

Blan Fou (Crazy White People)

This is all true, but much of it may also be real

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Author's Note

This is not an American redemption story.
This is historical fiction set in Haiti, 1991-1992:

- Historical – The coup, the violence, and the refugees are real.
- Fiction – Imagine if one American finally learned to get out of the way.

Yours Truly, in solidarity (no exceptions),
The Author and Unreliable Recaller

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Part 1 (Premye): ESCAPE / ARRIVAL**Escape (1 of 2)****Caribbean Sea**

Northwest of Port-de-Paix, Haiti

December, 1991

Henri sinks into the sea, his lungs burning as he fights his way toward the surface. It is so dark that he struggles to tell which direction is up, but the sound of the storm that capsized the small fishing boat is still raging. He orients himself toward the sound and forces his arms and legs to keep pumping. Just as he begins to see lighter colored water above him, a strong hand grabs his foot and begins pulling him away from the surface.

He knows it's one of the other passengers and considers if he can somehow help them. But with his lungs burning, he knows it is only moments before he will give in and breathe sea water. Henri makes a terrible choice. With his free leg, he begins kicking and pushing against the hand clutching his left foot. Finally, he feels the vice-like grip break, his fellow passenger's cold fingertips caressing his ankle as its owner sinks into the deep. With the last of his strength, Henri kicks and pulls with his arms until he finally breaks the surface and can take a deep breath.

Earlier that morning...

Henri boards the fishing boat at the ancient pier in Port-de-Paix, Haiti along with three other labor union organizers and a few dozen people he doesn't recognize. Most of the passengers are young men, but there a few young mothers with small children. Just before boarding, the "travel agent" at the end of the pier announces that the passage from Haiti to Miami will cost more than expected. The man explains that due to the economic embargo, the black market price of fuel for the small outboard motor has doubled. For Henri, there is no choice but to pay. He needs to get off this island today, doesn't have the money for a flight, and can't get past military security and the Tonton Macoute informants at the airport anyway. After much shouting, threatening, and eventual negotiation, the additional money is paid and the passengers are loaded along with several jerrycans of fuel.

The captain explains the rules of the voyage. He should be called Captain. His first and last name were not important. His only crew member is named "Bouki". No one should speak to Bouki because he's not very bright and easily distracted. Everyone must follow Captain's orders without hesitation. Each passenger is responsible for their own food and water. None will be provided. He does not want to know whether passengers have travel documents or not. While none of the passengers wear life jackets, he explains that there are inflatable life rafts in the hold which can be used if they need to abandon ship for some reason. Gesturing behind him, he adds reassuringly that the small dinghy floating behind their vessel will serve as a life boat if God wills that they need it. The captain and his one-man crew wear the only life jackets because they will be last to leave the boat if there is a problem. They expect to arrive off the shore of

Florida before nightfall in two days. There will be no refunds before or after arrival, for any reason.

After all the last-minute arrangements are settled, the travel agent unties the frayed mooring rope and the fishing boat pushes off and begins to make its way toward open water. There is a light wind this morning, so the captain raises the shabby boat's small sail and explains that he'll use the outboard motor if the wind died down. By mid-day, they are out of sight of land and into the open water. As they pass the last rusty and half-drowned navigation buoy, the lapping waves turn into rolling swells and several of the passengers begin to get sea sick.

As the sun sets, Henri notices one of the young mothers struggling to nurse her small baby. He didn't pay close attention to introductions as they settled in, but he thinks her name is Jocelyn. She's barely more than a child herself, and is trying unsuccessfully to hide a jagged scar across her otherwise flawless left cheek. She's already drunk most of the water in her gallon jug and appears to be dehydrated after a day of exposure to the sun. The mother makes eye contact and glances with a pleading look toward the two full water jugs next to him.

Henri looks at the baby, the infant's light brown skin already burning in the sun. He considers offering Jocelyn some of his water but instead asks her baby's name. Jocelyn beams and replies that the baby's name is Espwa. She is one month old today! The child cries softly, pushes her face deep into Jocelyn's open shirt. The baby is exhausted and pulls forlornly at her mother's sun-burnt and chapped nipple. Jocelyn winces in pain but doesn't pull away from the infant's pursed lips. Henri asks if Espwa resembles her father.

The young mother looks stricken and looks far over the horizon. As the sun's last gasp of crimson sinks into the sea, Jocelyn seems even younger than before she stepped onto the boat. The spell is broken when Jocelyn's facial expression sets into one of determination. She straightens her lips and her back, adjusts her breast against the baby's suckling mouth, and replies that the child's father is dead. Then she hunches her body over Espwa's tiny form and sobs quietly.

Escape (2 of 2)

As the sun disappears over the western horizon, the wind behind them picks up strength. At first, everyone smiles and laughs as the tiny boat begins to pick up speed and the temperature cools. But as twilight turns to night, the captain begins to look nervously over his shoulder. One by one, each passenger turns to see huge thunderhead clouds forming behind them, the wind increasing its strength. As the first stars begin to appear, lightning flashes across the sky and the sound of thunder grows closer.

Concern turns to fear as the captain begins giving sharp orders to Bouki, "Top off the fuel in the motor. Get it started now." As the crewman unscrews the cap on the motor's fuel tank, the captain lowers the sail. The wind is blowing much harder now, but the captain is able to get the sail lowered and stowed as rain begins to fall. The warm, soft rain is a relief and many of the passengers hold their heads back, opening their mouths to swallow the rain as it falls. A few even strip out of all their clothing and try to wring their wet clothes into their empty water jugs.

Suddenly, everyone's attention is drawn to the captain as he begins shouting and swearing at Bouki. The motor will not start. The captain shoves Bouki aside and begins pulling on the starter rope. The rope pulls freely but the motor will not fire or sputter. It just will not start. After several minutes of pulling on the rope without result, the captain becomes winded and stops to think. Slowly, he opens the motor's fuel tank and confirms that it isn't somehow empty. Then reluctantly, as if he desperately wishes he could be anywhere else, he puts his nose to the tank opening and sniffs. Then the Captain turns slowly to Bouki and says in a low yet urgent voice, "The fuel doesn't smell right. Give me the can you used to fill it." Bouki hands him one of the fuel cans and the captain carefully sniffs it too. Then Captain pours some onto his hand and tastes it. His shoulders slump and he looks at Bouki. "That bastard sold us water, not fuel. You put water into our fuel tank. This motor will never start."

Everyone stares in disbelief, until all the passengers start asking questions at once, shouting over each other, the entire boat rocking violently as everyone struggles to reach Captain on his perch to plead that he say it's all a ruse. In less than a minute the passengers exhaust themselves and begin to cry or stare off into space. Henri watches as the captain and Bouki exchange a long stare. Captain nods and without another word, the two of them climb out of the wallowing fishing boat and into the dinghy.

Before anyone can react, the captain cuts the dinghy's rope and shoves away from the side of the larger vessel. Bouki begins to pull on the oars until the life boat is out of reach of anyone on the fishing boat. Now the passengers begin to scream and shout. Some fall onto the slippery deck while others plead, some threaten, everyone trying to be heard over the din. But the captain doesn't turn back and Bouki keeps pulling on the oars. This has the effect of silencing the passengers, with the exception of some racking sobs. When the captain is barely visible, he calls back to them, "We're going for help. Just stay in the boat until we return."

The dinghy disappears into the mist and fog. The passengers begin look around frantically, shoving past each other to look into the hold, but each emerges onto the deck empty-handed. Another crack of thunder sounds simultaneously with a blinding flash, as a lightning bolt strikes the fishing boat's mast. Everyone on the boat crowds to the stern as far as possible from the mast. Another lightning strike lights the sky and Henri sees an enormous wave coming straight for the boat. The wave effortlessly lifts the bow of the boat out of the water and Henri finds himself launched into the air and into the stormy sea.

Henri kicks and pulls with his arms until he finally breaks the surface and can take a deep breath. That deep gulp is mostly seawater and a puff of air, as a massive wave crashes over Henri and submerges him again. Coughing with eyes streaming tears, he manages to fight his way to the surface again and sees a piece of debris floating nearby. He slowly swims toward it and grabs onto a chunk of wood with both hands. After taking a few coughing and retching breaths, he begins to get his bearings. A flash and crack of thunder, and the struggling fishing boat capsizes and quickly slips into the inky water taking another handful of passengers with it. One moment they are screaming and pleading to "Bon Dieu". The next, they are gone as if God never even dreamed of them.

Another lightning bolt splits the sky and illuminates the aftermath. Henri sees Jocelyn struggling to keep Espwa's head above water in the churning sea. He tries to swim toward her, but the

waves are too high. Other passengers sink into the water around them, their hands reaching toward the sky as they sink. The wind shifts, pushing Henri toward Jocelyn and Espwa, as another wave washes all of them together onto the debris. The rain is falling sideways now, its hail-like drops and gusting wind flaying them mercilessly. Henri turns his face back and forth in agony as the hard rain lashes his exposed skin. Another wave washes over him, but he stays afloat. When his vision clears, Henri sees Jocelyn still floating next to him on the debris pile, baby Espwa clutched to her chest.

Part 1 (Premye): ESCAPE / ARRIVAL

Arrival (1 of 3)

Caribbean Sea

Northwest of Port-au-Prince, Haiti

January, 1991

Eleven months before Henri, Jocelyn, and baby Espwa set out on their voyage...

The dull whine of the jet engines increases in pitch as the aging Boeing 727 begins its approach to Port-au-Prince International Airport. Kevin instinctively tightens his seat belt as a current of anxiety washes over him. Around him, Haitians stir and look at each other nervously, arranging their overstuffed suitcases and canvas bags and whispering to their children in Creole. Kevin doesn't yet speak much Creole, but he understands body language. He's the only white passenger on this flight, but seems connected to the Haitians by a thread of fear. No one knows what to expect when they land, but everyone expects the worst.

Kevin looks back out the window as the morning sun falls across the turquoise Caribbean waters and far ahead, the mountains of Haiti. As the plane descends, scrub vegetation becomes visible on the ridges that claw their way up the cliffs. The plane banks sharply and the city of Port-au-Prince comes slowly into view ahead, sprawled across the horizon like a hazy stain.

The wing flaps begin to move, revealing streaking oil stains as they adjust. A loud thumping sound and whining of electric motors startles the passengers as the landing gear is lowered. The plane passes over the island of La Gonave, low enough to reveal the drying fishing nets, buoys, and colorful boats pulled up onto shore. An updraft of wind rushes up to swat at the plane, the turbulence pulling Kevin against his seat belt and rattling open an overhead bin.

The aircraft continues its steep turning descent and the airport comes suddenly into view, its single landing strip surrounded by palm trees. The pilot clears his throat into the intercom and makes an announcement in French. After a brief pause, he repeats in accented English, "On behalf of Haiti Trans Air, welcome to Port-au-Prince, Haiti. The temperature on the ground is 95 degrees Fahrenheit. We hope you enjoy your stay". As the plane comes out of its turn, the passengers can see what's causing the fog to remain even as the runway is rushing up like a river. Thick columns of black smoke rise high into the air from all over the city.

The plane bounces down with engines screaming, bounces unsteadily into the air before slamming back down onto the runway. The rattling aircraft settles onto its landing gear and slows, before taxiing to a stop fifty meters from the passenger terminal. The passengers are up

on their feet now, elbowing each other as they drag their luggage down from the overhead bins. Others watch expectantly as a set of stairs is wheeled across the tarmac. As the passengers begin to disentangle themselves and their luggage, Kevin sees men in military uniforms with automatic weapons and sniper rifles posted on the roof of the airport terminal. They glance at the arriving airliner but seem much more interested in what's happening on the other side of the airport building.

A flight attendant opens the door, and a gust of hot, fetid air rushes into the cabin. Kevin barely notices the heat though, as the smell of sewage overwhelmed his senses. Sewage, rotting vegetation, brackish sea air, and exhaust fumes, but mostly sewage. He grew up in a farming community and can instantly smell the difference between pig, chicken, and cow manure. But this is something else entirely. When visiting New York City last summer, he walked outside after an afternoon thunderstorm and that was the worst thing he'd ever smelled until now. Kevin looks around, but none of the Haitians seem to notice. Resisting the urge to pull his shirt up over his mouth and nose, he tries to breathe through his mouth. What is he inhaling?!

In the aisle behind him, a man slams into the back of Kevin's knees with an oversized carry-on suitcase. Kevin shuffles his way toward the exit, his own backpack thudding against each seat. He steps out of the cabin into the blinding sun, makes his way down the stairs, and waits amid the shoving, jostling crowd until he finds his giant steamer trunk/foot locker. As he drags it across the rough surface of the tarmac, the wind shifts. He no longer notices the smell of sewage, as his eyes water from the acrid scent of burning rubber.

Kevin makes his way into the shaded entrance of the airport terminal and follows the crowd toward passport control and customs. There is no air conditioning and his shirt is instantly drenched in sweat. He prepares his bags for inspection before realizing that no one is very interested in his passport or what he's bringing into the country. Walking slowly, he leaves the secured area and heads toward the Arrivals Lounge, where he sees dozens of uniformed soldiers armed with what look like Uzi sub machine guns. Their attention isn't on him or any of the new arrivals. They seem much more concerned about who is trying to get into the airport. Kevin sees a handful of young men handcuffed by soldiers and led into a back room. Glancing up at the Departures board, he sees all the flights are shown as Cancelled. The Arrivals board shows the same. No one is getting in or out of Haiti by air. Not even from Cuba.

By some miracle, as Kevin emerges from the airport into the crowd of people looking for their friends and family, he sees a short, thin white man with thick glasses, gray streaked black hair, and a large mustache. They make eye contact and as the only white people in sight, approach each other. As he gets closer, Kevin sees the man is holding a piece of paper with his name on it. "Tim?" The man nods curtly, and without smiling or shaking his hand, reaches for Kevin's backpack, "Yes, I'm Tim. Welcome to Haiti. Let's get out of here!"

Arrival (2 of 3)

Kevin follows as Tim maneuvers his way through the crowd, waving some sort of credential whenever someone steps aside too slowly. Following Tim through the crowd, Kevin tries to

seem friendly while avoiding eye contact. Sidestepping past a group of imposing, hard faced young Haitian men, Kevin has to stop abruptly when one steps in front of him, makes deliberate eye contact, and sneers, “Blan Fou”. After moving a few steps past the men, he quietly asks Tim what that meant. With a small smile, Tim replies, “Crazy white guy”.

As they make their way free of the crowd clustered around the Arrivals Lounge, Tim begins to walk more quickly away from the terminal. Crossing the street, they pass a pair of soldiers leaning against a large banyan tree. With faded uniforms, vintage looking dented green helmets, and very new looking Uzi’s, the soldiers watch closely as the Americans make their way into the parking area. Tim approaches a dusty, red Isuzu Trooper, an SUV model unfamiliar to Kevin. One of the soldiers pushes himself away from the tree, drops his cigarette, and walks toward the SUV while unslinging his Uzi.

About the same time, a young Haitian boy emerges from between some nearby vehicles. He’s roughly ten or twelve years old, and is dressed in a tattered pair of shorts, a faded Chicago Bulls t-shirt, and plastic flip flops. Tim hands him some money and says something to him in Creole. The boy beams a bright white smile and replies something else Kevin can’t understand. The soldier notices this exchange, slips his Uzi back onto his shoulder, and returns to his observation post under the tree. Tim glances at Kevin and says, “Always pay the tax for someone to keep an eye on your vehicle. That kid will split it with the soldiers.”

Tim unlocks the SUV and pulls a tarp out of the cargo area. They load Kevin’s bags, cover them with the tarp, and climb quickly into the vehicle. Tim starts the engine and rolls down his window, “Gas is too expensive here to run the air conditioning”. As he weaves through the parking lot toward the airport exit, Kevin rolls down his passenger window and lets the humid air cool his skin. “How did you know I would be on this flight? Did someone from my NGO reach you yesterday?” Tim looks at Kevin without expression before returning his eyes to the road, “International phone calls have been down since the military took control. If you weren’t on this flight, you weren’t coming.”

Airport Access Road

They finally work their way out of the airport parking lot and make a right turn onto a potholed access road. Kevin immediately thinks of a cattle chute used in beef slaughterhouses. On the left is a chain-link fenced protecting an industrial park. On the right is the perimeter wall around the airport, a five-meter-high cement block wall topped with coiled barbed wire and shards of glass. Crowds of men, women, and children are on foot, moving in groups on the gravel shoulder and out into the street.

The atmosphere feels a bit like a party. The crowd moves like lava down the street, chanting, with the throbbing beat of African-style hand drums and referee whistles. Kevin sees a few men with rebar studded clubs and machetes mixed into the crowd. Tim begins to slow the SUV, “These mobs are all over the city right now. The Army says they’ve taken control of the city to prevent another coup attempt, but no one really trusts them. This crowd might be demonstrating against the military in support of Aristide. Or they might be trying to loot the industrial park.” He points to a laminated piece of paper on the dashboard, “Our radio station press pass should keep them from getting too aggressive.”

Whenever a car gets too close to a group of demonstrators in the street, they begin gesturing angrily and throwing debris and chunks of pavement at the car. A bottle smashes into a windshield a few cars ahead and the crowd cheers loudly. The drums beat louder and Kevin feels his heartbeat settling into their same rhythm. Vision pulsing with the insistent beat. Traffic soon grinds to a halt and the Americans find themselves surrounded in every direction, pinned motionless by a mass of humanity. Kevin reaches the handle to roll up his window and Tim said very quietly, "Don't. Do. That. If you roll up your window, they'll take it as a sign of fear and disrespect." Struggling to maintain a calm facial expression as the drums pick up their tempo, Kevin looks ahead while avoiding eye contact with anyone in the crowd.

The noise is deafening. As the crowd presses closer, they see the two Americans, and begin gesturing wildly and shouting, "Blan! Blan!" People from the crowd start crowding around Kevin's open passenger window, pointing and gesturing toward him. He's startled but manages not to shrink back from them. It becomes impossible to avoid eye contact, with faces peering into the car from all sides. Kevin adjusts the focus of his eyes so that he isn't really looking at anything, his version of the thousand-yard stare. His lack of reaction seems to deescalate things and some of the people begin to grin widely, as if this is all just a good-natured prank. Kevin smiles back, laughing along, and nods his head as if to say, "Good one! You had me going there." As the group moves on, a break opens in the traffic and Tim carefully accelerates ahead, careful to avoid any sudden movements.

Arrival (3 of 3)

Tim and Kevin round a corner in the road and see what's causing the traffic jam. Two tractor trailers are overturned and pulled across the road, forming a zig zag path between them. The makeshift checkpoint is manned by about a dozen young men. They don't have any visible weapons, but seem to be collecting a toll from motorists before letting them drive between the trailers. With no way around the obstacles, Tim slowly approaches the checkpoint. As they pull forward, a boy runs up to the group of young men, shouting and gesturing beyond the trailers behind him. Without another word, the group suddenly scatters.

An open-sided military truck rolls into view and stops at the barrier. Soldiers jump down from the truck and shoulder their weapons, aiming them toward the surrounding crowd. The crowd shrinks back, shrieking in fear and shouting angrily. An older, uniformed man with dark sunglasses steps down from the truck and begins gesturing toward the crowd and shouting orders. He assembles a group of bystanders and directs them to begin pushing the trailers off the road. Kevin flinches as one of the soldiers slaps the fender of Tim's SUV and gestures for them to begin moving ahead. Tim says "Merci" to the soldier and they pull away.

After getting past the roadblock, Tim is able to pick up more speed. They pass piles of smoldering tires every few hundred meters. Kevin sits back in his seat and enjoys the breeze coming into his window, even though the air is thick with the smell of smoke. He realizes that his hands are shaking and he exhales slowly. Tim glances over, "You OK?" Kevin takes a few more breaths, "I think so". Tim looks back at the road and shifts into a higher gear, "They've mostly left foreigners alone. So far, the US government has stayed out of it so we're not targets."

He gestures again toward the press placard on the dashboard, “We were the first station to broadcast the news that it was the police behind the coup, and not the Army. The people see us as the good guys because of that.” They pass the infamous slums of Cite Soleil on the right, the rusty tin roofs and cement block shacks extending as far as the eye can see. “I’m going to stay on the main roads though, just to be careful. There are still a lot of scores being settled in some of these neighborhoods.”

They continue in silence. It doesn’t seem long before they have to slow again, a line of traffic forming in front of them. A dark black plume of smoke billows into the sky ahead. Tim begins downshifting rapidly and leans out the driver side window, trying to see the cause. “There’s another roadblock ahead. They’re burning tires again.” He looks quickly over his shoulder and squints at the passing buildings. “No way around it. We have to get to that intersection. I’m not seeing a large crowd though. Maybe they set the tires on fire and then left.”

Approaching the intersection, they see a large pile of burning tires in the middle of the intersection, forming a sort of traffic circle. There doesn’t seem to be anyone trying to establish a roadblock. The traffic lights aren’t working, so they enter the chaotic stream of vehicles of all types and sizes trying to avoid each other, the burning tires, and swarms of angry pedestrians. Awaiting their turn to move around the obstacle, Kevin looks out his window at a smoldering pile of rubble. He slowly realizes that he’s looking at the remains of a charred body. Time slows and he can’t look away. The body is decapitated, its hands and feet cut off, and burned beyond recognition. Not wanting to believe what he’s seeing, Kevin slowly accepts that the musculature and bones are definitely human. It’s lying on its back, arms and legs outstretched toward the sky, as if praying and begging one last time.

Kevin finally squeezes his eyes shut but too late, he’s certain that he’s looking at what used to be a man. The SUV begins to move and Kevin slowly opens his eyes in time to see the name on the road sign overhead, “Boulevard Jean-Jacque Dessalines”. Hero of the Haitian Slave Revolution whose rules of engagement toward the French plantation owners and their families were quite simple, “[Koupe tet. Boule kay.](#)”

Part 2 (Dezyèm): MISEDUCATION**Dechokaj (1 of 2)****Delmas Highway**

Tim maneuvers the Isuzu around the burning debris and cement blocks strewn across the asphalt. The obstacles behind them and traffic clearing ahead, Kevin turns to Tim as he shifts into higher gear, “Did you see that? Was that really a burnt body at the roundabout?” Tim hits the brakes abruptly as a small group of protestors step into the street and wave their arms, palms down, in a gesture to stop. Tim downshifts, hits the horn and accelerator, and yanks the wheel to the left, swerving into oncoming lane of traffic but avoiding the knot of protestors. A large military-style truck is barreling toward the Isuzu Trooper, a handful of soldiers peeking around the truck cab with gun muzzles pointed vaguely in their direction. Every vehicle suddenly hits their horns at once. Above the din, Kevin hears the valiant Isuzu’s screaming engine. Tim yanks the wheel hard to the right and then left again, just in time to get out of the oncoming traffic who seem to be intentionally accelerating toward a head-on collision. The Isuzu skids briefly before all four wheels find grip and Tim continues up the Delmas highway as if it’s just another morning on I-95.

As if they hadn’t been interrupted at all, Tim glances over at Kevin his facial expression asking, “You OK over there?” Kevin lets go of the arm rest and exhales slowly, “Good to go!”. Tim up shifts and continues, “I didn’t see it, but I wouldn’t be surprised. The mob probably gave him the Pere LeBrun treatment”. After a pause he glanced at Kevin, “Pere LeBrun means ‘Father Fire’. Did they cover that in your immersion classes?” Kevin slowly shakes his head, “Not by that name. Was he another Salesian priest like Aristide?”. Tim snorts, “Hardly!”, then seems to reconsider, “Well, perhaps indirectly...” and trails off. The pause is long enough that Kevin looks over at Tim to see if he’s noticed something dangerous. But then Tim glances at the rear view mirror before adding, “It’s like necklacing in South Africa. The mob captures someone they think is on the other side.” Tim takes his hands off the wheel long enough to make air quotes with his hands. “They fill a tire with gasoline, put it over his head, and set it afire. You’ve seen those machetes, right? They don’t carry those in case they need to open a coconut. If it was a Pere LeBrun, they cut the victims hands off so they can’t pull the tire from around their own neck.”

The highway turns into two narrow lanes (one each way) and Tim casually negotiates the game of chicken, while everyone tries to nose their vehicle into the remaining lanes. Kevin’s window is still open, and he notices that the air is cleaner without the scent of tire smoke, but also cooler and less humid. Taking advantage of the traffic jam, street urchins and vendors of every imaginable beverage and street food walk between the cars offering great deals. Tim notices that Kevin is watching a young boy in a tattered Hooters t-shirt and one leather sandal, hold a cup to the window of each vehicle. No one pays him any mind. Tim says, “Best to get used to that. You’ll never have enough coins to make a difference. Besides, most of what’s in that cup will go right into the pocket of whatever orphanage/gang owns the kid.” Traffic begins to move before Kevin needs to act on this new perspective, and the street vendors scatter to the sidewalks to avoid being road kill.

Concrete/rebar roofs begin to replace the tin roof and cement block structures of the downtown slums. Street vendor booths are replaced with retail stores, pharmacies, and even a few restaurants. They're all closed now at midday, with iron bars and steel shutters covering the doors and windows. The streets are deserted and some of the stores have shotgun armed civilians on their roofs. There are more police visible now and less military presence, but Kevin's orientation was clear that there's no functional distinction.

Kevin asks, "Is it safer in this area?" Tim doesn't answer until he completes a left turn in front of a screaming motorcyclist onto a street called Delma-something, the road sign badly faded and illegible. He points toward a two-story house with blackened doors and windows. "It depends. The man who lived in that house was a member of the Tonton Macoute secret police back in the Duvalier days. And like they say, "Once a Duvalierist. Always a Duvalierist." Kevin looks into the blackened interior and the upside-down, burned-out Mercedes sedan as Tim continues, "When the power went out the night of the coup attempt, he and his family were thrown out into the street and their house was set afire. His wife and children were left alive, but were forced to watch him get Pere Lebrun. The term they're using for all this is 'dechokaj'. It means the uprooting. Like I said, lots of scores being settled."

Tim makes a few more quick left/right turns onto unmarked streets in a neighborhood of one and two story, single-family homes, built with cement and rebar. Their windows are enclosed in reinforced steel bars and a few have steel storm shutters. Many appear frozen in construction time, with partially built cinder block walls growing on top of their cement roof/floors. All the building materials have logos and markings that show they were imported from the US, except for the bags of cement. Since there's no official import/export process at the Haitian ports of entry, it makes sense that construction would stop/start as bribery and black-market conditions allow. Or the owners just ran out of money, or decided not to take in that extra family member from the provinces.

After a few more minutes, Tim slows in front of a large two-story house. It looks like a small fortress, surrounded by a wall of cement blocks, placed in a lattice pattern to allow visibility, but not access. The wall is topped with sharpened rebar and has a solid metal gate, wide enough to a vehicle to enter, when it slides open. Tim hits the horn a few times and the gate slides open. An older Haitian man emerges from behind the gate as it opens. "Our caretaker", Tim explains. "He used to be a police captain and has good connections with police and military. His information has saved this family a lot of unnecessary danger."

As they carefully pull through the gate Tim adds, "It's all about who you know here in Haiti. Probably everywhere, but especially here. Besides, it's not like you can call 911 when the mob decides they want your house." As the caretaker pulls the gate closed behind them, "It's just a precaution. We're here doing God's work and the Haitians know it. That's why those who stay out of politics and focus on spiritual matters have been left alone."

Dechokaj (2 of 2)

Delmas

For the next week, Kevin settles into his new living arrangements at Tim's house. Protestant Radio has a small FM station in the Petionville neighborhood, just a few miles up the mountain from Delmas. Kevin doesn't have access to any of the station's vehicles, so he's always hitching rides back and forth to Petionville for Creole lessons and to work at the FM station. Tim and his wife Martha, finally agree to let Kevin use their Yamaha motorcycle for local trips, if Kevin can get it running and wears a helmet.

Kevin learns that the house's caretaker / guard is named Fritz. He speaks English and is also an excellent mechanic. Fritz helps Kevin clean the Yamaha's carburetor, replace the fuel filter, gap the spark plugs, and the 175 cc engine is now running better than ever. Fritz gives Kevin some tips for surviving on Haiti's roads. "No one likes the motorcycle riders down here, because so many zenglando attacks are by men on motorbikes." Fritz cautions, "The other drivers will run you over if they get a chance. Don't weave in and out of traffic or someone will stop that real quick." Fritz gives Kevin a heavy chain, "If you're not riding it, keep it chained to something immovable. In Haiti, there's an assumption that if you don't secure your property, you must not need it as much as the next guy!"

In a country with almost total functional illiteracy, radio and newspapers are the only source of news. Most of those are in French (as is the education system), so radio remains the best way to communicate in Haitian Creole, the language that everyone speaks. The majority of radio stations in Haiti are run by either Catholic priests or Protestant pastors. Since radio is the best way for Haiti's government to communicate with its citizens, radio stations must balance journalistic integrity with survival, since there are no legal protections for the press. Kevin has a small short-wave receiver, battered and stained with mosquito spray, that he uses to monitor BBC, Voice of America, and the English version of Agence France Presse.

Kevin is in Haiti on loan from his US-based NGO (NGO Peace) to a consortium of Haitian Religious radio stations. He'll provide technical support to the Haitian Protestant and Catholic radio stations. But since Protestant Radio's gear is the oldest and least maintained it's the priority, with Tim as his day-to-day manager. NGO Peace coordinated all this via the Haitian exile community in Washington, DC. After all the agreements were complete, Kevin was sent to DC for cultural and language immersion. The language part didn't stick. But in the run up to Aristide's election and frantic scramble for election results, he learned about the history of US intervention in Haiti.

Since US media outlets had little presence outside of Port-au-Prince, most reporting from the provinces was in Haitian Creole. A young Haitian man named Gustavo started his own pirate radio station for Creole listeners in the DC area. Kevin was able to help with the technical setup and Gustavo taught him some tricks for FM line-of-sight radio transmission in mountainous or urban terrain. Gustavo's source materials were received directly from Haitian resistance contacts, who were often on the run or in hiding from Tonton Macoute death squads.

While in DC, Kevin built a list of Haitian journalists, labor organizers, and priests who he can contact throughout Haiti. Gustavo also introduced him to his Haitian contact for the news

materials. The Haitian-American man travels frequently between DC and Port-au-Prince for his import/export business. Since postal air mail is neither reliable nor secure, he's been Gustavo's channel to exchange documents and cassette tapes between the US and Haiti. Kevin doesn't ask for more details, but gets the man's card with local Port-au-Prince address and phone/fax.

As emergency repairs allow, Kevin is training Haitian technicians to maintain the equipment and perform troubleshooting after he leaves. Protestant Radio is owned and funded by a board of Haitian pastors in Cayes, about half a day drive from the main station in Carrefour. The Protestant Radio board readily agreed to host Kevin, because the current system of visiting American engineers is too expensive and sporadic to be sustainable. Tim "agrees" with the arrangement, because he reports to the board. But as he says to Kevin, "We've tried training Haitians before. As soon as they become capable, they leave for a higher paying job." Kevin asks, "Wouldn't a few pay raises solve that problem?" Tim snorts, "Oh, sure. But then we'll have every other employer angry at us for raising wages!"

Kevin spends most of his time in Delmas or Petionville. These communities have better infrastructure and are at a higher elevation than downtown Port-au-Prince, so the mosquitos, heat, and humidity are much less oppressive. But modern conveniences require maintenance. Susan, Tim, and the kids have explained the rules to maintain the house's electrical and water systems and to avoid water-borne illnesses. Five-minute showers at most, with no hot water other than what's been solar heated in the water drums installed on the house's roof. Refrigerator door must never be left open. The freezer never gets cold enough to freeze anything, so it's filled with water jugs. The family taught him a sort of sing-song nursery rhyme on his first day, "Never ask for ice. Always drink from the bottle. Unless the ice cubes say Culligan!" Since Kevin experienced Haitian happiness digestive distress during his fact-finding trip the previous year, he sings along each time.

There is a lot of time spent cooking each day. Without reliable electricity or propane for stoves and ovens, most food is prepared over charcoal in the yard outside the kitchen. Haitians cook their rice and beans differently from their neighbors in the DR or Puerto Rico. The process usually takes a full day of stirring a cast iron pot. Since it's a lot of work and Americans can never get the recipe quite right, Susan and Tim have hired a Haitian cook named Nadine to shop each day and prepare food for the family. She lives nearby and cooks the lunch and dinner meals based on whatever is available in the market. Since Tim and his family don't drink much coffee, Nadine shows Kevin how to make his own coffee in the Haitian style. First by grinding the beans, then percolating over a bed of coals, and then served with lots of condensed milk. The hand-powered coffee grinder was made by Nadine's neighbor, who sells them at the Iron Market. The little aluminum coffee pots are in every kitchen and have thick wooden handles to allow the pot to be handled over high heat.

Tim is showing Kevin the elaborate electrical system of batteries, backup power units, solar panels, and a small Honda gasoline generator. "We only get a few hours of electricity per day, so it's important that the charging leads be attached to the battery system at all times. I don't like the kids trying to connect the cables, so make sure everything is connected before you leave the house". Kevin asks, "When do you think the power will be back to normal? I thought they were cutting power to enforce the curfews or something." Tim laughs, "I've been here ten years

and this is normal. Wait until you see the generator system at the radio station. There was never good utility service in Carrefour, so we just built our own.”

Kevin looks at Tim with confusion, “Why can’t the power company keep the power on?” Tim thinks a bit and replies, “Well, it’s never been great but the Iraq War has caused prices of fuel to skyrocket on the open market. National Power can only afford to provide electricity to the city after paying bribes to get diesel into their generators. Then, protection money to keep the copper on the power lines and out of the scrap yards. That leaves us with two-hour rolling blackouts across a city with a population the size of Maryland.”

As Tim shuts the door to the utility closet, his teenage daughters come into the kitchen with their backpacks and Walkman headphones over their ears. Tim gets the attention of Susan, the oldest, and says “You’re not going to be able to drive to Mission School. I need the Isuzu. I’ll be taking Kevin over to Carrefour and expect to be there all day. You’ll have to hitch a ride with your mother.” Susan sighs but replies, “Yes, Dad. Mom will make sure we get there safely.” His younger daughter rolls her eyes and says, “We could walk there in ten minutes!” Tim turns to her, “Karen, we’re still in safety mode and you know that. Please take this seriously. No walking on these streets. Your mother will pick you up at the Mission. Just do your homework while you wait.”

Tim leads Kevin from the kitchen out into the attached car port / garage, to a tangle of pipes and hoses attached to cement wall. “Make sure these hoses don’t have any air bubbles in them, because then the siphon feed doesn’t work. If you see any, just open this valve and release some water into the drain. That will get the flow going again.” Kevin just shakes his head, “This is all so the water filtration system doesn’t run dry?” Tim nods, “You got it. Nothing worse than returning from the field to find dry water lines.”

Iron Market, Downtown

Having just arrived in a country without a functioning government, Kevin settles into a gray area between undocumented, illegal immigrant and short-term visitor visa. As do most of the expatriate-NGO types who operate without adult (aka US governmental) oversight. No one considers the Haitian government, the utility companies, or banks to be anything other than monopolistic cartels. Local custom is to rely on the black market for everything.

Since NGO Peace has not been recognized by Haiti’s government, they cannot open any bank accounts in Haiti. Instead, NGO Peace channels funds to Kevin through his US personal checking account for exchange into the local currency, Gourdes. Kevin and Tim are leaving a downtown market. Tim has introduced him to an “Arab”, North African merchant who will provide an exchange US dollars for Haitian gourdes at 90% to the official exchange rate, even when exchanging a personal check. While Kevin doesn’t fully understand all the signals, it’s clear that he’s being inducted into some sort of secret, unspoken arrangement where collateral has already been exchanged. But no one is asking many questions, because the alternative is the National Bank that takes 20% before taxes, fees, and mandatory “tips”.

Tim is pulling along a luggage wagon, stacked with heavy marine deep-cycle batteries, lanterns, water containers of all sizes, 5-gallon buckets with lids, and several gallons of the flat black paint used to coat 55-gallon drums of water on rooftop solar water heaters. Kevin is lugging along a

5-gallon jerrycan filled with kerosene, the lid leaking badly. No cigarettes can be lit until the can is safely stowed in the Trooper's luggage bay. They maneuver around piles of coconuts, hand-made leather work, colorful paintings, and swarms of naked children chasing each other around everything while their older friends use the distraction to thieve a few loaves of bread. Women glide by in brightly colored dresses, balancing piles of textiles and baskets on their heads.

Making sure not to knock over any of the merchant stalls, they make their way back to the parked Isuzu. Tim paid a street kid 5 gourde to watch the vehicle. Kevin can't remember where the Isuzu is, but recognizes the kid's Montreal Expos shirt as he follows Tim around a corner. Kevin is happy to see the vehicle is still where they left it. Montreal Expos sees them coming, nods to Tim, and then disappears into the crowd. As they load the Trooper Kevin asks, "When are you going to let me take custody of the station's little 4WD Lada?" Tim doesn't reply, so Kevin continues, "Why isn't anyone using it. It's not half as rusty as most of the other SUV's?" Tim quickly replies, "Oh! That thing. I don't know where we got that Russian eye-sore, but no one even knows how to start it. We'll probably just sell it for parts. But not even the Cubans want them." They get in the Isuzu. Kevin reaches for the seat belt out of habit before rolling down the window instead.

Part 2 (Dezyèm): MISEDUCATION

Missionaries (1 of 3)

"Whatever happened to those missionaries that disappeared last week?", Kevin asks. "I can't believe we didn't have any rounds come through the house." Tim interrupts him, "Well, maybe you shouldn't stand up on the roof when people are shooting at each other!" Kevin gives him a "fair point" facial expression, before continuing, "That firefight went on for hours! Was it connected to the Americans disappearing?" Tim doesn't respond, as he is gesturing emphatically at a police officer/soldier in combat gear and an Uzi. The armed man finally notices Tim's press pass, and lets them past the impromptu tolling station that just materialized in front of the blan Isuzu.

As they start moving again, Tim doesn't respond so Kevin continues, "I mean, I get that the zenglando are basically just the next version of Macoute, but why do so many of these awful dechokaj events seem to target either the Catholic hierarchy or old-school American missionaries? You've been explaining that the only safe way to preach the gospel is by avoiding politics. Then why have so many Christians been caught up in this political conflict?"

Finally, Tim sighs and replies, "Kevin, no offense, but you don't have enough Creole to understand what you're hearing on the radio. I don't know what you think you're learning from the newspapers, you can barely read French. Of course..." Tim swerves to avoid a man pulling a wooden cart full of barrels out of an alley. "Of course it's messy. Voodoo, Kevin. Demonic powers. This is spiritual warfare. We've been saying this for years, so of course they're coming after the missionaries. This country deserves all its suffering until they let go of their superstitions, reject communism, and accept help from the US! And yeah, the Lavalas mobs went after the Archbishop. The Vatican is all that remains between Haiti and total anarchy!"

Kevin lights a cigarette and replies, "Well, that, the CIA and whatever else the US embassy is cooking up.". Tim jerks in his seat and glances sharply at Kevin, then makes a show of waving away the cigarette smoke. Kevin continues, "Of course Haitian Catholicism absorbed some African folk spirituality into its Saints and Holidays. Doesn't make it idolatry or whatever." Tim suddenly jolts upright, "Are you trying to defend voodoo?!" Kevin sighs, "I'm not defending anything. I'm saying, it doesn't seem that different than Christmas being in December with a Yule log and lots of fir trees. That's not in the Bible either." Still no response from Tim, so Kevin pushes more, "Those leftists you're worried about? Are those the same that are running the Mother Teresa orphanage down the street from your house? Or the Fathers who are reminding everyone that Jesus was a brown-skinned, poor refugee, too?"

Now Tim pulls the Isuzu abruptly to the side of the road, angrily pulls the emergency brake, and turns his body toward Kevin. "You read a lot of books back home. Met a lot of exiles in DC." He leans in, so close now that Kevin can smell the street-pork that Tim ate at the market. "You might think it's all fun and games, but your name has already found its way to the Embassy. Your leftist church may think human rights are more important than law and order, but those of us who have been here more than a minute, no better." He takes the cigarette from Kevin's hand and throws it past his face out the passenger window before continuing, "This is a godforsaken place. Until Haiti bends the knee to God Almighty, they get all that they deserve. And you will too, if you're not careful."

Kevin breaths out slowly and stares into Tim's eyes. Neither blinking. And then both snap out of it at the same time. Kevin replies, "Look. Here's the thing. I'm still here to help. You're not the first "customer" to shoot the messenger because he didn't like the message. I may not have Creole yet or understand what all these foreigners are doing down here, but I know bullshit when I step in it."

As they pass a Kok Kalite mural with fighting rooster above the phrase, "Ansamn, Ansamn, nou se Lavalas!". Kevin gestures toward it, "Like the sign says, 'Together we're the avalanche!', but who gets washed away? Before I came down here, I was told to assume every priest is progressive and every pastor is conservative until proven otherwise." Kevin gestures toward the Bible on the seat between them. "It's been a while since we talked about anything in there but Paul's letters. Well, I was taught that the Bible may or may not be infallible, but you better not try to use it against the poor."

Tim slowly restarts the Isuzu and gets back on the road. "I think it's best we table this for now. It's been a long day and you need to get back to your language classes. That's still a condition of you getting access to any of the station's vehicles. You can keep using the Yamaha for back/forth to wherever you go. I just don't want to know about it." He looks over at Kevin, "Kompran?" Kevin replies, "Tout sanble."

They pull up to Tim's gate, just as all the lights go out in his house. The gate opens to the sound of Tim's wife and daughters, wailing that their TV/DVD just shut off. Kevin looks Tim in the eye and says, "I'm going to let you handle those batteries. It's been a long day, and I need to practice my Creole phrases before my lesson tomorrow."

Missionaries (2 of 3)

Carrefour

His orientation now complete, Kevin is splitting time between the FM station in Petionville and the main AM station and programming offices in Carrefour. The station's reporting has confirmed that the January coup attempt was initiated by a group of Haitian generals, with the aim to prevent the elected Aristide government from ever getting into office. These generals disappeared after the dechokaj started and a provisional government has been installed to oversee the transition to Aristide's inauguration next month.

Carrefour is growing rapidly as many Haitians from the provinces have been forced into the Port-au-Prince urban sprawl. Haiti's political conflict has disrupted the country's fragile economic system, resulting in mass displacement and migration. Peasant and labor unions are targeted for political retribution by the old Duvalierist and Macoute death squads, who are now operating with impunity. This displacement resulted in Carrefour being a crucial voting precinct, but there were many irregularities in the voting, which now require a run-off election. While Protestant Radio will not allow political ads on air, they did make the station available as a polling place in the previous general election.

One day while Kevin is working with a Haitian technician named Jè, there is a commotion in the main studio office area. They decide to see what's going on. When they enter the office area, Kevin sees a handful of Haitians in the hallway negotiating with Tim. The lead negotiator is a young Haitian woman, who has excellent English and is speaking calmly and firmly. Kevin can't hear everything she's saying because Tim is raising his voice, "I'm sorry Ms. Baptiste, we agreed to have the station used for the general election only. It's just not possible to open the station for another weekend. We only have a small team of weekend staff on hand." The Haitian woman looks at Tim silently for a long while, saying nothing. Finally, Tim continues, "I understand how important the run-off elections are and would love to help, but I just can't see a way to do it."

Kevin watches as the Ms. Baptiste confers with the group of Haitians. They all seem to be deferring to a man who's standing toward the back of the group, dressed in olive colored fatigue pants, black boots, and dark green t-shirt. Their brief huddle complete, Ms. Baptiste turns back to Tim. Kevin notices the man in the green t-shirt step away from the group and slip outside before he can see his face clearly. Ms. Baptiste continues, "We're not representing any candidate. But we are working with some Haitian pro-democracy groups in DC, to make sure there are observers for any run-off elections." She pulls out a bundle of documents and holds them so Tim can see, "The agreement you made with the Government of Haiti states that your station will be available for the general election AND run-offs. I understand it's inconvenient, but it isn't optional. If you don't make the station available, someone will need to explain that and since you signed the agreement, that's you."

Tim doesn't reply to this but says, "Well, if we need to get the Station lawyer involved, we can, but that won't be until next week. I don't know what else to say. I can't just open the station to the public this weekend without staff to make sure all our equipment doesn't disappear." Since the conversation seems to be at a stalemate, Kevin clears his throat and quietly says, "I could be

at the station this weekend to open/close and make sure nothing disappears.” Ms. Baptiste’s mouth shows a brief smile, before she regains her composure and turns to Tim, “Sounds like we might have a solution.” Tim stares at Kevin, his face showing irritation and says, “Fine. But Kevin, I’m holding you accountable if anything disappears. And keep everyone out of my office!”.

On run-off election day, the Ms. Baptiste arrives to make sure the polling place is open. Since she’s not allowed to go inside the polling place without an observer, Kevin walks her in and meets a few Haitian poll watchers. Everyone is focused on their work, so there’s not much time for small talk. But during a break, Kevin learns that one of the poll workers is related to his pirate radio friend, Gustave. They share stories and laugh about some jokes he’s told them both.

While Kevin expected his presence to be a formality, he does need to perform his actual role as election observer. About halfway through the day, poll workers are swapping full ballot boxes for empty new ones, when a worker finds one of the ballot boxes is already filled with completed ballots. She calls over the election judge and Kevin watches them remove all the ballots, and fan them out across the floor. Then Kevin photographs them, before the ballots are gathered and locked in a briefcase by the election judge. The election judge attaches a seal across the briefcase. The judge, poll worker sign as local Haitian witnesses and Kevin signs as official international observer. Kevin reports this all to Tim the next week. But Tim’s only response is, “It’s all as waste of time. These people will never understand democracy as anything but a tribal conflict.”

Tim’s House, Delmas

It’s getting late in the afternoon. The tropical sun and ever-present dust cast a soft glow in the screened in porch, where Tim and Kevin are enjoying a pot of French-roasted Haitian coffee mixed with thick, sweet, condensed milk.

Kevin leans in a bit as Tim wipes his mustache and continues, “So we really need you out in Cayes next week, so you can get your “blessing” from local leadership and get that noise silenced. Then get some real work done up on Mount Boeffe.” Tim pauses just long enough to see if Kevin will reply, but with no reaction continues, his voice rising slightly. “I would have sent you up there first, except you won’t get halfway there without security and Haitian muscle. Which I can’t get you, until you clean up this dust up between the local pastors and your NGO.”

Again, the careful pause, the almost eye contact, then straightening his back, begins to speak very forcefully, jabbing the air with his pen for emphasis, “Frankly, I’m beginning to question both motivation and ability of all involved!”. He quickly looks over his shoulder toward the living room where his daughters are practicing piano and violin, and lowers his voice to a more conversational tone, “But I know you’re a good guy. My kids like you.” Tim takes an almost fatherly tone, “But you are walking a dangerous line and need to decide who you serve. I need team players, not divas. Are we clear?”

Very slowly, as if taking care not to spill a drop of coffee from the empty cup, Kevin places the delicate, china cup and saucer onto the teak patio table. “I’m not sure we are. Clearly, our

Boards should have sorted out their mission statements before I got here. You have me locked down here in Delmas, surrounded by Americans who can't speak Creole and are afraid to venture downtown. Now you ask why I haven't already gone out to the provinces to negotiate my way out of the crisis you created when you censored my mail and shared a bunch of out-of-context notes with the pastors."

Kevin leans back, and carefully exhales, allowing some of the intensity to bleed from his voice. "The only social contact I have is with staff at the radio station in Carrefour, who only want to improve their English. Or whoever is in the car during the two-hour commute back and forth each day, or whoever is at the Delmas Church when I can hitch a ride there and back."

Then very softly, so that Tim needs to lean in a bit toward Kevin to hear him, "I might have been born at night, but not last night. If you think this is the first time someone has set me up with no option but to fail, you didn't read my file closely enough. You brought up your daughters. NOT me. But since we're on that topic, I can't imagine what you think is going to happen to them, if all your dire predictions about Aristide's communist hordes play out as you imagine."

Missionaries (3 of 3)

Tim freezes, his eyes seeming to see Kevin for the first time. He slowly asks, "What exactly are you saying?" Kevin responds evenly, "I'm here as on loan to your board. You can't fire me because I'm independently funded and have air cover at the national level. And if you do, I'll just go work with the Catholic stations. You know all this and we've had this conversation before. I'm here to help whoever needs it, as long as they're not hurting anyone. Everything else is just noise. What exactly is the problem here?"

The hymns from the next room have stopped now. Everyone except Tim and Kevin are now at the far end of the house in the kitchen, noisily clanging pots and pans. Both men sit back in their chairs and regard the other. Waiting to see who will go first, and lose. Kevin starts to fish out a pack of local cigarettes knowing that Tim cannot stand the smell of their smoke, but since they're on the porch, can't really say anything either. Kevin then takes off his glasses, and carefully examines them for dust, before wiping something away, then takes out a wooden match, and starts to strike it against his boot. Before Kevin can get the dilapidated cigarette lit, Tim suddenly stands up and says, "Well, listen. I don't have time to explain all this to you now. You're right. You're paid for through the summer. And you're not my responsibility. You're a liability. So that gives me a few weeks to get something in return for my trouble. One way or the other, I need you up on that peak and down again with all your gear and that tower at full power. Or, up on that peak with a month's worth of supplies and a short-wave life-line to me until that happens. Or until you die trying."

Tim is standing fully upright now, his voice at sermon volume, his eyes staring into Kevin's. "You're a leaf in the wind with no allegiances except to your no-creed peace church? Good for you. You signed on the line that was dotted. You said you know the deal. We both know you came in here naked as a whore, without K&R, logistics, or any physical security. You won't even report in at the US Embassy." He throws his hands up in frustration, "Now I'm trying to explain

YOU down there, while also trying to run a radio station. You want to play power games? Fine. Show me what you got. Figure out how to negotiate through the mess your leftist friends have made for you in Cayes. Or don't. But be someplace else until end of summer while I decide what to do with you. Now, get it done!"

Kevin slowly stands up and faces Tim, "I have accountability to my NGO and the folks back home who support me. I won't quit the assignment or take back my commitment to the Haitian staff. Unless you make it impossible for me to continue." Tim's eyeing Kevin carefully now, as if sensing that this isn't a negotiation. Kevin doesn't raise his voice, but it becomes firmer, "But I will continue to voice my concerns about your programming and coziness with all the military regimes. My NGO simply will not involve itself in any missionary shenanigans with the US Embassy or the Haitian generals. I can't explain those thank you letters from the military regime to Radio Protestant, and neither could my NGO. So instead of insisting that I go explain why I shared that information, maybe you should go explain those letters to the Haitian pastors. I'll find a way to sort out Mount Buff. I'll explain the technical situation to the pastors in Cayes and find a place to live in Carrefour, so I don't have to waste half a day every day, commuting from the fancy part of town to where I work."

Tim suddenly appears to notice that Martha and his daughters are standing at the kitchen doorway, listening closely. Kevin finishes stuffing his notebook into his overstuffed backpack and continues, "I assume the station's Honda 250 will be available for local use in Carrefour, but I won't beg you for a lift. I'll hitch rides or use public transport until my home team can pull together enough cash for a car."

They hear a horn toot from the street outside. Kevin glances outside and turns back to Tim, "That's a friend of a friend who's going to help me get my stuff stowed until I'm situated." Tim takes a deep breath and assembles his "boss face" but Kevin cuts him off with a raised palm. "Before you start hurling your boss-speak at me, I want to say one last thing. And you can quote me. I didn't just fall off the turnip truck and arrive at the airport in the middle of a coup attempt. I've had a lot of training in relevant things for the past year. That's why YOUR board invited me to this party. You may be an expert on how things worked when the Duvalierists and their Macoutes ran this place. But you might want to ask yourself whether this house will withstand a dechokaj. That press pass won't save you or anyone, if Lavalas decides you're the problem. And believe me, if they knew what I know, you'd already be sitting in the rubble."

Now Tim's face is ashen, and Martha gasps, Kevin looks at Tim's wife and young daughters and says to them quietly, "You took me in, fed me, and played music with me. This thing has nothing to do with you. I'm not passing anything on to anyone about this conversation or the other things I know. I don't have a dog in this clash of empires. But Mission Church has great music, so I really do hope to see you up there at the next Talent Show."

Without waiting for any acknowledgement from Tim, Kevin opens the front door and drags his footlocker onto the porch. "You do what you need to do, but it changes nothing for me. Decisions will be made above my pay grade. I just do my job and pass along information to others who might understand what I can't. I've already sent another personal report to family and church back home." Tim opens his mouth to speak, but Kevin cuts him off, "I know you said

you need to censor my mail, but I'm not speaking on behalf of you or the station. Never was my assignment. Sorry there was so much confusion."

Kevin's ride is waiting outside in a beat-up, primer gray, Land Cruiser pickup truck, with a rusted camper cab. He grins when he sees Kat at the wheel. She smiles back at him with her permanently ironic grin and says, "Sake pase?!" As he closes the door to Tim's house behind him, he laughs and replies, "M'a boule!"

Part 3 (Twazyèm): REBELLION

Networks (1 of 3)

Delmas Highway

As Kevin steps up and into the passenger-side door, a young Haitian woman slides across to the middle of the seat. Kat looks out her window and shifts the Land Cruiser into reverse. The young woman is holding a large Algebra textbook in her lap. He says, "Komo o ye? Non mwen se Kevin." She looks up at him, smiles, and replies in perfect English, "Hi Kevin, my name is Jocelyn. How are you?" Kevin's eyebrows raise in surprise before he starts to laugh, "Well then. I'll stop torturing you with my horrible Creole!" Kat tries to stifle a chuckle, which just makes Kevin's double-take even funnier and they all laugh together.

Jocelyn returns to the formulas in her notebook and Kevin watches in his passenger mirror, as Kat backs the rig into an impossible three-point turn. Kat's name isn't anything like "Kat" and the Haitians could never pronounce it much less spell it, so everyone refers to her by her Haitian nickname, misspelled to avoid any confusion! She got the nickname because the Haitians think her skin and hair color are like a tabby cat. And she has this sort of glide/prowl of a cheetah, so it all works.

Kat avoids a few street urchins, who go to great lengths to pantomime how close they came to death due to her reckless driving. She rolls down the window and starts bantering with them in rapid Creole that Kevin can't quite follow. But before long, everyone is laughing and the kids are in the truck bed and on top of the camper shell. They shout and wave at surprised pedestrians who can't quite fit together what they're seeing. Kat casually maneuvers the over-sized truck through the scrum and onto Delmas, holding a stately pace as she drives her traveling circus down the mountain toward the Big Top.

When they're tucked in with traffic Kat asks, "So, did they fire you for thought crimes?" Kevin chuckles, "Kind of difficult, when they don't pay me in the first place." Kat snaps back, "Colonizers. Am I right?!" The two Americans roar in laughter as the Haitian kids lean in the little window between camper shell and driver cab to see what's going on. Jocelyn smiles at the joke but continues working in her notebook. Kat points at Kevin and says something like "gro neg" and "kay" and everyone laughs even more. But Kevin knows it's with him and not at him, so he laughs along. Sprinkling a few Creole phrases into the mix in a way that doesn't seem to offend anyone.

Kat closes the window to the kids and asks, "OK, seriously. What's your play here? You're welcome to crash at our guest house in Petionville, but that's not really a long-term plan." Kevin

replies reflexively, “Seriously. What did I step into here? This escalated way faster than expected... I still can’t believe our mutual friends managed to get you here on time, based on that ridiculous coded hostage call I made over open air!” Kat laughs, “I think you mean my friends, but you might make the cut!” Kevin chuckles, “Well, it wouldn’t be the first time I was voted off an island.” He thinks for a bit and seems to make a decision. “How about this. Drop me off at that Mother Mary safe house near the Cathedral. I’ll stow my stuff and make sure the priests know what’s up. Then I’ll make my way to Miragoane by [tap-tap](#) and find your house. Can’t be that difficult to find a house full of blan!”

As she takes an opportunity to wedge the Toyota into the left-turn lane, Kat is quiet until the horns stop blaring and then replies, “Not a bad plan. When you get to Miragoane, just go to the police station and ask where the blan live. They all know!” She glances over at Kevin, “But you’re going to make it out there by tap-tap, with your Creole?!” Just then, a garishly painted [camion](#) nearly takes off the driver’s side mirror. Kevin shifts in his seat nervously, “Well, OK, but I can read a map. Once I get on a tap-tap, it’s just a straight shot west to Miragoane. I can sign-language my way there if I need to.” He looks over his shoulder out the passenger window reflexively and continues, “But really? Show up at the police station and hope for the best? I just barely survived watching “Do The Right Thing” at the downtown cinema. Thank all the [loa](#), no one could read the French subtitles or understand the English. But my dumb white ass stuck out like some sort of [Mal Leve](#)! No one seems to be in the mood to talk with the White American right now.”

Kat grins, “First off, it’s Miragoane, not Port. Our police are basically just a local club / fraternity. They don’t care what you or anyone does, as long as it doesn’t interfere with the Colombian trade. And we don’t have an airport or deep-water port, so no one really cares what we do unless we start an uprising or something. And no plans for that right now!” Kat and Kevin burst into laughter and sort of sing-song quote together from an imaginary hymnal, “Because THAT would be wrong!” and laugh uncontrollably for a few seconds. But then Kat suddenly gets very serious and continues, “How about one tweak. I drop you in the vicinity of the Cathedral and then forget where that Mother Mary safe house is. Then I have plausible deniability. How do I know what you did after I dropped you by the Cathedral? I just assumed you were going to get some Dominican fried chicken.”

Kevin’s face breaks into an even bigger smile, “I know I read all the LeCarre novels and WW2 resistance manuals. What were you reading?!” Without skipping a beat, Kat says, “Banned books, of course!” Kevin breaks into a huge grin, “You mean like 1984, Politics of Jesus, and War Against the Poor?!” With a sly grin, Kat replies, “Sure. That’s a good start. Plus some Chomsky and Sun Tzu. But if you connect with those liberation theology base communities? Get some real language fluency and some useful skills from those guys? You’ll be in the REAL game!”

As Kat pulls the Land Cruiser up in front of the gleaming National Cathedral, Kevin steps out of the truck and the gaggle of street kids clamor down from the pickup bed. They’re joined by another swarm of kids from the Cathedral Park, and there’s a bit of shouting and turf-explaining until everyone decides to see if the blans will hand over some cash. Kat’s way ahead of this game, and is already pulling away from the scene as Kevin is surrounded by a sea of dirty faces asking for [ti kob](#). But Kevin has one good Creole phrase that never fails. It acknowledges the

kids but also sets a fair boundary. He can't pretend that he CANNOT help, because of course he could. But since he can't help everyone, he simply says, "[M pa gen anye pou ou.](#)" Delivered correctly, it stops any further discussion. Then he drags his footlocker up the hill toward the safe house that he can see from the steps of the Cathedral.

Networks (2 of 3)

Mother Mary of Our Eternal Peace guest house

Since he's arrived after 3 pm, Kevin is given a small cubicle with cot and wash basin for the night. Aside from a table, chair, and ash tray, not a lot else. But in a safe place with God's angels watching over him, Kevin sleeps like a baby. The next morning, Kevin joins the priests, nuns, and brothers/sisters for a cup of coffee and communal smoke. As Kevin helps to clean up the coffee setting, an older Haitian priest steps into the dining area. His hair is cut close to his scalp and his short beard is flecked with gray. The priest scans the room until he sees Kevin and walks toward him, his smooth face revealing deep smile lines as he grins widely. Kevin face shows surprise as he sees the priest approaching. He almost shouts, "Oh, oh! Father Vitor! I thought you were [andeyo!](#)" One of the Haitian sisters smiles and takes away the tray while the two men embrace.

With a slap on Kevin's back, Father Vitor breaks the embrace, "Glad to see Kat got you here last night. She has a rare ability to gather wayward blan." Kevin laughs and replies, "Well, thanks for connecting the dots for me. All this time, I thought Kat was Gustavo's tape recording source. But you've been pulling strings in DC all along!" They laugh together, while Father Vitor helps Kevin carry his footlocker and backpack upstairs to a large bunk room and shared living space. After inventorying his footlocker's contents with the priest, Kevin receives a little ticket and his foot locker is safely secured.

Then he asks Kevin, "Is there anything sensitive about your situation? Anything that could cause scrutiny by the authorities?" Kevin thinks for a bit and replies that he can't think of anything new. Then the priest asks, "What about the Americans at the radio station. You're quite exposed there. Are you sure you're safe to continue? The base communities could sure use your technical expertise to get their radio network online." Kevin looks thoughtful and then replies, "I think it's worth the calculated risk. The station board can't walk back those thank you letters from the Generals and US agencies. I just sorted that out with the American station manager. He can explain his programming decisions to the Haitian pastors and I'll stay focused on the transmitter outage. That's all they really care about and it's what I'm supposed to be doing down here anyway." Father Vitor bursts into laughter, "You've already taken enough liberties with your NGO's rules!" Kevin laughs along, "Right?! Who knew it would be a bad idea to let me off my leash?" He pauses before continuing, "How about if we try both? I stay in my current role as necessary evil at the station but use my exile in the provinces to get connected with a base community in the south. Isn't there one near Miragoane?"

Father Vitor takes a cigarette from Kevin's pack on the table and chuckles. "I can't believe you smoke these local things!" But he lights up anyway and Kevin laughs, "Well, I'm tired of paying ten times as much for stale Marlboros." Fr Vitor takes a deep drag, exhales into the ceiling fan, and thinks for a bit. "I like it. You're hiding in plain sight. And, you won't need to kiss the ring of

those right-wing pastors in Cayes. We can help you get your gear up and down the mountain if needed. Maybe even add a solar powered repeater of our own at no cost to anyone.”

Kevin’s face shows visible relief as he replies, “Honestly, I’d be afraid the wrong people would follow me to the community right now. But if you give me a contact, I’ll find a time to stop by when no one expects me anywhere else. I’m not leaving the country or going into hiding. But I definitely need some cover while I get myself settled in Carrefour. Then we can start getting those recordings across the border to the brothers in DR.” The old priest agrees, and they join the rest of the house for a community lunch of beans over [mayin moulin](#) and sweet Haitian coffee.

When only a few of the priests and brothers remain, everyone joins in to clean up the empty plates and serving trays. Kevin asks, “Why is it you always eat mayin moulin instead of rice? I thought rice is what goes with beans!” Father Vitor suppresses a grin and glances at one of the younger brothers. “Well, why is that?” The younger man smiles broadly and replies without hesitation, “Because rice is imported. What we grow in the Artibonite is stolen by the Macoutes. But we can grow corn anywhere. And the upper classes refuse to eat mayin moulin because it’s peasant food. So there’s always enough for the rest of us!” With that, hugs and two-cheek French kisses are exchanged, and Kevin leaves Mother Mary’s Eternal Peace with his backpack, a new handheld tape recorder, a pocket full of gourdes, and a blessed mission from God himself.

Networks (3 of 3)

Iron Market

It’s early afternoon and hot but the sun sets quickly this time of year, so there’s shade on the road side. Kevin meanders downhill, following the merchants in reverse as they make their way back up the mountain with mostly empty baskets on their heads. Eventually, he arrives at the Iron Market. A massive indoor/outdoor market that never sleeps. Kevin wanders around a bit, deflecting the half-hearted high ball offers of vendors who have already sold their best wares. Eventually he finds a chaotic scrum of the infamous tap taps pointed in a generally westerly direction, waiting for the last chicken, goat, or small child to be attached to the sides or roof of the vehicle.

Kevin takes out his beat up Pentax 35mm camera and snaps a few shots of the scene. Each tap-tap is basically a small Toyota pickup truck (always a Toyota!) with a camper shell on its bed. Unremarkable, until the eye finally takes in the mobile art exhibit on each. Always bright, primary colors. Without question, some scantily clad and buxom women. Usually, Jesus and Kok Kalite and Aristide and every Catholic Saint who ever tried to help the poor or wayward. Or a more modern theme, with animals and mythical creatures, blending with loas and other vodou symbols. Along with a few local beer, rum, and Heineken logos plastered over every rust spot or evidence of tender, fender-to-fender love.

Kevin’s heard that it’s possible to travel across the entire country by tap-tap, but there are larger camions (school buses painted with as much imagination as the tap-taps) for longer distance runs. The tap-taps basically do round-trip runs that get them back home each night. Their

drivers are every bit as aggressive as Manhattan taxi drivers and for extra fun, they refuse to turn their headlights on until it is pitch-black outside. The drivers have all convinced themselves that illuminated headlights reduce fuel efficiency, so it's incredibly dangerous to be a pedestrian around dawn and dusk. Donkeys always get right of way. THAT is non-negotiable.

It's late afternoon but the market is still packed. Just before Kevin gets clear of the merchants and is about to head toward the waiting tap-taps, a grizzled old Haitian man offers him a machete for the equivalent of \$5 USD. Kevin notices the hand-stitched leather handle and matching scabbard. Kevin replies, "No, merci" after a bit too much hesitation. Before the man can make another lower offer, Kevin asks in his halting Creole, "[Ki kote](#) tap-tap Miragoane?" (Where is the tap-tap to Mirogoane?) His ridiculous accent seems to catch the old guy off guard and he points toward the nearest tap-tap. Kevin thanks him and approaches the loading area.

After joining the group waiting to depart (there are no lines, just a huddle of people jostling for a place when each tap-tap arrives), Kevin sees that there are already a dozen adults stuffed into the cab of this small truck, along with quite a few children. A couple teenage boys are also hanging onto hand rails on the outside of the cab. Kevin accepts the situation, wedges himself into the elbows and asses until he has a spot on the wooden bench inside. Many of the people in the tap-tap have been performing manual labor all day, so the air is pungent with a mix of body odor, garlic, and the fried pork that many have brought along as a snack. The good news is, no matter how bad the driver, Kevin cannot be thrown free of the truck in an accident. Safety first, as he was taught.

Only in country a few months, Kevin is already accustomed to stares from Haitians. To be fair, it's very uncommon for an American to travel by tap-tap, so he can't really blame the locals for being surprised to see him. There's an uncomfortable silence as the tap-tap starts moving, while a couple dozen eyes stare at him. The facial expressions range from impassive to slightly annoyed. Finally, Kevin clears his throat and with an apologetic grin says, "Sake pase?" That seems to do the trick and smiles break out among the group. He hears the word blan more than fou and his fellow passengers seem to be having quite a bit of fun at his expense. That's OK. He'd rather be a source of comedy than anger, so he smiles and nods along. Eventually, the novelty wears off and the passengers settle into the ride, swaying against each other without apology.

Kevin can't see much from his seat well inside the cab. Under his breath, he mutters, "Note to self. Be the last person into a tap-tap, not the first." They stop occasionally when a passenger slaps the roof of the cab. But for every person who gets off, another always seems to get on. Kevin loses track of time, but they finally arrive in Miragoane an hour or so after dark. The tap-tap stops in front of the local police station as Kat had told him to expect. Kevin climbs over the other passengers, "Excuse", "Pardon, moi!", while holding tightly onto his backpack. If someone takes it, he's never getting it back. Kevin makes his way out of the vehicle, in front of the police station, and tries to get his bearings while elaborately and luxuriously stretching his back and neck. That wooden bench seat was not built for comfort.

Part 3 (Twazyèm): REBELLION**Protect and Serve (1 of 4)****Mirogoane, Police Station**

Kevin's quite anxious about approaching the police station, despite his measured bravado with Kat. He's starting to question this whole plan. But he can't lose his nerve now. When is the next tap-tap returns to Port? And where would he go anyway? He tries to remember the headline from yesterday's Le Nouvelliste. Which side is the US on? Which side are these cops on? Which side is he on? Shouldn't he know that?

But, none of that seems to matter here in the pitch dark with nothing but a generator and single bulb illuminating four pairs of dark glasses and matching gun barrels. For some reason, political commentary seems irrelevant. Every day there are new rumors of another coup attempt before Aristide's inauguration and sleeper agents activating in every Protestant church. So yeah, things are getting a bit sporty. But hey! An American is always an American and not to be trifled with, even in this dust speck of tropical paradise. Those creepy Macoute cops in there don't know what he is either, but apparently they know where the blan live. So he does the brilliant, ballsy, bullshit thing. Take it to the limit, ONE MORE TIME!

Kevin straightens his back, fumbles around with his backpack straps, digs a pack of smokes out of his pocket, drops them, picks them up, pats all his pockets for a box of matches, finds them, uses three to get a flame and then accidentally lets it burn out. He sighs in frustration. Lights it again. Drags it deep to get a good coal going, mutters "Once more, God, if you're still there." Adjusts his crotch situation one last time and slowly walks to the dimly lit doorway, toward the flickering reflection of sunglasses and gun metal waiting inside. He's about to take his first step onto the first step, when he hears a female voice call out, "Hey blan!" He turns and sees Kat with her permanently ironic grin, "Glad you could make it. You're not in Kansas anymore!"

Kat's house

It's very late/early night/morning. Kevin, Kat, and Dirk are sitting atop Kat's house, on the flat roof, lying on bamboo mats and looking at the stars and sharing war stories. Kat works for a faith-adjacent NGO that focuses on educating young women (Education NGO). This seems harmless enough and is great for fund-raising, but patriarchy has deeper roots than Duvalierism in Haiti so like so many places in the world, teaching a young (especially!) woman to read and write is a revolutionary act.

Kat and Dirk explain expansively over rum, cane sugar, and coconut cocktails, that Education NGO isn't aligned with any specific national interest or religious group. Many of its staff are American but like most NGOs in Haiti, the boots-on-the-ground are a band of UN misfits. Kevin asks, "But who funds you? It's not like there are grants out there for any of this." Kat laughs, "Well, we're ecumenical enough to coordinate with any faith-based mobilization." Dirk snorts and interjects, "Yeah, mate. But also feminist enough to make the Yank fundajelicals uneasy and vague enough to confuse the US Embassy." Kevin grins mischievously, "Yeah, I've seen how much the missionaries and alphabet agencies love when someone goes off script." Kat exclaims, "Exactly! They just can't understand our motives. But "ask forgiveness later, maybe" works in a

wild-west failed state. With so many rival clans, everyone needs a truly impartial back channel to the embassy or financial resources in Zeta Zuni.”

Kevin and Kat had connected at one of the crazy house parties that spring up spontaneously, whenever the right combo of hippy/outlaw/NGO/left-wing types find themselves together with not much better to do after the lights go out. This two-story house with secure courtyard can easily sleep a dozen Americans or a small Haitian village. Kat and Dirk are on more permanent assignment and will be in country for another year or five, depending on funding. The annual rent for The Miragoane Stronghold (their hilarious term) is what it would cost Kevin to rent one of the two-bedroom houses in Carrefour for six months, which he'd spend in one month in one of the up-scale new Petionville apartments that the missionary wives keep recommending.

Kat has been in country long enough to have affected that classically French female vibe (complete with Gaelic shrug). Her look is one part hippy-adjacent and two parts west coast swimmer. While most American women look like they're wearing hastily constructed pioneer outfits made of random curtains, she's leaning into the light, flowing, peasant dress vibe. Even though she's visibly blan, her attire and attitude helps Haitians understand that she's not just another white woman visiting Haiti for an experience.

Protect and Serve (2 of 4)

Dirk is Australian. He's in his late twenties and is big. Not fat, just a large man with light brown hair pulled back into a shaggy combination of samurai bun and Cheech & Chong pony tail. He has a loud voice with a very obvious Aussie accent and is impossible to ignore. With all the anti-American energy around the country, he literally wears a vest with an Australian flag on the front and a hand written message in Creole on the back, roughly “I am not American. I am Australian.” But for Haitians, there's most beautiful Haiti, (as the song lyrics emphasize, “[Cherie, pi belle peyi, pase lot peyis!](#)”), anywhere else and of course, Zeta Zuni, which might as well be the moon.

He's also former Australian military of some sort and has been assigned to Mirogoane for “male energy” security. It endlessly irritates him that if the shit hits the fan for real, he's going to need one of the damn Yanks to get him into the US Embassy because Australia doesn't have one here! Well, really, he'll need Kat to bat her lashes at the embassy Marines. She's already gotten each of them to buy her drinks at the Montana Hotel. And Kevin's not sure the guards would let him in the Embassy anyway. But there's also a saying in Creole, “[Tout blan sanble](#)”. Ironic! Dirk needs to keep his head on a swivel like the rest of the Americans, because a dechokaj mob is unlikely to read the fine print.

When Kevin stumbled into the kitchen the night before, he recognized the young woman from Kat's pickup truck. She was lighting the kerosene lanterns and setting out carafes of filtered water. Kat explains that Jocelyn stays in the NGO house and helps with cleaning and cooking. Kevin is still not comfortable with the class implications or how easily Americans become accustomed to “the help” they could never afford back home. But nevertheless, all the blan have Haitian maids, often live-in with separate quarters. The Haitians of all classes do as well. If an American doesn't hire at least one maid, they are considered to be miserly and mean. Unless

one's project is to perform manual housekeeping in Haiti, it's much more sensible for an American to hire domestic help. It's also one of the few sources of income for many Haitians, other than the oldest professions. Or so Kevin will later explain to the bean counters back home, who seem to think he's already gone rogue and is building either a plantation or a guerilla army. Kevin mutters to himself, "Thanks again, Tim!"

On the roof, Kevin asks, "How did Jocelyn end up living at the house? Did she work here when you moved in?" Kat hesitates before replying, "No, she wasn't here when we arrived. It's a long story, but she doesn't really have other options. She's a huge help, so she's kind of a member of the team now." Kevin's nodding as Kat goes down the ladder to replenish supplies on the roof. While she's downstairs Dirk adds, "Since Education NGO runs schools for Haitian kids, she's able to get a free education. But even better, she's a teacher's assistant for the younger kids who are struggling with math. She has a safe place to stay, with only a few clueless blans to look after. Instead of trying to fend off the groping and raping that goes on behind the market stalls." Kat is yelling up about the corkscrew now, Dirk replies with exaggerated accent, "Aye, Sheila. Got the corkscrew up here on the barbie!"

Kat returns to the roof with two more wine bottles and they chat idly while looking up at the sky. Throughout the night, they've paused conversation to listen to the occasional sound of gunfire. Kevin is debating caliber of round and rifle vs shotgun, when Dirk starts to talk about his Australian military service and his time in some police action Kevin's never heard of. They drift briefly into the pacifism, non-violence, self-defense lane, but that all seems irrelevant with the boom and pop of weaponry at 4 am. It isn't getting closer, so they doze and smoke and drink until the sun starts to rise and the neighborhood roosters demand that everyone get up and present themselves.

Jocelyn has already made coffee and has it waiting in the courtyard, along with some Laughing Cow cheese and fresh-baked croissant from the home bakery across the alley. But most importantly, ice cold jugs of purified water. Well, not ice cold, but much cooler than room temperature. As they recover from last night's party and finish their coffee, it's discovered that there's no water coming out of the faucets because Someone, could have been anyone, bumped the fill line out of the barrel the night before while making drinks, and now there's no running water in the house.

Kat listens to the report and says, "Well, time to get the 5-gallon buckets out." Everyone except Kevin, immediately starts pulling heavy buckets of water from underneath counters and places one next to the toilet in the bathroom, another in the middle of the courtyard, and two by the kitchen sink. Kat says, "Obviously, none of this is drinkable, but it will keep the toilet flushing until the barrel refills. She grabs a sponge and dips it into the courtyard bucket, and begins to pull her thin t-shirt over her head and slip her loose skirt down over her hips. Kevin, Dirk, and Jocelyn each grab their own sponge, turn toward a different courtyard wall and wash the sweat, dust and smoke from last night off themselves. Each dries off while gazing at their wall, until Kat splashes her pail of water into the drain.

They grab some cleaner/dryer clothing and get dressed. Then each finds a quiet corner for their morning routines. A few hours later without any real command, they reconvene in the center of the courtyard. Kevin says, "I have a confession to make. I think I screwed up the water system. I

sort of remember tripping over it, but didn't think it mattered. Should have said something. That was sloppy." Kat looks a bit surprised at the apology, and looks at Jocelyn with her eyebrows raised. Jocelyn hides a smile which comes into full view when Dirk quips loudly, "No worries, mate! As long as you didn't let a crocodile into the outhouse! Besides, I'll just drive the truck into a river later, so we can wash off properly and air dry in the sun!"

Protect and Serve (3 of 4)

Miragoane Beach and Stadium

At that, Kat announces it's a perfect time to go to the local beach. They load up the Land Cruiser pickup with some bamboo mats, towels, and a cooler full of water jugs. Jocelyn quietly approaches Kat and whispers something to her. Kat replies, "Men, oui!" Jocelyn returns with a small boy who shyly climbs into the truck bed with Jocelyn. "Komo o ye?", Kevin asks and the little guy gives him a small smile.

As they're loading up, Kevin learns that everyone calls him [Ti Mon](#) and that he almost never speaks. No one's sure what his real name is, where he lives, or if he has parents. Kat often finds him curled up in the back of the truck in the morning. She doesn't make a big deal out of it, because she worries he'll stop coming by the house and will end up in a more dangerous situation. The Haitians who live in the neighborhood don't like Ti Mon and accuse him of stealing whenever something goes missing. Kat says it's certainly possible that he steals to survive, but she says the neighbors have accused Ti Mon of stealing when he was with her all day.

The band of five arrive at the beach around noon and Kevin realizes that it's for locals. Kat, Dirk, and Kevin are the only non-Haitians but no one seems hostile and after a few curious glances, everyone ignores them and goes about enjoying the sun. There are plenty of palm trees on the beach. They quickly find available lounge chairs, and assemble them around a fire pit. Many of the families have charcoal fires going and the smell of roasting meat and spices waft through the air.

There aren't any lifeguards or public bathrooms though. Kevin is a bit nervous about how close they are to a river that's emptying into the bay. The water is brown and he remarks about it to Kat. She just laughs and says, "Oh, I'm sure it's just top soil sentiment, but maybe don't open your mouth or eyes or ears in the water, just to be safe!". Kevin decides that he'll just enjoy the sand and sun today and settles in to read a book that Kat's just finished. They talk about each chapter as Kevin finishes it. Dirk snores quietly with a half empty bottle of beer tucked between his feet. Jocelyn and Ti Mon are occupying themselves with some sort of game involving a stick, an old bicycle wheel, a ball of yarn, and lots of counting out loud.

By now, Kevin expects they'd be surrounded by Haitian kids and a few adults, begging for ti kob. But instead, they aren't approached by anyone. No one is hostile or intentionally ignoring them. It just seems that since they're on the local beach, no one is treating them like tourists. One man approaches with a bag made from an old fishing net. It's filled with coconuts and he asks, "[Ou vle dlo coconut?](#)" Kat replies, "[Oui moche.](#)" After a brief negotiation, Kat hands the man a

couple Haitian gourdes. He pulls a giant machete out of a sheath he's carrying on one shoulder, chooses a coconut from the bag, and before Kevin knows what's happened he's cut the tip off of one end of the coconut. He hands the coconut to Kat and she puts it to her mouth and begins drinking the coconut juice directly from the opening he's cut in one end. After a couple swallows, she hands to coconut to Kevin and tells the man, "[Tre bon!](#)" He smiles broadly, nodding his head, and looks to Kevin, who takes a long swallow and agrees, "Tre bon!"

Protect and Serve (4 of 4)

As the beach goers start packing up for the afternoon, Kat suggests that they watch a soccer match at the municipal stadium. Kevin asks if they can still get tickets and she replies, "For a few dollars, we can get all the seats we want. Although since everything is general admission, we'll probably end up standing." They load back into the Land Cruiser and head for the game. The stadium has about as many seats as a Texas high school football field. The bleachers are packed on both sides, the scene looking like an impressionist painting with so many multi-color dots and pennants, signs, and pulsing music. No loudspeakers. Just raw people power. There are kids climbing over and under the chain link fence. A guy in security guard uniform who has a cop-club and pistol on his belt, seems more interested in talking with the girls than making sure everyone is paying at the ticket booth.

Kat and the gang buy their tickets and find a spot near one of the goals. The place is absolutely rocking. There are competing ra-ra bands making a racket on either side of the stadium. The whistles, drums, and chants are impossible to resist and they soon find themselves swaying along with the rest of the crowd. The energy is celebratory and the Haitians seem genuinely happy that some blan are here to watch their local athletes compete. Kevin never learns which team is the home team, since the crowd argues every call and cheers wildly when either team makes a good play.

As the sun goes down, they notice there's a blackout so there won't be any lights on the field. The fans don't mind and the players seem to be willing to keep playing as long as they can see the white ball. But Kat leans over to Dirk and Kevin and says, "We should get going. I don't want to get caught in this crowd after dark." Kevin looks around to see that most of the people around them are young men. Dirk and Kevin didn't notice when all the women left, but Kat certainly did.

Jocelyn and Ti Mon have stayed close by, so the group is able to quickly shuffle their way toward the stadium exit. There are all sorts of street vendors waiting on the street outside with their little carts. The hand crafts are of exquisite quality and the food smells delicious. Kevin asks Kat what he's smelling and if any of it is safe to eat. She looks closely at the nearest carts, "That's grio, which is basically fried pork. I never trust the pork. That's banan peze, which is basically deep-fried plantain. The oil looks rancid though, so I wouldn't eat any of that either."

They walk toward the truck and pass a woman selling shaved ice. Kat begins talking quickly with her in Creole and Kevin again hears the word Culligan several times. After some back-and-forth, Kat says, "This will be safe. The block of ice is from purified water and she's using paper cups for the shaved ice. I love the licorice syrup. Do you want to try one?" Kevin does and feels like he'll

melt into himself. He realizes it's the first time he's tasted anything this cold in weeks. As the ice melts in his mouth, he closes his eyes and enjoys this moment of luxury among friends.

The little band make their way back to the grass/mud field where Kat's truck is parked. Kevin notices that the Toyota's windows are all open and exclaims, "Oh, shit. Did someone break into the truck?" Kat hadn't hired anyone to guard the truck and Kevin had almost mentioned it when they parked there, but had gotten distracted. Kat just laughs and says, "Oh, I seriously doubt it. There's nothing to steal except the truck itself!" Dirk is laughing too and says something to Jocelyn and Ti Mon, who also start laughing, but not really at Kevin. He's confused, but keeps walking along with the group.

As their laughter dies down, Dirk finally slaps Kevin playfully on the shoulder and says, "C'mon mate! Don't be down. It's just good old fashioned trade craft. NEVER leave anything valuable in a vehicle. INSTEAD, open all the windows and unlock all the doors. Then, leave something silly on the floor like an old pair of panties or one shoe. They'll steal that and move on, thinking it's all that's left after the last thief!" Now everyone is laughing, including Kevin.

Dirk continues, "But wait, it gets better. That old truck hasn't had a radio since long before we bought it. BUT, the wiring is all good. When we go on long trips we bring the radio out of the house, install some portable big speakers, and then we be jammin!" The Australian impersonating a Haitian, impersonating a Jamaican, in Dirk's booming voice? Hits everyone just right and causes uncontrollable laughter from all in the vicinity. Now they are howling with joy in English and Creole as they climb into the beat-up Toyota, singing a ridiculous version of Redemption Song, making it up as they go, but somehow ending the chorus with "Lavalas" as they get back to the Mirogoane Stronghold.

Part 3 (Twazyèm): REBELLION

Self-Defense (1 of 4)

Mirogoane Stronghold

They unload the truck and are taking things inside when a loud commotion is heard outside the gate. Kat just finished closing it, so she opens it partway again while Dirk and Jocelyn join her. A crowd of a few dozen neighbors is shouting and shoving Ti Mon around, who was still outside when they closed the gate. The crowd is calling him names that even Kevin can understand, "[Ti vagabon](#). [Tet cho](#)". Kat begins to talk with a few of the neighbors on the edge of the crowd, but no one seems to be listening. Kat follows the crowd, trying to take Ti Mon's hand, but the crowd absorbs him too quickly. She's following at the back of the crowd, so Dirk and Kevin join her. Jocelyn says something quickly to Dirk, who nods, and Jocelyn steps back into the courtyard.

The crowd grows larger as they approach the police station. A few cops are lounging outside with cigarettes and a bottle, but they stand and get weapons ready as the crowd approaches. One calls back into the station and a Haitian man in plainclothes and dark glasses steps into view, holding a handgun. A handful of uniformed cops form a line behind him, still smoking their cigarettes, but the bottle has been replaced with rifles at the ready.

Kat, Dirk, and Kevin are now part of the crowd. Dirk is acting as a fullback, pushing his way toward the station steps. Kat is behind him, her hands holding onto Dirks' shoulders from behind him. Kevin tucks in behind her. He feels a lot of groping and grasping hands but ignores them and keeps his hands on Kat's shoulders ahead of him. Suddenly the crowd goes quiet as Ti Mon is shoved onto the station steps, stumbling and sprawling at the feet of the police. One slings his rifle and grabs Ti Mon by his ear, yanking the boy to his feet with an anguished scream.

Kat lunges forward toward Ti Mon when he seems to be dangling in the air by one ear. The plainclothes officer stops her with an outstretched hand, shoving her back into the crowd with Kevin and Dirk. The cop holding Ti Mon's ear, lowers him slightly so that the boy's toes can barely touch the ground. Plainclothes asks something to the crowd, and everyone begins shouting at once. Kevin can't understand what they're saying, but Dirk is just shaking his head. Kat looks horrified and as Dirk's shoulder slumps, she cries toward the cops in English "Please, stop! He hasn't done anything wrong." The uniformed police don't even seem to hear her, but Kevin notices that Plainclothes is looking only at Kat. His lips part in a sneer and he slowly says to her, "[M pa pale Angle.](#)"

This encourages the crowd to begin shouting their accusations at Ti Mon. Kevin catches them saying, "Today" and "steals" and then his stomach is in his mouth, "Pere Lebrun". The cops are nodding along now and one of them pulls out a box of wooden matches, lights one and passes it slowly back and forth in front of Ti Mon's eyes. The boy squeezes his eyes shut, so another cop starts smacking him on the back of the head until he opens them again. The crowd is cheering now, so the match cop takes another from the box and tries to light it on the top of Ti Mon's head. Roughly dragging the wooden stick across his short hair, but not able to strike the match.

Kevin freezes in horror as another cop emerges from the station with a tire and bottle of kerosene. But now the crowd is quiet, as the police continue to slap Ti Mon around, shoving him around like a pinball, while striking matches on his head and face. The one holding Ti Mon's ear lets go when a match lights near his own hand. Ti Mon falls to the ground in the fetal position, rocking back and forth and sobbing, "Mama. Papa." Finally, Kat is able to push herself forward and talks to the plainclothes officer in Creole, her voice cutting through the silence. Kevin's heard enough speeches to realize what she's doing. She partially turns toward the crowd and asks, "What would President [Titid](#) say? Is this how he would want a small boy to be treated?"

The cops are laughing and pretending not to hear her, but Plainclothes is watching her closely. Kat continues, "This boy was with me and the other blan all day. He has done nothing wrong." Then she gestures to Dirk and Kevin and dramatically asks them, "Was Ti Mon with us all day and with us in the truck when we returned?" Dirk is already nodding his head in agreement, when she repeats the question again in English. Kevin immediately begins nodding vigorously. Kat turns to the cop in charge and asks, "Are you calling these two men and me liars?" Then she turns to the crowd (much smaller now) and asks, "Are you saying Ti Mon is worth nothing?" No one's talking now and the cops are paying more attention to Dirk and Kevin as they step out of the crowd and join Kat, facing the cops with their backs to the crowd as Kat continues. "I will not watch this anymore." Her face changes and she draws herself upright, now looking like an avenging angel. "I will take this boy back home with us. Do NOT do this to our family again."

Kevin holds his breath, as Kat steps past Plainclothes' gun and gently pulls Ti Mon to his feet. No one moves or makes a sound, as she puts her arms around him, picks him up, and carries him toward the gate where Jocelyn is waiting and watching. Kevin turns to follow and glances over his shoulder. Two of the cops are starting to move toward Kat and are raising their weapons, when Plainclothes gestures for them to stop. He sees Kevin watching and very loudly and slowly says in English, "White bitch!" Kevin follows the group toward the gate. Dirk is walking backward toward the house, keeping his eyes locked on Plainclothes. When they get inside, Jocelyn quickly shuts and locks the gate behind them. She calls out to Dirk, "Key on peg" before joining Kat and Ti Mon. Kevin offers to take Ti Mon from Kat's arms, so she can wipe the tears streaming down her face. But the little guy has a death lock around her neck and won't let go. They slowly exhale and look at each other. Then Kevin's chosen family has a tearful and joyful reunion like no other.

Self-Defense (2 of 4)

The next day

Somehow amid everything else, Ti Mon climbed up onto the roof the night before, reconnected the hose, and now the water barrel is filled. Everyone gathers around Ti Mon to thank him and his little face breaks out in a huge grin. So now there's clean water (within reason) for bathing, toilet flushing, and cleaning. Kevin has stuffed his jumble of gear into his backpack, except for a bottle of local, raw rum called clairin that won't fit in his bag. It goes perfectly with coconut water and cane sugar but as Kevin is asking, "How am I gonna get this back to Carrefour without drinking it, along with my friends in the tap-tap?" Dirk replies with his perfect accent, "Fair dinkem!". Jocelyn laughs before rolling her eyes, "[Bouki net!](#)" Ti Mon just nestles himself deeper into Kat's lap and grins like he's won the daily lotto.

Kevin's plan is to take the return trip back to Carrefour, after attending a local Haitian church service with Kat and Dirk. As they're about to leave for the service, they hear banging on the metal gate in the courtyard. Jocelyn takes Ti Mon inside the house. Kevin follows Kat and Dirk outside to see what's going on. They can hear words and phrases from the other side of the gate. Dirk's face hardens and he positions himself just out of sight beside Kat, as she opens the peephole to see outside. After a few tense moments, Kat relaxes and says "It's just the neighbors".

She opens the door and lets a small group of Haitian women inside. Jocelyn tells Ti Mon to wait inside and then joins them. After smiling shyly and nodding politely to Dirk and Kevin, the neighborhood women launch into a very intense conversation with Kat. Kevin can't understand much of what he's hearing, but the back and forth is clearly urgent. Dirk is listening closely and Kevin tries to make eye contact, but he's taken the sentry position at the gate's peephole. Finally, the conversation slows and Kat thanks the women over and over, giving each a hug as they walk back out the gate.

After they leave, Dirk closes the gate and exhales loudly. Kat sees Kevin's confused face and explains, "They were here to warn us of another coup attempt tonight. Everyone seems to have a different set of information about what's going on." Dirk, "I can't decide if it's Tele Joel or the

real thing!” He sees Kevin’s confusion, “Tele Joel is the Haitian term for the game of “telephone” where rumors get passed from one bloke to another until no one remembers the original story. The most common Haitian name is “Joel”. But no one has phones, so Tele Joel!” Kat continues, “Some are hearing that the coup has already been successful. Others say the police attempted the coup but the military stepped in and stopped it. The neighbors couldn’t agree on exactly what’s happening, but they all are very worried about our safety.”

Dirk walks to a nearby storage shed and pulls out the heavy chain and massive padlock that was used to lock the gate the night before. He wraps it through the steel door handles and locks the padlock. He calls over to Jocelyn, “Key on peg!” after patting it on its hook just to be sure. He says to Kevin, “That will keep them out for a while. But if they want in, they’ll get in.” Kevin asks who “they” are. Dirk chuckles humorlessly, “That’s always the question. It could be Lavalas supporters who think we’re siding with the US government against them. It can be disgruntled former Macoutes who think we’re leftists. It can just be criminals looking for a soft target. When these things get started, anything can happen.”

While Dirk is certainly no pacifist, he’s working with Education NGO and Kevin because they all believe non-violence is the only sustainable strategy for social change. Kat is also from a peace church background so Kevin asks her, “How serious is this and what are our options for self-protection?” Kat looks over her shoulder reflexively and lowers her voice to just above a whisper, “We really have no support of any kind here. Our whole mission is to live among the community and become part of their culture. They don’t have security protection, so we don’t either.” Kevin starts laughing, “Wait, we’re not in Kansas anymore?” Kat’s giggling just short of maniacally now, “Oh, no. This is really real!” Dirk bursts out laughing and adds, “If I remember correctly, your Navy Seals always say, why bother bringing my own weapons? If I need to one, I’ll take yours!”

Self-Defense (3 of 4)

Kat chuckles ruefully before continuing, “But really, if we’ve been successful these past years, the community will protect us as they will their own. We’re here without a safety net and I’m sorry for pulling you out here without explaining that first.” Kevin’s face changes as he considers this, his expression of anxiety changing to determination. Kevin assembles his widest grin and says, “I wouldn’t have it any other way. If I wanted ‘normal’ I would have stayed home!” Then a half beat later, “But seriously, do you have any comms setup with Port? It’s one thing to be on a limb, but it’s another when no one even knows.” Kat laughs sardonically, “Oh yeah? Does anyone know where YOU are right now?” Kevin pauses a beat or two, “Well, shit. Good point. That’s going to be a problem when I show up at the station tomorrow.”

A loud burst of automatic weapon fire erupts from nearby, interrupting the conversation so they move inside to the kitchen/living area. Kevin does a brief inventory of their communication gear, just to make sure no one has missed an option. His short-wave receiver is already out of his backpack and tuned to Voice of America. Dirk mentions this, “Really, Kevin? VOA?” Without hesitation Kevin replies, “Always good to know what the enemy is up to!”

There's no phone in the house and there aren't any pay phones anywhere in Haiti. Usually, Kevin goes to a local Telco office and places a call from there. But they're closed on the weekend. Kevin and the gang keep switching the radio between local AM stations (including Radio Protestant) but none are mentioning a coup attempt. The French news services don't start airing until later in the day. However, the absence of local coverage doesn't mean much. Kevin explains that Radio Protestant will not air anything until there is an official statement from whoever seems to be in control of the government at the time.

For the next hour, the rattle of gunfire continues sporadically but doesn't seem to be getting closer. After scanning all the usual radio frequencies without hearing any new information, Kevin finally asks, "How do we know anything is happening at all? We can be bunkered down in this house just because of a rumor. Maybe we should drive around a bit to see what's really going on." Kat opens her mouth to reply, pauses, and then looks over to Dirk, who slowly shakes his head. She sighs. "I didn't want to tell you this because it's probably just alarmist. But the local women were insisting that we not go out into the streets. They said there is a lot of "[pale cho](#)" among their husbands, basically saying that the blan won't get away with it this time. Some of the local thugs are talking about kidnapping foreigners and holding them hostage as retaliation. Since we're the only blan within miles, we are being closely watched."

Kevin suddenly recalls what Tim had thrown in his face just a few days ago and says, "Just so we're clear, my NGO is national but not well funded. I'm operating independently down here, with the agreement that my NGO will not make any ransom payments. Reasons. Long story!" Dirk shakes his head, "Wow, mate. They really sent you down here dirty!" Kat just lowers her face and looks at the table. Kevin stands up from the table, grabs his coffee cup and says, "Well, if we're putting our security in the community's hands, I guess we should do what they say." They agree to keep a low profile and stay home the rest of the day.

Kat has some letters to write, so Dirk and Kevin climb up onto the flat concrete roof to see if there is traffic moving on Highway 1, the only road that connects the country from south to north. As they look around, they see a plume of smoke rising a few blocks away. Dirk points toward it and says, "That's not good. The police station is right over there." As if in reply, they hear a rapid series of booms and pops. Kevin says, "Sounds like shotguns and handguns. No automatic weapons." Dirk nods, "Still small arms fire, but that was a LOT closer."

People start running by in all directions. Kevin and Dirk start calling down to them from the roof, "Sak pase?" Finally, a few young men stop in the alley below them. They start arguing among themselves about what's happening. Dirk listens and quietly explains what they're saying. Since the police are suspected of leading the attempted coup, the people are rising up against them all over Port-au-Prince. There hasn't been more than warning shots here in Miragoane, but a crowd has gathered and is burning tires and debris in the street directly in front of the station. The wind shifts, and the smell of smoke is much thicker.

It's getting way too hot to stay up on the roof in the mid-day sun, so they climb back down and spend the rest of the afternoon listening to the radio and trying to figure out what's really happening. Periodically, someone will look into the sky in the direction of the police station, but the plume of smoke doesn't seem to be getting any larger. But the smoke isn't getting thinner

either. Kat says, “Someone is definitely keeping that blaze going. I’m surprised the police haven’t started shooting on sight!”

By dinner time, there’s still no official word on what’s happening. Kat says that the neighbor women are just rehashing the same old rumors, so no one seems to have new information. As the sun sets and Kevin realizes he’s not getting back to Port-au-Prince tonight. He comments about this to Kat. She smiles shyly and says, “Well, I haven’t been up on the roof yet. Let’s go up there and see what happens!”

Self-Defense (4 of 4)

The damned roosters rouse Kevin and Kat from their bamboo mat on the roof. They found a mosquito net at some point, and arranged it in a tent/lean-to against the water barrel. They don’t hear any gunfire and the smoke has cleared. They make their way downstairs where Jocelyn has set up breakfast and is reading by one of the windows. Dirk and Ti Mon are lounging in the courtyard playing dominoes. They all say good morning as Kevin and Kat come into the kitchen. “Good news!”, Dirk calls out to them, “The Macoutes all went back into their holes. No coup after all. Nothing like some burning police stations to remind the cops that don’t have enough bullets for everyone!” Before long, music is playing on Dirk’s boom box. It seems that there’s a Haitian band being nominated for a Grammy back in the States, so all the local stations are playing it over and over. It’s an interesting style of music that reminds Kevin of the ra-ra bands. He’s sure it’s the first time American listeners have heard anything like it.

Kevin says goodbye to the gang and they agree it’s not farewell. Luckily, Port-au-Prince tap-tap service is up and running after the previous day’s scare. Kevin gets in one at the very last minute as its driver is getting behind the wheel. The ride east toward Carrefour is surreal. With a full view of the scenery this time, Kevin watches the quiet rural villages around Miragoane turn into empty, sun-baked fields, scarred from one last attempt to burn the sugar cane into something like fertilizer. Then the rapid train-like effect of the tap-tap suddenly entering a dark cavern with tin shacks, cement walls, and rubble rising as high as the eye can see.

Carrefour started off as a afterthought suburb outside downtown Port-au-Prince. But its location makes it the gateway between Haiti north and south, turning it into a thriving maelstrom of un-zoned industrial, commercial, and residential chaos. Hastily arranged cables are thrown atop giant power towers above the buildings far below. But industrious entrepreneurs have tapped so many extension wires into the towers, that the whole arrangement seems to be some sort of organism trying to escape its cocoon.

As everywhere and especially Haiti, this kind of strategic positioning creates power and its vacuum. No one has ever bothered to pave the streets and there is no public sewer/water anywhere outside of Port-au-Prince and its affluent gated communities in Petionville. Kevin is aware of all this, because the station’s main studio was built in Carrefour when it was basically just countryside. The Carrefour slums (there’s really no other way to describe them now) just grew up around the station. A few of the station’s American engineers live in the Carrefour community, but Tim is trying to stop this because engineers “keep going native out there”.

The tap-tap comes to an abrupt halt. Looking around, Kevin guesses he's about a 30-minute walk to the radio station. He needs to gather all the gear needed for the Mount Beef trip, and then get gone. Carrefour is the fault line between rival gangs, so a 30-minute walk is a stroll through the lion's den. Kevin senses that he's pushed his luck enough the past few days, so he leans out to see what's stopped traffic.

The main police station in Carrefour is just a half kilometer ahead. It is completely bombed out and smoldering. The awful standard yellow paint on the front of the station is covered in black bullet holes with a huge hole blown out of the center of the front wall. The iron bars have all been pulled out of the windows. Lavalas graffiti is sprayed all over it and the station is abandoned. One of the passengers in the tap-tap says that crowds swarmed police stations all over the country, when reports suggested the police were behind the alleged coup attempt over the weekend.

A curfew was declared at noon yesterday and has only lifted this morning. All traffic from Miragoane and points south need to pass through Carrefour. No one is sure which gang controls Highway 1 right now, so the tap-tap drivers are all trying to convince each other to run the gauntlet to find out. Also, whatever accelerant was used to ignite the bunker police station, spilled out onto Highway 1 and melted what little asphalt remained, creating a smoldering moat across the highway.

At this point, Kevin is very glad he traveled light. He grabs his backpack, steps down from the tap-tap, glances at the surprised Haitian faces inside, and says "[M' ale](#)". As he makes his way toward one of the alleys, he remembers that he still has that bottle of clairin in his bag after leaving some books at Kat's place. That will be more than enough to get him past any neighborhood watch checkpoints. He lights another cigarette, coughs into the smoke and dust around him. Then he uses the feet God gave him to head toward the station.

The bottle of clairin proves useful, as expected. At the first checkpoint, he has the bottle ready. Before the shouting begins, Kevin opens the bottle, takes a swallow, and then passes it to the young man who seems to be in charge. "Sak pase?", Kevin asks. The young man wipes the mouth of the bottle and takes a drink, before passing it to his friend, who does the same until the bottle arrives back at the first man, who hands it back to Kevin and grins slyly, "Just hand this to the guys a couple blocks away and tell them it's from Yves. They'll keep it, but will send you through."

One bottle lighter but still on his two feet, Kevin arrives at the station. Just in time for the Head Engineer to hurry him inside, explaining that he can stay in the extra bedroom. Then Jè (his technician friend from the station) stops by Kevin's workbench and tells him that he's found a perfect two-bedroom house just a few blocks away. Maybe they can be roommates. Kevin has the cash. Jè has access to the station's vehicles. Many problems solved. As Kevin sinks into the old leather chair at his work bench, he wonders if he COULD use a solar powered repeater to give base communities their own comms network. "What is the line between education and information warfare?" he wonders, as the ceiling fan whirs and the mosquitos buzz. The Haitian on-air staff have just managed to slip that new song by Boukman Experyans on air. The one about never forgetting their African roots. Perhaps the truth cannot be hidden after all.

Part 4 (Katriyèm): COLLABORATORS**Safety First (1 of 3)****Radio Protestant, Carrefour**

Kevin spends the next week preparing for his excursion to Mount Boeffe in Southern Haiti. It's one of the highest peaks on a mountain range that begins near Miragoane and then bisects Haiti's Southern arm with Cayes to the south and Jeremie to the north of its spine. This strategic location is perfect to receive FM signals from the main Radio Protestant tower near the international airport. With line of sight to all of southern Haiti, the Mount Boeffe tower can then relay signals for retransmission by AM transmitters in communities that can't receive a signal directly from Port-au-Prince. With his ear for French and Creole words developing, Kevin somehow hears the name of the peak as "Mount Buff". The Haitians think this is hilarious and have met him partway, with their own version of his mistake, filtered through yet another translation layer, everyone now refers to the location as "Mount Beef".

It's a busy week. Kevin also moves in with Jè as planned. It's an easy move, since it only involves Kevin's backpack, the footlocker from Mother Mary's, and some used furniture Jè has collected from friends. They've worked together since Kevin arrived. Jè has excellent English and French language skills. While Kevin is still learning Creole, Jè has been teaching him about local customs and how to be a less clumsy blan. They've commiserated about their shared problems with housing and life as single men in Haiti. Kevin's real estate broker will only show him large four-bedroom, two bathroom houses. Every time Kevin insists that he doesn't need that much room, the agent just smiles and says, "You need a Haitian wife!" Jè's family all live up north, so he's been staying with friends saves up for a security deposit. Kevin has cash but no contacts. They agree to combine their resources. Jè has a few conversations with the right people and now they share a two-bedroom house within walking distance of the station.

Jè emerges from a large closet in the engineering team's work area. He's dressed impeccably, as usual. "Jè" is actually one of the bank-shot Creole-ish nicknames that are so common as cultures mix in Haiti. His given last name is Jeanty, a very common Haitian name that means roughly "God is gracious". But because he always seems so confident, Kevin thinks it's a nickname for "jaunty". But because he's not sure, he slurs the last name as the letter "J". Like he would a teacher whose last name was too hard to pronounce, like "Mrs. J" instead of Jankowski. Kevin starts referring to "Technician J". The Haitians pick up on this. But they think Kevin thinks that the name is "Jay". They flip the joke on Kevin again and now everyone refers to Technician Jeanty as "Jè" the Creole-ish spelling of the name "Jay". And no one even remembers his real first name at this point, but it doesn't matter because even Jè is now referring to himself as, "Jè".

Jè is looking worse for wear today; his brown forehead beaded in sweat. He's pulling two large canvas bags behind him and places them in the center of the room. Kevin joins him and they start pulling things out of the canvas bags and arranging them on the floor. Jè asks Kevin, "Are you sure those priests are going to be able to help? This is a lot to drag up the side of Mount Beef. Last time I helped a team up that mountain, the Cayes pastors sent a dozen locals to carry

everything and make sure the blans didn't fall down a crevice or something. It took two weeks of negotiations just to get all of them ready at the bottom of the mountain!"

Kevin doesn't look up as he disentangles a multi-meter's prongs from a rat's nest of cables and electrical leads. "And then they left this mess behind for the next guy. I mean, how can the priests possibly do a worse job than this?" Jè laughs, "Like your dad always says; Measure twice. Cut once!" Kevin grins back, "Right! When I was supposed to be learning how to fix things and wasn't paying attention, Dad would ask me for the next step. Guess what he'd say if I didn't have a good idea..." Jè thinks for a moment and then starts to laugh. "Let me guess. He told you to 'stop guessing'. That sounds familiar!" Jè and Kevin roar in laughter as they both realize that's ALL they do. The last engineering team had not bothered to update any maintenance logs before disappearing back to Alabama or wherever they came from. It's been years since anyone has even seen the schematic circuit diagrams for the elaborate web of transmission equipment needed to run a national radio station across Haiti's mountainous and far-flung provinces.

Kevin shakes a portable radio battery out of the canvas bag. The brick-sized gray battery is covered in that white dust that shows a battery has leaked its chemicals. Its connection terminals are corroded badly and the salt air from the marshy area around the station has turned an entire box of batteries into a brick of rust and who knows what else. Kevin shakes his head in disgust before coughing and continuing, "My dad was also an old deer hunter. His other famous saying was, 'Treat every machine like a loaded gun. Disconnect the power yourself!'"

Safety First (2 of 3)

Jè and Kevin chuckle together and return to the jumbled pile of gear. Kevin dumps the entire contents of a bag onto the floor, disgorging a cloud of dust, salt, chemicals, and rat droppings into the work space. Jè does the same with the remaining bag, and a plume of dust fills the engineering bay. Coughing and sneezing, they pull on the rusty chains to open the ancient garage doors and step into the station's courtyard to get some fresh air.

When the dust clears, they return to the engineering bay and continue assembling the gear they'll need for the excursion. Jè says to Kevin, "Let's not waste a lot of time digging through this mess. We'll take a backup multi-meter, some hand tools, and as many deep cycle batteries as we can carry. It's almost always the batteries or contaminated fuel in the backup generator. If we need more fuel or batteries, we'll get someone to send them." Kevin is nodding his agreement and adds, "Good call. I suspect those guys at the base community have a LOT more supplies than they're telling anyone. We'll travel light and get what we need when we need it, instead of dragging all this stuff up the mountain and back down again?"

Jè considers and replies, "[Dako](#). One change though. It is freezing up there. Let's take as many sleeping bags and cold weather gear as we can carry ourselves. Then all we need is a couple guys to help us carry the batteries and tools and you won't need any support from the pastors in Cayes." Kevin grins in agreement, "From what that younger priest told me, I suspect we'll have more than enough security." Jè laughs ruefully, "And we won't need any of those ex-military guys that make me so nervous. Half the [bagay](#) that goes up and down the mountain each time is theirs."

The Head Engineer (an American from Indiana) opens the door from the office area and looks at the pile of debris in the middle of the engineering bay. “Tim just radioed down from Delmas. He wants to know if you guys are on your way yet.” He looks at the pile and the empty station SUV outside the engineering bay. “So, what do I tell him?” Kevin and Jè look at each other and Kevin’s face breaks into a mischievous grin. He winks at Jè and responds to Head Engineer, “Tell him that I’m trying to find all the manuals that we gave his Alabama friends.” The Head Engineer’s face changes from “stern manager” to pure mirth, “Oh, I’ll gladly pass that along!” They all laugh for a bit and then the Head Engineer continues, “But for my own sanity, what exactly do you want me to tell him?” He chuckles, “I can’t believe I’m the negotiator between God-almighty Tim and YOU!”

Kevin settles himself and says with his best innocent face (I’m pretending to be a babe in the woods, but might be the wolf!) and says, “If he doesn’t come down here until next week, he’ll never need to see me again. He won’t need to be on short-wave with me all month either, because Jè has a radio that he keeps in our kitchen.” Jè starts to chuckle, expecting what will come next from the Head Engineer, “Wait, what do you mean, last time Tim will see you? You’re supposed to be covering for me this summer when I go on vacation.” Kevin just tries his own Gaelic shrug (left shoulder, left eyebrow), “Well, you better work that out with Tim. He told me he doesn’t want to see me at the station all summer. Sounds like I’ll be fired by the time you get back anyway.” Kevin dusts his hands off and pulls on some leather gloves, “Tell him we’re loading up and will be on the mountain any day now.” Jè looks at Kevin and raises his eyebrows as in, “Who’s this we?” Kevin looks at him and quickly adds, “Oh, but Jè will driving and in charge. As soon as he gets me to the top of Mt. Beef, he’ll decide if I can be left alone up there.” Jè nods as Kevin continues, “Getting that transmitter up and running again is my top priority.”

Safety First (3 of 3)

Department of Sud, Highway 1 toward Cayes

Jè drives the station’s small Geo sport-utility vehicle on the main highway south. Highway 1 is really just a two-lane road with one lane of asphalt shared in each direction. Kevin doesn’t have a driver’s license or any documentation other than his US passport, which is not much help in this environment. He also has a tattered letter of introduction from some long-ago disgraced Haitian government official to a vague list of acronyms that represent the major Baptist, Assemblies of God, and Mormon churches in the Department of Sud region, along with the whole splintered collection of sects recognized by the Haiti’s Department of Cults. The document is useful for getting past an illiterate cop/soldier/zenglendo shake-down at one of the random trash piles smoldering in front of every burned-out police station. But not much else.

Kevin is crumbling up the greasy wrapper from the pork grio he just grabbed at the gas station/bodega when Jè topped off the Geo. They ride together quietly, as Jè downshifts calmly and avoids a donkey that’s just wandering into traffic. A few pedestrians scatter and cough dramatically as Jè gets the Geo back on asphalt with an impressive rooster tail of dust fanning out behind them. Jè puts his arm out the driver’s side window and gives a wiggling hand signal, a sort of “sorry, not sorry” acknowledgement that usually turns any affront into a shared

moment of levity. Then they're back on their on-road/off-road journey at a breath-taking speed of 50 km/hr, the small SUV's suspension groaning and bucking at each pothole, as Jè casually steers through each sudden jerk of the wheel as the Geo forges ahead.

After another hour or so, Jè slows at an intersection where a dirt and gravel trail leads north. A hand-painted symbol of a mountain peak is the only indicator of destination. He looks at Kevin uncertainly, "Now what?". Kevin says, "Well, first chance to see if our friends are expecting us." He pulls himself up and out of the passenger side of the Geo and walks over to a few young Haitian men, who regard him impassively as he approaches.

Jè can't hear the exchange, but he sees Kevin gesturing with a lot of elaborate hand waving and head bobbing. He sees the largest of the men start smiling and then all of them, including Kevin, are laughing and pointing up the hill. Kevin shakes hands with them, hands out a couple packs of Marlboro Reds and climbs back into the Geo. After closing the door, he turns to Jè and points ahead, "Onward and upward!" Jè puts the SUV back in gear and starts driving slowly away from the checkpoint. "I still can't believe you talked Tim into letting you out of your cage, without really being able to speak Kreyòl. How did you pull that off?"

As they make their way uphill, Kevin breaths in the fresher, cooler air, lights a local cigarette (those Marlboros are useless for anything other than barter, as far as he's concerned) and exhales out the window before replying, "Well, I finally realized that I can't play poker because my face is so expressive. Since I can't talk in English without using my hands, I just pantomimed and Creole-ished my case to the Haitian on-air talent, and then convinced them to go tell Tim that I am fully capable of leaving the nest." Jè starts to laugh, "And let me guess, they went along with it?" Kevin starts laughing too, "Oh, of course! It was amazing. Since Tim won't speak with me directly, he had to take their word for it. How else would I have been able to convince them?"

"This is why we all say you're Haitian-American!", Jè barks, "You're just as crafty as us, but you're so obviously American." He pantomimes a six-gun with his gear-shift hand and says in an exaggerated John Wayne drawl, "Howdy there, partner!" Kevin turns and replies in his best Deniro accent, "You talking to me?!" Now that Jè has watched Kevin's entire VHS library of three films, he starts singing in his best falsetto, "Roxanne! You don't have to put on the red light!"

They're roaring with laughter now, and Jè is having a bit of trouble keeping the Geo in the middle of the single dirt lane. "And I forgot!", Jè burst out, "Tim still doesn't know that the staff speak English better than the Americans!" Kevin leans back in his seat, "None of the missionaries seem to connect those dots. Every Haitian in Port has better English than their Creole. The blan congratulate themselves for losing their Texan accents while speaking elementary school Creole. Meanwhile, I'm actually communicating without learning the language 'properly'. But that's perfect. What they don't know can't hurt us!"

A few hours later, the sun is beginning to set behind the mountain ranges, the shadows of the valleys melting into its last lingering rays. Kevin's glad they didn't try to bring along more batteries. The SUV is straining on the steep incline; it's four little tires spinning frantically and causing Kevin to look nervously over the steep cliff on his right. There are no guardrails, so when he can't see the road anymore he calls out, "Attencion!" and Jè carefully edges away from the

cliff toward the sheer wall on his side of the road. Eventually the road turns into a narrow trail with so many blind switch-backs that Jè stops and looks at Kevin, "Hey blan, can you walk ahead to make sure I'm not about to have a head-on collision with a donkey or something?". Kevin laughs, "No problem. I'm American, not French!" He gets out and starts walking ahead of Jè until the roadway widens again, then climbs back into the Geo.

Part 4 (Katriyèm): COLLABORATORS

Community (1 of 4)

Department of Sud, Ti Legliz Village

Eventually they reach a plateau and the path fades into a small pasture, shaded by fir trees. Some goats wander around with their little fence collars. Haitians long ago figured out that it's much easier to secure crops from goats by managing the goats instead of protecting the gardens. Haitian gardeners surround their small plots with meter high fence posts made of random building materials. Then, rather than import/steal wire for an enclosure, they put a triangle wooden harness around each goat's neck. The goats can travel freely anywhere except into the gardens that are surrounded by fence poles. There are a few well maintained homes arranged in a cluster around a one-story chapel which anchors the town square. This community isn't on any maps, but it has as many inhabitants as any other village/town that's managed not to be burned down or dechokajed into oblivion.

Jè parks the Geo under one of the larger trees near the path they just climbed, backing the little SUV into a nook where it can't be easily seen. It's aimed at a side track that runs parallel to the path they just ascended, but off in a different direction away from the route they followed to the base community. As they're getting out of the SUV and deciding what to carry with them toward the waiting chapel, two Haitian men and a woman approach them from a grove of banana trees that Kevin hadn't noticed when they arrived. A fourth man remains in the grove, and it looks to Kevin like he might have a rifle. But before he can work that out, he sees that one of the Haitians is a priest he met at the Mother Mary house. Kevin's face breaks into a grin, he thinks he remembers the priest's name, "Father Jean"? Not a bad guess, since Jean is probably the second most common Haitian name. He's pretty sure this is correct, because he starts to hear the soundtrack of "Les Miserables" in his head. Kevin meets the priest's outstretched hand, shakes it firmly and asks, "Father Jean ValJean?" The young Haitian priest, who's been educated in Paris and London, starts laughing and hums back a verse from the musical.

Code phrase dealt with; Kevin introduces Jè to Father Jean. Father Jean then introduces them to his colleagues. "I'd like to introduce two of my trusted advisors. If you need anything and can't find me, consider them to be me." He gestures to the young woman on his left, "This is Solange." Then turning to his right, "And Panielle." They all shake hands and find seats around the table. Solange is thin and a bit shorter than Jè. She has the smooth features of a young woman, but with watchful eyes that seem much older. Her braided hair is tied into a tight bun behind her head under a NY Yankees ball cap. She's wearing a dark t-shirt, traditional Haitian skirt, leggings and leather sandals. Fr. Jean gestures toward Solange, "She grew up near Cap Haitian, ran afoul of some Macoutes, and then spent enough time in Havana so that she can

now return to us here in the south as,” Fr. Jean makes air quotes with his fingers, “Organizer Solange”. Grinning widely, “She speaks English and Spanish. Do you have any Spanish, Kevin?” Kevin gives a little laugh and says apologetically, “Just whatever I’ve forgotten from high school.” Solange chuckles, “Don’t worry. You’ll learn it when you need it.” Kevin quickly replies, “That’s what they said about Creole!”

Father Jean waits for everyone to stop laughing, smiles broadly and gestures to Panielle, “This is our scholar from Paris.” Kevin’s face shows confusion as Panielle slowly smiles. He’s clearly a Haitian man who appears to be bald under his straw fedora-style hat. Panielle wears round glasses and has a hint of a mustache. He’s dressed in dark dress pants and an untucked collared shirt. But he’s also wearing black boots and has a sheathed machete on the seat next to him. Fr. Jean chuckles at Kevin’s confusion, “I know. Not what you expected. Which is perfect. Panielle, why don’t you tell everyone why you’re here.”

Panielle clears his throat and glances around the table, “I’m here to plant trees, honestly. The Canadians have been planting legume trees that grow a half meter a year. The reforestation is already working in Thiotte, but their grant money runs out this year. Haitian churches are working to get the new trees planted all over the country. It’s really our last chance to get out of the trees, charcoal, cooking cycle.” Kevin nods his head ruefully, “Those satellite photos of the DR/Haitian border? Even from space you can see the deforestation.” Solange interjects “That UN experiment with little propane tanks that got all the press? A complete failure, but that didn’t get reported. Propane burns too hot and ruins the Haitian style of rice and beans. Now the empties are bobbing around in the Caribbean because its too expensive to import propane.”

Kevin looks around the table and sees everyone shaking their heads sadly. With a bemused expression, he asks slowly, “But isn’t that good? In a few years, the new trees will be reforesting the country, right?”. Solange and the others around the table look at Kevin in confusion until Father Jean gently explains, “Sustainable forestry interferes with the charcoal cartel. They just call out the old Macoute death squads who target our organizers and agronomists, then they cut down all the trees and punish the village.” Kevin drops his head, shakes it, then looks back up at Fr. Jean and says, “Of course. I’m sorry. That should have been obvious.”

They start getting up from the table as Father Jean adds, “We have an entire country on the run. Until the Aristide government can root out the Macoutes in local government, organizers like Solange and Panielle are in hiding where the police informants don’t know them. It’s why you won’t meet many of our local agronomists and organizers. They’re all out hiding in other provinces.” Panielle adds, “It’s very difficult to be away from family but it’s safest for everyone. We’re cross-pollinating knowledge though, so maybe it’s for the best.”

Community (2 of 4)

Ti Legliz

Kevin now sees that this base community is a fortress of sorts. The arrangement of houses around the walled town square with its stone chapel at the center, is a kill zone. While Kevin doesn’t know that it’s happened here, he has heard from reliable sources that it’s not

uncommon for the Haitian government to send a “tax collector” into one of these communities and they never come back. But rather than admit they’ve lost control of the provinces, the government pretends none of that ever happens.

With all that in mind, Kevin is surprised that he doesn’t see visible weapons. None of the villagers carry firearms but the adults carry machetes at all times. The kids harden sticks over the charcoal fires while rice and beans are cooking. Then they run around the community with their sticks, occasionally using them to discipline a wayward goat or to spar among themselves. The priests carry walking sticks that Kevin knows are made of incredibly hard wood. He’s seen them split coconuts with one well-aimed strike.

A bell rings, signaling that the work day is finished. The priests lead Jè and Kevin toward long tables arranged in the village square, where Solange is waiting. Lay members of the church are carrying trays of food and pitchers of spring water. They reassure Kevin that the water is safe to drink without filtering. Steaming pots of Haitian coffee are arranged on the tables with a collection of chipped coffee mugs. They sit at the table with Solange and Kevin is stretching his hamstrings, when he sees Father Jean approaching with a handful of young Haitian men.

One of the new men is clearly their leader. The others defer to him in that unspoken way. He’s wearing olive fatigues, a dark green t-shirt, and has a machete over his shoulder in a beautiful hand-stitched scabbard with sling. He isn’t physically imposing, but has the tight, wiry frame of most Haitian men. He moves lightly in his dark combat boots as he makes his way toward them. The meal preparation chaos parts around him like a river. As he gets closer to the table, Kevin can see that the man is already looking directly at him and is making no attempt to break eye contact. His face is relaxed though and his eyes are friendly. The only mark on his face is a broken and badly reset nose, which Kevin can tell was caused by a police riot club.

When everyone is seated, they drop their heads as Father Jean offers a brief blessing for the food. Kevin has heard this prayer before but he can never get it entirely right. Something like, “We thank you for this food we are about to share, even though so many have so little.” A group of altar boys arrive with their serving bowls and ladles. When everyone has their plate filled, Father Jean clears his throat and gets the attention of the table. “I don’t have a lot of time since I need to get back to Port in the morning.” He looks at Kevin, “I’ll tell Father Vitor you found your way here.” Father Jean cracks a brief smile, “He’ll be surprised, but not really!”

Then it’s back to business. “Jè and Kevin are here on two missions. The first is cover; to get the Protestant station’s transmitter going. The other is for Kevin to stay with us for the summer and work on some other projects.” He looks at Jè, “You’re OK with only knowing part of the story?” Without hesitation Jè replies, “I’d rather not know any of the story, but am glad to know you’ll be keeping an eye on this guy”, and points toward Kevin. Jean smiles and says, “Bon nom!”

Then Father Jean gestures toward the new men at the table, “You’ll get to know all of them, but consider them to be friends of ours.” The men glance over to Solange who is nodding her head, and then back to Kevin and Jè. “Now I’d like to introduce the leader for our mountain top mission.” He nods his chin toward the man with broken nose, “We call him Henri, because it’s nothing like his real name.” They all chuckle at the worn joke. Fr. Jean continues, “As you probably guess, the good-looking one is Jè.” Now everyone is laughing enthusiastically and

Kevin says, “You can call me Blan. Tout sanble!”, which causes even Father Jean to burst into laughter. While the laughter dies down, Kevin walks around the table and shakes Henri’s hand.

Then Father Jean says to everyone as his face grows serious, “It might actually be best if we all forget the names of our new friends. Since you now need to know, Henri spent some time with the French Foreign Legion. Then with some shadowy groups of comrades in interesting parts of the world. Now he’s back among us doing God’s work.” Henri bows his head and says, “Father Jean, you’re too kind.” Father Jean smiles at the men and winks at Solange, “You’re all doing God’s work. He doesn’t just need mild-mannered priests and nuns, you know.” Father Jean turns back to Jè, “For your protection and everyone’s, I think it would be best if you returned to the station tomorrow. I’d appreciate if you could give me a lift at least as far as Carrefour. Henri and team will get Kevin up to the peak. We have our own radio tower near there and can communicate with you directly if we need you to come back with supplies. If you boost from your side, you can send us messages here at 6 AM or 6 PM each day.”

After a brief pause, he claps his hands together, “I almost forgot the best part! Fr. Vitor added a sweetener.” Grinning mischievously, “It turns out a friend of his is a progressive Pastor on the board of the National Convention of Haitian Protestant Churches.” He laughs, “How do you keep them straight?” Kevin laughs along and with a mischievous grin, “I forget. Are all of you Jesuits?” This has the whole group laughing until Father Jean continues, “Since they provide most of Protestant Radio’s local funding, it would be terrible optics if they withheld donations due to concerns about radio coverage among their parishioners in Department Sud.”

He looks at Kevin and Jè, “You’re both welcome to stay here anytime for as long as you like. Father Jean gestures around the table and then to the sky, “Until we all agree that Kevin is finished, he’ll be working on the mountain for Radio Protestant. That’s all anyone will need or care to know.” He winks at Kevin, “We’ll get you down to Cayes every few weeks, so you can be seen going to some church services. That will reassure everyone, I’m sure.” The table starts laughing again as Fr. Jean hands Jè a hand-held two-way radio. “The frequency is already saved. Just find a high place and start using the call-signs we gave you. Do you remember them?” Jè smiles, “They’re all Bible verses, so I already have them memorized!” Father Jean smiles and then starts to laugh, “Well, I’ll give the Protestants that. You all know your Bibles!”

Community (3 of 4)

Mount Boeffe, Southern Haiti Mountain Range

Their meal complete, Solange and Father Jean say goodbye. “We’ll be over at the orphanage for the rest of the day if anyone needs us.” Henri takes Kevin, Panielle and the rest of the men into a small garden shed behind the chapel. He turns on a battery-operated bulb when they’re inside. The shed is filled with locked cabinets. Henri unlocks one and begins handing backpacks full of gear to each man. Then he turns to Kevin, “You have your tools and personal gear in your kit already?” Kevin nods, “I have everything except the batteries.” Henri nods, “We’ll take a donkey along for those.” Then one of Henri’s men adds, “I scouted the tower a week ago. The generators weren’t running.” Kevin nods, “That makes sense. The last engineers couldn’t remember if they refueled it or reset the timer for the solar panels.” Glancing at Henri who’s

watching him closely, he continues, “The AM transmitters in the cities use so much power that most stations in Port use low-power FM transmitters on peaks to relay signal back down to the cities on the coast.” Henri nods knowingly, “Always get to high ground before turning on a radio.”

The next morning, after a light breakfast of coffee, hard bread, and cheese, the men make their way up the trail to Mount Beef with their trusty burro in tow. They have a few close calls on some very unstable shale that avalanched over the trail during last summer’s rainy season. After lengthy negotiations with the donkey, now nicknamed The Ass, they arrive at the transmission tower as the sun is setting. Kevin and the men take off their packs and sit on the base of the transmission tower, enjoying the view. From their vantage point, they can see the Caribbean Sea to their north and south. As the sun drops into the sea, they watch the water color change from bright turquoise to a deep, cobalt blue. The night is clear, so Kevin can also see stars for the first time since arriving in Haiti. The smog, dust, and constant haze of Port-au-Prince blot out the starlight each night. Kevin thinks he can see the Southern Cross before some clouds drift in from the north. Then the night turns pitch dark and the men use kerosene lanterns and flashlights to make their way inside the transmitter control shed.

Henri has the men pile all their gear in a circle around the inside of the shed. They lay out blankets and sleeping bags and huddle together on the floor as the night temperature drops to a temperature that has them all shivering before long. They laugh and try to blow smoke rings with the fog that appears when they exhale. Soon their breathing begins to become regular and a few light snores are heard. Kevin turns off the last kerosene lantern and falls asleep to the sound of rats scurrying outside the walls of their makeshift luggage moat.

As soon as the sun rises the next morning (no goddamned roosters at this altitude), Henri has everyone up and packed. He says to Kevin, “I’ll leave Panielle here with you as security. His English will deal with anyone who stops by without Kreyòl.” Kevin knows this could mean just about anything, if a missionary or other American shows up without an invitation. Henri continues, “We’ll go check on our transmitter and should be back by nightfall. If not, we’ll wait until tomorrow to come back so we don’t accidentally lead a bunch of mal leves up here to you. I think we’re going to need your help on our tower. But if you haven’t figured out what’s going on here, we’ll help you sort that out first.” Kevin agrees, and begins pulling out tools and his multi-meter to check the power circuits. Without more conversation, Henri and the remaining Haitian men descend the path that leads downhill, then back up again toward the next peak.

A few hours later, Kevin has confirmed that there’s nothing that needs any repair other than the generator that won’t start. He’s already tapped on the fuel tank and it seems to be more than half full. But having checked everything else, he climbs up onto the tank with his flashlight and opens the rusty hinged opening on top of the tank. Holding his face away from the opening to avoid inhaling the fumes, he drops a long stick into the tank with markings every few centimeters. But before the stick hits liquid, he feels it sink into something firm. He holds his breath and peers inside the fuel tank. It is filled with sand and diesel. Kevin stares in disbelief, then seals the tank again and climbs back down to the ground.

Community (4 of 4)

Sitting on the ground while considering options, Kevin hears new voices. He looks up and is sees an old Haitian man climbing the hill, followed by a young boy. Panielle is already watching carefully. When the man arrives at the tower, he begins telling a lengthy story. Kevin can't follow it, but Panielle is nodding along and translates, "He claims he's the caretaker for this site but hasn't been paid by the pastors in years." At this, the old man interrupts and announces "Mwen se, Guardian Joel". Panielle looks expectantly at Kevin, who just shrugs and replies "Tim never mentioned a caretaker or guardian for this site." Guardian Joel begins a heated exchange with Panielle, gesturing at Kevin saying, "blan" and "tout sanble". The old man is getting increasingly agitated while Panielle just looks back at him without expression. Finally Panielle gestures in the direction of Kevin's tool box on the ground, gives a Gaelic shrug and looks away as if finished with the conversation.

Guardian Joel sees the Radio Protestant logo on Kevin's gear and relaxes slightly. Kevin introduces himself, reassures the caretaker that Tim sent him, and then asks about the sand in the fuel tank. Guardian Joel looks surprised and shuffles his feet nervously. He looks at the young boy beside him and mutters something. The young boy begins speaking with urgency to Panielle, "He says some zenglando came up here a few weeks back after the other engineers left and tried to get into the transmitter building. But when the locks were too strong for their bolt-cutters, they filled the fuel tank with sand and gravel and took the fuel filter with them."

Guardian Joel says something sharp to the young boy, who flinches and then steps away from the conversation. Kevin looks directly into Guardian Joel's eyes and says to Panielle, "Ask him why the boy was up here and not him." Panielle snorts, "Let's not make this worse." After sighing deeply and looking at the sky, Kevin turns back to the caretaker who is watching him carefully. The wind kicks up just then, and everyone starts shivering. Kevin has a good jacket with hood. He's already grown accustomed to the warmer temperatures at sea level, so he's glad he brought extra gear. He notices that the young boy is off by himself, wearing nothing but shorts and t-shirt and is shivering so much that his teeth are chattering and his face is streaming with tears. Kevin takes an extra sweatshirt out of his bag and gestures to the young boy to come get it. Instead, Guardian Joel grabs it out of Kevin's hand and tells the boy to sit back down. The older man pulls on Kevin's sweatshirt and thanks him profusely.

Kevin is about to insist that the sweatshirt be given to the boy when Panielle leans in and mutters in his ear, "Don't waste your time. Until that boy turns twelve, he's a liability to his family and they won't do anything to help him. He'll need to toughen up and show that he can carry his own weight, before he'll get anything other than food and water from them." Kevin's eyes are wide he's breathing quickly, "The kid just did that bastard's job for him. Maybe we should hire him instead of a lazy old man, who can't even climb up here without help." Panielle steps between Guardian Joel and Kevin and waits for Kevin to take a breathe and says quietly, "Kevin. We need this guy to be OUR friend." Kevin's shoulders slump and he nods once. "Merci," he says to Panielle, assembles his biggest, toothy smile and turns back to the caretaker, "Merci, Guardian Joel. Bon nom!". Then he shakes the caretaker's hand.

It's getting late in the afternoon now and Kevin expects Henri's team to be returning from the Catholic radio transmitter. Convinced that the generator is completely useless, he tells Guardian

Joel that no more help is needed. With Panielle's assistance, Kevin explains that he'll add a few more solar panels to the array. That will keep the transmitter functional for at least a few hours a day. Kevin promises to give an update to the pastors in Cayes when he's finished. Then he will ask the pastors to arrange for the caretaker's back pay and recommend they hire him for the next year. With that, Guardian Joel beams brightly, nodding his head, and shakes hands with Kevin and Panielle before returning down the hill with the young boy in tow. As the caretaker turns to leave, Kevin sees Henri's team making their way down the rocky path from the neighboring peak. Not wanting the caretaker to have more faces and names to recount later, Kevin walks and talks with him until they're far enough down the path that Henri is no longer visible. Then Kevin shakes hands with Guardian Joel a last time, pats the young boy on the shoulder, and slips him a candy bar before climbing back up to the transmitter site.

Henri soon arrives and tells Kevin that the Catholic transmitter has also been sabotaged. Kevin asks, "What kind of damage?". Henri replies without much elaboration, "The bullet kind." He fishes out a large glass tube that is one of the amplifier vacuum tubes. This was the only tube they didn't shoot up. Used a shotgun, so there's not much more than cosmetic damage to anything else, but they knew what mattered." Henri sighs, "Any chance you have some spare amplifier tubes in your pack?" Kevin looks closely at the markings on the tube and laughs darkly. Seeing the annoyance on Henri's face Kevin quickly adds, "As it turns out, this is the exact model of amplifier tube that this thing uses", gesturing over his shoulder toward the Radio Protestant transmitter. "Looks like someone stored a bunch of spare tubes up here and forgot about them. I think we can get your tower running, courtesy of the Protestant churches of Haiti! We'll be done tomorrow and then I can hang out at your base camp while I try my hardest to repair the Protestant transmitter." The men all start laughing now and they're slapping Kevin hard on the back with the word fou sounding like praise instead of criticism.

Part 5 (Senkyèm): LESSONS

Resilience

Ti Legliz Village

Kevin spends the rest of his time at Ti Legliz combining trips up and back to the transmitter, sending reports to Tim and the Head Engineer about progress, never mentioning that he's not camping on the peak. Kevin has finished writing a maintenance report for the week: this many kilos of sand removed from the tank. That many liters of water carried up the mountain and flushed through the tank. The sort of details that show how miserable his lot in life has become. He hasn't seen Henri in a few weeks. Father Jean explains that now Henri is just on assignment elsewhere. All is well.

Since Kevin is contributing to the base community, they've made him a member. He had to pass a verbal exam in Creole about his responsibilities, how the village protects itself, and what it contributes to nearby communities. The community's center is the village of Ti Legliz, but it consists of seven [ti groupma](#) with 20 – 30 people in each. These little groups are scattered strategically at all the passes and trails that make their way up the mountain to the base community. Young boys and girls are trained as runners to pass intelligence and logistics details between the groups. Each ti groupma combines its cash to buy seed and supplies. Then they harvest and bring the crops to the silo at Ti Legliz village. When market prices are favorable, they arrange for a truck to come collect their harvest and take it to the markets in Port or Cayes. They then divide the profits among themselves, after a 20% allocation to the emergency fund or [ti legliz](#). The base community has been coordinating with other villages to build a 20 km road that is now used by more than 40,000 people in six surrounding counties.

What's left of the Government of Haiti has no interest in leaving the main roads or wandering around in the mountains trying to find agronomists and labor organizers. They just pretend they don't know what's happening while the base community builds infrastructure around them. But the existing power structure needs the peasants to remain poor and helpless, so old Duvalierists use their contacts in the former Macoute paramilitary groups to terrorize any community that organizes itself economically.

Above all else, the community has a policy of full participation in governance. Everyone must come to the weekly group meetings, usually held after Sunday worship services. But even though the community is led by Catholic religious they welcome anyone into the base community, as long as they agree to the rules of governance. Each ti groupma elects a committee of three for coordination and decision making. If there are discipline problems, the group handles that on their own. Usually, the offending member will lose recreation privileges and will perform an act of service to the community, before regaining full voting status again. No one is expelled, but may be "encouraged" to leave after too many infractions. Beyond that, the priests don't really want to know unless there's actual bloodshed involved. In addition, each member who is not disabled, widowed, or orphaned, is expected to contribute roughly one US dollar to the co-op each month, to cover incidentals and hopefully, the cost of an annual celebration on St. John Bosco's birthday.

Jè stops in every few weeks to keep Kevin up to speed on the latest gossip from Port, bring supplies, and to take reports back to the station for Tim. Sometimes, Solange gives him a packet of materials but Kevin never asks what that's about. Solange runs a small army of neighborhood kids as informants all over the province. Most information is exchanged orally, but the runners are also carrying more notes with them. Since colonial times, the spoken language of Haitian Creole has been suppressed and all official documents have been in the French language. The Aristide government is proposing that Haitian Creole be adopted as one of the country's official languages. But since that allows peasants to do business without a clerk, priest, or pastor to document and tax every transaction, the reaction from "business" is predictable. Now even Creole Bibles are considered subversive.

One of the top priorities for Ti Legliz is to use their hand-crank mimeograph machine to copy materials for nearby communities. They have already collected a surprising variety of Creole language guides on how to setup cooperatives, organize a labor union, the UN Declaration of Human Rights, and the base community's own rules of governance. Jè and Solange approach Kevin with an idea to get the materials mass-produced. The station has a storage closet filled with missionary photocopiers that don't work anymore. If Jè and Kevin can get one of them working, they can run a printing shop at the station and then Solange can distribute from Ti Legliz.

Amid all this, there's also great debate and inevitable shouting about the Constitution that the Ti Legliz community will ratify in June. It's quite radical and gives equal rights to men and women, regardless of whether they worship Protestant, Catholic, Voodoo, or none of the gods. Kevin never makes any suggestions and doesn't intend to vote, but asks a lot of questions to make sure he understands all the implications of this egalitarian approach.

The Protestant transmitter is working again and now the station is clamoring for Kevin to return to Carrefour. Head Engineer's family has already left the country for summer vacation. But until Kevin gets back from the provinces, Head Engineer can't leave. Tim doesn't trust the Haitian staff without American supervision. Aristide has been inaugurated and other than breaking up the military and police into two different entities and thanking the women of Haiti for their sacrifice, none of the missionary nightmares have come true.

Despite its rocky start, the Aristide government is getting itself together and the poor people who swept the Lavalas party into power are starting to see how democracy can help them. Nevertheless, Protestant leaders are resisting all the changes including ratification of the Haitian Constitution. Kevin fumes about this when it comes up and wonders why anyone would want to live in a country without a bill of rights. But without fail, a Haitian will eventually remind Kevin that, "The Constitution is paper. The bayonet is steel. Only we and Bon Dieu can save us."

Part 5 (Senkyèm): LESSONS**Choices****Ti Legliz Village**

As the summer draws to a close, the pastors in Cayes and the Americans at Protestant Radio are also starting to ask questions about Kevin's progress. Jè has been checking in by radio from Carrefour and they've agreed that Kevin should return to the station the following weekend. Kevin tries to argue that he should finish up a few more projects, but Father Jean firmly insists that the community has learned enough about AM/FM radio from Kevin, "You've already documented the maintenance schedule in Kreyol. We've got this." Kevin asks about Henri. Father Jean replies, "We're not sure when he'll be back. He's been in contact by radio, but has kept quiet about his whereabouts. We've got this. No need for goodbyes, we'll see you soon." Then he grins, "But if you could stop by the orphanage and replace their batteries before you leave, that would be greatly appreciated."

St. John Bosco Orphanage

Kevin's departure day arrives and after packing up his remaining gear, he goes to the community's orphanage to wait for his ride with Jè. He's carrying spare power supply batteries for the orphanage's last functioning PC. Solange is already there when he arrives. "Just taking these into the office", Kevin says when she sees him. She smiles briefly, nods, and returns to her discussion with the kitchen staff about how many supplies they'll need for the next day. Due to all the zenglando death squads roaming the region, there are many more lost children than the orphanage was ever designed to accommodate. She also keeps a list of parents, so that the kids can be returned to their parents are safe. But this assumes the parents are still alive, which is increasingly rare.

Kevin hears crying children as he passes Solange and makes his way to the orphanage office area. In the hallway, he meets an older Haitian nun in light-blue nun's habit. "Bon jour, my name is Sister Maureen. Can I help you?" Kevin smiles at the question, "I need all the help I can get, but it looks like you're busy enough. I'm Kevin and will be heading back to Port later today. Why haven't we met before?" Sister Maureen smiles, "I think we may have a mutual friend at Mother Mary's." Kevin chuckles, "The world is such a small place." Sister Maureen continues, "If you have time after you're finished with those batteries, it would be great if you could spend some time with the toddlers. They don't know you're blan and won't be afraid." She grins at Kevin as her eyes move quickly around the room, "It's nice to meet you. Maybe we'll see each other at Mother Mary's some time." With that, Sr. Maureen sweeps down the hallway and Kevin hears her warm voice reminding the children to hold hands, hug, and sing together with Baby Jesus whenever they feel sad or afraid.

Kevin swaps out the backup power supply batteries for the computer, reconnects the trickle charger and carries the old batteries to the front gate. As he finishes, a toddler bursts out the front door, runs across the porch, and jumps into his arms. He doesn't recognize the little boy, but carries him back into the main living area. Kevin has never seen so many kids in one place. Children are crying and running in all directions. There are twice the usual amount of community members helping out, but they are clearly overwhelmed by the scale of the

problem. No raised voices from the adults though. The little boy in Kevin's arms has locked his arms around his neck, so there's no putting him down.

Kevin looks for Sister Maureen, hoping she can take the young boy from his arms. She's surrounded by a swarm of kids, so he looks around for another adult to help. Another nun recognizes Kevin and approaches, "Oh, thank God. You found him. Every time he gets a chance, he runs outside thinking his father has returned." Kevin asks about the boy's father. The nun quickly shakes her head and says, "His name is Jedi, because he arrived on a Thursday. We have no idea who his family is but he keeps crying "Papa" when he wakes up screaming. Can you just hold him for a while? He hasn't been touched by anyone in days." Before Kevin can answer, the nun moves away toward a cluster of boys that are fighting over something on the kitchen floor.

Struggling to hold back his own tears, Kevin takes the sobbing Jedi out onto the veranda and sits in a porch swing, eventually rocking the small child to sleep. Kevin dozes too and awakens when he hears the Geo's tires crunching on the gravel outside. Kevin glances at his watch and realizes that it's getting quite late. Jè quickly loads the batteries and Kevin can tell he's in a hurry to leave again. Kevin looks around for someone to take the sleeping child. There's no one nearby, but Jedi starts to stir and awakens with a small cry. He pushes his face deep into Kevin's chest and wraps his little arms as far as he can around Kevin, "Papa? Papa?" Seeing no alternative, Kevin gently places Jedi on the porch swing. He starts whimpering and clutches Kevin's neck, so he has to gently pry the little fingers apart before standing. As he starts to back away, Jedi jumps down from the swing and wraps his arms around Kevin's leg.

Having no idea what to do, Kevin hears Jè approach but doesn't look up. He just pats the boy on top of his head. A few minutes later, Jè returns with Solange who smiles gently at Kevin, "I've got him." As she leans down to lift Jedi from Kevin's arms, her t-shirt slips over her shoulder and Kevin sees that her back and shoulder is covered with burn scars. His eyes lift to hers, as she settles Jedi against her hip and pulls her t-shirt back into position around her neck. Solange looks back at Kevin as his eyes lift from her scars and nods. After a moment, "Merci. You don't know how much you just meant to Jedi. Please go with God." Kevin wipes his face, exhales forcefully, looks back up at her, "M' ale. Hope to see you soon."

As he turns away, Jedi senses that he's leaving and begins to wriggle in Solange's arms, his little arms reaching toward Kevin. The Geo starts behind him, and Solange waves briefly at Jè through the windshield. Holding Jedi against her chest and singing a lullaby in his ear, she looks at Kevin and waves at him too. Then she gently puts Jedi onto his feet and leading him back inside. As the screen door opens, Jedi looks back at Kevin expectantly. Kevin replies sadly, "[Mwen regret sa. M' bezuin ale.](#)" The boy begins to sob deeply, wrapping his arms around himself as Kevin turns away and walks toward the waiting Geo.

Jè is inside watching him closely. After getting his gear into the back of the SUV, Kevin walks around to the passenger side door to get inside. Jedi has run across the weed filled lawn to the fence surrounding the orphanage yard. Through his tears, Kevin sees the boy smile wanly and then wave his one little hand at Kevin. Jedi mouths to him, "[Ou ap tounen?](#)" Kevin nods his head "[M'a tounen,](#)" knowing he'll never see this child again and hoping that God will forgive yet another lie. Jè turns the Geo around and as they start down the hill from Ti Legliz he asks Kevin, "You ok?" Kevin sighs deeply and replies, "No and probably never will be." After a bit of silence,

Kevin lights a cigarette and Jè quietly says, “Do you remember that old proverb I taught you?” Kevin exhales a plume of smoke out the window and laughs ruefully, “The rocks in the river can never know the pain of the rocks in the sun?” Jè nods and looks at Kevin before returning his eyes to the road, “That’s the one.”

Part 5 (Senkyèm): LESSONS

Survival

Carrefour

After returning to the station with Jè, Kevin settles into a routine. The Head Engineer has postponed his vacation. Tim is busy in Petionville, negotiating for a new space to expand the station’s reach with a soft rock radio station for the upper classes. They’ve settled into a rhythm at their Carrefour house. While Kevin thought the house would be too big for them, it is nice that they can each retreat to their own corner if they’ve seen enough of each other at the station that day.

Solange introduced Jè to one of her friends and how he has a girlfriend, which also makes the extra space convenient. Her name is Fleur, which Kevin hears as “Flo” setting off the usual comic relief as Jè and Fleur help him through that. Before long, he’s saying her name correctly and everyone is relieved that Kevin is keeping up for a change. It’s all good natured and before long, Kevin is invited to join Jè, Fleur, and their friends at local bars and clubs. The ones that aren’t on any tourist itinerary.

Making everything less difficult, Kevin has also solved his main transportation problem. He has his own vehicle but it is quite a sight. Jè helped him work out a deal with a Cuban man who owned two broken down Russian Ladas like the one rusting away in the station’s parking lot. During his morning walks, Kevin had also met a few of the shade tree mechanics that are always busy fixing tap-taps and every other wheeled conveyance. In exchange for both Cuban Ladas as spare parts and the broken-down station Lada, the mechanics give him one functioning 4WD Lada and somehow manage to turn the other two into one functioning vehicle of their own.

There’s no safety inspection required in Haiti. As long as the Lada keeps running, Kevin is mobile. More importantly to Kevin, he’s not reliant on the station’s motorcycles anymore. A friend at the Department of Motor Vehicles downtown paid another friend, and now Kevin has a valid Haitian driver license. The friend was a missionary, so of course it would be wrong to pay a bribe. Instead, they agree that the money exchanged was a “tax and customary fee”, so that’s how Kevin writes up the expense report. Besides, it’s not like he can be more dangerous than the other Haitian drivers.

Jè and Kevin are making do with a gravity-fed 55-gallon drum on their roof with a hand pump that fills the drum from a rain cistern. Unfortunately, Haiti is in a severe drought so there hasn’t been any rain. It’s late evening and getting a bit cooler (or less oppressively hot), when they discover that the shower ran dry and the toilet won’t flush. They have been rationing and agreed with the maid that it’s best not to use water for mopping, so they’re just living with a lot of dust.

But now that basic needs aren't being met, they climb up onto the roof to see what's going on. Not that surprisingly (but they really hoped otherwise) the drum is bone dry and the cistern is empty. The radio station has been paying for tank trucks of water to keep their swimming pool filled and toilets flushing, but there is so little water anywhere that the station has been using the compound pool as a cistern. To say that Kevin and Jè are out of options is putting it mildly. But as they stand on the roof wondering what to do, Jè begins to pray out loud. A prayer that Kevin's heard previously, but never really paid attention to before. It's not really a Christian prayer in the usual sense of "Thou" and "Art" and "Amen" and so forth, but more of a hymn?

Before Kevin can ask Jè about it, the wind shifts suddenly and a cloud bank moves in from over the ocean toward Carrefour. As if by God's hand itself, the clouds open and a cool, soaking rain begins falling. Kevin just looks at Jè and raises his left eyebrow and says, "You didn't need to wait until now to summon rain. It doesn't have to be this exciting!" Then they hug and laugh and agree that God's grace is good.

A few days later, the cistern is refilled but Kevin decides it's unwise to rely on Jè as his only source of rain. He arranges to have a submersible pump shipped from Miami and pays a local man to dig a well in front of their house. It was quite impressive the first time Kevin plugged in the pump and it started gushing water into the street. Unfortunately, the pump was so powerful and the well too shallow that it could only fill a handful of buckets before the well went dry. After trying this a few times with no new results, Kevin is resigned to waiting for rain.

But Haitians are not so easily deterred and before long, Jè has arranged a system with the neighborhood, where the kids and women with water buckets can just wait on the front porch until the well refills. Then refill their buckets in the shade, before carrying them back home across the street or around the corner. It's much more efficient for everyone than dragging five-gallon buckets along the dusty roads. Kevin learns that one five-gallon bucket of water is the maximum unit of measure for each water carrier. It's the most a child can reasonably carry and all that those waiting will tolerate, before it's the next person's turn.

The whole situation becomes a source of entertainment for the neighborhood and every few hours, a new crowd forms to see how many buckets the pump will spit out this time. It's a great way for Kevin to meet the neighbors and now everyone knows him. Without comment, Jè has hooked up a remote switch, so that even when they're not home, anyone who needs water can reach inside their "fe foje" iron bar security system (or "house cage" as Kevin calls it), turn on the pump, and see if there's water available.

Before the water pump, Kevin and Jè were sort of a community joke. No one really thought they're "a couple". But the neighborhood's confusion is resolved, when Jè brings Fleur into the picture. Everyone then accepts that the blan fou is just too busy for a wife and stops asking about it. The water pump switch system is providing water to all the houses within a few blocks, so instead of being "the white guy and his Haitian friend" they are now two pillars of the community. Kevin is able to move freely throughout Carrefour because when people see the Lada or the station SUV, they just assume it's both of them inside.

While Kevin was on Mount Beef, his NGO had negotiated an agreement with Tim and the station's board. Kevin will transition out of his role at the station to assist with other NGO

priorities in Haiti, but remain available for emergency situations. Kevin quickly agrees to this, since Jè is perfectly capable of handling any emergencies that can be solved without guns or money.

Part 6 (Sizyèm): BETRAYAL

Observers (1 of 2)

Port-au-Prince

While Kevin is happy to get out of the day to day drama at the radio station, his NGO's arrangement with the station's board means that Kevin's new mission is to be a tour guide, interpreter, and "our man in Haiti" for recent blan arrivals. The Aristide government is a focus of interest for the usual suspects, for reasons not that new in Haiti's history as the first African slave revolt-then-Republic. Visitors from Columbia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, France, Jamaica, Panama, and of course, Zeta Zuni. With all the journalists, cartel soldiers, spies, humanitarians, and grifter Alphabet agencies coming into Port on every flight, the bars and restaurants are packed and the cost of liquor and cigarettes have skyrocketed. Still no condoms though. Still a Catholic country. Well if you know a guy, they're available at black market prices of course, but no expiration dates...

However, Kevin, Kat, and their friends are still partying like it's the end of the world, because they stopped drinking top shelf long ago. Marlboros and Johnny Walker? Oh, forget it. But local cigs and 3-star Barbancourt rum? No problem. No one came down here to get HIV/AIDS or knock someone up or go home knocked up. Other than drinking themselves into oblivion whenever possible, it's all very wholesome and egalitarian. Except back in NY, DC, Miami. Then it's a different vibe. But here, living in wartime despite the supposed truce between Lavalas, the Duvalierists, and the military, gunfire is common. No one wears seat belts anymore because there's a lot more risk from stray bullets than a fender bender. Everyone avoids driving at night, because the price of fuel and strategic value of darkness leave the city without electricity most of the time. Can't be with the one you love? Love the one you're with.

Then there are the observer/tourist delegations from all points in Christendom. Since Kat and Kevin work for faith-adjacent NGO's, they're constantly shepherding flocks of American fundajelicals around the country. Since the safest restaurants and bars are in Petionville and every delegation needs to end with a good dinner party, Kevin spends more time in Petionville than Carrefour. Most daily itineraries include the Montana Hotel sooner or later, so the hotel bar always has two excellent bartenders on duty around the clock. After the tourists are safely asleep in their hotels and guest houses each evening, Kevin, Kat, Dirk and all their NGO friends usually end up in the Montana bar, exchanging war stories about the hopeless delegations. They quickly adopt the term "JAFO" (just another fucking observer) as a catch-all for the gaggles of confused white people in their charge.

While drinking an Irish coffee one morning and waiting for his group to collect itself in the Montana lobby, Kevin sees Jocelyn talking with Kat outside the main hotel conference room. Before he can make his way over to them and say hello, Jocelyn is back inside the room. Kat has

collected her flock and sees Kevin in the lobby. They hug briefly and Kevin asks about Jocelyn. Kat is already moving but looks back at him and says, "Long, amazing story. Will tell you later." Kevin peeks in the window in the conference room door and sees Jocelyn. She's standing in front of the room with a bar graph and a pointer, explaining something to a group of American pastors. Then he collects his own delegation and leads them outside to the buses.

International Airport

It's late one morning at the Port-au-Prince airport, and Kevin is slightly hungover and waiting for a missionary group to arrive from Miami. He's found a good spot to watch the exit from Immigration and Customs and he's early, so he watches the mayhem as each flight's passengers emerge into the bright sun from the airport arrivals area. It's like clockwork as he watches from across the street. When a group steps into the sun with their bags and carts, the heat and midday sun stuns them. As they try to get their bearings, put on sun glasses, and dig out their paperwork, a few dozen street kids and young men descend on the confused blans, offering cheap taxis, assistance with bag handling, and guided tours.

Now that Kevin's Creole is entry-level functional, he understands that these offers are just a distraction for the pick pockets. When he's responsible for these groups, he tries to pre-negotiate with whoever is the ringleader. \$20 in local gourde currency is usually enough to get a few minutes of space for people to load into vehicles and keep the rival groups of street kids at a distance. Kevin is trying to decide which of the young men to approach, when the whole crowd of Haitian greeters collects around the airport exit.

Observers (2 of 2)

There's a very large group making its way outside with a collection of luggage trucks. The group is typically bewildered and is struggling to get itself collected. Now the street kids are mixing in with them like sharks among among baby seals. In the center of the maelstrom is a tall black guy wearing an LA Dodgers ball cap. Kevin knows he's African-American and not Haitian, simply from the way he's dressed and how tall he is. But for some reason, the Haitians aren't picking up on this.

LA Dodgers seems to be in charge of the American group but from raised voices, Kevin can tell they're from Texas or someplace in the deep south. The white folk are yelling things to LA Dodgers, because they seem to expect him to magically communicate with the Haitians. Kevin watches him shrug his shoulders toward the group, his facial expression saying, "How should I know?". LA Dodgers grabs his bags and makes his way toward the waiting line of taxis and passenger vans. Not knowing what else to do, the Texans follow him.

The Haitians pick up on the fact that the Texans don't seem to trust LA Dodgers, so this seems to convince them that he's Haitian. The street kids start swarming him and try to grab at his bags and slip their fingers into his pockets. But he just laughs and playfully but firmly bats their hands away. The kids start yelling at him in Creole but he stops, grins, and says loudly, "[M pakab pale Creole!](#)" [Mwen se Ameriken](#)" Then he pulls an LA Lakers towel from his bag and puts it around his neck.

Suddenly, he's like a celebrity and the Haitian kids start practicing their English with him. Singing lyrics from NWA and other songs Kevin's never heard. Some even say, "Fuck LAPD!" which horrifies the Texans but has LA Dodgers doubled over laughing. Eventually a driver appears with a sign and everyone loads up into a nearby van, while LA Dodgers fist bumps the Haitian kids and climbs in after the last Texan is aboard.

Kevin's arriving delegation is a church youth group down to help "build a school" for the Haitians. For some reason, they don't have any local contacts other than him but they do have the name of a local van/camion company. As Kevin's trying to decide what to do, a Haitian man approaches with a placard and explains that he's supposed to take this group to their project. But the driver doesn't know where their project is either. They decide to get everyone and their luggage into his big school bus so they won't all get robbed. After they're inside, Kevin talks with the middle-aged couple who are chaperoning the teenagers. "My NGO only gave me your flight number. What else can you tell me?" Church Couple argue their way to an explanation that Kevin can understand. It seems the group raised funds and shipped supplies to the school location a few months ago. But when all the political trouble started, they lost contact. They're hoping Kevin can help them find that school and then their building supplies. They need to build the school and return to the US in a week.

The next problem is that no one from the Haitian church arrived at the airport to meet them. The Americans don't know anything else, except that the church is near Hinche. Keeping his voice low to avoid alarming the kids, Kevin explains to the couple, "That's up in the Artibonite valley way north of here, and it's already late." They look at him with blank stares but he continues, "It's very remote and the area has almost no paved roads. The Macoutes haven't been pacified up there, and they're having daily gun fights with the Haitian military." Church Couple looks at him in bewilderment, "Macoutes? Gun fights? We're not getting involved in any of that!" Then Husband looks at Kevin as if just noticing that he's not much older than the youth group, "Your NGO said you're their fixer down here. But if it's so hard to get up there, how do you know any of this?" He looks at Wife and back to Kevin triumphantly. Kevin blinks, raises an eyebrow, and smiles thinly, "Protestant Radio has a transmitter up there. I've made the trip but only by motorcycle and NOT during the rainy season, which is what we call this time of year. Unless you're in a military convoy, no one is going to care what you think you're doing. Either way, they'll shoot first. And since I'll be with you, I agree we shouldn't get involved in any of that."

Since everyone is already on the bus and Church Couple is staring at him in stunned silence, Kevin steps out of the bus to smoke a cigarette and consider options. He finishes the cigarette and steps back into the bus. "Look, if your supplies made it to Hinche someone will already have made use of them. Possibly to build that school." The couple both open their mouths at the same time but Kevin interrupts them, "I have another idea that will be safer for the kids and is nearby so you won't spend half your week getting bounced around in this school bus." He explains his proposal and since no one has any other options or ideas, the bus follow his Lada north from the airport, away from downtown, to a small village in the mountains an hour away.

One of Kevin's friends is running a huge project in the area for NGO Housing. They're building an entire village, including a steel suspension bridge to connect with the nearest available road.

Even though the bus full of Americans is unexpected, there's plenty of work to go around. Kevin and his friend get the group into dorms and everyone seems very happy with the arrangement. Kevin sticks around to make sure the kids and Church Couple are settled in. Then he shakes some hands, reminds everyone that they'll need to get back to the airport without him next week, and makes his exit. As he's climbing into his Lada, his NGO friend bangs on the cargo door, opens it, and pushes a crate into the back of the SUV. She comes to his driver side window, leans in and winks. "Thank me later", she says. Laughing, they exchange cheek pecks and remind each other to stay safe. When Kevin gets back to his apartment and looks in the back of the Lada, he discovers a whole case of Barbancourt 3-star in exchange for the free labor. Not a bad day. Hope LA Dodgers is doing OK.

Part 6 (Sizyèm): BETRAYAL

Huddled Masses

Bon Repos Refugee Camp

After finishing up some meetings in Petionville a few days later, Kevin receives a panicked request via Tele-Joel to place a collect call to a certain number in Zeta Zuni. It looks like a NYC number, so Kevin finds a Telco and pays the "seating fee" to wait for a phone. He makes the call and learns that some church affiliated with his NGO panicked and is escorting several hundred Haitian cane workers back from the DR, with no plan for what to do after they get across the border. That's why she needs Kevin's advice. Kevin quickly advises that she turn them around before they cross the border. Then she admits that the group has already talked and bribed their way past the Haitian border guards. The Haitian refugees have been deposited at the Bon Repos government refugee camp. The American "facilitators" have already landed back in Miami without making any arrangements with the camp staff.

Before Kevin can interrupt, she goes on at great length to explain that the DR regime was expelling all Haitians and they are so glad they could get the group safely into Bon Repos. When she takes a breath, Kevin explains that this is all common knowledge, except that the Haitian government has no funds and everyone in that camp is already starving to death. Since she doesn't have anything to say about that, Kevin asks if she knows this DR-initiated crisis is an intentional tactic to overwhelm and destabilize Haiti's democratically elected government. After a lot of crackling silence on the line, the young lady concedes that she isn't aware of this. Then Kevin suggests she tell someone who makes decisions. Because if churches are unwittingly compounding the problem, then they better get down here with lawyers, guns, and money because we all know what happens next. Then the line is cut.

Kevin is about to write the whole situation as someone else's bad decision, but decides to check in with the NGO's office in the US. His contact explains that their NGO already funded the Haitian's trip from the DR. As Haiti Representative, he will need to assist the group until other help arrives. Since he's accepted every other assignment his NGO can think of, Kevin accepts this one too. The next day, he goes to the Bon Repos camp to see what's going on. Before he's even figured out who's in charge, his Lada is surrounded with shouting, angry people, who see his tool kit and lead him to their power generator. After convincing them that the fuel tank is

empty and he can't fix that, another person who seems to know Kevin leads him across the camp in the opposite direction from his Lada. They weave through the dozen or so squat cement buildings that used to be a mission school campus. Every open door shows at least four curtained off areas with cots inside. The desks and chairs have already been turned into firewood and the only evidence that this was ever a school is the blackboards.

They pass a line of Haitian women over large cauldrons of rice and beans and turn the corner to see an endless food line stretching across a soccer field and around the corner of a building 100 meters away. Just then, a fight breaks out in the food line. Two young boys tumble into the dirt and roll around until one screams as the other tears away his ear lobe with his teeth. Blood flows but no one intervenes. Kevin's escort tells him it's "pa gro bagay." The kids have no parents. No one will make trouble.

They finally arrive at the camp's medical clinic. It's a small room in the former school's admin building. Kevin's escort pushes him inside and then disappears. The clinic is crowded with a line of waiting patients outside. A very tired looking Government of Haiti doctor is being assisted by a young French nurse. The nurse has just arrived in country. Her French allows her to communicate with the doctor. But she doesn't understand or speak Creole, so she can't communicate directly with the patients. A Haitian man approaches Kevin, introduces himself as Pastor Isaac and explains that he's one of the pastors of the group "Kevin's NGO abandoned" here. They've been having problems getting medical care or resources due to their own language barriers with the staff. The Haitian cane workers were living in the DR so long that their Creole is now a mix of Spanish and Creole, and most of the local Haitians can't understand the Dominican-Haitian refugees.

The doctor, nurse, and Pastor Isaac all start speaking in their own languages at the same time, and then look at Kevin expectantly. He asks them to explain again, slowly, and one at a time. Eventually, Kevin pieces together the problem. One of the children who came with the group has a severe throat infection. The doctor hasn't prescribed any antibiotics. Instead of reminding them that he has medical knowledge and is only competent with English, Kevin jumps in and tries his best to be the interpreter for everyone. There's a lot of shouting and hand waving and Kevin quickly becomes overwhelmed. He asks everyone to calm down and repeat things slowly, but that seems to panic everyone more. If he doesn't understand, why is he here? But Kevin's into it now and can't bring himself to call a timeout.

Eventually, everyone agrees that the child should receive antibiotics. The doctor's concern was that no one would make sure that the child took all the pills. Kevin finally gets frustrated and announces, "Fine! I'll take accountability, just give me the pills." However, by the time all the arguing has stopped, it escapes everyone's attention that the sick child is an infant who can't swallow anything because of her throat infection. Kevin only learns this when he returns to the family's corner of a classroom some penicillin tablets. Then he watches helplessly, as the parents try to get the little girl to swallow them. Then he has to attend the funeral on behalf of the NGO that created the entire mess in the first place.

After that disastrous performance, Kevin doesn't expect to get any more phone calls from the US. But despite his inadequacies and lack of experience with refugee resettlement, Kevin is the NGO's only English/Creole speaker. Kevin writes up a report on the child's death for his NGO.

That report then finds its way to the Aristide government, who investigates. A commission is formed, made up of any international NGO's that have grant money left and a collection of new officials from the Aristide government. USAID takes one look at the whole camp situation and says, "No thanks."

Due to his previous relationships with some of the new government officials, Kevin finds himself negotiating with the Ministry of Cults, the Red Cross, and dozens of NGO representatives. They're all concerned about the situation in the camp, but Kevin is the only member of the entire commission who's actually set foot in the place. After a very long meeting with lots of high-minded rhetoric about the importance of integrating the new Haitian refugees into Haitian culture, Kevin has had enough. When the NGO and GOH experts have finally stopped theorizing, Kevin clears his throat and says, "It's obviously important that we think about the long term. But if we don't do something to help those people right now, they're all going to be too dead to immerse themselves in Haitian culture."

But even after that, Kevin still keeps getting invited to meetings and his NGO keeps finding new ways to dig him in deeper. Even though he's only been in the country for less than a year, Kevin's reports about the coup and human rights atrocities are thorough and difficult to ignore. This has brought him to the attention of other audiences as "someone who knows things" but more dangerously, "someone who will tell things". Unfortunately, the audience taking the most notice seems to be at the US Embassy. Kevin learns from several reliable sources that his name is on their list of "human rights and democracy advocates."

Despite all the administrative distractions, Kevin is able to stay in touch with Pastor Isaac at Bon Repos. Conditions there are atrocious, but there is just nowhere else for the refugees to go. Most have no friends or family in Haiti to help them get resettled. Kevin works out an arrangement with the pastor's wife, who's name is Esperanza. Her Creole is very mixed with Spanish, so Kevin struggles to understand her and she him. But since Esperanza is responsible for getting supplies from the nearby market, they quickly find that they can communicate easily with lists and prices. Kevin gets his NGO to start sending money through his personal checking account, so he can take cash to Pastor Isaac and Esperanza. At this point, his Lada usually contains about a year's worth of Haitian wages at all times, wrapped in old newspapers under a box of Bibles. Kevin prefers the French Bibles. Thieves love those because they're worth more on the secondary market.

Because language barriers continue to cause problems in the camp and Kevin's learned that lesson, he starts bringing Je and Solange along to help. NGO Peace agrees to pay them as staff, so now he has Jè to help him with the Creole speakers and Solange to help with the Creole/Spanish that the cane workers speak. Best of all, Esperanza and Solange become friends instantly. They quickly organize the women in Bon Repos and conditions start to improve. Kevin and Je are taking a break together at the camp one day, when Kevin suggests bringing Henri in to meet Pastor Isaac and Esperanza. Jè thinks for a while and then says, "I don't think so. Henri isn't really anonymous anymore. He's been organizing very effectively and the Macoutes and know him in the south, just like in the north." Jè pauses and looks like he's wrestling with something before continuing, "And honestly Kevin, you're so obvious in that Lada. I hope you

know you're being followed every time you leave the camp." Kevin's face pales, "Are you serious?" Jè nods, "New sheriff in town."

Kevin, Jè, and Solange agree that it's best for Kevin to keep handling all the meetings with concerned helpers and alphabet agencies, so they can keep a low profile and continue working with the Haitians in the camp. Since Kevin owns the only typewriter, Solange also declares him to be their "Cultural Attache". The goal is to get the DR Haitians out of the camp as soon as possible, but not before they have a chance of surviving outside. They'll bring Kevin in if they need help with the Haitian administrators or to scare any of the Americans that keep showing up at awkward times. But no matter what side you're on, meetings must happen and those meetings should be in a comfortable setting. This keeps Kevin quite busy in Petionville but at least he's not wearing out his Lada, driving back and forth to Carrefour every day.

Part 7 (Setyèm): MEN WITH GUNS

Martial Law (1 of 2)

Petionville Apartment

September 30, 1991

Zero-dark-thirty.

Kevin jolts awake, his heart racing. He lies still and a few beats later, hears gunfire. He's asking himself if it's actually gun fire or the neighbor kids raising hell again, when a staccato series of sharp cracks convinces him that this is the real deal. He scrambles to find his lantern and is looking for matches, when he remembers that his mosquito net is over his bed. Ripping the thin fabric aside, he gives up on the matches and makes his way toward his closed window.

The apartment that he's house-sitting is in a round, three story high bunker-looking building one block from the Petionville police station. It has a great view of the bay and airport lying miles away, down at sea level. Kevin's studio apartment is half of the circle. In an ingenious architectural and functional design, the "windows" in the apartment are actually tinted plexiglass screens that slide up and down inside the cinder block window sill itself. Dim light is showing through it and he can't find his watch, so he cracks the window open and peeks outside.

The first thing he notices is that it's not pre-dawn, but very dark. He listens and hears a few distant generators but sees no electric lights of any kind. But the air is cool and he pulls the window open, gropes his way to the kitchen table to find his matches, and a flashlight that actually works. He goes back to his bed and retrieves the lantern, finds that it has some kerosene and decides to light it and save the flashlight batteries. Eventually he finds his watch and sees that it's now 5:30 AM. Some dim sunlight is starting to come into his window which is disorienting, since the morning sun is usually much brighter this time of year.

Then he hears the church bells. They should not be ringing on the half hour, much less before the idiot roosters get started. Where are they, by the way? He realizes that as loud as it is now with every bell ringing like it's the end of the world, the gunfire has become quite sustained. It's hard to tell how far away now, but Kevin has an uneasy feeling that this is not just another day

in tropical paradise and eyes the half-empty bottle of 3-star on the counter. He decides it's the wrong kind of 5:00 and checks the water levels in his water filtration apparatus instead. Since it's too early to get coffee at any of the nearby cafes, he decides to use his last bottle of butane and fires up his camp stove to get some coffee brewing.

Luckily, he remembered to charge his solar panel yesterday, so his boom box external battery pack is all green LED's. Someone has permanently borrowed his Public Enemy disc while leaving the empty jewel case. He looks in the CD tray to see that Joshua Tree is still there and hits Play. Kevin sits down at his small table with a cup of coffee and croissant. No cheese. He doesn't have a refrigerator and Marie (the apartment maid) usually shops each day. He never keeps a lot on hand, except some Hormel chili and a local hot sauce that will make Texans cry.

It's 7 AM as U2 is hitting the groove in "Bullet the Blue Sky". Kevin realizes that the church bells have stopped ringing and the gunfire is now very close. No more pops and cracks, but the continuous fire of automatic weapons. It's well after daybreak, so he makes his way back to the open window and looks outside. Usually, the view would be of the bay and La Gonave beyond on a clear day. But today, he can't see anything outside except a smoky haze. The wind shifts and Kevin coughs at the sudden gust of acrid, tire smoke. He's lighting a cigarette when he hears a loud, "Bllaaatttt" from the street below.

He hears a woman scream and peeks over the top of the window/screen to see three heavily armed men in full combat gear and the new US-style helmets. Kevin's surprised at this, and is trying to decide if he's ever seen a Haitian soldier in anything but those old WW2 GI helmets. But his thoughts are interrupted when the rear guard of the three looks back over his shoulder and sees Kevin watching from high above. The soldier shouts something, spins toward Kevin and raises his assault rifle, its suppressor looking like a beer can at the end of its barrel, and drops to one knee. The other two soldiers spin and drop just as quickly, and before Kevin can do much more than flinch back from the window, a stream of bullets flies past his head and into the concrete above his window. A few other rounds whiz past with that zipping sound and shred the palm tree fronds that shade Kevin's window. Kevin makes his way back to his bed. He falls into it and shakes his way through a massive adrenaline dump, before returning to the kitchen for that bottle of rum.

Road to La Boule Mountain.

Kevin has loaded up his Lada with anything he can fit and is on the road up the mountain from Petionville. He's aiming for a big guest house in La Boule, where some friends are house-sitting for an American family. The family was out of the country when rumors of coups became too loud a few weeks ago. They decided not to return until after the New Year and asked Kevin's friends to keep house-sitting until they get back. There was no mention of the bar and wine cellar, so his friends have been working their way through those perishables and running an endless house party. At this point, it's drawn in every outlaw and subversive who finds themselves between projects or other schemes. Kevin even sees Henri briefly at one of the weekend parties. Henri gave him a quick smile and nod, before ducking into a nearby room. Kevin never mentions this to anyone because who needs to know?

The road to La Boule is carved into the side of the steep mountain range that towers above Port-au-Prince itself. It's easy to forget that people live up here, because the mountain is usually shrouded in fog and mist. The temperature drops quickly with altitude. Kevin is debating whether to try the Lada heater, when he rounds one of the road's hairpins and sees a black Mitsubishi Pajero slowing ahead of him. Kevin downshifts and begins to slow, as the Pajero stops and soldiers begin disembarking with their weapons pointed in every direction including Kevin's. He slams on the brakes and comes to a full stop approximately 30 meters behind the SUV.

Kevin sees what has stopped the soldiers' vehicle. The road is blocked by a barricade of smoldering tires and an overturned delivery truck. One soldier walks a few paces toward Kevin's Lada. Kevin looks in the mirror and sees no one behind him, so he backs up as fast as the soldier is walking. Realizing where this is going, the soldier points his Uzi barrel at Kevin and waves him forward. Instead, Kevin rolls down his window and then places both hands on the wheel. The soldier watches him intently, but doesn't move his gun from its casual parade rest position. Kevin slowly leans out the window, making sure not to move his hands. With no visible reaction from the Uzi, Kevin calls out in his best Texas accent, "Hey, Y'all! Which way to the Barban Koon distillery?". The soldier relaxes, drops his Uzi onto its sling around his shoulder and shakes his head, stepping a few paces back from Kevin so he can provide overwatch for the other soldiers.

Martial Law (2 of 2)

La Boule

Kevin relaxes slightly and takes the opportunity to light a cigarette, blowing a plume of smoke downwind toward the soldier. The soldier sniffs absently, but doesn't take his attention from the road block. Kevin leans out his window a bit farther so he can see what has the soldier's attention. From one of the shanty towns that spill down the embankment below the road, a crowd of women and children are being led at gunpoint, up the steep hill toward the road block. Kevin sees that the rest of the soldiers are split into two groups. One is taking cover behind the Pajero with guns pointed at the hill above the road block. The rest are still down in the shanty town, but have lined up about a dozen men in front of one of the plywood retaining walls. The men are on their knees, hands behind their heads, and a man in civilian clothes is going through all their pockets while the uniformed men keep their guns trained on the men's backs.

As the women and children are herded onto the roadway, they begin pulling the tires aside and push them over the bank toward the shanty town. Then as the soldiers kick and beat them, the villagers push the bed of the burned-out truck bed aside, so that it is only blocking the lane nearest the steep cliff on Kevin's right. Then the villagers are shoved and kicked back down the steep bank to the left of the road. The soldier nearest Kevin slowly turns and stares into his eyes, a smirk on his lips as if to ask, "Did you enjoy the show?" then waves Kevin ahead with the barrel of his Uzi.

Kevin carefully threads his Lada past the Pajero, then between some pavement chunks that are still strewn across the road surface, taking care not to get too close to the legs of the soldiers and taking extra, special care not to look down the bank on his left. Traffic is piling up in the

downhill direction. Drivers are panicking at the scene they've also been watching, and many try to three-point their way back up the mountain. Kevin just lays on the horn of the Lada, keeps it in second gear and accelerates until the little Russian engine sounds like it will explode, causing the other drivers to slam on their brakes until he's past. He shifts into third and drives as fast as his tires will allow up the mountain and to the house party that awaits.

For the next month, the days begin to blur into a chaotic stream of rumors, fear, and boredom. The house party dwindles daily as the NGO's, Embassy non-essentials, and any unarmed alphabet agencies get their tickets out of the hot zone. Most of the new wave of missionaries have long ago extracted, with only the oldest school remaining in their compounds. As a god-damn-independent (GDI), Kevin has decided he'll ride this out until the New Year. He hates Christmas and would rather spend it on a beach than in some White Christmas icy hellscape. He's getting some pressure from back home to come back to his senses. But at the same time, since Kevin is his NGO's only unaligned source of information about the coup's aftermath, he keeps sending reports about human rights abuses that keep people asking for more, so he can go and ask more questions and repeat the process.

His radio engineer pass and brand-new letters of recommendation and authorization to travel from the Aristide government are useless now, but his Haitian driver license is still valid. All the officials who signed anything are in hiding, already on a plane helpfully provided by the US Military, or down a hole in Fort Dimanche prison awaiting their fate. Kevin has his shortwave radio though, sets it up on the dining room table, and someone is scanning and shouting out updates whenever they catch a fragment of news. None of the local stations are on air, since journalists have been getting rounded up and disappeared along with anyone who was elected to anything the year before. But Tele-Joel is undeniable and before long it's common knowledge that President Aristide has been arrested by whatever General is in charge now.

This news seems to break something in everyone in the house and everyone in Haiti who isn't already celebrating their victory at the Presidential Palace. President Aristide was entirely unharmed. He was arrested in his private residence in the wee hours of the coup. Oh, but good news? Now the US is offering to negotiate Aristide's release. Oh, well then. I guess the good guys will win one. Never mind, they're offering to send him to Africa or other place Andeyo.

After a few days of inactivity in the house and supplies running low, Kevin and a few remaining Americans decide to make the run to Petionville for resupply. They'll take the Lada because it's so ridiculous that the military never consider it a threat. But most of the people in the house now are Haitian labor organizers and low-level Lavalas fugitives. They explain all the ways the American idea is a terrible plan, mostly because it will put them all at risk if it goes wrong. A healthy debate ensues until someone shouts everyone quiet. Voice of America is advising all Americans to stay inside and shelter in place. The Haitian military has started shooting people on sight. They've declared a 24 hour, blanket curfew in place for all of Port-au-Prince. No one is allowed in or out of city limits and the airport is completely off limits for all but military use. So, that ends the debate and discussion of rationing begins. Over drinks, of course.

Part 7 (Setyèm): MEN WITH GUNS**Police State****Haiti**

The military has installed a provisional government (led by a General, of course) and has finished rounding up most of the opposition. Haiti is open for business investment, so come on down and place your bets and bribes. In response, the international community have placed a US-enforced embargo on all fuel into Haiti. As soon as a few nights pass without renewed hostilities, the curfew is eased and travel is allowed from 6 am to midnight. But black rocket fuel prices already skyrocketing, gas lines extend for kilometers as fuel is rationed to 5-gallon cans. Kevin has made his way downtown to the Iron Market, hoping to change a personal check for cash, but the market is deserted. Disappointed and not wanting to waste gas driving around looking for an open bodega, he drives back up a side street toward Petionville.

Kevin's hoping to avoid all the checkpoints on Delmas, but now he has a military truck tailgating him so closely he can't even see its headlights. He's pulled over twice and waved them around, but they just stop and wait for him to continue driving. After another attempt to get them around him has failed, Kevin comes upon a badly beaten man lying on the side of the road. His features are distorted from a heavy beating and he's not moving. Kevin takes his foot off the accelerator, but notices the military truck overtaking him quickly. So instead, he says a silent prayer for forgiveness and drives on.

Running out of cash and without any contacts who can access information, Kevin spends most of his time in his apartment. He's been working his way through audio records that document human rights abuses and the carnage that's swept the country. It is truly biblical. No one recalls a time when so many people have been killed and brutalized with such impunity. The recorded accounts from survivors are harrowing. Kevin's been trying to translate and transcribe them. But after a few weeks of not much sleep, he realizes the emotional toll is too great. The next time he links up with Father Vitor, he hands over the tapes and partial transcriptions. "I don't think I'm going to be able to do any more of the transcribing", he explains. Fr. Vitor just nods reassuringly, "Not a problem. We'll have one of the brothers do that here." He shakes Kevin's hand, "We always appreciate when you bring the packages."

Kevin still makes the safe house circuit with cash that somehow doesn't show up in his expense reports. Henri, Je, and Solange are managing the distribution of printed materials for storage in the Carrefour house. Kevin meets up with Jè each week for resupply and to discuss any technical issues at the station. Kevin is delivering pamphlets and blank cassette tapes at a house near the Cathedral, where some friends of Father Vitor and Henri are hiding out. Suddenly, one of the lookouts steps back from the front window. He motions for Kevin to join him. They peer out between curtains and see a soldier searching the glove compartment of Kevin's Lada. The lookout asks, "Do you need to get out of here another way?" Kevin watches the soldier for a few seconds before chuckling darkly, "Nothing in there but French Bibles".

The lookout laughs nervously, but doesn't say anything in reply. Kevin's face falls into a serious expression, "I'm sorry about all this. I'm leading the mal leves to you now." The organizers quickly change the subject and ask him to stay for a meal. Kevin declines, but leaves a few gourde by the door when he leaves. The lookout sees this and starts to protest. Kevin smiles and makes a time out gesture with his hands. "It's just ti kob. Don't know when I'll be back again. If you don't need it for food, get a box of those Cuban cigars for next time." He shakes hands with the organizers and their families, checks his glove compartment for any surprises left by the soldier, starts the Lada in a plume of smoke, and drives up Delmas toward his apartment.

Out of habit, he almost makes the turn to Education NGO's guest house but veers back into the traffic heading toward Petionville. Kat and Dirk have been pulled out of Mirogoane. He hasn't heard what happened to Jocelyn and Ti Mon. He should find out from Kat right now. After considering a U-turn back down the hill toward Kat and Dirk's temporary quarters, he remembers that it's filled with JAFO. Sighing, he lights a cigarette and pulls off the road to get a bottle of Barbancourt before the vendor closes up for the evening. Restarting the SUV, he notices that his fuel gauge is at 1/8. Kat and Dirk have somehow kept their Landcruiser fueled up for the cannonball runs back and forth to the airport. The rest of their staff are pulling out but last Kevin heard, Kat and Dirk were staying. Rather than try to siphon more gas from abandoned missionary vehicles, Kevin decides he'll park the Lada to save the last 1/8 tank and hitch rides as needed.

Petionville Park

A few days later, Dirk and Kevin leave the Landcruiser parked along a wall next to the Petionville Park, across the plaza from the Police Station. There hasn't been a general strikes in days. After the US Embassy invited everyone to leave, gangs were robbing Americans on Delmas as they tried to get to the airport. But that's bad for business, so the military razed a few slums, slaughtered a few hundred random peasants, and things are just fine again.

But life must go on. Dirk has heard that one of their favorite bakeries has opened again. They make their way a couple blocks downhill from the police station and find that the bakery is indeed open. They grab pastries and hustle back to the truck. As they're climbing in, Kevin sees a handful of street kids approaching. He mentions this to Dirk, who gestures up the street at an approaching soldier. They quickly climb in as the kids reach Kevin's passenger side window. The soldier is shouting something at Dirk and motioning for him to drive ahead. Kevin rolls up the window as the first boy tries to get his face close in the window to shout something. But one of the other kids pushes him from behind as the truck pulls away. As Kevin finishes rolling up the window, he notices a smear of tears from where the child's face had been.

Dirk rolls the pickup to the end of the street where the armed man is waiting. He's wearing a police uniform, a WW2-style helmet and a long rifle with wooden stock and attached bayonet. He gestures to Kevin that he should roll down his window. As Kevin complies, the soldier taps on the door with his bayonet tip and gestures for Kevin to let him in the truck. Kevin slides over the bench seat toward Dirk as the soldier climbs into the truck with them.

As Dirk starts driving again the soldier asks, "How are you finding the security?" Kevin's not sure he's heard him correctly and looks over at Dirk who just raises his eyebrows as if to say, "I have

no idea!” Kevin asks him to repeat what he said and the soldier leans in very closely with his bayonet pointing everywhere and asks slowly, “How do you like the security?” Kevin replies that it’s fine. Then the soldier continues, “I need you to give me money. It’s very difficult for the armed forces right now.” Dirk is still driving, but is slowing for the turn into Delmas. Kevin is completely out of ideas and just replies, “I can’t do that.” The Haitian cop/soldier snorts and says, “You can’t give me anything at all?” Kevin says again, “No, sir.” Dirk has come to a near stop now and seems to be frozen at the wheel. The soldier seems to think that means his ride is over, so without further comment he gets out of the truck and walks downhill toward the main Army barracks.

They have quite a party at the Guest House that night. Kevin doesn’t remember exactly how he got home, but the next morning he’s awakened by the screams of Marie, calling his name over the shouts of a man outside. Kevin hurries out onto the stairway landing and carefully peeks over the side. He sees his Columbian neighbor shouting at her. “Get out of here! I’m tired of seeing you. If I see you again, I’m going to get my gun and shoot you.” Kevin is trying to decide how to respond when Guardian Joel rounds the corner and walks up to the gate. Without comment, he unlocks it so Marie can run upstairs to Kevin’s apartment. Then Joel looks calmly at Kevin’s neighbor and says, “It’s for people like you that we need Aristide to return.”

Part 8 (Wityèm): DEFEND

Adapt (1 of 2)

While Kevin has been stuck on the Petionville side of the city with the tourists and now the military, Jè and Henri have continued working together to build out the Ti Legliz comms network. Kevin receives news occasionally, but stays clear of Carrefour and Ti Legliz Village. He can’t justify the gas to travel out there and with tap-taps being stopped and searched at will by anyone with a gun, Kevin’s decided to focus on communicating with their mutual friends in Port-au-Prince.

Henri’s organizing skills and leadership have been crucial in the Ti Groupma. He and Solange have trained deputies who are patrolling the area around Ti Legliz and the transmitters on the peak. But that notoriety has come with a cost, and now Henri is on another Macoute list and can’t be openly visible within the community. But by working with Solange and Jè, Henri is able to coordinate the exit of Pastor Isaac’s DR Haitians from the camp. Before lifting the curfew, the military had cleared the camp, burning everything and everyone that remained.

Kevin doesn’t know where Pastor Isaac’s group ended up, because Jè and Solange arranged all that and kept him out of the details. The US staff quickly agrees that it’s best if no American knows the location. Pastor Isaac will contact them when it’s safe. However, since Jè and Solange know where they are, the NGO should keep them on staff for ongoing support. This allows Jè to stay in Carrefour when he’s not at the base community. The station hasn’t paid anyone since the coup, so there’s barely any programming. Just country and western gospel music and “updates” from the Haitian Generals. Henri and Solange have been donating all their NGO wages to the Ti

Legliz war chest. After a few cryptic calls with the NGO accountants, Kevin types up an expense report with very large, round numbers in Gourde currency for transportation, food, security, housing and contingencies. Then he drops the report into the missionary air-mail bag at the Mission church, with a note saying that he'll provide more details when he's back in the US.

Now that the Aristide government has been forced into exile, all of Kevin's governmental contacts are in hiding or out of the country. Most of the foreign Missionary/NGO staff that he'd been advising on refugee resettlement have already been evacuated. Since their belongings were purchased by their church/org, they leave their stuff behind when they leave. Kevin has keys to several houses and checks in on them occasionally to make sure there aren't any water leaks. The missionary and NGO groups all insist they will return when it's safe. Since Kevin can't be everywhere and the houses are empty anyway, he uses them as temporary quarters for Haitians who can't get into any of the other safe houses.

One afternoon as he's returning to his apartment after a failed attempt to refuel his Lada, he's stopped by a Haitian police officer, who gives him a citation. It's in French, but Kevin's able to read that he's required to present himself at the Petionville Police Station before end of today. Kevin thanks the officer for his service drives home, and shows the citation to Joel at his apartment. Joel looks at it very closely, before turning back to Kevin with a strange expression, "I'll take care of this, Kevin." Kevin is surprised, "Can you do that? Settle police summons for me? Do I need to come with you?" Joel shakes his head vigorously, "No, No! It's best that I go alone. You wait here."

Kevin agrees and hangs around the courtyard for a few hours, waiting for Joel to return. When Joel finally returns, he's got a big smile for Kevin. Kevin asks, "Do I need to go there again? Did you pay the fine for me? Let me pay you back!" Instead, Joel says, "No need. It was all a misunderstanding. They mistook you for someone else." Kevin is relieved but then asks, "What would have happened if I went to the station instead of you?" Joel looks around very carefully to make sure no one is near, and then says, "[Ou pa ta retounen.](#)"

The next night, Kevin tells the story to some Haitian organizers at one of the safe houses. The Haitians do not laugh one bit. The oldest of the organizers (no one shares names anymore) asks, "Do you see what's happening?" Kevin stops laughing quickly, when he realizes how serious the man is. "Well, the entire country is on fire and no one seems to have any water, if that's what you mean." The rest of the house has gathered now, and Kevin starts to get the feeling he's on the wrong end of an intervention. The man continues, "You're being followed. The Embassy knows you. The police are trying to kidnap you. Are you sure you weren't followed here?" Kevin's face pales as he slowly shakes his head. "I took the usual precautions, but that really only keeps the thieves from following me."

Everyone sits quietly and listens to the mosquitos circling the room. Finally, Kevin asks, "Have I become a liability?" Without hesitation, the man replies, "Never. You're family and we worry about you. I know that you won't agree to leave Haiti tonight, but will you allow us to pray for your safety?" Kevin laughs harshly, "God stopped caring about any of us long ago!" No one laughs or reacts and the man smiles calmly, "Do you trust us to keep you safe another time?" Kevin looks around at the unfamiliar faces, but says quietly, "Yes. I really do." The man nods in

satisfaction and gestures toward the surrounding faces. “We’d like to pray for you in the old way. Will you allow that?”

Adapt (2 of 2)

Petionville, Palace Pizzeria

While Kevin’s been trying to avoid the police and military patrols, he’s lost touch with Kat and Dirk. He’s seen Kat at a few black-out, eat-drink-be merry, end-of-days parties, but hasn’t been able to catch up on the latest gossip and rum-int. So many friends and trusted colleagues are being disappeared or evacuated, it’s impossible to keep up. Standard custom is to leave one empty chair and glass for anyone who should be with them, but cannot be.

It’s late one night, after the blackouts are over for downtown Port-au-Prince. The party has migrated from a mutual friend’s apartment into one of the local clubs that never really close. The rest of the blan have paired up into the combos that will ride out the time left until dawn and the Macoute roosters. Kat and Kevin are each finishing a Haitian fruit punch, which sounds innocent enough, but is really just rum, rum, rum, and a splash of grenadine juice. A Long Island Ice Tea, if tea was code for 150 proof rum. They’ve settled into a sort of half-hearted exchange of the usual topics that keep them occupied when there’s nothing more urgent to talk about. But the mundane topics seem to be a distraction from what Kat really wants to say.

After the waitress clears their glasses and leaves a fresh ashtray, Kevin asks, “Sak pase? You seem somewhere else. Trouble back home?” No answer from Kat so he asks, “Whatever happened with Jocelyn? You never told me the rest of that story.” He lights a cigarette and leans back in his chair as if, “I’m all yours.”. Kat smiles wanly and seems to have trouble meeting Kevin’s eyes. He leans in a bit closer and touches her hand briefly, before resting his elbows on the table and looking directly into Kat’s face. After he says nothing else, she lifts her eyes from the table and meets his. When Kat seems ready to continue Kevin says softly, “OK. Lay it out for me. What happened with Jocelyn?”

Kat takes a deep breath, and then it all comes out in a jumble. She had taken Jocelyn along to a meeting in Petionville with some vaguely evangelical church officials for new churches being planted for “outreach to the upper classes”. Ordinarily, Kat wouldn’t go near anything like that, but her NGO’s donors have been insisting that they work more closely with the missionary community. She continues, “There was this very charismatic preacher who brought his son along to be co-pastor for the first church. After their introduction, his son started a conversation with Jocelyn and by the end of the meeting, made her an offer to join their church planting team as a project manager. He explained the position would have a salary and room/board would be provided by the parish. He also mentioned the possibility of a US green card, so it seemed like an opportunity of a lifetime...”

Kevin’s nodding along and adds, “It always sounds like a good idea...” Kat sighs and her shoulders slumped. “I know, but at some point you have to believe God gets involved otherwise...” Kat’s face falls and she continues, “All I could offer was a school teacher position and that’s not exactly a promotion.” Kat takes a deep breath and continues, “So of course we

supported Jocelyn's decision to leave Education NGO and work for this new church." She thinks while Kevin waits patiently. "I guess it was about six months ago. Right after that crazy coup-rumor night in Miragoane. We moved Jocelyn into the new pastor's house, and then attended one of their services. They'd already asked her to lead the opening worship songs, so it seemed like a real good fit. I checked in with her when I was in the area. The pastors don't have a house phone yet, so I missed her as often as I found her when stopping by." Kat drifts away for a bit, but returns with a small shake of her head. "But Jocelyn always seemed happy, so I decided to give her some space to find her own way."

Kat begins to sob, "Then last week, I stopped by to say hello. The younger pastor answered the door, and I almost didn't recognize him because he's gained so much weight. He said Jocelyn she was too busy preparing for Sunday services. I asked if I could just poke my head in and say hello. Then, the pastor leaned in close and said something like, "I don't want to see you here again, and neither does Jocelyn. You need to let her move on!" Then he slammed the door in my face!"

Kevin sits upright, eyes wide as he takes a long swallow from his glass. Kat continues, "So I went back to the truck and was starting it up, when Jocelyn stepped out onto the back porch and waved to me. I saw that one side of her face was bruised and covered in bandages. I think the pastor must have told her to come inside but before she did, I'm pretty sure she gave me the HELP signal! We hadn't practiced it in so long, but I think that's what she was doing before she disappeared again." Kat's sobbing now, her face on her hands, tears flowing onto the dirty, barroom table. Kevin stands suddenly with his fists clenched, and Kat starts. He takes a deep breath and relaxes his fists, walks around the table, and gives her a hug. After a moment, he pats her on the back and asks, "When do they have services at that church?" Kat replies absently, "Every Wednesday night and Sunday. Why do you ask?" Kevin pauses long enough that Kat finally looks up and meets his eyes, "You'll just have to trust me."

Then Kat drives him back to the Education NGO guest house, where his Lada is waiting. "Give me a couple days and stay near that telephone, OK?" As Kat locks empties the LandCruiser's glove box into her purse Kevin adds, "I have an idea, but it's pretty flimsy. But less risky for Jocelyn than doing nothing. If it works out, you'll get a call from a friend who will tell you where to drop Jocelyn off 'for music practice'. Just pick Jocelyn up after the next church service and get her to that location." Kevin looks over his shoulder to make sure no one is eavesdropping. "Kompran?" he asks her. "Dako", Kat replies.

Part 8 (Wityèm): DEFEND

Organize (1 of 2)

Mother Mary's

The thrice-damned roosters announce the morning as Kevin arrives at Mother Mary's. He needs to tell Father Vitor what he learned from Kat, and see if they can get Jocelyn out of danger. The guardian looks carefully in Kevin's SUV, before waving him through the gate. Kevin grins at him

and says, “No contraband. This time. But thanks for double-checking!” The guard knows enough English to crack a smile and wink back at Kevin, “Oui moche!”

Fortunately, Fr. Vitor is just finishing up his morning coffee when Kevin arrives. After he explains the situation, Fr. Vito thinks a long time and then replies, “Henri is also running out of options. He’s up in the hills outside Ti Legliz. At this point, we need to get Henri and Jocelyn onto an escape boat. But they must not know or recognize each other. Because if the Macoutes realize they’re a pair, they’ll use one to betray the other and we’ll lose both. No one can hold up to that torture for long. Best to compartmentalize everything.” Kevin is nodding along, starting to see how the pieces can fit together. Fr Vitor continues, “Jocelyn could stage here at Mother Mary’s. She’s never been here before, so no one is going to anticipate that move and stake us out. Do you have a similar safe spot where Henri could hide out for a couple days? Then we can get them both up to Port-de-Paix. There’s at least one refugee boat pushing off from that port every day.”

Kevin thinks for a minute and says, “I think I see it. Henri can hole up with Jè in Carrefour, then when it’s time to head for Port-au-Paix, he can drive Henri up there separately. Two vehicles, less chance of losing them both. If you can arrange for Jocelyn’s transport...” Father Vitor considers this a long time, and then starts nodding his head slowly. “That’s more complicated, but worth the extra effort since neither can give up the other. Sister Maureen can take Jocelyn up to Port-de-Paix in a van full of nuns.” Kevin bursts into laughter and Fr. Vitor quickly joins him. After wiping some tears away and reassembling his serious face Father Vitor continues, “That leaves Henri in Je’s hands for a couple days until they make the run north. Will Jè agree?” Kevin begins to smile, “He’s been my house mate for almost a year, so nothing I ask will surprise him much!” They both grin at each other and Fr. Victor says, “He lived with you all that time and still talks to you?” They both burst into laughter as Kevin replies, “Well, obviously, I have to pay him to be my friend!”

Fr. Vitor stops laughing and becomes very serious, “There’s still a problem. It’ll be difficult to get past that Gonaive checkpoint. Those guys have been making a lot of money terrorizing and stealing from people trying to flee north.” Kevin’s face falls, “I forgot about them. I can’t believe they’re still in control of that whole city. If we can’t get across that bridge, we are just about out of options.”

The mood has shifted so they each dig out a cigarette and smoke slowly, letting the smoke drift toward the ceiling fan. They watch the smoke chase the mosquitos away until Fr. Vitor finally replies, “I’ve been saving a few blessings for a special occasion. This is as special as it’s going to get. Get things setup with Je. No need to confirm, but tell me right away if you can’t. Then, if he has to back out for any reason, tell Je to send a radio signal to Ti Legliz on the usual frequency with the usual verses. But no matter what, but the sisters will take Jocelyn and Espwa to Port-au-Paix. If God wills, Henri and Jocelyn might even get on the same boat.”

Kevin asks, “What about that kid that was living with Jocelyn and Kat out in Mirogoane? Not sure anyone knew his name, but they all called him Ti Mon.” He tells Fr. Vitor about the weekend in Mirogoane then slaps his forehead. “I was so focused on Jocelyn, that I forgot to ask Kat about him. Father Vitor nods slowly and closes his eyes for long enough that Kevin wonders if he’s dozed off. Then his eyes pop open and Fr. Vitor smiles broadly. His smile lines are hiding

his eyes as he lets the suspense hang in the air. Kevin finally breaks the silence with exasperation, “OK, Padre. What miracles will you perform?” Fr. Vitor snorts briefly and says, “Oh, nothing that miraculous. We’ll take in this little guy, Ti Mon, at Ti Legliz. It gives me another idea that I’ll keep to myself for the usual reasons.” Kevin relaxes but is still looking at Fr. Vitor with a raised eyebrow, “And the mob of Macoutes guarding Gonaives Bridge?” Father Vitor takes a long drag from his cigarette, releases a smoke ring, and replies casually, “I just happen to know there will be a massive festival/protest in Gonaives on any day I choose! I think Christmas Eve will be nice this year. You get your side ready, and then we’ll get Henri and Jocelyn up north.” Kevin’s smile is so big that his own eyes are now hidden, “This is why I always need a mission from God!” Fr. Vitor laughs and says, “You’ve already got the sunglasses and half-pack of cigarettes, what else do you need?!”

But then he gets very serious. “We’ve compartmentalized everything, but that means if we do it right, you will never know the final outcome. Are you OK with that? It’s a lot to carry.” The way Fr Vitor’s tone has changed, Kevin is listening very carefully. Rather than immediately respond, he nods and thinks for a bit. Then he replies, “My NGO has been trying extract me but I keep extending. There’s no one left from the international community and I’m exposed with all the wrong people anyway. If I we can get Henri and Jocelyn into your network’s hands, I can live without knowing the outcome.”

Father Vitor looks at Kevin a bit skeptically, “You’re saying you could walk away from it all and never look back?” Kevin gives a time-out signal, “No, no! I’m just saying that other than fè bri and making enemies at home and here, I don’t have much to show for my time with you. If I can give a Henri and Jocelyn a shot at survival, that’s way more than something. That’s a lot!”

Organize (2 of 2)

Kevin looks lost in thought and Father Vitor doesn’t interrupt him. Then Kevin continues, “I wasn’t going to mention this today, but my NGO told me that my last chance airline ticket will be at the Pan Am counter for me on New Years Day.” Father Vitor nods his head, “That’s the signal. You’ve become a liability for them. They can’t suppress what you’re doing as long as you keep all those memos flowing to your home church. But they can cut your financial cord.” Kevin is nodding vigorously, “Exactly! Just the way you predicted. They’re throwing an “Associate Director” title at me, as if I’m a careerist now.”

Father Vitor chuckles, “How is it possible that your NGO is in charge of anyone!” Kevin just shakes his head, “I know. It’s as if they weren’t reading anything I wrote before they published it. But if I don’t get on that flight, I’m on my own. As much as I’d love to just burrow back in at Ti Legliz, I’m afraid I’d lead the damn Macoutes to those guys too...” Kevin’s voice fades and he looks utterly lost and alone. Father Vitor looks into Kevin’s eyes, stands, and steps toward him. Kevin starts to stand, thinking that’s the signal for him to leave. But instead, Father Vitor takes him by both shoulders and asks, “I know you’re not Catholic, but is it OK if I send you off with a blessing?” Kevin looks back at him and says, “Not if it’s OK I was blessed by a houngan last weekend. Any conflict there?” With another small smile, Father Vitor replies, “Never was.”

He murmurs a prayer softly, shakes Kevin's hand, and quietly says, "I know you don't think you helped, but you showed up and learned. Sometimes though, the only way to help is to step out of the way." Father Vitor steps into the kitchen while Kevin pulls himself together, using his t-shirt to wipe the tears from his cheeks and try to wipe his glasses clean. In a quick minute, Fr. Vitor steps back into the living room where Kevin is on his feet, backpack closed, boots relaxed. Fr. Vitor says, "Tell..." He grins, "I've already forgotten the names of everyone involved. Just pass on this one," Father Vitor leans in and whispers a name in his ear. Kevin slowly grins, "I have a feeling the driver will remember."

Father Vitor almost spit laughs his coffee back into its mug. "Please, do not tell me! I can only unimagine so much!" Now Kevin is laughing so hard that his backpack falls onto the ground. "Hey, Father. I'm not the one who lied through his teeth to that radio station guard! And did you really place a bet with a Vegas bookie at 20:1 for Washington to win the Super Bowl?" Father Vitor assembles his most pious face, "I am qualified and authorized to bend the rules. YOU are NOT!".

Kevin pulls himself together, bows his head slightly, looks back up into Fr. Vitor's face and very seriously says, "Don't worry, Father. I have already sinned enough. I'll have my friend stop by the Port-au-Paix cathedral and make a \$100 gourde donation (\$20 USD) directly to the person you mentioned." Then as an afterthought, "Why is he doing that?" Father Vitor smiles, "Well, even if you don't get to know what happened, I want to!" They exchange a long embrace, look into each other's eyes, then nod. Kevin says goodbye to the kitchen cook/sisters and shakes hand with the house's guard. Kevin says, "M' ale andeyo". The guard just smiles at him warmly, pats him on the shoulder and says, "I know."

Downtown Port-au-Prince

Kevin leaves the Lada at Mother Mary's and walks down the familiar road, past the National Cathedral, the Palace, and to the Iron Market. Unlike previous walks along this route, there are very few merchants, since the embargo has destroyed the local economy. But there are still a few half-empty tap-taps and by offering a driver 10X the usual fare, the driver agrees to make the run to Carrefour with half the usual passengers. As always now, Kevin sits at the rear of the tap-tap, able to stand on the bumper or hang from one of the handrails, if that keeps him out of the tap-tap's clutches and able to jump and roll if necessary.

But the tap-tap isn't full, so he sits at the rear and watches what's left of Port-au-Prince pass by him on the way to his old house in Carrefour. As bad as his first day, this is so much worse and he's seen a lot since then. The trash hasn't been collected in weeks and has piled up along the main highway like sand dunes. Commerce still continues, as street kids and merchant women pick their way through the pathways worn through the drifts, looking for salvageable metal. Kevin sees a group of kids and an old woman, fighting over something in the pile. Without really wanting to know, Kevin glances down as the tap-tap passes. He shudders slightly and squeezes his eyes shut, but that never works. The object in question is the wallet from a dead man's pocket. He's been shot so many times that it's obvious a Macoute zenglando death squad left him there as a warning. But Haitians will survive, and that dead man doesn't need his wallet anymore.

Kevin drifts into his sort of gray zone, eyes tracking but not seeing, until the tap-tap hits the first speed bump / ditch in Carrefour. Kevin watches closely as they get closer to his “second home” (ridiculous) that he wasn’t able to sublet when he had to move across town for the refugee work. But Jè is still living there and as the tap-tap rolls by, Kevin sees that the station SUV is parked inside the little car port area, behind all the iron bars protecting the house. Kevin doesn’t ask the tap-tap to stop, but rides along for another few hundred meters, watching faces in the tap-tap, until he decides it’s time to slap the top of the cab and get out. He waits for the tap-tap to turn the next corner, then walks back toward his house.

Jè is outside checking tire pressure and oil on the SUV when Kevin arrives. “Oh, OH!”, Jè says in that wonderful Haitian expression of joy and surprise. Kevin laughs and says, “Baron Samdi himself could not stop me now!” They hug and Kevin says to Jè. I have an interesting mission for you, if you’re not too busy pleasing Tim.” Jè snorts, “That guy is afraid to come down here anymore. The staff and engineers have pretty much just gone around him to the Board.

Jè looks over his shoulder and adds softly, “He says he’s staying for another year, but I’ve heard his wife is already back in the States looking for schools. It’s not safe for any of you blan now. No offense, but I’ll feel better when you’re not walking around here like a big, dumb, white target!” Kevin smiles sadly, “When you’re right you’re right. Not to mention the target it puts on you!” Before Jè can reply Kevin continues, “But come inside and let me tell you about the plan our friends cooked up.”

Part 8 (Wityèm): DEFEND

Extract (1 of 2)

Montana Hotel

Kat and Dirk are driving up the Delmas highway from their NGO’s guest house to the Montana Hotel. It’s Sunday, so Jocelyn should be at church services this morning. They’re dressed in their best “missionary garb”. Dirk in white shirt with clip on tie and Kat in her best impression of the shapeless dress favored by the missionary set. She’s even managed to pull her hair back into a frumpy bun. They don’t talk much. Each lost in their own thoughts.

To maintain their cover as missionary couple, Dirk is driving. As they approach the hotel, Kat breaks the silence, “Best case, no one notices us except Jocelyn. When I give her the “help arrived” signal, she’ll know to find us in the truck after service. But if she doesn’t notice us, then you have to play your part.” She waits for Dirk to respond. He does without hesitation, “Oh, crikey! I’m brand new here and can’t find the Australian embassy. I’d also like to buy some Creole Bibles.” Kat laughs. “That’s perfect. The only character more annoying than the Ugly American is the Clueless Australian!” They turn into the Montana’s large parking lot and park their beat-up truck around the corner, near the employee entrance to the hotel. Dirk rolls down all the windows and leaves a small, pocket New Testament on the seat. Kat rolls her eyes and Dirk replies, “I don’t care. I still say if someone steals my Bible, that’s good karma for me!”

In his very loud voice, Dirk announces, “Come on, dear?! Can’t be late for the service!” He grabs Kat’s hand marches toward the Montana main entrance as if he owns the place. Kat allows him

to lead her along meekly, just a step behind. Ten minutes later, the employee door bursts open, shouldered aside by Dirk with Jocelyn and Kat close behind. Dirk jumps behind the truck's wheel, starts it, and shifts into gear. Kat helps Jocelyn into the truck, climbs in behind her, and pulls the passenger door closed. Dirk doesn't bother to close his door or fiddle around with a three-point turn. He just floors the rear-wheel drive truck, spins the wheel, and sprays gravel, sand, and exhaust all over the two American pastors who have just burst through the door behind them. Dirk leans out the window and yells at them, "Sorry! Forgot our cash. Be right back in time for the offering!"

The pastors stand speechless, as Dirk drives the truck through a hedge of shrubs and into the street. As the truck speeds away, a small head pops up from behind the truck's bench seat. It's Ti Mon. He hugs Jocelyn fiercely and then adds Kat to the hug. Dirk looks over at him and raises his eyebrows at Ti Mon his facial expression asking, "What? No hug for me?" Ti Mon grins at him slyly, and pushes his face deeper into Kat's chest. But then Kat suddenly looks closely at Jocelyn. Jocelyn averts her eyes and looks at the floor. Kat is reaching toward Jocelyn's hand when a small cry greets her.

Everyone jumps at the sound and Dirk almost drives off the road, sending a few merchants sprawling to get out of the way. Kat stares in disbelief as Jocelyn opens her button-down sweater to reveal that she's hiding a small infant girl in a little sling. The baby girl starts crying and Jocelyn hums softly to sooth her. Then Jocelyn begins crying in deep wracking sobs, as she and Kat hold the baby cradled in Jocelyn's lap. Kat doesn't say a word and keeps patting Jocelyn on the shoulder as she cries. Ti Mon looks up at Kat questioningly but Kat just shushes him and says, "Everything is OK now". Dirk has been watching out of the corner of his eye and says to everyone. "Every life is a blessing. Doesn't matter how it arrives." Jocelyn relaxes a bit and Kat flashes Dirk a quick "thumbs up" sign. Then Dirk turns to Kat and asks, "OK, where are we going now? Mother Who?"

Carrefour

Jè is able to contact Ti Legliz by radio after Kevin leaves. He passes on a few Bible verses and Henri arrives the next day. He doesn't have more than a small bag with him, so it doesn't take the men long to get loaded into the Geo. As they're leaving the Carrefour house Jè says to Henri, "Here's the play. You're a Senior Engineer from the station and I'm driving you up to Cap Hatien, so you can help the missionaries get their transmitters going at full power." Henri looks skeptical, but Jè quickly adds, "Don't worry. Just sit there and look bored and supremely powerful. That's what everyone expects from an engineer."

Henri grins and says, "I'll just go on about power amplifiers and backup generators. Heard enough about those up on the mountain." Jè begins to laugh, "Like Kevin always says, they only call him Engineer because Haitians assume blan need fancy titles." He does his best impression of Kevin's accent, "Tout moun kapab change batteries!" Both men laugh before Jè continues, "Those guards won't know what you're talking about but won't admit it." Jè hands Henri a few sheets of official looking paperwork who glances at them and asks, "What's this all for?" Jè smiles and says, "Well it's all counterfeit of course, but I've been through Gonaive a few times. Those Macoute cops can't even count past ten, with their boots on. All you need is something with an official looking government seal on it, and they'll wave you right through!"

Then Jè looks at Henri. “Solange said we’re on our way to Port-au-Paix? The port? Anything I need to know other than location?” Henri just shakes his head. “Not entirely sure myself. I’m just going to get on the first boat that will have me. Hope I get past the American Coast Guard, or they’ll dump me in Guantanamo or right back where I started. Then directly to Fort Dimanche prison for the rest of my very short, but very painful life.” Jè shakes his head. “It’s a shame we don’t have oil or something here in Haiti, instead of just freed slaves and sugar cane. It’s possible the world would care about us.” Henri thinks about this for a few kilometers and then says, “I don’t think that would help at all. Look at Cuba. Probably just make everything worse, because then we won’t only have the CIA and do-gooder Americans down here. We’ll be dealing with the US Marines again, or worse like in El Salvador. At least the US hasn’t sold the Generals helicopters and bombers yet.”

They get through the downtown checkpoints without any trouble. By the time they arrive it’s well after dark and the guards are drunkenly enjoying Christmas Eve. Jè only needs to wave his pile of paperwork and they’re sent through without comment. Just two guys in a truck. Nothing to see here. They ride along in silence for a while. Then Henri says, “Solange mentioned the side roads in Gonaive. In case there’s a demonstration. Any idea what that’s about?” Jè laughs. “No, moche. Just the code phrases Kevin gave me. Could be nothing, could be something. I gave up trying to understand when he’s “predicting” or when he actually “knows” something. My guess is there are some friends of friends pulling strings we can’t see. I don’t think Kevin would have sent us up here based on faith alone.” They laugh and Jè continues “I wonder if he’ll actually leave Haiti. I half expect he’ll be waiting for me when I get back.”

They’re still chuckling when Jè turns onto Highway 1 headed north to Gonaives. When they pass the now burned-out refugee camp that used to be called Bon Repos, they become quiet. Jè breaks the silence, “I can’t believe you and Solange got Pastor Isaac’s group out of there in time. Don’t know how. Don’t want to. But Grace a Dieu and thank you!” Henri just nods his head slowly and claps Jè on the arm. “Just stay on comms and in contact with Ti Legliz. You’ll be returning the favor soon enough!”

Extract (2 of 2)

Mother Mary’s

Dirk and Kat arrive with Ti Mon, Jocelyn and her baby at Mother Mary’s just in time for dinner. The nuns quickly swarm around them. They guide everyone but Dirk into a nearby women’s dorm and close the door. Dirk’s not sure what to do with himself until an older priest approaches him. Not clear on the protocol for meeting a priest outside of confession, Dirk does what he does best. He grins and says, “Hola, padre! Sak pase?” Father Vitor bursts into laughter, “Well, that wasn’t the password, but you must be Kevin’s friend.” Dirk begins laughing, “Well that depends. Who wants to know?” Father Vitor takes Dirk by the elbow and says, “I think we might be able to help each other. Do you know much about the Ti Legliz base community in the south?”

The sisters have helped everyone get cleaned up and show them their sleeping areas and the bathrooms. Ti Mon has crashed out hard and is snoring softly. One of the nuns tucks him into a

cot next to Jocelyn's bed. Then an older nun asks Kat if she can speak with Jocelyn alone. Kat looks at Jocelyn questioningly, until Jocelyn nods her head. Kat gives hugs to everyone and goes downstairs to watch the evening game of dominos with Dirk and Father Vitor. When Fr. Vitor yawns after telling a long story, Dirk and Kat realize it's now quite late. Dirk stands up and says, "Well, this Aussie needs his bed before it's Christmas Eve!" This interrupts the game of dominos and everyone says their goodbyes with hugs and French double-cheek pecks, before Kat and Dirk drive back to their NGO guest house.

Jocelyn is sitting on her bed with Ti Mon snoring on his cot. The older nun sits on the bed across from Jocelyn's, reaches out and holds both her hands until Jocelyn stops sobbing and looks up at the nun. "My name is Sister Maureen. I wasn't always a nun. I was once a mother." Now they're both crying. Sister continues, "But it wasn't my choice. Much as I sense this wasn't yours either." Jocelyn seems afraid to breathe but shakes her head, "No. He never even asked me." Sister Maureen nods gently and pats Jocelyn's hand. "Me either. But you must know. This isn't your fault!" Jocelyn begins crying even harder, "But I didn't even fight him. I just couldn't believe it was happening after so much time." Sister Maureen just shakes her head, moves onto the bed next to Jocelyn, and puts her arms around the young mother who sinks into her and sobs quietly.

Jocelyn's sobs slowly subside. She takes a deep breath and wipes her eyes. Sister Maureen says kindly, "It's not safe for you here in Port-au-Prince." Jocelyn points to her bruised and cut face and nods. Sister Maureen asks, "Do you have anywhere else to stay?". Jocelyn shakes her head bleakly. Sister Maureen then asks, "If you were able to flee the country, would you?" Almost without hesitation, Jocelyn nods her head vigorously. Sister Maureen considers this and asks, "How much would you risk? Would you risk everything, even the life of your child?" Suddenly, Sr. Maureen stops abruptly, a look of surprise on her face, "I'm so sorry! What is your daughter's name?" Jocelyn smiles just a bit and replies, "Espwa". Sister Maureen's face breaks into a contented smile, "Oh! That's our answer. Hope. With Faith and Love... Tomorrow morning, a few sisters and I will take you to Port-de-Paix. Kat and Dirk left an envelope with US dollars to get you to Miami and beyond, if God wills it. We'll get you on a boat that's headed for Miami. Just tell anyone who asks, that Espwa's father is dead but that you're trying to reach his family in New York. It's true, but not in the way they'll think. Don't worry about the child's light complexion. The blan on those Coast Guard cutters can't tell one brown face from another."

Christmas Eve, 1991

Solange arrives at Mother Mary's very early and is greeted warmly by the guard. She's not wearing her NY Yankees cap, but is dressed like a market woman carrying a large bag. There's a white passenger van parked in front of the house. Solange puts her bag in its cargo area, then joins Sister Maureen, Jocelyn, and Espwa in the kitchen. Sr. Maureen looks up and smiles when she sees her, "Oh, good! Perfect timing. Jocelyn, I'd like you to meet Solange. She's a friend from a church in the south. Solange will be traveling with us this morning, at least as far as Gonaive."

Jocelyn says a soft "Bon jour" to Solange, who smiles back at her kindly and returns the greeting. Sister Maureen is putting bottles of water into grocery bags, as Father Vitor comes into the room with Ti Mon following him closely. Solange sees Ti Mon, gets down on one knee and asks, "Who's this gro neg?" Ti Mon looks up at her shyly and Solange cracks just a hint of a

smile, "I see you've already met Father Vitor." She looks at Ti Mon with a serious face before winking, "Please don't give him any more white hair!" Ti Mon giggles and then Father Vitor says with an overly hurt expression, "Oh, oh! I'm right here..." Solange smiles at Ti Mon again and sits back down at the table. Jocelyn is nursing baby Espwa. Solange gently pats Espwa on her little head before adding, "I won't be able to join you on the boat, but I'll make sure you can board one in Port-au-Paix."

The morning roosters begin announcing sunrise, which adds a sense of urgency. A few more nuns come into the kitchen and quickly help Jocelyn get Espwa nestled into her carry sling, and help them toward the van. Then they take Solange into a nearby room. In a few moments, Solange emerges wearing a blue nun's habit. Ti Mon looks at her in surprise, his mouth hanging open. Father Vitor sees his expression and bursts into laughter. "No, Ti Mon, it's not quite that easy. Solange isn't really a nun now but since it's Christmas Eve, Sister Maureen said it's OK to pretend."

Solange gets into the van's shotgun seat and Sister Maureen climbs in the driver side. They wait for Jocelyn to finish saying her goodbyes to Ti Mon. He is almost frantic now, sensing that Jocelyn and Espwa are leaving him behind. Jocelyn hugs him tightly and Father Vitor joins her as they hug and rock the small boy in a group hug of four with Espwa nestled between them. Time seems to stop as Ti Mon cries softly, his body shaking as he swallows a last few sobs. Looking up at Jocelyn, he asks in English, "You'll return?". Jocelyn looks into his eyes and finally says, "Little brother, I will see you again as soon as Bon Dieu allows it. But you won't need me now. You'll stay here and spend Christmas with Father Vitor and the brothers and sisters. Then when Solange gets back from our trip, she'll take you to meet some new friends in the countryside." Father Vitor quickly adds, "There's a little boy named Jedi who lives out there who could really use a big brother!" Ti Mon has calmed himself and watches Jocelyn climb into the van with Espwa. He still seems unconvinced until Father Vitor asks, "Have you ever seen a donkey climb a mountain with a little man on his back?"

As the engine starts, Sr. Maureen looks back at Jocelyn and Espwa in the rear seat. "If anyone stops us, just pretend to be very ill. We're taking you and your baby to a mission hospital in Cap Haitian." Jocelyn smiles wanly, "It will be no problem to feign illness. Should I also practice some Hail Mary's or something?" Solange snorts with laughter, "No, please don't. Because I don't know any of that either. This rosary is pure trade craft!" Sister Maureen starts to back the van out of the courtyard and chuckles, "By the time we get to Gonaives, the soldiers and their gangs will be very drunk. I'm counting on that and their unwillingness to commit atrocities on Christmas Eve. Especially with a van full of nuns and a child in their care." Solange laughs again and says to Jocelyn, "We would have given you and Espwa nun habits too, but even those illiterate Macoutes would see through that." The women all laugh as Sister Maureen gets the van moving. As they pass the cathedral, Baby Espwa burps and they laugh even harder.

Part Nine (Nevyèm): EXIT**Survive/Die?****Port-de-Paix**

Christmas Eve, 1991

Late that night, Jè arrives at the Port-au-Paix cathedral and is surprised to see that its doors are open. He can hear piano music, but doesn't hear anyone singing. Since the door is open, he steps inside. Jè has never been in a Catholic cathedral before, just the chapel back at the base community. But he's been told to make a donation. Out of pure respect for Kevin, he's doing this instead of keeping the 100 Gourde note for himself. It was definitely an adventure. If not for the conveniently timed mass demonstration, he and Henri would not have made it through the city, because even the side streets were under gang control. What's left of the Government of Haiti can barely keep the main highways clear of bandits and kidnappers.

But Henri has been safely delivered to the port, and Jè hung around long enough to see Henri get onto the boat. Jè walks into the cathedral and tries to decide what to do about the holy water. Is that necessary? But before he needs to decide, a Haitian nun materializes from the gloom and says, "My name is Sister Maureen. Have you come to pray, confess, or make an offering?" A second nun steps from behind Sister Maureen, and Jè sees that it's Solange. His face breaks into a brief smile before he replies softly, "I'd like to make an offering on behalf of my friends."

Caribbean Sea

Christmas Day, 1991

Henri sinks deeper into the warm Caribbean Sea, the screams and cries of the passengers fading as his ears fill with water. The waterlogged plywood sheet that's been supporting him is now sinking. He's just, floating... Henri knows this is the end, and it's OK. Not so bad. Peaceful, except for the burning in his lungs as he involuntarily holds his last breath as long as he can. Finally, he just lets it go, a few last bubbles beginning to slip from his nose as he squeezes his eyes shut against the burning saltwater.

But then, he feels something brush against his forehead. Not a wave or debris, something soft. He reaches up languidly, to brush this distraction away, but realizes that his fingers have touched something warm. Instead of releasing that last bit of buoyancy in his lungs, he kicks his feet in a sort of tread water way that he remembers learning during a brief swimming lesson in some missionary's pool, and gets his head above the water surface. Almost reluctantly, Henri takes a deep breath and wipes water from his eyes with his left hand, while using his right hand as a doggy paddle.

Another lightning flash, and a half-second later, the crash of thunder. Henri realizes that what he touched, was the infant Espwa, floating alone on one of the white, Styrofoam rescue life rings that were loosely attached to the fishing boat's stern. She's sobbing quietly with brief cries, that seem like almost too much effort. Her one hand is caught among the rope webbing of the life buoy, and her other is jammed into her mouth. Her lips are cracked and parched, but they still keep suckling on her little thumb.

Henri paddle-crawls over to the life ring and grabs hold of it, just as a wave threatens to capsize the little life boat with its tiny passenger. As his fingers sink into the buoy, it begins to crumble, it's ancient fibers disintegrating and disappearing into the sea like sand. As the life buoy melts away, little Espwa begins sinking into the water with it. Her one hand struggling to free itself from the restraint of the webbing, while her other stays in her mouth, lips pressed tightly around her thumb's first knuckle.

Now Henri just can't take anymore. His own eyes are streaming with tears and salt water, he lifts his head to the sky and screams, "Bon Dieu!!!!" as Espwa sinks farther into the dark water. Another lightning strike on the horizon illuminates the scene and Henri sees another hand emerge from the water, behind Espwa's sinking life buoy. Another swell of waves and Henri is sure this hand will be the Loa Agwé herself, ending their misery once and for all. But as the swell subsides, Henri sees that it is the infant's mother, Jocelyn.

Jocelyn has managed to tie her two empty water jugs around her waist, creating a sort of life preserver/water wings device. She's kicking her feet weakly, trying to make her way to Espwa. On reflex, Henri also begins kicking his feet, but now one of them is entangled in something heavy. He keeps paddling with right hand, left foot, and uses his left hand to try to pull his right foot and leg free from whatever has entangled them.

Finally, Henri is able to get his fingers inside the tangle of rope around his right ankle. He pulls with all his remaining strength and lifts the entire tangled mess of rope to the water's surface. He finds his original water jugs, still sealed, the rope in his hand the same that he'd used to tie them around his neck while carrying other things.

Henri's eyes reach Jocelyn's as a swell lifts them high above baby Espwa, her sinking buoy in the valley below them. Without needing any exchange of words, Jocelyn pushes one of her empty water bottles toward Henri, still attached by rope to her other empty water bottle. Realizing what she's proposing, Henri does the same with one of his full water jugs. It has just enough buoyancy to keep it from sinking. When the swells drop and they're both next to Espwa, they loop their ropes under the buoy, so that they've created a sort of life raft for her.

Jocelyn is really struggling now. She's trying to hold onto Espwa's thumb sucking hand, while also treading water. She'd been relying on both empty water jugs to keep herself afloat, but she just doesn't have the strength to kick/paddle while also trying to hold onto a full water jug. Not enough strength. Not enough hands.

Exit (2 of 2)

Henri sees this happening but is having trouble of his own. Somewhere along the line, that nail in the plywood ended up cutting through his right tricep and he's not sure that arm even works anymore. He's got the water jug rope wrapped around the lame arm so tightly, he can't feel anything. Another cross-current wobbles all three, and now Henri, Jocelyn, and Espwa are all tangled together and are being tossed around like one of the piles of garbage that fall from the yachts who dump all their sewage and garbage right outside the international border, 12 miles from Haiti's coasts.

But then without really knowing how, Jocelyn and Henri somehow manage to get half the water from each of their full jugs, into the empty jugs. Now each has two partially filled, one-gallon water jugs. As if God is still watching, the next wave is gentle and causes all three to rest together on top of a new life raft made of refuse and water jugs.

Jocelyn takes a long pull of water from one of her jugs, while Henri gently cradles Espwa against his chest. Then Jocelyn hands the water jug to Henri, and Henri passes Espwa back to her in exchange. Jocelyn's face gleams in the reflected moon light, her scarred cheek accentuating her burning eyes. After Espwa is nestled safely in her lap, she looks at Henri and their eyes lock for a moment as Jocelyn's eyes say, "Merci". Henri holds her gaze for long enough to acknowledge the thanks, and then glances down at her baby. Espwa is content for now. Henri leans against Jocelyn and enjoys the feeling of her warm back against his own bleeding and scarred skin.

Then either God or Agwé herself decides to get involved and a suitcase drifts by. Its hard plastic shell keeping water out and retaining buoyancy. Henri snags its handle with his foot and pulls it toward their little raft. Fortunately, no one padlocked the suitcase so it opens easily with his first try at its latch. Henri then pushes it behind him, toward Jocelyn. He hears her squeal a bit, as if in happy surprise. Henri looks over his shoulder to see Jocelyn pulling a pink onesie over Espwa's tiny head.

The effort to do all this is overwhelming. The suitcase is sinking now that it's opened and the waves are spilling inside. Henri sees a flashlight in the bottom of the suitcase. Visible now, because the water has washed away the rest of the bag's contents. He manages to pull the light free with its elastic wrist-loop. Almost afraid to try (because seriously, why bother?!), he clumsily pushes the switch with his left hand and the flashlight bursts into clean, white light. Henri's trying to decide how this helps when he hears the sound of a small, outboard boat engine. It's putt, putt, putt, audible over the wind. But the waves are still so high and visibility so poor, that it seems to be passing by them, instead of coming closer.

Jocelyn tries to cry out toward the sound, but her voice is too cracked from hours of shouting, crying, and praying. She can barely utter a croaking squeak. Henri's in terrible shape himself and can barely even raise his head, much less summon the energy to call for help. Instead, he just holds his left arm up as high as he can, and waves the flashlight in every direction. After a long minute, he hears the putt, putt sound getting closer.

Jocelyn and Espwa are slipping away now. The ropes that held them together for a few minutes, now untangling themselves. Henri tries to keep his arm high with the flashlight, while frog/crawling his way toward the sinking mother and her child. He's falling behind though, his muscle mass causing him to sink. He has no body fat, so can only keep afloat by keeping his legs kicking. But they're so tired now. Henri is starting to feel that "going to die now" calm seeping in again. He's paddling with his left hand too, out of habit, the flashlight gone and forgotten. He's feeling peaceful though. No longer really that concerned about what's happening, because it's happening somewhere else. Soon he will be free.

Then, a boat appears. Henri thanks all the gods that it's not a US Coast Guard cutter, but a fishing boat even smaller than the one they stepped onto in Haiti. It doesn't have a US or Haitian flag. Henri has seen it before, but his eyes are streaming with sea water and it stops

matter as another wave washes over his head. As the boat draws closer, two men are leaning over its bow with long poles, orange life preservers at the end of each. Another man kicks off his shoes, strips out of his clothes and dives into the water, swimming quickly toward Jocelyn and Espwa.

The boat draws closer and he can see the boat's captain. He's very dark skinned, compared to the brown skinned men that are pulling them all into the boat. After they are safely onboard, the captain gives sharp orders to the crew and they quickly get warm blankets around the three Haitian refugees. Then some hot, sweet, black coffee from a thermos. Then a banana and some crackers. Then, one of the men who helped pull them from the water, exchanges places with the captain at the boat's wheel.

The captain sits down on the deck beside them and Henri sees that he has vaguely Haitian features. Henri glances up at the Captain with a look of surprise. The captain just nods at him, before leaning down to pat Espwa on her swaddled back. Then he squats down and looks calmly and kindly into Jocelyn's eyes, "Gracias, pequeña madre" Then into Henri's, staying there long enough for both men to signal their mutual respect. Then the captain says in Creole, "Welcome to Cuba. NOT Guantanamo. You're safe now."

Acknowledgements

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For the human rights activists, the community organizers, the base communities, and the generous, welcoming angels who kept me safe.

The clergy, laity, Haitian, African, American, Australian, Belgian, Canadian, Columbian, Cuban, Dominican, Dutch, German, Jamaican, and Puerto-Rican brothers and sisters,

Formed in the crucible of Haiti, 1991-1992, doing the best we could to help as many as possible while surviving ourselves.

There are no more easy choices. I hope we can do better.

Glossary – Kreyòl Ayisyen – English Translation

Throughout this novel, the Haitian language is used without direct in-line translation. [The history of Kreyòl Ayisyen \(Haitian Creole\)](#) is as rich as the rest of Haiti's history. The events of Blan Fou occurred when Haitian Creole was first being adopted as an official language along with French.

In 1991, non-Haitians (blan) would be referred to the language as “Haitian Creole” while Haitians were referring to it as “Kreyòl Ayisyen”. So without further negotiation, both sides settled into “Creole” and “Kreyòl” since they sound the same audibly and no one wrote much down anyway.

Key Kreyòl words and phrases

In order of appearance in the novel...

Escape (2 of 2)**Mal leve**

English: Not a direct translation. Similar to “Someone not raise properly”

Usage: General use term for anyone who is causing trouble for someone else. Often followed by “bastard” or other slur.

Arrival (3 of 3)**Koupe tet. Boule kay.**

English: “Cut off their heads. Burn their houses.”

Missonaries (1 of 3)**Kompran?**

English: “Understood?”

Tout sanble.

English: “Everything looks the same.”

Usage: Literal or in this case, “I hear you, but my mind remains unchanged.”

Missonaries (3 of 3)**Sak pase?**

English: “What’s up?” or “What’s happening?”

Usage: Casual greeting. Less formal than “How are you?”

M’a boule!

English: No direct translation, but generally “I am maintaining.”

Usage: Usually ironic, with “just barely” implied.

Networks (1 of 3)**Gro neg**

English: “Big man”

Usage: Not a direct translation. General term for any man, regardless of skin color (not just a “black” man)

Komo o ye? Non mwen se...

English: “How are you doing? My name is...”

Kay

English: “House” or place to live

Loa

English: No direct translation. Spiritual beings or forces in Haitian Vodou.

Usage: Loa are spiritual figures rooted in West African religious traditions, often mapped to Catholic saints during the colonial era. In Haitian spiritual practice, a loa and a saint may share the same identity depending on context. The term “voodoo” is widely considered a Western distortion. Haitian practitioners use “Vodou” or “Vodoun.”

Tap-Tap or Camion

English: “Taxi” or “Truck” (Public transit)

Usage: Used interchangeably to describe the public transport vehicles painted with vivid decorations.

- “Tap-tap usually refers to the small Toyota pickup vehicles
- “Camion” is often used to describe the larger school bus or truck sized vehicles

Ti kob

English: “A little bit”

Usage: Implies a financial donation. Similar to English phrase, “Can you spare some change?”

M pa gen anye pou ou.

English: “I don’t have anything for you.”

Usage: **Not**, “I don’t have anything”. Acknowledges that the request was fair and valid, but indicates no help will be provided at this time.

Alternative usage: Each word can be emphasized for different effect. For example, if “anye” is emphasized it is much more emphatic, “I don’t have ANYTHING for you.”

Networks (2 of 3)

Andeyo

English: “Over there”

Usage: Not a direct translation. Refers to anywhere other than Haiti

Mayin moulin

English: "Corn meal"

Usage: Term for a meal of beans over corn meal (instead of with rice).

Networks (3 of 3)

Ki kote

English: "Where is"

Usage: Followed by a noun

Protect and Serve (2 of 4)

Cherie, pi belle peyi, pase lot peyi

English: "Haiti my dear, my beautiful country. More beautiful than any other country..."

Usage: Opening stanza to Haiti's national song

Tout blan sanble

English: "All white people (foreigners) look the same"

Usage: Ironic reversal of the racist phrase used by southern American Marines during the [US invasion and occupation of Haiti \(1915 – 1934\)](#).

Protect and Serve (3 of 4)

Ti Mon

English: "Little Man"

Usage: Common general nickname. Can be dismissive or affectionate.

Ou vle dlo coconut?

English: "Would you like water of coconut?"

Usage: Coconut water (not milk) which is lost in the processing of coconut for export.

Self-Defense (1 of 4)

Ti vagabon

English: "Little thief"

Tet cho

English: "Hot head"

Usage: A crazy person with very bad judgment.

M pa pale Angle

English: "I don't speak English"

Titid

English: "Little one"

Usage: Fond nickname for President Aristide, because he's so diminutive in size.

Self-Defense (2 of 4)

Bouki net

English: "Maximum Bouki"

Usage: Reference to a Haitian proverb where "Bouki" constantly gets himself in trouble due to stupidity and gullibility

Tet cho

English: "Hot head"

Usage: A crazy person with very bad judgment.

Self-Defense (3 of 4)

Pale cho

English: "Hot talk"

Usage: Dangerous or particularly heated speech.

Self-Defense (4 of 4)

M ale

English: "I'm going"

Usage: Anywhere else, not specific. Can be followed by place, as in "M ale Zeta Zuni".

Safety First (2 of 3)

Dako

English: "Agreed" or "OK"

Bagay

English: "Thing"

Usage: Singular or plural. Can refer to a single item or a whole collection of "stuff"

Resilience

Ti legliz

English: "Little church"

Usage: Little is used to emphasize that this church is not necessarily a part of the "big" Catholic church hierarchy.

Ti groupma

English: "Little group"

Usage: "Little" emphasizes the relationship of the small group to the small church, without the hierarchy.

Choices

Mwen regret sa. M' bezuin ale.

English: "I'm sorry. I must go."

Ou ap tounen

English: "I will return"