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Dr. Bones
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Bit by bit, they counted victory in individual souls. Small groups, independently run and loosely connected, freed 100,000 slaves between 1810 and 1860. Harriet Tubman, one of its most legendary stationmasters, fought to make the world she believed in, refusing to wait for it to arrive or be accepted by society. It was not a matter of abolishing slavery. It was about tearing it apart with your own hands.

The dreams of a racially just society held by the abolitionists have failed, and one wonders how much more militant they might have been if they could glimpse our present time. If they had kept organizing beyond the Civil War and into Jim Crow…where might we be now? Regardless of their failings, the daring and practical work they carried out saved lives. On a decaying planet increasingly hostile what more can one hope for? How many more people need to die while the American worker waits to be convinced?

Nobody is going to abolish the police. Nothing will stop the sadistic murders carried out in the name of "law and order" and nothing will convince everybody. **Step out of some invisible march of history and start focusing on the breathing bodies around us.** Alternative services to calling the police must be built rather than new slogans or "movements." Territory must be claimed and protected. There must be methods to convince the people the police are not their friends and there must be methods to deal with vile scum who would endanger the lives of our loved ones. Through it all, rather than trust in the innate "rightness" of our cause, our idea, our future, we must begin to measure our success in lived human experience.

We have failed Gregory, we have failed his family. Before the year is over more tears will be shed, more blood will fill the streets. Ask yourself how so many Germans could stand by and be complicit in Hitler's crimes.

Oh you pious ones, you devout believers in far off salvation! You blabbering priests vomiting forth the One True Faith! How many more broken lives will you allow in the name of heaven on earth?

Saving Lives Or Waiting For Jesus?

We've got to deal with concrete realities and step away from any Red Heaven. For Black Americans playing music *today* can result in a death squads being dispatched to your house. There is a section of the American population *today* that not only sees this as justified but takes pleasure in it.

Faced with this monumental task many easily grow bitter. They retreat online to ever smaller circles, screaming at a digital void as if it determined the price of their rent. They laugh and mock as the bodies pile up around them, cheer on countries and struggles millions of miles away; history will absolve their own miserable fates and so they let the passage of time do their fighting. They refuse to deal with the outside world and gleefully piss both in the face of those that can be convinced and those who despise them.

Any kind of meaningful change in the survivability of Gregory's children is going to take difficult, arduous work. It is going to be done surrounded by enemies, real ones that will kill you and not "problematic" lecturers at the local college. It will be fought and built on a street-by-street level by people with names and addresses rather than historical concepts like "workers" or "bourgeoisie." It will involve alliances of real human beings with personal relationships looking outside of ideology and onto a planet of nightmares.

The smiles or tears of children will be the measure of their success.

We have Ancestors. The Dead surround us and whisper their secrets. The Underground Railroad did not depend upon an awakening of humanity to carry out its work, yet neither did it refuse to spread the idea of abolitionism to the people. In a country that showed no intention of changing, facing the grim truth that not everyone could be saved, unafraid to rebel against a society that loved all they stood against, this multi-gendered and multi-racial network put themselves to work.

"The mass of ordinary Germans did know about the evolving terror of Hitler's Holocaust, according to a new research study. They knew concentration camps were full of Jewish people who were stigmatised as sub-human and race-defilers. They knew that these, like other groups and minorities, were being killed out of hand.

They knew that Adolf Hitler had repeatedly forecast the extermination of every Jew on German soil. They knew these details because they had read about them."

––John Ezard

"Tell me, Tarrou, are you capable of dying for love?'

'I couldn't say, but I hardly think so–as I am now.'

'You see. But you're capable of dying for an idea; one can see that right away. Well, personally, I've seen enough of people who die for an idea. I don't believe in heroism; I know it's easy and I've learned it can be murderous. What interests me is living and dying for what one loves.'"

—Albert Camus, *The Plague*

On January 14th Gregory Vaughn Hill Jr. was in mortal danger. He didn't know it of course, couldn't sense the odds and probabilities stacking against him. He may have never glimpsed his ancestors draw closer or the slow chill of Death creep across the floor. He was in his home, totally at ease and listening to music. *How could he have known from this moment on he had no future?*

As I sit under the Florida sun and stretch out on tourist-free sands I can't help but think about Gregory. Was he relaxing as I am? What did he think of his neighbors? If "justice" finally came after 500 years would it mean anything to a man stolen forever from his children?

It's 98 degrees and Floridians are heading towards water. My wife and I are at a beach so hidden I dare not speak its name, an undisturbed stretch of the legendary A1A. Most folks drive past it, seeing nothing but sea grapes and palmettos. That's part of the appeal. On top of that the nearest gas station cooks chicken gizzards and homemade empanadas. You can score a six-pack of Landshark

there for $4.99. There are no hotels and public drunkeness is a way of life.

Cheap booze. Beautiful views. Nature in abundance and a carefree attitude that flies in the face of the nine-to-five. For a moment the world drips away. We forget anything else exists.

But on the horizon the world waits, among the clouds slowly rolling in. For Gregory it knocked right on his door.

We're All In This Together

Gregory was on disability leave from a Coca-Cola warehouse. He probably figured if he wasn't going to be working he might as well enjoy himself. He turned on some music, had a few drinks, and relaxed in the small sliver of paradise he'd carved out for his self and his family.

Gregory has a fiancee, Monique Davis. They have three children together.

There is a knock at the door. Innocuous. Gregory doesn't know it but somebody from the school across the street has called in a noise complaint. Gregory goes to the garage door, where the sound is coming from, and opens it to see who it is.

It's the police.

Gregory closes the door. He may have wanted to grab his wallet, change his clothes. Maybe turn down the music. The police, after all, were responding to a noise complaint.

He didn't realize he'd committed a grave error: even alone, inside your own home, it is a fatal condition to be black in America. At this moment, though he never knew it, there was no future for Gregory.

Christopher Newman, a white Florida sheriff's deputy, shot him three times through that door. This killed him. Every dream, every hope, every project that Gregory put off was lost like rain pud-

on his cross, and their pain promises an eventual reward and salvation for planet Earth.

This of course is Christian thinking: that the gospel is so true, so perfect, that when exposed to it people *must* come around. People have heard of Christ, of Feminism, of Mao. No one idea has yet to dominate the planet. Capitalism may be the strongest ideological paradigm but it is far from gospel: each State has tweaked it to its own preferences in ways that might render it unrecognizable to Adam Smith or Karl Marx. Small groups have fought against its "truth" in every way. Why would our ideas be any different?

For some it is a matter of force: if we give the "vanguard" enough power they'll force the workers to behave in the "right" way. This includes mass prisons, forced re-education, and unparalleled violence in the hands of a small minority. Once this power goes up it never comes down, and results in such wonderful fractal expressions as the "People's Republic" of China reducing citizens to state property and funding the execution of Maoist guerillas in the Philippines.

These same vanguards assure us that our sunny beaches are just around the corner–as soon as the whole world agrees to the Holy Gospel. Until then stringent measures and obedience are required until Capitalism is defeated world-wide. The Vanguards fall into the same religious tradition the Educators do, with the added benefits of a Revolutionary Inquisition alongside a violation of human dignity. The Vanguards though are strictly atheists through and through. The historical record shows zero "communist" governments that believed in a classless, stateless society enough to actually try it.

Both theories promise an approaching redemption. Gregory is gone forever today. We assure his children everything will be fine in an impossible future but can't promise they won't meet the fate of their Father. *"People get hit by lightning now,"* says the True Believer, *"but eventually lightning won't exist..."*

Our present predicament stands in stark contrast to these religious myths.

We are the forgotten children of an age once thought impossible, trying to re-tool theories that thought history would end by the time we were born. Capitalism has not ended. It has become all the more pervasive while the working class, as a commodity-producing caste whose labor turns raw material into "value," is ceasing to exist.

Within 10 years nearly half of the 145 million employed Americans — about 65 million workers — will be "independent workers" with no benefits and a precarious employment determined by a platform. Some timetables even have a full 40% of U.S. workers joining the "contingent workforce" by 2020, freelancing to make ends meet and depending on hyper-capitalist enterprises like Uber, Airbnb, and Instacart to survive.

These industries transform no new resources. If anything they shuttle around existing constructions into new commodities based on ease. The working class has little to no leverage, and does not even touch the very platforms they come to depend on. How can one "occupy" the Instacart app? How does one keep scabs from working with Uber if drivers go on strike? The means of production aren't owned by the capitalist but rented from workers at wages below the poverty line–some less than $3 an hour. There is nothing to seize. You already have it.

The grand historical narrative that guided anti-capitalism is going the way of the spinning-jenny and unpolluted water.

The prophecies have failed. What remains? **Faith.**

For some it is a matter of education: if only enough people heard the gospel of [INSERT THEORY/AUTHOR HERE] the people would come to their senses. The people who voted for Trump were all just momentarily confused, secret Anarchists just waiting to blossom! Inside each of them the Kingdom of God awaits, an essential *good nature* bestowed on them by benefit of being reduced to a commodity. Humanity has suffered, like Christ

dles under the Florida sun. Officer Newman would claim Gregory pointed a gun at him. A gun was indeed found on Newman.

Unloaded. In his back pocket.

Odd thing for a dead man, falling back from being shot, to have the muscle memory to unload his gun and tuck it safely in his back pocket. Even odder the placement–no gun owner carries a pistol in their back pocket. You can't draw it worth a damn in that position. Why would you sit on your gun anyway?

We know Gregory was executed for no reason. We know the cops maintain a system of white supremacy and brutal exploitation. This isn't a story about a Black man being lynched by the police. That is as common as swimsuits at Cocoa Beach. This is a story about what came after, when "the people" have to decide if he deserved to die.

Four years ago a grand jury declined to indict Officer Newman, the usual response. Grand juries, often made up of the same "revolutionary" class destined to overthrow capitalism, frequently decline to indict law-enforcement officials who kill their fellow workers.

Gregory's mother filed a wrongful death lawsuit against Newman and his boss, St. Lucie County Sheriff Ken Mascara. The hope was if "the people" weren't willing to put a cop in prison for murder, perhaps they were at least willing to provide a small amount of resources for his widow and children. This wouldn't harm officer Newman or the Sheriff at all: research from Joanna Schwartz of UCLA Law School found that governments, not individual officers, paid 99.98 percent of damages in the case of wrongful death.

The case finally came to a close just recently. The jury deliberated for 10 hours.

The "people" said Gregory was almost entirely at fault because he was drunk. The blame had shifted from "pulling a gun" to simply being black and intoxicated in front of a cop.

It was then time to determine what the city owed Gregory's family for his lynching.

The jury awarded $1 for funeral expenses to Hill's mother, and $1 each to Hill's three children, aged 7, 10 and 13.

The people had been empowered. They came to a consensus. To them a black man's life wasn't worth a pine box to bury him in, his children's pain equitable to a box of chicken Mcnuggets.

The family's lawyer, John Phillips, was flabbergasted. The jury could have awarded nothing, but instead they chose to further humiliate and denigrate the grieving family. *"Either it was punitive,"* said Phillips, *"or they viewed these children's pain as virtually worthless."*

The jury went home and back to their lives. They joined the nondescript faces we pass in the store or eagerly explain Marx's ideas to. Gregory's family was left alone, to struggle and descend into poverty. In the eyes of at least a segment of the Florida population this is exactly what they deserved.

You Just Gotta' Believe!

What does the Left plan to do if "the people" don't want a revolution? Don't want an end to racism?

A storm has chased everyone off the beach, a massive one that throws lighting at the ocean and kicks boogie boards like soccer balls. The power is raw, visceral; there are no trees or buildings to break the wind, to filter the experience. *This is what a storm really is,* I think, *how it really feels.* Trees bend and birds flee. Paradise reveals itself to be an illusion and the storm's fingers reach for more territory.

Finally the rain comes and my wife and I retreat to the car. Powerful bolts of energy are hurled at the water, the crashing sound echoing across miles and miles of wide open ocean. I stand transfixed. These same lightning bolts are an essential part of the Florida ecosystem: when they hit dry land they start wildfires, setting the

state ablaze. New life rises from the ashes and nutrient-deprived soil feeds on the corpses of animals.

Humanity is inoculated against this harsh reality. We move from climate-controlled room to climate-controlled room, visit stores where the people are expected to treat us like royalty and smile on command. We expect to die of disease, not violence(unless you're black of course), and if we believe in an afterlife it's all sunshine and rainbows. Heroes always win, good ideas never lose, and above all karma/the dialectic/human nature will right the wrongs that seem impossible today. History is about progress. Rainy beach days and thunder storms will eventually be corrected.

This mindset is alien to the Conjurer. Violence, death, this is the very essence of existence. Terrible, terrible things happen to good people everyday. Hoodoo does not wait for justice but demands you make it: if you want your neighbor to move you have to hotfoot them, if you want a job you gotta burn gravel root candles and go out looking, if you want your rapist to feel the fires of hell you gotta HEX THAT MOTHERFUCKER and put his ass in the graveyard.

Hoodoo is about influencing present conditions, amplifying or changing them for the practitioner *in their own life.* There are no spells to "advance" in some spiritual hierarchy or gain a better seat in some far off underworld. Our perspective is focused on the here and now.

Can the Left say the same? How does it deal with a portion of the population who is not only hostile to their ideas but hostile to the very lives of those empowered by them?

The jury in this case could be called "revolutionary" in a sense, no doubt made at least in part by members of the "working class." According to many Leftist theorists the working class holds the keys to the liberation of planet Earth and the death of Capitalism. The idea is Capitalism can not survive its own contradictions and that, above all, it will grow to the point where the people would have no choice but to overthrow it.