

ILLUMINATI II: THE DAVOS DEADLOCK

A tale of Future-Alternative History in the form of a ZX Spectrum game

DISCLAIMER:

This backstory was written in October 2022, then altered and updated as necessary until 13 December 2022. It is still possible, given the state of American politics, that it could age like a carton of milk left in the middle of the Sonoran Desert in July.

Don't blame me if that happens, I'm not Nostradamus.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Ever get the feeling you've been cheated?

I mean, seriously, the thought of an elite cabal called the "Illuminati", who control the world's leaders like puppets on strings, who in turn control the thousands or millions of people in their jurisdiction at the Illuminati's behest... it's all just a conspiracy theory, isn't it?

Certifiable lunatics like Alex Jones ranted about them until his face turned bright red and he nearly exploded, along with all those other bizarre claims about gay frogs, chemtrails and the Moon landings. Before him, David Icke told us the Illuminati were not only real, and in every meaningful position of power, but they were also shape-shifting "reptilian forms" wearing human skin suits to put us off the scent. All this didn't exactly fill us with confidence in their credibility.

But we should have listened.

In 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, "they" revealed themselves, with their master plan to fix the world and "Build Back Better".

"The Great Reset", "they" called it.

"*You will own nothing and be happy*", "they" said.

And "they" specified 2030 as the target date for its completion.

"They" are the World Economic Forum. They are the *real* Illuminati. They meet in Davos, Switzerland, every year – and, in their own words, they decide the future, there and then. So said their founder and chairman, Klaus Schwab:

"The future is not just happening, the future is built by us."

Terrifying, isn't it? There we all were, thinking that sort of talk had died out with the Vikings. Every thought you think, every decision you make, every action you take, isn't your doing; it had all been predetermined. You are nothing more than an actor saying lines in a play. You have no agency, no

control over your own destiny, and ultimately, no influence over which afterlife you'll be sent to. Even in death, there is no escape from the Fate of Norns.

Or, for a more modern interpretation, we could turn to George Carlin. He was warning us about rampant American corporatism when he said, during a live show in 2005:

"It's a big club, and you ain't in it. You and I are not in the big club."

The WEF, on the other hand, is a very small club, which means it is even less likely that we are in it. Their goals are similar – to force the people under their control to be nothing more than a cog in their machine – but their outlook is global, hence there are *eight billion* potential cogs who are not in that very small club, rather than the mere 296 million of the American population of 2005. The population of the West, i.e. those who will be most affected by the actions of that very small club, is around one billion – still not exactly insignificant, by comparison.

But back to that 296 million, which has since grown to 332 million. So fond was George Carlin of sticking the boot into the worst aspects of his home country, that he might even have *approved* of the second point of the The Great Reset, had he lived long enough for it to affect him directly...

It called for the removal of the United States of America from its status as a world superpower.

And while there was no mention of which country would be the USA's replacement in that position, Klaus Schwab let it slip in late 2022 that the societal model he prefers and would like to see the world adopt is that of... China. Authoritarian, communist China.

Are you all paying attention?

CHAPTER 2: WHAT HAPPENED NEXT

Joe Biden was 78 years old when he became the 46th President of the United States of America, to the sound of howls of protest from the most ardent supporters of his predecessor, "the God-Emperor" Donald Trump... who had heard much the same cacophony when he'd taken office four years previously. That's the way things were going now for the world's most powerful country. Trump was always the one blamed for widening the divisions between Democrats and Republicans, to the point where Tim Pool was constantly predicting a second American Civil War – but the reality was, it had been happening long before he appeared on the political scene, and his 2016 election to the White House was a *symptom* of the polarisation, not the cause.

Neither Trump in 2016, nor Biden in 2020, had made the finest choice for their Vice-President. The libertarians who'd hitched their wagons to the populist Make America Great Again train weren't so convinced by Mike Pence, firmly from the Republican Party's old school of pious evangelical authoritarianism. Biden's choice, Kamala Harris, was about as close a representative as was available of the Democrat Party's comprehensive shift towards identity politics, Critical Race Theory, Cultural Marxism, "wokeness", call it what you will. And there was no shortage of commentators who pointed out that her selection as Biden's running mate was a plan by the DNC to get her to the Presidency by the back door. Of course, they were dismissed as conspiracy theorists.

On 17th July, 2023, the DNC got what they wanted. After two and a half years of never quite knowing where he was or how he'd got there, Joseph Robinette Biden Jr. died in office, and America got its first female president. Taking New Zealand's Prime Minister, Jacinta Ardern, as a

blueprint, 47th President Kamala Harris pressed forward with moulding the country in her own image. But governing a small, mostly-compliant population of under five million is one thing, imposing the same policies on 332 million people, is quite another – and not only did rather a large number of those millions not share President Harris' vision for their future, they were heavily armed and very vocal about it. To nobody's surprise except those occupying the White House, Donald Trump's revitalised MAGA movement grew stronger with every "progressive", anti-populist policy imposed on the Red States.

Advancing years notwithstanding, the God-Emperor ran for the Presidency again in 2024, this time with Florida governor Ron DeSantis as his running mate. Questions were asked about them representing the same state, solved by Trump changing his primary residence to a penthouse above Trump Tower in New York. More of a problem was the rather public spat that Trump had initiated in the 2022 Midterm Elections – but it died down as fast as it had started, effectively dismissed as "Trump playing 4-D chess" again to manoeuvre himself into the box seat. It was clear that the two of them were on the same page on the majority of issues, Florida was held up as a bastion of liberty for the way DeSantis had refused to turn the state into a COVID detention camp, and they made resistance against The Great Reset a central part of their plan to Make America Great Again.

It worked. Trump won the popular vote as well as the Electoral College, and became the second President to serve non-consecutive terms, as the 45th and 48th President. Even Grover Cleveland couldn't claim *two* Presidents between his terms. And this time, nobody was going to cast doubt on his legitimacy, although it didn't stop the editors of RationalWiki from trying.

On the downside, political divides widened further, to the point where one non-partisan commentator described the divide as "Democrats are from Venus, Republicans are from Mars" – to the sounds of strident indignation from *both* sides, because the truth hurts; it laid bare the problems of such a system in which the two main parties are separated *that* far. One side of the house proposes a policy, and even though everyone can see it's brilliant, the other side of the house vehemently opposes it anyway, because the tribalism of American politics dictates that this is the only correct course of action. President Trump says the sky is blue and the sun rises in the east; staunch Democrats write screeching op-eds all over The Huffington Post, BuzzFeed and The Atlantic that the sky is *obviously* pink and the sun rises in the north, and if you disagree, that's hate speech, you're a bigot and you deserve to die. Bernie Sanders says that we should phase out the use of fossil fuels before reserves run too low to be economically extractable, and does so without once mentioning climate change or the environment in general; Republicans, nevertheless, demand that True Patriots™ must use fossil fuels *exclusively*, even after they've completely run dry, and anyone who refuses is a communist cuck – preaching solely to the converted on Gab and Truth Social.

How could any country, let alone one as huge and potentially unwieldy as the USA, ever hope to achieve anything under such conditions?

Either way, come 2028, Ron DeSantis had spent four years being prepared as Trump's Chosen One for the MAGA Republican nomination – and he easily beat the paleoconservative nominee, Jeremiah Clarke, a neo-Puritan evangelical preacher from Biloxi, MS. The Democrats, still focusing on identity politics rather than policies that the population cared about, chose Pete Buttigieg as their nominee, firmly believing that after a black President and a female President, a homosexual President was the next box to be ticked. DeSantis trounced Buttigieg with a result that Ronald Reagan would have been proud of.

The immediate wake of Trump's Presidential victory of November 2024 had spread panic through the WEF. They had considered it so dire an emergency that they'd brought their January 2025 meeting forward by a month – and never switched it back. By the end of the decade, some Western

governments had willingly accepted the transition to the WEF's Brave New World, however much their people objected. Australia was trying to forcibly urbanise its Outback population, reminiscent of the Highland Clearances, so that they could be better monitored "for their own good". Canada had voted – well, someone high up in the government had decided, anyway – to become a People's Republic, with President Trudeau choosing to emulate China as closely as possible, to the consternation of their neighbours to the south; the story was identical for newly-independent Scotland. But for ordinary Americans, who had chosen a different path, 2030 came and went with no Great Reset. They still owned houses, and owned junk that they filled their houses with, they still owned cars, many of them not electric, and they still ate Big Macs made of beef at McDonald's.

For the WEF, *this would not do at all*. They'd selected their target a decade ago, and missed.

Political divisions in the USA were by now wider than the Grand Canyon, but even though most Democrat supporters could take off their blinkers and see that President DeSantis had done an excellent job, they were obliged by party doctrine to decry him as the second worst President ever, behind Trump. With the 2032 Presidential Election looming and DeSantis riding high in the polls, the DNC's continual pig-headed refusal to reject identity politics led them to select the one candidate who nobody in their right mind would choose to open a tin of beans that was already open: Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. You know, she of the wild-eyed stare of *revenge*. Revenge against men, against white people, against Right-leaning voters, against all those who dared to stand in the way of "progress". Revenge *against America itself*. She would make Kamala Harris look like Jimmy Carter by comparison. Surely, under such conditions, President DeSantis' second term was a foregone conclusion...

...wasn't it?

It's not who votes that counts, it's who counts the votes. The result was a landslide victory... for Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.

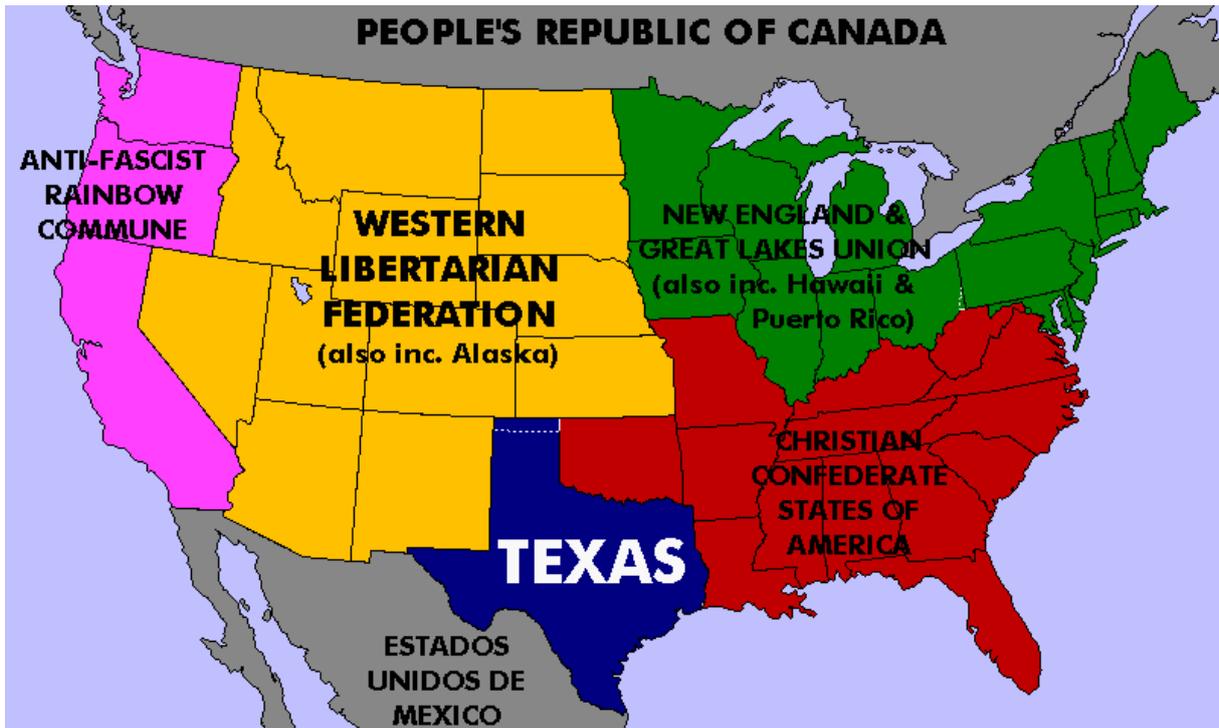
The WEF could barely disguise their delight, admitting that this was their doing. The new President Ocasio-Cortez was the WEF's Chosen One, through whom they intended to impose an Even Greater Reset by 2050. To achieve it, they had to ensure that she took the keys to the White House, by any means necessary. And they didn't just come clean that they'd rigged the election, they revelled in it. The message of self-indictment was delivered personally by Klaus Schwab – now 94 years old, and a major donor to Aubrey de Grey's life-extension research laboratory. Not that Dr de Grey knew where all the money was coming from, just that a lot of it was coming all of a sudden, and with instructions on how to spend it if he wanted to extend his *own* life beyond the next few days.

The WEF gloated that they'd done exactly what the Trumpists had accused the Democrats of doing in 2020 to derisive howls of "fake news". Oh, and they *had* done it in 2020 as well, just to clear up that 12-year-old talking point. Boxes full of votes, discovered at the last minute, many thousands of them from Canadian and Mexican citizens, more thousands from the residents of local graveyards, and sometimes the same name 20 or 30 times over. It was almost as if they were admitting that Bokanovsky's Process was not just real, but something they endorsed, and there were hordes of identical Gammas, Deltas and Epsilons, all voting Democrat en masse. Nobody – not CNN, not MSNBC, not the New York Times, not the Washington Post, not the BBC, Wikipedia, the Morning Star, the Huffington Post, Salon, Slate, Vox, Vice, BuzzFeed, XOJane, the Mary Sue, AlterNet, Novara Media, the charred remains of Gawker, *none of them* could deny the most flagrant electoral fraud in the whole of recorded human history, even including all of Africa and South America... although, once again, that didn't stop the editors of RationalWiki from trying.

And so, as eight years of Trumpist rule came crashing down, it took the entire country with it.

CHAPTER 3: DISUNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Over five years, the United States of America fractured along its ideological fault lines into five successor states, with only minimal changes to the existing boundaries.



New England & Great Lakes Union (a.k.a. "The Union")

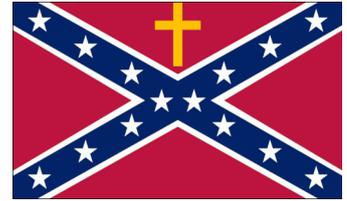


- **Population:** 133 million
- **Capital:** Chicago
- **Seceded:** it didn't
- **National motto:** "E Pluribus Unum"
- **Official languages:** English, Spanish and French, the latter in case of a future union with Canada.
- **State religion:** no official religion; the State *probably* won't interfere with those who are religious.
- **Component states:** MN, WI, MI, IA, IL, IN, OH (includes the WV Northern Panhandle), PA, MD (includes the VA Eastern Shore), DC, DE, NJ, NY, CT, RI, MA, VT, NH, ME, HI, PR; also the official guardian of the Overseas Territories (Guam, US Virgin Islands and American Samoa).

"Everything remains as it ever was" is the message that the NEGLU wants to broadcast to the world. It retains the largest share of the former USA's population, crammed into an area similar to the pre-Civil War Union; that, and the awkward new acronym, ensures that's how everyone, everywhere, refers to it. The flag is the same design as what went before, only with a mere 21 stars for the states that "stayed intact", and this is the country that's still home to Wall Street, the United Nations, the White House and all the trappings of the *former* capital. That's about all that has noticeably changed; with the potentially hostile CCSA on the opposite bank of the Potomac, the seat of government was moved to a location away from any border and as safe from external conflict as was practical. Chicago narrowly won the vote over New York. For the most part, the NEGLU aligns with the average, slightly-liberal-by-default Democrat voter; "what the politically disengaged used to be in the Before Times".

Christian Confederate States of America

(a.k.a. "Dixie", "The South")



- **Population:** 98 million
- **Capital:** Atlanta
- **Seceded:** 2036
- **National motto:** "To God We Submit"
- **Official languages:** the local dialect of English only; anything else is *violently* suppressed.
- **State religion:** Evangelical Southern Baptist Christianity; all other religions and sects are prohibited.
- **Component states:** MO, KY, WV (minus the Northern Panhandle), VA (minus the Eastern Shore), OK (minus the Panhandle), AR, TN, NC, SC, LA, MS, AL, GA, FL.

The South Really Did Rise Again. Seeing TEXAS secede successfully, a year later the semi-official successor to the CSA of the 1860s was recreated, complete with a 14-star Dixie flag, the return of Jim Crow laws, and a totalitarian theocratic government. Race-mixing and atheism (which extends to non-attendance of church) were made criminal offences, and abortion (including unintentional miscarriage) became a *capital* offence. Even the reintroduction of slavery was seriously discussed, though as of 2042 it is a long way from being passed into law. Representing the maximum extent of the fears that liberals, progressives and a large proportion of libertarians had about the old-school Republican Party, the CCSA is Christianity's equivalent of Saudi Arabia.

In recognition of US President DeSantis' somewhat-libertarian leanings during his time as governor, and because of the importance of foreign tourism, Florida functions as a semi-autonomous state in which the racial and religious laws still apply but are not enforced, unless absolutely necessary.

Western Libertarian Federation (a.k.a. "Libertaria")

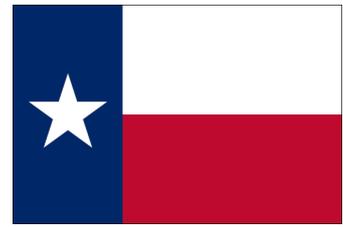


- **Population:** 35 million
- **Capital:** Phoenix
- **Seceded:** 2038
- **National motto:** "Don't Tread On Me"
- **Official languages:** English only, though Spanish is spoken widely near The Border.
- **State religion:** nothing official, though Christianity is widespread, and non-evangelicals (such as Catholics and Mormons) are allowed to do as they please; no religion gets State protection.
- **Component states:** ID, MT, WY, ND, SD, NV, UT, CO, NE, KS, AZ, NM, AK.

The WLF has the largest land area of all the successor states – but a large amount of it is barely habitable, being a combination of the bulk of the Rockies, the plains and desert caused by their huge rain shadow, and freezing cold Alaska. Hence, it also has the lowest total population, and the lowest population density by a long way. As spread out as they are, and with extensive farming to deal with, the people have a deep sense of individualism and liberty, as well as the highest level of gun ownership of all the successor states. With the only access to the ocean being from the inconveniently-located Alaska, the WLF maintains as friendly relations as possible with TEXAS, helped by sharing the burden of patrolling The Border. Government is kept deliberately small, just enough to secure the country's territorial integrity while interfering in the lives of its people as little as possible. The Gadsden Flag was used as the basis for the national flag, given a bolder design and with the text removed, but still left nobody in doubt as to its origins.

Republic of TEXAS (*always* in capitals – by law)

- **Population:** 36 million
- **Capital:** Dallas
- **Seceded:** 2035
- **National motto:** "Don't Mess With TEXAS"
- **Official languages:** English only, though Spanish is spoken widely near The Border.
- **State religion:** Southern Baptist Christianity, though with slightly less fervour than in the CCSA; Catholicism is found among Spanish speakers.
- **Component states:** TX (includes the OK Panhandle).



In TEXAS, everything is bigger, and better, and they want you to know about it, so much so that they'd been threatening to secede from the Union from the minute they first joined – or even from the minute the Vikings first set foot on Vinland. That they actually did it, and were the first to do so, surprised nobody. With a population large enough to function as its own country (Canada is of a similar size) but also with plenty of empty land, a patriotic streak longer than The Border, and property prices low enough to attract suitable Californian refugees, it thrives despite the favoured brand of overt, brash patriotism that often spills over into arrogance when dealing with foreign countries. Once the fracture of the USA was completed, TEXAS became the ideological middle ground between the hyper-authoritarian Christian Confederate States and the Western Libertarian Federation, able to communicate and negotiate with both while retaining its own strong identity.

Anti-Fascist Rainbow Commune

(with a *catastrophically* inaccurate definition of "Fascism")

- **Population:** 50 million
- **Capital:** Portland
- **"Seceded":** 2040
- **National motto:** "Workers Of The World, Unite!"
- **Official languages:** Mexican dialects of Spanish, Arabic, all indigenous Native American languages (even those nowhere near the territory), and pointedly *not* English.
- **State religion:** religions are all officially forbidden, although the new secular religion of Wokeism, which is not considered to be a religion despite ticking all the boxes that qualify it to be one, is practised by just about everyone.
- **Component states:** WA, OR, CA.



The utopian wet dream of every 20-year-old, radical feminist, soy-latte-drinking, artificially-lisping, pink-haired Berkeley student – or, if you like, Seattle's ill-fated Capitol Hill Autonomous Zone scaled up to the size of three states, including the most populated in the former USA. The entirely-politicised flag is a vexillological atrocity, veganism is compulsory, The Border is left *wide* open, and any and all reminders of the past are considered to be "promoting Fascism" and are destroyed. Big Government is considered a replacement for the family, leaving the population infantilised and totally dependent on the State for even their most basic needs. It's a Failed State in waiting.

Note that the AFRC did not actually *secede* from what was left of the USA by 2040; it was the first ever example of territory being forcibly ejected by the central government. The USA was no stranger to having a large chunk of its territory (i.e. Alaska) separated by another country, but the three Pacific states with their considerably larger population and relentless demands for ruinously expensive government handouts made them more of a liability than an asset. Hence they were jettisoned, and the "eastern mainland" became the NEGLU.

CHAPTER 4: OUR HERO

On 4th July, 2006, as the United States of America blew out 230 candles on its birthday cake and the population celebrated with barbecues and fireworks, Ethan Nash was born in Flagstaff, AZ. His parents, deeply patriotic but not *quite* as capital-C conservative as was required in the Bible Belt in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, had left the Atlanta suburbs in 2002. Briefly considering reuniting with their alleged-but-unproven heritage as descendants of automotive pioneer Charles W. Nash by relocating to Kenosha, WI, in the end they opted for northern Arizona, which married the spectacular scenery of Colorado with a Libertarian attitude to gun ownership and a more bearable climate than the Sonoran Desert west of Phoenix. Their first son, Carson, was born in Flagstaff in 2004, followed by Ethan, and then a daughter, Sarah, in 2009.

Ethan's early life, and particularly his teenage years, were not all that pleasant. Carson was the athletic one, captain of the junior football team by the age of 14, popular with his peers and his father's clear favourite. Sarah was the precious flower who her mother tried her best not to spoil rotten, but usually failed. And Ethan, stuck in the middle, was the quiet one who would barricade himself in his bedroom after school, preferring the company of computers over other humans, whether of his age or otherwise. He was ten when the Democrat-voting half of the USA descended into Trump Derangement Syndrome, and the more liberal-leaning families who had ever associated with the Nashes suddenly refused to do so, including Ethan's only real friend who was prevented from making contact with him outside of school. And when he was 13 and just starting puberty, COVID-19 hit...

COVID restrictions, objectively terrible though they were, were a blessing in disguise for Ethan. He was able to handle the looming lockdowns better than anyone else in his family or peer group, but soon learned to hate the reason for their imposition – government overreach – as well as the fervour for meek compliance on the part of those who were unable or unwilling to think for themselves. All three of the Nash children were pulled out of the local school and home-educated as far as possible, thus sparing them the dehumanising indignity of being muzzled in the classroom like naughty dogs – and for Ethan, he didn't have to have his voice break and his face erupt with acne in public, to the merciless mockery of those who were going through the same biological process. Seeing what happened to the other teenagers, even though he wouldn't usually get on well with them, inculcated a deep contempt for authoritarianism in Ethan. This was signed and sealed one day in the autumn of 2021, during another randomly-imposed lockdown, when his father took him to a secret gun range away from the prying eyes of the State.

Ethan was very good at shooting. Barely able to deal with the recoil of a simple 9 mm Glock 17 when he first arrived, by the end of the day he was hitting targets dead centre with tiresome regularity. His analytical brain that was best suited to writing 1000 lines of self-taught Python code in an hour was also very good at assessing the amounts needed to adjust his aim for both wind conditions and the increasing resistance of his arm muscles to the recoil. Crucially, it gave him the first opportunity he'd ever had to bond properly with his father who, until that point, had considered him something of an embarrassment. In front of all his gun-nut friends, Nash Senior finally said it:

"I'm proud of you, son."

It was all uphill from there. Despite maintaining a near-obsessive interest in computing, Ethan opened up to outdoor pursuits, especially if they involved guns in any way, as well as being determined to do as much for himself as possible. For the 2022-23 academic year, he went back to school, choosing to rejoin a year down on where he should have been, just to make sure his education was substantially complete – and everyone was made well aware, to the point of being slightly scared, of his growing interest in and expertise with all manner of firearms. As if to ram the

point home, shortly after turning 17, he shot a stag clean through the head, and impressed his entire family with his knowledge of butchery that he'd learned from a series of videos on Odysee, YouTube having banned content that was unsuitable for vegans a month previously. He was a better cook than his mother, as well, and even Carson had to admit that his younger brother's haggis and devilled kidneys were far superior to his faltering efforts with ramen and frozen peas... and that's before the family had been served their first venison steak.

Ethan's schooldays finished in 2025, shortly after turning 19 – such was the advantage of being a July birthday that he wasn't nearly 20. By this time, God-Emperor Trump had returned to the White House, and Trump Derangement Syndrome had reached fever pitch in the Deep Blue states, none more so than Arizona's neighbours to the west. Ethan had decided to apply for university, to increase his ability to #LearnToCode from talented amateur to god-tier; unfortunately, trying to find a suitable university proved impossible as they were all either extreme adherents of Mindless Hysterical Screeching Wokery, or were privately-run, thinly-disguised Christian madrassas (such as the likes of Brigham Young or Oral Roberts).

And so, he abandoned the idea of university altogether, carried on coding as a side hustle, and took an apprenticeship at a machine shop instead. Here was somewhere that there would always be work, and provided he practised enough, he could manufacture custom parts to ever-finer tolerances, and in no time at all there would be people beating a path to his door for his services above others. On day one it was a simple brass bush for a weathervane, by the end of the month it was a replacement set of valves for a 1955 Nash Metropolitan – a fine tribute to his maybe-great-great-great-great-uncle Charles – and one day it would be custom-made gun parts.

The ever more finely tuned twin skills of Ethan Nash brought him to the attention of the Arizona state government.

Not because he was considered a threat, but as a potential asset. If there was ever any kind of conflict, near-certainly along ideological lines, that Arizona was dragged into (with neighbouring California on the opposing side), the state government wanted to be prepared for it, and that meant scouring the population for potentially useful talent. And here they found someone who could be equally adept at weapon manufacture and cyber-espionage, to the point where they'd anonymously pass him contracts in the machine shop to test his skills, and then attempt to hack his home computer to see if he noticed anything was wrong, and what he could do about it.

In November 2032, with staunchly Republican Arizona suddenly finding itself in opposition – for reasons unknown until Klaus Schwab deliberately spilled more beans than the entire Heinz factory – Ethan Nash found himself ever more entwined with the authorities of the state that proclaimed government was to be kept to a minimum louder than all the others.

CHAPTER 5: FIXING THE FUTURE

In 2035, TEXAS seceded from the United States of America, and sparked its breakup.

Three years later, the citizens of Arizona were no longer Americans, they were Libertarians – as in citizens of the Western Libertarian Federation – governed, in a highly limited way, from Phoenix and not Washington.

And two years after that, next-door California and its two fellow Pacific coast states jerked so far to the Left that they fell over sideways – ruining any lasting diplomatic relations with the WLF, and

effectively erecting a barrier to the Pacific coast. Accessing the nearest Pacific port at San Diego now required crossing 120 miles of ideologically hostile territory, though the regime now in charge of the new Anti-Fascist Rainbow Commune was so infantilised that they posed no threat, other than the imminent cataclysmic collapse of the new country. More of a problem were the Mexican drug cartels that were now flooding uncontrollably through the AFRC-Mexican border, the mere existence of which the AFRC considered to be racist; *de facto*, the border between Arizona and California was indistinguishable to that between the WLF and Mexico.

The World Economic Forum, which had engineered the events that led to the disintegration of the United States of America into these five smaller constituent parts, favoured the neo-Marxist, collectivist political direction of the AFRC – but rather than the beefy farm labourers so beloved of Soviet, Chinese and North Korean propaganda, the people of the AFRC more closely resembled the Eloi from H.G. Wells' *Time Machine*. Everyone with the slightest sniff of self-reliance or detachment from the collectivist hive mind had decamped east, many of them applying for TEXAN citizenship as soon as it had declared independence, and leaving those who remained in the Pacific states in desperate need of Big Daddy Government, upon whose teat they would blissfully suckle for all eternity. (According to the mandatory ideology of the AFRC, there is *no* intrinsic contradiction in the previous sentence, and nor could there ever be, you bigot.)

Until now, the chief irritation amongst the WLF's citizens was how close their acronym was to that of the WEF, and their anger resonated in the YouTube comments section as hordes of low-IQ NPCs, usually found in large Union cities such as New York, Washington and Chicago, were goaded into being filmed for street surveys, and revealed they had no idea of the difference between the WLF and the ideologically opposite WEF. The education system had failed them badly.

But no sooner had the AFRC given the merest hint of its imminent implosion, the WEF swooped in and assumed control. The laughter of the WLF at their neighbours' predicament stopped virtually overnight; now, they had a powerful enemy barricading their way to the Pacific coast. No longer would WLF freight traffic be able to bludgeon through the territory of the AFRC to reach Los Angeles, bribing any Mexican drug cartels they might meet on the way; the WEF's enforcement patrols (not "police", the word was banned in the AFRC) treated any trucks with WLF licence plates as if they were pirates, reminiscent of scenes from Ottawa in 2022.

Seeing how easy it was to make the people of the AFRC comply with their mandates, the WEF ramped up their intention to seize control of the entire Western world. Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Scotland, France, Germany, Scandinavia, those would all be easy targets, and the NEGLU wouldn't put up too much resistance either. It was the more Right-leaning countries who would provide more of a challenge. Italy, Austria, most of Eastern Europe, England, the Western Cape, the CCSA, TEXAS, and the WLF – these were the countries that dared to resist WEF rule, and were chosen to be the guinea pigs for The Even Greater Reset of 2050, as punishment for their resistance. Never mind the annihilation of privacy and property rights that was living in the Pod, which some San Franciscans had once done voluntarily; Nano-Pods would be barely larger than a coffin, all in the name of packing the people into as small a space as possible. Don't ask what was on the menu; "I will not eat ze boogs" was the defiant mantra of those who resisted the thought of an insect-based diet in the 2020s, but nobody could quite confirm that the latest dietary offering even *was* insects; all that was obvious is that someone at Davos had watched *Soylent Green*, and had taken it as an instruction manual. Never mind personal transport, the idea of such a thing had been abolished; even walking from one town to another would be forbidden. In the horrific reality of The Even Greater Reset, you are born, possibly in a *Brave New World*-style hatchery, you live in the same Nano-Pod for your entire life, you never stray more than a mile from the same point, you die, and maybe feed the next unfortunate generation somehow. The WEF knew perfectly well how outright *evil* this was; they also knew that all they had to do was clothe it in the language of "progress" –

"for the greater good", "for the benefit of the environment" – and their existing Left-leaning sphere of influence would roll over and comply with no resistance. If only those troublesome Rightists, Libertarians and one-time MAGA Republicans could be bullied into similar compliance...

So now, the WLF had much bigger fish to fry. Never mind trying to bulldoze a path to San Diego and shore up The Border to their standards, never mind the potential for TEXAS to turn unfriendly and cut them off from the Gulf of Mexico, these were trifling issues in comparison to The Big One.

The WLF looked at the WEF, and said: "**Don't Tread On Me**".

A reconnaissance party was sent to Davos in November 2042, disguised as tourists on a skiing holiday, and they revealed the primary obstacle to a well-armed militia storming the castle. It was the Davos Deadlock – a supposedly impenetrable security device, allegedly developed by the Illuminati, but more likely a product of Big Tech in Silicon Valley.

A month later, the WEF convened for their annual meeting – and the WLF pounced to deliver them a Christmas present they'd never forget. They sent the militia to hold the delegates in the headquarters, just for the sheer irony of seeing how the WEF would deal with having lockdown imposed on them. And to break the Davos Deadlock, they sent their most lethal weapon.

But this wasn't high explosives, armour-piercing depleted uranium rounds, or even a nuclear bomb.

They sent Ethan Nash.

EPILOGUE: FURTHER GEOPOLITICAL CHANGES, 2022-2042

As has already been alluded to in the text above, the breakup of the United States of America is far from being the only change of borders that has happened in the 20 years leading up to the final showdown between libertarianism and authoritarianism. This is a brief(ish) summary of the other changes that would affect the West.

Europe

In 2042, the European Union consists of only nine countries: Germany, France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Denmark, Sweden, Ireland, Scotland and Catalonia.

The EU's downfall was in its continual failure to understand that not every country wants to be exactly like the multicultural, cosmopolitan, utopian ideal envisioned by faceless Eurocrats bereft of loyalty to their home countries and pride in their heritage. As early as 1930, Winston Churchill had said that the UK was "with Europe, *but not of it*", so the UK becoming the first country to leave the EU should not have come as any surprise. What was a surprise was that it was the Netherlands that was the next to leave, after the Dutch government's ill-fated attempt at compulsory purchase of farms in 2022 sparked a populist uprising. The Mediterranean countries followed, having still never quite recovered from the hardship of the 2008 economic meltdown – and the countries of the former Eastern Bloc left en masse as soon as the flow of money from West to East dried up, although Slovenia was dragging its heels on that front. Cyprus' exit was confirmed when the EU condemned their plan to drive the Turks out of the northern part of the country as Greek irredentism.

The United Kingdom broke up. Scotland declared independence in 2034, becoming a one-party People's Republic led the SNP, which had by now absorbed all the other left-leaning parties, and

banned the rest from existing. Positioning themselves as "liberators", they govern the country in perpetuity and crush any dissent. Northern Ireland bailed at the same time, reuniting with the Republic of Ireland; any rumours that Protestants were mistreated was denounced as "fake news" by RTÉ. Scotland's accession into the EU was unopposed on the grounds that they were ideologically compatible – as was that of Catalonia, who seceded from Spain a year later.

In Eastern Europe, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary formed the Visegrad Union, based in Prague – solely as a trading bloc, with it written into the VU constitution that national sovereignty is paramount and any attempt to form a United States of Eastern Europe is illegal. This was attractive to other countries with a similar outlook; Bulgaria, Romania, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia all joined soon afterwards, as did Austria and Finland, both considered "Western" countries, geography be damned. Serbia was the last to join, which made Slovenia and Croatia think twice about doing so; as with the other ex-Yugoslav countries, they remain outside the VU for now.

Russia was forced to withdraw from Ukraine after four years of "special operations", with Ukraine being returned to its pre-2014 borders. However, as of 2042, Ukraine has still not been accepted into the VU, even though it would make sense. Belarus, meanwhile, has ceased to exist, being annexed by Russia with absolutely no resistance. The people of Moldova are just waiting for the Transnistrians to give up the fight for independence so that the country can be united with Romania.

Asia

Primarily of interest to the West, although to the consternation of some parts of both ends of the political spectrum, Israel has reasserted itself over the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, after the Palestinians made such a nuisance of themselves that only Saudi Arabia was still prepared to tolerate them. This left Israel with a lengthy border with Jordan, the one Arab country with which they have friendly relations.

The Saudis' master plan was to offer to rehome all five million Palestinians. Not so coincidentally, they had also just completed their NEOM project, and needed up to *nine* million new residents to fill The Line, who were definitely not coerced into moving there and definitely wouldn't have their every move and thought tracked in a way that the WEF would certainly approve.

China functioned as it always had, to the continual resigned depression of the billion or so people within its borders. Taiwan formally renounced its claim to mainland China, and in return, became a recognised independent country that China promised not to invade. Hong Kong and Macau were unavailable for comment. Taiwan allied with Japan and South Korea, and became the peaceful and prosperous country it always could have been.

India and Pakistan snarled at each other, never sorting out the problem of Jammu and Kashmir, but did at least simmer down enough to play each other at cricket outside ICC tournaments.

Elsewhere

The only significant change that the West would have noticed was South Africa splitting into two parts, effectively along racial lines, as anti-white rhetoric had increased the further the memory of Nelson Mandela sank into the past. The Western Cape, which already had an independence movement, a racially diverse population and voted for the Democratic Alliance rather than the ANC, became the "white" state, as well as that for all the other non-black ethnicities – while the remainder of the country was renamed, according to the demands of Afrocentrists, as the Republic of Azania. Only one of these successor states retained diplomatic relations with the West.