They occupy a specific, documented, theologically precise category of human experience — one that the Prophet (PBUH) himself described as *"one* forty-sixth of prophethood." (Bukhari)

One forty-sixth.

Not metaphor. Not poetry. A fraction. A portion of the same divine communication that prophethood represents — transmitted through sleep to ordinary believers, in the mercy of a God who did not close the channel of communication when the era of prophets ended.

The Prophet (PBUH) also said: *"Whoever has seen me in a dream has truly seen me, for Satan cannot take my form." (Bukhari and Muslim)* This hadith is the authentication. The scholars who have studied it for fourteen centuries are *unanimous on its meaning:*
if a dream contains what is recognizably the Prophet (PBUH) —

his physical description, his movement, his presence — then the encounter was real. Satan can imitate many things. He cannot imitate the Prophet (PBUH). The form you see is the form.

And if the dream carries even a small redness — a darkness, an agitation, an uncomfortable undercurrent — that is the signal that something else is present. The Prophet's (PBUH) dream is

light. It is peace. It is the specific quality of something that cannot be manufactured by darkness no matter how sophisticated the imitation.

What I experienced had no redness. Not one trace.

I am going to tell you exactly what happened.

THE DREAM

I was in a desert. Not the hot, oppressive desert of midday — the specific beautiful desert of late afternoon, close to sunset, when the light turns gold and the air carries a coolness that the daytime gives no indication of. The kind of evening that feels like a promise.

There was a hill. He came from the hill — walking toward me. Not slowly, not running. Hastily is the only word that fits. The specific purposeful speed of a man who has somewhere important to be and is moving with the complete confidence of someone who knows exactly where he is going and why. He was tall. Broad shouldered. The width of his shoulders is one of the first things I noticed — substantial, present, the physical frame of a man built for what he carried. His hair was soft — dark, falling to his neck, the specific quality of hair described in the authentic narrations of his

companions. Beautiful is not a strong enough word. There is a quality of beauty that exists entirely outside the categories we use for ordinary human attractiveness — a beauty that is simultaneously physical and beyond physical, that registers in the chest before it registers in the eyes.

His face — I cannot fully describe it exactly. I remember the smile. Wide, reaching to his ears, the specific completeness of a smile that has no performance in it. But the features — the precise details — were not fully visible to me. Not because of poor lighting in the dream. Because of something else.

And this is where the scholars said something that stopped me completely:

The prohibition on depicting the Prophet (PBUH) — the reason his face has never been painted, drawn, or captured in any image — is not only about preventing idolatry, though that is part of it. The Prophet (PBUH) himself was aware that if people saw his face portrayed, they would soon start worshipping him. He spoke against such images, saying: "I am just a man." Images, over time, result in the worship of images. If one enters a mosque one finds calligraphy of the word of God — not an image of God or a person. The focus is the message, not the face.

But there is something deeper that the scholars suggested when I described my dream: The face is kept hidden — in life, in art, and sometimes in dreams — so that when you finally see him, it will be the first time. Your eyes will not have been trained on a reproduction. When you meet him in the hereafter, at the pool, as he offers you water with his own hands — the face you see will be the original. Unspoiled by any human attempt to capture it. The Prophet (PBUH) said:
"From those among my ummah who will love me the most will be those who come after me
— every one of them would have the keenest desire to catch a glimpse
of me even at the expense of his family and his wealth." (Muslim)

I understand that hadith now in a way I did not before the dream.

The hidden face is the preserved face. God kept it from the world so it could be given to you whole, unmediated, at the moment it matters most.

The Prophet (PBUH) came to me directly. No hesitation. No introduction. He knew who I was — I understood this without words, the way you understand things in dreams that would require paragraphs to explain in waking life.

He put his hands on my shoulders.

Big hands. The hands on my upper arms — not gripping, not aggressive, but present. The specific warmth of being held by someone whose strength is entirely in service of care rather than control.

And he said:

"All will be alright with you."

Five words. In the desert. At sunset. From the most important human being who ever walked the

earth. And then — either from him or from somewhere near him, another voice, warm and unhurried:

"Do you want to come with us?"

And I woke up. Some Islamic scholars, when I described this to them, offered three possibilities for that second voice: it may have been him again — echoing, as his voice sometimes appeared to companions in different registers. It may have been Allah Himself — some scholars consider that proximity in a dream that pure to be a category beyond ordinary dreaming. Or it may have been a companion near him. I do not know which. I know what I heard. The warmth of it has not left me.

THE FALLING

I woke up the way you wake up from falling — the heart dropping, the body shocked back into itself, the sudden awareness of ceiling and room and earth after something that had felt entirely different from earth.

But it was not the falling that I felt.

It was light. An enormous light. In my chest. Not metaphorical light — a physical sensation in the center of my body, filling the hollow of my chest the way water fills a vessel. Not heavy. The opposite of heavy. Spacious. Open. Wide. The feeling of a space that had been cramped and pressured suddenly — instantly — released into something vast.

I cried.

Hard. Harder than I have cried in my adult life. The specific crying that has no social function — no audience, no performance, no release valve for a tension that had been building. The crying of someone who has been handed something so much larger than their capacity to hold it that the body has no other response.

Happiness and sorrow simultaneously. Both at full intensity.

I understand the sorrow now, looking back. It was the sorrow of returning. The soul that had been — for those moments of the dream — in the presence of something it recognized as home, being brought back to earth. The baby cries when it arrives here because it knows what it is leaving. I cried when I woke up because I knew what I was returning from.

I went to the mosque immediately.

I told the scholars what I had seen. They listened. They asked about the details — the movement, the light, the redness or absence of it. They considered. And then they said what I had already known in my chest from the moment I opened my eyes:

You saw him.

THE YEAR THAT FOLLOWED

What the scholars did not fully prepare me for was the love.

For nearly one year after that dream, I walked through life with a specific sustained warmth in my chest that I had never experienced before and have not experienced with the same intensity since. Not happiness exactly — deeper than happiness. The settled certainty that comes from having been personally addressed by someone who sees you completely and chose to tell you directly: all will be alright with you. I think of him now as I write this. I am tearing as I write this. Not from sadness — from the specific emotion of remembering something that changed the architecture of your interior life permanently. The people who have never experienced this will read that sentence as hyperbole. The people who have experienced it will recognize exactly what I mean.

Why me?

I have asked this question since that morning. Not with arrogance — with genuine bewilderment. There are better men than me. More learned. More consistent. More pious. Men who have given more and taken less and built their lives more completely around submission to God.

Why me?

One day — in the hereafter, in the garden that God has promised, in the moment the scholars describe when the believers will drink from the Prophet's (PBUH) own hands — I will ask him this directly.

I believe he will answer.

Until then, I hold the only answer available: God chooses whom He chooses, for reasons that are His. The question is not why me but what now. What does a man do with a dream like this?
What is the responsibility of having been addressed?

You write a book. You tell the truth. You point as many young men as you can toward the door you found.

That is what now.

WHO HE ACTUALLY WAS

Before this chapter ends, I need to address the slander. Because the name “Muhammad” has been dragged through every medium available to the people who understood — correctly — that destroying the reputation of the Prophet (PBUH) was the most effective way to close the door of Islam to the people he might otherwise reach.

The drawings. The mockery. And the most persistent, most weaponized accusation: that he married a child.

Let me give you the honest historical account that the mockery always omits.

The controversy centers entirely on one narration about the age of Aisha bint Abu Bakr (RA), known as the "Mother of the Believers," at the time of marriage. The age of Aisha is not mentioned in the Quran, nor in any direct statement of the Prophet himself. The narrations come from Aisha herself, who gave varying ages reflecting the inexact nature of age-tracking in a society without birth certificates or a formal calendar.

When examined against the chronological record — specifically against the documented birth year of her sister Asma RA, who was ten years older — credible historical calculation places Aisha RA at approximately 17 or 18 years old at the time of marriage.

A critically important fact: before the Prophet (PBUH), Aisha was already engaged to Jubayr ibn Mut'im. This proves that whatever her age was, she was at the customary marriageable age for that society. If she were not of marriageable age by the standards of the time, she would not have been engaged to someone else first.

In the 7th century, the onset of puberty marked young adulthood across all cultures — not just Arabian culture. European royalty, Byzantine nobility, and Jewish tradition of the same era all practiced marriage at ages that modern Western legal frameworks now consider inappropriate. Evaluating the Prophet (PBUH) through modern legalistic age thresholds while

exempting every other historical figure from the same standard is not scholarship. It is targeted prosecution. Aisha RA never acknowledged any pain, trauma, or remorse. She spoke consistently of the Prophet (PBUH) as the kindest person she had ever known. She went on to become one of the

most prolific hadith narrators in Islamic history — transmitting over 2,000 hadith, giving legal opinions, engaging in political life. She was not a victim. She was a scholar. The most prominent female scholar in the first century of Islam. The people who weaponize her age against the Prophet (PBUH) are not concerned with Aisha RA. They are not concerned with child welfare. They are concerned with closing a door that they understand, correctly, is the most important door in the world. Here is what you should understand about the name “Muhammad”:

It is the most used name on earth. Estimated 150 million people alive today carry it as their given name. It appears in every language, every country, every culture that Islam has touched. It means the praised one — the one worthy of praise, the one continuously praised.

The Quran says about him: *"And We have not sent you except as a mercy to the worlds."* *(21:107)* Not to Muslims. Not to Arabs. To the worlds. Every world. Every human being. Every soul

that has arrived on this earth since his prophethood began in 610 CE and every soul that will arrive until the day of judgment.

This is the man who was sent as mercy to you. He saw the heavens. Physically, bodily, in a single night — mounted on Buraq, a heavenly creature larger than a mule, smaller than a donkey, whose hooves touched the horizon at each step — traveling from Masjid al-Haram in Mecca to Masjid al-Aqsa in Jerusalem, and then ascending through all seven heavens. It was during this ascension that the five daily prayers were prescribed — the same prayers that produce measurable alpha wave activity in the brain, that increase blood flow to the prefrontal cortex, that reduce cortisol and blood pressure and the chronic anxiety of a generation that was never given this tool.

He stood in the presence of God. He saw what no human being before or after him has seen from the vantage point of the divine proximity. He came back. And then he told us everything — in a book that has not been altered by a single letter in fourteen hundred years, in hadith literature that the greatest human minds of every century have dedicated their lives to preserving and authenticating, in a tradition so internally consistent and externally verified that the scholars of science keep finding, in their telescopes and laboratories, what he described from the seventh heaven.

He deserves your attention. Not as a historical figure. Not as the founder of a religion. As the man who was sent as mercy to you — specifically, personally, directly — and who came to me in a desert at sunset and put his hands on my shoulders and said words I will carry until the day I meet him properly.

All will be alright with you.

THE HEALING IN HIS NAME

One practical thing before this chapter closes — because this book has always been about tools, not just testimony.

Say his name.

Muhammad. Say it over wherever it hurts. Place your right hand on the pain. Say his name. Mean it. Feel the weight of what the name carries — the 150 million people who share it, the 2 billion who invoke it daily, the fourteen centuries of souls who have found in it something that nothing else provided. This is not magic. Magic is unauthorized. This is the sanctioned practice of a tradition that has documented healing through the name and invocations of the Prophet (PBUH) for as long as

the tradition has existed. I cannot tell you it will work the way I can point you to a clinical trial. I can tell you it works the way I can tell you that the prostration produces calm — from the inside of the experience, consistently, in the body of someone who has tested it enough times to call it reliable.

Try it. Believe it. Practise it.

He holds power granted from God. Not his own power — the power of a servant who was trusted

with the most direct access to the source of all power that any human being has ever been given.

And here is the theological truth that explains why the slander persists — and why it will not end until the day it is settled once and for all:

The revelation ended with him . God said so explicitly: *"Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the last of the prophets." (33:40)* And God said: *"This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favor upon you and have approved for you Islam as religion." (5:3)**

Some did not accept this. Not from theology — from envy. From the specific human refusal to accept that the door has closed, that the book is complete, that no further prophet is coming, that the authority they wanted to claim has no legitimate vehicle.

The religions and sects that arose after Islam — the ones that claimed new prophets, new revelations, new amendments to what God said was perfected — arose from exactly this refusal. And the fragmentation you see today, the competing claims, the religious wars, the confusion of people who were given one clear message and subdivided it into a thousand — this is the downstream of envy dressed as theology.

But the settling is coming.

Jesus will return. Not as God — Islam has always been clear that he was never God, never the son of God, that God has no parents and no children and nothing comparable to Him in any direction. He will return as a man — a prophet — and he will stand before the world that crucified his image and worshipped his person and say clearly, finally, in a voice that cannot be edited or shadow-banned:

There is one God. I was His servant. Muhammad was His final messenger. The book was completed. It was always complete.

And people will follow in numbers that will shock the world.

But — and this is the terrifying part that should concentrate every mind reading this page — there is a point after which repentance is no longer accepted.

When the sun rises from the West — one of the major signs of the final hour confirmed in multiple authentic hadith — the door closes. God will not accept repentance after that sign. Not because He is unmerciful — because the test will be over. The period of faith by the unseen will have ended. What remains will be visible, obvious, undeniable — and faith that requires no courage is not the faith that was being tested.

The Quran says: *"The day that some of the signs of your Lord come, no soul will benefit from its faith if it had not believed before or had not earned through its faith some good." (6:158)**

Be careful.

The door is open now. It will not always be open.

You are holding this book now. That is not an accident.

He is worthy of the attention. More than any celebrity. More than any influencer. More than any athlete or politician or performer who has ever occupied the space in young men's hearts that belongs to him. His IP — if we're going to use that language — requires no license. No trademark registration. No Paramount or Nickelodeon or Warner Bros. to terminate the agreement. The name Muhammad cannot be corporatized, cannot be terminated, cannot be pulled from the market when it becomes inconvenient for the licensor.

It belongs to no one and therefore to everyone.

It is the most powerful name ever spoken on this earth. And he walked toward me from a hill in the desert, at sunset, and put his hands on my shoulders and said: all will be alright with you.

I believe him.

I will always believe him. *"Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the last of the prophets." (33:40)* The last. The seal. The one after whom no door of prophethood opens — but whose mercy continues, whose name heals, whose dream visits, and whose hands will offer water to the thirsty in the hereafter to every soul that held him in their heart while on this earth.

I will be there.

I intend to ask my question.

ONE GOD

Before I leave this chapter — before we move into the world of algorithms and artificial intelligence and what God permitted and what He warned — I want to give you the foundation that every other chapter in this book rests on.

Not as a lecture. As a man telling another man the most important fact he has ever learned.

Laa ilaaha illallah.

There is no god but Allah.

Not there is no god but my God — as if God were a personal possession, a tribal deity, the flag of a particular civilization. There is no god. Period. Full stop. The negation is total and unqualified. Every object of worship, every ultimate authority, every source of meaning and fear and hope and submission that is not the one Creator — negated. Completely. Simultaneously.

But Allah. The affirmation that follows the negation. The one who remains after everything false has been cleared. Not a man. Not a committee. Not a feeling. Not a force. Not the universe itself. One. Singular. Without partner, without parent, without child, without anything comparable in any direction.

"Say: *He is Allah, the One. Allah, the Eternal Refuge. He neither begets nor is born. Nor is there to Him any equivalent." (112:1-4)*

Four verses. The entire theology of monotheism compressed into four verses so precise that the Prophet said reciting them was equal to reciting one third of the Quran. God describing Himself in the most economical language possible because the truth does not require decoration.

He neither begets nor is born.

This single phrase dismantles the theological architecture of every religion that came after the original message was corrupted. No son. No mother. No family. No divine lineage. No council of gods. No pantheon. No Trinity.

One. Only one. Always one. In ways that human language approaches but never fully captures.

And His size —

The observable universe contains approximately two trillion galaxies. Each galaxy containing hundreds of billions of stars. The numbers stop meaning anything to the human brain at a certain point. We just say big and move on. He is above all of it. The Throne — *Al-Arsh* — sits above creation the way a dome sits above a field. The greatest of His creation in scale is still nothing compared to the One who created it. The scholars describe it and immediately acknowledge that the description falls short. The words reach toward something the words cannot hold.

"His Kursi extends over the heavens and the earth, and their preservation tires Him not." (2:255)

Tires Him not. The preservation of two trillion galaxies and everything in them and everything between them — tires Him not. Not an effort. Not a maintenance challenge. Not something requiring management attention. The natural state of the One who created all of it from nothing and sustains it continuously without it costing Him anything at all.

This is who you pray to when you put your forehead on the ground.

This is who was closer to you than your jugular vein when you were at your lowest point. This is who sent the man with the wide smile and the big hands to tell a beige ambitious entrepreneur on a desert hill at sunset: *all will be alright with you.*

One God. Only one. And He knows your name.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

THE ALGORITHM AND THE ALMIGHTY

Let me tell you something that most religious people won't say and most tech people can't say:

God permitted this.

Not reluctantly. Not as an oversight. Not as something that slipped through the cosmic approval process while He was occupied elsewhere. The development of artificial intelligence — the most transformative technology in human history since the printing press, possibly since fire — happened inside a universe that God sustains continuously, in a species that God designed, using the intelligence that God breathed into the human being when He made it the only creature on earth worthy of His own breath.

"He taught Adam the names of all things." (2:31)

All things. The first act of human intelligence after creation was naming — categorizing, classifying, building the cognitive architecture that is, at its foundation, what artificial intelligence attempts to replicate at scale. God taught it to us. We taught it to machines. The lineage is direct.

This does not mean AI is sacred. It does not mean every application of it is blessed or neutral or without consequence. It means the tool is permitted — and like every permitted tool from fire to nuclear energy, what matters is not the existence of the tool but the character of the hand that holds it.

The hand matters. It always matters.

WHAT AI ACTUALLY IS

Let me strip the mythology before we go further — because AI in 2026 has accumulated more mythology per square inch than almost any technology in history. AI is not conscious. It does not think in the way you think. It does not feel, desire, suffer, or experience anything. It is a very sophisticated pattern-recognition system — trained on enormous quantities of human-generated data, optimized to predict what output would be most useful given a particular input, producing results that can look startlingly like intelligence because they are built entirely from the products of intelligence.

The intelligence in AI is borrowed human intelligence — compressed, redistributed, made available at scale. When you ask an AI system a question and it gives you a useful answer, you are benefiting from the distilled output of every human being who wrote about that topic and whose writing was included in the training data.

It is a mirror of human knowledge. Not a new mind.

This distinction matters enormously for how you relate to it spiritually. You are not consulting an oracle. You are not speaking to a being with agency or soul or accountability. You are using a tool that reflects human knowledge back at you with varying degrees of accuracy and usefulness.

In 2026, AI algorithms drive digital assistants, predictive healthcare, logistics, autonomous vehicles,

and the very platforms we use to communicate. This ubiquity promises efficiency and innovation — but also exposes society to serious risks including algorithmic bias, privacy erosion, misinformation, environmental impact, and job displacement.

All of those risks are real. None of them change the fundamental nature of the tool. They change the responsibility of the people deploying it.

WHAT GOD PERMITTED AND WHY

The Islamic tradition has a principle: *al-asl fil-ashya' al-ibaha* — the default ruling on things is permissibility. Unless something is specifically prohibited, it is permitted. This principle exists because God knows human civilization will continue to develop and He did not intend His religion to be a cage that makes every new development a source of anxiety and prohibition-hunting.

AI is not mentioned in the Quran. It is not mentioned in hadith. It did not exist in the 7th century in any form that would have been relevant to legislate about. What is mentioned — repeatedly, emphatically, from multiple angles — is the human responsibility for what human hands build and how they use it. *"Corruption has appeared throughout the land and sea by reason of what the hands of people have earned." (30:41)*

The hands. The choices. The deployment. Not the material. Not the tool. The hands. AI used to accelerate the discovery of drugs that cure disease — permitted, good, encouraged. AI used to generate deepfakes that destroy reputations — forbidden, harmful, the corruption the verse describes. AI used to translate the Quran into languages that have never had access to it

— extraordinary, potentially the most significant contribution to Islamic knowledge dissemination since the printing press. AI used to generate propaganda that manipulates democratic processes — the precise definition of spreading corruption on earth. The tool is the same in all four cases. The hands are different. The accountability rests with the hands — not with the tool, which has no soul and will face no judgment.

THE BENEFITS — AND THEY ARE REAL

I am going to defend AI here in ways that might surprise people who expect this book to be purely skeptical of modern technology. Medicine. AI diagnostic systems are already outperforming human radiologists in the detection of certain cancers. They are identifying patterns in medical imaging that human eyes miss — not because the AI is smarter than the doctor but because it has been trained on millions of images and can recognize statistical anomalies that individual human experience cannot match. People are alive today because an AI system caught something in time.

"And whoever saves one life — it is as if he has saved all mankind." (5:32)

Accessibility. Translation technology powered by AI is making knowledge available in languages that have historically been excluded from the global information economy. The Quran is being heard in languages whose speakers had no access to scholarly translation. Islamic content is reaching communities that no human translator could have served at this scale.

Productivity and Economic Liberation. This is the one that matters most for the young man reading this who was told — by school, by the job market, by the entire credentialing infrastructure described in Corruption #2 — that his lack of formal education or inherited capital meant a ceiling on what he could build.

AI demolished that ceiling. A nineteen year old in Lagos with a phone and a clear idea can now produce output that previously required a team of specialists, a studio budget, and connections built over decades. A first-generation immigrant in Toronto with no university degree can access the same quality of research assistance as a partner at a law firm. A Palestinian entrepreneur in a refugee camp can build a product, translate it into twelve languages, and reach a global market — with tools that cost less per month than a dinner.

Rizq is written. God never placed a limit on what He intended for you. Society placed the limits — through gatekeeping institutions, credentialing systems, and the specific architecture of who gets access to what tools. AI is dismantling that architecture faster than any political movement has ever managed to.

Crypto belongs in this conversation too. Not as speculation — as infrastructure. The decentralization of money through blockchain technology is the financial equivalent of what social media did to news: it removed the intermediaries who were extracting value from every transaction while producing nothing themselves. A young man in a country with a collapsing currency no longer has to watch his family's savings evaporate because a central bank made bad decisions. He can hold value in a form that no government can inflate away and no bank can freeze without his consent.

Knowledge decentralized. Media decentralized. Money decentralized. Now intelligence decentralized.

The institutions that maintained power through controlling access to these things are watching their monopolies dissolve simultaneously. This is not coincidence. This is the specific pattern of a civilization being prepared — whether it knows it or not — for something that requires the old walls to come down first.

God never said the poor must stay poor. He never said the uneducated must stay ignorant. He never said that the accident of which country or family you were born into determines the ceiling of what you can build. Human systems said that. Human systems built the walls.

The tools that are dissolving those walls were permitted by the same God who said: *"He subjected to you whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth." (45:13)*

All of it. For you. From Him.

Use it.

THE DANGERS — AND THEY ARE ALSO REAL

Now the honest side.

Deepfakes. The crisis of verifiable media is here. Deepfakes — AI-generated video and audio that are indistinguishable from real footage — have created an environment where visual evidence no longer functions as evidence. A video of a leader saying something he never said. A recording of a voice making a confession it never made.

The implications for truth — for the concept of witnessing itself, which the Quran treats as sacred — are profound. *"O you who believe, if a wicked person comes to you with information, investigate." (49:6)* The Quran commanded verification fourteen centuries before the technology existed to make verification necessary at every level of daily life.

Job displacement. AI is accelerating job displacement across industries, particularly in roles involving repetitive cognitive tasks. The clerk, the paralegal, the junior analyst, the entry-level coder — roles that have historically been the ladder rungs of economic mobility for people without inherited capital — are being automated in ways that benefit the owners of the AI systems rather than the workers whose labor trained them.

The people who control the infrastructure extract the value while the people who generated the underlying data — every human being who ever wrote anything on the internet — receive nothing. Your words trained the model. The company owns the model. You pay to use the model.

Who decided that arrangement?

The same hands that decided pharmaceutical companies own the patents on compounds derived from plants that indigenous communities identified and used for centuries. The same logic. Different domain. Surveillance. AI enables privacy violations at scales that were previously impossible — facial recognition in public spaces, behavioral prediction from data patterns, the ability to build psychological profiles from phone usage that are more accurate than self-reported personality assessments. The Chinese social credit system is the current extreme. But the infrastructure for equivalent systems exists in every country with sufficient data collection — which is every country with smartphones and internet penetration.

"He knows what is concealed and what is witnessed." (6:73)

God knows what is concealed. He always did. The problem is when governments decide they need to know what is concealed too — and build AI systems to tell them.

Autonomous weapons. The development of AI-powered weapons systems — drones that select and engage targets without human authorization in the kill chain — is not hypothetical. It is current. Multiple nations are deploying or developing such systems. The specific horror of this is not just the casualties it produces but what it does to the concept of human accountability for lethal force.

A human soldier who commits a war crime can be tried. Who tries the algorithm? Who is accountable when the autonomous drone kills the wrong person based on a pattern-matching error in its training data?

The hands. Always the hands. And when the hands remove themselves from the decision — the accountability does not disappear. It metastasizes.

AI AND THE QURAN — AN EXTRAORDINARY OBSERVATION

Here is something worth sitting with. The Quran has been subjected to more computational analysis than any text in human history. Linguists, cryptographers, mathematicians, and now AI researchers have run every kind of pattern analysis available on its 114 chapters and 6,236 verses.

kind of pattern analysis available on its 114 chapters and 6,236 verses. The results consistently produce the same response from the researchers: this text is structurally unlike anything else we have analyzed. The mathematical patterns embedded in the Quran — the numerical relationships between chapters and verses, the letter frequencies, the structural symmetries — are either the most extraordinary coincidence in the history of human writing or evidence of something that human authorship cannot explain.

AI cannot write the Quran. It has been tried. The most powerful language models ever built, trained on every text ever digitized, cannot produce output that scholars consider comparable to a single verse. Not in the Arabic linguistic precision. Not in the structural integrity. Not in the specific quality that the tradition calls i'jaz — the inimitability of the Quran.

"Say: *If mankind and the jinn gathered in order to produce the like of this Quran, they could not produce the like of it, even if they were to each other assistants." (17:88)*

Mankind and the jinn. Every intelligence available. Cannot produce the like of it. AI is the most powerful tool human intelligence has ever built for producing text. It cannot produce the like of it.

This is not a religious claim dressed up as a technology observation. This is an observable, testable,

repeatedly tested fact. The book that came down from the seventh heaven remains — in 2026, with the most powerful AI systems ever built available to challenge it — unmatched.

I'jaz stands.

HOW TO USE IT — PRACTICAL GUIDANCE

Since this book is always about tools, not just observation:

Use it as an assistant, not an authority. AI is a tool for extending your capability. The moment you outsource your judgment to it — the moment you accept its output without critical evaluation — you have made the tool your master rather than your servant. That is the inversion God warned about when He described people who follow without thinking.

Verify everything. Deepfakes and AI-generated misinformation are indistinguishable from real content without deliberate verification effort. The Quranic command to verify information from potentially unreliable sources applies now more urgently than at any point in human history. If something is outrageous, emotionally loaded, perfectly timed, and confirms exactly what you already believed

— be most suspicious of it, not least. Protect your data.
Every interaction with an AI system trains the system. Every piece of personal information you share becomes part of the infrastructure. You are not just using the tool — you are contributing to it. Be conscious of what you contribute. Do not let it replace human connection. Among the documented risks of AI is its effect on mental health — particularly the replacement of human relationships with AI companions, which produces the illusion of connection without the substance of it. A human being needs human witness. The specific experience of being known by another person — seen, heard, remembered — cannot be replicated by a system that has no experience of you except through text on a screen.

God designed the human being for human community. No technology changes that architecture.

Use it for knowledge, not wisdom. AI can give you information. It can summarize arguments. It can generate options. It cannot give you wisdom — the specific integration of knowledge with experience, character, and spiritual orientation that produces right judgment. Wisdom comes from God, from lived experience, from the kind of suffering and survival and prayer that this entire book has been documenting.

"And whoever is given wisdom has certainly been given much good." (2:269)

Much good. From God. Not from a server farm in Virginia.

THE SPACE CEILING — A FINAL NOTE

I mentioned earlier in this book — in the chapter on One God — that there is a point above which human technology cannot pass. A ceiling. A boundary in the heavens that is not a matter of

engineering but of permission.

The Quran says: *"O company of jinn and mankind, if you are able to pass beyond the regions of the heavens and the earth, then pass. You will not pass except by authority." (55:33)*

By authority. Not by technology. Not by rocket power or computational intelligence or any tool that human hands build. By the authority of the One who set the boundary.

The space programs of the major powers — the billions spent on rockets and telescopes and orbital stations — operate within a zone that God permits. The extraordinary images from the Webb telescope, the missions to Mars, the satellites mapping distant galaxies — all of this happens inside the boundary. None of it breaches it.

When they claim to have gone beyond it — when the billionaires performing their space tourism describe the universe as a frontier for human colonization — they are performing confidence about something they cannot actually verify. The boundary is not visible. It is not marked on any map. But it is there. And the specific pattern of what has and has not been achieved in space exploration — the missions that succeed and the ones that fail in ways that cannot be fully explained by engineering — suggests that something is managing the boundary.

God manages it.

AI will not change this. No technology will change this. The authority to pass beyond the regions of the heavens belongs to God — and He has not issued that authorization.

Everything within the boundary: explore, use, build, understand, give thanks.

Beyond the boundary: *His*.

The distinction matters. *"And He has subjected to you whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth — all from Him. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought." (45:13)*

Subjected to you. From Him. For thought. The permission is in the verse. The ownership is in the verse. The purpose — that you give thought — is in the verse.

AI is the most powerful thinking tool the human being has ever built.

Use it to think.

Not to stop thinking.

That is the entire instruction.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

ATARAXIA

The Man I Am Today

They sold you happiness. Think about how many products, books, courses, therapists, influencers, morning routines, cold plunges, vision boards, gratitude journals, and motivational speakers have organized their entire commercial existence around selling you one thing:

Happiness.

And you bought it. We all bought it. Because the hunger was real even if the product was fake. Here is what nobody told you — what the entire happiness industrial complex has a specific financial interest in never telling you:

Happiness is a weather system. It comes and it goes. It responds to conditions. It is present when things are going well and absent when they aren't, and no amount of positive thinking or gratitude practice or daily affirmation changes the fundamental nature of what it is — a temporary emotional state produced by temporary circumstances. You cannot be happy twenty-four hours a day. It is physiologically impossible. The brain is not built to sustain that state continuously — and the relentless marketing of happiness as a permanent destination has produced a generation of people who feel like failures every time they feel anything other than it.

The wrong word was sold to you. The ancient Greeks had the right word. Ataraxia. Serene, undisturbed calm. Not the presence of joy — the absence of being moved by chaos. Not the elimination of difficulty — the specific internal stability that makes difficulty passable.

But the Islamic tradition has an even more precise word.

Rida.

RIDA — THE WORD THAT CHANGES EVERYTHING

Rida (رِضا)
means contentment. Acceptance. The deep, settled, grateful trust in God's timing and God's plan that produces a quality of inner peace that happiness cannot touch — because unlike happiness, it does not depend on conditions.

You can have Rida while grieving.

You can have Rida while broke. You can have Rida while your licensing deal is terminated by an envelope from a courier, while trolls are coordinating campaigns against you, while you are walking alone on Eglinton at midnight with a song about heartbreak in your ears. Because Rida is not an assessment

of your circumstances. It is an assessment of who controls your circumstances.

And if you know — genuinely, not performatively, in the body not just the mind — that the One who controls your circumstances is the One who is bigger than 2.3 trillion galaxies, who is closer to you than your jugular vein, who sent his messenger to your dream to tell you personally that all will be alright with you —

Then the circumstances lose their authority over your interior life.

Not their reality. They remain real. The pain is real. The loss is real. The grief is real.

But they lose the power to move you from the foundation.

That is Rida. That is **Ataraxia**. That is what this entire book has been building toward since the first page.

THE DOME

Imagine a dome.

Not a physical structure — a spiritual one. A space of settled clarity that you inhabit when you are in right relationship with God. Inside the dome: Rida. The quality of presence that comes from having surrendered the outcome to the One who controls outcomes. The specific freedom of a man who has stopped trying to manage what he was never equipped to manage.

Inside the dome you can think clearly. Create freely. Build without the specific anxiety of someone whose entire sense of security depends on the results of what he's building. Respond to difficulty without being defined by it. Receive good things without mistaking them for the source of your peace. Outside the dome:

Humans go crazy. Not dramatically — gradually. The specific unraveling of a person who has made their inner stability dependent on external conditions. The man who cannot accept that a deal fell through. The woman who cannot process that the relationship ended. The entrepreneur who cannot survive the negative review. The politician who cannot absorb the election loss. They cannot accept it because they have no dome. They have happiness — which was there when things were good — and its absence when things are not. And the gap between what they expected and what arrived has no container to hold it. This is what you see in most people around you. Not evil. Not weakness. The specific consequence of being given the wrong word and the wrong framework for understanding what a good human life is supposed to feel like.

Happiness is the weather.

Rida is the house. You live in the house. The weather passes through. Some days it's beautiful

outside. Some days it's brutal. The house remains.

HOW I FOUND IT

I want to be honest about the timeline because honesty is the entire contract of this book.

I did not find **Ataraxia** because I read the right books. I found it because I ran out of every other option. The entrepreneur in me tried to build his way to peace — more ventures, more deals, more visibility, more proof that the vision was real and the doubters were wrong. The orange suit on Bloor Street was partly branding and partly armor. The man inside it was moving at the speed of someone who believed that stopping meant being caught by something chasing him.
What was chasing me was the question I couldn't answer:

Who are you when you're not performing? GarfieldEATS gave me an identity — the Garfield King. The PPC campaign gave me a platform. The trolls gave me an enemy to define myself against. The celebrity encounters gave me a story. All of it real, all of it genuinely mine — and all of it, in the specific way of every external identity, insufficient.

Because external identities are weather too.

The termination arrived in an envelope.

The campaign ended on election night.

The celebrities moved on to their next room.

The trolls found their next target. And what remained — what was always there beneath every layer of activity and ambition and noise — was a man who had been running for so long that he had confused the running with the destination. The Eglinton walk. The mosque at dawn after the dream. The autumn road with Lana Del Rey and tears and a beige coat matching beige skin. The prostration where the forehead meets the ground and the brain produces the frequencies of calm. The accumulation of all of it — slowly, not dramatically, not with a thunderclap — was a man learning to stop running.

Not giving up. Stopping. There is a difference that takes years to understand. Giving up is the surrender of someone who has decided the fight is unwinnable. Stopping is the maturity of someone who has realized that the frantic motion was never the path — that the stillness he was running from was actually the destination.

WHAT CONTROL ACTUALLY IS

Here is what I know now that I did not know when I started:

You are not in control. Not of outcomes. Not of other people's decisions. Not of which deal closes

and which doesn't, which relationship stays and which leaves, which license gets terminated and which doesn't, which dream visits and which doesn't.

You control your effort. Your character. Your choices in the moments when choice is available. Your response to what arrives when it arrives.

Everything else — the results, the timing, the shape of how it all unfolds — is written by the One who sees from a vantage point you do not have access to.

No book on sales changes this.

No reel on productivity changes this.

No ad spend changes this. No morning routine, cold plunge, vision board, or motivational speaker with a private jet and a course for $997 changes this.

God has your exact number.

Your rizq — your sustenance, your provision, your portion — was written before you were born. Not as a ceiling on your ambition. As a promise from the One who knows what you need better than you do. The bird goes out in the morning empty and returns in the evening full. Not because it optimized its hunting strategy. Because God provides for the bird.

You are more valuable to God than the bird.

"And whoever relies upon Allah — then He is sufficient for him." (65:3)

Sufficient. Not partially helpful. Not a contributing factor. Sufficient.

This is the sentence that dismantles the entire self-help industrial complex in seven words.

THE WARRIOR STANDS

I need to talk to you about something real.

Not the trolls. Not the landlord. Not the licensor with the D name. Not any human enemy — because human enemies are the easy ones. You can see a human enemy. You can document them. You can sue them. You can call them out on X.

The enemy I am talking about has no face on a booking photo. It moves through the unseen world. It whispers in your own voice. It targets your weak points with the precision of something that has been studying you since before you were old enough to defend yourself. It enters through the wounds left by others. It sets up residence in the stomach — Islamic medicine has always known this — and it operates from there, sending signals upward, making you feel things that aren't yours, want things that

will destroy you, fear things that are actually your path.

I can feel it. Not metaphorically. Physically. The specific presence of something that is not welcome. A weight that arrives in certain rooms. An energy that attaches to certain people. A pull in certain directions that has nothing to do with your will and everything to do with something working against it.

I can see it in eyes.

Some eyes are just eyes. Windows to a soul doing its best in a difficult world. Some eyes are something else. A vacancy behind the surface. A predatory assessment that has nothing to do with the human face around it. You know it when you see it — if you have developed the specific sensitivity that surviving certain things produces. You recognize it the way you recognize a smell that warns you before your mind has processed why.

I do not fear it.

This is the sentence that took the longest to arrive. Not the knowing that it exists — I always felt that. The fearlessness. The specific settled confidence of a man who has learned that the unseen enemy is real but bounded. That it operates within limits God set for it. That it cannot touch what God has placed His hand on.

And God has placed His hand on me. Not because I am exceptional. Because I asked Him to. Because I turned to face it — this thing that operates in the unseen — and said clearly, in the language it understands better than any human language:

In the name of God. I see you. I am not afraid. And you have no authority here. From the boy who woke up on a filthy floor in Beirut and ran crying through foreign streets —To the man who stands in the dome of Rida and feels the presence of the unseen and does not flinch —

That is the distance this book covers.

That is the transformation. Not from weak to strong in the way the world measures strength. From unaware to awake. From a man who didn't know he was being attacked to a man who can feel the attack coming, name it correctly, and reach for the one weapon that actually works.

Astaghfirullah. La ilaha illallah. Allahumma salli ala Muhammad. Said with conviction. Said from the gut. Said by a man who has tested these words in the darkest conditions available and found them — every single time — sufficient.

The chain I am breaking is not only the emotional inheritance of my family — though that is part of it. The chain I am breaking is the one that runs through the unseen world — the generational vulnerability that accumulates when a family moves far from God, when the protection of

remembrance is absent, when the whispers find no resistance because the inhabitants of a bloodline

My nephew. My niece. Those beautiful model-looking children of my brother — the great artist who built something extraordinary despite everything that tried to prevent it.

They will not inherit this.

Not on my watch. Not while I am the uncle who knows what I know and can pass on what I have found.

The Quran as armor — not decoration, not culture, not identity performance. Actual armor. Recited over children. Placed in their ears before the whispers find them. The names of God repeated in households until the air itself changes.

The prayer taught as a weapon, not a obligation. Five times a day your nephew puts his forehead on the ground and his brain produces calm and his soul touches proximity to the Creator and the things that operate in the gaps between human awareness find the gaps closing.

This is what I can give them.

Not wealth — though God willing that comes. Not connections — though those matter. Not the right schools or the right cities or the right opportunities — though all of those have their place.

The awareness. That the unseen world is real. That it is not to be feared but to be faced. That the specific sensitivity some of us carry — the ones who feel too much, see too clearly, are too aware of what moves beneath the surface of ordinary life — is not a weakness but a weapon, once it is trained and aimed correctly. The sensitive man who survives his sensitivity intact is the most dangerous thing the darkness has ever encountered.

Because he can see it.

And now he is not afraid.

"Indeed, the plot of Satan has ever been weak." (4:76)

Weak.

Not absent. Not harmless. Not irrelevant.

Weak.

Weak against the name of God on the lips of a man who means it. Weak against the prostration of a soul that has chosen submission over pride. Weak against the warrior who has been through the fire and come out knowing exactly what he is fighting and exactly what he is fighting with.

From vulnerable to fearless.

From the floor in Beirut to the dome.

It stops here. With me. In my generation. In my bloodline. In my nephew and my niece who will grow up knowing what their uncle learned the hard way so they don't have to learn it the same way.

The chain ends.

The warrior stands. God is sufficient.

Celibacy Is Sexy.

Until It Isn't. A guide for the overstimulated, chronically online, and touch-starved Let me be clear about something before we begin. I am not a nun. I am not a priest. I did not take a vow in a stone chapel somewhere with candles and a robe and a very serious face. I took a personal decision — with full faculties, full awareness, and frankly full confidence — that I needed to be alone for a while. Clean up the house. Air it out. Maybe repaint a few rooms. I kept celibacy for nearly five years. And I am here to tell you: it was one of the best decisions I ever made. I am also here to tell you: it had a shelf life. And I read the expiry date correctly. That is the part no one explains in the wellness content — the part where celibacy, which started as sacred discipline and radical self-possession, quietly turns a corner at 3am and starts looking suspiciously like just... being alone. The silence that once felt like peace starts to feel like an echo. The independence that once felt like strength starts to feel like a one-person dinner for the fourth Tuesday in a row.
You are not broken. You are not weak.

You are a human being and human beings were not designed to be solitary creatures indefinitely, no matter what your vision board says. I am comfortable in my own shell — genuinely, deeply, not-performing-it-for-Instagram comfortable. I know who I am. I like who I am. I do not need a partner to complete me, validate me, or remind me to drink water. But I am also honest enough to admit that affection is not a luxury. Intimacy — real intimacy, the kind built on trust and time and actually knowing a person — is something the soul requires. Denying that indefinitely is not enlightenment. It is just stubbornness with better branding. So last month, officially, publicly — I announced it. I am back in the market. Open to dating. Ready to meet someone worth meeting.

The comments were delightful. Now — children. Let us address this immediately and without apology. I do not want them. I cannot stand the crying, the duties, the sheer relentless neediness of a small human who does not yet understand that other people also have needs. The world is absolutely full of children. Beautiful, chaotic, exhausting children. I have magnificent nephews and nieces whom I love with my whole heart and hand back to their parents at the end of the day like a library book I enjoyed but was never planning to own. This is fine. This is more than fine. A woman who knows herself well enough to know this is doing everyone a favour — especially the children who will not be

born into a house where their mother is counting down the minutes. Not every form of love looks like parenthood. Some of it looks like being the brilliant, present, wildly inappropriate aunt or uncle who teaches them things their parents would prefer they not know yet.

I am that. Happily. Permanently. But back to celibacy — because here is what the hypersexualised, chronically online, always-available culture does not want you to hear:

It is good for you.

Not forever. Not as a personality. Not as a substitute for actual healing or genuine connection. But as a practice — as a deliberate, chosen period of stepping off the conveyor belt of apps and situationships and the exhausting performance of availability — it is genuinely, measurably, scientifically good for you.

Research has shown that oxytocin — the bonding hormone, the one that produces feelings of safety and calm — is most meaningfully released in contexts of genuine loving connection, not transactional encounter. Every swipe on a dirty app, every situationship that goes nowhere, every interaction that mistakes stimulation for intimacy — it costs something. It does not look like it costs something in the moment. But the body keeps the score, and the body is not impressed by your body count. A period of chosen celibacy resets the nervous system. It recalibrates what you want versus what you have trained yourself to accept. It gives you back the ability to actually feel things — including the difference between genuine attraction and just being bored and lonely at 11pm with a phone in your hand. That distinction is worth more than most people know.

Oxytocin in authentic connection contributes to reducing anxiety and promoting security — feelings of being genuinely known. You cannot build that on an app that shows you someone's carefully curated front page and calls it a personality. Get off the apps. Take six months. Take a year. Take five years if that is what the cleaning requires. Reap the benefits — the clarity, the self-knowledge, the unbelievable quality of sleep when you are not managing someone else's emotional unavailability at midnight. And then — when the quiet stops feeling like peace and starts feeling like too much quiet — have the self-awareness to know that the season has changed. Celibacy was never meant to be a life sentence. It was meant to be a reset. I reset. I healed. I am, by my own assessment, excellent company and a genuinely interesting person with a great deal to offer the right woman.

The market has been informed.

You are welcome.

Judge Nathan Is In Session

On law school, late ambition, bad corporations, and why knowledge is the best weapon money can't buy Let me tell you something about the University of London that most people do not know, because most people only know the glossy version of history. Nelson Mandela studied law there. Not in a lecture hall with a coffee and a laptop. Not complaining about the WiFi. He studied through distance learning, for many of his 27 years of imprisonment on Robben Island — sitting in a cell, with no freedom, no library card, and a government actively trying to stop him from finishing his degree. The South African Department of Prisons blocked his correspondence, refused him permission to continue his studies, and intercepted his application forms so they never arrived. The man was studying for an LLB while literally incarcerated by the state he was trying to dismantle.

He eventually qualified in 1989 — 46 years after his first registration for a law degree.

46 years.

And I thought I was making a bold move doing it in my late thirties.

I am studying at the same institution as one of the greatest human beings who ever lived. A man who used legal knowledge as a shield, a weapon, and eventually a tool to govern an entire nation. A man who understood — in a way that only people who have been truly wronged can understand — that the law is power, and that power without the law is just violence with better PR.

I understand that now too. Not from a prison cell, thankfully. From a different kind of accumulation of experience with people, companies, and systems that behave badly because they have calculated — correctly, for a while — that you do not know enough to stop them. Paramount cancelled my GarfieldEATS licensing. Paramount. The people with the lawyers and the letters and the very official-looking letterhead designed specifically to make you feel small and unequipped. Next time, I will have my own letters. With my own letterhead. And considerably more knowledge of IP law than they will be comfortable with. Knowledge, as Allah said in the Quran — and I am paraphrasing here but the essence is precise — is something you should actively ask to be increased in. "Say: *My Lord, increase me in knowledge." Surah Ta-Ha.* Direct instruction. Not a suggestion. Not a nice-to-have. A command to keep learning, keep equipping, keep sharpening — because an ignorant believer is just a believer waiting to be taken advantage of.

So I went back to school. Late thirties. Second degree. Law.

And before anyone raises an eyebrow — yes, people do this. Mandela earned his law degree while behind bars. If a man studying in a seven-foot cell on Robben Island with the apartheid government confiscating his textbooks managed to persist, I think I can manage lectures and deadlines from the comfort of my own home without too much complaint. The world is drowning in filth dressed as progress. Wars prosecuted by people who will never see a battlefield. Poverty manufactured by systems that call themselves charitable. Homelessness in cities where buildings sit empty. Injustice

wrapped in so much legal language that the people it harms cannot even parse the sentence that explains why they have no recourse. Corporations that do genuinely terrible things and hide behind contracts that the other party never had the knowledge to properly read. Nobody is doing anything about most of it. Or rather — plenty of people are doing things about it, but those things mostly involve making money while performing concern at a safe conference table distance. I want to actually do something. Maybe not fix everything — I am ambitious, not delusional. But to walk into a room where something wrong is happening and have the vocabulary, the credentials, and the legal standing to say: actually, no. That sentence alone is worth three years of study and whatever the tuition costs. IP law in particular — because yes, I have a life and a creative career and I have learned the expensive way that protecting what you build requires knowing what protection actually looks like in practice, not just in principle. Licensing matters. Contracts matter. The fine print that nobody reads until they are sitting across from someone who read nothing else — that matters enormously. So I am reading it. All of it. Enthusiastically and with the energy of someone who has a very specific list of people they are looking forward to being informed at.

And listen — maybe one day, after all of this, there is a bench somewhere with my name on it. Judge Nathan. Black robe, serious face, gavel that I will absolutely use more than necessary. Not Judge Judy — she shouts and I find it excessive, though the ratings were undeniable. Love her though. Not Judge Nathan from Judge Nathan, the daytime show where I sort out people's disputes about borrowed lawn equipment.

An actual judge. With actual authority. Making actual decisions about actual injustice.

The orange suit, naturally, remains optional. Allah gave me the strength to go back. He directed me to the knowledge. He removed every excuse I was carefully maintaining about why now was not the right time, why late thirties was too late, why one degree was probably enough. It was not enough. It is never enough. And the people who decide it is enough are exactly the people that the people with the lawyers are counting on.

I refuse to be counted on.

Class dismissed.

Beige & Proud.

I am a Palestinian. Lebanese. Canadian. Muslim — not by inheritance but by choice, by evidence, by the specific journey of a man who had to lose everything external before he could find what was internal. I have been assaulted and survived it. I have built things and lost them and rebuilt from what the losing taught me. I have stood on a political stage and been ignored by the media and called irrelevant by people who needed me to be irrelevant. I have fought battles in my own mind that nobody in my culture gives me language for — and found the one treatment that actually worked. I have been mocked and threatened and coordinated against and had

my face put in YouTube thumbnails for other people's revenue.

And I have had a dream that I will carry for the rest of my life. I am not the same man who opened an orange restaurant on Bloor Street in 2019 with a bespoke suit and a hunger that he was calling ambition but was actually a question he hadn't yet learned to ask. I am not the same man who drove to a farm on an autumn road crying to Lana Del Rey — healing something he couldn't yet name.

I am not the same man who woke up on a floor in Beirut and ran to his hotel and scrubbed his skin raw trying to remove something that doesn't come off in the shower. I am the man who survived all of that. Who built through all of that. Who found — on the other side of all of that — something the ancient Greeks spent their careers chasing and the Islamic tradition encoded in a single Arabic word:

Rida. The dome is real. I live inside it. The weather still comes — the challenges, the uncertainty, the moments of grief and frustration and the specific loneliness of being a person who sees things clearly in a world that prefers its comfortable fictions.

But the dome holds. Because the dome is not made of success. It is not made of achievement or validation or the number of followers or the reviews or the deals or any of the things I spent years mistaking for the foundation. The dome is made of one thing:

The knowledge that God sees you. That He has your exact number. That what is written for you is making its way to you at exactly the pace He has determined. That the cord He holds will not be cut until He decides it is time — and when He cuts it, it will be because something larger is opening.

Takes you up. Cuts the cord.

He does this to tyrants. He also does this to His servants — not as punishment but as promotion. The cord that needed cutting so you could find the thing you were actually here for.

The cat left so the gap could be seen.

The license terminated so the platform could be built.

The dream visited so the mission could be confirmed.

All will be alright with you.

I believe it.

Not because my circumstances guarantee it.

Because He said it. And I have learned — through everything this book has documented — that He does not say things He does not mean.

WHAT ATARAXIA ASKS OF YOU

It asks nothing complicated.

It asks you to stop performing for an audience that was never going to give you what you were actually looking for. It asks you to put your forehead on the ground five times a day and accept — in your body, not just your mind — that you are the creature and He is the Creator and that this arrangement is not a diminishment but the greatest relief available to the human soul.

It asks you to release what you cannot control and invest completely in what you can — your character, your effort, your response to what arrives.

It asks you to stop mistaking happiness for the destination. Happiness is Tuesday. Rida is the whole life. It asks you to say the things to the people who deserve to hear them before the opportunity to say them closes — because people leave, and the words you didn't say are the heaviest thing you will carry.

And it asks you to believe — specifically, personally, in the specific circumstances of your specific life — that God has your exact number. That what is written for you is already on its way. That the delays are not denials. That the terminations are not endings. That the desert at sunset is not empty even when it appears to be.

He is there.

He was always there.

Even in the club in Beirut.

Even on the floor.

Even on Eglinton at midnight.

Even in the basement with the trolls and their coordinated campaigns.

Even in the boardroom where the shelf fee killed the clean food.

Even in the court where the farmer's cows got seized.

Especially in every room where you were most alone.

"And He is with you wherever you are." (57:4)

Wherever.

Not in the mosque only. Not after prayer only. Not when you are behaving well and believing hard and performing faith correctly.

Wherever.

That is Ataraxia.

That is **Rida**. That is the man I am today — still building, still imperfect, still learning to say the words that don't come easily, still healing things that take longer than I want them to.

But standing in the dome.

Unshaken by the weather.

Finally.

TO: The young person reading this at 2am
RE: Everything you are carrying. And what to do with it.
FROM: Nathen Mazri - Author - Your Garfield King

EPILOGUE

A Letter to the Young Man at 2am

Share it. Copy it. Pass it on.

A LETTER TO THE YOUNG MAN AT 2AM

This letter is for you. Share it with anyone who needs it.

You found this book.

That is not an accident. I don't know how it reached you — maybe someone sent it, maybe you searched for something and this appeared, maybe you downloaded it at 2am when you couldn't sleep and the ceiling had nothing useful to offer. However it happened, it happened. And in my experience, things that happen at exactly the right moment are rarely coincidence. So let me speak to you directly. No brand. No course. No funnel leading to a $7,000 program where I teach you my system for becoming your best self.

Just one man. To another. At 2am.

I know some things about you without having met you.

I know you are tired in a way that sleep doesn't fix. The kind of tired that comes from carrying questions nobody in your life is equipped to answer. Questions about who you are, what you're for, why the path that was supposed to work isn't working, why the things that were supposed to feel like enough don't feel like enough. I know you have probably been told — by a screen, by a course, by a very confident man with a very expensive car in the thumbnail — that what you need is a strategy. A system. A mindset shift. That the reason your life doesn't look the way you want it to is because you haven't optimized correctly yet. I know that somewhere underneath all of that noise, you have a feeling that none of it is quite right. That the thing being sold to you is not the thing you are actually hungry for.

You are correct. Here is what I want to tell you. What I wish someone had told me at your age, before I had to learn it through a Garfield restaurant, a farm with cows, a floor in Beirut, a walk on Eglinton, and a dream that changed everything:

Youth is an asset. Not a liability. I also coined that phrase. I mean every word of it. The world will try

to use your youth against you — your inexperience, your lack of capital, your absence of the right connections, your not-yet-ness. Every institution you encounter will find a way to make you feel that your timing is wrong, that you arrived before you were ready, that you should wait, credential, comply, prove yourself to gatekeepers who have no genuine interest in your success.

Don't. Your youth is not a problem to be managed until it passes. It is the resource. The energy. The specific unreasonableness that built every important thing that was ever built — because reasonable people accept the walls and unreasonable ones build doors through them.

You have more time than you think. And less than you assume. Both things are simultaneously true. Use it now. But here is what nobody selling you hustle culture will say:

Building without God is building on sand.

I know how that sounds. I know the version of religion you may have encountered — the guilt, the performance, the cultural compliance dressed up as faith. I am not talking about that.

I am talking about the real thing. The direct relationship between your soul and the One who made it. The prostration where your forehead meets the ground and something in your nervous system recognizes the frequency of the presence you are in. The fast that teaches your body it is controllable. The name on your lips that has been healing people for fourteen centuries.

I am not asking you to become a different person. I am asking you to become the person you were made to be — which requires the relationship with the One who made you.

Everything else is furniture.

I need to say something about the men being sold to you right now as models of what masculinity looks like. The Tate brothers. The looksmaxxing influencers. The red pill merchants. The men with their private jets and their courses and their very specific ideas about what makes a man valuable.

I will not sell you a $7,000 course. I will not tell you that women are the enemy or that vulnerability is weakness or that the measure of a man is his ability to dominate whatever room he is in. What I will tell you is what I learned the hard way:

The strongest men I have ever encountered are the ones who survived the most and became more open, not less. More honest, not harder. More connected to God, not more disconnected from everything.

Real strength is not the absence of pain. It is the ability to move through pain without letting it make you cruel.

Real masculinity is not dominance. It is the specific courage required to be honest — about what happened to you, about what you struggle with, about what you need, about who you are when the performance stops.

The man who can say I was assaulted and I survived it is stronger than every man who has kept that story locked in his body for fear of what admitting it would cost him. The man who can say I fought something in my own mind for years and found a way through is stronger than every man who never had to fight that battle because the battle was never real enough to matter.

You are not less because of what you have been through. You are more.

I am not here to tell you life is easy. This entire book has been a documentation of how it is not. But I am here to tell you something that the algorithm will never tell you because it cannot monetize it:

You are not alone in whatever you are carrying. The specific thing you think makes you uniquely broken — the thing you have never told anyone, the thing you fear defines you, the thing you have built an entire personality around protecting — I promise you, someone who has walked a similar road has found a way through it.

I found a way through mine. Not perfectly. Not completely. Not in a straight line with a satisfying ending that resolves all the threads. In the messy, nonlinear, two-steps-forward-one-step-back way that actual healing actually works.

And on the other side of enough of it — not all of it, enough of it — I found something real.

Rida. Ataraxia. The dome. The settled calm of a man who has stopped fighting what he cannot control and started trusting the One who controls it.

It is available to you. Right now. Tonight. At 2am with the ceiling offering nothing useful. Not through a course. Not through a system. Through a relationship with the One who made you and knows your name and has had your provision written since before you arrived here.

Put your forehead on the ground. Mean it. Start there.

One last thing.

I ask God why me every time I think about the dream. Why did he come to me — a beige Palestinian-Lebanese-Canadian man who built a Garfield restaurant and ran for office and fought

trolls and made every mistake available — and not to better men who deserved it more?

I don't have the answer yet. What I have is the instruction he gave me. Not in the dream — in the accumulation of everything that followed it.

Tell them.

So I am telling you.

All will be alright with you.

Not because your circumstances guarantee it. Because He said it. And in my experience — which is now documented across sixteen chapters of this book — He does not say things He does not mean.

You are going to be okay.

More than okay.

You are going to be something. If this book found you at the right time — if something in these pages hit differently, if you recognized yourself in any of it, if you want to be in a room with people who are asking the same questions and building through the same noise —

You are invited.

Not to a course. Not to a program. Not to a funnel.

To a community of people who showed up for this before it was finished and stayed because something real was being built.

discord.gg/6fjVjEkwTX

No trolls. Moderated. Real people. Real conversations.

I am there.

See you inside. With everything I have, -Nathen Mazri

"Youth is an asset. Not a liability."

With everything I have,

Nathen Mazri

Toronto,Canada
nathenmazri.com

discord.gg/6fjVjEkwTX

Congratulations!
You have now heard my testimony.
What you do with it is between you and God.

“Truth has come, and falsehood has vanished. Indeed, falsehood is bound to vanish.”
— Quran 17:81

APPENDIX

The Arsenal

Invocations That Manifested

These are not affirmations. Not the Law of Attraction. Not The Secret repackaged with Arabic words. These are transmissions tested in real darkness, by a real man. They worked. They work. They will work. The condition is not perfection. The condition is sincerity.

HOW TO USE THIS APPENDIX

Read each dua. Say it in Arabic if you can — the original language carries a precision that translation approaches but never fully captures. Say it in your own language if Arabic is not yet yours — God hears the language of the heart.

Say each one with presence. Not performance. Your mouth moving while your mind is elsewhere is exercise, not invocation. Mean the words. Even if meaning them is difficult. Especially then.

Repetition matters. Build it into every idle moment. Walking. Waiting. Before sleep. After prayer. Until the tongue moves from habit and the heart follows.

Then release. Make the dua and surrender the outcome. Your job is the asking. His is the answering. His timing is never wrong even when it feels catastrophically slow.

01 For Forgiveness — The Master Invocation

أستغفر الله العظيم وأتوب إليه

Astaghfirullaha al-'Azeema wa atubu ilayh

MEANING

"I seek the forgiveness of Allah the Magnificent and I repent to Him."

The Master Invocation. The polish for the heart is Istighfar. I said it over a thousand times daily. And somewhere in the third year the clarity arrived. The desires lost their authority. The creative energy consumed by the battle became available for everything I was actually here to build. Say it. Mean it. Keep saying it.

02 For Anxiety and Worry

حسبي الله لا إله إلا هو عليه توكلت وهو رب العرش العظيم

Hasbiyallahu la ilaha illa Huwa 'alayhi tawakkaltu wa Huwa Rabbul 'Arshil 'Azeem

MEANING

"Allah is sufficient for me. There is no god but Him. Upon Him I rely and He is the Lord of the Magnificent Throne."

Recite 7 times morning and evening (Abu Dawud). Every time the trolls escalated. Every time a deal fell through. This dua relocates your anxiety from the problem to the solution. The Magnificent Throne is bigger than 2.3 trillion galaxies. The problem fits inside that frame with room to spare.

03 For Protection from Evil — Morning and Evening

بسم الله الذي لا يضر مع اسمه شيء في الأرض ولا في السماء وهو السميع العليم

Bismillahil-lazi la yadurru ma'asmihi shay'un fil-ardi wa la fis-sama'i wa Huwas-Sami'ul-'Aleem

MEANING

"In the name of Allah, with whose name nothing on earth or in heaven can cause harm, and He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing."

Recite 3 times morning and evening (Abu Dawud, Tirmidhi). After Beirut. After the death threats. After the dark web campaigns. The protection is real — not as a magical shield that removes all difficulty, but as the specific covering that comes from beginning and ending each day under the name of God.

04 For Relief from Hardship — The Dua of Yunus (a.s.)

لا إله إلا أنت سبحانک إني كنت من الظالمين

La ilaha illa Anta Subhanaka inni kuntu minaz-zalimin

MEANING

"There is no god but You. Glory be to You. Indeed I have been of the wrongdoers."

Quran 21:87. Said from inside the whale. Three things simultaneously: declaration of tawhid, glorification of God, honest acknowledgment of personal wrongdoing. The scholars say Allah responded because of all three at once. Say it when you are inside whatever your whale is. The whale opens. Not immediately. But it opens.

05 For Sadness and Grief

أمتک ناصيتي بيدک أن تجعل الـ قرآن ربيع قلبي ونور صدري وجلاء حزني وذهاب همي
اللهم إني عبدک وابن عبدک وابن

Allahumma inni 'abduka... an taj'alal-Qur'ana rabi'a qalbi wa nura sadri wa jala'a huzni wa dhahaba hammi

MEANING

"O Allah, I am Your servant... make the Quran the spring of my heart, the light of my chest, the departure of my grief, and the disappearance of my anxiety."

Ahmad. The Prophet (s.a.w.) said Allah will replace the person's grief with joy. The crying nights. The loneliness of fighting a battle nobody knew you were fighting. The specific grief of loving what you have built and watching it end. Say this in your grief. All of it. Mean every word.

06 For Healing

اللهم رب الناس أذهب البأس اشف أنت الشافي لا شفاء إلا شفاؤک شفاء لا يغادر سـ قما

Allahumma Rabban-nas, adhhibil-ba's, ishfi Antash-Shafi, la shifa'a illa shifa'uka, shifa'an la yughadiru saqama

MEANING

"O Allah, Lord of mankind, remove the harm. Heal — You are the Healer. There is no healing except Your healing. A healing that leaves no illness behind."

Bukhari and Muslim. Place your right hand wherever it hurts. Say this. Fourteen centuries of testimony and my own. Try it before you judge it.

07 For Difficult Decisions — Istikhara

اللهم إني أستخيرك بعلمك وأستقدرك بقدرتك وأسألك من فضلك العظيم

Allahumma inni astakhiruka bi'ilmika, wa astaqdiruka bi qudratika, wa as'aluka min fadlikal-'azim

MEANING

"O Allah, I seek Your guidance by virtue of Your knowledge, and I seek ability by virtue of Your power, and I ask You of Your great bounty."

Bukhari. Said after two voluntary prayer units before a major decision. Not to receive a dream necessarily — to align your will with God's. Before the PPC announcement. Before every Scooby-DooEATS launch. The wrong paths became difficult in ways that felt frustrating at the time and clarifying in retrospect.

08 For Financial Difficulty

اللهم اكفني بحلالك عن حرامك وأغنني بفضلك عمن سواك

Allahumma-kfini bi halalika 'an haramika wa aghnini bi fadlika 'amman siwak

MEANING

"O Allah, suffice me with what You have made lawful against what You have made unlawful, and make me independent of all others besides You."

Tirmidhi. After the termination. After the 1.5 million. This dua asks for two things: provision that is clean, and the specific independence of a man who does not need to compromise his character for his income. It never depended on a person. It never did.

09 For Protection of Children and Family

أعوذ بكلمات الله التامة من كل شيطان وهامة ومن كل عين لامة

A'udhu bi kalimatillahit-tammati min kulli shaytanin wa hammatin wa min kulli 'aynin lammah

MEANING

"I seek refuge in the perfect words of Allah from every devil and every poisonous creature and from every evil eye."

Bukhari. The exact dua the Prophet (s.a.w.) used over Hasan and Husayn. Say this over every child you love. Every night. Without fail.

10 For Gratitude — The Dua That Opens Everything

اللهم أعني على ذكرك وشكرك وحسن عبادتك

Allahumma a'inni 'ala dhikrika wa shukrika wa husni 'ibadatik

MEANING

"O Allah, help me to remember You, to thank You, and to worship You in the best manner."

Abu Dawud. Recommended after every prayer. Gratitude is not a feeling you wait to have before you express it. It is a practice that produces the feeling. Rida. Ataraxia. The dome. Begins here.

“And your Lord says: Call upon Me — I will respond to you.”
Quran 40:60

He said it. He means it.
Call God instead of your friend to get drunk.
He may answer faster than they do.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To Allah - first, last, and always.

Everything in this book that is true came from You. Everything that falls short is mine. You lit the fire in me. Not my circumstances. Not my ambition. Not any human being. You. And You knew exactly how far it would travel before I took the first step.

I have nothing now but my prayers and invocations (duas) — and I trust You completely with all of them. If You answer them, alhamdulillah. If You don't — You are protecting me from what I cannot see but You see all. I dream of the seventh heaven. Seven (7) has followed me my entire life — in numbers, in plates, in passports, in moments I cannot explain and no longer try to. It was never accidental. Above all, you have sent the Prophet Muhammed (PBUH) to me!

To my mother — the Goldie Hawn of Lebanese-Levantine immigrant mothers

The woman whose survival I have been trying to understand and honor my entire life. I love you. I am still learning to say it out loud. This book is part of that learning.

To my father — I never truly knew you until lately.

And what I found was a funny, warm, stubborn man — set in his ways in the most specific and unmovable sense — who turned out to be right about most things. But one thing above all resonated and took me over fifteen years to fully understand and fight:
You told me I was my own worst enemy. You were right. I am your son. I can see clearly now. I do not carry what was unfinished between us as a burden. I carry it as fuel. My plans are bigger than me — and that is exactly what you made possible.

To my oldest brother

Blood is blood, regardless of what society puts in front of it. Step, half, full — those are paperwork words for something that has no paperwork. You are my oldest brother. The great artist who built something extraordinary from a starting point that had been deliberately made harder than it needed to be. You are proof that God protects what humans try to destroy.

To my Uncle Eddie
Who continues to believe in the next big disruptive vision in licensing before it had a name, who has been patient in the way that only someone with genuine faith in something can be patient. Your turn is coming.

To Zaid

The young scholar on the Zoom call who told me to pour the alcohol down the drain. You saved something I did not yet know was worth saving.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To Jim Davis

You took a chance on a young Canadian rebel, and you have no idea what that cat brought me. I am not your ordinary licensee. Online trolls do not attack licensees with millions of views and impressions — that was something else entirely.

It was a calling. A self-discovery. It led me to publish a scholarly paper on the defragmentation of licensing and the unsolved challenges that have never been properly named. How you perceive me now I cannot know — but whatever the picture is, it needs an update. Thank you for the Christmas dinner in Indiana. Thank you for the stories. Thank you for "*take care of Nathen now*." And thank you for building something so full of love that it could carry a man all the way to Ataraxia.

To Frank Welker — for barking correctly.

To my fanvestors — the ones who showed up before it made sense to show up and stayed through everything that followed. You are the room I built everything for.

To the trolls, the termination letters, the landmonsters, the coordinated campaigns, and everyone who tried to silence what I was building — thank you. Every one of you was tuition. God used you better than you used yourselves.

To Canada

May you wake up. May you see the light buried in the snow. I worry about you and I worry about your youth. You are a beautiful country slowly forgetting what beauty is for. Come back.

To the young man reading this at 2am — this book was written for you specifically.

I hope it found you at exactly the right moment.

And to Nathen Mazri —

This time.

I love me.

ATARAXIA

A Palestinian-Lebanese-Québécois-Canadian Muslim man built the world's first licensed Garfield restaurant, ran for federal office, survived corporate termination, death threats, and a spiritual war fought mostly alone — then publicly named his assailant, exposed corruption from Trump's world to the halls of Canadian politics. He exposed how *AI* is replacing God entirely. And announced to the world that the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ appeared to him in a dream.

He can prove the rest.

A strange hybrid the internet could not categorize — described by journalists and YouTubers as one of the most unlikely cultural figures of the era.

"To speak to Mazri was to uncover the skin under the sculpture, the man behind the mockery, the heart that beats in us all." — Honi Soit, University of Sydney

"Nathen doesn't have a hint of Zuckerberg's arrogance or Jeff Bezos' flippant villainy." — MEL Magazine

"He took his licks — and made something nobody else would dare. He deserves it. If Nathen becomes a millionaire off of this, I think he deserves it."
— Eater USA

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