

The World as We Know It

by Eustace F. Pendleby

Our story begins with flying saucers raining down laser blasts on New York City. The laser blasts level wide swaths of the congested metropolis, and the alien weaponry causes dazzling, psychedelic explosions all over the city. Although it is high noon, the cityscape is already covered in darkness because the sky is filled with billowing black smoke clouds and thousands of immense flying saucers. The sparse human survivors on the ground marvel as they witness numerous squadrons of earthling warplanes come from all directions and engage the saucers.

Missiles zoom across the sky, from the warplanes to the saucers. The missiles resemble riled swarms of mammoth killer bees, and they connect with many of the saucers, generating deafening blasts and blinding flashes. Only a single flying saucer stops flying, however, and it plummets to the earth like a brick, directly onto the same

place where Carnegie Hall once stood, the same place where a miniature mushroom cloud now arises.

And then neon blue spheres of light appear around each flying saucer in the sky. A bright pink energy suddenly permeates the atmosphere, and all of the earthling warplanes fall out of the sky and crash into the ground. The pink energy fades away, and then those flying metal discs with clear domes on top of them finish up with incinerating the city and its inhabitants and fly off to their next destination, which is, let's say, Kathmandu.

Meanwhile, somewhere in the South Pacific, Bill Gates, founder of Microsoft Corporation, sits in a spacious room, surrounded by large paper-thin monitors that are all displaying video of the planet's ongoing cataclysm.

"Oh my," Gates says aloud. "Heavens to Betsy, it's getting hairy out there. I told those idiots not to mess with the aliens. But they had to go and mess with the fucking aliens, didn't they?" He adjusts his horn-rimmed glasses and scratches his nose and then twirls around a few times in his plush swivel chair. "Well, there's no time to waste. The time has come for me to save the world!"

Bill Gates steps outside and sees clear skies above him on his private island. Fronds of tall palm trees sway in the breeze. Bill takes his robotic trolley to his high-security bunker, which even his cybernetic sentinels are not allowed to enter. After a brief fingerprint scan and urinalysis and blood sample, the seventeen layers of ultrastrong metal doors at his bunker's entrance retract and grant him entry. Bill makes his way to the wing designated by various placards as "Time Travel Laboratory." He walks into a room and to a wall and presses a small red button on the wall, and the wall folds into itself, revealing another room, in which a long, flat object resembling a

fluorescent pink snowboard is suspended in midair by some invisible energy field emanating from two oval-shaped silver devices, one on the floor, the other on the ceiling.

“Finally, a ripe time to unveil the latest and greatest from the mind of Bill Gates: the time-traveling hoverboard!” he proclaims. He grabs the hoverboard and steps into its foot straps, which instantly secure themselves to his feet. “The planet’s salvation is surely within my grasp!” He adjusts his glasses again.

Bill hovers his way out of his bunker and hovers on through his island’s streets until he reaches the fenced perimeter of his personal dinosaur zoo, which is densely treed with all manner of enormous trees that were long extinct prior to Bill’s recreating them with genetic engineering. His park is also covered with other ancient, previously extinct flora.

At his zoo’s main gate, Bill goes through another rigorous series of biological scans, confirming that he is actually himself, and then hovers on into the depths of his Mesozoic jungle. He passes by assorted dinosaurs, some of them grazing on the lush foliage, others attacking one another. He pauses for a moment to watch his pterodactyls soar gracefully through the sky. The pterodactyls are kept from flying all throughout the earth’s atmosphere by a force field of Bill’s design — a force field that also keeps out the aliens and their incredibly powerful alien weapons. The force field could even protect Bill’s island from a comet’s direct impact. Bill’s island is virtually impervious to every natural and supernatural force in existence, and his security system automatically obliterates any unwanted nearby presence. It has been shooting down flying saucers since the invasion began. But Bill’s advanced armaments can only protect himself and his island — not the rest of the planet.

The only other people who are alive on the planet and have protection from the aliens are the members of the super elite around the world that are wealthy enough to have purchased their own islands and Bill's patented island-defense technology, which Bill priced at slightly over a half-quadrillion dollars. These privileged few include the Rothschilds, the Rockefellers, the Obamas, the Lincolns, the Bushes, the Waltons, and approximately two hundred other families, mostly "American." As for Bill's wife, Melinda, Bill gave her her own island, where she stays with the kids.

But Bill doesn't like any of the people left alive, including his wife and children, so he irreversibly sabotaged the defense technology he sold them. And in a few days time, they are all going to be alien food. And Bill knows that he can live comfortably on his island indefinitely, what with his amusement parks, his virtual-reality sex machines, his robot friends, his gourmet-food generators, and his perfectly safe, environmentally friendly fusion power, yet since the aliens came, Bill has become lonesome. So he decided to try and save the world by going back in time. And that is where we were.

This is where we are: in the heart of Bill's dinosaur-filled jungle. Bill hovers on until he reaches one of his lakes, Lake Doo-Doo, as he calls it, where many ceresiosauruses and muraenosauruses and cryptocliduses and umoonasauruses play and swim around. He hovers up to a lakeside wooden hut that is almost fifty feet tall and twice as wide. Bill knocks on the hut's humongous door, and it is answered by a tyrannosaurus rex who is wearing a Hawaiian shirt and a frayed straw hat and holding half a gigantic coconut shell with an umbrella sticking out of it.

"Dude!" roars the dinosaur. "What's happenin', my man? How are the aliens comin' along?"

"They're good," Bill responds. "They're good. Listen, Rex. I think I'm gonna try

and save the world.”

“Alright! Let’s motherfucking do it!”

“I wouldn’t want anybody else with me.”

“Well, I wasn’t doin’ a damn thing but smokin’ some ganj and gettin’ drunk. You can count me in — as long as I can bring along my bong.”

“Yeah. That’s cool. There’s no time like the present, Rex. Stand next to me.”

The dinosaur fetches his bong from inside his hut and then stands next to Bill, and in the blink of an eye, they are gone. When they reappear, they are in Washington, D.C., at the Capitol Building. It is February 23rd, 2009 — two months before the alien offensive begins.

Bill and Rex burst into the House of Representatives chamber, and all four heads in the room turn toward them.

“Y’all are supposed to be in session,” Bill points out. “Where the hell is everybody?”

“I dunno,” says the Speaker of the House, who is picking her nose. “Where the hell are *you*?”

“My dinosaur and I need some answers, dammit! We don’t have time for this nonsense. Where is the President?”

“Where do you think he is?” the Speaker asks sarcastically.

“Oh brother. Come on, Rex. Let’s teleport to the strip club.” Bill and Rex disappear and leave behind only a blip’s echo.

They reappear outside of the Cockpit, a few blocks away. A bouncer is standing in front of the main entrance.

“This is a private club — members only,” says the bouncer, a big fat black man

dressed all in black leather and wearing black sunglasses.

“Let us in,” says Rex. “We need to see the President!”

“Oh yeah?” The bouncer lowers his sunglasses and is looking up at Rex. “And what are *you* gonna do about it, whippersnapper?”

“Hmm,” Rex ponders. “How about this?” And Rex eats the bouncer. When Bill genetically engineered Rex, he encoded into the dinosaur’s DNA the ability to shrink or grow to any size desired. Rex uses that ability now and shrinks down to human size, and he and Bill enter the club.

With Rex in tow, Bill hovers his way to a booth near the back of the smoky club, where they find two male strippers dancing together on a single pole, two other male strippers making out, and President Obama snorting a line of cocaine off of the bare butt of another male stripper, who is bent over on his hands and knees.

“Bill! Old pal!” Obama yells, wiping his nose. “You wanna toot?” He points at the bent-over male stripper’s bottom.

“Barack, now is not the time,” Bill replies. “There is serious business at hand.”

“I’ll say,” Obama says, and he smacks the bent-over stripper’s rock-hard buttock, allowing his hand to linger on the flesh. “What’s at *hand* is some hot ass, Bill. I think you yourself should lend a *hand*.” And he winks at Bill. The bent-over stripper turns his head around and winks, too.

“Perhaps at a more opportune time, chum. But the fate of the world is at stake. The aliens are mounting a major offensive as we speak that will surely end the world...as we know it. Immediate action must be...Rex! What are you doing?”

Rex is in a private booth and receiving a lap dance from an extraordinarily muscular Asian stripper while simultaneously snorting a line off of another bent-over

stripper's butt. Rex looks up at Bill, surprised. "Um...nothing," says Rex. "What are *you* doing?" Rex's eyes dart from side to side.

"Well, I do have a time machine, I guess," Bill says. "One itty-bitty bump won't hurt."

"We've got all the time in the world, baby," says Barack.

Six hours and three-quarters of an ounce later, Bill, Obama, Rex, and four male strippers all lie naked in a sweaty coke haze in a swank hotel suite.

"So, seriously, Barack," says Bill.

"Call me your extra-sweet White Russian, honey," says Barack, in bed next to Bill, caressing one of Bill's nipples.

"My extra-sweet White Russian, what's up with this alien situation? You know I've warned you about these aliens for years."

"I'll be honest. I know little. This one goes straight to the top. Only one person knows." Barack leans into Bill and whispers: "Blackbeard."

"Blackbeard?" Bill asks. "You mean the pirate?"

"That's the only Blackbeard I know of."

"Well, off to whenever Blackbeard was around. Come on, Rex," says Bill.

Rex exhales a thick cloud of bong smoke and says, "Aye aye, cap'n." They both get dressed, and Bill steps onto his hoverboard. Then he and Rex disappear and reappear again. This time they reappear on a pirate ship. This pirate ship immediately rams into another pirate ship, out there in the middle of the big blue ocean, back then in good ole 1717, and screaming pirates with guns ablaze and swords in hand begin rushing and jumping onto the target vessel. Some pirates are swinging on ropes, and others are sharing swigs of rum with parrots.

“Wuh-whoa,” says Bill. “Looks like I got us into quite a mess here, REXY boy.”

“I’ll say,” Rex says. “What’re we gonna do, Billster?”

“Stay low. And follow my lead.”

Rex nods at Bill. Bill pulls from his pants two Vulcan machineguns equipped with homing bullets, and he fires relentlessly on the brawling pirates while hoverboarding around. The flying bullets hit pirates in their chests as the pirates pierce other pirates with golden-hilted rapiers, they strike pirates in their kneecaps, exploding them like blood oranges under combat boots, and they lacerate brachial arteries of pirates battering one another with brass knuckles and blowing each other up with crude bombs that are made of wood and have long, winding fuses.

Rex pulls out dual MAC-10 submachine guns from under his Hawaiian shirt and follows suit. Rex shoots in their faces a few pirates kicking at each other’s midsections. Rex’s hot lead penetrates one pirate’s neck, and blood sprays about like a whale’s blow in the Red Sea. A few of Rex’s bullets hit one dude in the nuts.

“Don’t worry, pirate man,” Rex says. “Time heals ball wounds.” And then Rex stamps on the same pirate, crushing him.

After a moment, all but one of the pirates lie dead. The one who is still alive has an exceptionally black beard — so black that it makes a black hole look like a gray sweatshirt.

“Goddammit, your beard is black, fella,” notes Bill.

“Yar, it is,” agrees Blackbeard. “Would ye care for some couscous?” Blackbeard holds up a ceramic bowl filled with couscous and green beans and grated carrots and diced eggplant and herbs and spices. “It’s the finest cous in all the Seven Seas, I tells ye.” Blackbeard stomps his foot powerfully, squints his unpatched eye, leans toward Bill and

Rex, extending the bowl of couscous, and grins maniacally, his smile wrinkling his swarthy skin.

“Cut the cous crap, Blackbeard,” Bill asserts.

“Yeah, Blackbeard,” says Rex. “We’ve had enough outta you. Whaddya say you, me, and Mister Bill Gates here go take a long walk together.”

“Ye’ll never catch me!” yells Blackbeard.

The scurrilous pirate jumps into the air and vanishes.

“He got away!” Rex announces.

“Then let’s look for clues, Rex,” says Bill.

Bill begins searching under wooden crates and heaps of rope as Rex sniffs around the sinking ship like a dog on the hunt.

“I found something, Rex.” Bill holds up a paper pamphlet. “It’s a pamphlet of some sort, so it seems. And look — it’s titled, ‘So You’re Traveling Back in Time to the Wild West.’”

“Finally, an excuse to wear chaps,” comments Rex as he slips into a pair of brown leather chaps. Then he and Bill are gone into thin air.

Blackbeard is running on top of a locomotive that is speeding through a desert in the Wild West, and he jumps from car to car, the blazing sun and desert heat drawing out liters of sweat from the pirate, especially because he is in full pirate garb. He is now wearing a cowboy hat, however, instead of his tricorne. His peg leg even has a little spur on it.

Bill ollies over Blackbeard, landing in front of the pirate and spinning around to face him, on top of a passenger car.

“Yar,” yars Blackbeard. “Ye found me, did ye? Well, I’ve got news for ye and ye’r

dinosaur.”

Rex jumps down behind Blackbeard, shaking the train car.

“And what news is that, Blackbeard?” Rex asks.

“I’ll tell ye,” Blackbeard tells them. “A teenage girl from Wyoming has gone missing today in Bora Bora. The girl was on vacation with her family, and police say the family says that they hope everybody can still go to the waterslide park tomorrow, because they just built this new slide that’s supposed to be the biggest in the whole county, or something like that.”

Bill and Rex sit in rapt attention, eyes wide open, tongues hanging out of their mouths. Rex is eating popcorn and drinking a Coke.

“It’s not really news, Rex,” says Bill. “But I can’t keep from listening. I had no idea he’d be so skilled at brainwashing.”

“Yes. Muhuahhaha,” laughs Blackbeard, evilly. “Suffer me ruthless brainwashing! Five minutes ago, General Motors unveiled a more fuel-efficient sport utility vehicle. Pfizer Incorporated plans to file for bankruptcy later this week. A spokesperson for the pharmaceutical company stated, ‘All our money guys were high on drugs.’ The size of the Amazon rainforest is now reportedly less than the square acreage of a new strip mall being constructed in Dubai. Britney Spears is back in the news again.”

At this point, Bill and Rex both collapse over dead. Blackbeard laughs again and jumps off the side of the locomotive as it chugs along. And you’d think he’d hit the ground and severely injure himself, but there is actually a horse galloping alongside the train, right where Blackbeard jumps off. Blackbeard and the horse go galloping away.

And here’s where things get weird:

So, Bill and Rex are dead, just lying there, all dead and stuff, and then, out of

nowhere, an alien creature appears right there on top of the train. The alien looks kind of like a Smurf but bigger — and with no hat and three more heads and fangs. The alien grunts and waves this metallic wand thingy over Bill and Rex, and they come to. Before they know what happened, that alien is gone, back to wherever he or she or it came from — maybe in the future, maybe in the past. Who knows?

Well, I do. See, the alien, who is from the planet Toebapoolukwa, was part of the Earth offensive of 2009, and knowing that once its species controlled this cursed planet their total demise would be inevitable, Nagelproff (as its name can most accurately be written without elaborate transliteration) traveled back in time from after the invasion in order to determine Bill's location in time. Nagelproff already knew that Bill was going to die, but it was having a moral dilemma about interfering with timelines. And now we're pretty sidetracked.

Either way, the alien did what it did, and Bill and Rex are alive again.

"Jesus, Rex," Bill says. "I thought it was over there for a sec."

"Me too, Bill," says Rex. "I don't ever wanna lose you. Let's go get that motherfucking pirate-cowboy. Hop onto me, Bill. I want you to ride me."

"Oh yeah," Bill says. He gets off of his hoverboard, slings the hoverboard over his shoulder, and hops onto Rex's tail. Rex grows really big and then jumps off the train. "They went that-a way, Rex!" shouts Bill, pointing in a direction, and Rex and Bill gallop in that direction.

Rex and Bill speed ahead and are soon upon Blackbeard. Rex and Bill and Blackbeard and Blackbeard's horse are all now racing toward a cliff's edge, which is just becoming visible to them, in the distance.

"End of the line, Blackbeard!" Bill cries out. "Your time is up. Tell us what you

know about the aliens — or else!”

“Never, Bill Gates,” says Blackbeard. “Ye’ll have to pry the secret information from me cold, dead hands!” Blackbeard looks down at his one hand and his hook. “Well, me cold, dead hand and hook.”

They are all coming right up to the cliff’s edge. And Rex stops in his tracks, but Blackbeard urges on his horse. Blackbeard jumps his horse into the air, flying over the cliff’s edge. Blackbeard disappears, but his horse does not disappear and floats for a moment. Before falling to a certain death, the horse looks around and then blurts out, “He went to ancient Egypt!”

Bill dismounts Rex and looks out over the desert landscape beyond the cliff, wind blowing through his hair, a tumbleweed rolling past his feet.

“Bill,” Rex says, “the horse just said that Blackbeard went — ”

“I know what the horse said, okay?” says Bill. “But the question is: Can we trust a horse?”

“My gut says yes.”

“That’s good enough for me. Time is on our side, Rex!”

Bill and Rex travel through time to ancient Egypt. They arrive on top of the Sphinx’s head at nighttime, the full moon brightly shining, the stars in the heavens twinkling like babies’ eyes. Rex pulls out a pair of binoculars from under his straw hat and scans the area. Bill brings out a laptop from somewhere and types some coordinates into his GPS software. To explain: Bill had launched a series of satellites outfitted with time-traveling capabilities. It is these satellites that aid him in locating Blackbeard.

“Just as I suspected, Rex,” says Bill. “He’s underneath us — directly under the Sphinx’s front paws, in some secret sort of chamber.”

“Hey, look at that — the Sphinx’s nose,” says Rex. “It’s a clown nose!”

Bill peers over the Sphinx’s forehead and sees that, sure enough, the Sphinx’s nose is a big red clown nose. “Well, I’ll be jiggered,” says Bill.

Bill and Rex climb down the Sphinx’s head and neck and body until they plop their feet onto the desert sand.

“I guess we start a-diggin’,” Bill says, and they both don headlamps and begin digging in the sand, Bill with a snow shovel, and Rex with his enormous mouth, mouthful by mouthful. After a hefty hole has been dug, they uncover a stone slab with hieroglyphs on it.

“What does it say, Rex?” asks Bill.

“It appears that this chamber is a portal into the Universal Mind — whatever that means,” says Rex. “And it says that a lot of bugs are in there. I hate bugs, Bill.”

“Oh, it probably just mentions bugs to scare people off, Rex. Let’s give the old chamber a look-see, shall we?”

Rex pries up the slab with his teeth, and a puff of dust rises into the air.

“Into the abyss,” Bill says.

Rex and Bill jump down into the chamber, which is a single ten-foot-tall room of about twenty thousand square feet, all of it teeming with gold and glittering gems and filled with priceless statues and ornate sarcophagi. The chamber is lighted by torches burning a mystical purple, casting eerie shades of lavender and periwinkle around the underground expanse.

“Good golly, Miss Molly!” exclaims Rex. “It’s like something out of a TV show, Bill.”

“But better,” says Bill.

The most remarkable aspect of the room is that bands of rainbow are floating around, which seem like fantastic ethereal prism-snakes.

Seeing these tie-dyed serpent-ghosts, Bill remarks: “I don’t know, Rex. I kind of feel like hightailing it.”

“What? With all of this amazing treasure to check out?”

And not only are there scattered about the area literally tons upon tons of jewels, precious metals, and artifacts, there are also an innumerable amount of bookshelves, existing in another dimension, which can only be perceived by one who possesses highly developed psychic abilities or wears a specific combination of crystals and gemstones in a special prescribed manner. But Bill has no psychic powers or gemstones or crystals and is without a clue, and the same goes for Rex.

“Let’s smoke him out,” suggests Bill.

“Way ahead of ya,” says Rex. Rex is busy placing high explosives around the chamber. The explosives have timed detonators. “Time to blow this joint.”

“Now to commence with the countdown,” Bill says, and he presses a yellow button on a small black remote control that has an antenna on it. Beeping comes from all around — from the detonators on the multiple bunches of dynamite that Rex has placed, from the remote control, and from Rex texting on his cell phone. “Let’s abscond, Rex.”

“Okay, Bill,” says Rex. “Hey, Bill. Look at that!”

And a sarcophagus lying on the ground in front of Bill and Rex suddenly opens, revealing Blackbeard inside. The pirate has a mischievous smirk on his face.

“Okay, ye got me,” Blackbeard concedes. “There’s no way out. I’m either going with ye or getting blown up. I broke me damned time-travel device on this mummy’s

pelvis when I squeezed into this crazy coffin dealy.”

“I’m glad you’ve come to your senses, Blackbeard,” says Bill. “Now what’s up with these aliens, huh? What’s the big whoop?”

“I would tell ye,” says Blackbeard, “but ye should hear it from the main man himself — Leif Ericson.”

Bill and Rex both say in unison: “The Viking?”

“That’s the only goddam Leif Ericson I know of,” says Blackbeard.

“It’s time-traveling time, gang,” says Bill.

“What about the bombs, Bill?” asks Rex. “They’re still rigged to blow!”

“Eh, too much trouble,” says Bill.

“I guess you were right about the bugs, Bill,” says Rex.

“I guess I was,” says Bill.

The three time travelers disappear, and then the secret chamber underneath the Sphinx is blown sky-high, along with most of the Sphinx itself. But to Bill, Rex, and Blackbeard, that’s all in the past. Right now, they are in 1001 CE, or AD, or *Anno Domine Nostri Jesu Christi*, or The Year of Our Lord Jesus Christ, standing on top of a lengthy wooden dining table in a mead hall in Norway. Seated around one half of the table are Vikings dressed in full armor, with swords and battleaxes at their sides, and around the other half of the table are aliens, all of who look identical and just like the one that saved the lives of Bill and Rex on top of the train in the Wild West. The Vikings and aliens stare at Bill, Rex, and Blackbeard, who are standing in large serving bowls of mashed potatoes, beets, and chicken legs respectively. The three time-traveling companions get the impression that now is not a good time.

Rex turns and looks at Bill. “I’m getting bored with this adventure, Bill. Do you

think we can go home soon?”

“Soon? Sooner, later — what’s the difference?” asks Bill. “Time is relative, my friend.”

“I’m your friend and a whole lot more,” Rex tells Bill and winks at him.

“Alright. Where’s Leif Ericson?” demands Bill.

“I am he,” says a colossal Viking at the table’s head, who stands up and raises his hand, identifying himself as the speaker. “I am sure that you want to know why the aliens have attacked your home-time of Earth 2009.”

“Uh-huh,” Bill says nonchalantly.

“Well, the story begins almost ninety-two millennia ago, during the reign of the alien king Farton, who ruled this planet for seventeen hundred years,” begins Leif. “It was then that your President Obama visited that time through time travel and struck a deal with Farton. The deal was made to ensure that the United States of America of your time would have access to as much alien technology as it wanted through time-travel trade. It seems that it is more cost-effective to time-teleport goods from your own planet’s past rather than import them from star systems millions of light years away.”

Bill leans close to Rex. “You know, I’m getting pretty sick of this whole thing, too,” says Bill. “Let’s go home.”

“Yeah,” says Rex.

“What’s with this Leif guy, anyway?” Bill asks Rex quietly. “It’s time to get back to our own time.”

“Agreed,” says Rex.

“Also agreed,” says Blackbeard.

“Hold on,” says Bill. “*You’re* not going anywhere, Blackbeard. *You* will stay here

and stand trial in Viking court — or whatever passes for court with Vikings.”

“Nuts,” says Blackbeard. “I thought we had become friends. Yar?”

“No,” says Bill. “We are not friends, and you will not be coming back to the present with us. Nor will you go back to your own present, unless the aliens and Vikings say so.”

“Aw, crap,” says Blackbeard.

“As you can see, my comrades,” continues Leif, “it is only a matter of time. And that is why you must assassinate Barack Obama in order to save the world.”

“I saw that coming, honestly,” says Bill.

“Me too,” seconds Rex.

“Yar. Also, I did,” chimes in Blackbeard.

“Well, whether it was obvious or not, that is the service I have charged you with,” says Leif Ericson.

“We accept your offer, Leif,” says Bill.

“A wise decision, Mister Gates,” says Leif Ericson.

“Time traveling’s not like it used to be, Bill,” says Rex.

“All in good time, pal,” says Bill. “All in good time.” And then he and Rex disappear again.

Blackbeard stays behind, still standing in the bowl of chicken legs.

“Do ye have any barbeque sauce?” asks the pirate.

“Yes,” says an alien. “Yes we do. To eat *you* with!”

“Yar,” sighs Blackbeard.

In the future from then, on the date of January 19th, 2009, Bill and Rex appear on top of the Washington Monument, which is really just a huge white phallus. Bill pulls

from his shirt's breast pocket a foldout pop-up fully operational sniper rifle.

Barack Obama is standing on the Capitol Building's steps during his presidential inauguration. Right now, his right hand is on a copy of the Holy Bible.

Barack says: "I, Barack Hussein Obama, do solemnly swear to execute — "

And then a gunshot rings out across the National Mall and the Capitol Reflecting Pool and the West Lawn. And Barack Obama falls dead, there in front of God and everybody, from a single bullet through the heart.

"I guess it was time for a change," Bill says to Rex as President Joseph Robinette Biden, Jr., cracks a smile. "It's good to have whitey back on top. Our work here is done."

Bill and Rex blink out of existence and then back into existence, reappearing a few months later, back on Bill's private island. Later that day, Bill and Rex are lounging in beach chairs, watching the ocean foam wash ashore, drinking piña coladas out of hollowed-out pineapples. They are drinking their drinks with crazy straws.

"Nothing like a beach-themed mixed drink after saving the world," says Rex. "Huh, Bill?"

"I hear that, buddy," says Bill. They clink pineapples. "And there's nothing quite like having a planet full of people to alienate ourselves from. Huh, Rex?" Bill takes a sip through his crazy straw. "And you can't spell *alienate* without *alien*!"

They both heartily laugh as robot servants come and refill their beverages from glass carafes. The sun sets and the stars and moon appear in the sky. Soft ukulele music is heard in the not-so-distant distance. A bright fire blazes in a fire pit nestled in the sand in front of Bill and Rex. Hula-skirt-clad tan girls dance seductively in front of the two, the unlikely pair. And here our story ends. For better or worse, the planet is back to how it was, to how it is.