

Giganto kaj La Nova Mondo

Not all that long ago, our city faced a foe unlike any other. A foe that previously we figured was just a myth from hundreds of years ago. Science fiction. Well, the reason I'm writing to you today is quite simple—I was wrong.

The infamous Monstreco. A story passed down through generations. A man who, despite our best efforts, we could never find any evidence of until mere weeks ago. Like I said, this guy was supposed to be nothing more than a myth passed down through generations, not metastasizing in reality by any stretch of the imagination.

I'm an enforcement officer for the Military Police in this city. My name is Ezra Purpura, and I'm 25 years old. I am a well trained enforcement officer--I'm required to undergo continued training every single day and my physical shape reflects that. I've been an officer for 6 years, and I thank the wise sage Hillel that I am still alive after facing borderline insanity in my teenage years brought about by my own self-tortuous nihilism and drug abuse. In fact, I am lucky I was allowed into the military police in the first place. My parents both died young, due to environmental contagions that are a common cause of death in our time. So basically, to make a long story short, my job is my life and because of that I take my work very seriously.

Our base is in the center of the town where I live, La Urbo de la Malbenitajn, in Paradigmo, Respubliko de Memoroj. Our recorded history goes back to the year 1859. There is no recorded history farther back than that, although all of us know very well that we have a past—otherwise, none of us would be here. I can't explain it any better than that because I quite simply wasn't there. I had nothing

to do with our unknown fate of years past, I'm just here in the present. Everything before 1859 is a blank page.

La Respubliko de Memoroj is the last country on earth. The only country. All of the people gathered together some decades ago and decided to throw away their national pride and become one nation. Our native tongue is Esperanto, and this book is translated by our local printing press. The owner of the printing press learned English from his father, who learned it from his, etc. That language is now only useful in deciphering the thoughts of people of the past, which I am being led to believe is the audience am writing to.

The town sage, who owns a temple, thought it may be useful to send this message to the people of the past so we may change the trajectory of our own future. The sage, Hillel, is able to traverse throughout time and space due to his meditation practices, which allows him inter-dimensional telepathy and empowers him with subliminal, effervescent transcendentalism not at all unlike that of a god.

The sage is the one who is transcribing this message to you all right now. As for me, I am just a simple man who works for the military police. In my present time, that of the year du mil naŭdek—2090, we are rejoicing. Our world is full of happiness, though humanity is slowly dying off due to the conditions of our planet. We make the best of it, and robots help us with some tasks now that earth, which has since been renamed Nia Tero, has less than one billion people. Anything that requires a high level of intellect, we are sure to find a human for the job. Otherwise, our robots, which function by the means of the venerable GNU/Linux kernel, do menial tasks such as running bakeries, assisting nurses, janitorial duties, etc.

Despite the misguided efforts of some of the “brilliant minds” of our forefathers, they were unable to force people against their will to have children for a number of reasons, the least of which being lack of fertility brought about by the poisons that have flooded our atmosphere since at least 1859. Tyranny, like anything else, dies in a vacuum, and that’s exactly what happened when mass deaths started to occur from climate catastrophes across Nia Tero.

Floods, famines, World War III, World War IV, and the final war of recorded history—World War V. Those are the kinds of things *la populo* experienced in the last 60 years. We do not have a holiday celebrating the end of World War V—We celebrate this every single day. Every day a day of celebration. But almost a month ago, this all changed.

An old spectre, thought to be nothing more than an ancient fable, was materializing right under our noses. Out of our mind’s eye, so to speak.

A figure shrouded in mystery, named Monstreco, was seeping into our collective subconsciousness. This man, a wizard with an impure heart, takes the shape of a fellow of an unassuming build, often seen wearing a charcoal gray three piece suit. The wizard has black hair, always buzzed as short as possible, with a big, bushy goatee. He obscures his face with a fedora not unlike a shy, lonely man of times past. His skin pasty gray, and his pupils devoid of life—Nobody wanted to believe he was real.

It all started when a shop owner had allegedly seen this figure some weeks ago. The man had come in without saying a word and stole two big armfuls of tomatoes. The shopkeeper decided to confront the man, asking him why such a well dressed man would need to steal something from her.

The man looked over his shoulder at her, looking at the woman straight in the eye but did not say a word. According to her daughter, who witnessed this encounter and was working with her mother at the time, that's when the woman froze, unable to confront the man any further. For a moment she had a strange look in her eyes like she was trying to recall the man from days past. The man spoke telepathically to her, without moving his lips, only looking back at her momentarily as he walked away clutching several kilograms of tomatoes. There was only one thing he found pertinent to convey to the woman--"You remember me..."

The woman became so distraught after this, so paralyzed, that she is still in a coma as of the time of writing this report. According to her witness, her daughter, the woman is due to recover soon but the doctors are unsure when. She awoke briefly a few days ago but only for long enough to give the sparse details of her encounter with the strange man. Her family and the community is concerned, but there is still hope for tomorrow.

Monstreco's reign of terror shook the country—our only country, I needn't remind you. Always doing some sort of petty crime, some sort of misdemeanor, with an uncanny ability to bewilder his victims. A man who cast self-doubt and fear into the hearts of whomever he decided to cast his gaze on that day. For example, not long after the aforementioned incident with the shopkeeper, he decided to spray paint the walls of the local synagogue with various forms of religious iconography—iconography that the Jewish people forbid in their places of worship. A cynical but unsurprising act for such an antisocial creature.

Upon reports of seeing a graffiti tagger in the area, a local police officer (for the city, not in my department) came to speak to the man. The wizard was quick to cast his spell on the officer, before he could even ask what the man's business was at the synagogue with a can of spray paint. The officer,

who upon waking up from a coma just last week is so far the only person who was able to give a detailed first hand account of what happened to him, recalled a dizzying confusion that took over his mind when he looked the man in the eye. At that moment Monstreco took his eyes off of his sardonic spray painting mockery and gave Officer Greco a look unlike any other. Devoid of emotion, a blank, thousand metre stare that stopped the officer in his tracks. The policeman had no time to think, and only recalls being in a mental haze up until his regaining consciousness. Monstreco spoke to him those three words, telepathically, just as all the other victims--"You remember me..."

As you can imagine, being a military policeman myself, I had no intention of getting involved in this matter. None whatsoever—Such civil concerns are the jurisdiction of standard law enforcement. The military police has bigger, more systemic issues to concern itself with. Those are the topics that I concern myself with and investigate in my duties as an officer of the military police. I have nothing to do with solving the mystery of some ancient specter, or so I thought.

My commanding officer, Remy J. LaSoldato, called me into his office 3 weeks ago. He told me all of what I just told you regarding the terror being caused by Monstreco, among other instances of random citizens being targeted by his bizarre power of bewitchment upon eye contact. Nobody knows the history of this man. Apparently, this monster is fabled to be from before the beginning of time, before 1859. He has haunted people for, apparently, thousands of years. A monster that conjures up old, unwanted memories and brings them to the fore. An inter-dimensional wizard who changes his looks with the times, but always has the same effect—dazzling and bewildering his victims, causing them to dwell on the question their own existence, many of whom never woke up from any coma and simply perished.

Remy said he learned all of this from Hillel, whom he came to for personal guidance after Remy's own husband, Jeane, was put under the spell of this madman. When Jeane tried to check the credentials of this strange figure at a checkpoint on our base at La Urbo de La Malbenitajn, the man simply looked at Jeane, long enough to put him under his spell, and upon making sure that Remy's husband was incapacitated, kneeled under the guard rail to walk through the checkpoint without authorization or security clearance. Jeane would abruptly lose consciousness and put into a comatose state like all the other victims had been. He was hospitalized with no prognosis on when or if he may recover from the psychokinetic attack. On that day, Remy vowed to take action against the old cruel wizard. He used all of his authority in the military as a lieutenant and leader of a battalion in order to acquire the resources and manpower needed to build a new kind of weapon.

In our modern day, the military does not use simple armaments anymore. Our tanks use force-fields around them to prevent their armor from ever being punctured. Our planes, invisible to the naked eye and running on electrical powered engines, are the cloak and dagger of our military. Our military which fights no wars. Our military is as pristine as our minds, which our thriving public education system has taught us all to nurture like a rose garden. Since the end of World War V in 2068, we have never had to deploy our military against any major threat.

Despite all this, a new piece of equipment was build to help us combat Monstreco. Remy went all the way up the chain of command for this, he said, and wanted to make sure he got the right person for the job of piloting this new machinery. That person turned out to be me.

According to Remy: "their codename is Giganto. They are a massive robot superstructure designed by some of the greatest minds of our modern era. They have been infused with an indelible spirit and what is believed to be an analogue of Monstreco's powers. The windshield is plated with an

enchanted tint material that will protect the occupants from the gaze of that god-damned ghoul.” He continued “I didn’t care about this god forsaken wizard until I saw what he did to my husband, Jeane. The guy is a monster. I don’t know how he is able to have such a profound, immobilizing influence on people but he must be eliminated by any means necessary.” After hearing the story about his husband’s accident and his powerful call for action on my part, I quickly offered to handle the situation myself. He handed me the keys to the giant robot, Giganto, and I saluted him.

I walked out of Remy’s office to the hangar just across the airstrip and entered through the side door. The huge room still dark, with only natural light from the skylights coming in through the roof, I clicked the unlock key on my shiny new giant robot and hear a “chirp chirp” of an alarm system unlocking as I made my way up the complex scaffolding that led to the entrance on the head of the robot some 400 feet up in the air. The robot had a boxy look about them, with a square, Frankensteinian looking jaw and eyes that looked like they were covered with overpriced sunglasses. They had a circular feature on their head not unlike the style of hair a monk in a monastery would have.

The only way in and out of Giganto was through their head. I continued up the scaffolding, panting heavily after a while.

Finally, out of breath after I made my way up to the top of the scaffolding, I see the eyes of the robot, simply a fancy glass windshield, open up automatically. Inside, what looks like a desk and a chair firmly bolted to the ground. Joysticks on large, arm shaped rails are affixed to the chair, and on the side of the desk, not unlike a gauge cluster in a modern car, is a screen showing RPM, miles on odometer (zero) and so on and so forth. As I go to step into the chair, I see a helmet underneath the desk. As I put this on, I can see that it pairs with Giganto. It displays and gives me information on where to find our target.

The roll up door of the massive hangar finally swung open at that moment, taking even longer than it took me to walk up to get in the cockpit of my giant robot, for my comrades, no less than two dozen of them in all, to ravel up the gigantic 400 foot door. Understandable...That metal roll up door was surely heavier than most houses.

I am not sure why, but upon activating Giganto's power systems and hearing his generators rev up I felt a sense of purpose and meaning that I had never felt before. Upon resting my arms on the controller rails, once I got my hands on the two separate joysticks and dug myself in to the three foot pedals, I felt like I had known exactly what to do. Like I had driven this giant robot behemoth before. But I know I didn't. I mustn't have. I don't explicitly recall any such thing. And yet, here I am piloting Giganto, effortlessly guiding them into the center of town.

City Hall had been holding a press conference about the recent encounters with the fabled specter, Monstreco. They were discussing an action plan with many of the citizens of the town, who were eager to come to the city hall meeting to try and face this problem head on, stoically. Whole families came together to city hall to form an action plan to combat against this sorrowful creature, Monstreco.

Unsurprisingly, the cynical wizard had other plans. He made his way into the crowd of the impromptu city hall meeting...this time, as if he had rehearsed for such an occasion, he reverberated loudly so everyone could hear his message echo inside of their skulls, enough to shake their brain, even: "YOU REMEMBER ME... DON'T YOU?"

First, the people sitting at their posts in city hall fell victim to his gaze. Then, people started looking, wondering what had become to their city officials and worried for themselves even more-so, and of course wondering who it was that asked them such a strange question. Before long, every person in that room eventually took a glance at Monstreco.

It wasn't long before he left the whole room paralyzed, frozen and collapsed onto the ground. Monstreco must have taken great pleasure in doing the deed. I was gallivanting into the city center with my new friend Giganto when I saw him. The sardonic wizard was already leaving city hall after stealing wallets from some of his comatose victims. He was smiling, like he had just done something great, something he was very proud of. Monstreco only cared for bringing mischief--he had no interest in the mindful and selfless ways of living life that we are taught to exemplify nowadays.

I approached city hall, piloting Giganto with every step causing a loud clank, a loud thunk, a booming, anvil like sound. In the viewfinder of my helmet, it pinpointed on Monstreco. The man was simply counting the money he had taken from some of his victims wallets, adding it up and putting it in his own wallet. His perverse smile never went away all the while—he was clearly proud to be a nuisance to everyone and, evidently, if the old fable is true, he felt as if this was his true purpose in life. I wasted no time. As I brought the robot down into a crouching stance, I swung one of the joystick rails, which translated into the bullet-train sized robot arm swinging a punch downwards and directly at the small and seemingly insignificant 1.7 metre tall figure.

It was at that moment he looked at me. As I was piloting the robot, one foot after the other, hand over hand, fist over fist, I noticed his gaze as well. The feeling hit me hard--I felt stoned, like my body had taken on a large dose of barbituates and was about to go to sleep. Even the machinery of Giganto shuttered and stalled. My memories are blurry at this point; I drifted in and out of consciousness.

Giganto staggered, knocking over trees and damaging a few neighboring buildings. I heard it echoing in my brain, over and over again: “You remember me, don’t you?” --The repetitive catchphrase of this monster.

I was unable to speak, but Monstreco kept speaking to me, telepathically--”You remember me, don’t you? Don’t you? *Everybody* remembers me.”

I thought long and hard about that. I must have been frozen there for about 10 minutes, drifting in and out of consciousness, unable to compose my thoughts. I thought, surely, I would be another victim of this mind game he was playing.

It was then, in my mind’s eye, my third eye, that I gained the self awareness and consciousness I needed to give this forsaken creature a response to his infernal question. I used the telepathic powers imparted to me by Giganto to help me deliver my message to Monstreco:

“No sir.

I don’t remember you. I’ve never seen you before...

You creep.

And I *surely* hope to never see you again.”

Although I was only semi-conscious, through my third eye I could see his fear, I could see his resentment. I could see that I was the first person who ever questioned his grasp, his control over others. His face twisted up like he just chewed on a lemon. He took off his hat and used it to cover his clay-like pale face.

Darkness engulfed the town like a solar eclipse. Giganto's power seemed to have shut off, possibly due to some sort of electrical interference. The big *matte* silver automaton lurched forward a bit, and at that time I thought I might end up face first on the ground with a whole giant robot collapsing around me—a certain death.

But that didn't happen.

I woke up from that cosmic entanglement feeling more awake than I'd ever been. Better than after any cup of coffee I'd ever drank. The late afternoon sunlight returned to the town and when I looked around, I didn't see Monstreco anymore. I guess Monstreco was finally gone, after all.

Not everyone in town recovered from their comatose states brought about by that foul wizard, but those that lived to tell about it won't ever let it go. Always telling me "thank you" and how if it weren't for me, our town would have "fallen" under some "terrible curse." I appreciate it, but still, it can be embarrassing being the hero with everyone watching you, looking after you. I never wanted to be a hero, I just wanted to do what I thought was right.

Earlier today, Remy brought me with him to the hospital to see his husband, Jeane, who was still comatose after the terrible attack inflicted by Monstreco.

Me and Remy looked over him. He had been in the hospital for over two weeks by now, staying hydrated and also dosed with an IV in his arm. Who knows what that terrible monster did to his mind or if he would ever even wake up again.

Me and Remy each set down a vase with some flowers for Jeane. Remy was looking sorrowfully at his dear lover, wondering if all of this meant goodbye. The pain of not knowing must have hurt him tremendously. I felt terribly for him.

It was not a moment later that we saw Jeane's body twitch on the gurney. First a finger, then a foot. His eyelids began to twitch. Could it really be...?

It was then that Jeane's eyes flickered open. "Remy, is that you, dear?" he said.

We couldn't believe it. Me and Remy were so happy for Jeane. "He's back!" I remarked joyously. Remy came and hugged his husband while he laid there on the hospital bed. He cried and cried many tears of joy as he was reunited with the love of his life, whom he met in the Military Academy over a decade ago when both had only just graduated from college.

As I stood by Jeane's bedside while he and Remy embraced each other, I thought about how the unsure fog of our minds can trap us inside ourselves forever if we let it. All I could manage to say in that moment, taken aback by the beauty of it all, was this: "Thank goodness for that giant robot, Giganto. Without them, I am certain that we would have lost our beautiful city of La Urbo de La Malbenitajn."