

In the Matter of:
Instrument of God

Paul Robinson

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“Grind our enemies into the dust, and drown them in their own gore.”

“Above all else... We shall go on...”

“...*And continue!*”

and “The greatest philosopher alive, possibly the greatest who ever lived.”
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Lyrics from the following songs,

Elusive Butterfly, used on Page [20](#)

Tonight's the Night, used on Page [60](#)

You Mean the World to Me, used on Page [120](#)

Sign, used on Page [164](#)

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Persons Having Significant Parts or Speaking Roles

Since most people in this story are referenced by their first name, everyone in this story will be listed in alphabetical order by first name or by title.

Speaking Roles and first place where they speak in the story:

Adrian 55 (Sign Molester)	192
Airline Clerk (“That will be an extra \$100”)	629
Akers 780126 (“I’ve had some questions about religion.”)	417
Andrea 528 (“Andrea: 4, 246: 0”)	155
Andy (Clerk at Home Depot)	574
Al (“John, you’re on the PA system”)	88
Al (News Radio 2700 Announcer)	158
Al Basura, Sirius/XM News Radio Announcer	633
Albuquerque Base MP	598
Albuquerque Military Operator	591
Albuquerque Recorded Announcement	591
Alan 90534 (Prosecutor of Barney 96)	244
Alan 976121 (Man at 246’s Press Conference)	235
Alan Engel (Detective, Houston Police)	631
Alexander 2317 (Magistrate)	243
Anita 71603 (Loved Leroy 504337 into the world)	24
Announcer for Channel 63,045	132
Announcer for Ellen Richards	562
Announcer for “In Other News...”	114
Announcer for KNX 1070 News Radio	624
Announcer for Main, Main, Main and Main	132
Announcer for WTOP News Radio	641
Area 51 MP	600
Arlene 1144 (Reporter, Channel 63,045)	106
Artie 11 (Asks Supervisor 246 a question)	108
Bailiff in 246’s Courtroom	238
Bailiff in Supervisor 960’s Courtroom	195
Barney 96 (Rapist of Information Clerk)	175
Bill 774 (Sergeant, Welcoming Department Security)	1
Board of Directors Security Officer	142
Board of Directors Snotty Executive Office Clerk	97
Bob Marlow, WTOP Traffic Reporter	641
Bystander in Corridor (“Way to go, 246!”)	104
Cable Car Operator	571
Carl (Clerk at Home Depot)	574
Cesar Chavez, Frontier rapist	430

Persons Having Significant Parts or Speaking Roles

Christiane Amanpour's Voice	100
Chuck ("I was just playin'")	167
Conductor, Northern Express	569
Cylon Warrior from <i>Battlestar Galactica</i>	99
Dale (Rapist)	479
Dan 3346 (Reporter at 246's News Conference)	231
David 30216 (David Rollins, Manager 12032)	86
David Cooper (Man who was considering suicide)	488
Death Traffic Manager (Grim Reaper)	45
Dr. Diane McCloud (Member of the Board of Directors)	321
Doreen 930054 (Co-Worker to David 30216)	100
Dwight 304 (Reporter at 246's News Conference)	232
Earth Representative ("...here's your credit cards.")	491
Ed 120779 (Tried to Recycle Self)	60
Eddie 37 (Plea bargainer)	154
Ellen Richards, Television Researcher	562
Emelio 3337 (Runner #1 in Frontier Truck Stop)	170
Erica (Office Manager, Welcoming Department Executive Offices)	86
Eunice 30, Editor, <i>Welcome to This Week Magazine</i>	287
Female Reporter on earth ("Excuse me, sir, could I have a moment with you?")	623
Frontier Bar Patron ("Why don't you just get out of here, 246?")	168
Frontier Bartender ("Hey, what about my window?")	168
Frontier Truck driver who tries to run over David	172
Frontier Truckstop Cop	169
Gary 7 (Hits man over head with beer bottle)	241
Gas Station Attendant about to be robbed	627
Geannie 921969 (Lead female Supervisor, Welcoming Department)	39
General Ryland's Secretary	593
George 3 (Chairman of the Board of Directors)	48
George 7723 (Roller Coaster Inspector)	438
Gordon 45561 (Reporter at 246's Press Conference)	233
Greg (Desk sergeant who shoots Barney 96)	181
Harold 1216 (Welcomer for Marilyn 11430)	270
Harry Allen (Member of the Board of Directors)	327
Harry 9 (Police Deputy Watch Commander)	70
Helga (Scheduling Judge's secretary)	254
Hertz Rent-a-Wagon agent	568
Ivan 9 (Former loan shark)	156
Jack Egan (Diane's husband)	544
Jason Trapp, Major, Albuquerque Base	592
Jim (Information Desk Visitor)	176

Persons Having Significant Parts or Speaking Roles

Jo (Information Clerk)	175
Joan 20319 (Police Watch Commander)	1
John 316 (Kicks man in testicles)	240
John Rawlins (Kills David Cooper)	488
Jane Omar (Incoming that 246 seduces)	647
Joanna 13401 (Loved into the world by Ed 120779)	60
Juror in Barney 96's trial ("Why was I excused?")	364
Lani 37022 (Marilyn's secretary)	178
Laura 1503 (Newscaster, Channel 65,043)	133
Laura 154731 (Slapped Newton 108037)	39
Lawrence Fishburne's Voice	463
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Leroy 504337 (Leroy Martin Washington)	2
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Dr. Lynn Green (George 3's wife)	20
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Margaret (In-N-Out cashier)	625
Maria 844323 (Maria Consuela Lopez)	637
Marie 760132 (Loved Wilson 91043 into the world)	89
Marion 22106 (Newscaster, Channel 65,043)	133
Marilyn 114430 (Welcoming Department Deputy Administrator)	132
Mary Jensen (Member of the Board of Directors)	326
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Penelope (Job Service Receptionist)	50
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Phyllis 22, Appeals Judge #120	54
Phyllis 22’s Secretary	380
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Police Detective, Long Beach	623
Priscilla 30332 (Loved David 30216 back into the world)	131
Rafael Washington (Leroy 504337’s brother)	622
Ralph 3217 (Ralph Fine, Murdered in Houston)	507
Ralph 30445 (Holds sign insulting 246)	217
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Rapist #2	477
Rapist #3	478
Receptionist, Channel 63,045	139
Rich Harold, KNX 1070 Traffic Reporter	624
Robert 91187 (CIA Agent visiting Mexico City)	616
Robert 86409 (Judge slapped by Barbara 96)	393
Roller Coaster Dispatch Operator	439
Royce 9959 (Editor, <i>The Pentagon</i> newspaper)	236
Royce’s Secretary	399
Samuels 8 (Barney 96’s attorney)	244
Sally 730126 (Offered Plea Bargain)	154
Shane Taylor (Trooper, West Virginia State Police)	634
Sherry (Woman targeting rapists)	475
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Persons Having Significant Parts or Speaking Roles

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Travis 99015 (246's assistant)	53
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Victim of John 316 (Slapped ten times)	240
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Victim of Nancy 200341 (Spanks her five times)	241
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Persons Having Significant Parts or Speaking Roles

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Wilson 2109, Appeals Judge #103 [367](#)

Dedications

This book is dedicated to the following people:

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I'm not really sure if a fiction book is supposed to have a preface, or is it a foreword? I'm not really even sure what the difference is. I just looked it up. A general purpose talk at the beginning of a book about that book is an *Introduction*; some books have that, possibly when the book is by multiple authors or the talk is. A *preface* is when the author writes the introduction, a *foreword* is when someone else writes it. So I have just now changed the name of this section from a foreword to a preface, and reversed the appearance of the two words in the first sentence of this paragraph. So there!

I don't know where the idea for this book came from. I know I've had inklings about it and hints for years, both from my private thoughts and from my personal notes of things I wrote down when I was writing the first book "In the Matter of:" series, "The Gatekeeper: The Gate Contracts" ("Gatekeeper") more than twelve years ago. (When I started this book, it was over *seven* years ago; it has taken me *five years* to write this one, and over eight to finally *finish* it.) Where has the time gone? Back then, the book wasn't even part of a *series*, just a drug-induced hangover. Oh, no, I don't do illegal drugs (basically because I can't afford them and I'm far too lazy to steal to pay for them); it was because I was taking Phen-Fen for treatment of depression. And because of severe overweight but that's beside the point.

You'll notice some of the words in this section are in **boldface**. When I mention a real or fictional person or company for the first time I'll do that. It's a trick I picked up from the Washington (DC) *City Paper*, when its column about happenings mentions someone, it puts their name in bold. I thought it was a nice idea so I decided to do that.

What am I going to use this preface to talk about? This book, in hope that you'll find it interesting enough to buy it. Or read it on yours or someone's electronic book. (I had to add this line when **Amazon.Com** released the *Kindle*.) Or borrow and read it if it's at a library. Nothing more complicated than that. So I'll tell you something about it so maybe you will.

I have to ask **myself**, is this book perhaps some advance notice to me and perhaps to others about what we could expect? Is it just some weird dream that popped into my head? Is it a shared experience passed on to me from others? I do not know and may never know.

What I'm going to do here is to say a few things about death, and maybe about life, and their meanings. The points I make here are supposed to be for fun, to maybe make you think about some things, and maybe make you a little bit uncomfortable about your pre-set notions so you'll want to hear more about what I have to say. But I'm not really trying to rock your world, or shock your world; that's what the rest of this book is for. So read on, and maybe you'll learn something in a fun way, and hopefully consider this book interesting enough that you'll want it and I'll get a chance to tell you the story that awaits, starting on page 1. But you don't need to read this introduction to enjoy this story, I just wanted to say a few things as background to the story.

What I am doing here in this preface is a discussion of the philosophical concept called *metaphysics*. That's where someone asks those really weird questions that keep people up at night, like, How did this universe get here? Why does it seem like I am the only person in the Universe? Why are things the way they are, i.e. is the universe the result of some planned intelligence or is it random chance that caused everything? What happens after **you** die, if anything? Or the even less asked question, what happened to you before you were born? Have you been here before, or did you just suddenly appear here because you were instantiated anew and never existed before? And there's lots more questions after that. Lots and lots of questions. Lovely questions, really interesting things to think about. Only problem is, I'm not allowed to answer *any* of them. If I do, I'm being dishonest.

I know one of the first rules of metaphysics: You're supposed to ask questions, you aren't allowed to give answers unless you admit clearly that they are only your opinions and are not necessarily right and you may even know them to be wrong. If you claim your answer to a metaphysical question is a (or the only) correct one, you crossed over the line into *religion*, which is kind of like cheating. Philosophers aren't allowed to have answers (that are claimed to be correct) to metaphysical issues – only questions. (If there does turn out to have a legitimate answer to the question, it stops being metaphysical.) Preachers and ministers *are* allowed to have answers to these questions (that are claimed to be correct), that's *their* job.

Since I'm wearing my Philosopher's Hat today, not my Reverend's Hat, I'll try and avoid that trap of religion (pun unintentional) by saying that everything I say in this preface about life beyond this world is merely my opinion; some of it may be right or wrong. I do not know the correct answers and do not claim to know them. So lets take a look at some possible answers, some of which I can *guarantee* will be wrong, because they conflict with one another. Remember, I'm trying to have some fun with you in order to get you to take this book, so I'm going to toss different ideas at you, not all of which are compatible with each other.

The late **Robert A. Heinlein**, probably the greatest science fiction writer in history, wrote a short story about a man who kills himself across to another universe while in prison after he got caught committing some white collar crimes, and becomes a teacher in the new universe he now inhabits, teaching some of his students to do what he did, to be able to Cross Over. At the moment I can't remember the name of the story, this sentence will be replaced with the name. Oh yeah, *Elsewhen*. In that story, the main character makes the statement that nobody will ever cease to exist when they die, because *no human being has the capacity to believe in their own death*.

So, have you thought about what happens after you die? There are only two possible conclusions. You cease to exist or you continue on in some form. The former is a dead end (pun unintentional) and the latter has two possible states, either you'll like the way things turned out or you won't. (Well, maybe you won't have an opinion either way, but eventually, I think you will.)

I think I can, for the moment, skip discussing what happens if you like the results after you die because if you're totally happy about it, there's no point in looking at it because if it's perfect, the subject is pretty much dead (pun unintentional again), you don't need to change perfection. I'm going to look at the other possibility, that you continue to exist, but you're in some manner dissatisfied with the results.

Of the ways that people consider life after death - an *Afterlife*, by whatever you want to call it - to be unpleasant, the most common one seems to be the idea of hell, or something like that, where you roast in fire and brimstone for a long time, maybe for eternity. Sounds boring. And a real example of a stupid way to punish someone, read the next paragraph. It ain't hard to torture people, that doesn't take much smarts, there are lots of stupid torturers in those South American countries where Death Squads roam the countryside and those fighting, both in and out of the military, barely even know how to shoot the guns they carry, and a lot of them "couldn't pour piss out of a boot if you printed the instructions on the heel." ("**Cañal três** presents our next programme, *Exécution of de Week*. This execution is sponsored by the **Départementé de Taxaçion** which reminds you that failing to pay your taxes - which is whatever we say you owe, even if it's more than you have - is very dangerous and could result in fines, imprisonment or even death, or possibly a visit from your friendly neighborhood officer of the **Ministry de Disappeariançes**, whose motto is "We specialize in invisibility. They'll never see you going or where you've gone. In fact, they'll never see you again. And neither will anyone else. Nor will anyone who asks about you ever be seen again.". It is also sponsored by the **Office of Religious Affairs**, reminding all Catholic nuns and priests that they will be sent to see their boss any time they disagree publicly with government policy. And we don't mean the **Pope**, we mean *his boss*.”)

Read this book for some really great ideas on how to make life after death into a real hell, without having to hurt those who are being punished at all. And not only are they punished, they learn something. Which should be the reason for punishing someone, to make them understand that they did something wrong and need to learn not to repeat their misconduct. And if punishment is meant to deter someone's conduct, it has to have an end so they can continue the usual and customary affairs of their existence and go about their business.

If you read more of this book, **Supervisor 246** discusses with someone named **Akers** the issue of eternal suffering after one dies and whether it makes any sense. If all you do is torture people, you don't allow them to fix what they did wrong, and you don't even let others know that they are being punished, why do you want to do that? You're going to punish them for something they did wrong, but they can't let others know about what they did so the other people might learn from this person's error, and you're not going to ever end their punishment so they can't learn from their mistake so they don't repeat it. Torture for torture's sake is an asinine way to punish someone. Unless it's because that's what the person being punished *wants* as punishment.

Some people believe there are really bad people who should be punished after they die. Now, the question is, will they be, and what is the standard? Who decides, and why?

When **Franklin Delano Roosevelt** and **Winston Churchill** met with **Joseph Stalin** - one of those so-called 'people' whom we can put on our 'double-plus ungood list' - at the Yalta Conference, where they decided how to divide up the world after the war, someone asked Stalin how he knew that he was destined to become ruler of the Soviet Union. He said that **God** came to him in a vision and told him that it was to be so. FDR turned to him and said, "Now wait a minute, Joe, I never said any such thing."

I think that it's pretty hard to expect someone who believes (or at least *claims* to believe; I have no idea if he did) he was divinely inspired to be ruler, and ended up having over 20 million people murdered in mass collective farming schemes¹, to believe that he was a bad man who deserves to be punished. As he himself put it, "One man's death is a tragedy; a million men dying are a statistic." So if he is punished, it's because someone else is going to impose punishment upon him for something he probably doesn't even believe was wrong.

So if someone else decides the punishment, it's probably going to be arbitrary, might be capricious, and may not have any relation to what is appropriate. Might be too lenient. Probably be too strict. If we are going to punish people after they die, if they deserve to be punished, that is, would it not make more sense, by letting them determine their own fate? Maybe they do exactly that.

Following along with what I just pointed out and the quote from Heinlein's *Elsewhen*, perhaps we get the Afterlife we believe we are supposed to have. In such a case, then, eternal suffering for eternity would make sense, because the person who got it believes that's what they deserve. In which case, they can probably get out of it simply by changing their mind, ala **Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio**, who plays the deceased wife of **Robin Williams** after he dies, when he goes to try and rescue her from Hell in the movie *What Things May Come*.

But I think that might not happen for those we would think would *really* deserve it, because the really bad people that have, as **Dr. Malcolm Stevens** refers to **Dr. Hugo Sign** in *Gatekeeper*, "so contaminated this universe that a trillion years of torture in boiling acid, wouldn't cure one second of what they have inflicted upon it by simply existing, wasting space which would be more usefully occupied by maggots," don't believe themselves to be evil, and thus won't ever be really punished in ways we might find appropriate. I pointed out the example of ol' fun lovin' Joe Stalin. And I'll bet all those people who committed horrible crimes in Nazi Germany didn't think they were bad either.

I think it was said that the War Crimes Trials at Nuremberg, Germany showed, not the horror of evil, but it's banality. Being a guard in a concentration camp, where you raped a few Jewish

women, gassed their husbands, stole the gold out of the teeth of the corpses, and worked the survivors to death, was just another job like being a file clerk, or any other ordinary occupation. (The willingness of people to simply obey otherwise horrific orders would later be confirmed in the *Milgram* and *Stanford Prison Experiments*, among others.)

Watch *The Green Mile* sometime. Being the guards at a prison Death Row, to them, it's a job they do, and yet to some, what they are doing is a clear and obvious example of barbarism, of some form of sadistic death rituals which we can wonder how sane human beings can commit themselves to be part of. (Coincidentally, while I was writing this preface, that movie was released on free broadcast television.)

So, since the really bad people don't believe themselves to be that way, who does get punished? Those of us like you and me (well maybe not me; see below) who have a conscience and believe we should be punished when we die for whatever we did wrong. The character played by **Tom Hanks** in *The Green Mile* later comes to realize he's being made to live a long time as punishment for what he did wrong in performing the execution of a man he knew to both be innocent and something which in some people might consider to be a Messenger of God. Consider the plight of **Hattie Durham** in the *Left Behind* series of Christian thrillers, after she realizes who **Carpathia** is, for a long time believes that she doesn't deserve **Christ's** salvation by becoming a Christian, and deserves to be violated six-ways-from-Sunday in Hell for eternity for what she did.

Well, maybe you think you deserve that, more power to you as you scream in agony then, I hope you enjoy the torture since you wanted it so much. I don't think I've done anything wrong enough to deserve being punished at all when I die. I figure all the suffering and hell I put up with in this life, plus the trauma of dying, more than makes up for anything that I might have done wrong here, if I did do much of anything wrong. See **Robert Short's** book *Something to Believe In* on the subject of Hell on Earth.

So you get to the end of your life and you believe you done wrong and deserve some punishment. So you get it and you realize how horrible it is. Who do you blame for this state of affairs? Well, it ain't **me**, I'm giving you a new idea for the meaning of death, and it ain't God, if (s)he exists, because (s)he didn't decide to punish you, *you* did. So maybe you need to rethink what you believe is going to happen to you at the end of your life here on earth.

The clock is running, sooner or later your time will run out. And it was Robert A. Heinlein, again, who said about his own death, exactly what will happen next: Either you will know what happens after you die, or you will know nothing.

What am I saying here? If you will know nothing, that is, if you 'die dead' - that when you die, the result is oblivion, that is, annihilation and subsequent nonexistence - then you don't need to

concern yourself about what happens when you die. I used to think the thought was terrifying until I realized - or actually it was **my sister** who pointed it out to me - that it's exactly what it is, if the end result of your life is oblivion, that you'll never know that you don't exist. That's one of those kind of self-evident ideas that, until you think about it, is probably something you don't realize.

Do I think it's sad if that is the case? Yes, I am deeply saddened by such a concept. All the horribly pointless waste of human potential that is lost at death and can't ever be recovered. Thirty billion souls - the estimated total population that has ever existed on earth - all used once and thrown away. If that doesn't say something about the need for recycling, or reclamation or something, then nothing will.

But there are a few glimmers of hope. One of the finest examiners of myth and mythology, the late **Dr. Joseph Campbell**, asks the question, "Are we consciousness or are we the vehicle of consciousness?" One way to put that is, are we, that is, our soul, and our personality, our essence, merely a display, or is it part and parcel of what we are as an entity?

If our consciousness, our 'soul' as it were, is merely a display, then when we die, we go with it. Maybe some part of our existence will remain, if you can call it that. And I think that's still a waste, because if you aren't around to remember what happened to you, what is the point of living, of having lived? Maybe there isn't one, as Supervisor 246 says later in this book.

But if - this, I hope with every fiber of my being is true - that I am something more than mere display, then I continue notwithstanding my death, and birth or rebirth, that I exist for all time, I always have existed, will always exist, and never will cease to exist. And neither will you, either.

Also, consider this. Science tells us that matter and energy are the same thing. If the energy in our brains represents our soul, then it should stand to reason that if one's soul is a form of energy, and is thus matter, then under the rules of science that matter can neither be created nor destroyed; we have always been here, we always will be here.

On the other hand - and I hate bringing up this point, but if I am to be honest with myself I have to make it - there is the possibility that while our existence is a form of energy, it is simply kept as an electrical storage within the construct of the brain, the way the files stored on a computer disk are simply the change in magnetic flux; the disk never changes, just the contents, and the contents can be modified, changed, replaced or lost. Or, the contents of the electronic memory of a computer, its "RAM," as long as it is refreshed by electricity the contents remain; if the computer ever shuts down, the physical memory remains but the electrical contents, the running program, disappear. If it's the same thing in our case, then when we die, we're gone, annihilated, we cease to exist and we become part of the *consignment to oblivion*. (Somehow, that seems like a cheesy and weak cliché.)

Ayn Rand put it quite simply in her book *Atlas Shrugged*: “There is only one fundamental alternative in the universe: existence or non-existence - and it pertains to a single class of entities: to living organisms. The existence of inanimate matter is unconditional, the existence of life is not: it depends on a specific course of action. Matter is indestructible, it changes its forms, but it cannot cease to exist. It is only a living organism that faces a constant alternative: this issue of life or death. Life is a process of self-sustaining and self-generated action. If an organism fails in that action, it dies; its chemical elements remain, but its life goes out of existence.”

There is one possible answer which, if that answer does occur, then provides for certainty of life beyond existence. If it ever is shown that, even using the best possible atomic storage capacities, that the human brain’s capacity is inadequate to store the contents of the mind of a human being, then obviously part of us exists somewhere other than our brain. It may be that the brain does have the capacity to store all of us. Or perhaps it does not. I’ll leave that point open for now.

And let’s not forget all the reports of people who can remember having been here in a previous life. And Near-Death Experiences; I get to those in a later paragraph. And other things. Maybe all of these things are all coincidence and mere self-induced delusion to make ourselves believe in something beyond existence. But there are enough reports of people who, never having heard of other people having these reports, coming forward to say the same things without knowing about the others, at least as I understand it they did not know of the others.

Maybe all of these people got together and concocted these stories. Now, one thing experienced interviewers such as police officers and security people tell us that when two people tell a story about an event, there should be minor differences between them. If two people tell exactly the same story about an event, they’re lying or they’ve been coached (or both). If these people did not know of each other when they told different people the exact same things about what they saw and what happened, it provides a question: Why are all of them are telling essentially the same story? If they are a bunch of co-conspirators, who is raising the money to finance this operation and what are they getting out of it?

It can’t be some religious organization, because the way this stuff is coming out, it doesn’t necessarily favor any specific religion, and I don’t see where it favors a political agenda since a lot of people won’t believe it. I suspect it might simply be either cracks in a very well designed system or game to keep those on this side of the line from finding out about the other side, or hints thrown at us to keep us guessing.

I think a very good reason to argue for continued existence with our memories intact, but it staying hidden, is that if it has the sort of promise that what this book talks about, the many people living in less than subsistence conditions, if they had positive evidence of there being something more and possibly better than this world, would commit suicide in such mass numbers that there would be almost no one alive here in some parts of the world.

Just consider how much better the lifestyle of some yuppie stockbroker on Wall Street would look to some less-than-subsistence farmer in sub-Saharan Africa. And yet the stockbroker has his own set of problems to deal with. And yet, think about what's possible when your only limit on what you can experience is your own imagination. Go see *The Matrix* if you haven't. I think it's going to be one of those special pieces of work that becomes a classic, the sort of thing that the people who made it may not have had an idea of what they would end up doing at the time, sort of like what happened to *Citizen Kane*.

So I think we can build a case on almost any side of the issue for the continued existence of the soul, the death of the body notwithstanding. The reports of Near-Death Experiences ("NDEs") also provide good hearsay evidence of this. As I said, there should be discrepancies in every story; if two people tell the exact same story, they're lying or they've been coached. And it seems like everyone who has had an NDE is telling the same story. Are they all lying, or is the experience so explicit that they all had the same thing?

Now, they've done experiments where they simulated the Near Death Experience (sounds like the name of some New Age punk rock group) by causing certain parts of the brain to experience loss of oxygen or being struck on the head or something, and the results seem to be the same. But I have this suspicion there is something more there, something I can't quite put my finger on, that makes this phenomenon more than the mere dying or almost dying of a few brain cells. Perhaps it's some misguided faith on my part that wants to believe it enough to discard evidence to the contrary. I hope not, I believe I am a good enough philosopher of reason and scientist of logic to accept such evidence - if there ever is any - *even if I do not like the answer*. But call it a hunch.

To quote **Mr. George Green** in my first book *Gatekeeper* again, only I'll use it on the subject of whether there is something more than this life, "Perhaps you just have a gut feeling [about it]... I know how that is; more than once I've had gut feelings about things where I couldn't put my finger on it, but I knew something... Later I would discover why I had that feeling, and, more importantly, why I was right, but at the time I did not have the evidence or knowledge to know why I felt that way."

I think, should that be the case, that perhaps it is possible to forgive everyone for their stupid screwups when they are here. Come on, someone screws with you for a few years and tortures you to death once? You going to hate him (or her) for the next trillion years? What if, in your previous life, you were a soldier and killed a bunch of people, should they be mad at you too? Or what if it was him you killed then, isn't he entitled to payback in the next life for what you did in the previous one? How do you know what you might have done before? Or what about some crackpot who thinks you did wrong to him?

If you play a game of Monopoly and you crucify one of your friends, I mean “grind them into the dust and drown them in their own gore”™, and bankrupt them, and really enjoy watching as they have to liquidate everything, turn over everything they own to you and quit the game in ruins, are they supposed to hate you for several years over that? Or might it be likely that the next time you play, they should do their best to destroy you then? Could it perhaps be that life is like that?

When I first learned to play chess back in 5th or 6th grade in school, I was about 11 or 12 at the time, I was terrible at it and a **friend of mine** kept crucifying me, I kept losing badly. I got so mad one day I swept all the pieces off the board. Well, one day - and he swears he was playing his best and did not throw the game - my friend made some really bad mistake in one of his moves. You can bet I enjoyed every minute of that game as I turned around and destroyed him! No mercy and not a bit of charity, I enjoyed watching him suffer and lose big time. You have to figure it was a significant moment of my life when I can remember one chess game I played over thirty years ago, and yet sometimes I can't remember what I had for breakfast yesterday.

Do I regret destroying him in that game? Of course not, it was payback for what he did before. And if he was able to come after me again, I should have no complaints. And yet we could still be friends in other circumstances even if we were merciless competitors on the chessboard.

Back in the summer of 1995 I had a friend named **Erwen Tang**, whom I have never met in person, only spoke with him by telephone and e-mail even though we only lived maybe 40 kilometers apart. We played the computer game DOOM - in deathmatch mode - by modem a lot. I'd kill him some times, he'd kill me a lot and we always played take-no-prisoners mode. One time I and **one of his friends** went at each other and we toasted each other left and right, a charnel-house of killing. When we got finished, we both talked how much fun we had, especially when the other guy did a really neat way of killing us. Erwen and I were still friends even though we always fought to the death - and redeath - in the game, and we even collaborated on writing a map for the game, that ended up being included in a third-party book on maps done by expert players of the game. He went on to college and I went back to work so we sort of drifted apart and I haven't spoken to him in several years. We never took our game playing attitude of “kill the other son-of-a-bitch at all costs” toward each other out of the game.

So maybe we have to consider the possibility that we're playing a game on earth or we're learning things, and as such, once we die we shouldn't hold people responsible for what happened here, because maybe what they did to us here is payback for what we did to them before. Or just maybe, you're going to violate them six-ways-from-Sunday in their next life to make up for what they did here. Presuming you can find them.

A dear friend of mine mentioned how **one of her friends** died and promised if there was any way to do so they would try and send a message back from beyond. And she never got a message from them. I said that if sending a message is possible maybe what happened was, they wanted

to learn something and decided to come back to earth in order to learn whatever it was in the life of that particular entity.

Maybe what happened was that they got to Heaven, Paradise, The Afterlife or Valhalla, or whatever you call it, and the **Death Traffic Manager** or **Incomings Support Clerk**, or **Optional Recycling Operator** said to them, before they could even get to the equivalent of a phone to make a call back to earth, “Hey, I got just the thing for you, we have a birth in an hour and 45 minutes where that person will have over 20 of the experiences you put in a requisition that you wanted to learn, and you have a priority reservation for them, since it’s a pure match for what you’ve selected. Only problem is, you have to immediately go under the knife now, you just made it in time if you want to catch that one. Otherwise, from looking at our plans for the future of earth, someone having all these experiences won’t be around for another 10 years and unless you stay here the whole time you won’t be available. You were chomping at the bit to get three of these and you only took your last life because you knew you were going to die early and would get one of the experiences you wanted badly in that life you just left. Or you can pick up each one of them, but you’ll have to die and be reborn as many as 30 times to get all the things you want. So it might take you 2500 years to get all these experiences versus maybe 70. We’ve got all of eternity but you might not want to take that long. It’s your call, do you want to take this birth now or pass?”

And they took it, did a u-turn, so they’re no longer dead and can’t signal her. But maybe, because they know them, their Circle of Life will touch again. My sister has a **friend** whom they suspect they knew each other before in previous lives. In one life, she claims they were both soldiers in the same army (which implies they were both men at that time), and in another they were husband and wife or lovers, I’m not sure which. In this life, both of them are female, so maybe people get Real Sex Changes quite often. Or maybe you don’t get to pick your sex when you’re born. Maybe you don’t get to pick, it’s involuntary. Or there is no Afterlife (in the sense that you don’t get to stay after you die) and since you have to come back, recycling is automatic. Or maybe you don’t get to come back, you only get one chance, and the people who think they have been here before are mistaken. Or maybe you keep coming back until you get it right (see my **David Letterman** parody about “Top 10 Reasons you can’t remember what was before life” following this preface.)

Which brings up a whole new kettle of fish: presuming, for the moment, that people do survive death, do they come back? If so, is it because they have to (no afterlife to stay in), they choose to come back, or is it that they come back because of some misconduct (or simple insufficiency) and don’t qualify to stay there? (Alfred Brooks in the movie *Defending Your Life*.) And if so, what level of misconduct justifies “taking the being born course over”? What might we consider to be the sort of thing that says that people have to go back and try again?

My sister has this fascination with Serial Killers. Don't get them confused with Mass Murderers, as I did, of which someone could be both. A serial killer kills usually one, or perhaps two people, at a time, or maybe a few extra if the opportunity comes up, but they do their killing more than once. Mass murderers might kill 5 or 6 people or more people at a time, and might only murder once. **Ted Bundy** was a serial killer. So are **John Mousai** and **John Malvo**, the boy Mousai was molesting, who, as this book was being written, were allegedly shooting 13 people from Fredericksburg, VA, to Montgomery County, MD, killing 11 of them before they were caught on their way to Pennsylvania. So was Supervisor 246's dear friend, **Jeffrey Dahmer**, of which he speaks so highly. **Those who crashed the planes** in the World Trade Center, Second Edition event were Mass Murderers. As was, of course, 246's other poster child, **Timothy McVeigh**. The **Manson Family** members who killed people were both. I spoke to my sister about her fascination with Serial Killers, that maybe she's learning something to understand how she was in a previous life, or perhaps she's taking advance lessons for her next life. As 246 says, maybe she'll have quite an accomplishment if that's going to be the case.

Someone once said life was too short to feel bad about things. How about eternity is too long to spend it wallowing in pity. Or seething in hate. If there is something beyond life, and it holds the kind of capacity that an entity of pure energy can obtain, then there is really no reason to have those negative emotions once you cross over. In this book I'm holding the Afterlife to a mirror-image copy of earth, because it gives me a good palette to paint my story upon and comment upon our world. But if you have no restrictions upon your existence, and the universe is what you can dream it up to be, then the capability is unlimited for happiness, to do anything you please. If you've ever seen "**Q**" from *Star Trek: Next Generation* then that's the sort of thing that everyone just could be. Of course that character is a pest because he's too needy, but that's beside the point.

On a side note, I'm an agnostic. I do not know and do not have enough evidence to express an opinion one way or the other. Professionally I remain neutral but personally I suspect something is out there as a controlling entity. The problem I have with the whole scenario is that if you have nothing there, the universe makes too much sense, or, they still have the problem in which the universe was created but have no explanation as to what caused it. On the other hand, if someone did create the universe, how did they get here? And why are all the ways I keep hearing about whoever might be running the universe depict Him - and it's almost always a Him, the writers of most religious tracts tend to depict their God as male because, as Ayn Rand notes, when they created Him in their own image - and it's usually men who write religious tracts - God usually appears to have the social graces of an uncivilized two-year-old, being exceptionally rude, throwing tantrums and fits, and generally acting like someone who has severe self-respect problems? The character TDR - **Tansin A. Darcos** - exhaustively explains my reasoning on the subject in *Gatekeeper* which I don't need to reiterate here. That gives me yet another excuse to sell my other book to you also.

So I think maybe I've rambled on just a little too much. Maybe I've given you some questions to think about. But again, I'm not claiming I have *the* answers, that is, the ones that are right, or *any* answers. While I love what she has to say and I believe much of it, in my opinion I'm a much better metaphysicist than Ayn Rand because I learned from one of her errors, as I have stated from the beginning, that the most important rule of metaphysics is: it's a system of questions, you aren't allowed to give out the answers. Once you try to answer a metaphysical question, and claim it is correct, you stop dealing in metaphysics, you cross the line and you fall over into religion. Rand made that error at least once. I learned from it. And sometime in the future I'm sure someone will spot one of my errors and point it out. Maybe I'll be lucky enough to be alive when that happens, so I can learn too.

Well, anyway, let's go on to the story before I scare you so much that you put the book back on the shelf without buying it. The story is supposed to be fun to read, and while I don't know if you'll have fun reading it, I sure had a lot of fun writing it. While trying to do all the other things, e.g. look for work, settle an automobile accident claim, write to the CEO of a financial organization to tell him how I felt he shouldn't think he broke his promises, get clearances for some of the things in this book, handle my application to become a common carrier, notarize documents, clean up my room, and so on and so forth. Oh great, I finally get the chance to legitimately use "e.g." in a sentence, it's very hard to get that opportunity as most times "i.e." is the one you have to use to be correct. I treasure such rare pleasures.

You can read more about and discuss this book online at

<http://www.instrumentofgod.com>

or send e-mail to

246@instrumentofgod.com

In writing this book, I wanted to say that I had a hell of a lot of fun doing it. But I can't say that. What I can say is I had a Heaven of a lot of fun doing it! And if there is anything to a Heaven, or an Afterlife, or something, I hope it's organized like this one. If it is - and I hope with every fiber of my being that it is so - I can't wait until I become part of that society when some nice lady picks me, takes me to her room, and 'loves me back into the world'.

On to the book. Here we go. It's all yours. Go to town on it.

"One thing seems clear and obvious from the lessons of history. It stands out singularly among all the things the lessons of history can teach us. The one thing, more than any other, that the lessons of history teach us, if the lessons of history teach us anything at all, is that no one ever learns the lessons that history teaches us."

- Paul Robinson

Paul Robinson <paul@paul-robinson.us>
Prince George's County, Maryland, USA, North America, Terra
August 18, 2002 - September 30, 2010

Commonwealth of Virginia)
County of Arlington)

I certify that this book, *In the Matter of: Instrument of God*, is a true and complete copy of the original on file and of record in my office. Witness my hand and seal, this _____ day of _____, 20_____.

Seal

Paul Robinson
"A Computer Programmer and Notary Public in and for the Commonwealth of Virginia at large, and the State of Maryland in and for Prince George's County."
Virginia Commission No. 318185
My Commission Expires November 30, 2014

I recommend the following books and motion pictures as either being related to the same subject of this book, or being very helpful in giving me ideas for creating this book:

Books:

Heinlein, Robert A.

- *Elsewhen*

An interesting short story which I talk about earlier. You get the afterlife you expect to get. “No human being is capable of believing in their own death,” so nobody ever disintegrates after they die. Then again, I wouldn’t be surprised if Ayn Rand could, she was pretty good at thinking of a lot of things.

- *Starship Troopers*

Government is those people that can initiate violence against others and get away with it. If you vote for something, the government has the power to force people to do things in order to get it, whether by taxes, or condemnation, or kidnaping them to get it. If the responsibility one has for ones actions is not equal to the authority one has, you have governments that oscillate out of control, then collapse into cruel despotisms. If you have a system where those who have authority to act have no responsibility for their actions, or those who are responsible for the actions of others, but no authority to act, you have chaos. And that’s exactly what we have in our society right now. Everyone wants to be the driver, but nobody wants to pay the price for running everything. Or those that are expected to pay the price are given no say in the matter. Actually, both *Starship Troopers* and *Atlas Shrugged* deal with the same issue, failure to balance responsibility and authority. *Starship* shows a world where they have done this; *Atlas* shows a world where they have not and the resulting disaster that ensues.

- *Stranger in a Strange Land*

You get two things in that book that I duplicate in this one: people being able to create (or remove) things simply by force of thought, and lots of people having lots of sex with others, i.e. the Free Love movement that he just happened to catch onto back in the early 1960s when his book was released. I suspect that we are just now restarting that level of social mores after the 40-year cycle of sexuality has swung back close to the way it was then. Now, as Heinlein himself admitted, since he didn’t have some device create the items in *Stranger*, his book is classified as fantasy rather than science fiction. On the other hand, since everything happening in the book you are reading now is by computer simulation, I get to classify this book as hard science fiction. Except for the scaling problems - same as in *The Matrix* - where you can’t do this for a lot of people because it takes too much computing power to do it in real time, almost everything in this book is potentially possible or almost possible with the computer technology we

have now. And the trans-universe work is done via devices so it's all pure science fiction, no fantasy involved.

Jenkins, Jerry and LaHaye, Tim

Left Behind (and the subsequent sequels)

It's said that these guys have done for Christian fiction what John Grisham has done to the legal profession. The series talks about a group of lying, stealing, murdering, conniving schemers. And that's just what the good guys are doing! You can imagine how the bad guys are in comparison. Consider the "Loyalty Enforcement Enhancer" or whatever they called the Guillotines used to make sure people take the Mark of the Beast. My sister said that seeing the kind of world that is promised for Christians after the Rapture made her glad she's an atheist. Of course she's forgetting these are all people who became Christians after they got whacked across the head with the 2x4 of The Rapture. I don't know where that puts me. I'm an agnostic; I can't accept either side of the typical religious arguments either for Christianity and God (or Muslim and Allah, or whatever they believe in, in Asia), or for Atheism and No God.. I'm also a Christian, I'm stuck with it, I'll always be one, because I got into it when I was very young, before I knew any better, and even if I change my mind later, the Bible claims I can't stop being one. It's sort of like joining a credit union, "once a member, always a member." If that is correct, I won't be around to be part of what happens once events as predicted in the series do happen. It might be that's the whole idea; God would want to grab in advance anyone who might figure a way out of the mess that's going to occur. This presumes that there is a God to Rapture his church as the series of books predict.. If there isn't then there's no Antichrist either and we don't have to worry about it.

Rand, Ayn, *Atlas Shrugged*

- This is one of those books you either love or you hate. I've read it cover to cover more than eight times, so you can guess just how much I despise it. Rule #1 comes almost verbatim out of that book. Also, the concept of objective law. The law is defined *exactly* so you know if you are breaking it or not. Both *Starship Troopers* and *Atlas Shrugged* deal with the same issue, failure to balance responsibility and authority. *Starship* shows a world where they have done this; *Atlas* shows a world where they have not and the resulting disaster that ensues. I'd love to be able to say that it's the first non-religious definition of a workable system of morality, but I can't. I know it took her two years to develop the 60+ page statement made by the main character in the lecture near the end of the book, but I wish she had been able to make it without a flat and explicit statement that the universe has nobody operating it. In 15 minutes her writing convinced me that my years of religious beliefs were, if not flat out wrong, at a minimum, misguided

and ignorant. I agree with her flat rejection of Christianity as an insult to intelligence, her statement in this book are what made me become agnostic. Now, maybe it is true that there is no God, but the problem is, once you make a claim either way, that there is a God, or there isn't, you don't get to classify your statement as a philosophy, you cross into religion. That means that her whole system is a matter of faith as to whether you accept it or not, the exact thing I think she was trying to get rid of in the first place. Get rid of the religion and you can argue the whole thing by logic. Now, I don't necessarily believe in the alleged God or Allah as depicted by the Bible, or the Koran, or most of the other religions, but for the moment I stand neutral because I can't accept either the proposal that nobody started all this, nor can I accept the kind of crazed lunatic they all seem to have as the Head Honcho. On the other hand, maybe when I die I'll find out that God is a Committee, as Lazarus Long in Heinlein's *Time Enough for Love* suggests. Or maybe it's someone like Supervisor 246 or George Green. Or me. That would explain a great deal, wouldn't it?

Short, Robert A. *Something to Believe in: Is Kurt Vonnegut the Exorcist of Jesus Christ Superstar?*

I went onto Amazon.Com to look up the author's name for this book and had forgotten the whole title. I haven't read this book in twenty years but it was terrific when I did. Thinking about it made me decide to buy the book and read it again. This is a great book if you want to look at religion and the philosophy of where you go when you die and how you might be punished as a result of what you did here, or maybe why you won't be punished after all. I like the way he examines the suffering people go through on earth and compares it to what people expect to be the hell that they go to when they die on earth if they weren't good enough to get to go to heaven. I think he's the one who pointed out that if you didn't have something to make people think they should act for good on earth, most of them would turn nihilistic. That, other than that proposed in *Atlas Shrugged*, no one has tried to create a philosophy of morality that didn't have some religious system as its basis is the reason that exactly what I have just stated is what is happening in general in western civilization, as more people come to the realization that if there ain't nothing after this, there's no reason to act decently because you're gonna die dead anyway and it won't matter what you did here. "If there is no life after death then human existence has no value since it doesn't matter how you act, you get the same treatment at the end, and the Nazi murder of six million people in Germany has no more significance than the murder of six million cockroaches when a tenement is fumigated." Or something like that.

Motion Pictures

The Green Mile

The story of the men who run Death Row at a prison and what they go through. When you do something in a job that you do not like, do not want to do, and in some cases do not agree with but you do it anyway because it is what you are supposed to do. Of course, you can look at this and say that what they are involved in is sadistic brutality equivalent to the guards at a German Concentration camp circa 1939, but it's still an interesting examination of the issues of life and death and how some people live with handling both.

The Matrix

Hands down, one of the top 10 films of the 20th century. (Forget the sequels, they pale in comparison and might as well be a different movie series altogether.) There have often been, people arguing that the world around us and the reality we are seeing could be shown to us are mere illusion. The big question would be, "Why?" Why would someone - or something - be going through all that effort, trouble and expense to do that? Well, this movie is the first to come up with an answer to that question. Why would someone go to the trouble to create a completely synthetic world and want you to think it was real? So they could use you (and your body) for some purpose they did not want you to know about. Some people have even written a book discussing the philosophy that the Matrix talks about. I read it; interesting. But the movie "ExistenZ" that book talks about, *sucked*.

Starship Troopers

I like the way they kept the point that elections are a form of violence. "When you vote you are exercising force. And force my friends, is *violence*, the Supreme Authority from which all other authority is derived." If you want the idea of a no-win scenario, consider the scene where Lt. Radchak looks over the wall of the compound and scans to the horizon, and sees the hundreds of thousands of members of the Welcoming Committee, who would like to welcome him and all of his troops to the inside of their stomachs, or whatever they have as an unreasonable facsimile thereof.

Total Recall

The man goes to get a memory implant so he'll think he's been on a trip to Mars as a secret agent but something goes wrong. Or does it? Is everything that is happening real, or is it a dream? That's the whole point of the movie.

Vanilla Sky

Is what is happening to him real, or is he imagining it, or is he insane, or is he sane and seeing something which is not real. That's the whole point of the movie. A very strange and weird movie if I do say so myself.

What Things May Come

A film that examines what could happen once you die. This is one of those movies where all of the characters *really* go through hell! If what happens after we die is the result of what we expect the afterlife to be, then all we have to do to stop suffering in hell is to choose not to suffer. "The purpose of life is not to suffer and die, but to enjoy yourself, and live." - John Galt in *Atlas Shrugged*.

A Poem

Love me back into the world
I feel the touch
That I need so much
When you love me back into the world

Love you back into the world
I'll feel all the things
And the happiness it brings
When I love you back into the world

Show both of us you care
And what you want us both to share
When we love each other back into the world.

We have been here
For all time
And we shall be here
Though we may at times be gone
For a short while
We will always return

I may have known you before
We may come to know each other again
While we are together, let us celebrate that which we have
And love each other (back into the world.)

A Blurb

Profane, profound, and parodically funny, Paul Robinson's *Instrument of God* tells the story of Supervisor 246, the lead supervisor of a "service facility." What sort of service do they provide? Well, that's what this story is about.

You could say it's the story of his life but that's not true at all.

You see, Supervisor 246 is dead. Everyone in this story is dead - or so it seems - and so we learn what it's like in a place they call the Afterlife. Take the world as we know, turn it upside down and shake it, and you get the mixed up and strange place he, and everyone else around him resides in, a world very similar to our own and yet is in so many ways a mirror image.

Instrument of God brings a completely new "look at everything from scratch" society in which "almost everything you know is wrong," where you need to unlearn almost everything you know about how to act in society, and how it questions all our assumptions about the way things are.

- The book opens with a rape crisis intervention, in which they counsel the victim of this horrible crime: the rapist.
- Where Supervisor 246 makes a statement on national television: "The 'holocaust survivors' were criminals, the 'Nazi Skinhead' was a law abiding citizen minding his own business." And when you read why, you might very likely agree with him.
- How the police tell you that they respect you as a human being even though you're being carted off to jail.
- That money is worthless, while words and promises can be more priceless than gold.
- That it is possible to joke about child molestation, cop killers, and other subjects normally considered too sensitive to make jokes about.
- Where a TV station is declared by a court to be a newspaper.
- The happiest news you can hear is that a close personal friend of yours has been killed in an automobile accident, and the worst possible tragedy is that a baby has been born. And if you die in a motor vehicle accident, it just turns out to be a minor inconvenience and merely a bad day for you, nothing to get too upset about.

Instrument of God was designed to tell a story, make the reader think, and perhaps challenge all of his or her established beliefs about just about everything, from religion, to politics, the Justice System, and even whether the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution is too weak to protect free speech.

Oh, and let's not forget sex. There is a lot of sex in this book. It's going to pick on your ideas about sex, too. In fact, in the book an incident makes it possible for a woman to take literally the following statement: 'If rape is inevitable, relax and enjoy it.' And she really does, too!

A Blurb

They used to say that nothing beats a Smith and Wesson. They never heard of ‘Immunity from Assault.’

You might love this book, or you might not, but it is doubtful you will remain neutral. It is unlikely you will remain unmoved, however. Inspired by the works and ideas of great writers and artists such as Robert A. Heinlein, Ayn Rand, The Wachowski Brothers, and others, it brings a fresh and possibly unique perspective on death - and life - in a work of fiction.

Instrument of God, by Paul Robinson
Part of the “In the Matter of” series.

If you don’t mind reading a spoiler, here’s a one-paragraph (and actually one sentence) summary I did for TVTropes.org:

Through the story, the star, Supervisor 246, ends up being reincarnated out of the afterlife into another universe, crosses into a third, back into his own, dies, is re-reincarnated along with a friend, is killed by the friend who then blows up a hotel room to commit suicide, is visited by another friend from the third universe who temporarily dies in order to know how to build an afterlife for her world, plus waits for the death of his best friend who was a man but decided to go back to earth and be born as a woman so that when he died he could have regular sex with his friend Supervisor 246, who isn't into gay sex, but has no problem screwing the women of three universes.

Comments from others

If some unemployed punk in Trenton, New Jersey can buy a plug-in for \$29.95 to let him make love to Cindy Crawford, Virtual Reality is going to make Crack Cocaine look like Sanka.

- Dennis Miller

Death is nothing to us, since while we exist, death is not present, and whenever death is present, we do not exist.

- Epicurus, 3rd century

The lovers and the fighters and the risk they take
Are on the other side of life...

The only way to get there is to take the step
To the other side of life...

- The Moody Blues, "The Other Side of Life"

Can I believe what I see

All I have wished for will be...

Lord, kiss me once more, fill me with song

Allah, kiss me once more that I may, that I may

Wear my love like heaven...

- Donovan, "Wear Your Love Like Heaven"

Welcome to the real world she said to me

Condescendingly...

But something's better on the other side...

I just found out

There's no such thing as the real world

Just a lie you got to rise above ...

I am invincible

As long as I'm alive ...

- John Meyer, "No Such Thing"

Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic.

- Arthur C. Clarke

If it is distinguishable from magic, it's not advanced enough.

- Anonymous

I really don't hold with knowing the future, even my own, which is short... I mean, if we knew for a fact there was an afterlife, and if the afterlife was bliss eternal, we'd all commit suicide in order to enjoy it.

- Mandemous,

"Battle for the Planet of the Apes"

... I don't want to leave the comfort of this place
'Cause there's a hunger, a longing to escape
From the life I live when I'm awake
So let's go there, let's make our escape
C'mon let's go there, Let's ask "Can we stay?"

- Creed, "Higher"

Our voices will ring together

Until the 12th of Never

We all will live love forever, as one! ...

Recognize its your life, now in review

And, as you stay, for the play

Fantasy has in store for you

A glowing light will see you through

It's your day, shining day, all your dreams come true

- Earth, Wind and Fire, "Fantasy"

They say that in Heaven, love comes first

We'll make Heaven a place on earth

Ooh Heaven is a place on earth

- Belinda Carlisle,

"Heaven is a place on Earth"

Baby you're all that I want.

When you're lying here in my arms

I'm finding it hard to believe

We're in Heaven.

- Brian Adams, "Heaven"

Swear there ain't no Heaven

And I'll pray there ain't no Hell.

But I'll never know by living

Only my dying will tell.

- Blood, Sweat and Tears, "And
When I Die"

Death is not important. Death is insignificant.

Eternity is what is important. And eternity is now.

- Ayn Rand

Where is Heaven? It is no place. It is myth.

- Joseph Campbell

Date: Sat, 13 May 1995 09:37:35 -0500
From: Paul Robinson
Subject: Top 10 Reasons you can't remember what was before life

John Hoban (Shibumi@epix.net) wrote in newsgroup alt.philosophy objectivism:

If there is no personal ego that can remember life before this one how can one "remember." Isn't that supposed to be possible?

TOP TEN LIST BY T.A. DARCOS & COMPANY (Not affiliated with Worldwide Pants, Inc.)
(Drumroll)

From the Home Office of Tansin A. Darcos & Company in Silver Spring, Maryland, Top 10 Reasons why you can't remember where you came from before you were born:

10. We're all virtual reality elements and this is the program we're in.
9. We're an experiment growing in a scientist's test tube.
8. This is a game, and some of us are real people playing the game, and some are computer operated agents who don't know they are; the ones who remember are real, and the ones who don't are programs.
7. You got sent here as punishment for something, and when you learn why you're here, or you serve out your sentence, you die and you get your memory back.
6. You flunked your death exam so you have to take the "being alive" course all over again.
5. Valhalla / Heaven / Paradise is overbooked and they gave you temporary lodging until your cloud was ready.
4. ?BABY-E-NORMINSKUL You couldn't fit your past memories into a baby's head, and forgot to pay the surcharge for getting them back later.
3. When you came here, you paid the extra charge for not remembering your past lives.
2. The trauma of being born has given you amnesia.

And the Number 1 reason why you can't remember what happened before you were born:

1. This is your first time here. (Some of us have to be "virgin" lives.)

(Cymbal Strike, Orchestra plays piece from "Feels like the First Time" by Foreigner, then "Like a Virgin" by Madonna.)

In the Matter of:
Instrument of God

Paul Robinson

Book I

Chapter 1

"She isn't going to make the decision either."

"Hi Bill, how are you doing?"

"Good afternoon 246."

"I presume that's him there," 246 says, pointing at a man sitting on a bed, with his trousers and underpants pulled down to his ankles.

"Yep. The computer says he arrived from the United States. Specifically California. 15022 EN Leroy 504337. Unbelievable, isn't it?"

"I was so surprised when I heard. The last time this sort of thing happened was, oh, I can't even remember it's been so long, must have been years ago. Usually it doesn't happen this fast. Can we take him up to my office?"

"The police are already here to take him."

"Oh no they don't! I want him in *my* office." He turned to his right. "Oh hi, Joan. Let me introduce you, this is Sergeant Bill 774 of Welcoming Department Security. Bill, this is Police Watch Commander Joan 20319."

"How do you do?"

"Charmed. Where's the perp?"

"On the bed over there."

"Okay, well anyway, I have my handcuffs, I'll take him." She turned to the man on the bed. "Sir, you can pull your pants up." The man does so. "You are hereby violated. You have rights under the law and you are advised to say nothing until you are informed of them or have access to counsel." She reached over and began to put the cuffs on. "You are under arrest for.." She doesn't get to finish her canned speech as 246 interrupts.

"Ah, no, Joan, you can't do that."

She stops. "Supervisor 246, I want this guy."

Supervisor 246 shakes his head. "You know the rules, Joan, whoever catches him first owns him. In fact, you're only allowed in this Department because you're my friend. Normally the police can't even enter unless my best friend Tom, the Administrator, grants them admission. Now I know he's your friend too and you can always get him to let you in, but as far as the alleged perpetrator here is concerned, even he won't overrule me on this. Possession is nine-tenths of the law, as they say, and I caught him first. I've got him so he's mine until I decide whether you can have him. Right now, the answer is no, I want to take him up to my office."

"How much do you want for him?"

"He's not for sale. You can't have him."

Her response was nearly a scream. "WHAT? You turned *down* a sale?"

Supervisor 246 shakes his head again. "I'm not turning you down; I'm just refusing to sell him at this time. First of all, I don't know how much he's worth to me yet; I might discover he's very valuable and regret later that I sold him to someone for too little. Then, I have to hate myself for a while for allowing myself to be cheated. And I don't want to hate myself; I love myself too much. Gene Wilder in *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory* is asked to sell a business man, one of his golden chocolate egg laying geese for the business man's daughter, and he says, 'They're not for sale, she can't have one.' So I present to you the same response."

“Maybe Willy didn’t want the man’s daughter. I do want *him*.”

“Very funny, Joan. You know what I mean.”

“I’ve never heard you refuse a sale, Supervisor 246. Name your price.”

“Hmmm. Hmmm.” Supervisor 246 smiled. “Do you really mean that?”

“I want him. What do you want?”

“Don’t be so quick to ask. You might not like it.”

“What’s that supposed to mean?”

“Maybe you can’t afford it.”

“Don’t bet on it.”

“Okay, you come work for me in my section for twenty five calendar years. No wait, strike that, you might think it was worth it; I’ve got to make sure the price is too expensive, so you *have* to turn me down. Come work for me for one hundred and twenty five calendar years. For that, you can have him.”

“You’re out of your mind.”

“Absolutely. And I’ll take your response as ‘no’. Since you turned me down, the answer is ‘no’ to you in return. It’s really not my call to make in the first place, but there’s a chance I could have made a big profit out of the deal, and I always look at my own self-interest first; I’m not a humanitarian. But in any case I’m not going to make the decision on which of us he goes with.”

“You’re not?” She smiled. “Okay, I’ll go ask the girl.” She started to leave.

“Joan, dear, before you leave to go bother Anita, it might interest you to know something. She isn’t going to make the decision either.”

“Well who the hell is?”

Supervisor 246 pointed at the man on the bed. “He is. And I can bet you 2000 favors he’ll pick me over you.”

“Supervisor 246, that’s not fair!”

Supervisor 246 smiled. “Who said death was supposed to be fair, babe?”

“Please?”

“Are you begging?”

“Yes.”

“It doesn’t matter.” Supervisor 246 turned to the man on the bed and started to talk very softly, as if he were talking to a small child. “Young man, look at me. Bill, would you get us a couple of chairs, please?. Thank you. Young man, I’d like you to sit down in that chair, if you don’t mind. Thank you. Would you like a glass of water or something?” The man shook his head. “Very well. Do you mind if I sit down here next to you?” The man shook his head again. “Joan, would you like to sit down here next to us?”

“No, I’ll stand.”

“Well, I’m going to sit down right here next to this young man. Now, young man, I’d like to know if you would be willing to tell me your name, or what you would like to be called?”

“Leroy Washington, sir.”

“Okay, ah, Leroy, ah, do you mind if I call you Leroy?”

“Uh, no sir.”

Supervisor 246 smiled. "Okay then, Leroy, my name is Supervisor 246. You don't have to call me sir, just about everyone calls me 246 so you can do the same thing if you'd like, okay?"

"Okay."²

246 points at Joan. "You can probably recognize by the fact that she's wearing a uniform, that this nice lady standing next to me, whose name is Joan, by the way, is the Police Watch Commander. In fact, Leroy, would you be willing to stand up, say hello and shake hands with Joan?"

Leroy is completely puzzled. "Huh?"

"I'd like us all to try to be on a first name basis. Well, first number basis in my case, but that's beside the point. Would you like to say hello and shake hands?"

"Uh, no."

"Okay. Now, I want you to understand something here. You are aware that you are in a serious amount of trouble, aren't you?"

"Yeah."

"Well you haven't shaken hands with Joan over here, so you probably don't know much about her, so I'll have to tell you. Where you came from she's about the equivalent of the head of the State Police, say the California Highway Patrol in your case. I'm sort of a jack-of-all trades around here. Now, I'm thinking I want to have a little chat with you in my office. On the other hand, Joan here wants to take you to the police station. Now I'm going to say something to you. I'm going to give you a choice as to which of us you want to go with, but before you answer, consider this: I am going to give you my solemn promise that for as long as you're in my office that no one will hurt you for any reason whatsoever. Do you understand?"

"Yes."

"Joan?"

"Yes."

"If you know me, you know how I am. I'm often very irreverent and funny. But this is serious time. I'm going to ask you something and I expect you to answer me seriously, okay?"

"Yes."

"Joan, upon your most solemn promise to me personally, that on penalty of breach of this promise I will never, ever trust you again, I want you to answer me a question. If you can answer yes, do so, otherwise don't say anything. If you can promise me that no one, not you, not any member of your staff, will strike, hit, or otherwise hurt this man if I turn him over to you, you may have him. Are you willing to make me this solemn promise?"

She cried, "246, that's not fair!"

"Just a yes, or silence if you can't say yes, Joan."

Joan said nothing.

"Well, Leroy, what's your answer, with which of us do you want to go?"

"I think I'd rather go with you."

"Okay, now Leroy, I want you to be absolutely certain, I don't want you to make a mistake. I want you to say either 'I definitely want to go with Supervisor 246', or I want you to say 'I definitely want to go with Watch Commander Joan' and we will do whichever you ask."

"I definitely want to go with Supervisor 246."

“Thank you very much young man.” Bill starts to put handcuffs on him. “Stop. Leroy?”

“Yes?”

“I don’t think you want anyone to put handcuffs on you, do you?”

“No.”

“Okay, let’s go over to my office.”

Chapter 2

"That 'tasty bitch' ... just wanted to love you back into the world."

246 and Leroy walked out of the apartment, down the corridor, and over to an elevator. When the elevator arrived, the two of them rode up alone to the floor of his office, then walked over and entered it. "Please have a seat." Leroy sat down. "Do you mind if I sit down in this chair next to you?" He shook his head. "If you'd like something to eat or drink, let me know."

246 looks down at what appears to be a piece of paper on his desk, touches it a few times, then looks up. "Now I don't know what happened, but I'd like to find out. Now, you can probably guess that we can pretty much figure out what happened without you saying a word. But what I want to do is give you the opportunity to tell me your side of the story. That's all. What I'd like for you to do is tell me everything you remember about what happened, what you were doing, and what you did. And if you tell me what you were thinking, I don't want you to sugar coat it, either, I want you to tell me exactly what it was you thought. You're not going to insult me. Do you mind if I say some things that might be offensive to you?"

"Uh, no."

"Okay, now, just as an example, if you were thinking about robbing a bank, and you thought, 'I'm gonna go get a fucking gun and go stick up that goddamn bank,' I want you to say exactly that, I don't want you to say that you thought 'I'm gonna go rob the bank.'" Okay?

"Uh, yeah."

"So go ahead and tell me, as best you can, what you remember happening."

"Uh, well, I was, uh, it's funny you would say that because I was actually robbing a bank, I had come out of the place when a bunch of cop cars rolled up and I'm thinking, 'Oh shit, the motherfuckin' cops,' so I drop the bag, grab my gun and try to shoot at them. One of them pulls out a shotgun and shoots and it hits me right in the guts and I fall down. I thought I fell face down, but I must have rolled over and was staring up at the sun, and I'm seeing this really white light, really, really bright.

"I guess I was seeing things because I thought I saw a couple of guys that I had known, only they died quite a while ago.

"Well, anyway, all of a sudden I end up in this room where this really dynamite, gorgeous looking broad, a real knockout, walks over to me and asks me if I would come with her. Well, I guess she was some kind of hospital admissions clerk or something. Anyway she takes me back to the room, and I see there's this really big bed behind us. She locks the door and I get this idea that somehow they made a mistake.

"So I get the thought that I might grab me a piece of this tasty bitch before the cops figure out what happened and bust my ass. So I grabbed her, and I pushed her on the bed, and I reached under her skirt, and pulled off her panties, and I dropped my pants, and I said, 'Shut up, bitch, you know you love it.' Then I started fucking her. And I kept on fucking her but nothing would happen, it was like my cock was blocked. And I kept fucking and fucking and fucking and still nothing. Finally, I got up, unlocked the door and was going to pull my pants up and leave when the cop came in, told me to sit down on the bed and that's when you showed up."

246 looked at him, almost ready to cry. (“Poor bastard, I feel so sorry for him,”) he thought. (“He doesn’t even know how close he came to being able to do exactly what he wanted.”) “Young man, do you know what that woman was?”

“No.”

“That woman was what we call a Welcomer. She picks someone who has just arrived and goes out to meet them. Then she asks them to come with her, and she takes them to her apartment where she explains that she wants to show them something and answer some questions. And, Leroy, after they watch the movie and she answers some questions, do you know what the next thing she does?”

“No.”

“Do you have any idea?”

“Uh, I suppose tries to find out what insurance you have.”

“Insurance for what?”

“Health insurance, I guess.”

“Oh. Well, no, Leroy, the next thing she does is asks him if he wants to have sex with her.”

Leroy’s eyes bug out. “Huh?”

“She would have asked you if you wanted to make love to her. That ‘tasty bitch’ as you referred to her, just wanted to love you back into the world. That’s all. Bet you didn’t even know that.”

“You’re kidding me.”

“No I’m not.”

“What kind of a hospital is this?”

“Who said this was a hospital?”

“Well where the hell am I?”

“Not bad but I think you’re going in the wrong direction.”

“Huh?”

“I have some news for you, Leroy, You remember how you said that you thought you were seeing things after the policeman shot you?”

“Uh, yeah.”

“Well, it turns out that you weren’t. He shot you in the stomach with a 12 gauge pump-action shotgun. It tore out most of your intestines and you bled severely. Your heart stopped and paramedics were unable to revive you. At 12:41 p.m. Pacific Time, you were pronounced dead in front of the Pine Avenue Main Office of the Farmer’s and Merchant’s Bank of Long Beach, California.”

“Uh, you’re shitting me.”

“No shit, Leroy.”

“You trying to tell me I’m fucking *dead*?”

“No, Leroy, I’m not.”

“What then?”

“I’m *telling* you, that you’re fucking dead.”

One of the things that has started happening in movies, especially comedies, is the use of outtakes at the end of a film. Well, at certain sections of the book, I originally wrote it one way, then changed my mind later because I felt the item didn't work or I expanded upon it or changed it. So, where the material was in the book, there is a marker here for that area. Sometimes the ideas changed. I'll explain my original thoughts and you can see how the focus of the book changed as I figured out what I wanted to say. I thought it might be interesting for people to see how the ideas in a book can change as they are refined into the final work.

Also, there are some places where I make comments about the book; those are included here also.

1. From the preface: An editorial "An Overdue Memorial" in the June 23, 2007 *Wall Street Journal* says that "The middle estimate of Stalin's victims is 40 million." Wikipedia's article about him says that some estimate the number to be as low as 9 or 10 million; I know, because I also edited it to include the above item from the *WSJ*. So I'll stick with "over 20 million" as it seems a reasonable number for an unreasonable act.
2. Page [3](#). Chapter [1](#), "She isn't going to make the decision either."

In the original text of the first chapter, I originally refer to the main character at the opening and subsequently thereafter as "246." Basically I have to do that; we know nothing about him except that the security guard calls him 246. I changed it so that when Joan refers to him as "Supervisor 246," she continues to do so until he says, "Nearly everyone calls me 246, you can do the same." At that point, I revert to calling him 246. I thought it would make the story work better; when it opens, all we know about him is that he's called 246. When we know his full title, we call him by that, in effect, as a sign of respect. When we know he likes to be treated informally and called 246 after all, I do that. I thought it was cute. Also, the name of the agency got changed from Welcome Department to Welcoming Department. Also, I indicate in a later revision that he arrived from the United States, specifically California, so that the reader knows that while the people there speak English, they are not in the United States. This is originally how it appears.

"Hi Bill, how are you doing?"

"Good afternoon 246."

"I presume that's him there," 246 says, pointing at a man sitting on a bed, with his trousers and underpants pulled down to his ankles.

"Yep. 15022 EN Leroy 504337. Unbelievable, isn't it."

"I was so surprised when I heard. The last time this sort of thing happened was, oh, I can't even remember it's been so long, must have been years ago. Usually it doesn't happen this fast. Can we take him up to my office?"

"The police are already here to take him."

"Oh no they don't! I want him in *my* office." He turned to his right. "Oh hi, Joan. Let me introduce you, this is Sergeant Bill 774 of Welcome Department Security.

Bill, this is Police Watch Commander Joan 20319.”

“How do you do?”

“Charmed. Where’s the perp?”

“On the bed over there.”

“Okay, well anyway, I have my handcuffs, I’ll take him.” She turned to the man on the bed. “Sir, you can pull your pants up.” The man does so. “You are hereby violated. You have rights under the law and you are advised to say nothing until you are informed of them or have access to counsel.” She reached over and began to put the cuffs on. “You are under arrest for..” She doesn’t get to finish her canned speech as Supervisor 246 interrupts.

“Ah, no.”

She stops. “Supervisor 246, I want this guy.”

”You know the rules, Joan, whoever catches him first owns him. In fact, you’re only allowed in this department because you’re my friend. Normally the police can’t even enter unless my best friend Tom, the Administrator, grants them admission. Now I know he’s your friend too and you can always get him to let you in, but as far as the alleged perpetrator here is concerned, even he won’t overrule me on this. Possession is nine-tenths of the law, as they say, and I caught him first. I’ve got him so he’s mine until I decide whether you can have him. Right now, the answer is no, I want to take him up to my office.”

“How much do you want for him?”

“He’s not for sale. You can’t have him.”

Her response was nearly a scream. “WHAT? You turned *down* a sale?”

“First of all, I don’t know how much he’s worth to me yet; I might discover he’s very valuable and regret later that I sold him to someone for too little. Then, I have to hate myself for a while for allowing myself to be cheated. And I don’t want to hate myself; I love myself too much. Gene Wilder in *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory* is asked to sell a business man one of his golden chocolate egg laying geese for the business man’s daughter, and he says, ‘They’re not for sale, she can’t have one.’ So I present to you the same response.”

“Maybe Willy didn’t want the man’s daughter. I do want *him*.”

“Very funny, Joan. You know what I mean.”

“I’ve never heard you refuse a sale, 246. Name your price.”

“Hmmm. Hmmm.” 246 smiled. “Do you really mean that?”

“I want him. What do you want?”

“Don’t be so quick to ask. You might not like it.”

“What’s that supposed to mean?”

“Maybe you can’t afford it.”

“Don’t bet on it.”

“Okay, you come work for me in my department for twenty five years. No wait, strike that; you might think it was worth it; I’ve got to make sure the price is too expensive, so you *have* to turn me down. Come work for me for one hundred and twenty five years. For that, you can have him.”

“You’re out of your mind.”

“Absolutely. And I’ll take your response as ‘no’. Since you turned me down, the answer is ‘no’ to you in return. It’s really not my call to make in the first place, but there’s a chance I could have made a big profit out of the deal, and I always look at my own self-interest first; I’m not a humanitarian. But in any case I’m not going to make the decision on which of us he goes with.”

“You’re not?” She smiled. “Okay, I’ll go ask the girl.” She started to leave.

“Joan, dear, before you leave to go bother Anita, it might interest you to know something. She isn’t going to make the decision either.”

“Well who the hell is?”

246 pointed at the man on the bed. “He is. And I can bet you 2000 favors he’ll pick me over you.”

“That’s not fair!”

246 smiled. “Who said death was supposed to be fair, babe?”

“Please?”

“Are you begging?”

“Yes.”

“It doesn’t matter.” He turned to the man on the bed and started to talk very softly, as if he were talking to a small child. “Young man, look at me. Bill, would you get us a couple of chairs, please?. Thank you. Young man, I’d like you to sit down in that chair, if you don’t mind. Thank you. Would you like a glass of water or something?” The man shook his head. “Very well. Do you mind if I sit down here next to you?” The man shook his head again. “Joan, would you like to sit down here next to us?”

“No, I’ll stand.”

“Well, I’m going to sit down right here next to this young man. Now, young man, I’d like to know if you would be willing to tell me your name, or what you would like to be called?”

“Leroy Washington, sir.”

“Okay, ah, Leroy, ah, do you mind if I call you Leroy?”

“Uh, no sir.”

“Okay then, Leroy, my name is Supervisor 246. You don’t have to call me sir, just about everyone calls me 246 so you can do the same thing if you’d like, okay?”

“Okay.”

246 points at her. “You can probably recognize by the fact that she’s wearing a uniform, that this nice lady standing next to me, whose name is Joan, by the way, is the Police Watch Commander. In fact, Leroy, would you be willing to stand up, say hello and shake hands with Joan?”