

Theories of Liz

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Today is the last day in March. It is a warm and windy day with clouds congregating over the Moose Lodge on Indian Lake in Lakeview, Ohio. My friend Liz and I are having lunch here today. Liz emailed me a few days ago that she had something to show me and wanted to get together in person. She said it was something she didn't want to send through email.

The lodge is about fifty miles from Columbus just outside the small town of Lakeview on the northwestern part of the lake. When I arrive in the parking lot, sharp waves are bouncing a few boats against the dock.

Liz has already arrived and meets me inside the first door to the lodge. It is good to see her. We hug. She hands me a banana cake she has baked for me. She is a master baker and gives me various baked items each time we get together. I know Liz from her son William (Willie) who is my brother's closest friend. Willie is now out in Phoenix winding things down with his insurance business for mobile homes. He sells insurance to Canadian "Snowbirds" who come and go from Phoenix during the summer and winter seasons. Willie is coming back to Ohio in a few weeks. He has a home for half the year in nearby Bellefontaine. Liz is happy to Willie is coming back soon. She has been sending me emails about major things ahead. "Things are about to get crazy," she tells me in her emails. "It'll be good to have Willie near home."

We walk down the long entryway and up to the front door of the Moose Lodge. I take my Moose card and swipe it in the electronic device and the door clicks and I'm able to push it open. I'm surprised the door opens since my membership date listed on my card has expired. But on the international Moose website it says I'm an active member. I called the lodge yesterday about this conflict and spoke with the club manager Jackie. She checked and said I'm a member and that she would leave an envelope at the bar with information for me.

The door is one of those metal doors with a horizontal bar on it. It seems like one of those doors a carnival cart crashes through into a funhouse. There's a mixture of high tables and regular tables inside. Against the walls are video games and an ATM machine. Announcements are tacked to a bulletin board next to the front door. The church fish fry is coming this Friday. A dog has been lost. A pontoon boat is for sale. A food area is off to the right. Liz waves to several people around the lodge. Everyone knows Liz. We stop at a few tables, and she introduces me to friends.

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My first visit to the lodge was during the big boat rally on the 4th of July two years ago. The first year of the pandemic. The docks of the lodge were full of pontoon boats like the one Liz's son Willie was captaining that day in the boat rally around the lake. My brother, Liz and I

were on Willie's pontoon boat. We had been on the boat for an hour now and it was good to stop for a beer at the Moose Lodge where Willie had a membership.

I immediately liked the place. It wasn't fancy but there was a genuine feeling to it. The membership was mostly people older than 60. Everyone seemed to be having a good time and the beers were flowing. It was the fourth month of the pandemic and the nation had gone crazy about wearing masks. But no one inside the lodge was wearing a mask.

I mentioned this event on an email list I was sending out at the time and a friend from Russell's Point wrote me back and sent in sponsorship and my fee for a membership in the Moose Lodge (chapter 1533) on Indian Lake, Ohio. My email friend runs a business in Russell's Point, on the southern side part of the lake. I thought of calling him to join us for lunch today as I've never met him in person. But Liz has something important she wants to tell me so I decide it's not the appropriate thing to do.

Severe cabin fever has overtaken me after a long, winter inside. A lockdown on top of the general lockdown everywhere due to the pandemic. It's good to get out of Columbus for a while. I've been a member of the lodge for almost two years now but I've yet to get over here since that first time on July 4th in 2020.

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I've known Liz for a number of years but over the past few years – since the start of the pandemic - we've established a special friendship based on our mutual interests in conspiracy theories and alternative news. During the first days of the pandemic, I was hard into alternative perspectives on things. The general narrative seemed hard to accept. In those early days, I followed some of the conspiracy theories on things and listened to several people from the UK and other nations on what was really happening in the world. There was the Charlie Johnson Show I listened to all the time. His theories were incredible. But then, what was happening in the world with the pandemic was incredible. I signed up for subscriptions to all types of alternative news sites and at one point was getting about 300 emails from these sites each day. I shared news from these sites with Liz and she began religiously reading posts to them and videos from them each day. She became an expert on conspiracy theories.

In the past year, I've moved away from reading all the conspiracy theory stuff. It's not that I don't believe them. It's just been too much for me to take. Now, I listen to my jazz station streamed from the Bay Area most of the day and write my blogs. I've drastically reduced my intake of news. I occasionally still go to some of the old conspiracy sites. But I learn about most things going on behind the news from Liz. She has read many of the books recommended on the sites. I get all the updates about leading stories in conspiracy news from Liz.

As I've stopped listening to alternative news, things in the world have gotten crazier and crazier with the world. There are various theories about the war with Russia different from what we hear on mainstream media.

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The other day, Liz emailed me that she has something big she wants to tell me. It's too important to write in an email. You never know who can read your emails she says. I can't disagree with this. So, we set up this lunch. The weather forecast yesterday said it would be warm and sunny at the lake. It was supposed to be one of the first warm days we've had after a cold, grey winter. The weather has changed so much since I first moved back to Columbus from California.

But yesterday's forecast is wrong.

We walk to one of the high tables in the lodge. It is close to the long bar in the lodge that looks out over the lake. We get one of the high tables. There are several people at the bar. A few are engaged in discussions. A few sit alone at the bar staring out the long gray window. A group of women are playing cards at a nearby table. One of them waves to Liz and Liz waves back.

I brought my drone today to take some aerial shots of the lodge. But it is too windy to fly the drone. Liz knows all about my drone as I took some aerial shots of the resort she runs a quarter of a mile from the lodge. Her family has owned the resort since 1897. It's the oldest resort on the lake.

I give Liz the little certificate I made for her on my Mac. It announces her position as a drone operator in the Ukrainian Aerial Reconnaissance called the Aerorozvidka. It is signed by a version of my name in Ukrainian. Attached to the certificate are three printed pages from an article in The Guardian a few days ago about Aerorozvidka. The article is about 30 bike-riding members of Aerorozvidka who send their drones with two-pound bombs against the Russian tanks at night. The Aerorozvidka ride their bikes in the country that parallels the road that the Russian tanks are on heading for Kiev. The unit began eight years ago as a group of volunteer IT specialists and hobbyists designing their own machines and has evolved into an essential element in Ukraine's successful David-and-Goliath resistance.

The certificate I made for Liz is somewhat tongue-in-cheek containing my usual humorous, satirical view of the world. I've concluded it's the best perspective to take these days. Yet in the humorous certificate I've made for Liz, there's an element of truth. It is a very different war than any others in the past. Who would think that a handful of drones could hold back a long column of Russian tanks? Modern information technology has made a match of bikes and drones against tanks.

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Liz smiles as she reads the certificate and briefly goes through the attached pages of the article about the Ukrainian drone pilots. We've both been emailing about the use of drones in the war.

The media makes the story out to be one of good versus evil. But it's the same media that sent me to believe in conspiracy theories at the beginning of the pandemic so it's hard to believe what they tell me now about the war. There are many atrocities reported in the media of Putin's forces against the Ukrainians. But the allegations that Putin is a mad man are hard to believe and the more I learn about the war the more I understand Putin has reasons going back many years in Russian history.

Putin might not be mad. Still, he is a cold and calculating tyrant. On the other hand, Zelinskyy is a former actor and comedian. It would be hard to find two more opposite leaders. Unlike Putin, Zelinskyy was not picked by a small group of powerful people to lead the nation but rose through popular culture. He was not anointed like Putin by a small, powerful group.

Liz and I have been recently emailing about all this and the current war serves as a background to the things going on in the world when we get together at the Moose Lodge today.

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I order two cups of ice and two unsweetened ice teas from the bartender. She works with the long window framing her filled with the image of the windy lake and its sharp, agitated waves. Looking out the window, I could see dark clouds moving in from the west and swirling about like laundry in a washing machine. On the right side of the window are the dots of the town of Russell's Point at the south end of Indian Lake.

The actions of the bartender take on a dramatic effect against the agitation in the window behind her. I ask for the note Jackie said she would leave at the bar. The bartender hands me an envelope with a copy of the same page I printed off the site of the International Moose Lodge. It showed me a member in good standing. Just as I thought. On the sheet Jackie wrote "Ordered your new card. Hope to see you around here more."

The bartender puts two plastic bottles of iced tea and two plastic cups of ice on a tray and pushes it across the bar towards me.

"Two dollars," she says.

It was one of the few places you could still buy a bottle of iced tea for a dollar. Especially with the cost of food skyrocketing everywhere today.

I put two fifty on the bar.

"Looks like a storm coming," I say picking up the tray.

"It's that time of year," she says.

"Columbus weather predicted it would be sunny and clear over here today," I say.

"As if anyone can predict anything these days," says a guy at the bar wearing jeans with suspenders and a cap with the OSU logo on it.

"Isn't that true," I say as I walk back to our table.

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When I get back to the table, Liz and I toast each other with our plastic iced tea cups. It is good seeing her after coming over to her resort a few months ago to take drone shots over the resort. In this time much has been happening and Liz has been emailing links and news to some new sources into deep, dark conspiracy theories. Things are happening faster than anyone can keep track of, and I watch as conspiracy theories of today often become the truth of tomorrow.

There is a flash of lightning in the long oblong window behind the bar area. A few seconds later, the rumble of thunder and then hard streaks of rain explode against the long window.

“Sorry the weather is bad today,” I say to her. “I thought it was going to be a nice day so we could sit out on the deck of the lodge. I even brought my drone to get some pictures. But no way today.”

“You know the weather is all manufactured,” Liz says. “Have you heard of Dale Witherspoon?”

“The chemtrails guy.”

“Yeah, the chemtrails guy,” Liz says. “He says things are getting worse and worse.”

“Everything’s getting worse,” I say.

“This bad weather won’t last long,” she says. “Just the result of all the stuff the chemtrails are putting into the atmosphere. It’ll be over soon.”

I smile and shake my head in disagreement.

“I used to believe in what Witherspoon says,” I say. “But his ideas are a little too much to take.”

“You’ve got to listen to his latest video on Ramble,” Liz says.

She opens a manila folder she’s brought to our meeting and goes through loose pages inside it. She pulls out a few of these pages and hands them to me.

“Read this article by Witherspoon and then click on the link in the article to hear his interview on the Charlie Johnson Show.”

Ramble was one of the numerous alternative news sites that sprung up since the pandemic started and Charlie Johnson one of the biggest stars of alternative media. I could see in her emails to me Liz got much of her information from Charlie Johnson and Ramble.

I take the sheets and fold them and put them in my jacket pocket.

“Thanks, I’ll take a look but it’s not going to change my mind on all of this weather conspiracy stuff.”

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We’re distracted by another flash of lightning and boom of thunder. The rain hits the window in almost a horizontal angle. We watch the drama of weather for a few moments.

“You’re not really interested in all of this anymore are you,” Liz says. “All of these things you were so excited about a few years ago.”

“I’m still interested Liz,” I say to her. “I just don’t have time to keep up with all the stuff anymore. Watching hour long videos each day from people like Witherspoon is just not my thing these days. I’m doing more writing and don’t have the time to watch Ramble or RedCast or BlackStar or Mind Meme or the fifty other alternative channels. It used to be just the Charlie Johnson Show when the pandemic started but now there’s an entire network of alternative media.”

“There’s networks of alternative media because it takes a lot to describe things the main stream media won’t tell us about,” Liz says.

“You’re probably right,” I say. “But I had to get away from all this conspiracy stuff for my own good. It was taking over my life.”

“The forces against the global cabal need people like you,” she says. “People who can connect the dots and communicate what’s going on.”

“It seems to me that the forces against the cabal have enough warriors right now,” I say. “I can’t see how I could add much to their efforts.”

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Liz was not listening but shuffling through the papers inside the folder she had brought. She extracted one page and pushed it to the middle of the table.

“Something big is coming down in a few weeks,” she says. “These are links from the latest Charlie Johnson program. It’s what I wanted you to see. I didn’t want to send this to you over the Internet.”

“I understand,” I say.

“Take it and read when you get home,” Liz says. “You won’t believe this stuff.”

I fold it up and put it in my pocket with the article by Witherspoon she gave me.

“It’s from Charlie Johnson’s show,” Liz says. “He says to pray for the nation. Things are moving along, but still we will have severe shortages of food and inflation and gas prices will continue to get worse. He says they are going to remove the President in a few days because of the information on his son’s laptop and his involvement with the bio labs in Ukraine. The military has been moving into areas all over the country ready to take control when marshal law is declared.”

I shake my head and smile.

“It’s not the first time Charlie has made predictions like this,” I say.

“He’s backed up by General Rogers and the former head of the National Security Agency,” Liz says. “There are satellite photos of troops stationed around the nation in the materials I gave you.”

“What do you want me to do with the information?”

“Write about it and put it on your blog like you used to do,” she says.

“I’ll read over it,” I say. “But I don’t have time to start writing about all this stuff again.”

“Your site was so important a few years ago,” Liz says. “If it wasn’t for you, I wouldn’t have learned about all this stuff happening today. A lot of people wouldn’t have learned about all the stuff happening today.”

“That was two years ago,” I say. “I’ve moved on to other things.”

“What other things could you possibly move onto when our whole world is about to collapse?” Liz asks.

“I’m going to grab a beer,” I say. “Want anything?”

“A Jack Daniels over ice,” Liz says.

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The old guy with the OSU cap is still at the bar. A few empty bottles of Budweiser are on the bar in front of him. He is looking at the rain crash against the window. The bartender finishes taking drinks to a group at the end of the bar and walks down our way.

“A Bud and Jack Daniels over ice,” I tell her.

She hands the drinks to me.

“Five dollars,” she says.

I put a five and three ones on the table.

“Heard anything about when the storm is supposed to end?” I ask her. “I’ve gotta’ make it back to Columbus today.”

“The radio says it’ll go all night,” she says.

“What do they know,” says the old man at the bar wearing the cap. “If they don’t know when a storm is coming how can they know when it’s ending.”

I smile at the old guy and take the drinks back to our table.

We sip our drinks and Liz talks about her son Willie coming back from Phoenix in a few weeks. Her resort is on the shore of the lake just a quarter mile north of the lodge. She has been busy planting flowers and weeding a lot of her flower beds. One of her sons lives and works at the resort and Liz says he’s been busy painting and repairing the docks and getting them ready for the big summer crowds. It is one of the most popular places on the lake during the summer months.

I get two more drinks and tell Liz about a few writing projects I’m working on and my planned trip out to California in August to see my two sons. I tell her we all have to get together when Willie gets back from Phoenix and takes his pontoon boat out on the lake.

“Sounds good,” Liz says. “Any time. Just let me know ahead so I have time to fix a pecan pie or something else you and your brother like. You might want to come to the resort for lunch. I could fix shredded beef sandwiches. Some of my daffodils are blooming. I sat out on my porch this morning and listened to General Rogers talk about the war in Ukraine. They’re not telling us the truth. The photos and videos we see come mostly from a government agency that works directly for the Defense Department. Of course, we’re getting biased news of the war. I’m concerned about deals some of our former presidents have made with China. To think I have always thought our country was better than other countries. We aren’t the nice country I thought we were. I do believe we have a lot of good people in the country. It’s the government that’s bad. We have some good people in that nation. But not as many as I used to believe.”

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A friend of Liz stops at the table and Liz introduces Ethel to me and asks Ethel to join us. Ethel sits down and starts talking with Liz about local things at the lake like the auction for the Chamber of Commerce and the coming election for a new mayor. The current mayor is so corrupt Liz says. Hopefully, people can see this.

It’s around mid-afternoon. It has grown even darker outside with the storm continuing to rage. I rise from the table and excuse myself.

“Got a little drive back to Columbus and this weather isn’t getting any better,” I say.

“It’ll change soon,” Liz says.

“Not what the forecast says,” I say.

“It’ll change soon,” she says again.

I give Liz a hug and say goodbye to the two of them and head towards the door of the lodge. Outside in the parking lot the rain and wind comes at an angle. I push against it to get to my car.

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I drive down the little dirt road that connects the lodge to 235, the road around the lake. I turn right on 235 and slowly head east down the road. Oncoming cars all have their lights on in the dark day.

A line of olive military vehicles pass.

In a few minutes, the rain suddenly stops. The clouds disappear as if blown away by a great puff of wind.

The sky is blue and clear without a cloud. Except for the chemtrails scratched across it.