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BREAKING NEWS

by Cliff Dale

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For those that will never read a book again,
who will never hear the sound of joyful music,
nor the mournful cries from family and friends,
for you, your struggle is over,
ours, is just beginning.

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1. Trees

The world was not such a strange place, most of it had been mapped, almost all of it had seen the footprint of Man at some time or another, and mankind had bent and warped the world just the way it wanted. Despite this beauty, mankind dug up the wonders and built on the space now cleared, and continued to scoop out the heart of the planet, leaving the soul raped and pillaged, and then drilled holes to plunder the bountiful riches, left the surface scarred and ugly. Sadly, it had been that way for many years now, then things accelerated, got worse, Man built the machines that made bigger holes faster, devices that drilled deeper into the Earth's crust, and without a care, removed more and more of the wonderful riches the planet had to offer, it laid waste to the beauty that Mother Nature had created for Man's pleasure.

Since that industrial revolution, the world had been slowly dying and mankind appeared oblivious, it seemed as though whatever Mother Nature threw at the people who abused the privilege of living on its glorious surface, they always ignored the idea that this could be a warning of worse to come, now they were beginning to see the truth in these natural disasters, seeing them for what they were, realising it was time to change, and that change was needed now. The people, they complained about the mess that industry was making, protested, demanded changes, and turned to the politicians to protect them, but industry beat them to it, lately, it was the people who needed protection from the politicians.

In the modern world, the last fifty years or so, it was Science that had taken the lead, religion had once driven the thinking of the way the world worked, that God, the one you happened to believe in, was going to save you, us, or most of us, the believers at least, but faith was a fickle thing, people started to question their faith, began to doubt in their religion, and Science became the new saviour.

It always seemed strange that the promised land was green and pleasant, at one point very earth-like, abundant trees heavy with fruits, its surroundings smothered in beautiful flowers, bathed in glorious sunlight, in the shade of the tree the nice animals relaxed, listening to the sound of the bird song as they paddled in calm clear river water as it trickled toward a sea full of fish. That image was shattered years ago, now the trees are on fire, the animals are in hiding, the fruits are in a can and the flowers are buried under the concrete, you can't hear the bird song for they are too frightened to sing, and they dare not paddle in the dirty brown waters for fear of getting some manmade disease and all their feathers will fall out, and those clear blue seas, they were now full of plastic and heavy metals. The promised land had become more like the rubbish tip, a polluted wilderness surrounded by the burning desert, there was no garden of Eden anymore, now it was just a high-rise apartment block communal garden much in need of a makeover.

The Science was sound, things were getting warmer, the ice was melting, waters were rising, the wind was getting stronger, volcanoes are erupting, the forests are on fire and the earth was often moving, and when it rained, well, grey and acidic.

Come on people, wake up!

If this were an automobile you would either get it mechanically serviced or you would exchange it, but this was not an automobile, this was a planet, an eco-system, you could service it, you could also do it a service by not driving it to destruction in the

first place, it really needed a clean, a bit of polish here and there, actually, it needed a real shine just about everywhere, but you could still travel forward with it, still ride in it, you just needed to take a bit more care of it, treat it with a bit more respect and it would allow you to journey with it into many more sunsets yet.

Of course, there was no exchange, you couldn't trade it in for something new, there was nothing else like it anywhere, this was the ultimate in designer wear, you could not buy this again for love nor money, you could give it love, you should spend money on it, but you could not exchange it, it was the ultimate in unique.

The people were good at the tidy thing, or at least some of them were, the rest didn't seem to care, it didn't affect them, or it didn't seem to, so why bother?

It was exactly that attitude that needed to change.

She wanted to change it, and she could if enough people would listen, but they were sheep, they needed to be led, shown the way, driven by the dog snapping at their heels, careful enough not to bite them, but showing just enough menace to frighten them into moving in the right direction, keeping them all together on the right track, herding them toward the safety of the enclosure. The dog wasn't going to mention that this track was the way to the slaughterhouse, eventually, they would work it out, but by that time, they were already on the truck and there was no way back, no way out, there was just the one path and it leads to their untimely death.

Of course, the sheep could change, the herd could face down the dog, they could stay in the meadows, eat all the good stuff, and if they got the balance right, then they could stay there until their natural time was up, they had the power to do that, all they needed was that choice pointing out to them, it was in their hands.

Globally, politicians didn't care, that was perhaps unfair, some did, some campaigned on the green ticket, but they didn't have the same money or its influence, they couldn't do the same huge campaigns or the countrywide tour as the others did, but they tried, they joined in the TV debates, tried to steer the conversation to the state of the planet, told how it needed fixing before we all completely broke it, the politicians, however, would then direct the conversations right back to the economy and how the green vote would see everyone broke, and said there was no way to fix that either.

It wasn't true, many politicians didn't want to affect profits, the green way attacked their investment portfolio, their way of life, not ours, theirs.

Big business ignored the signs, flouted the rules, courted political friendships and got the rules changed so they could make more profit without all these silly restrictions on their factories waste output clogging up the process. This waste output was clogging everything else up, it was filling up the landfill sites, it was turning the lakes orange, green, blue and sometimes red, it was creating islands of plastic in the seas, and dropping acid rain on the forests and plains that they hadn't already burnt down or ploughed up, that is what they were doing.

This course of action was unsustainable, it was harmful, it was suicidal, had no one told the politicians that in most countries assisted suicide was illegal? Of course, where it was legal, then it still required the patient's consent.

You needed to look at the bigger picture to see what was going on, but it was difficult to know where to look first, there was so much going on in this intellectual collage that you were constantly drawn away to another point of interest elsewhere, it was hard to focus on the problem at hand.

That was the problem, the problem with the problem was that it was multi-faceted, it was not just one thing, it was hundreds, this affected that which had an effect on this and changed it into something else, and so it went on, and on, and...

It had to go back to the basics, the fundamentals, if you didn't start from there then the complex could not be fixed, it was that simple but most missed it, ignored it, that was because it wasn't the interesting bit, it was the slow bit, time was apparently of the essence and the basics took too much time to work, it seemed the politicians were only looking at the quick fix, something that could be seen to be done in their term of office, they didn't want the opposition taking credit from what they started, so it had to be now, it needed to be instant, you couldn't fix this in an instant, it was going to take years, generations, this was never going to be the quick fix they wanted, but it was what the planet wanted, it is what it needed, if 'we' couldn't fix it in time, then, 'it' was going to fix us, permanently.

After that, time would have stopped for us all, no one was listening.

The planet was objecting to our presence more and more, after showing us countless patience over the years, now, it had considered that it had given us enough time and we had wasted it, not seen the signs for what they were, now the planet was going to offer no more, now it had zero patience with this annoying pest crawling all over it, this parasite that was burrowing into its shell, digging away and doing its own thing, it needed to stop, it was going to stop it, stop them.

There were those that could see the problem, wanted to fix the problem, wanted to help, but they couldn't, what they needed was money, everything revolved around money, money was the modern god, it was king, it was, according to some, the root of all evil.

Was it odd that there was this nature-based ring to that phrase?

The root; it was as if it had all been planted, it had, perhaps the seeds of this evil were planted years ago, for centuries it had been them and us.

This conversation had shifted already, the focus had already been lost, see, I told you it was difficult to concentrate on the basics, those fundamentals.

Trees.

The world needed trees, it didn't need to tear them down and burn them, those trees had taken tens of years to grow, in some cases, hundreds, you can't replace them in an instant, it doesn't work like that, they needed to be preserved, protected, and the various green charitable organisations had been trying to do that for a hundred years or more, and they could not do it fast enough, it came back to money and the fact that they didn't have enough of it.

Trees, get back to the trees.

What does a tree do? Well, lots of things, but perhaps the most important is that it provides the balance for the air we breathe. So, the basics are simple, no trees, no air. So, the question has to be, why are we cutting down trees to provide land for beef cattle and palm trees for oil?

Simple, because they provide money, profit, trees provide no income, well they can do if you sell the wood, pulp the stuff into paper, the paper they print the money on. The replanting though, the growing, that was too slow, no profit in slow.

Back to the basics, money, profit, greed.

Should we stop eating beef?

Well, no, we are, as a species, designed to eat meat and vegetables, you can survive on just vegetables, but not on just meat, it doesn't have the right nutritional balance, it comes back to basics, get the basics right at the beginning, find the balance, and the complex almost resolves itself.

Should we stop consuming palm oil?

Actually, yes we should, there was an environmental concern obviously, more natural forest was destroyed to plant the palms, you would think it was just trees for trees, and to a certain extent it was, but when it came down to what a palm plantation converted to what the same forested area had done, there was no comparison, the forest was considerably better. There was all the displaced wildlife to consider as well, much of which was slaughtered without a second thought, couldn't have these things eating the profits, what do they think they are, endangered?

Some of them were.

Of course, there was the health concern too, but much of this was controversial, yes palmitic acid was saturated fat, that was seen as one of the major influences on cholesterol build up in the arteries, but palm oils also contained a number of beneficial things, vitamins A and E, which are powerful antioxidants, and it had been scientifically shown to protect the heart and blood vessels from plaques and ischemic injuries, and palm oil consisted of oleic and linoleic acids too, which are monounsaturated and polyunsaturated, and, as an alternative oil to other vegetable derivatives, and when consumed as a dietary fat as a part of a healthy balanced diet, it had been shown not to have an incremental risk for cardiovascular disease.

It came back to the way it was managed, that was perhaps the biggest reason as to why it was not welcome in the foodstuff we all purchased, the burning and clearing of acres of land for this stuff was an environmental crime against humanity.

So, should we all turn vegetarian?

We could do, many would say it is a healthier choice, but then, how much land do you need to clear to grow all the extra vegetable crop? Of course, a higher vegetation waste only produces more of the so-called greenhouse gasses, so that won't help either, the assumption was that you would probably need to cut down more trees and end up producing more methane, so that doesn't work then, or does it?

Perhaps that argument was too basic, and maybe not scientifically accurate either, but it is the perceived thoughts of the masses who like their meat-based products, and tended to see vegetarians and vegans as extremists, those who were being guided, perhaps misguided, by the advertising machine that told them meat is good, that palm oil production was harmless, of course, the animal lovers would mention that the Orangutan, pygmy elephant and Sumatran rhino would disagree, and the vegan will tell them meat is murder, but that is perhaps a whole different argument.

Not completely.

What is needed is a balance, everything needs to be put back into balance, not the bank balance, the ecological balance.

As a species we now eat more meat than we used to, part of that is because we genetically engineered things to be more efficient, more meat per animal, but mainly it is because we can now afford to, the money thing again, go to the poorer areas in the world and they live on a vegetable-rich diet, meat is a luxury, they also live on a subsistence diet, they eat what is available, sometimes that is the local wildlife, and

sadly, if there is nothing available then they don't eat, they die unless some charitable organisation props them up until the rains come again and the crops grow and cows get grass to feed on.

Again, nature put out of balance, nature is often cruel, survival of the fittest, the alpha dog gets all the best bits, takes the bigger bite, the runt gets the scraps. Some have learnt to overcome it, look at the wolf, for example, some would say it is a cruel animal but they may surprise you, the pack only moves at the speed of its slowest member, no one gets left behind, everyone gets a fair share of the proceeds of the kill, they know that if one gets fed less then it can't run as fast or for as long, the pack always runs to the speed of its slowest member, there is a balance, they have balance, balance is good, we need to be more wolf.

Going off track again, focus, back to basics, see, one thing is affected by another which has an effect on something else, even the basics become complex.

Trees, we need more trees, keep the air thing going and the carbon dioxides get filtered out, global warming gets naturally reduced.

It sounds simple, right?

No, it isn't.

Where is all this global warming effect most concentrated?

Everywhere there are no trees and masses of people, that's where.

So, plant trees where these concentrations are, right?

Not so easy, these places have no free space to plant trees, very few green spaces at all, and trees are big, they are awkward to slot into the finer slices of greenery, how about an example?

London, the capital of England, the seat of Government in the UK, parliament, well, London used to have hundreds of trees, thousands of them, there was no forest of them in the modern era, yes there were parkland areas that had concentrations of them, wooded areas, but most of these modern trees lined the roads, they were the buffer between the traffic and the pedestrians, the divider between the road, the footpath, and the houses. Londoners used to refer to these trees as the lungs of the city, they took much of the pollution and filtered it, they ate up the output from the city and turned it back into something breathable in the natural process of photosynthesis, and it did this for free, no cost at all, all they needed was a bit of land to grow in and they did the air cleaning for free. Plane trees, they were called plane trees, sycamore or maple are of the same species, the leaves absorbed the pollutant and every autumn the leaves fell, removed the pollutant, and by spring, they started all over again. There was a balance, nature attempting to compensate for the folly of Man, Man who was using the generosity of nature to its own advantage, giving nothing in return, it seemed the balance was becoming a bit one-sided.

For London, more and more people moved in, the pollution levels increased, and in the 1950s and 60s, people died from it, Government was forced to help, industry volunteered to help, the technology they developed helped too. The newly implemented legislation banned anything except smokeless coal, natural gas was installed, better electricity supply became available, and a cleaner more fuel-efficient central heating took over from coal fires, household emissions decreased, the good old London pea-souper fog had been successfully reduced and eventually removed. The term smog comes from this, smoky fog, smog, did you know that?

It was said that the term was popularised by one Doctor Henry Antoine Des Voeux in his 1905 paper, "Fog and Smoke," it was produced for a meeting of the Public Health Congress to report on the effect of the London pea-souper fogs of the time, it discussed the effects on the health of the city dweller, and those of other towns and cities too with a similar problem. In a London newspaper article the following day, a reporter suggested that this new term, smog, had been created specifically for the smoky fog of London town, however, it wasn't true, the term does appear in an edition of the Santa Cruz Weekly Sentinel of some fifteen years earlier.

Smog was always thought of as a new phenomenon, yet the term was invented in 1880, that was long before the motor car and the aeroplane were a major pollution problem, but its root cause was still the result of the burning of fossil fuels, it seems nothing much has changed over time, lessons were not learned.

Off-track again.

The London tree thing all changed when people wanted more space, families had more money, a disposable income, they sought more luxuries, bought into the advertising hype of more money equals better status in the community, so they bought two cars, this created more traffic, it created greater congestion, more pollution, and sadly, the trees were now in the way of progress, of expansion, roads needed to be widened, trees needed to be trimmed, more people meant more public transport, double-decker buses, taller trailers for the trucks that delivered the greater quantity of food and consumer goods to this rapidly expanding population, to those with a greater disposable income. That was the start of the disposable trend in society, not just in London in the swinging sixties, but globally where there was a similar culture. This expansion started to cost greater sums of public money, something needed to be trimmed to balance the budget, so down the trees came, no more maintenance bills, no more pavement and road repair necessitated by the expanding roots of the bigger greater filtering trees, surely, less smog meant fewer trees were required, so, chop-chop, down they came. Sure, the people complained, after all, the nice greenery had gone, the shade, the smells, they made the city seem less city like, more relaxing, welcoming, but there were still parks, all you needed to do was drive to one, you could catch a bus, get a train, you could still see the green, it just wasn't outside your front door anymore.

The trees were just the beginning, more parking spaces meant fewer parks, more green replaced by more grey, just more expanses of concrete that trapped the heat and hid the basic plants, the grasses, the colourful weeds, the simple things, the grow anywhere things. More journeys to find the greener places, more traffic, taller buildings to house the people, all trapped the fumes of modern life, now there were no London lungs to do the cleaning, no autumn fall and spring renewal, only more of mankind thinking it knew better than Mother Nature.

A movement sprung up, they could see where this was going, it was happening all over the world, it wasn't a London only thing, it wasn't a United Kingdom thing, it was worldwide, it needed a global response, a global voice, what it needed was an image, something the youth could relate to, inspire the young for they are the future, keep the status quo and you would only see the lights of that future fade.

You could argue the pot-smoking hippie was perhaps not the best image to have had, but, it obviously seemed right for the time, unfortunately, the modern hippie, now re-

branded as a tree-hugger, is seen in the same light, out of touch with the modern world, out of sync with the pace of modern life, out of work and out of money. Some of that is true, something was certainly out of sync, but it is the world out of sync with the planet, not the modern hippie, they were still in tune with that. Out of money; perhaps some are, but many are working and spending some on trying to bring the modern world back into alignment with what the planet needs, but out of touch, not at all, they are perhaps the only ones still in touch, still aware that there is a fragile balance and it has already tipped too far toward the bad. They know that if it keeps going as it has in the past, then the whole thing will be so out of balance, that all that's left is the fall, and once it all falls then there is no way back, it will be gone, the trees will be gone, we will be gone, it will all be gone.

Money will be of little use then.

Tree-hugger is such a derogatory term, accurate perhaps, it came from another image, of people trying to defend the trees by hugging them, often joining hands with other like-minded spirits, occasionally with the aid of chains and padlocks, to stop the property developers from digging up more vast chunks of green space for expensive sprawling housing that the towns and cities could do without. It was also true that they sometimes swapped the chains and padlocks for handcuffs, but that was rarely a choice they made, that choice was made for them too.

If you rip up the trees, tear them down, burn them, you can't just make new trees, you have to plant them, to grow them, nurture them, take care of them, it takes time to grow a tree, it wants nothing but the time to be able to grow, and the right environment in which to grow, to thrive, to live, to help others to live.

That is the basic function of the tree, it helps others to live, from the leaf that animals can eat to the fruits people can eat, to the air that both need to breathe, life for the tree is simple, it is Man that makes it complex.

We need more trees, we need more simple.

The planet needed more help, there was a growing movement that was becoming the leader in this fight, though fight sounded like it was in a war, it was sort of, but no guns, no bombs, no destruction, it was a hearts and minds thing, it was about preserving the good things, well, most of it was.

The plan was basic, all the best things were basic, object, protest, observe, if the objection didn't work, if you protested but observed no change, then go back to step one, object again, protest to make your point, observe the reaction, repeat.

They were all there to object peacefully, to demand changes in policy, to help bring the modern world back into sync with the pace of the planet, it was clear it wasn't working the other way around, nature took time to adapt naturally, Man just pushed forward with its own agenda, irrespective of the consequences. The protests were loud, they were bright, colourful, enjoyable, there was a party atmosphere, a safe place to be, you couldn't bring the kids to a war zone. These changes were not this Government's immediate problem, that was for future generations to sort out, well guess what, we are that generation of the future, the problem was made, was forced upon 'us,' from changes pushed through in the 1960s, protests took place then, objections were raised, those same objections are raised now because observation tells us that no change was made that worked, at some point, someone will have to listen or we will all die on a planet that will tire of all the hurt heaped upon it, by the

disrespect that is shown to it, by the destruction that will be caused by it as it falls apart, taking the remnants of mankind down with it.

Observe what is going on now, it is clear that all is not well, all is not right with the world, our world, the one we all live on, Mother Nature has raised her objections often, voiced her protest frequently, and mankind still isn't making the changes, the planet is raising its objections again, still voicing its own concerns over the inhumane treatment it is subjected to on a daily basis, protesting loudly for all to hear, for that is the basic truth of this, if the politicians of the day don't observe and listen now to the overwhelming volumes of evidence, hearing the clear message the planet is sending, this telling of an impending ecological disaster, then there will be no politics of the future, the ghost of politics past will have condemned us, and them, to the same fate as the planet, it is dying, we are dying, they are helping to kill it.

Who said suicide was painless?

It was probably some party-political idiot who had never tried it.

Rallies became calls to action, action blocked the streets, obstructed roads, disrupted the workings of modern-day life, and with time, it had the right effect, people started to listen. Some politicians got it, at least, they saw a new voter out there, one they could appeal to, whether they would do as they promised, well, they were politicians after all, they went where the groundswell of opinion took them, it didn't mean they would continue with that direction once they got the keys to the big house. Quite often they acted like spoilt children when they got on to the big stage, missing the point, stamping their feet, arguing over nothing, choosing party lines over common sense, ignoring the obvious and avoiding the needs of the very people that voted them in, the sad part was it happened every time and still the people were surprised. Come on people, wake up!

Off track again.

But, it got to a point where the protests had raised the right objections, voiced the right opinions, and eventually, observed the rule of law, this was in exchange for a positive reaction from the politicians of the world, enough voices were on the streets to make it hard for them to not hear the beat of the war drum voting, its rhythm telling them they needed to do something or they were set to lose their lifestyle and prestige, they would be voted out of office and were unlikely to be returned.

So, those who made the global decisions had decided it was time to listen to the voice of dissension, that of the people, not the planet, they were the bigger pest here, even though the planet had tried to shout its objections, raised its red flags, mankind still ignored them, or many of them did. The faithful few, those still in touch with Mother Nature, they listened, they recognised the signs for what they were, they raised their voice for the planet, and on behalf of their fellow Man they were heard, rebellion has a way of making politics listen, but could it make them act?

Now, she was part of the latest "Breaking News."

This first real-world conference on the globally impending ecological disaster was called, this wasn't to discuss agreements on change, that had been done and failed in the past when money came before the welfare of the people on the planet, when idiots thought they ruled the world, doing as they wanted, well, more "Breaking News," they ruined our world.

2. Conference Call

She was there, had her invitation, about to get another fifteen minutes.

It was so easy, simple, all she did was shake hands with the right people, accepted a nod here and there with those of the high and mighty, those who ran the world, the power brokers, decision-makers, and that was it, her PR job was done.

Well, not quite, now she had to tell them off.

That would get the Public Relations teams scrambling to do as much damage limitation as they could, they wouldn't let their boss take all the flak she was about to dish out.

Most of what she was required to do was organised for her, right now, that was standing just inside of the large open doorway, accepting the greetings from the world leaders as they filed past, sometimes passing a few pleasantries, even as they all made a point of shaking her hand whilst turning carefully away, ensuring to smile for the officially placed photographer. That image would be on the front cover of the newspapers and business magazines around the world, all they had to do now was to walk on to take their seats and await her scathing words of wisdom.

Who was she?

Well, she was the person that everyone wanted to talk to, the young woman everyone wanted to be seen with, photographed with, the person who swayed the current world opinion with her carefully chosen words, she had the ear of the youth but was not the person that those who made the decisions wanted to pay attention to, yes, they would listen politely, but they took little notice of what she had to say, her opinion was not the significant thing here, they were the important ones, she was just the novelty act. It was an odd position to be in, well aware of what she was, what she had, what she could achieve, but there were limits, she knew there were limits, but it didn't matter, there was a message to put out today, an audience that listened by remote access, all she could hope for was that by the time these listeners were able to vote, that there would be a planet left to live on.

That's what she was here for, to lecture these dumb politicians about, she knew they didn't care, the green vote was not a big vote, it didn't sway the masses, but it would, she would see to it that it would, that motion had begun.

Who was she really?

Just a student, one that had come to symbolise a movement, she had caught the imagination of the youth that could see that change was necessary, and, that action was required to make that change, though, they were not sure how much action was appropriate, more sheep to be guided, more to be saved from the slaughterhouse. She became the voice to be heard, and one to be reckoned with, over time at least, but it took a while to get there. All this came about from one simple interview at a protest march in London almost one year ago, a TV news crew were looking for someone to interview and there she was, well dressed, well-spoken, adding her voice to the gathered multitude, and they asked the simple question, "what are you here for?"

The interviewer wasn't expecting much but got more than he bargained for, the piece went global, viral on the web, that was it, everyone wanted to know who this woman was, so eloquent, so passionate, so real.

"Me, I'm here for the planet, you know that if we don't all take part then we cannot make them understand our concerns, they have the truth and ignore it, we know their version of the truth and want to correct it, we voted them in but still they won't listen, why is that? Money, that is what this all comes down to, they don't want to lose their own, it is not about spending our money, it is about preserving their pile, it is a global disgrace, all of them, politicians globally, they should be ashamed, they are not saving us, helping us, no, they are saving themselves, they don't put us first, they don't put our country first, nor the planet, it is them, it has always been about them, I, we, will not stand for it anymore, we demand they put the planet first, that is why we are here. This is not Breaking News, our planet is in trouble, we, are in trouble, it is simple, no planet, no us, wake up people, this is about you, it is for you, join us, be part of the cause. Let me ask you and your viewers a question, what are you waiting for, why are you not here, what is your excuse for not joining in?"

The reporter didn't have a response, to be fair it wasn't his place to answer, he had to remain neutral or the piece would have never made it to air, if it hadn't, then she would not be here now, would not be the guest of honour at this conference.

It was hard to believe that it was just eleven months ago when they found her, when she became the spokesperson for the youth of the world.

However, it wasn't all her, there had been a dedicated team working hard to promote what she was to become, what they needed to make her, and social media played its part in getting the message out there, getting it shared, forwarded, getting it liked. This team had helped her to become the ultimate eco-warrior, "they" made her that, but she was one of many, there were thousands of them, tens of thousands who were active and vocal, and there were millions of sympathisers, the followers, and they would make a difference, come the day of reckoning they were to play their part, but it was going to take time, she was young, there was plenty of time for her, the planet, however, that didn't have that much time left, that was the message she needed to get across today. It was falling apart, the people of the world were telling the politicians they had to do more than listen, the planet was telling mankind it had to change, it had been making that point for years, mankind was just too wrapped up in its own little personal space to even consider what the planet required from those who were freeloading on its surface.

Mother Nature had been scraped and raped, used and abused, now it was going to fight back and there was nothing mankind could do about it, Mother Nature was not going to speak to the deaf any more, now others were to do the talking for her, and this woman was just one of many. The planet had raised its voice in the past, given enough hints, displayed many messages, and there were plenty of telling signs that things were going awry, tsunamis, earthquakes, volcanoes, all were clear signals from an unhappy relationship, all natures doing, there was an increase in the wind speeds, of tornado, cyclone and hurricane activity, a rise in the air and sea temperature drove them, the melting icefields and a rise in the seas, a change in the timing of the seasons, they were all mankind's doing, something that Mother Nature could no longer correct nor halt, and yet, science pointed out where the fault lay but it was politics that

decided that Mother Nature was at fault, it wasn't them, their policies, their lack of action, why had Mother Nature decided to stop sorting out all the crap Man could throw at it, why now?

They were wrong, she hadn't stopped, she could no longer cope, Mother Nature tried to remind the parasite on her surface that she was the boss, they were the naughty children who needed to tidy up their rooms, but the multitude of pests kept fighting off her attempts to correct them, to remove them, typhus, cholera, polio, smallpox, an ever-changing flu strain, Ebola, HIV, SARS, MERS, the persistent invader managed to evade them all, they pulled together then, why not now, for her benefit, for the planet? She, Mother Nature, managed to get quite a few of them in the past, but they just kept coming back, more and more of them, now there were over nine billion, they had to learn, it had to stop, there had to be a lightening of the load, they had to go, she was past talking to the petulant vermin.

She had friends out there, kindred spirits, sympathisers, eco-warriors, time was now of the essence, waiting for Man to listen to the message she was sending was not working, now there was zero patience, zero tolerance, it was a time to act.

Now there was a new woman driving things forward.

Even her name was eco-friendly, Holly Amber Greene, and as she used to say, Green with an E, the E was for environmentalist, it was her icebreaker comment. She was affectionately known as 'the hag' to her friends, H, A, G, her initials, but these days, she wasn't really sure who her true friends were anymore.

Things had become a bit more serious, too serious, she would even use the word extreme, Holly hadn't seen it coming but "they" did, her "they," they had pushed this agenda, worked her into it, "they" sort of slipped it in so that it surfaced unseen, becoming the norm, being the direction of travel, the go-to conclusion, the only solution. It wasn't what she wanted, but what she wanted didn't matter anymore, this thing was bigger than she, it had become its own thing, a big thing, and it was now way beyond her control. This thing, it just moved forward on its own, the popular momentum driving it, there was no obvious guidance, it seemed there was no one at the helm steering, it, she, just went where the tide of popular opinion took her.

It wasn't true, there was plenty of guidance, it was discrete, manipulative, calculated, deliberate, but it seemed natural, that is what they were about, nature, most of the time it was meant to look that way.

Now she was here, and "they" were here too, guiding, steering, manipulating, and the other "they," they were here too, this "they" were the common enemy, not that they were common, they were the elite, the upper echelons of society, the movers and shakers as they were sometimes referred to. Holly was here to tell them the planet was sick of them, sick because of them, and it was tired of playing the game and losing, now they were to be told that there was a new game, a guessing game, she was not going to tell them how it was going to play out, nor the rules, it wouldn't matter to them anyway, they didn't want to know, they were unlikely to stay around to be a witness to the change that was coming, they were going to become the first victims of the eco-change, they were to be the first collateral damage in the new war, for it was going to look like a war zone eventually, she had been warned about that.

Holly didn't like the idea of collateral damage, it was likely to be a tough lesson to learn, but she could appreciate that sometimes you needed to play a little rough to get

your point across, they said it was about to get very rough, Holly had to be prepared for the potential damage that went with that.

There was not going to be an actual revealing of this game plan, that was not sensible, there was going to be an explanation of a possible one, a hint of things to come, a word to the wise was one phrase she liked, but this lot were not wise at all, they all had their own little island agendas, and cooperation on the global scale didn't figure highly in it, that is what she wanted to change, that is what she had been banging on about for almost a year now.

Her studies were put on hold, almost abandoned to some degree, she most likely wouldn't need them, colleges and universities around the world were lining up to give her honorary diplomas and degrees, she was good for their branding, the face of the moment, the voice of a movement.

The lights dipped, and the spotlight came on, the Secretary-General said his small introduction and that was it, she was on, centre stage, her moment was now. She had been here before, not physically here in this place, but she had been in this moment, several times, but this was different, now it was time to shift gears, switch tactics, get a little dirty.

There was polite applause as she stood at the podium.

“Secretary-General, Ladies and Gentlemen, distinguished guests, thank you for my invitation to your global conference. You know, I wasn't sure I should accept it, I wasn't sure it was worthy of my time and effort trying to convince those in all the right places to do the right thing, knowing that they had no intention of doing anything to save us from their greed and mismanagement.”

There had been a slight buzz to the room, the sound of several hundred uninterested people talking in hushed whispers, that last comment silenced the auditorium.

She had attention now, Holly was talking to the world, for the world.

What she was about to say was broadcast live to a world looking for direction, this was the “Breaking News” of the moment, and these words would be picked apart, analysed for the hidden messages, it would be cut up into news-transmission worthy slices and the big league politicians reactions would be shown for the public to judge if “they” were sincere or not. Those major players in that big league, the other “they”, they were now concerned that this young woman was about to upset the status quo, and they were coming around to the idea that this one girl could spoil the cosy little world that “they” lived in.

That was the point, the world they lived in wasn't the same one as for the rest of us, they lived in their ivory towers, full of gold taps and fancy drapes, the rest of us lived in the mud huts at the bottom of a long garden, all flimsy doors and cheap duvets to keep us warm, this other-world village was separated by a big wall that she wanted to tear down, and they had no idea what was coming.

She was riding the tide of popular opinion, surfing in on the biggest ecological idealistic wave the planet had seen since the 1960s, she was about to drown them all and would offer no apology for that.

“That's right, no intention, you came to show your face, to look the part, nod politely, and do absolutely nothing, all you are here for is the photo opportunity with the face of the moment, to look like you care, you don't care, you have no clue what is coming because you don't listen, you actively choose not to listen.

Well, it may not surprise you to learn that I choose to get active.

Let me tell you what the rest of the world already knows, for years the scientists have been warning of the risks mankind poses to the planet, the damage done to it in the name of profit, for greed, it is not the people, not the general population at fault here, it is the businesses, the Governments controlled and supported by those businesses, by the money that lines the pockets of the few. I'm not talking about bribery here, though I do not doubt that it does go on in certain quarters, no, I am talking about complicity, collusion, the downplaying of the facts, the hiding of the truths, the smothering of the solutions, this conspiracy to hide the truth from a public more aware and better informed than ever. This world is sure that their tax payments are being wasted, not being used for the good of the next generations, it is being squandered on the quick fix for the political point-scoring, not being invested for the future, for their future, their children's future, my future. This next generation is one you are condemning to an ecological disaster, this is the next set of voters, they will be even more aware than the previous ones, and we will tell them of your failings, they are the ones to be scared of ladies and gentlemen, they are the ones to put you and your political organisation out of a job, they will be the ones to put you out of business, the ones to put you in your place.

I must tell you, now that you are listening, we, the ordinary people, are disgusted at the way you behave, you ignore the signs, you are blinkered from the reality coming up behind you, behind us, seemingly unseen, but you know it is there, we know it is there, it is coming, we tell you it is coming, it is not Breaking News yet, but it will be, and you, you just keep making the blinkers wider, taller, trying to hide the inevitable, let me tell you, I know that you will regret it soon, mark my words, you will all regret it, we, the people, will make sure you do."

Still, the room was silent, not even a polite applause, just a sea of horrified faces waiting for the rest of the brown smelly storm to come their way.

"Let me set up a scenario for you, something I see coming, I see it because I have no blinkers, I can look to my left, to my right, I choose to, and I can see the mistakes of the past, that which is behind us, these mistakes are coming up fast and trying to overwhelm us, they could have been avoided with the right investments, the right solutions, and, at the right time. That time is behind us, much too far away for your cheap quick fixes to begin to even hope to correct, this time is fading into an ever darker, smog-filled past, buried in the red tape and bureaucracy of an uncaring Government, your Government, your bureaucracy, your mountains of red tape. All of the fixes required will be lost and hidden by time, or so you hope, but these mistakes are still rising through the gloom, still creeping up to try and make you take notice, but you ignore them still, tell us they are unimportant, yet they still keep coming, keep trying to be seen, to be heard, and these things are important, they do matter, they are urgent, you can't outrun these things, they are alongside us constantly, keeping pace. Sure, you could all run faster, but that needs more energy, it is unsustainable in the long run, you could stop and fight it, do the right thing, confront these issues and resolve them, it can be done, there is still time, there was, but you are worried that not everyone will join in, and if some are still seen to profit, to not take an active role, try to make some personal gain, then others, you, want a slice of that economic pie too, you all stop doing the right thing, and despite what it is going to cost us all, you keep

going down this dark road you know leads to ruin, it is all you do, that is the only leadership you provide, to take us all running headlong into the dark.”

At each “you” she stabbed a finger of accusation at them, out there in the gloom, and at “us, we” she would clutch at her heart, they got the picture.

“It is pathetic, and I am sorry to say, you are all pathetic too, you have the power and you abuse it, you fail to perform to the best of your abilities, you are playing games with our lives, and we, the people of the world, we are sick of it, sick of you, there will be rebellion, it has already happened in many countries, you tried your heavy-handed tactics and found them to be inadequate, the people kept coming, the world keeps coming to sit peacefully and protest at your inadequacies, your failure to deliver the basic protections for your people, for they are your people, they elected you, and what do you do to them ladies and gentlemen, I ask you, what do you do?”

She took a pause, Holly had pointed a finger at them directly again and they didn’t like it, there were plenty of stern faces out there, this little bitch was stealing their thunder, trying to ruin their carefully woven image, making them squirm in their fancy woven suits and dresses, no, they definitely did not like that.

“Yes, that’s right, you ignore them, you just ignore them and hope this momentum will fade away, you hope this wave becomes a ripple and then fades to nothing, that the people will tire of the waiting, but you are wrong, so wrong, when you are voted out of office those people will still be there, they will still believe that you did harm, did no good, they will still be demanding change, that you change, do you think you can do that? There is an old expression that seems to fit here, that a leopard does not change its spots, I like that analogy, it has a natural theme to it, but it is true though, you say you will change, can change, but you still go headlong, chasing the herds, killing the weak and the vulnerable, reaping the benefits, leaving those you see as the weak to fall victim to the system you created, the one you control, manipulate, you do it all the time, changes in social benefits, in health schemes, in community services, in taxes, a further burden on those that can least afford it, you all do it, you are all guilty of it, why do you think that is fair?”

Another finger stabbed in their direction, and she berated them some more.

“Of course, the leopard is now endangered, it is a bit like yourselves, a dying breed, hunted to extinction, but your breed, we can happily do without.”

Holly smiled, she liked that line.

“Do you think that all that money in your bank will cure your conscience? Really?”

Do you, ladies and gentlemen?

You know you can’t spend your money when you are dead, when you have been drowned by the rising seas, choked by the obnoxious toxic gasses rising from the filthy smokestacks of industry, or suffocated by the exhaust fumes from millions of gas-guzzling automobiles you allow on our streets, these can easily be replaced by the cleaner alternatives, and when you are dead from being scorched by the unfiltered sun, blasted by the solar radiation pouring in unfiltered through the ozone holes, or starved by the failing of crops, all caused by the loss of the growing locales to those rising seas, their seeds tainted by the toxins rained upon them, the young plants burnt by the radiation of the sun, but you still don’t get it, do you, what good is your money then? No, you don’t get it, but they do, your electorate does, they get it, they

understand it, you and your fancy schools, colleges and universities, you still think you know better, are better, you people are the worst of society, not the best, you and your overinflated opinions of yourselves will not help when things go south, when you are running scared of what Mother Nature throws at you, it won't help. She, Mother Nature, has issued enough warnings, you have been given enough hints, now there is no time left for niceties, war is about to be declared and the coming enemy is unseen, unstoppable, the true force of nature. You had been given warnings and you chose to ignore them, made things worse, now things have got to the point where there are no warnings left to give, you had your chance, there are none left to give, more fool you."

There were several smiling idiots out there, those thinking that this is nothing more than a rant, who was the little upstart, who does she think she is, in a few weeks she will be forgotten, "they," on the other hand, they already have their place in history, they were on the global map.

The girl on the podium continued.

"I see you smiling out there, you think this is a joke, that people don't care, they do, they will, you will, this coming storm is your fault, your predecessor's fault, you, all of you here, you had the power to reverse this trend, to start the planet on the correct path, but you fail in your duty to protect your people time and time again, you fail all your people, why is that?"

Again, there was that stabbing finger of accusation, aimed directly at the void where their heart should be.

"It's simple; because it affects profits, your profits, your friend's profits, company profits, shareholder dividends, money is king, and you think that he who has the larger pile is the bigger king, that is what you think, it is, isn't it?"

Ladies and gentlemen, that is a poor attitude, and it is the poor that are paying for it, it is their taxes that pay your wages, they expect you to fight for them, instead, you don't, you won't, it is not that you can't, well, it seems you can't be bothered, that much is apparent, and we, the people, are sick and tired of it, of you, of the elite doing what is best for your own, there is no us in your plans, it is all you, it is going to stop, the people will make it stop.

I tell you, no, I warn you, this new change is coming, and let me tell you this change is not good, it is going to hurt, it will be painful, it will be disruptive, and worse, it will affect your pockets, and it will be global, everyone's pockets will be affected, and you know who will get the blame for that don't you?

Yes, you, all the world knows you will try and shift that blame, it will be the fault of another country, of a business rival, that's your line, you blame it on fake news, it is a clear and blatant misrepresentation of the facts, a false science, scaremongering by the ill-informed, those are your tactics, those are your poor solutions to this problem, all you can come up with is it is not my fault, well, you are wrong, it is your fault, it has always been your fault, you created this state of affairs by creating the situation in which we are forced to live, you created the greed, the poverty, the imbalance, it is driven by your lust for profit, the need to maintain your position in society, it is greed and vanity, it is that simple, it really is.

Maybe, some you consider as crackpots are the ones with the sensible solution, perhaps we should leave this planet, it has become unsustainable, there are too many

here, restrictions are now necessary, perhaps China had the right idea many years ago, limited offspring, they could see where this was heading, they could not support such a mass of people, they reacted, limited the numbers, but it was still too little too late, too big to control, now they are feeding the global economy with what it wants, it is helping us to destroy ourselves at your request, can you not see that? The economic powerhouse is dictating trends, controlling supply and waiting to pick up the pieces for when this all goes horribly wrong, and it will, it is coming, you have been warned. I will agree that the people are now feeding the furnace, adding more fuel to the fire of global warming, but what choice is there? You have removed the choices, chosen convenience over quality, profit over livelihood, pushed advertising and branding, it is you that have made the people what they are. You have also hidden the solutions to many of the worlds ecological problems, purchased them and secreted them in locked archives, if you believe that strongly that they will affect your business model, then change your model to the sustainable one, be brave, unleash these solutions, be the first to make the affordable hydrogen-powered automobile or provide the engine that runs on seawater, they exist, the patent for them exists, these are now owned by the very people the world is angry with, now is the time to release them, to make these things work for the benefit of the planet, if you don't, the planet will bare its teeth, it will bite back. I tell you, you have had the warnings already, the earthquakes, the tsunami, the volcanic eruptions, the devastating tornadoes, cyclones and hurricanes that rip through your lands. Not us you say, it is an act of God, is your God that cruel, mine never was? We, the people, have suffered for your God, your God is cold, your God is hard, unyielding, your God is cold hard cash, that is no God, that is the Devil and he is going to turn on you soon, your greed will feast on you before you know it, I see that there is worse to come and it is no longer behind us, it is here, right here beside us, it's there right now, remove your blinkers, see it for what it truly is. Perhaps, you will blame these things on a freak of nature, but that is a lie too, nature has lost control, you have ripped the control from nature with your poor environmental policies, your lack of political will to make changes to allow the control to return, nature isn't the freak here and you know it. You should also know, that if you do nothing, if you do not return to the right path, then there are consequences, events will be forced upon you, on us, they are happening as we speak, mankind is not in control here, never was. This return to the right path, the true path, and not your poor version of it, yes, there was one you know, it was a turning, a junction that you passed a while ago, and it is still there, it is further away now but you can turn around and find it, or you could have done, now I am not so sure because what I see is that the road is too narrow to turn around in, the end of the road is coming and the way forward is getting narrower and narrower, and you, you are about to get wedged in, stuck, your ego and fat wallet trapping the rest of us behind you, condemning us all, dragging us down with you." She paused again, shaking her head at them, that was pure admonishment, a reprimand to those that thought they were wise, she didn't think of herself as wiser, just more sensible, more sensitive to the situation.

"When is this end coming?"

That I don't know, but it will be soon, too soon, the change should have started from here in this room today, but it can't, you still won't let it, it is the beginning of the end

that starts here tomorrow, you should have been the catalyst of this change, but it is not the one you want so you will fail to implement any plan to save the planet, to save the people, it is not the plan you want because of what it will cost you financially, but the human cost is going to cost us all, and it will be seen as your fault, yes it will, your continued inaction started it, finished us all, we will remember that you had the power to stop it and you failed, you failed miserably.”

Her tone was rising, she was angry and struggling to control it, the finger had turned into a clenched fist beside her, hidden from the cameras, they heard the passion, heard the anger, and still, they sat, squirming, conscious that the world was watching, waiting for the first of them to flinch.

“As many a great leader has said before, the buck stops with you, there is no one else to blame, and yes, the people will rightly blame you.

This scenario is yet to play out of course, but I see a global disaster just on the horizon, the like of which has rarely been seen but it is coming, and you, you are too late to stop it, that moment for you to act has gone, although you had your opportunity years ago, you missed it, failed to take it, you didn't want to see it, unfortunately, now it is time to suffer the consequences of your inactions.

This scenario is a global threat, it will affect you all, affect us all, it is a warning from the planet that things have gone too far, that changes will have to be made, and they will be made without your consent, without your approval, but they will be done, it has to be done for our continued survival, you have left no other option. You, the minority, will force this issue, and the whole of mankind, the majority, will suffer because of your failings, and you will be remembered for those failings, I tell you, your time has come, your moment of salvation has passed, your destiny is, as your judgement, clouded by your inability to act for the benefit of those who graciously voted you into your fancy and plush office, you failed them, you failed us, you failed the planet and it is going to slap you down, you can't fight back.

You know that history is a great teacher, you rely on it for your investment advice, all you have to do is listen to it to learn from it, sadly, you can't even do that for us, it is still all about you, most of you didn't go to school to learn, you think you know all there is to know already, I am telling you that you know nothing of this world and its needs, and it is that nothing that is coming to get you.

Ladies and gentlemen, let me tell you that this planet is about to fall apart around us, you are driving consumerism to extremes, this disposable society you have created should not include its people, the consumers should not become the consumed, but they will, you have pushed it, driven it, allowed it to become the monster it is, and when it does fall, then guess what, profits fall, companies fail, political ambitions fade, life fails, you've failed, is that really what you want?

Ladies and Gentlemen, wake up, this is coming, and soon, sooner than you think, it is not the next generation's problem or the one after that, it is ours, yours, it starts here, this problem is now, and it is already too late to fix it, it is about to swallow you up, eat you whole, to spit you out for the bad taste you leave in the mouth, I tell you, it is far too late to fix it, you had your chance and ignored it, our world is already broken, the cracks are evident right now and getting wider, there is no band-aid big enough to fix this, it needs more than a splint and a bandage, our world is broken, your greed and indifference to the problems broke it, the consequences are catastrophic and the

solution is drastic, but we will strive to survive it, many will not make it, those that do will not remember you, though they will not be happy, they may be thankful they survived, but it will not be any thanks to you, you will be dead and buried, you will be consciously disremembered.

You know the planets current course of action is unsustainable, we are using resources at an alarming rate, and once it is gone, it's gone, you can't make more, you can't magic it out of thin air, it is too late to dig it out of landfill to recycle it, that should have been done years ago, another opportunity missed, you missed it, another opportunity wasted. There are seas of plastic in the oceans so vast you can't sail through them, there are places around the world where you need headlamps lit on the vehicles in the daylight hours because the smog is so thick you can't see through it, the air so toxic you can't breathe in it, why? Greed, laziness, convenience, and your ignorance, you have pushed consumerism down the throat of the people, and they, like sheep, have eaten it up and believed your drivel, swallowed your lies, followed your poor examples, that is bad leadership, bad management, and what for? Of course, it was for bigger profits, you did this for you, not for them, and it has cost them, continues to cost them, but I tell you that this coming storm is going to cost you, it will impact you too, it was avoidable, you could have sorted it long ago and chose not to, that was a choice, your choice, a poor choice.

These issues, the cause of this coming change, it is not a new thing, these are old things that were never addressed, these issues were noted in the nineteen sixties, then, we are told, it was all about a silly notion, a passing flower power favoured by lazy wasters and a drug smoking youth, no, that was just an example of an early disinformation campaign by Governments around the world, they supplied the news outlets, fed them on sensationalism that they served up to the people, more poor management, more manipulation of the truth, more ignorance and intolerance. The sad part is that the youth were right to be concerned then, as they are now, the hippies of old would be horrified today, and they are, and the youth of today are the flower people of times past, the reborn are now seeing what you, the world leaders, are hiding, are covering up, then, in the past, information was hard to find, but now, in the modern world, that information is everywhere, you can't claim it is all fake news, you can't claim that the tinfoil hatted scientists know nothing, that the so-called tree huggers are scaremongers, they are all right, it has often been proven that the fake news is generated by the spin a Government puts on it. We all know tin foil is a good insulator, reflector and deflector, and many of these scientists went to better schools than you did, and we know there are fewer trees left to hug, you have chopped them down to make the paper to print your money on, we need more trees, you do not need more money. We also know nine billion people is not sustainable, the planet is about to revolt, it is sick and getting sicker, your brand of medicine just makes it worse, placebos are not a cure, they are a blind, the people are not blind, they are not stupid, it is you, the leaders of the world who are fooling yourselves, it is a false sense of security, you are vulnerable, you will be found out, you will be found wanting, your money will not be your cure, it will not save you, sadly, it will not save the rest of us either, we are all going to suffer for your greed and from your incompetence. Politics are the fault here, religion does not enter into this, though the people do need faith, it is the politics that is failing to provide it, all religions have a respect for the

world we live in, and I will mention the one I am most familiar with, one I grew up with, the Bible, the book of Mathew, for those unfamiliar, the following passage is taken from the Beatitudes, the Sermon on the Mount, Chapter Five, Verse Five, it mentions that “blessed are the meek for they will inherit the earth,” well, that is a shame for you all here, you are not the meek, we, the people are the meek, and we get to inherit what you ultimately made a mess of, thanks for nothing. Sadly, my faith in this book, of its God, has been tested and been found wanting, much like my faith in those gathered here, my lack of religious faith is my concern, my lack of faith in you is a shared one, many no longer have faith in the political will to provide the comfort and security we all need and it will result in your downfall, you will see, it is coming, swiftly followed by this disaster I speak of. Sadly, I believe that many of the meek will fall victim to this coming disaster, as will the rich, the powerful, there will be no immunity from it, money is not a cure, there is no remedy for Mother Nature’s anger, they say time is a great healer, well, you have had plenty of that, now you are out of time, another opportunity squandered.

I will say that there are other stories in the scriptures worth looking at, the four horsemen of the apocalypse perhaps, the white horse of Conquest, the red horse of War, these are two we know well and have managed to keep at bay, for much of the world at least, and for some time, but they still ride in every now and again, and they are given a free pass to destroy and kill, to burn and pollute, but it is for the common good we are told, no it isn’t, it is for profit, for the protection of profits, that is what it is for, for driving up the stocks and shares to make the rich richer and the planet poorer. Let me tell you, it is the black horse of Famine and the pale horse of Plague we need to look out for, they are what are chasing us, they are the ones being driven forward at speed, spurred on by the relentless failure of your command of this ecological emergency, they can see their opportunity to rise, to be dominant, and should the four ever meet to join forces, then we, as a species, we will fall, will fail, we will be no more, your fault, you are in command of the arsenal, you are in control of the finances that could heal this, in command of the remedy, you could have fixed this but you looked the other way, put on the blinkers again, looked forward only to check the bank balance and to say thank you very much, you continue to only look forward, searching for the next opportunity to feed that greed.

It is sad to say that you are dinosaurs, you are, look at you, your attitude is old and outdated, and look what happened to the dinosaur, wiped out by an ecological disaster, OK, that one perhaps not of their own making, but this one is on your watch, it is your responsibility, you are out of touch with the thinking of the people, you are out of sync with the world, and you are out of time with Mother Nature, she is about to react and you will be powerless to stop it. This coming disaster will be self-inflicted, aided and abetted by your inability to legislate, from your failure to protect the vulnerable, the meek, your electorate.

I can see you looking at your watches, looking at each other, sorry, but I have not quite finished with you yet, I will berate you as often as I can, at every opportunity that I am given, one day you may get it, my hope is that it will not be too late, I fear that it is too late already, you, I care nothing for, you are a waste of space, useless to the planet, a burden on the society you are supposed to serve, you deserve nothing but contempt from the sensible among us, those who see you for what you are, a brief

celebrity looking for their fifteen minutes of fame, very few here will be remembered for the good they have done, only for the harm they had caused.

I have to say that I have my fifteen minutes of fame too, I am grateful for that and my photo op's, though mine is for a different reason, I can honestly say I tried, I asked, pleaded, I told "them", told you, I warned "them" when they were here, still, they failed to heed those warnings, did nothing to help, go ahead, prove me wrong, I dare you, make me happy, make us all happy, prove me wrong, please.

I am not waiting for your applause, I do not want it, I do not need the adoration of the public vote, I am comfortable with what I have, I can appreciate that it is fleeting. I don't need my fame to last; only my planet, my purpose, as yours should be, is to act now, act for the common good, for the common people, so what I want is your attention now, the planet wants your help right now, we, the people of this world, we need you to step up and help us both, but you are not going to, your heads are still in the sand, you think we can't see you, you still think we don't know what you are up to, you are mistaken, we know, we see you, we have found you out, you will be exposed, you have been exposed."

She took a deep breath, an attempt to calm down, and closed with a simple message for those who didn't really give a damn.

"Good luck, we are all going to need it."

She was right, there was no applause, they were too stunned to clap for anything, even out of politeness, they had just been threatened by a teenager, how dare she, who does she think she is?

Holly disappeared out of the spotlight and into the darkness of the stage beyond, there, in the gloom, several security personnel whisked her away to a waiting electric vehicle outside, there was little fuss, a quickened walk, and doors opened to be firmly shut behind them all as they ventured into the brightness of a glorious summer's day, they won't invite her back there again, she wasn't going to go anyway, neither would most of them, they would not survive what was coming.

She lied; she knew when this disaster was coming.

The security team with her were there to protect her from them, the powerful, they wouldn't like her message, her threats, though perhaps it came across as more of a rant, a rambling speech aimed at blaming and shaming them, pointing out the failings of those in power now and those that had gone before them. To some extent it was a rant, it was supposed to make them feel uncomfortable, feel threatened, they were supposed to react to it, though many would react to her, not to the point she was making. To a point this was old news, everyone knew it was their fault, the politicians, they all knew the science was right, it had said so for years, that message hadn't changed, the tone had got stronger, and the warnings were more frequent, the projections more dire, but still those with power to make change did nothing. Every new update was belittled, suggested figures of the "real" truth put out by Governments across the globe were deliberate underestimates, a lowering of the dangers, a reducing of the risk shown, a spinning of lies to sugar-coat the bitter pill waiting to be swallowed if you could only get the top off the container to take it. This eco-warrior had plenty to fear from them, especially in the near future, there was going to be a mass call, a rally for the planet, a revolution that was going to encompass the whole world, it would be amazing to witness, and she would be there,

not physically there, that would not be safe, “they” would try and stop her, deny her her platform from which to speak, but she would.

“They,” her they, had planned the next series of events, they were going to ride the coattails of this event, this was going to be the springboard that the movement needed, that the planet required, that Mother Nature desired.

They had their own spin doctors, social media was the platform of choice, of free speech, they couldn’t shut that down, like them, it was its own thing now, too big to close down, too loud to silence.

She flew out on a private charter jet, of course, it was the one with the proven lowest emissions, and her destination was known, but beyond that, her location would be a well-kept secret. Her safety was paramount, plus, she needed to be in isolation, there was work to do, lots of it, recordings were to be made, they needed doing now before the trouble started, she needed to be seen to coordinate the effort, though this was going to be way too big for one person to handle.

Holly knew this was going to be difficult, it had to be, decisions had to be made, had been made already, and it was already too late to go back on those moves already started, things were in motion, there were the beginnings of a huge drive, she, “they”, must keep up with that momentum, as their common enemy was fond of saying, they must seize this moment.

Social media was awash with snippets from the live broadcast, Breaking News clips, millions had tuned in, news feeds globally broadcast it, some chose not to, but these were the state-controlled or sponsored ones, couldn’t have the president, the prime minister, the head of State, whatever their title was, could not have them berated on live TV, no, no, that was not good for their political and public image.

This was what they were fighting against, the Cause was fighting bias and control, but social media was the tool they used to circumvent this, they could put their own spin on this, counteract the Government line, they would add their own comments, correct misconceptions, point out the flaws and flat out lies directed at them, at her, steer things in the direction they wanted it to go, needed it to go.

It wasn’t difficult, the coverage was extensive, even state-sponsored broadcasts had alluded to the gathering of the world leaders and the young upstart who was to address them all, she was global news, she was the person of the hour, the hope was that it would last a lot longer than that.

Holly was still grounded though, it wasn’t about her, she knew that, it was the message that was important, it didn’t matter who delivered it, only that it was delivered. She was just a messenger, one in a long line of them, hopefully, her message would get through, to be heard, that was all she wished for, all she could hope for.

For now, she slept.

The media geeks did their thing for the Cause.

It was a week later when it first started, a brief item in the news, and the next day another small item, and later the same day, another, and with little prompting, people started to connect the dots.

In between, the call had gone out on social media, the world needed to stop, just for a day, the whole globe needed to pause for twenty-four hours. No work, no transport, just go home, stay there, enjoy your surroundings, those you loved, ignore work for a day, pause the commute, see what a difference it would make, call it a global

experiment, the start of something new, the beginning of a change that the people of the world would force upon the politicians, on those who were supposed to act for them but would not, chose not.

The date was set, the 1st of July, six o'clock local time, where ever you were in the world, at six in the morning your time, you stopped, you went home, you slept in, didn't get up, didn't go into work, not for a whole day, what they asked was that the world did nothing for a day, pause for the Cause, see what happened.

The news feeds and channels reported on this "Breaking News," and it became a thing, gained its own momentum, industry tried to stomp on it, issued threats, demanded workers complied with contracts, threatened termination of employment, but as the "word" said, if you all don't go, then what? The employer can't sack you all, if they do then they have no workforce, no profit for a day is better than no profit ever.

Some employers got the idea, got the message, played along with the hype, closed for a day, those were the employers that got a mention, given pride of place on the do-gooder's list, and if they paid the staff too, well, a gold star and a merit badge, it meant little, but every little helped for the Cause.

The Cause had people all over the world, groups organised, plans were drawn as if on the spur of the moment, but this was highly ordered, controlled down to the last small detail, it was not disorganised in the slightest.

Governments tried to stop it, many refused to grant licences or permissions to protest, but it would make no difference, these protests would go ahead even without permissions, "they" could not arrest that many, organisers were careful with who knew names, places were not such a problem, there were plenty of public spaces available. In some countries, there were planned events, music, and entertainers, celebrities wanted in, those that wanted a fee were exposed, that stopped the others from even thinking of asking for a payment, if you could not do it for the love of the planet then you were not going to do it at all.

The Cause was already well known, what it stood for was well known too, who was in it, who ran it, that was not so well known. Holly was the current face of it, she was the voice, the spokesperson everyone wanted to interview, the "chosen one" as far as the world was concerned, but she ran nothing, it ran her. Holly was a spokesperson, that was true, but she went where there was an invitation, and there were many of them, and for many things, but she didn't choose them, the committee picked which one to attend. Holly didn't know the committee, they had never been introduced, she had no clue where they were based, just that they provided her with the speeches and locations at which to speak them, the passion though, that was all hers.

The work to be done now wasn't hard, it was a simple set of messages, pre-recorded, ready for broadcast at the demonstrations and showgrounds around the world, once they were done, she could rest awhile, recharge her depleted batteries.

It didn't take long for the sickness to arrive.



OK, that is your 15,000+ word, two chapter preview, I hope you like it. Depending on the version, the Kindle version is 234 pages. The printed version (6x9") is around 199 pages, in either case, all full editions are just over 116,000 words.

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About the Author –

Born in 1961 in London, England, Cliff moved near to Bristol in the summer of '69 and recalls seeing the grainy black and white images of the first moon landing as it happened, it was an exciting time of discovery. Cliff was already an avid reader of Science Fiction by then, and brought up with the excellent BBC TV series Doctor Who, vividly remembering watching it in black and white in the mid-'60s, (hiding from the Cybermen behind the sofa!), and, reinforcing the Sci-Fi adventure with other TV series in the '70s and '80s with the likes of Blakes Seven, Quatermass, Day of the Triffids and more.

He left school for college, and studied catering, became a chef, and started work for the MoD for a while, which is when he began writing just for fun, essentially just scribbles in a notebook (the paper kind), none of which have survived to tell any tales.

He got married, to Caroline, they had children (2 boys), and the books took a back seat while family life continued and other commitments took priority. The kids grew up, eventually moved out, and the parents moved on, Caroline and Cliff moved to the Costa Del Sol and have never permanently left it, they have moved around a few times, but the weather there is better for Caroline's health. Once there, the original typed notes for his early book was rediscovered, that book, Orbiter One, kickstarted the little grey cells again, and more storylines were compiled for the Orbiter One series, and other stories were written, now there are several other stories available, like this example, and there are more planned, some just waiting to be finished, it seems there are not enough hours in a day, but, he manages to work on more stories here and there, and, there is still the same patience from an understanding wife, more green tea, and many enjoyable hours of thought-provoking contemplation with Pink Floyd and David Bowie.

Now, at 59 years of age, he does have a bit more time available, but, as he mentions, not quite as much time left as when he started the original idea, but there are hopes to be able to complete a whole series of follow-on stories to this book, and many of the others.

They are both still on the Costa del Sol enjoying the Spanish weather at the new Finca (house move number 5), with freshly picked and squeezed OJ for breakfast, straight out of the orchard.

At the time of writing this, several other stories are also complete, but this is the third book to be released, Orbiter One – At Worlds End was the first, Anecdotes of a Zero followed, and more stories are planned for release later in 2020 and early 2021.

This book was prompted by the SARS CoVid19 pandemic of 2020 and the whole series of events that transpired because of it, the assumptions and accusations, the sensational reporting of the blatant mistruths and misdirection, and the fake news generated on social media by the outbreak, and the realisation that it could have been far worse. Of course, for some, it could not have been deadlier, many had died from this coronavirus and there was another realisation, that there was earlier outbreak (2002-2004) which was less damaging to the global economy, and loss of life was minimal compared to the 2019 outbreak. So, assuming that there was to be a SARS CoVid-3 outbreak in the future, how bad could it be, and why had it resurfaced again.

At the time of publishing the book, 10 million were infected and the figure was still rising, and over 500,000 had succumbed to the virus, it was going to get worse, everyone was waiting for a second wave, will it, won't it?

(July 2020)

OTHER TITLES

BY THIS AUTHOR

Orbiter One (series)

Book 1 – At Worlds End (January 2020)

ISBN: 978-84-09-18312-8

Capsaa (series)

The Genesis of Capsaa (August 2020)

ISBN: 978-84-09-22483-8

Anecdotes (series)

Anecdotes of a Zero (May 2020)

ISBN: 978-84-09-19930-3

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 *Cliff Dale*