

**PAX**

**by  
Richard Dante**

SMASHWORDS EDITION

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PAX  
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PAX

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## CHAPTER 1

For centuries man has asked the question: Who or what created the human race? Did it evolve from single cells swimming in some ancient primordial ooze as suggested by Darwin and others, or were we created by God, in his image, as told in the bible? Since stories from the Old Testament are more colorful and entertaining than scientific dogma, let's use one to kick off our formidable tale:

In the beginning, or there about, God created the family unit, presumably starting with Adam and Eve. Should we choose to believe, as biblical scholars do, Adam begat Cain and Able, then there you have it...that's where our troubles really began. When Cain slew Able, he set off a chain of violence which has flourished and escalated to this day. What followed Cain's fratricide were wars of greed, power hunger, ethnic cleansing, genocide, or on a smaller scale, patricide, matricide, regicide, you name it...any time man, or woman for that matter, could visit their inhumanity on others, they murdered their way into the present. For whatever reason, here in the current era, countries, tribes, gangs, and families continue in their attempts to bump one another off.

There are exceptions to the rule, but they often seem to be in the minority. A few gentle souls get along just fine on what they possess and cohabit peacefully with others. Yet the burning question remains, what to do about all the killing? It's crossed many minds. However, over the years, most gave up the quest, the mayhem being too universal and ingrained to do anything about it. Studies ultimately showed a vicious genetic glitch in the human psyche. Found in the area of the brain which houses our self protective gene, it varies from being to being. In a relative few it's only activated when there's need to protect oneself, loved ones or country. Tragically, many others, behaved themselves as long as everything goes their way. They can be kind and gentle as long as they're successful in finding a mate, a job, a fortune or a happy home, but their dark side is provoked when their endeavors are thwarted. In far too many cases the commandments against covetousness, thievery, adultery, jealousy and the sixth commandment, *though shalt not kill*, are ignored. and things get out of hand.

Two thousand years ago, one man tried to change all that. Today we find he was only moderately successful. Unfortunately, he hadn't the technology to bring peace to the insanity inflicting much of the world

## CHAPTER 2

Nearly two thousand years after the first Messiah was born, there came a new peace maker. This one however, was born in an age when philosophies were based on scientific thought, not ancient fables:

And so, It came to pass in the late nineteenth hundreds a brilliant etymologist, Dr. Orville Peace, Ph.D., wed Olive Pound. They married at thirty and at thirty-one Olive gave birth to a bouncing baby boy. Orville suggested, and Olive agreed, they should name the boy Warren after his paternal grandfather. The couple doted on the child and spoiled him with attention. Still, they had other responsibilities and life must go on. Dr. Orville, a much respected professor, taught at Harvard, while Olive, an efficient mother and housewife, kept an immaculate home. Each weekday morning, following a healthy breakfast, she sent her husband off to teach with a farewell kiss.

After clearing away and loading the dishwasher she made it her habit to retire to the family room to watch the early news before launching into her other chores. During these viewing sessions, Baby Warren sat on her lap. From the beginning he was bombarded with the brutality reported by the media. There was a horrendous mix of road rage, assassinations, domestic violence, gang wars, and savagery occurring in battles on the international front, The news rocked the child with an unending spectacle of horrors. From this early beginning, all the killing disturbed Warren as he watched human beings being exterminated.

Following the news his mother would place him in his playpen while she did her housework. She left the television on, usually tuned it to PBS. Once, when she decided maybe the baby would prefer cartoons, she switched channels. Surprisingly this set Baby Warren to squalling until she switched back to the educational channel. As he watched the documentaries and teaching programs he was quiet and attentive, giving her time to complete her housework.

The boy had inherited the best attributes of his parents: his mothers deep blue eyes, fathers dark hair and the intelligence of both. He began to walk and talk at an early age and his mother, assuming he had her and her husbands extraordinary IQs, decided he must also be gifted. At less than a year old she began showing him children's books. He spent hours pouring over the pictures and words, making rapid progress in his desire to learn.

When Olive pointed out her observations to her husband, Orville also became involved in the improvement project and bought complicated puzzles for the boy to solve. Amazed by the child's progress, they sensed they had a genius on their hands. By the time he reached kindergarten, he was reading and writing at the sixth grade level, and his parents entered him in a school for gifted children. At six, his father bought him his first chemistry set and he became an expert at testing the acidity of urine with its litmus paper. As the years passed, he excelled at everything he studied: math, science, literature, language, philosophy, including a fascination with psychology and the workings of the human mind. Though his extraordinary intellect gave him *geek* status, he grew up personable and charming and was popular with his peers, girls and boys alike. Early on, the youngster realized a healthy mind needed a healthy body and went out of sports. In college he became the Harvard team's star quarterback and his brilliant plays carried them to the national championship.

Still, burning in the back of his mind was an obsession to find a way to bring peace to the world. Since his infant days watching the news on his mother's knee he'd continued to observe, listen and read about the the planet's chaos. Driven to stop the killing, he wanted to know why human beings were so determined to snuff one another out, and read everything he could on the quirks of the human mind. Wanting to reverse the process of human violence, he majored at Harvard in biology and chemistry and minored in psychology. Slowly a plan began to form in his mind. In his study of the human psyche, he found proof in the old cliché: *It takes all kinds of people to make up a world*. His studies had shown nearly every being on earth had some form of mental aberration. A small percentage was truly good, while another equally small group were rotten to the core. There may be saints who approached perfection, yet there were also bipolar terrorist tyrants who reeked of narcissism, paranoia and schizophrenia; brutalizing everyone around them.

In between was the vast majority who might be kind and generous on the surface, but harbored a dark side within. Deep in their brains was an evil force which could turn cruel and violent when aroused. There were as many causes for this instability as there were people on earth. A great majority were simply gullible and easily influenced by ruthless leaders. The more he studied and learned about the dark side of humans, the more determined he became to pull them out of the dark and into the light.

Meanwhile like any normal young man, he fell in love. Her name was Emily. She was beautiful, intelligent and affectionate. He simply adored her. He was anxious to marry, but Emily wasn't so sure marriage was what she wanted, she was more drawn toward a successful career in medicine than that of a wife, no matter how desirable her potential mate might be. Determined in all things, Warren decided he might have to get her pregnant to win her. He was athletic and worked out regularly. He was, Emily thought, *a real hunk*, and she certainly enjoyed making love with him as long as he practiced safe sex. However, unknown to Emily, Warren began to punch holes in his condoms or forget to wear them at all. He invited her to have sex regularly. But with all his efforts, his devious plan came to naught. For whatever reason he was unable to impregnate her, and Emily still refused to marry. Years went by as the couple remained true, but single.

### CHAPTER 3

Still, his driving obsession took up most his his time. as he searched for a way to pacify the world. Aware universal frontal lobotomy was impractical, he decided the only sensible mode of disseminating peace would have to be some sort of gaseous compound. Thus, during his graduate studies, he spent much of his time in the university laboratory, mixing and experimenting on his brain child, a *peace gas* he dubbed PAX. Though he'd smoked some pot during his college years it was only out of scientific curiosity. Predictably, reefers gave him a definite feeling of tranquility. Still, he realized he'd have to intensify the potency to make it universally effective. He synthesized THC from sources more legal than marijuana and distilled a concentrate--purifying it and eliminating any negative effects to leave only its positive pacifying properties. Experimenting with mice seemed effective, and in its gaseous form PAX

proved to be even more so. He gave himself small doses and found PAX most gratifying.

Meanwhile, as in his childhood, the news media continued to blast his sensibilities with violence. Horrified, he saw there was a practical side to all the killing. It was an excellent method of population control, but, Warren thought, there must be a better way. He began a series of additional experiments on a special ingredient he could add to his PAX gas. He theorized the combined compound could be released into the upper atmosphere, and riding on wind currents, be inhaled by all the peoples of the world. Yet he realized the birth control additive might prove to be more complex than PAX itself. Another challenge. He welcomed it, but for the moment put it on the back burner of his extraordinary mind.

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Knowing his quest for world peace would be expensive he decided to raise money for the project. While his studies and experiments took up much of his time, he arranged whatever spare time he had for fund raising. Since Warren somehow knew a government grant was unlikely, he decided he'd go to the private sector for financial aid. The charismatic young man was a forceful speaker and conned his way into speaking engagements before service organizations such as the Shriners, Eagles, Elks their women's auxiliaries, and women's clubs-- anywhere he could get an audience. He outlined his plan to create a sophisticated weapon against war and other violence, and told them he was making headway. He'd driven rats crazy and then pacified them with his secret compound. Though many thought he was a crackpot, there were enough wealthy believers to donate vast sums to his fund. There were some pacifists who were more than generous when the young scientist promised he'd travel to troubled areas in the third world and bring back proof positive just how deplorable conditions were.

Since he felt the news media hadn't really shown the most explicit cruelties, Warren needed to see mans-inhumanity-to-man for himself. He asked for and received special visas and permits from the government to go into war zones forbidden to most civilians. During one summer vacation he used part of the PAX funds to go first to Sierra Leone, reputed to be the home of the most horrendous atrocities known to man. Under the control of one of the world's cruelest dictators, the news reported only vague indications of the monstrous tortures the Sierra Leone leader visited on his people.

When Warren arrived in the capitol, Youngstown, he wasted no time in getting into the rural areas, where he'd heard much of the horror lurked. On an ancient bus loaded with locals, baggage and livestock he was rattled into the outback of Sierra Leone. As they bounced along, they heard a commotion ahead and the bus stopped. Armed natives came aboard and ordered everyone to disembark. Warren and one other passenger being the only whites, they were told to stay inside and not look out the windows.

Suddenly there were horrible screams that couldn't be ignored. Warren held his digital camera close to the window and watched, sickened and dismayed as the screaming black passengers, men, women and children were systematically butchered by machete wielding mad men. Arms, legs, hands, heads and torsos were hacked off, and covered with blood, littered the area outside. The driver was among those killed.

The perpetrators finished their grim slaughter and disappeared into the jungle leaving Warren and his companion, who had fainted, were left to fend for themselves.

Seeing the villains leave, Warren got out of the bus to inspect the carnage and forced himself to take more pictures. Finding no one alive, he got back in the bus and drove it to Youngstown. He unloaded his sick passenger at the hospital and returned the bus to the depot. When he reported what had happened to the police, he was rewarded with disinterested shrugs.

Still shaken by the sights he'd seen, he returned to his hotel. He decided to sit down and gather himself together before he collected his key at the desk. He sat behind a potted plant in a small room off the lobby. Overcome with emotion from the horrors he'd seen, he moaned softly to himself. Suddenly he heard three men enter the room and take seats at the small table. The large chair and plant hid him from the men, and he decided to remain hidden as they went about their business. Though he couldn't see them, he soon determined there was an American and two natives. The American spoke only English and one of the natives translated what he said into the local language. As he listened he discerned the gist of their business. It became clear the American was an arms dealer, and he was selling AK42 assault rifles to one of the RUF generals--an officer from the same contemptible organization who'd just slaughtered the busload of innocent fellow passengers. Warren shrank down into the chair, afraid he'd be discovered. Selling arms to such groups had been dubbed illegal by the UN and anyone involved in such dealings could be prosecuted. Finally the three men reached an agreement and he heard an ominous rattle of something hitting the table. Sierra Leone was a major diamond mining country, and Warren had read about weapons being bartered for blood diamonds. The RUF enemies used children to carry out gun battles and cut the hands off their enemies. They had a motto: "You don't hold your weapon against your brother." Brandishing machetes, RUF rebels amputated the hands, arms, and legs of thousands of Sierra Leonines. The RUF indicated the reason for this brutality was so amputees could no longer mine diamonds which might be used to support government troops.

Finally the three men shook hands and, much to Warren's relief, left the area.

He went quickly to the desk and ordered a taxi. Hurrying to his room, he gathered his few belongings, quickly paid his bill, and took the cab to the airport. Once there he took the first plane out of Youngstown, but didn't feel safe until he was winging his way toward Baghdad. The ancient capitol of Iraq could be the *frying pan into the fire*, but at least he'd have the US Army to look out for him.

## CHAPTER 4

His room at the hotel in Baghdad hotel wasn't posh by any means, but was certainly a step up from the one in Sierra Leone. He checked in and sat waiting in the lobby to meet the news reporter his American contacts had arranged to show him around. Warren wasn't there as a tourist, but to research first hand what the conditions really were. Ralph Jones showed up right on time and they went out to scan the rubble strewn city. As they crossed a street entering a shopping area, the reporter remarked.

“See that.” he said pointing at a small beat up car. “Watch out for cars like that. A perfect vehicle for a suicide bomber .”

The small auto pulled ahead of them and into the crowded market place. Warren kept an eye on the vehicle and as it reached the middle of the crowd there was a huge explosion. Warren barely caught a glimpse of flying body parts and groceries before his companion pushed him to the pavement. Seconds later, Jones leaped up and ran toward the disaster. Over his shoulder he shouted:

“Come on!...should be safe now!”

Warren got up slowly and, partially deafened by the explosion, hurried after the reporter. Wanting to get closer to the action, yet dreading what he'd find, he ran on. As he arrived at ground zero he saw the disaster was far worse than he'd imagined--even more heinous than the incident in Sierra Leone. There were many wounded who were still alive and screaming in pain. Bodies and body parts lay everywhere, some together and some dismembered or partially torn apart by the blast. The areas not strewn by bodies were covered in blood. The reporter, had apparently seen such grisly sights before, and went right to work taking pictures and gathering information for his story: estimating the toll of the dead, and the injured. Very shortly, ambulances and trucks began to arrive to clean up the carnage. Warren, sick to his stomach, realized this was his reason for coming to the war zone. He grit his teeth and followed the reporter around. As in Sierra Leone he took many pictures with his digital camera. The sight of all the men women and children suffering or dead and beyond suffering was deplorable to him, How is it possible for human beings to do these things? He was viewing the proof he'd traveled halfway around the world to find: evidence some people get gratification from doing violence to others. Some who enter war have sociopath tendencies. and enter battles with a psyche preprogrammed to hurt, damage and kill. The sight sickened him, but confirmed his suspicions and strengthened his resolve to do something to counteract mankind's depravity.

As he and Ralph Jones finished their grim task, medical and clean up teams went about theirs. Sadly Warren sensed they'd all been there before and this was just another routine suicide bombing.

Finally the reporter shrugged and turned to Warren. “Well. that's it. Gotta file my story, Why don't you go ahead to Army headquarters and check in for tomorrow morning's patrol duty.”

Ralph Jones and Warren managed to grab two local taxis and took off in opposite directions. Jones to the hotel that housed his news department, and Warren to Camp Victory, the army camp outside Baghdad responsible for area security. At the gate, Warren presented his pass and papers and was escorted to the tent/ office of a Major Lees. The Officer was expecting him and they held a brief conference in which the Major outlined the possible dangers of Warren's accompanying his men into the field. Though Warren was aware there were risks, he was willing to put himself in danger to see how soldiers were affected by the angst of war.

After conferring with the officer and checking out some safety gear, Warren returned to his hotel for the evening. Events of the day left him with no appetite, but he'd agreed to dine with the reporter and his news gathering friends. His dinner companions were a mixed lot, but all seemed cynical as they regaled him with their war experiences. He took mental notes of all the horrors they described and would add their comments to the

laptop computer he'd brought for the purpose. Though the conversation was anything but appetizing, he managed to force down enough food to keep going. Tomorrow promised to be another trying day and he'd need all his strength. He retired early and his exhaustion pushed him into a series of bloody nightmares.

## CHAPTER 5

Warren rose before five AM, dressed quickly and forced down a tasteless breakfast before he met his reporter friend in the lobby. Ralph Jones had arranged for transportation and they were hurried out of Baghdad to Camp Victory where they found Major Lees and their Humvee convoy waiting for them. The lead vehicle, radioed for clearance as the three-Humvee patrol drove out of Camp Victory into the countryside. The heavily-armored vehicles hadn't cooled down much during the night. The sun was already up and the temperature climbed rapidly to over a hundred. Since the feeble air conditioner was on the fritz, under body armor and helmets, everyone was soaked within the first hour of a three-hour drive.

While they drove, one of the soldiers, a corporal, rambled on about how you couldn't trust native Muslims. They were a bad and ungrateful mob who were laughing up their sleeves at the attempts of the U.S. to bring peace to the region.

"We gotta throw out the Geneva Convention. This war can't be won as long as we play by some artificial rules written for civilized people." His rant concerned a couple of soldiers who had disappeared. "The reality is, our two American Soldiers will be found dead and mutilated in about two weeks...sounds ugly, but some people need a dose of reality. We're back in Vietnam and the light at the end of the tunnel is gonna turn out to be the glow from a lit fuse. We're fighting under the Marquis of Queensberry Rules while the jihad soldiers are using The Mohammed of Mecca Rules. By grabbing Sadism Hussein, we've only made it easier for them to reek their mayhem on their fellow Muslims. Hussein was the only one who could keep the Iraqi bastards in check."

Warren listened, fascinated, and noted the other soldiers in their Humvee were nodding in agreement. His reporter friend was in another vehicle, but Warren remembered some of the dinner conversation the night before had touched on things the corporal was bitching about.

"I thought history was to teach us how to protect ourselves." The corporal continued. "Guess we didn't learn anything from Vietnam. This is the same deal. These Sunnis and even the Christian Iraqis would just as soon stab us in the back as look at us. And when they are smiling and friendly...Look out!"

When they arrived at their destination, Mahdudiya, they were stopped by what they assumed was a friendly Iraqi patrol. Their group got out of the Humvees to stretch their legs and hopefully find some respite from the heat inside the vehicles. The corporal grabbed Warren's arm and led him behind the group to a nearby building.

"Sorry, man, I just don't trust any of 'em." he growled, leading the puzzled scientist farther away from their group and the Iraqi patrol. "They look too friendly!"

Almost before he got the words out of his mouth there was a barrage of gunfire behind them. The corporal pushed Warren aside and rushed up an alley and down the



street, his assault rifle at the ready. Warren followed at a safe distance and saw the corporal crouch behind one of the Iraqi vehicles and open fire. The Iraqis had already managed to shoot most of the American soldiers. Most, faced with what they thought was a friendly force, had foolishly left their arms in their vehicles. Some of the enemy were killed by the Americans, while the rest of the enemy were gunned down by the corporal. Even when a couple of Iraqis indicated they wanted to surrender, they were shot down by the battle crazed soldier .

The firing from both sides ended as soon as it had begun. Looking forward, the corporal inched his way into the battle zone. Finally he signaled for Warren to follow.

“It’s over...they’re all...oh God! They’re all dead!” He sobbed, leaning down to check his own lieutenant who had been in one of the other Humvees. Warren hurried into the area. Breathing heavily, he groaned in sympathy as he viewed the wholesale slaughter.

Grudgingly he took out his camera and taking a deep breath, began snapping pictures of the carnage. The corporal frowned at his actions, but went on with his inspection of the bodies. Suddenly, Warren came upon the corpse of Ralph Jones, the war correspondent. War shows no favorites and his friend was dead. Choking, he said to himself. *Ralph, I’m so sorry...but I’ll get your story for you.* As he’d seen Ralph take notes, he did the same, getting the count of dead and a description of the horror.

The corporal had disappeared and Warren found him calling headquarters on one of the vehicle radios. The soldier struggled to keep the emotion out of his voice as he reported what had happened and asked for assistance.

While they waited for the helicopters to arrive, Warren wrote out his story:

This morning at 10:15am in Iraq, a coalition force team of ten soldiers (twelve Americans and an Iraqi army interpreter), were attacked near Mahmudiya. As a result of this attack, Both U.S. and Sunni forces suffered heavy losses. Among the dead was war correspondent Ralph Jones. Only Corporal Johnny Michael's and a U.S. civilian observer escaped with their lives.

The attack, one of the worst against American ground forces since a US-backed security crackdown began in Baghdad three months ago, took place near the same area where two US soldiers were abducted by Al Qaeda insurgents last year before their mutilated bodies were found.

Residents in Mahmudiya, an area of orchards and palm groves that is a bastion of Sunni Arab militants including Al Qaeda, said gunmen wearing Iraqi army uniforms had formed the check point the night before. Denying any involvement, the natives, fearing for their own lives, did not warn the American soldiers.”

Warren read his story to the corporal, who made few corrections but criticized the last paragraph.

“I wouldn’t give the goddamn civilians a word of praise. I’ll bet they were part of this...this mass murder”, He finished, his voice filled with hate.

Just then, the helicopters arrived with medics and doctors. They found there was nothing they could do but load the dead U.S. soldiers and the reporter into the helicopters and Humvees. The doctor in charge spoke to the native villagers and convinced them it was their duty to dispose of the enemy corpses.

The officer in charge assigned driving duties to several of the helicopter passengers and asked Warren to go back to Camp Victory with the corporal. With that the

helicopters roared away and loaded with cadavers, the Humvees did the same. Warren sat in the passenger seat of the vehicle driven by the corporal and kept an eye on his companion. The back seats contained four of the dead U.S. soldiers. Trying to ignore the bodies laid out behind them, they drove in stunned silence. As upset as he was, he could see the corporal was even more distraught. Taking a small packet from his back pack, Warren offered the young soldier what looked like a stick of chewing gum. At first the driver refused it.

“Better take it, Johnny. It’ll help. This isn’t ordinary gum. It’s an invention of mine and it should bring you back to reality from all the distress you must feel.”

“I’m fine...fine! I can cope with it!”

“You only think you can. I’ve studied how the mind works. It can only take so much. I can’t have you cracking up on me. Bet you’ve tried pot. Well this is even better, My own *new and improved* THC formula,” he grinned, trying to lighten the grim atmosphere in the Humvee,

“It’ll relax you and give you some perspective on these horrors.

“All right Doc. I could use a double right now.”

The driver’s hands were occupied with operating the vehicle, so Warren unwrapped the gum and holding it by the paper passed it to the driver. The corporal chewed for a few minutes and commented: “Well it does taste good. What’s it made of?”

“Secret formula,” Warren smiled. “A gum base with sweeteners and powered by my own synthetic and safe THC . It’s kinda like smoking pot, but lasts longer.”

Suddenly the driver sighed and took a deep breath.

“Thanks Doc! he smiled, and for the first time since Warren had met him seemed to be able to contain himself. “Say, this stuff is okay!” The aged look the corporal carried before disappeared and was replaced by the twenty year old. Pulling himself together, he sat up straight as he drove confidently back to camp.

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Back at Camp Victory, Corporal Michael's turned his Humvee in at the motor pool and the two reported to Major Lees The corporal related his side of the story. Warren assumed he'd be released to return to the hotel and turn in his story to the news team. The major had other ideas. It looked like the corporal might be in trouble. It seems the rescue medical doctor had spoken to the native village elders and they'd given a different slant to the Corporal's account. Since Warren was the only non-Muslim witness to the killings, the major wanted him to attend the hearing the next day. As Warren and Corporal Michael's left the headquarters tent, the corporal gave Warren a look of despair. Remembering how the soldier had shot down the two Sunnis who tried to surrender, Warren knew where the trouble lay. He gave the corporal a look of understanding and handed him the remainder of the PAX gum. Not wanting to be overheard, he hoped his gesture indicated he was on the corporal's side, and all would be well.

He turned in the story to the media staff at the hotel and spent some time with them... mourning the loss of their comrade, Ralph Jones. He had small snack before retiring. He barely slept that night. Tossing and turning he was buffeted he by the horrors he'd witnessed during the last few days, and his apprehensive about the military

hearing the next day. Up at dawn, he showered and shaved to make himself presentable for Corporal Michael's hearing. He took a taxi out to Camp Victory and arrived at the tribunal at eight. Inside a large tent he found the court already assembled. Seated at a long table were five officers who looked like they meant business. Nearby was Major Lees, the pilot from the helicopter rescue crew, a medical officer and a very discouraged looking Corporal Michael's. Behind him a couple of MPs stood guard. As he entered and took a seat in back, Michael's gave him a sad smile and held up the empty PAX gum wrapper. Though he was chewing the leftover gum, it had apparently lost its effectiveness. It crossed Warren's mind he'd need to give the formula a boost.

The colonel, acting as judge, wrapped his gavel and the proceedings began. The whole courts-martial atmosphere worried Warren. He knew what he was going to say. He just hoped it would be enough to get the corporal off the hook. The accused was being tried for excessive violence against the enemy, an disregard for the Geneva Convention. Major Lees was called first and confirmed Corporal Michael's was an excellent soldier and a fine squad leader. He was up for sergeant any day now. The Major was followed by the helicopter pilot who told his side of the story and mentioned that the Sunnis couldn't be trusted to honor the Geneva Code. They had slaughtered the Humvee patrol brutally and without mercy. Next the medical officer who had been helicopter to the scene was called. He agreed with what the pilot had said, but added the coup de gras. The medical man had spoken to the village elders and they claimed two of the Sunnis had signaled to surrender, but the Corporal had blatantly shot them down. With that, Corporal Michael's bent his head in his hands.

Finally it was Warren's turn and he nervously took the stand to give his testimony.

"Gentlemen, I'm here to state the Corporal Michael's is innocent and deserves a medal for his bravery. I was right behind him as he exchanged fire with the murderous enemy. The two Sunni's in question saw me. The corporal was down behind one of their trucks, and I was the only one visible. Foolishly I was standing in their line of fire and they took careful aim at me. I ducked down, just as Corporal Michael's shot them, saving my life. You must find Corporal Michael's innocent.

The colonel nodded gratefully to the young scientist.

"Thank you Dr. Peace. Your testimony has been most helpful."

As Warren stepped down, the colonel turned to Corporal Michael's.

"Corporal, is there anything you wish to add to the testimony."

"No, sir, that's the way it went. Just like he said." Michael's responded.

"Very well. If you'll give us a few moments." After a brief exchange with his fellow officers, he turned back to the others.

"In view of the positive testimony, I hope what I say will go no further than this tent. There is strong suspicion these days, though civilian Muslims may support what we are trying to do here, there are also many who can't to be trusted to tell the truth, We exonerate Corporal Michael's with our thanks and best wishes.

There was a gasp of relief from the corporal and the MPs both gave him pats on the back. Michael's commanding officer shook hands with the relieved soldier as he made his way to Warren's side. The corporal didn't say word, but as they shook hands, Warren saw tears of gratitude in the young soldier's eyes.

## CHAPTER 6

Warren took the next plane out of Baghdad. He'd seen enough to convince him his invention was sorely needed. In Paris he transferred to a plane bound for the U.S. During the trip he reviewed his notes and scanned the horrendous photos in his camera. As he digested the grim realities of what he'd seen, his mind also remembered things Corporal Michael's had said during the long drive back to Camp Victory. The angry soldier had related more war stories, including the one about two soldiers who had been captured and mutilated while patrolling the outskirts of the Camp. In his own words, Warren wrote down the corporal's words as he remembered them:

"Hopefully their deaths were quick, but we know that's not the case. We all know what the satanic cult of death does: excruciating, horrible, prolonged agony where one begs for death and is denied, given only enough time to recover a bit, and then more torture - a cycle repeated until the maximum possible pain is extracted before death. The bodies are then mutilated, dismembered, often having their severed genitals stuffed in their mouths. What I've seen, read, or heard about Islam and Muslims for years had shown me that there can be no peaceful coexistence." Still quoting the corporal, he wrote, "I look at most religious faith as a minor mental illness. Islam, by contrast, is a large metastasizing brain tumor. If it is not excised, it will kill civilization." Warren wondered, Was he himself the one to perform the *operation*.

Could what the corporal said be true of all Muslims, or was he merely relating the distorted view of war sustained by a few evil leaders? Sadly, Warren had seen enough to wonder if sadism was not the exception, but the rule.

Back in the U.S. he learned the incident in Iraq had made the front page and lead story of all media. He was a bit upset when he found they'd mentioned his name as an eye witness to the

massacre, the worst in the war so far. Apparently his friends in the newsroom in Iraq had considered his presence news worthy. No matter. The publicity might even help his cause.

He hurried home where his parents, who, having seen and read the story had been worrying about him. Relieved to have their brilliant son home and safe, they held a brief family homecoming celebration. That evening he went straight to his computer and set to work creating a multimedia presentation he could show in his continuing fund raising campaign. First he downloaded the many digital photos into the the computer's sophisticated video program. Determined to show man's cruelties as they are, he researched the web and found additional information and stills on gangland terror in the U.S. and accounts of domestic and criminal violence. As he worked he became more aware of the horrors inflicted on humanity by depraved minds. He wondered--was evil even more prevalent than he had first thought?

He also decided to add to the mix some history of mans inhumanity to man. Using graphics and art work from the internet, he illustrated the abominations wreaked on mankind by such ancient leaders as Genghis Kahn and Julius Caesar. And there was Charlemange who had terrorized and murdered his way through Europe in the name of Christianity. Plus Warren included gruesome pictures from Nazi death camps. He

included Hitler and Stalin and other ruthless psychopaths. He also gave motion to the still pictures with the special effects in his computer's video program. As he worked he was torn by the hope his audience could tolerate the graphic pictures and not be tuned off by the reality of world wide depravity. The story had to be told and he prayed there would be enough wealthy, sympathetic viewers to fund a project that might ultimately cost nearly a billion dollars.

After he had scored and narrated his presentation, he held a viewing for his parents.

They had left him alone during his labors and were anxious to see the final product. The young scientist, in turn, wanted to see if the content of his presentation would be acceptable to the general public. As they watched the digital video, he could sense his mother's revulsion at some of the scenes, but he had added a few pictures at the end, depicting a world at peace after the dispensation of PAX. The program ended on a positive note, and his father, Orville Peace, was bowled over by the power of the presentation. He applauded and shook his son's hand in congratulations on a job well done. His mother, who he'd never seen cry, wiped away a few tears and gave him a big congratulatory hug. With their encouragement, he sent out announcements to his former funding groups alerting them he was back and, as promised, with graphic proof of what he'd only implied in his earlier lectures. Many of his contributors had seen the news reports of his involvement in the Iraqi incident and were anxious to see and hear about it first hand.

His Harvard days were behind him, and armed with his doctorate, DVD, large video projector and many invitations to speak, he set out across the country. He traveled alone. Not by choice. Emily was taking an internship at a New York hospital and wasn't available to accompany him. She was planning a career as a cardiovascular surgeon and he began to see the hopelessness of his quest to wed and bed her.

## CHAPTER 7

A convincing and charismatic orator, now supported by the new video presentation, he was a smashing success. The flow of funds went from a trickle to a flood. With it he leased a large deserted factory closed by the economy crunch. In Bedford near Boston, he had it modified for his current as well as future needs. At the moment he was hard at work in the large well equipped laboratory. Instead of working alone, he now he had enthusiastic assistants to aid him. First he needed to purify THC and remove any potentially dangerous chemicals from the compound. Leaving only it's positive formula. Earlier, as he'd worked on creating PAX, he determined world peace would bring with it, other complications. Without wars and such to kill off surplus humanity, what to do about over population? He decided he'd have to put some sort of birth control into his concoction. Mass sterilization was out of the question. Finally he came upon the ideal solution. By combining certain chemicals and adding them to the mix he could push a large percentage of the population toward bisexuality. They would still have a choice, but statistically, there should be less births. Fearing he might be effected by the compound he decided to save that ingredient for the final product.

For once he had a selfish motive. Since he was still involved romantically and sexually with Emily, he didn't want to do anything to jeopardize his own love life. There was also the question of the animal kingdom including mammals, birds, insects and aquatic life. If as he hoped, PAX pacified all living things, it could eliminate the *survival of the fittest* drive from the world. Carnivores would cease their decimation of the animal kingdom. This of course created another problem. If animals ceased to kill one another for food, the world could be overrun by starving creatures. What to do? The carnivores would have to be redesigned to become scavengers and herbivores. Lions, and tigers and bears, would be given the duties of cleaning up those who died of natural causes, and would, out of necessity, become herbivores to fill out their diet. But what about meat eating humanity? They would have to become vegetarian, and hunters, fisherman and butchers would need to find employment elsewhere. Deciding to let the animal kingdom well enough alone, he added a genetic marker to leave animals to their age old habits.

## CHAPTER 8

In spite of his success with mice, rats and one chimpanzee, he realized there was a pressing need to test PAX on human beings. During his last days at Harvard, he contacted the California Medical Institute in Vacaville California, a prison notorious for its psychotic inmates. After reading Warren's letters of recommendation from the Harvard graduate school and a treatise outlining his goals and need for a human guinea pig, the warden sent an invitation. Encouraged, Warren packed his gear, bid his parents farewell and flew to San Francisco. He rented a car and drove to the nearby town of Vacaville, and a small house he'd sublet near the prison. He then called the warden to confirm their meeting the next day.

The facility was less than a mile from his rental and the next morning he elected to walk over. At the steel gates he pushed the bell and was greeted by two guards in uniform. When he presented the warden's letter, they ushered him in, and he was escorted him to the main office.

When the receptionist announced him a stocky gentleman rose from behind the desk, and came around to greet him with a wide smile:

"Dr. Peace! This is a pleasure, sir! I was just re-reading the materials you sent us and your credentials from Harvard. Very impressive and your proposal looks promising. We have a large collection of incorrigibles, and your plan to pacify at least one of them is certainly welcome. Too bad you can't use...uh...PAX, is that what you call your compound? Can't PAX the entire prison population. Your info sheet mentions the procedure is safe and hopefully beneficial. We're grateful for anything you can do."

The two men shook hands, "Warden Silvers, I'm the one who's grateful. My plan really hinges on whether or not my formula works on the most hardened psychotic criminals."

"Well, you've certainly come to the right place. I'm sure you know we house some of the worst in the country. I know you're as anxious to get started, and we are hoping to see some results. How may I help you!"

Taking a seat in the chair indicated by the warden, Warren began.: “First I’ll need to look at files on some of your worst cases. I’d like time to study them, and with your input we can select the prime example.”

The warden reached across his desk and picked up a heavy pile of manila folders.

“We’ve already put together rap sheets on the best of the worst. You may take your time studying them. I’m sure someone with your psychological credentials will find them interesting

“Oh, here he is.” the warden smiled as a short man in a white medical jacket entered the office. “Dr. Peace, meet Dr. Barker. our medical supervisor. He’ll represent the medical staff during your experiments. You may need him to tranquilize a violent inmate.

“A pleasure Doctor! I hope your assistance won’t be needed. The reason I’m here is to *tranquilize* whoever we select.”

“Good to meet you Dr. Peace. I’ve been informed your visit may aid our own treatment. I hope you’ll forgive my skepticism. “A Peace Gas?!”

“Yes, I call it PAX. Maybe I should outline my plans.

The trio sat down and Warren told him about PAX and his plans to bring peace to the world. He also touched on the horrors he’d witnessed in Africa and his hope to make changes.

Both listeners were impressed with the idea and his PAX philosophy, but Dr. Baxter remained skeptical.

“A truly admirable ambition. But to pacify the entire world. Is that possible?”

Warren responded. “It won’t be easy, but I have many financial backers and my presentation has convinced them I’m on the right track. I’ve experimented with rats and monkeys, and I’m sure PAX is safe enough for animals, even beneficial. Now I need to try it out on at least one really violent human being. If we can pacify even one crazed human psyche, we should be able to do the same for the rest of the world.”

The MD smiled and extended his hand. “Well, PAX *sounds* miraculous. I’m sure the warden is as enthusiastic about the *possibilities* for our inmates as I am. IF...only, it works. How do you plan to administer this...uh.. PAX gas?

“It’s too bad your prison doesn’t have a gas chamber, but I brought something that may work as well.” Warren reached down and picked up a large attaché case. “It’s a sort of personal gas chamber,” he chuckled as he removed what looked like a gas mask with several tubes attached to it. “It’s my own design. I’ve used it to pacify a psychotic chimpanzee, but now I hope it will work as well on one of your sociopaths. It’s designed to allow the subject to breath PAX into his lungs, but when he breathes out, the air, including any residual PAX, goes into another container. This experiment is only for your violent felon. Observers are not part of the test.”

“Sounds promising,” smiled Doctor Baxter. “However, I suspect your *victim* may need a shot to tranquilize him long enough to install the mask. I can stand by to administer the shot as needed.”

“Thank you doctor. Now all I have to do is study these diagnoses this evening and make my selection?”

“Sorry for the skepticism , but we’re hopeful and looking forward to your worthy experiment Dr. Peace. I imagine you’re anxious to get started. Take the files and study

them, while we to get back to running this...uh...nut house.” the warden smiled. “Let us know when you’re ready to make the final pick.”

Warren rose, took the folders and shook hands with the warden.

“You’ll find some really extreme cases in that pile.” Dr. Baxter added shaking Warren’s hand. “I tried pick our worst inmates.”

Warren left the doctor and warden and returned to his rental. There, he cleared the dining table and sat down to go over the case studies. The day went by as he became fascinated with the various stories. He forgot about dinner as he read detailed reports of the horrendous crimes committed by the subjects. Finally, by midnight he’d selected three examples. He took a shower and went to bed. He’d get some sort of final decision from the warden and Dr. Baxter the next day.

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“Roger Cooper?!” exclaimed the Warden. “Well Doctor, you certainly know how to pick ‘em. He’s a tough nut all right, dangerous and totally insane. He tried to strangle his girl friend and was sent here in chains. We’ve been unable to reach him or help him shake off his schizoid narcissism.”

“Perfect for my purposes, warden. Though your reports are quite complete I’d like to see for myself. If I could use your equipment I want to test him myself.”

“We normally have to sedate him to get anything out of him. We could give him a shot after lunch and maybe you could do the exam an hour later.”

“Thanks warden, but no sedation. I need to see the raw truth...the real Roger Cooper.

“It could be dangerous. Hopefully we can contain his violent temper>”

The warden walked Warren to a special room that housed the equipment for testing inmates. His guest sat down at an electronic device similar to a lie detector. He studied it for a few moments to familiarize himself with its workings. It was like those he’d worked with at Harvard’s psychological department. Turning to the warden he announced.

“Yes, I think this will do nicely, Can we see Mr. Cooper now?”

“Yes, I’ve sent a small squad to get him. but you might want to stand off to the side when he enters. He can be extremely violent.”

Warren rose from the chair and went to stand next to the warden. Dr. Baxter joined them. They waited a few moments before there came the sound of a commotion from the hall outside. Suddenly the door burst open and a squirming mass of humanity forced its way into the room. Warren could make out four husky guards and one average sized man who was heavily manacled and handcuffed. There seemed to be good reason for his chains. He was kicking and wriggling so powerfully the four guards had trouble containing him. He was also wearing a mask similar to those worn by goalies in a hockey game. From the grill that covered the struggling prisoner’s mouth came a loud stream of the most awesome profanity he’d ever heard. As the guards tried to avoid being injured by the mad man, they managed to seat him in what resembled an electric chair. Warren, aware this was a necessary precaution, watched as they applied wrist and ankle straps and larger belts around his waist and chest. Finally they pulled his head against the headrest and fastened a clamp around his head.



With the prisoner immobilized they shook themselves and released sighs of relief as they inspected their own damage. All the while being regaled by foul language.

“Is the mask necessary?” Warren asked

“He bites!” came the warden’s reply. “I hope you’ve had your rabies shots.”

While they spoke, a technician applied and attached probes to various part of the squirming, cursing inmate. Sensors were placed on his forehead, arms, hands, and ankles in preparation for the exam.

The technician, motioned for Warren to return to the test equipment. “It should be safe now, Dr. Peace. You may begin your examination.”

“If we could remove the mask, I think I’ll get a better reading. Surely he’s secure enough to be safe.”

The warden motioned to one of the guards to remove the mask. “But be careful, He’s a wild son of a gun.”

The guard hesitated for a moment. He looked anxious. Then going behind the bound and chained man, he carefully removed the mask, being careful to keep his hands clear of the gnashing jaws. The mask removed revealed an angry face, contorted beyond recognition. The bound man continued his tirade of profanity.

“Who the hell is this?!” he growled as he fixed Warren with a menacing look.

“Roger, meet Dr. Peace. He’s here to help you.” The warden offered in a pacifying tone of voice.

“Bull shit!” exploded Roger Cooper “Nothing’s gonna help me. Sure as hell, not his dude!”

“I hope you’re wrong,” offered Warren. “I hope all this will not only help you, but cure whatever it is that’s troubling you!” Warren withdrew a sheet of paper from his jacket pocket, then turned to the technician. and nodded. The equipment began to whirr and the prisoner quit his raving for a moment to stare at the flashing lights and dials as Warren continued. “I’m going to ask you a series of questions. It would be helpful if you would answer them truthfully. However, in this go around verbal answers will not be necessary. The probes will measure your body language and respond for you. Let’s begin. How are you feeling?

“Like shit! whadayathink?” Roger Copper spit out.

“How did you do in school?”

“Hated school! a waste if time! I was smarter than the dunce teachers”

Dr. Peace continued asking questions for about an hour and received a similar string of negative answers. Meanwhile the warden, Dr. Baxter and the guards stood by. When the test was over, Warren asked to see the read out. He analyzed it and nodded.

“Very good, Roger! A perfect candidate for PAX.

“PAX! What the hell is PAX?!”

“PAX could be the miracle that will change your life. At least I hope so.” turning to the warden and Dr. Baxter, he asked, “Unfortunately, it looks like we may need that hypodermic, Doctor.”

Cooper exploded. “Hypodermic! Now wait a minute! You’re not gonna stick any needles in me.” Terrified the prisoner struggled against his bonds at the doctor approached with his right hand extended, exposing the needle. The guards quickly grabbed and bared an arm for the doctor. Even in his bound state, he tried to kick and

gnashed his teeth as he released a flood of abusive curses. The guards finally held the prisoner long enough for the doctor to administer the sedative.

“Dr. Peace, you picked the right man. As violent as he seems he hasn’t really done any serious physical harm to anyone. He’s here because his frustrated love for a conniving woman had taken him to the point of murder. A neighbor heard the woman’s screams and called the police. When they arrived they found him strangling the woman. From then on, he’s been as you see him. Bitter and vicious to the point it takes four strong men to subdue him.”

“Yes, thank you warden. From his tests I was able to see his potential for violence. He’s right in the ball park of the extreme behavior I hope to reach with my experiments.” As he watched the guards struggle with their charge, he only wished he make this Roger Cooper understand they were trying to do; find a safe way to administer PAX while avoiding injury. After a few minutes the subject went limp and only his bonds kept him from falling out of the chair. Doctor Baxter nodded to Warren, who came forward with the case containing his device. Quickly he removed the gas mask and placed it over Roger Cooper’s face. After carefully checking his connections, he turned a small valve and there was the sound of gas escaping. The subject in the chair was breathing easily--inhaling the PAX from a small canister while exhaling into another container.

After about a half hour of inhaling the gas, the young man took a deep sighing breath. Warren closed the valves on the device and removed the mask. The face which had been contorted in hate and anger had relaxed and taken on a peaceful expression. He opened his eyes and suddenly his face broke into a broad smile. His blue eyes sparkled and his lips parted to reveal straight white teeth. To the institution staff it was the first time since his incarceration he actually looked happy. Those gathered in the room heard him giggle as the THC mixture coursed through his system. The guards stood by, ready to quell any outburst from the criminal. They were surprised when he gave them his full cooperation. Dr. Peace was delighted. The prisoner giggled a bit as they reattached the detector’s sensors and probes.

“Hey fellas, have you heard the one about...?!”

Jaws dropped all around. Incredibly, one of the asylum’s most difficult inmates. the one who usually only opened his mouth to utter abuse and curse them. now offered to entertain them with a joke. All stood spellbound as he related the amusing tale. It was not only clean but contained no sacrilegious or ethnic slurs, and was so hilarious and expertly told they roared with laughter. Though it seemed he was no longer a threat, prison protocol dictated he must be manacled and fettered which he patiently allowed, as the guards still chuckled over the joke. Then, Dr. Peace took him through another series of test questions, which he answered promptly and intelligently. When all the questions had been addressed, Warren took a few moments to evaluate the results. With a triumphant hoot he proclaimed the PAX had apparently pulled the dangerous sociopath back to sanity.

The grateful former maniac joined the positive round of applause. Exhausted by the events of the day, he turned to his captors and announced:

“Thank you Dr. Peace, Warden, Dr. Baxter.... Now if you don’t mind. Could you take me back to my padded cell for my afternoon nap?”

Though the astonished guards removed the test chair restraints, they still followed the rules, as they handcuffed and reapplied ankle fetters. Foregoing the protective mask, they led him from the room. As they moved down the hall...the guards were again heard laughing merrily at another Roger Coopers joke as they led the former mad man back to his cell.

Feeling triumphant at the positive results Warren asked the warden if he might visit Roger again the next day.

## CHAPTER 9

As early the next morning as seemed appropriate he walked back to the prison where the warden took him to Rogers cell. As he entered the padded enclosure, the once violent young man came forward to shake his hand. All traces of a a schizoid nature seemed to have vanished as the warden left them alone with the guards stationed outside.

“Sorry about the lack of furniture,” Roger apologized with a gesture to the small room.

“They keep it sparse to make it safer for us nuts. And it makes it easier to inspect for weapons. No place to sit but on the bed.” He motioned toward the cot in the corner.

Tentatively Warren sat down and the inmate sat on the padded floor.

“Doc, I can’t thank you enough for handing me this cure, Not sure what it was in that gas stuff, but it sure made a difference. I was scared to death when Doc Baxter gave me the needle, but after a few minutes of...uh...PAX, it was as if the world was lifted off my shoulders. For the first time I can remember, I’m actually glad to be alive.”

Warren could see tears of gratitude in the younger man’s eyes. The change in Roger Cooper was truly amazing. From a hate-ugly, savage animal to this totally different being was really satisfying. The sociopath’s blue eyes were shining and the lips smiling. Generally well groomed , his brown hair was combed and fingernails clean. Though afflicted with normal prison pallor, he seemed healthy enough. Warren had been informed one of his subjects obsessions was a need for vigorous exercise and even though he wasn’t often allowed out of his cell, he’d resorted to dynamic tension exercises to keep fit. This worried the personnel. They assumed he wanted to keep in shape as he awaited the chance to escape and wreak havoc on any who got in his way. His obvious power only made him more dangerous. At the moment he seemed normal enough, except for the arresting blue eyes. As Warren sat there, he felt Roger studying him. The eyes never left his face and though not unpleasant, it did make him nervous. Finally, feeling the success of PAX was assured he shrugged off his uneasiness and he decided to confess his reason for the morning’s visit.

“Roger, how would you like to get out of here?!” he began.

“Whoa, more than anything! They take good care of me here, but I’ve been stuck in this room for two years and would like to see the world outside.”

“I’ve spoken to the warden and he agrees it might be safe to allow the *new you* a bit of freedom. The final tests were positive and we all feel like you may be ready to leave. Fortunately you’re only here for behavior treatment and not for criminal reasons.”

“Well, I did come close. That bitch I was in love with sure screwed me over. It’s lucky a neighbor called the police or I’d be in for life with no parole.”

“I’ve rented a house a short distance from here and the prison staff has agreed to allow you to stay with me for a few days. How long, of course depends on you. If I see any signs of regression you’re coming back here.”

“Got it! Got it!” the prisoner agreed, laughing joyfully. “The sooner the better!”

Warren got up and went to the cell door. He spoke to the guard for a moment and the door opened. Warren motioned for Roger to follow him. Though the guards looked a bit dubious, they made no move to bind the prisoner as they led the way to the warden’s office.

“All ready to go, I see!” smiled the warden getting up from his desk. “This is only on your good behavior Roger. Any sign of the old you, and back you come!”

“Thank you warden, I plan to be a real good boy!”

“We have your things in the suitcase, there,” offered the warden. “You might want to change before you go.”

“Maybe we can do that at the Doc’s place. Now that you’ve made this generous offer I’d really like to get out in the fresh air. The neighbors are used to seeing these uniforms. As long as the Doc is with me, I won’t scare anyone.”

“Then off you go, the guards will have you sign out and good luck!”

As Roger was led away by the guards, the warden took Warren aside.

“Though I believe you’ve cured the man, it’s highly irregular and I’m sticking my neck way out to allow an inmate out of our sight without some sort of legal release. How can we be sure the cure is permanent and he won’t regress to his sociopath personality? And you’re taking on a dangerous responsibility. If you should want to make it permanent you’ll have to go before a judge who will make you his combination legal guardian and parole officer. We can only pray he’ll behave. But one thing the test may not have indicated. HE sometimes walks in his sleep. Not sure what will happen now. Let’s give it a few days and see if the PAX really did the job. If that miracle really occurred, you’ll eventually have to clear him with the courts. We’ve faced that one before. With any luck it should be simple enough.

Warren took the warden’s hand and shook it. “Thanks warden, I think we’ll be okay. I’ll call with a report tomorrow.

Warren, carrying the suitcase, met Roger at the gate and when they opened it, the former inmate rushed through the gate and did a little dance as he cavorted about. “See you guys!” he laughed waving at the guards. Relieved to see one more problem out of their charge, they waved back.

“I hope you don’t mind walking,” Warren suggested. “It’s only a short way and it’s a nice day!”

“A gorgeous day!” Roger enthused resisting the impulse to skip. “And I’d love to walk. I’ve been sitting so long, I hope my ol’ legs still know how.”

The two men made their way along the path to Warren’s rental and the scientist laughed as he watched the freed inmate leaping about. Occasionally Roger ran up to pat him on the back or give him a friendly punch. He was like a kid on a holiday. Warren was glad for him and for himself. He’d made it all that joy possible. Finally they reached the house and Warren showed his guest to his room where he plopped down on the bed.

“God, a real bed! It’s been a long time.” He smiled at his host as his gratitude shown in his face. “How about a shower? and I need to put these clothes away.” he said indicating the small suitcase Warren had set on the chair

## CHAPTER 10

Warren prepared a simple lunch. As the two munched on sandwiches, the scientist made a startling proposal.

“You know what. I think we both need a break. This has been a really wild two days. If you’re up to it, I’d like I to go into the city and see the sights.

His guest brightened. “That would be really great! After being locked away for so long, I’d like to see San Francisco again.”

“I grew up and went to school in the east. All I’ve seen of the Bay Area was from the plane before it landed. Maybe we could go museum hopping and have dinner in town.”

“Like a date?!”

“No...not exactly. More of a celebration. I modestly admit I’m proud of how things turned out. How successful the PAX experiment worked.”

“...in taming the beast?” Roger grinned sadly.

“Yeah, I guess that’s it. I hope....uh I don’t know the *new* you, but at first glance... I think you turned out A.O.K. I put you through a lot of strum und drang yesterday, and you deserve a reward. Fact is we both need some R & R. What do ya say!”

“Delighted, Doctor Peace!” agreed the smiling former maniac.

As they drove to the city by the bay, Warren regaled this passenger with his plans. Opening up for the first time he told of his design to release PAX into the atmosphere and hopefully bring peace to the world. Some of it was still theoretical, but he spoke with confidence of how dismal the outlook was at the moment and how much better things could be.

Fascinated, his passenger rarely took his eyes off of the driver.

They drove through the city and into Golden Gate Park. After Warren parked the car, they toured the east end of the huge park. They enjoyed the beauty and awesome landscape of the park itself with it’s Arboretum, Botanical, Japanese and Shakespeare Gardens. plus the De Young museum. After moving the car, the two also took in several aquariums and late in the afternoon, wandered through Fisherman’s Wharf looking for a likely place to dine. As the sun went down over the bay and night crept over the city, they settled on a reputable seafood restaurant. After putting their name on the waiting list, they retired to a cozy bar and decided to have a few celebratory drinks before dinner. Though they’d certainly enjoyed their sightseeing excursion, the hike and fresh air had wearied them and they said little as they sipped their drinks. When their table was ready they carried their drinks into the dining room and sat down. The jaunt to the city had helped to bond them as friends. Warren was particularly delighted with the way Roger Cooper’s personality had blossomed from the violent malcontent of their first meeting, to the warm and friendly being who now sat opposite him. After a bit the two

grew silent again as they concentrated on the gourmet meal. Once Warren felt his guest's eyes on him and the blue eyed stare unnerved him a bit.

"You're doing it again!"

"What's that?"

"Staring at me. I wish you wouldn't." he reprimanded with a troubled smile. "It not only makes me nervous, but people might talk."

Roger looked away, and Warren could swear he saw a blush creep into his guest's cheeks.

"Sorry. I don't know what's gotten into me. Since I've been PAXed, I see the world in a different light. Even the people around me look different. You for instance. I hope this won't embarrass you. I guess part of my awe stuck *ga ga* is my gratitude for pulling me out of the hell I was in. I'm still a bit bedazzled by that miracle. Most difficult for me to analyze is how I feel about you. It goes without saying, I believe you're the most extraordinary person I've ever met." He paused to let his words sink in, before he continued with: "I confess I admire you more than is normal. You are pretty special."

Now it was Warren's turn to blush. He cleared his throat and gave Roger a searching look. His companion's admiration was one thing he hadn't anticipated. He hoped it wouldn't complicate their lives. He laughed nervously.

"Oh come on! Let's not get mushy, your lobster's getting cold."

Roger joined in the laughter and shrugged. "Yeah, OK. Guess I'm not used to this new personality of mine. It's hard to analyze all my new feelings."

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By the time they drove home, both were beat and decided on bedtime. While getting ready for bed, Warren sensed Roger was at his bedroom door. He'd left the door ajar, but since he'd just undressed to put on his PJs, he really didn't want to expose his bare body. He turned his back to the door as Roger opened it. The intruder stood for a few moments just staring at the naked young scientist. Trying to put on his pajama bottom, he was unnerved, and stumbled. Irritated at being caught at such an unguarded moment, he growled;

"You could have knocked."

"Sorry," the intruder responded. "I think you know how I feel about you. I just wanted to see you in the altogether." He studied Warren's nude body for a moment.

"And *all together*, you're mighty fine. You must have played ball in college."

"Quarterback" Warren volunteered as he slipped into his pajama bottoms. "But I've always felt a healthy mind needs a healthy body. I've tried to keep in shape all my life."

"And what a great shape!" Roger enthused. "As stated before you really are a beautiful man. Someone to dream about tonight." Embarrassed by the personal bent of the conversation, Warren blushed as he exclaimed:

"Come on Roger! That's enough. If we are going to cohabit for a while, you've got to quit talking like that. You are an attractive son of a gun, and I like you, but I'm not interested in you that way. There's only one person for me and that's Emily." He paused for a moment and frowned. "Though I'm beginning to believe her feelings for me are no longer mutual. As I understand it, you've had your own trouble with women."

Roger sat down on Warren's bed and grumbled: "Now there's an understatement if there ever was one. That woman I was involved with made my life a hell--the torture chamber that got me into trouble. Now that you've cured my woman troubles, I have no interest in the bitches. I'm beginning to realize maybe I've traded one problem for another. PAX was an amazing cure, But It's changed my outlook on love and sex. What was in that stuff anyway?"

Warren finished dressing and buttoned his pajama top. He sat down across from his guest and gave Roger a sad smile.

"Roger, I'm sorry to confess I haven't been entirely honest with you. I hope you can forgive me. Pacifying you was only part of the experiment. There is also a secret ingredient I really don't want anyone else to know about. I told you I perfected PAX in the hopes it would bring peace to this troubled world. As I worked on the project I realized if there were no wars, assassinations or murders there might also be an irreversible population explosion, or at least serious expansion. The world is overpopulated as it is and I was determined not to make things worse. I had several ideas, but after studying the matter for months I felt the only solution was to make everyone bisexual. That would counteract the possibility of over population. In fact I hope it may reduced the population over a few generations.

"Wow! You really are something. Brains, brawn, and beauty all rolled up into one. Not to worry. Though I always preferred women, I was certainly curious about the alternative. Sort of a closet *switch hitter* I guess. Now that women no longer interest me. Men..." he paused and stared at the scientist for a moment... "or to be more accurate. One man has stolen my heart."

Reaching across the bed he grabbed the unsuspecting Warren and crushed him in his powerful arms as he kissed him hard on the mouth. Taken by surprise, the scientist struggled to free himself as his attacker's kiss became more urgent.

In a battle to free himself, he had to admit the attack had unnerved him. Finally he won out, and pushed his opponent away. Roger fell backward and landed on the floor.

"Damn you, Roger!" He exploded. "None of that. If you don't settle down and behave yourself, I'm going to send you back to prison." He rubbed the kiss off his bruised lips and glared at the fallen *foe*. "I am not interested in you as a lover. Women are my thing and I am not going to change my sexual preference for you!"

"Oh, bull shit!" Roger exclaimed rising from the floor, chastised and flushed with embarrassment.

"I just wanted to see what it would be like to kiss a man. Especially one as desirable as you, Doc. Please forgive me. You and your PAX did this to me--drove me over the edge. I can't help myself. I love you and that's all there is to it. But since you don't or can't feel the same, I promise...no more shenanigans. I won't touch you again. But I can't promise I won't look at or dream about you. Good night!"

With that he hurried out of the room and closed the door.

Warren sat for a while consumed by mixed thoughts and emotions. His day with Roger had been one of the most enjoyable of his life. The reformed psychotic was full of fun, jokes and anecdotes that had kept them both on a roar all day. He liked his new friend a lot and hoped he'd be able to legally arrange to keep him around. *The new* Roger Cooper was as intelligent as he was charming. If he was to feel more than friendship for Roger, he knew such a relationship could be no more than brotherly. He

valued his own sexual preference and though he was glad his PAX-BI experiment on Roger Cooper had been such a success, but wondered what was going to happen when he released PAX-BI to the world. How would *he* be effected? Which choice would he make? This surprise development with Roger had shaken him. Hoping his guest would keep his promise and his distance, he decided to sleep on it.

## CHAPTER 11

The next morning the two met in the kitchen for breakfast. Both were relatively quiet, as they finished off the eggs, toast, and coffee. Finally Warren broke the silence.

“How are you doing this morning.”

“Slept well and came to the conclusion that I’d have to control the emotions we talked about last night. I’m kinda embarrassed at how I threw myself at you. It won’t happen again.

“Good. I really don’t want anything to get in the way of what I believe is the beginning of a great friendship!” smiled Warren. “My tests and our good time yesterday only confirmed what I had already suspected. You’re not only an outgoing, amusing dude, but a damned intelligent one. I’ve been looking for an assistant for my project and you just might be the one.

“Hey, I’d like that!”

“Only one problem stands in the way...you’re legal status. I spoke with the warden and he’s pretty sure we can have you legalized. You didn’t really commit a crime. Only attempted one. Unfortunately your behavior was serious enough to put you in the California Medical facility. The court was afraid you might cause some real damage if left on the outside. Let’s just hang around here for a few days and make sure the treatment took. And I don’t have to give you a booster. I’ll be on the phone and internet most of the time. Gotta keep things moving. Meanwhile we can outline my plans for our *partnership*.

Roger laughed at his good fortune. Not only out of prison, but offered the possibility of a career with someone he considered extra special. He frowned at the memory of their meeting last night. He didn’t want to go back to prison, and now that his future looking so bright, he was determined to suppress his feelings for his new friend.

Warren called the warden and Dr. Baxter with a positive report on his charge’s progress, then opened his lap top and motioned for Cooper to join him on the couch. Feeling he could trust Roger with his secrets, he opened the PAX project files to his guest and asked him to study them. Any questions.--just ask. Warren saw immediately his *student* was computer literate.

The former CMI inmate spent several hours eagerly pouring over the scientific jargon. Surprisingly, he understood much of it and only asked a few questions. As he scanned the extraordinary information he occasionally exclaimed. “Whoa...fantastic!”

Meanwhile, Warren spent his time on the phone, checking in with the factory and his financial director. All was well. Money was again pouring into the PAX coffers and improvements were continuing on the PAX fabrication plant. He checked in with his



parents and was assured all was going according to plan. His mom was watching out for his interests and he relied on her to keep everyone honest.

The two finished their activities at about the same time and with a relieved breath Roger set the laptop on *sleep*, and placed it back on the table. He smiled at Warren who had just hung up the phone. "Well, I was right!" he laughed.

"Oh...how's that?!"

"You really are a most extraordinary human being,. From personal experience I've found your PAX is a miracle. Now to see it all in writing it's confirmed. And most of it so clear even I could understand it. Knowing all this stuffola, I'd say *Peace on Earth* is certainly possible."

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For the next week, Warren conducted an improvised classroom to familiarize Roger Cooper with his plans and the many facets of PAX and PAX BI. The scientist was delighted with his student. The former inmate of CMI was a fast learner. He'd quickly absorbed Warren's ideas and was enthusiastic about the possibilities.

One morning after breakfast, Roger interrupted the lesson with some of his own thoughts on the PAX subject.

"This morning, I woke up around five, my mind PAXed out and with a few ideas of my own. From personal experience I know PAX is a miracle. It cured me, and I firmly believe it can cure the world."

"Let's hope so,' Warren said. "And if you have some ideas of your own. I'd like to hear them."

"Okay, Boss," Roger replied consulting his clipboard notes. I made a short list of issues you may already have addressed, or you might want to work on before the release date. Number Uno. To control the birth rate you've decided to redesign the human race to be bisexual. Great idea. However, with all the free choice and free love going on. there could be an escalation of sexually transmitted diseases like AIDS, syphilis, etc. Is there any way to add something to the mix that would control disease?"

"Roger! Great Idea, As soon as we get back to the lab, I'll set to work on it. Anything else?"

"Well, let's see, I went down the list of the ten basic commandments and it looks like PAX should cover most of them . Greed, Jealousy, murder of course etc. I was just wondering about Prejudice. People might appear to be immune to it, but still harbor some feelings against their fellow man. The old race, color creed, thing. Anti Semites and such? And how about that prejudice against sexual choice other than the *so called* normal heterosexuals. Since apparently PAX-BI is going to create a lot of same-sex relationships. It would be nice if that was universally acceptable.

"Lordy, Roge. A super idea! One would hope PAX itself would do the job, but you may be right. A little of this and that added to the formula, could make the difference."

## CHAPTER 12

After a week of often entertaining camaraderie, Dr. Peace decided it was time to take the next step. He called the warden and made an appointment to retest Roger. They also discussed some sort of permanent freedom for the prisoner. The two made a trip to the institution and Roger again passed his tests with flying colors. Warren, the warden, Dr. Baxter and their subject were elated to find the cure was apparently permanent.

“Our major goal at CMI is rehabilitation and to see such an extraordinary success is really rewarding. Dr. Peace, you’re welcome to use our prisoners for guinea pigs anytime.”

Roger made an *oink, oink* sound and they all laughed.

Dr. Baxter joined them in the warden’s office and they discussed Roger Cooper’s future.

“I’ve spoken to our lawyer about your wish to free Roger, Dr. Peace. He’s standing by and there’s a judge who’s amenable. This won’t be the first time we’ve released one of our inmates to the outside world. I certainly believe Roger is one of the major successes. However, you must realize this is a big responsibility. When the judge signs the papers you become liable for all Rogers actions, and may be held accountable for any illegal acts he may commit.”

“I understand and I’m willing to take the chance.” Warren replied

“Sounds kinda like an adoption.” Roger laughed.

“It’s a bit more than that. Dr. Peace becomes your legal guardian as well as parole officer. No offense, Roger” added Dr. Baxter, “but we are all counting on you to behave yourself.”

“I’m so grateful to Warren for rescuing me, I’ll be forever in his debt. You can depend on me!”

The warden handed Warren some papers.

“Then here is the tentative prison release and our lawyer’s card. Call him and he’ll set up a private hearing with the judge. I see no problems.”

Warren thanked the warden and MD, took the paperwork and the two left the medical facility. As they walked back to the rental, Roger clapped Warren on the back.

“Thanks, pal!” he said his voice choked with emotion. He longed to take the scientist in his arms, but that was against the rules. Instead, he told one of his jokes and their laughter broke the silence.

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The next week sped by as they contacted the lawyer who quickly arranged a meeting at a judge’s office where they put the final stamp of approval on Roger Cooper’s freedom. This was followed in quick succession by packing up their gear, making plane reservations for Boston and driving into San Francisco to turn in the rental car. They spent the night at an airport motel and took off for Warren’s home the next morning. After an uneventful flight they arrived at Logan International Airport in Boston. A cab drove them quickly to Warren’s parents home in Cambridge near the Harvard University Campus.

The duo was greeted by the scientist’s mother. Olive Peace was delighted to have her son home again, and welcomed his new friend. Warren had e-mailed her Rogers story and she put on her most tolerant smile as she served tea. The young former

felon seemed to be as amiable as her son had stated, but aware of his violent history, she could only hope PAX had truly done a permanent *fix* on him. Time would tell.

She listened, fascinated as Roger Cooper related his story and how her son had rescued him from the California Medical Institution. He added a few jokes about his life, education and hope for the future, which had mother and son amused throughout his monolog.

At four o'clock, Dr. Orville Peace came home from work and they all gathered for cocktails at five. Roger hit it off with Warren's father. and they talked about the future and the hopes for PAX , while Mrs. Peace prepared dinner.

It had been a full day for all and they retired early--with Roger to sleep in the guest room.

As quiet settled over the house, sleep took them all. Hours passed until around midnight Warren woke up. Someone was in his room. He could see a silhouette against the window. It was Roger. Warren wasn't sure if he was dreaming at first, until he determined Roger was looking out the window and standing very still.

"Roger?" Warren called softly. The silhouette remained as still as a statue, staring out at the street.

"Roger!" he called a little louder. Still no response. Despite the old myth it's dangerous to wake a sleep walker, Warren got out of bed and went to his nocturnal visitor. He was unsure of the somnambulist's reaction.

"Roger!" this time he reached out, gripped Cooper by the shoulders, and shook him gently.

The sleepwalker whirled around, and growling in fury, pushed Warren away, sending him crashing onto the bed. His head struck the headboard and he saw stars. Without warning, Roger was on top of him, his strong hands encircling his neck, tightening on his larynx. Chocking, Warren struggled to regain the advantage. The pair battled for long minutes, until at last, Warren , using all his athletic strength against the crazed attacker, managed to subdue him. and pinned him to the bed. Awakened by the noise, his parents hurried into the room and turned on the light. Surprised by its glare and their entrance the somnambulist was at last wide awake. Realizing where he was, he looked around, shocked and embarrassed. Recognizing his friend, he groaned. "Oh, no, walking in my sleep again?! Warren, Are you all right? Of all the people in the world it had to be you. I had a a couple of these attacks back in the *place*...ended up in a padded cell. Fortunately I walked into your room and not your parents. I am so sorry. Does this mean I've had a relapse...the PAX didn't take?" Turning to Warren's parents he apologized. "Sorry about this, folks."

"Warren, are you OK?" came his mother's concerned voice.

"Well, I was warned this might happen. I'm a little bruised, but okay! However, Roger, I'm not disappointed in your *cure*. You merely reacted to what you thought was a threat to your safety. PAX doesn't eliminate the drive for *self protection*. It's supposed to eliminate the *need for it*. You're living proof PAX really works!" smiling he assured his parents all was well and turned to his friend. Come on, Roger. Let's get you back to bed." He took Roger by the elbow and led him back to the guest room. Roger turned on the light and rummaged in his suitcase until he found a pair of hand cuffs.

“Here, better use these. I’m embarrassed enough. We don’t need a repeat performance. At least while I’m in your folks’ home.” He got in bed, handcuffed himself to the headboard and handed Warren the key.

“It’s a little like being back in prison, but I trust you to release me for breakfast?” he chuckled.

## CHAPTER 13

It was nearly nine when Warren woke up. He put on his robe, went to the guest room and found Roger still asleep. He carefully unlocked the headboard end of the hand cuffs and went downstairs. In the kitchen he found his parents preparing the traditional Saturday morning breakfast.

“Is Roger sleeping in this morning? He’s going to miss your mother’s fabulous breakfast.”

“I thought it best to let him sleep. Mom, maybe you could fix a little extra we can reheat in the microwave.”

His father took a sip of coffee. “Are you all right after last night’s little set-to with Roger? I read the story you sent your mother. Certainly a miraculous turn around from the inmate you described.” Charming, amusing, and seems intelligent enough.”

“Roger is very smart and before he got into trouble he completed a master’s degree in physics at Berkeley. He’s a unique dude all right. I’ve only known him for a few weeks but he’s becoming a real friend. Right now I need someone I can talk to and confide in. Ironically we are also pretty much stuck together legally. Among other things, I’m his probation officer, I have to keep him around to keep an eye on him. Not bad duty, though. He’s an amusing fella.”

Olive Peace served the two men in the breakfast nook. “I hope your new charge won’t get in the way of your romance with Emily. Such a pretty, intelligent girl.”

“I’m afraid the part of my life is fading away. As fond as I am of Emily, I’m afraid my obsession with PAX and her own concentration on a medical career have pushed us apart. At our last meeting, I got the impression she wanted to call it quits. Woman troubles, that’s one of many things Roger and I have in common. And he’s so easy to talk to. I need someone like that in my life. I can’t bother you two forever.

“Good morning, folks!” Roger appeared at the kitchen door.

Warren laughed. “Were your ears burning? We were just talking about you.”

“The ol’ sleep walker?!” Roger laughed waving the handcuff for all to see. “*Master*, would you be so kind, and unshackle me.”

Warren took the key out of his robe pocket, removed the handcuffs and handed all to his friend.

Roger added, “Maybe we should put the key on a chain around your neck. Then you can lock me in at night.” gesturing to the food, “Boy, that looks good!”

Olive, rose and patting him on the shoulder, pointed out his place at the table. She went into the kitchen and there was the sound of the microwave as it heated his meal.

Dr. Orville Peace asked, “What are your plans for the day, boys?”

“I really need to get out to the plant and check things out.” Warren offered. “I understand there have been a lot of additions and I’m curious to see how things are going”

Mrs. Peace returned to the table with Rogers steaming plate. “I was out there Wednesday and it looks like all is moving apace. Subject to your approval, of course.”

“Thanks Mom! Thanks for everything!”

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Warren drove the two of them out of Boston to Bedford a half hour away. The factory had been recently painted, and with a large PAX inc. on the front. it looked pretty impressive to his passenger.

“Wow! Not Bad, Warren! It’s a lot bigger than I thought it’d be.”

They drove around the building to the back entrance. The parking lot was loaded with machinery and packing cases.

“Good! It looks like the materials have arrived! Now we can really get moving!”

Warren parked and they walked to the main building. He pressed a buzzer on the entrance door and a man in security uniform answered the summons.

Smiling, the guard opened the door. “Dr. Peace...you’re back!”

“Yeah, Charlie! Everything quiet on the home front?”

“Well we had some strange characters hanging around last night, but the boys and I ran em off.”

“Good Show! Looks like you got the weekend shift Charlie. Charlie Parton is head of security, Roger. Charlie, this is Roger Cooper, my new assistant. Everyone should be in Monday and we can really start on the PAX containers. Looks like the parts are here.”

“Roger, Welcome to PAX. The two men shook hands. Then turning to Warren. Parton added, “I ’vet scheduled myself on weekends and holidays, figuring if there’s any it trouble might happen then.

“Thanks Charlie. You’re probably right. Now I want to show Roger the plant.”

“It’s quite a place, Roger and PAX is quite a worth while project. Enjoy!Warren and Roger continued on into the laboratory. It was large and fitted with all the latest scientific equipment. Roger recognized the uses of some of them.

“What is the next step, *boss?*”asked the new assistant to the director.

“Now we make bombs.”

“Bombs?”

“Yes PAX gas bombs. After studying the matter I decided the best way to spread the gas over the earth would be to drop bombs into the atmosphere at specified locations. I’ve had maps made of the prevailing world wind currents and ...well. Here, let me show you!” Warren led the way to an alcove containing large maps of world areas. They had gold stars scatter ed across their surface. Obviously in areas where the wind currents would move the gas in the desired directions.

Eyes wide open, Roger was fascinated by what he saw as they moved on into the main part of the plant. One huge chamber contained giant pressure tanks lined up like soldiers.

“There’s the PAX in concentrated form. We next need to add the other ingredients to the mix. The one’s you and I discussed and you so brilliantly suggested.”

“I’ve been thinking about another potential complication. Not sure the world is ready to become bisexual.” He glanced at Warren before he continued. “I hope you won’t be offended by my alternate suggestion?”

Warren gave him a concerned smile. “Oh?...mmm...Frankly I’ve been a little worried about that one, too. Let’s hear your idea.”

“You’ve managed to create so many miracles...uh...yours truly being one of them. I was wondering if you could modify the human biology so as not to interfere with the sex drive. but merely limit women’s ovulations to one or at most two in a lifetime and only during copulation!”

Grinning from ear to ear, Warren clapped his friend on the back and exclaimed, “Roger, that’s brilliant! Now who’s the brains behind this project? I should have thought of that one. We could just add another genetic marker. It wouldn’t effect this generation, but the next would begin the process. In less than a century it should begin to reverse the world’s population growth. By then someone should come up with another method if necessary.”

Still smiling at his guest, Warren led the way though the rest of the plant. In another area were large conveyor belts and other equipment. “Monday the whole crew will be here to begin fabricating the bombs to hold the gas. We’ll eventually need thousands of containers of PAX to make it universally effective. Thank the lord my backers have been so generous, Now If I can just convince the government to loan me the Air Force to carry them to the world. I have feelers out and should hear from them soon. Otherwise I’m going to have to lead another fund drive to get enough to rent cargo jets.”

“You are amazing, Dr. Peace. How can anyone resist your ideas?”

“Oh, Some of them will give us trouble. Inventing and producing the gas may turn out to be the easiest part of this plan. Convincing the powers World Peace is in everyone’s best interest, may be damned daunting. No time to worry about that now!” the scientist growled turning to his friend. “Come on to the office, I need to check the e-mail”

In the front part of giant plant was a large office complex. In one room there were many cubicles that Roger could see were in use on work days. There were only a couple of stenographers on duty at the moment as Warren led the way to his own office.

“Good Morning Dr. Peace!” They were greeted by a cheerful looking woman of middle age who sat at the desk outside a door marked *Private*.

“Madeline, so good of you to come in this morning. Uh...be sure to put in for the overtime.” Warren added with a smile. “This is Roger Cooper, he’ll be helping me get things going on Monday.”

“Welcome, Roger. You’re indeed lucky to be a part of PAX. This is such a worthwhile cause I feel guilty about being paid at all. But thanks for the overtime, Doctor. There are some critical messages on your desk. A couple should be of particular interest. And we’re working on the financial report. I should have that for you shortly.”

“Money, Money Money! Wouldn’t it be great if we didn’t have to worry about it?!”

“Well, Doctor, maybe after PAX changes the world you can work on that!”

They all laughed and Warren led Roger into his large, modestly furnished office.

“Take a seat while I check out these messages. We’ll have to get you a desk in here. As my assistant director, we’ll need to work together,” smiled Warren.

“Assistant Director? wow!” Roger responded sitting down and leaning forward expectantly “Are you sure? Do you trust me that much?”

“Listen,” added the young scientist. “I’ve known you for less than a month, but I’ve learned you’re a pretty smart fella...capable of most anything. Since I’m more or less your legal guardian, and have to keep you around anyway, why not put you to work? In the next week or so I’m pretty sure you can learn the operation. Now’s a critical time. If I’m called away or something happens to me, I need someone I can trust to carry on. I’m gambling PAX will bring the world to order. The least I can do is trust it’s also brought you the same.” He paused for a moment staring hard at the e-mail copy in his hand.

“Uh oh...here it is. Looks like they’ve caught up with me.” he added handing the single sheet to Roger who had taken a seat opposite the desk.

Roger read the note quickly and groaned, “A Senate committee hearing? Oh, brother!

“Yes. I’ve been expecting it. This may be our greatest challenge and my toughest sell to date. It means I’ll have to go to Washington next week and do my *PAX show and tell* for the government. I can only hope they’ll see the benefits of PAX and let us go ahead with it.” Warren laughed as he continued. “The big question is, should I take you along to show off my prize guinea pig or leave you here to supervise the work.”

“You’re the boss. I’m ready and willing to do your bidding.”

“Okay, guess this is as good a time as any to teach you the practical side of the biz. Let’s start over here.” Warren led the way to a large table spread with blue prints and diagrams. The scientist had Roger’s full attention as he spread them out one at a time and explained the workings of the plant in detail, and his ultimate plans for the project. The listener was already familiar with much of the operation from their first week together, But now he needed to know nearly as much as Warren to take on his new position of authority. He quickly memorized, absorbed and collated the information. Occasionally punctuating his observations with admiring exclamations at the brilliance of his mentor.

After lunch they continued with only a short break to study the completed financial report brought in by the secretary.

“We’re in good condition financially. That’s a plus in our favor. Even if the government fails us, we’ll have enough to move the operation somewhere we can continue.”

“Then you’re determined to let nothing stand in the way of PAX?”

“I feel it’s my duty and goal in life to rid the world of mans cruelties at all costs.”

“You’re a wonder! A living breathing wonder! It’s no wonder I feel such admiration for you. ”

Warren gave him a warning glance and he dropped the subject. No time for that now.

The world needed what they were doing and he was proud to be a part of it.

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The two continued to pour over the diagrams and took another walk through the plant where Warren translated the equipment sketches they'd studied into their practical uses. After five they called it quits and with farewells to the staff and security, promised to return the next day. Warren insisted the office workers take Sunday off and he'd see them on Monday.

As they drove out of the factory gate Roger looked back at PAX Incorporated and the company's new Assistant Director exclaimed:

"Whoa! an amazing day, boss! I feel like my ol' brain has finally kicked in after those two years at the institution. I'm sure you know I'm grateful for this new chance."

"I hope you won't read anything into what I'm about to say, but I believe PAX needs you. Not only because you're it's primo success story, but because the boss needs a friend around to keep him on course."

Roger didn't reply, His heart was too full of gratitude...and other things.

Warren drove them to a nearby apartment complex and led the way to a modest but comfortable condo.

"Here's my place." he stated unlocking the door. "The drive from the folk's home often took up too much creative time, and at twenty-five I need a place of my my own. He took his friend's small suitcase as they walked to the back of the apartment. At the end of a short hall, he paused.

"Here's your bathroom and the guest room. I'm up front. Let's clean up and I'll take you out to dinner."

## CHAPTER 14

The next week was full of activity. Roger concentrated on learning every aspect of the PAX business. With Warren's help, he made great progress as both supervised the start up of the bomb fabrication. First they had to indoctrinate the large crew on the goals of the project and then train them how to stamp out and assemble the bomb casings. The materials used were designed to vaporize and release the colorless, odorless gas without causing any contamination to the environment. The duo spent their evenings at the condo, working out potential problems. Warren, concerned about his next week's appearance before the Senate committee labored on his presentation and the related visuals.

The following Tuesday, Warren bid his friend goodbye and took off for Boston's Logan International and his brief flight to Washington DC. He felt confident his assistant was ready to solo in running the PAX plant. He was not so sure of the Senate committee. He'd given his new presentation his best shot and the next day he would put it to the test. Though he had an alternative plan, he was counting on the government's cooperation.

After a sleep starved night in his hotel he took a cab to the Senate office building. The driver helped carry in the video projector and screen for his video. The large hearing room was crowded. On a raised platform the subcommittee was sitting at long table. *In judgment?* Warren wondered. There was an area for his equipment and a



podium where he would stand. Usually Warren welcome the opportunity to tell the PAX story, but this morning he was nervous. A lot depended on the outcome of this meeting.

He was glad to see at least one friendly face. That of Senator James Hargrave of Massachusetts. He'd met the Senator on one of his fund raisers. Hargrave was a junior senator and the youngest on the committee. The two exchanged smiles and Warren set up his equipment.

The Senator in charge of the meeting, Ralph Dunbarton of Minnesota waited patiently and on a nod from the young scientist, he banged his gavel. The hubbub that filled the room quieted as he announced:

"This meeting is now in order!" He gave Warren a wry smile. "Or perhaps we could call it an inquisition. Our subject today is Dr. Warren Peace's mysterious PAX project. Word is out and about it's the miracle that could bring peace to the world. The government is a bit dubious and we would like to hear the story from the inventor's own lips. Dr. Peace...you've on! We'll not interrupt your presentation, but I'm sure we'll have questions when it's over."

The video projector was situated so that most of the room could see it. Once again, the video showed the history of violence, followed by a stark overview of the current horrors of war assassinations, gang and domestic violence. The audience sat spellbound and groaned or gasped at the horrendous pictures shown on the screen. Finally after a quiet transition the picture changed to what the world would be like at peace. The audience seem to sigh in relief.

As the picture faded to black, Warren stepped to the podium.

"There you have it gentlemen. the world before and after PAX! I realize it all seems a bit utopian. However, my experiments have shown it's certainly possible and with the release of PAX, it's also probable."

Senator Dunbarton glanced at the rest of the panel and then at the young scientist.

"Very impressive, Dr. Peace Very Impressive. indeed! What does the rest of the committee think?" The others nodded in appreciation. "However," added the committee chairman, "Though on the surface this PAX certainly *looks* like a panacea for the world's troubles. IF...and that's a big IF it really works, will its success brings up several troubling problems."

Warren cringed inside. He'd spent years developing PAX. He had great confidence it it's effectiveness, but as he'd feared, he began to doubt if he was going to get the important support of the government. The dozen senators were staring at him, he briefly locked eyes with each as he tried to determine how he or she felt.

"I'd hoped you'd all read the final pages of my little dissertation--the affidavits by Warden Silvers and Dr Baxter of the California Medical Institution."

As Warren continued in his PAX sales pitch, several senators nodded while others, who had only given the PAX written presentation a quick glance, looked puzzled. "In their statements the warden and psychologist are witness to the dramatic conversion of one of the state's inmates from psychopath to valuable, productive citizen. His name is Roger Cooper and he's now my personal assistant. A brilliant addition to the PAX staff. And I should point out, PAX doesn't interfere with humans' drive to protect themselves or their loved ones. In principle the elimination of violent behavior in all the peoples of the world, would eliminate mans need to protect himself against aggression."

Senator Dunbarton, frowning at his peers continued “Yes, also very impressive. Still Those *few in the committee* who read your treatise thoroughly came up with several questions.” First of all, the elimination of war across the world would, it seems to us, eliminate the armed forces and many important industries. In other words put a lot of people out of work. We’re all for world peace, but have no choice but to take your proposal to congress for a vote, and I’m sure some of our more hawkish peers will fight against it. I suspect you may also have to do your *show and tell* presentation for the Pentagon. and possibly the United Nation.”

Warren took a deep breath as he tried once more to convince them.

“I believe along with my many supporters, that basing our economy on wars and human suffering is inhuman. We’re convinced with a bit of imagination and legislation the armed forces and allied industries could be turned to something like a giant Peace Corps. Many of the peoples of our own country and rest of the the world need help. Instead of killing and torture, we should set to work aiding humanity.”

“Very commendable, Doctor. and I believe we all agree in principle. But we also need to be practical. And then there’s the burning question. Without war and assassination to control the population what’s to save the world from a giant baby boom? The world is becoming too crowded as it is. What about some sort of birth control?”

Still striving to get this powerful committee to support his cause, and knowing this was a crucial first step in garnering world approval he continued. Without going into details, he outlined his formula for population control. Some senators nodded in agreement, others looked dubious.

“If the good doctor will give us a few hours, we need to discuss your project and make some sort of decision. We’ll get back to you.”

Discouraged, Warren thanked the committee and packed up his gear. With help from some senate aids he moved out of the building. On the steps he was greeted by a large crowd of reporters wielding microphones and TV cameras. Apparently during his presentation the word got out and now the media descended on him. Putting on his best public relations grin, he met them head on.

“Dr. Peace,” one woman began. “I think most of us agree, you have a wonderful goal, to bring peace to the world. But how are you going to convince the government? What some of us heard inside, didn’t sound too promising.”

“The senators are just doing their job. They have to decide what’s best for the country. I can only hope, they make the right choice.”

“What about the proposed meeting with the chiefs at the Pentagon?”

“I was aware this wouldn’t be easy. We’ll just have to wait and see”.

After a few more questions and an interview with a network TV reporter, he hailed a cab, and along with his equipment returned to his hotel to wait.

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Still mulling over his meeting with the Senate committee, he decided to spend a quiet afternoon and evening studying the questions put to him that morning. Early in the afternoon, the phone rang. He answered and was told there were a few reporters in the lobby. Since no escape was possible, he decided to go down and face the press.

In the hotel lobby, he was met by a small group of men and women wielding small audio recorders and still cameras or portable television gear. Once again he took a deep breath, smiled tolerantly and weathered a half dozen interviews. Finally all left except one reporter who introduced himself as Carl Rabbin, of The Inquisitor Magazine. The name rang a bell. Inquisitor Magazine was a popular rag, known for exposing fraud and scandal. Feeling he had nothing to hide, Warren agreed to tell all. The two sat in the lobby while the magazine photographer snapped a few stills to illustrate the article. Rabbin had obviously done his homework, and asked Warren a series of well planned and pointed questions about PAX and his plans for it. Though on his guard, Warren answered honestly and positively. The reporter appeared charming and supportive, yet Warren sensed there was something lurking in Rabbin's eyes, he couldn't quite trust. Hoping the old adage *All publicity is good publicity* was true, he could only hope the resulting article would give PAX a boost.

He returned to his room just in time to take a call from Senator James Hargrave, his most staunch supporter on the subcommittee. The senator told him the group had met, debated the pros and cons of Warren's proposal and he'd like to meet with the scientist in the morning. Not sure of the outcome Warren agreed to nine o'clock meeting.

He ordered dinner and put in calls to Roger and his parents. They'd seen one of his TV interviews and were enthusiastic about how well he came across and as he responded to the reporter. In turn he gave them the details of his day, the Inquisitor interview and his hopes for the meeting with the senator the next morning. In turn, Roger gave a positive report on the work at the plant and wished him luck.

After a restless night he rose early, had breakfast and took a cab to the senate office building. There, precisely at nine he was ushered into Senator Hargrave's office. The two men shook hands and the senator smiled as he offered his guest a seat.

"Well, Warren, there's some good news and some bad news. Uh...not bad exactly, but it may slow down the PAX process. The good news is: Most of the committee were enlightened and elated by the contents of your presentation. There was some debate, but all agreed PAX is a worthy idea. We, or I should say I have been elected to present a bill to congress supporting the spread of PAX across the world." He paused for a moment to allow his guest to digest the news. Then smiling oddly he added, "The rub is. a few were a bit skeptical. Will PAX deliver what you've promised? They want some sort of proof beyond your one successful experiment."

Warren groaned inwardly, but wasn't surprised. What next, he wondered?

"They propose to send independent scientists to the PAX plant to check it out, and determine if it's safe and effective. As you know, I am one hundred percent behind you, but my hands are tied by bureaucracy--have to go along with the doubters. Still, when the new tests are successful, and I'm sure they will be, we can pretty much count on a positive vote by both houses and the president. It's a damned nuisance, but I guess we'll just have to be patient."

Warren and the senator talked for a while about the PAX and joked about the vicissitudes of government, before Warren return to his hotel. He had just about decided there was nothing he could do but return home and await the government inspectors when he received another call.

This time it was the office of the President of the United States. The chief executive wanted to see him and hear more about his *extraordinary proposal*. Perhaps he could

meet with the President for an hour at four thirty. Apparently the president had seen the news coverage of Warren's visit with the Senate Subcommittee, and wanted to be given a personal briefing. Amazed at the quick response, Warren was elated and looking forward to meeting. He'd always felt President Mark Lambent could be an ally in his PAX quest, if only he could have an *audience* with him.

## CHAPTER 15

That afternoon he arrived at the White House with mixed emotions. This could be a very important meeting and he hoped he was prepared. He'd only brought the DVD of the video presentation and a copy of his written report. Would that be enough? After sitting in the reception room for nearly an hour, he was ushered into the Oval Office and greeted warmly by the President, who apologized for keeping him waiting.

"This damned job gets in the way, sometimes." He apologized, shaking Warren's hand. "I'm only glad you could make it on such short notice. Our mutual friend Senator Hargrave called yesterday afternoon with an enthusiastic *adviso* to see you while you were in town." The two men settled on the couches across from the president's desk and he continued, "I'd of course heard of you work and read about your meeting yesterday, but wanted to see for myself. I hope it's convenient."

"Not only *very* convenient, but a great honor Mr. President." enthused the young scientist.

"Your plan is to bring peace to the world, eliminate violent crime and such. It's my job to know people, and unfortunately many of them are degenerate to say the least. I'm all in favor of peace at any cost, but your plan seems a bit--no offense--but a bit far fetched."

"Yes...Mr. President...a utopian dream. But one I decided to do something about.

My whole life has been dedicated to finding an answer, and I'm convinced PAX is *it!*"

"I've read Senator Hargrave's report. Very impressive--but I'd like to see your presentation first hand if I may."

"If I may play my DVD for you. It pretty much lays out the program. And here's my written report."

"Oh...Good" the President took the folder from his guest. "I'd like some of my staff in on this if you don't mind?" He added reaching for the intercom. "Miss Jones, could you please send in any available staff member, and you might like to see this yourself." He turned to the scientist and indicated the console that contained the digital video player and monitor. While Warren loaded the machine and set the levels on the monitor, he was aware of a small crowd gathering, including the First Lady, Vice President, Secretary of State, Chief of Staff and others who took seats or stood by waiting. Finally ready, Warren turned to them and the president introduced him.

"Most of you have seen this young man on the news, and I'm sure you're aware he has a promising proposal for all of us. I give you Dr. Warren Peace. Doctor the floor is yours" Those gathered in the oval room nodded to the scientist and he nodded back.

"I need to warn you ladies and gentlemen, what you are about to see--tells it like it is, and the world out there can be a pretty gruesome place. Be prepared for scenes

that may shock or sicken you.” With that he pressed the play button and the presentation began. As usual there were gasps of horror at some shots of gore. The DVD again presented a brief history of horrific violence and bloody examples of recent cruelties, not only in war zones, but by savage gangs in the U.S.. inner cities as well as disturbing shots of domestic brutality. Warren kept his eyes on the President who struggled to maintain his composure while facing the grisly scenes. Ultimately the heavy music lightened to a more positive theme and with computer special effects showed the spread of PAX and the resulting scenes of peace and tranquility.

As always, when the picture faded to black, the audience heaved a sigh of relief and there was some positive applause. The President’s expression went from dour to optimistic, as with his famous smile he rose from his chair and went to where Warren was standing. Enthusiastically he shook the younger man’s hand in congratulations.

“Well done...very well done!” he exclaimed. “Dr. Peace, *if* PAX can deliver a fraction of what you propose, this sick world could be headed for a beautiful future.” Behind the Chief Executive, Warren could see heads nodding in agreement. “I realize you’re counting on all of us to support your quest. I’m sorry about that *if*, but being student of human nature, PAX still seems too good to be true. I understand your written report mentions an experiment with one human which has thus far proved to be outstanding. Good news! Still I agree with the committee: We need more assurance.”

He took a few minutes to lead Warren around the room as he introduced him to his staff.

Most were positive in their responses. Finally, Mark Lambert allowed some to go back to work, but kept his wife, the Secretary of State and his friend the Vice President seated.

“Just a few more words, Doctor and we’ll let you go. As we understand from the committee report, there is some fretting about a peaceful world putting a lot of folks out of work.

I believe you suggested a big Peace Corps might hold on to the armed forces. Good idea, and I have another one. Anyone unemployed can go into what I like to call the *Green Machine*. Let’s not let it go beyond this room for the moment. I’ve been pushing for private companies to expand the *Green* philosophy and clean up the atmosphere before it’s too late. Hopefully that would decrease global warming and keep the ice caps and seas intact. I hope you’re going to tell me PAX is non toxic?

“No color, No smell, No taste, No toxins, just a peaceful life for all who inhale it.”

“Good! It’s too bad the government doesn’t trust anyone on anything. I believe you, but to get any support we’ll have to go ahead with the tests. And you’re tampering with the war machine. One major faction you may eventually have to face is the Pentagon. Probably as soon as the tests prove PAX really works. I can help you there. I am still the Commander and Chief, and those hawks have to do pretty much what I tell them. You might as well go back home and wait for the inspectors. When they’ve made their recommendations we can move on. And the sooner the better. Doctor, Thank you for coming in and good luck with the inspection team.

The President and the others present shook Warren’s hand and he left the White House.

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Somewhat discouraged by the results of his trip, he was still hopeful as he returned to the Boston area. After a quick stop to see his parents he returned to the PAX plant. There he was greeted by all and was especially glad to see Roger had kept things moving along. He held a meeting with all the personnel and brought them up to date.

“We’ve had a bit of a set back and can expect some visitors next week to check out our work. The government works in slow and mysterious ways and it may be a while before we’re actually able to use the bomb casings you’re working on.” Some faces showed their concern.

“However,” Warren continued, “Keep up the good work, eventually they will be needed. I’m sure of a positive report by the government inspectors, and hopefully the powers-that-be will jump on the band wagon soon. I’ve checked the market, and in the dismal case we lose the race, I have a potential buyer for these disintegrating bomb casings for agricultural purposes. There will be no layoffs, but I may ask you to take a paid vacation in the near future. Thank you all so much for your excellent work.”

He received a round of applause and a few hip hip hurrays as the workers went back to their duties. He and Roger returned to their office for a strategy meeting.

## CHAPTER 16

Two weeks went by before they received a message from the Occupational Safety and Healthy Administration. The OSHA inspection team would like to come by the following week and begin their investigation. Warren sent back a response to *Come ahead!* Having tasted the slow pace of government, he was surprised by the comparatively quick action, but had been assured by Senator Hargrave, the subcommittee was eager for an answer.

Sure enough on the appointed day, a team of five inspectors showed up with their warrant. Dr. William Paley, the group leader apologized for the paper work, but assured the PAX CEO, a warrant was SOP. Dr. Peace made the team welcome and set them up in a corner of the large laboratory. They’d brought their own equipment and test rats, but he furnished them with anything else they needed. Opening his files, he provided them with the PAX formulae.

They worked rapidly, poking and probing the PAX operation and testing gas from the storage tanks. Another week went by. The OSHA team proved to be interested and supportive of the PAX goals and kept pretty much to themselves. As they reached an important stage in their experiments, they sat down with Warren and Roger to give them the good news. They had found PAX to be safe for human consumption.

However, now they wanted to test it for effectiveness on humans and had arranged for their own human guinea pigs. The next day a prison bus from the Massachusetts Correctional facility showed up. The passengers included six inmates from one of the countries toughest prisons along with their guards and a couple of government psychiatrists. They were taken to a vacant room in the factory that could be easily secured. Still, concerned for the safety of his employees, Warren gave them a week off with pay and sent them home.

When queried on the use of hardened criminals, Dr. Paley responded that they were merely taking a hint from Warren's own experiment with Roger. Hoping their human tests would be as profoundly successful, they asked for and received use of Warren's special gas mask. Dr. Paley assured Warren, the prisoners were volunteers who would receive reduced sentences on completion of the tests. Under armed guard, each prisoner was given a PAX treatment. Having been promised a time reward for their cooperation, the half dozen bad boys were easy to work with and the tests were completed quickly. The results were almost instantaneous. Each was taken into a small room and using an electronic testing device similar to the one Warren used on Roger in California. They were also given complete psychological evaluations by the guest psychiatrists. The six criminals seemed to have gone through a positive mental metamorphosis. The team were amazed by the results, but to be certain, the doctors would test them again in two days at the prison.

With the tests completed, the OSHA research team, the prisoners, guards and all, went about their merry way, leaving Warren and Roger to breath a sigh of relief.

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Though, since being *PAXed*, it was no longer in Rogers makeup to show anger, Warren could see his friend was upset as he rushed into the office the next day.

"Oh, boy! Warren, you'd better read this!" he exclaimed with a growl. In his hand he held up the latest issue of The Inquisitor Magazine. On the cover was Warren's handsome smiling face and a headline that screamed: *PEACE--TRUTH OR SCAM!*

"The lying bastard!" Roger added dropping the magazine in front of the scientist.

Warren was shocked to see his face on the cover and the scathing headline. Almost afraid of what he might find inside, he picked up the magazine and shuffled through it until he found the article. Though he had suspected the reporter, Carl Rabbin, had something up his sleeve during the interview, he wasn't prepared for the gist of the story. As he read, it sank in and gave him a chill. The article started off with mentions of Warren's background as a Harvard Ph.D. in science. Then, within the body of the article, he made blatant use of the word *Claimed*. He mentioned Dr. Warren Peace *claimed* he had worked for years on a plan to bring peace to the world. Dr. Peace *claimed* he had invented a gas called PAX which, when released and inhaled by the peoples of the world, he *claimed* would bring peace. Then the reporter wrote: Since he'd interviewed and investigated many corrupt personalities, he theorized most of the world was populated by similar individuals. He was indeed skeptical of the outlandish *claims* made by the scientist. He pointed out even the United States Government must be skeptical, since they were currently investigating the PAX project. What followed added insult to injury when Rabbin accused Warren of calling his project a nonprofit organization, funded by donations. In fact Rabbin had investigated and found the PAX coffers were filled with millions of dollars. Was Dr Warren Peace paying taxes on this booty? Perhaps the IRS should also investigate the PAX books. Had Dr. Peace told him the truth about PAX. Could it possibly bring peace to this troubled world. If by some miracle your *claims* are true--Good for you, Dr. Peace. However, if PAX is just a scam to cheat the government. Shame...shame on you!

“Damn!” Warren muttered. “This is tragic! I fear, Mr. Rabbin didn’t do our cause any good. My fault, I shouldn’t have agreed to his interview. Those reporters scrape up dirt on nearly everyone they think is news worthy, and the public eats it up. Unfortunately, their scandal rag is just about the most popular magazine in the country.”

“Well, It’s just a good thing I’ve been PAXed. The old Roger Cooper would hunt him down and strangle him. And I wouldn’t have to be sleep walking to do it.”

Warren smiled sadly and added. “We can only hope the OSHA report to the Senate is positive enough to counteract this crap. It’s just too bad Rabbin didn’t report the success of OSHA tests. And this business about nonprofit and tax evasion. We could probably sue The Inquisitor on that one.’

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Sure enough, a few days later, two gentlemen showed up from the International Revenue Service. Since he’d half expected their arrival, Warren welcomed them to his office. They were tactful but firm. Their director had read the Inquisitor article and suggested it might be a good idea to check out PAX Industries. The inspectors had wasted no time, since tax fraud could be quickly hidden. Warren cringed at their suspicions, but took them directly to the PAX accounting office and introduced them to, Emma Jones, the PAX accountant. The two demanded all the books and computer hard and software pertaining to the operation. The accountant turned pale, but had no choice. She had to follow her boss’s orders and cooperate. The IRS men carted off all the materials and left the building with the promise to return them in three days. Concerned for the seemingly shocked accountant’s welfare, Warren assured her, all would be well.

As promised the tax inspectors returned at the end of the week and sat down with Warren and Roger to discuss their findings. The PAX CEO and his assistant director were a bit nervous at being faced with the IRS suspicions. However, the two inspectors were smiling and assured them they had nothing to fear from the IRS. Apparently Senator Hargrave had gotten wind of the investigation and phoned the Internal Revenue Service chief to call off his dogs--that PAX was indeed a most worthy, non profit organization, and the Senate was sure of positive results from the PAX tests. The Tax men added: Before they had been *called off*, they managed to inspect most of the files and found them generally in order. One small glitch, however. Their investigation revealed the PAX accountant had embezzled nearly two hundred thousand dollars. They were sorry, but they did have the authority to arrest the woman in question.

“Oh lord!”, Warren exclaimed. “How could anyone suspect sweet old Emma Jones of criminal intentions. Since you took all her records, she didn’t have anything to work on, and I gave her a few days of paid vacation.” He checked the cardex file on his desk and wrote down Emma’s address. “Here’s where she lives. Good Luck!”

The two men left in a hurry, hoping they weren’t too late to catch the culprit.

“Emma Jones.” muttered Roger. “Who would have thought she was capable of something like this?!”

A few hours later, the IRS investigators returned to tell them Emma Jones had cleared out. Her apartment was empty and so was her her bank account. This looked like a job for the FBI. They were sorry for the loss, but not to worry. They’d take care of it. They replaced the PAX accounting equipment and books, with a bit of advice. Warren should check out Emma’s replacement carefully and arrange for periodic



independent audits to keep the new accountant honest. On parting they had one last comment:

“Maybe you should have given your staff the PAX treatment.”

“Unfortunately PAX does not rid the world of such crimes.” Warren muttered. “It’s only designed to eliminate crimes of passion.”

## CHAPTER 17

Months went by as they waited for some sort of sign from the government. Two weeks following the OSHA tests, they received a call from the government psychiatrist. He was elated as he reported the test prisoners were doing extremely well and were fast becoming good examples for fellow Massachusetts State Prison inmates. The PAXed convicts behavior had brought a brief period of comparative tranquility to the normally oppressive institution.

Meanwhile the PAX plant hummed along, turning out bomb casings for the gas. Hundreds of the sleek containers, being readied to carry PAX to a waiting world, were now stored in the back parking lot. More months went by as Warren and Roger waited for the government to plod its way to some sort of decision. Surprisingly, the media kept close watch on the proceedings and reported each time there was some sign of action on the PAX project. Warren’s smiling photo accompanied nearly every story. Most were positive and hopeful PAX would deliver as promised. However, Warren was embarrassed by all the publicity and it became awkward for him. Whenever he and Roger went anywhere, autograph seekers plagued him for his signature and young women gazed gaga eyed when he walked by. Being a celebrity might be okay or some, but Warren preferred to keep a low profile.

Finally, they received a message from Senator Hargrave, their PAX ally. The Senate would vote on his initiative the next day. If positive they would be off and running. The senator also reported his good buddy, the President, was hopeful both houses would pass the bill, and he had pen poised to sign it into law. That evening Warren and Roger went to dinner at their favorite restaurant to celebrate. They thoroughly enjoyed the food, wine and jovial company and were only bothered a few of times for Warren’s autograph. Roger even signed menus as a friend of Dr. Peace. They laughed at all the foolishness and had a happy time, joking and patting one another on the back in congratulations. A bit tipsy from all the wine, their blood alcohol levels went over the limit. Glad the apartment was close-by, the celebrants were relieved when Warren’s short, weavy drive home didn’t result in a DUI. Both awoke the next morning with ugly hangovers. Fortunately it was Saturday and they took the day off to recover.

In spite of considerable positive support, the Senate and House were in no hurry to get involved in the controversial antiwar weapon. Debates raged in both houses. Once again the old arguments: World peace would put too many out of work, eliminate police and law enforcement, and result in a baby boom, rocked Washington and the news media. PAX supporters, including the President argued they were ready to offer alternative employment to all, and pointed out PAX would only eliminate violent crime.

There would still be lots of laws for people to break and law enforcement to try to control. Ultimately, weeks went by until the nay sayers gave up the fight and by a narrow margin voted in the PAX initiative. It was quickly signed into law and Warren and Roger were invited to the White House for dinner with the President and family. They also received an invitation to appear before the Pentagon Chiefs of Staff the day following the White House dinner.

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The dinner at the White House turned out to be a gala affair. Besides the President and first lady hosted. Also attending was their grown daughter, Peggy and her escort, good friends Senator Hargrave and his wife, the Vice President and his wife, plus the Secretary of State and her husband. Conversation dealt mostly with the success of the PAX initiative and their hopes for its future. The guests were well versed on Dr. Peace's plans and though they had a few questions, were mostly there to congratulate him on a job well done.

As the meal progressed the President turned to Roger Cooper.

"Roger, I hope I won't offend, but I understand you are Warren's most successful PAX guinea pig. I'm sure we'd all like to hear how that came about."

Ever the comedian, Roger took the floor and regaled the diners with anecdotes about actually being *PAXed*. He even managed to joke about his crazy life before and during his incarceration at the California Medical Institute. Those at the table roared with laughter throughout the monolog, as Warren sat by, laughing at his portage's remarks and proud he'd helped in his friend's rehabilitation.

Ultimately the evening drew to a close and the President escorted his guests to the front steps of the mansion. He had volunteered the presidential limo to take Warren and Roger back to their hotel. As they climbed in he remarked.

"Tomorrow morning is your meeting with the hawks at the Pentagon. Sorry there's no way out of that one. I fear they won't be as glad to see you as we are. But I've given them orders to cooperate and they've come up with a conservative plan to start off PAX distribution. Good luck to you, and let Senator Hargrave here, know how it goes."

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The next morning, Roger and Warren were confronted by a table full of long faces as they met with the Pentagon chiefs. Aware PAX threatened the officers' war machine, Warren tread softly. Frankly there wasn't much additional information for him to offer. His now famous video pretty much said it all. His respectable *do-it-yourself* production job and fascinating content created a demand for the DVD. To raise more PAX funds he'd sold it to the cable channels and it was featured at video rental stores. The hour program was even available through Amazon. The officers present, along with anyone with courage to brave the grim viewing, had seen it and it was the talk of the news media.

The generals, made an attempt to be polite, but it was a strain. Finally they came to their plan. Together, they had agreed the next step in the PAX saga would be to drop the gas bombs on Afghanistan. The Secretary of State had met with and garnered an

agreement with the Afghan President to do so. PAX would either bring peace to the area, or it wouldn't, and they'd been assured the PAX bombs would cause no further suffering or damage.

The meeting ended and General Frank Gibbon of the air force asked Warren and Roger to follow him to his office to work out the details. After they were seated the general made a confession.

"Listen, I'm on your side. I wouldn't want the others to hear this, but since I'm about to retire, I could care less about losing my job. That's their problem. I can only hope your PAX will do the job and bring about the peace you promise." He shuffled through some papers and took up a thick folder. Encouraged by the general's cooperation, Warren and Roger smiled "Here's what I propose. We will furnish five B-52Hs to carry the bombs. Since your factory is close to Hanscom AFB we can drop in there and pick up the bomb loads. I'd like to get cracking on this, so hope the twenty-third will be all right with you. I think we can scrape up enough heavy equipment to move and load up the bomb bays."

"General, that sounds great!" Warren exclaimed "Looks like we're in business!"

The general smiled and added, "I'll be sending a Major Larson up to your plant to help you coordinate things. Let's hope all goes according to plan."

The three men shook hands and Warren and Roger made their way down the long halls of the Pentagon to the entrance. As they walked out into the sunlight, Roger clapped Warren on the back.

"Congrats! Ol' buddy. Looks like we're off and running."

Just then a small car pulled out of nowhere and ignoring the curb tore up the long walkway toward them. It swerved to a stop in front of them and the passenger reached out of the window pointing something at Warren.

Roger moved quickly pushing Warren out of the way as he shouted.

"Warren, look out! He's got a gun!"

There was the bark of a pistol as Roger spoke and with a moan he dropped to the ground. The pistol fired again and Warren felt the bullet zip past his head. Though the assailant had missed his prime target, the driver tore across the lawn, onto the street and out of sight. Only moments later MPs came running and fired after the retreating car. Meanwhile a distraught Warren hurried to his friend's side.

"Roger! Oh no! Roger?!"

Kneeling next to his friend, he saw blood oozing out onto the sidewalk and nearly panicked. "Call an ambulance, my friend's been shot. It looks bad."

Minutes later an ambulance came screaming into the scene. The medics inspected the wound, gently loaded Roger onto a gurney and into the vehicle. Waiting only moments for Warren to climb in, they took off, siren wailing. The hospital was nearby and they drove right to the emergency entrance. They'd phoned ahead, and orderlies were waiting to wheel the wounded man into the operating room.

Desolated, Warren gazed around in confusion for a few moments until a nurse directed him to the waiting room. Worried and shaken, he was given no clue to Roger's condition. Was he still alive? Would he live? Disturbing questions poured into his mind. To lose his best friend and confidant was a tragic possibility. He suddenly realized how important the wounded man had become to him, and struggled manfully to hold back the tears.

He also wondered why someone had tried to assassinate him. Roger had saved his life. He already owed his friend so much. This was a debt he could never, or *might* never be able to repay. During his mental anguish someone came by to take down the necessary information. Roger's PAX Corp. health insurance would cover the costs. But all that was pure crap. What Warren really wanted was to know if his friend would live? He suffered the uncertainty for nearly two hours before a doctor came into the waiting area. His face drawn and concerned, he gave Warren the prognosis.

"You're Dr. Peace? I've seen your picture and news stories. What you are trying to do is certainly admirable." The surgeon paused and took a breath before he continued, "I hate to be the bearer of bad news, but at the moment Mr. Cooper is extremely critical. The bullet nicked his heart. At first we thought he was going to leave us at any moment. But he has a strong constitution and he's fighting to live. Whether he will or not is out of our hands. We can only wait and pray. He's just barely hanging in there and it could be days before we know for sure."

"May I see him?" Warren moaned.

"It might be better to wait twenty four hours. A visit tomorrow couldn't cause any further damage."

"Thank you, Doctor. I'm really concerned about him. Roger is very important to all of us."

"I understand, and he's getting the best care available. We can only wait and see."

Warren made his way out of the hospital and took a cab back across the Potomac to his hotel. He turned on the TV just in time to see his smiling photo and hear the dramatic story of what had happened. Also shown were pictures of Roger as the shooting victim, plus a sinister looking man with a beard who was identified as Awar al-Walid, the al-Qaeda operative responsible for the attack. The story mentioned a chase by military police and a shoot out. The driver of the getaway vehicle had been killed and al-Walid, arrested. The apparent motive for the assassination attempt was to prevent Dr. Warren Peace from completing his bid to pacify Afghanistan and squelch any plans to pacify the rest of the Muslim world. Peace was contrary to the Al-Qaeda jihad to create a purely Muslim state.

A phone call from the President's office sent condolences and prayers for Roger's recovery and thanks that Warren was safe. Senator Hargrave called to say they were sending security officers to guard Warren's room and Roger's at the hospital.

Warren called the PAX plant and spoke to the manager, informing him of the air force plans and Rogers condition. Shocked, the manager promised to have all in readiness when he returned in three days. The desk called and said their were reporters in the lobby. Warren excused himself and said he wouldn't be able to talk to them for a few days.

He plugged his laptop into the hotel service and checked his mail. His e-box was full, and he skimmed the notes which looked urgent. There was one from Emily. It was a *Dear John*. or in his case a *Dear Warren*, The gist of the message was: They had both been too busy with their careers to have time for each other. He was now famous and out of reach. She finally found herself with time on her hands and needing a new boy toy. She'd fallen for one of the other interns. He wasn't as well endowed as Warren, but he was more available, and that's what she needed at the moment. She

still loved him but their relationship was doomed, and she hoped he understood, *Love Emily*

*Women!* he growled quoting the old axiom: *Ya can't live with 'em and ya can't live without 'em*" Well, his plate was overflowing with troubles and didn't need any more. At the moment his concern about Roger was first and foremost in his mind.

He phoned the hospital to check on his friend several times. No change. Roger was still in critical condition, but hanging in there. The next day, accompanied by his body guard, he made his way back to the hospital and was directed to Roger's room. Sure enough there was a guard at the door. The sentinel recognized the young scientist. Leaving his own guard outside he went in. Seeing his fallen comrade for the first time since the assassination attempt, he choked back a sob. Roger lay sprawled across the bed. The covers were thrown back to reveal his muscled chest and the bandage across it. Warren pulled up a chair to sit next to the bed. The wounded man looked pale and drawn. The hospital quiet was broken only by Rogers labored breathing and the pings and blips of read-out equipment--the only signs of life.

He took a pale, cold hand in his and sat looking down into the stricken face--a face he had become so accustomed to see smiling and laughing. Looking around to make sure he was alone, he bent forward and whispered:

"Roger...Roger...Listen to me...You've got to live! You've brought so much to my life. To go on without your positive presence seems nearly impossible." His voice grew fuzzy as tears choked his voice. He hadn't cried since he was little, but overcome by emotion he laid his head on the bed and wept. He lay there for a while. Until suddenly he heard Rob groan and felt the stricken man's hand tighten on his. He started and sat up, searching the pale face. Suddenly the blue eyes flashed open for a moment. Elated by these signs of life, Warren reached for the call bell. A few moments later a nurse came in. She smiled to see her charge was coming out of his coma and left to get a doctor.

The eyes opened and the weak voice spoke: "Warren, Thank God you're here. I was afraid I'd never see that gorgeous face of yours again." The effort was almost too much for him, he moaned, reaching his free hand toward the bandage. "Whoa...damn thing hurts like a sonofabitch!"

Alarmed, Warren cautioned his friend: "Roger, hold still, the Doc's on his way."

A doctor entered and checked the read outs.

"Hmmm. Much Better. Looks like you're going to make it after all, Mr. Cooper. Hold on. I'll give you a shot for the pain." turning to the patient's guest he said. "Dr. Peace, it seems your friend here is pretty tough. That and your presence may be just what the doctor ordered. However, now that he's come to, maybe we should let him rest a while. Why don't you come back in the morning."

"Damn it, Doc! Does he have to go?" Roger growled weakly. "He just got here, I'd sure like for him to stick around a while."

"Doctor's orders!" the doctor said with a smile.

"I'm going, Doc." Giving Rogers hand a squeeze, Warren added. "Roger, better take it easy like the *Man* says. I'm just happy to see you back among the living. See you in the morning! And Doc Thanks for taking such good care of my buddy."

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The next morning, accompanied by his guard, Warren went to the hospital to see his friend. As he entered the room he was delighted to see Roger sitting up, and eating breakfast.

“Hey Roge! How’s it going? You’re able to sit up and take nourishment, that’s great!” he enthused

“Pretty good, still hurts like hell, but they give me stuff for that. Something like morphine. Good stuff. Feel’s okay at the moment.”

“I’m still sorry you took the bullet. You saved my life.”

“I couldn’t let anything happen to you. You know why.

“I know--I know...” Warren whispered softly.

“You made the rules. We’re not supposed to talk about it. But that doesn’t *rule out* the way I feel about you. Nothing’s going to change that...ever!”

“Roger, you’re my best friend...my only real friend. We’re alike in a lot of ways, but in that way, we’re different and it makes me nervous to talk about it. Let me just say this one thing though. If I was designed *that way*, I’d be the luckiest guy in the world. You’re a very special person and very special to me. In a way I blame myself for changing your orientation. I think I put it all in your mind when I did the PAX-BI job on you.” In any case, all I can offer you is sincere brotherly love, but no more than that.”

Roger tried to protest. “Warren, I don’t blame you. Since that woman ruined my life I have no feelings for women. I guess what I feel for you has just replaced that need. In any case, it’s a whole lot better than no emotion at all.”

Warren interrupted. “Just wish you hadn’t risked your life for me.” He patted his friend’s hand and changed the subject. “Let’s talk business. Now you’re out of danger, I need to get back to the plant. That air force major is already there checking out the facilities and I need to help get the bombs ready for next week’s mission. Just came by to make sure you were okay, before I go. I’m sorry you’re going to miss the action this time. Come on home when you’re able, but take good care of yourself.”

“Oh...uh...A final note on the subject of love. I just got a note from Emily. She’s dumped me for one of her medicos. One more thing you and I have in common. I can certainly agree with you on the subject of the so called fairer sex”

“Women!” cursed Roger.

“Women!” growled Warren.

## CHAPTER 18

On his return to the PAX plant, Warren found Air Force Major Robert Larson and his assistant, Airman John Poole, waiting in his office. After introductions and over coffee, the three got down to business. The air force duo seemed enthusiastic and eager to participate in the PAX mission, and were full of ideas and information. The two had looked over the plant and having seen Warren’s video, had a pretty good idea of what was expected of them.

The air force was offering the use of five super bombers B-52Hs for the mission. Each had a capacity of seventy thousand pounds. Having already thoroughly checked

out the size and weight of the PAX bomb casings, It was decided each plane should carry ten bombs. Filled with condensed gas, instead of explosives, the PAX bombs weighed about one third as much as a two-thousand pound blockbuster. Also, the self destructing bomb casings were fabricated from a rugged, but much lighter material than conventional bombs. This would mean less midair refuelings during their flight nearly half way around the world.

After completing their calculations the major phoned them to the Pentagon and was told to report to nearby Hanscom Air Force base to work out the details with the base commander.

Warren excused himself for a few moments to called the hospital in Washington, and speak to Roger.

“Hey, mon ami, How are you doing?”

Rogers voice on the phone sounded stronger than their last meeting.

“I’m doing okay, How’re things going with the air force?”

“These guys are really into our project. They’ve figured out the logistics and we’re headed for the base to make final arrangements for next week’s flight. Hauling the bombs to Hanscom is the next big chore.” Warren paused and chuckled, “Glad the air force is showing more enthusiasm than those Pentagon chiefs.”

“I just wish I was there to see the take off. Looks like I’m stuck here for another week or so.”

“Just take it easy and get well. That’s the main thing.” I’ll try to get back as soon as the bombers take off next week.”

“Good luck, Warren!”

“Take care,” Warren replied, signing off.

The visit to the nearby air force base also proved to be encouraging as the base commander ordered the motor pool to send heavy trucks the plant. It would take a couple of days to deliver the fifty PAX bombs before the B-52H landed and loaded up.

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After numerous trips back and forth between the air force base and the PAX plant, the bombs were delivered. Right on time five B-52Hs arrived and under Warren’s supervision they were loaded into the planes. Two days were spent in orientation of the pilots and crew as Major Larson and Dr. Peace instructed them in the goals of the mission. All were experienced in the deployment of normal bombs, but PAX bombs were different. For maximum effectiveness they must be dropped in very specific zones and at recommended altitudes. Each gas bomb was designed to disintegrate at two thousand feet and spread the gas over a large area as it settled. Though invisible and odorless PAX was slightly heavier than air and each bomb could cover a wide area. Wind currents were also instrumental in its coverage and had to be carefully considered. During the orientations, the airmen were attentive and showed great interest in the potential outcome of their mission. When Warren completed the two day course, all applauded and wished him and themselves good luck.

Late one night that same week Warren, Major Larson, Airman Poole, Warren, and the ground crews watched as the big planes roared into the sky. Then they turned and smiled at one another.

“Well, Doctor Peace,” said the major encouragingly, “If all goes well, we should have some results in a week or so. And if...uh...*when* the Afghanistan reports are positive, we can count on future missions.”

The PAX bombers were scheduled to drop their load in two days. The departure time was kept a guarded secret and the B-52 would be joined by a fighter escort in Eastern Europe. With luck there would be no interference from the enemy.

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After a day at the plant giving the workers an update and pep talk, he left them to continue their work and hurried to Washington to check on Rogers progress. His wounded friend was doing well and was anxious to leave the hospital. Warren talked the hospital staff into letting him camp out there and he spent most of his time in Roger’s room. They talked and watched television for reports from Afghanistan. Warren took and made a few phone calls to his senate and Pentagon contacts.

Finally the news stories started filtering in. B-52Hs had been spotted over Afghanistan. and some sort of mysterious bombs had been dropped. They caused no damage and a day later the news media revealed the bombs were PAX gas containers. Headlines blared: AFGHANISTAN PAXED! with details of the mission. Lolling in the hospital room. Warren and Roger waited with the rest of the world hear what reaction PAX would bring to the war torn country.

Less than a week later TV, radio and the print media begin to respond with positive reports. A minor border incident occurred, but there were no fatalities. The brief battle indicated PAX still encouraged humans to protect themselves and their homes. In spite of the minor trouble, Al-Qaeda and other Afghan war lords came out of hiding and marched into the villages with smiles on their faces as they greeted the crowds of cheering people. The Afghan president called a meeting of all concerned and the assembly, smiling and convivial, declared a peaceful end to hostilities. News coverage showed only happy faces throughout the land. Warren gave Roger a gentle but brotherly hug as they laughed at the apparent success of the mission. The worlds press congratulated the U.S. and Dr. Warren Peace on a job well done.

But would it last? Warren and Roger were confident, but the government withheld its judgment for several weeks. During their wait, Roger was released from the hospital. Though his wound was still uncomfortable, he was pronounced fit to return to active life. They dismissed their guards with thanks as Warren helped Roger to the plane. They flew back to Boston for a brief stop to visit Warren’s parents, before returning to their apartment to await word from Washington. The two had barely settled in before the Air force Chief of Staff called to inform him the President had authorized a hit on Iraq and Iran. In addition , there was a surprise request from OSHA. The safety organization suggested: *Would it be possible to add something to the PAX mix. An ingredient to reduce or eliminate the world’s growing addiction to so called recreational drugs.* Roger laughed, then moaned and held his chest as his laughter gave his old wound a twinge.

“Great idea, Warren! Is *possible*?”

“Is definitely *possible*, and I should have thought of it. Drugs are one of the main causes of crime everywhere. Though PAX should eventually wipe *violent* crime from



the face of the earth, we'll still be troubled by those who crave the bad stuff. I think I've pretty much grasped the formula for pacifying the public with PAX, the safe and sane drug. Why not eliminate the *bad drugs* with an additive to PAX...the good one?"

"Warren, you are amazing!" Roger exclaimed, giving his friend a hug. Warren blushed and pushed him gently away.

## CHAPTER 19

Nearly a month later, following a friendly meeting between the Secretary of State and the Afghan president, the secretary's office called Warren to Washington. On behalf of the President and government, she applauded the success of PAX in the former war zone and announced the war with Afghanistan was officially over. She had also arranged a meeting for him to appear before the UN Security Council. They group felt they had been left out of the loop and wanted to meet with Warren to get and give advice on future uses of PAX. Leaving Roger in charge, he flew to New York and took a room near the UN building. The next morning he walked to the meeting and was ushered into the Security Councilor precisely at ten AM. He was surprised and elated by a round of applause from the fifteen members, their associates and secretaries, seated at the round table. Along with the interpreters at a lower table, the chamber occupants numbered nearly a hundred. They made a space for him and invited him to sit. The president made an opening statement lauding the successes of PAX and their guest before launching into business.

"Dr. Peace, we feel we've been remiss in not having you meet with us earlier. After all, our business is the same as yours, to bring peace to the world. The General Council has asked us to meet with you to hopefully form future plans for your miraculous PAX compound. Unfortunately UN methods have not always been successful. But with PAX they just might be. We understand you want to spread PAX and peace throughout the world. We all agree it's a worthy, but extremely daunting task. Eventually it's our hope it will come to pass. But perhaps we can convince you to prioritize the use of PAX. We're all too well aware, there are areas now under siege from within and without. We hope you can convince you to administer PAX to them as soon as possible."

Warren rose to speak. "Gentlemen and ladies, thank you for your confidence. My dream of world peace was originally only a fantasy, but one I now believe is possible. Of course you are right. First things first. The success of PAX in Afghanistan has proved its worth. Next we plan to give Iraq and Iran the same treatment. But I am at your disposal to recommend other war torn areas which need attention."

Hands went up and the council president called on them. Some felt Palestine should be next and others pointed out the horrors of some of the African nations. With Warren's early experience in Sierra Leone, he heartily agreed. Someone also suggested North and South Korea as potential trouble spots. Others had suggestions near and dear to their own hearts. As the meeting drew to a close, Warren had a list of about thirty hot spots which could benefit from immediate PAX bombings. The meeting closed with Warren's thanks and assurance he would be in touch with the Secretary of State, the Pentagon and others who now had authority over PAX usage.

As he walked back to his hotel, he received a call on his cell from Roger. All was well, but Roger had just received a call from the Pentagon. The joint chiefs wanted to see him. Warren thought it odd, or maybe it was such a coincidence. He needed to talk to the generals about his meeting with the UN Security Council and proposed targets for PAX. They'd already agreed on Iraq/Iran...now what?

He hurried back to his hotel, checked out and took a cab to the air port. The short flight got him into Reagan National in the afternoon and he prepared his notes for the meeting the next day. In the morning he traveled by cab to the Pentagon and was just in time for the scheduled meeting. As he approached the WAF lieutenant seated at the reception desk, she gave him a big smile of recognition.

"Dr. Peace. So good to see you. What brings you to the Pentagon this morning."

Surprised, Warren replied.

"My meeting with the chiefs is at ten isn't it?"

The young lady consulted her schedule and returned, "I don't see it here. And most of the generals are out of town. A couple are in Afghanistan to see your PAX victory for themselves. But there's no meeting scheduled. I am sorry, Doctor?"

Puzzled, Warren turned and left the building. *Damn!* he said to himself. Then he remembered he had a standing invitation to lunch with Senator Hargrave anytime he was in town. He called the Senator's office on his cell and was assured he'd be welcome for lunch in the Senate Office Building at noon. He did have things to talk over with the senator and headed for the taxi stand. On the way he called Roger with the awkward change of plans. As he reached the street a voice called out:

"Dr. Peace! Dr. Peace! Your ride's over here!" He turned to see two men in gray suits standing next to a limousine. *Now what?* He walked over to where the men were standing.

"Sorry guys, But I didn't order a limo."

"No problem, sir," smiled one of them as the other opened the passenger door. "The President heard you were in town and sent us to get you. The *boss* hopes you can join him for lunch."

*But how?! Did the whole town know he was in DC?* He shrugged and got into the limo. Might as well take advantage of the President's kind offer. He set his attaché case on the seat next to him and didn't notice the sound of the door latches locking. He called the Senate building to delay his meeting with the senator until later in the afternoon as the vehicle took off and headed *south*. Warren was familiar with the city and wondered at the direction they were taking. The White House was in the city *north* of the Pentagon. Still puzzled he was even more so when the car pulled onto a side street. The door locks clicked and suddenly the right side passenger door flew open, and one of the men in gray stood there with a pistol aimed at him.

"We forgot one thing Dr. Peace...before we all get into trouble...your cell phone if you please!"

A cold chill poured through Warren. *What was this all about?! It became clear he'd been kidnapped, but why?* Someone out there was after him. First the assassination attempt, and Roger being wounded. Now this. He handed the well dressed, but suddenly sinister driver his cell phone and wondered as the limo door was closed and locked once more. The Al-Qaeda assassin had come close. Would he come out of this alive?

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Roger checked his watch. When he was away, Warren usually called in during the afternoon for an update. Just then his phone rang. It was Senator Hargrave to say he'd expected a visit from Warren that afternoon. Warren had made, then canceled a lunch, saying the President wanted to see him, but the scientist still hadn't shown up. When the senator checked with the White House, they knew of no luncheon meeting. Something wasn't right.

Puzzled, Roger hung up and sat there. He looked at his watch again. Well maybe it was too early to get worried. Just then the phone rang again. He picked up the receiver.

"Hello...Warren?"

A strange sounding voice came on. It sounded like it was digitally augmented.

"We have Dr. Peace, and we're going to keep him. It's up to you to see him alive again."

Roger froze as the voice continued.

"To save his life, you must release the PAX stored in your warehouse and dismantle the plant. In other words No More PAX...OR... No More Dr. Peace."

Roger took a gasping breath and gathered his shaken wits.

"What have you done to him?! He'd better still be alive! I want to talk to him....NOW!"

There was some fumbling and suddenly a familiar voice came on the line.

"Roger. It's me--Warren."

"Thank God! Where are you?! Are you okay?! What have they done to you?!"

"I'm fine...so far... uh...You know what to do." There was some fumbling again and the filtered voice came back on:

"That's right Roger. *You know what to do.* Get rid of the PAX and the factory or we'll send your boss back in a box. You have one week...and we'll be watching!" and the phone hung up.

Roger sat there frozen for a few moments. Trying to gather his thoughts.

Warren had said... *You know what to do.* What did he mean by that? Was it code? One thing he did know. Warren wanted PAX to go forward at any cost...but did that include his life? There had to be a way out. I grabbed the phone and checked the cardex. He rang Senator Hargrave's office number. *Jesus, let him still be there!* On the other end the phone rang several times until a woman's voice answered. "Senator Hargrave's Office."

"Thank the Lord! Is he there? This is an emergency!"

"May I ask who's calling, please."

"Roger Cooper, Dr. Warren Peace's associate."

"Just a moment please." there was a pause and long moments went by before he heard:

"Roger? This is the senator. What's up?"

Roger related the gist of the kidnapper's call.

"Good heaven, Roger!" the Senator gasped. "This is serious! Let me make some calls and I'll get right back to you!"

The senator rang off and Roger sat there holding the dead phone for few moments before hanging up. He had a sinking feeling. *If anything happens to Warren...!*

Twenty minutes later, the Senator called back.

"The FBI is on their way. They told me to issue a press release but not give any details. I spoke to the President and he's as shocked as I am. He wants to send out an all points bulletin and call in the CIA along with all law enforcement agencies. How we are going to contain the press is another problem. With luck there won't be any leaks until we get these guys. We can only hope and pray they don't harm Warren. He's too valuable to our cause to lose him."

Somewhat relieved help was on its way. Roger tried to relax but his concern for his friend battered him.

Several hours later a team of FBI investigators arrived and plant security ushered them into Roger and Warren's office. They went right to work and set up their surveillance equipment. First they attempted to trace the phone call from the kidnapper. No luck. They assumed it came from a cell phone. They also set up a hot line to a team near the Pentagon--the last place Warren had been seen. They called around but were only able to trace Warren's calls from in front of the Pentagon.

A bit later the Pentagon FBI team called to say they had spoken to a driver at the Pentagon taxi stand who remembered seeing Dr. Peace get into a limo. He'd watched them out of sight and swore they turned south--away from the city. The FBI then contacted their office in DC and advised a helicopter search for an unknown limousine, somewhere south of the city. Not much hope there, but they'd been instructed to do everything possible to find the missing scientist.

Several days went by with no search results. The morning after the disappearance headlines blared across the nation: DR. PEACE KIDNAPPED--PAX THREATENED! There was great consternation and speculation, but no real details.

Meanwhile Roger fretted. The voice on the phone had been extremely threatening and he needed to do something. He gave instructions at the plant for workers to fake removing parts and machinery and then make a big show of filling and releasing compressed air from one of the empty PAX tanks. Hopefully whoever was *watching* would send their cohorts a positive report. That might delay any serious action. Roger could only hope it would fool Warren's captors.

Toward the end of the week, Roger received another call from the mysterious voice. "We know you're fakin' it...Mr. Cooper... We're watching and your game won't play. You have only two days left. Our demands must be met or we kill Dr. Peace."

The FBI team at the PAX office and near the Pentagon jumped on tracing the call and quickly determined the cell tower was in Montclair about thirty miles south of the Pentagon. This time the FBI and a SWAT team descended into the area, keeping as low a profile as possible. Investigating every house in the area seemed an impossible task.; but they had to try while still avoiding any kind of show. That might force the kidnappers hand to harm their captive.

*Only two days left. Would they make it in time?* Roger worried, thankful his PAXed system prevented him from going into panic. He hadn't slept in days and was just going through the motions of running the plant.

Meanwhile the teams in Montclair were moving quickly. Early on the seventh day, he received word the investigators had found the limo parked in a deserted shed. They

must be getting close and Roger kept his fingers crossed as the teams scoured the area nearby.

The day dragged on and finally ended. Roger had a horrendous empty feeling. The kidnappers scheduled time was up. He could only hope the perpetrators were lying about the deadline.

Then late the next afternoon, he received a call from the search team. They'd interviewed the neighbors in the area and finally someone had seen suspicious action at an empty house. The swat team had been successful in storming the house. But the kidnappers had flown. The FBI agent cleared his throat and took a deep breath.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Cooper, we were too late. We found Dr. Peace. I'm afraid he's gone...uh... been killed."

The shock of the news was more than even his cool mind could cope with. He lost hold of the phone receiver and it crashed to the floor. His whole being began to shake as he tried to retrieve it. Finally he struggled with himself and was able to respond, his voice shaking.

"Are you still there?" he gasped.

"Sorry for your loss, Mr, Cooper."

"How?... Oh, God! ...They didn't torture him, did they?"

"There was no pain. I realize it's little consolation, but it looks like they made it quick."

Crushed by news his worst fears had been realized, Roger suddenly felt totally cold and empty. It was as if his reason for living had been taken from him. His friend, mentor and the one being in the world he loved had been killed. How would he live without Warren? He only wished he was again the one shot down.

"I need to see him." he choked out. "Where is he now?"

"They've taken the body to our FBI morgue in D.C. for autopsy. The *perps* cleaned up here pretty well, but we're scouring the premises for evidence and clues. We also have the limousine. They were here for a while. There's sure to be DNA and prints somewhere. We'll get 'em, Mr. Cooper. You can count on it!"

The FBI officer's assurance did little to comfort Roger. He thanked the officer and hung up, tears streaming down his cheeks. He sat still and in pain for a while before he managed to pull himself together. It finally sank in--Warren's words *You know what to do* meant he was now in charge of the PAX project. He took a deep breath as his new responsibilities sank in. First he called Senator Hargrave. The Senator had heard the tragic news and was also desolated. He invited Roger to come to the capitol for a meeting. The President had been informed and also sent his condolences. The guard around the PAX plant would be doubled and Roger was again given personal security guards including a body guard. A Billy Gordon was assigned the task. Before heading for Washington, Roger conferred with the PAX staff and gave them the go ahead on the PAX bombs for the Iraq/Iran mission. For security reasons, the government sent a private plane to nearby Hanscom AFB to transport him and his guard to the Capitol. His appreciation was tempered by his need to say a final farewell to his friend. He also assumed the government would continue their plans for PAX and might need his help.

## CHAPTER 20

Once in the capitol he was put up at a secured residence where he could be he guarded around the clock. Wondering what all the fuss was about, he received an invitation to dine at the White House that evening. The President's Limo picked him up at seven and along with his guard, Billy Gordon, road in silence to the mansion.

The dinner was hosted by the President and first lady who were saddened by the current events. Both had been taken by Warren's open personality and promising mission.

The dinner guests were again made up of the President's close advisors and friends. The Senator Hargraves, the VP and his wife and the Secretary of State and her husband were in attendance.

All remembered Roger fondly from the prior dinner, but this time a pall of gloom hung over the proceedings. Finally, the President broke the silence. "The country, and the world, has lost an important force in your friend. I believe he could have made a great contribution to the cause of peace here and abroad. We can only hope your close association has given you some knowledge and drive to carry on his mission. We need to continue his work."

Finally seeing the reason for all the attention and security, Roger replied. "Thank you, Mr. President...That was Warren's goal and he taught me the business and PAX production process. Warren can never be replaced, but I hope I may be able to carry on his work" Those at the table smiled for the first time and gave Roger their full attention

"With the help of the air force we are even now preparing for a PAXing of Iran and Iraq. I'm sure you are all aware of this follow-up mission to our success in Afghanistan. I suspect it may have been the motive behind Warren's...uh...assassination." He held on to his emotions as he looked around the table. "We'll be ready by next week to carry out his last mission. In addition, as I understand from Warren's meetings with the UN and the Secretary here." He said with a gesture to the Secretary of State, "There is a whole list of destinations for PAX drops. The plant is humming at full tilt in anticipation of those bombings and the possibility of even more universal PAX *treatments*."

"In spite of the tragic loss of Warren, that's encouraging news, Roger. It looks like you've already taken the project in hand." the President responded positively. Then his tone changed as he added. "We do have one very sad mission of our own to perform. We feel Warren is as important a hero as any of our armed troops. Due to his foresight and courage the war in Afghanistan is ended, and soon his good works may resolve conflicts throughout the world. His martyrdom grieves all of us. Since that first meeting with the Senate subcommittee and the resulting news coverage, we've received tons of fan mail for Warren. Then, with the first assassination attempt that wounded you, his kidnapping and now this the tragedy, the e-mails, blogs, mail rooms and government switchboards have been flooded with concerns for him. He captured the imagination of much of the country. They see his death as the martyrdom to a great cause. They want to know if his goal of world peace is also dead. So you see, now *you* are our last, best hope and we have to keep you safe. Warren's dead, but his idea is still alive, and in tribute, we'd like to present him with a posthumous Congressional Medal Of Honor. However, since he's a civilian we must settle on the Presidential Medal of Freedom. and

if it's all right with his relatives, we have special dispensation to bury him at Arlington with full honors. The President's words brought tears to Roger's eyes and he had difficulty expressing his

thanks for the honor the chief executive planned for his late friend.

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The next day Roger and guard, Billy Gordon, went to the FBI morgue to view his friend. On the way, he suffered from mixed emotions. Though he wanted to remember Warren as the vital person he'd known in life, he somehow needed proof his dear friend was no more. He wasn't sure what reaction he'd have on seeing the body. But when it was rolled out and uncovered, surprisingly he wasn't shocked. Warren's remains looked tranquil as in sleep and though a bit pale, as handsome as ever. As Roger remembered the kind things the President had said, his feelings of love and pride were added to the deep emptiness which had filled him since he'd heard of Warren's death. For a few long minutes he stood staring at the beloved face. Then he took a deep breath, turned away, and along with his guard followed the morgue attendant's directions to the detective offices. After some inquiry he was introduced to the lead detective on Warren's murder case.

"Glad to meet you Mr. Cooper. We've been meaning to get together with the family and discuss our progress so far. We didn't mean to keep you out of the loop, but we are just now making some headway in the case. Frankly, there isn't much evidence to go on. As I told you before, the perpetrators cleaned up after themselves pretty well. However, no crime is perfect and in the limousine, we found skin cells and a couple of partial prints. Our forensics lab is testing for DNA. We won't know anything definite for a day or so. Please be patient. We'll find the ones who did this, you can depend on it. In the meantime, I understand the funeral is set for day after tomorrow."

On his return to his secured residence, Roger was told the White House had called and invited he and Warren's parents to a little wake in honor of their son. Once again Roger, under security, was driven to the White House. There, he met Warren's Parents. Dr. Orville and Olivia Peace. All embraces and a few tears were shed. In spite of President Lambert's attempts to keep the event light, it was impossible. He made a short speech, lauding the contributions of the Peaces' son and pointed out how the young scientist had brought hope to a troubled world. Though PAX had yet to prove to be the panacea of peace for the entire planet, its success in Afghanistan had given humans a brighter future. Their son could go down in history as its savior.

Olivia Peace excused herself for a few moments and came back wiping her eyes. The First Lady comforted her and invited Warren's parents to stay the night at the White House. A singular honor, usually given only to world leaders.

The next morning at nine, all gathered at the White House and were driven in presidential limousines and black HUVs to Arlington for the graveside ceremony. There was a huge crowd of politicians, reporters and admirers of the late martyr. The Army honor guard stood by with rifles for the salute and a military trumpeter to play Taps. The hearse arrived and a squad of Air Force personnel carried the coffin to the grave side. There it was placed on the mechanism which would lower it into the ground. A military minister gave a short service in which he praised once again the contributions of the late scientist. In conclusion the honor guard fired its salute, and Taps was played

as the American flag which had draped the coffin was folded and presented to Warren's mother. The President came forward, gave a brief speech and presented the posthumous President's Medal of Freedom to Warren's father. The entire proceedings were televised for the nation and satellites carried portions of it to the rest of the world.

## CHAPTER 21

Following the funeral, Roger, along with Billy Gordon, was flown by special plane back to Hanscom AFB. There he again met Major Larson and Airman Poole for final arrangements of the Iraq/Iran mission. When he arrived the B-52Hs were already on the ground and in the process of loading PAX bombs. Roger smiled for the first time in days. The PAX team had followed his instructions to the letter and the next major PAX mission was ready to go. That night, under cover of darkness, the ten heavy bombers took off for their flight to the middle east. Warren had encouraged him to study history, and as he watched the bombers roar into the night, he thought of the Iraq/Iran past. For thousands of years their tribes had fought and killed one another and peoples outside their borders. They were way overdue for a PAXing.

As busy as their afternoon and evening had been, Billy and Roger had missed dinner and on the way back to the condo, Roger drove to an all night diner. They ordered, and while waiting for the food to arrive, Roger noticed something new and strange about his personable young body guard.

"Billy, what are you staring at?"

"Oh...uh...sorry Boss. But after all, I am supposed to keep an eye on you."

"Uh huh....sure." Roger responded skeptically. Suddenly he remembered a similar occurrence, over a year ago, when Warren had accused him of the same thing. Now Roger wondered about his companion.

"Well, face it. I admire what you a lot. You're a pretty amazing fellow. This PAX thing has got to be the greatest contribution of the twenty-first century."

"We have to thank Warren for that. He's still the power behind PAX."

The dark haired twenty five year old smiled sadly. "And like a lot of folks I was an enormous fan of Dr. Peace. I mourned for a time when he was killed. What a loss! And now you are the one in the driver's seat. Pretty special!"

Both grew silent as they ate, remembering the martyred scientist, and his contributions.

At around one AM they finished dinner and after Roger paid the bill he drove them to the condo. Billy was required to keep an eye out for trouble and with no chauffeur that meant his Roger had to do the driving.

All of a sudden, Billy reached out and took Roger's free hand in his.

Shocked, the driver exclaimed. "Oh My God!" but he didn't remove his hand.

"Sorry, Boss...uh Roger! but enough pussy footing around. I don't care if this costs me my job. I love you! I have since our first day together. For years I've searched for a special dude, and finally found him...uh...you. I think you're... beautiful. And not only because of your good looks, but because of your extra special qualities. Taking over for Dr. Peace and running PAX for instance. I'm impressed by what you're doing, and



proud to be a part of it. I've been watching you in action for days and you're incredible! In spite of the pain you must be feeling inside, you carry on."

"Lordy...a gay body guard?!"

"It takes all kinds...", laughed Billy, "Guess I'm one of the *other kind*, and I'd like to do more than guard your hunky body Mr. Cooper!"

Shocked by Billy's surprising confession, Roger grew silent as he thought of his own past, present and future: Three years ago he'd definitely preferred women--until the woman in his life had betrayed him, driven him to madness and sent him to the California Medical Institute. After two years in a prison for the criminally insane, from out of nowhere came Warren Peace, who cured his insanity with PAX. But at the time, the PAX formula contained an ingredient which changed his sexual preference and he fell in love with Warren. Ironically Warren could only offer him generous *brotherly* love, and for a virile man in his mid twenties, brotherly love wasn't really enough for Roger. Though he continued to have powerful feelings for Warren, he was forced to suffer his passion in silence. Even now he loved Warren, but Warren was dead, and this charming, good looking young man was offering what he'd been craving for nearly two years.

As he drove, Roger chuckled and confessed to his passenger: How he'd been changed by the PAX-BI treatment and how he'd felt about Warren. Squeezing Billy's strong, warm hand, he confessed how he desperately needed someone to fill the void.

Just then they pulled into the condo parking place. After Roger switched off the engine they sat for long moments just staring at one another. Finally Billy reached out and touched Roger's cheek.

"My place or yours, Big Boy?" the body guard whispered with a grin.

"Looks like we're already at my....uh...*our* place"...Roger replied. "I'll race you to it." They jumped out of the car and ran for the front door.

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The next weeks were beautifully difficult. Not only were the two men always together, but had important things to do. It was a struggle, but they managed to cope with their potent new relationship and also do the work. Billy pointed out he had a degree in criminal justice and related subjects with a well rounded background. Perhaps he could do more to help than just guard Roger's person.

Roger smiled at the suggestion:

"Warren made me his associate director, Now maybe I could do the same for you. Since you're always going to be around, I might as well put you to work. Warren spent weeks teaching me the business. Let's see how well you do. I can probably arrange a raise in pay, but none of us takes much salary. The PAX mission is our primary reward."

A week following the Iran/Iraq mission, the world began to see the results of the bombings. Sunnis were seen in the company of Shiites, American soldiers were being invited to have dinner with native Muslims of both groups. Romances developed between allied service personnel and locals. A few weeks following the PAXing, the war was declared officially over and though there were a few border disputes, the army

personnel began to work shoulder to shoulder with the Muslims to rebuild the war-torn cities.

## CHAPTER 22

A month after Warren's assassination, the FBI made their first arrests in the case. The skin cell DNA and partial prints didn't match any FBI files and they were stumped until someone suggested trying the military files. It was Roger who remembered the animosity shown by the Pentagon Chiefs toward the PAX project during the first meeting, and wondered. The evidence found in the limousine matched two Marine captains who were taken into custody for questioning. They admitted nothing and were finally indicted for murder. But there was suspicion they were only carrying out orders. One of their laptops was confiscated and examined. The hard drive had been totally erased. However, the FBI had recently developed a process whereby residual information could still be extracted from the disk. They found an e-mailed memo which led to an enormous scandal. The memo was from General Morton Saunders, the U.S. Marines Chief of Staff to one of the officers involved. On a directive from the President of The United States, the general was arrested and interrogated. He refused to speak at first, until told the kidnappers were getting ready to talk. Finally, the general confessed to making a *suggestion* someone should eliminate Dr. Warren Peace before he *destroyed* their war machine. On this *suggestion*, the captains, being career men, planned and carried out the kidnapping and subsequent assassination.

The Marine General was asked if any other Chiefs were involved. He laughed and sneering, replied: "Those wimps? Huh! They talked about it, but I was the only one with the guts to go through with it. It takes a marine to do a man's job!" All three men were sentenced to life in prison and sent to the United States Disciplinary Barracks at Fort Leavenworth

In the meantime, assassin Alwar al-Awlaki was tried for his crime against Roger and Warren and sent to Guantanamo. The embezzling accountant, Emma Jones, was apprehended by the FBI. She returned most of the money, and received a minimum sentence.

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Roger and his new partner, Billy, worked with the air force as they prepared for the next hits on the United Nations list. Palestine was ripe for treatment, as it had been for over a half century. Arabs and Jews still either fought openly or conducted a constant cold war along the Gaza Strip. Areas of Africa further south were also being aimed at by the PAX bombers.

Next came North and South Korea, the Philippines and other areas which had been infiltrated by Al Qaeda or other terrorists. The PAX plant worked 24/7, turning out bombs and sending many to Hanscom AFB nearby. Though the residents could have complained about the noise each time a mission landed or took off, they smiled knowingly, inserted ear plugs and went about their business. The PAX rail spur was

put into use and hundreds of bombs were shipped to the West Coast for transport to airfields in the Pacific.

As peace came to the war zones of the world, other governments wondered if PAX would be beneficial to eliminate local violent crime and domestic violence. Cities in the U.S. led the way. First to make the move was Detroit, Michigan, notorious for inner city gangs and killings. This required a vote of the populace, and in an election, PAXation won by a narrow margin. As predicted, violent crime was nearly eliminated. Next came Washington DC, Miami, Las Vegas, Orlando, Little Rock and many others. A fortunate coincidence was most violence was generated by drugs, and the anti drug ingredient in PAX squelched addiction. Though they were threats on Roger's life and the PAX plant, fortunately the drug cartel criminals responsible were pacified along with the rest of the populace and caused little trouble. Those who lost their jobs when war ended and the service men returned home--those not hired by the New Peace and Green Corps, were employed by PAX to operate new plants on the East and West coasts. Under Roger's direction they developed portable PAX release towers. Consulting Warren's existing wind maps, PAX teams deployed the telescoping devices in critical areas of the world. They could be moved into position and reach high up into prevailing wind currents to spread PAX over vast areas. Once a site was treated, the PAX Towers were moved on to the next locale. And so it went for years, until the world was PAXified and pacified. .

Much of the past violence had been motivated by greed. However, PAX brought with it many positive side effects. The philosophies of big business changed. Now the rich and powerful became like the patriarchs and matriarchs of old. They used their wealth to build companies to employ the less fortunate or talented. Unlike the business world of the early twenty first century which laid off personnel to hike their profits, companies offered jobs to nearly everyone. The worlds economy was finally secure. Most hoped these golden days would last. Still, if and when the world again got into trouble, the PAX organization was standing by to give it booster shot.

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