

“Is this meant to be....”

« Est-ce que ça doit être... »

Nicholas Gerald Jansen

Dear Greg Procknow,

Please find attached: submissions for the journal, as described in the information, provided by members of the Navigation Empowerment Council, of Southwest Centre for Forensic Mental Health Care, St. Thomas, Ontario (St. Joseph's Health Care, London - Elgin Campus).

My name is Nicholas Gerald Jansen, a patient who has lived under detention disposition for over 15 years, having been housed at 6-related centres. I am an artist working in multimedia, currently AI-prompting, using digital images of physical art pieces (painted canvases, I have made), as well as music.

The 5 songs were rendered using Suno.ai, a music generation program. Some were rendered in post-production using BandLAB; these were the earlier pieces, as Suno has caught up, in regards to services offered. My handle there (Suno.com) is suno.com/@ngjansen and examples of my NFT art can be found at LinkTr.ee/ngjansen

Working closely with our patient council, here at Southwest Centre, I often DJ at special events, coordinate with my fellow patients on planning events, and can be found, in my free time, at a computer or scribbling ideas on paper.

Custody has not been easy. I find it to be acceptable at times - but not all. Verbal abuse and clinicians derelict of responsibility are the norm. This is quite unfortunate, given

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this is claimed to be an environment of healing. Hopefully, systemic change will come with advocacy.

Please feel free to use words of this email, and the songs provided, for the journal publication. I do not wish to remain anonymous.

All the best, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Regards,

Nicholas Gerald Jansen
B2 Treatment Unit, in-patient

P.S. Download restrictions prevent me from attaching this latest piece. I will try to forward it in the near future.

“Is this meant to be....” lyrics

I once wrote that the experience of "living" in the forensic systems is as it should be - a challenge beyond liberty. The longer I dwell in this shape and form, the more I become defiant...

[Intro]

Woven into this time - a fabric devoid of life...

[Verse 1]

It starts with something little, and builds and builds
Nothing, it seems, will stop or yield - never fulfills
A hope that this could be more than just too much
So, I seek and look for something beyond, and as such...

[Chorus]

Built of bricks and mortar, formed of ill-desires
Pyres of those we knew, who can light the fires
Along the borders and margins, of lost highways
Leading to nowhere - nothing in the sought-after days
Freedom should not entail, this despotic liberty
Maybe long beyond - we can be set free?

[Verse 2]

It comes to be, a feigned complacent reticence
Lost deep inside, a dark heart of wanton circumstance
Every moment lost, every day away, every hope of less
This does not cease, but carries inward, this confessed...

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[Chorus]

[Bridge]

All I have become, is never just enough
Tears I've shed, hide the lost in suffocating...
Hatred, anger, hurt and pain - a second coming...
Into hours, bereft of time - years, now succumbing

[Verse 3]

How it ends, far too few will ever know
Marginalized, stigmatized - hated, despised...
For what is known as wrong - is it even possible?
How can I ask, when no one thinks me capable?

[Chorus]

[Verse 4]

Capacity and bureaucracy - agents of something else
Never knowing - though always wanting - a sense of self
Can we be delivered from under a hardened thumb?
Will you see that none of this, can ever be undone?

[Outro]

For once I might have been a man - now inside a can
Or cannot - have not - will be taught, against as I am
My self of right does entail: heartless sufferance
For once, for always, I might have stood a chance
...against that which defies logical reality - a second slight - over and again, can this
really justify; who I really am?

A Note from the Author

I delved deep into poetic license and allegory with this piece, hoping to create a visualization, through song, about how long it takes (even in short stays), to move through the forensic system. It is well known that lifespans inside institutions are shorter, due to the nature of illness, not forgetting hardships encountered, in the complexity of the environ. Being sent to a Forensic Mental Health Facility occurs when one pleads "Not criminally responsible on account of mental disorder" - the new legal equivalent of an insanity plea. Agreements are made to be assessed, and the findings (conducted by a

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specialist, recognized by the Court), are used to determine "fitness to stand trial" and/or NCR. It is an arduous process, where one detained, remains in custody, during the assessment ("dead time" does not count), and then begins the protocol of treatment, therapy and rehabilitation, usually lasting at least 5 years. The concept of "significant risk" is applied to gauge whether a discharge from hospital, with (conditional) or without (absolute), continuing restrictions. This occurs across one or two (sometimes multiple) hospitals, often restarting on transfer from one to the next. The song I have written is about the sensations and experiences, there-within. May all our words now live on...

Intro

Time is often compared to the threads of fabric, symbolizing the interconnectedness of being, with the intro alluding to time crossed and lost - perhaps gained. In this context, it means I feel "woven" into a greater "fabric", piece of a puzzle, so to speak.

Verse 1

Often offenders are imprisoned and held in custody for petty crimes. Feelings of driving, desperate want can develop, as the confines are overwhelming - taking from a hope for better - where "too much", leads to a seeking for "something beyond" the walls. Not satisfied with the process, I seek to effect change, where I can, advocating on my own behalf, whilst striving to give understanding, through a voice for the others, in this same predicament.

Chorus

Repeated through, is the idea that skewed thinking continues to build lockhouses, and those lost spark a more pressing desire; marginalized and lost outside (or inside) the sanity of comfort, a journey comes to a continuation of misplaced desires; nowhere is

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here, and a hopeful manner turns into an affect of perpetual entrapment; "despotic liberty" is a play at "least onerous" custody, almost a farce inside the "long beyond" of a sentence served. "We can be set free?" Not yet. These words are so often repeated, they seem to take on paradoxical life of their own: will there ever be an end to the struggles faced by ongoing (sometimes increasing), removal of liberties? I don't know the answer, after repeating the same process at 6 different hospitals - hoping that one day, there will be one fulfilling the promise of therapeutic resolution - still battling an "unknown disorder".

Verse 2

Distance between living and alive is what carries this verse. "Wanton circumstance" is used to describe association between what was done, and what is being done, in turn. "Every hope of less..." is used here, to describe rationale over simplex logic. Confessing anything is perilous. As such, we become engrained in a vicious cycle of us and them, give-and-take - cause and effect, becoming worse alongside others attempting to find a way out.

Bridge

Hiding any and every feeling of resistance, is commented on, with acquiescence the result. Nothing really carries over, with frontline staff attempting to offer a fresh start...in reality, a stagnation of progress so they can understand - at a pace of slow familiarization.

Verse 3

The end is discharge from custody and the Board. However, they try, stigma of a marginalized group feels like the way we are viewed. Capability to consent is removed - manufactured submission. Within the process, there are elements of forced adherence.

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One can lose their autonomy to decide a course of treatment - or control of their financial properties. This is beyond frustrating.

Verse 4

"Capacity and bureaucracy" are the bleak reality, of a simple look at the superstructure of a machine, given to forced compliance - modified behavior etched in history, this time becomes a permanent reminder. Ultimately, we are subjects of studies; there is a machine built on interconnected organizations who profit on their promise. If there is to be healing, change must come. Otherwise, we are, simply, pages in journals.

[Notes from the editor: Nicholas's song can be downloaded from the Critical Disability Discourses webpage]