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*Editor-In-Chief*

**Dr. Vishwanath Bite**



**Managing Editor**

**Madhuri Bite**

[www.the-criterion.com](http://www.the-criterion.com)

[criterionejournal@gmail.com](mailto:criterionejournal@gmail.com)

## Crazy

**Jeff Dupuis**  
Toronto, Canada.

So not only was Jay schizophrenic, and being paid a grand a month by the government to be that way, he started a business coaching others how to be schizophrenic too. They sent him 250 dollars via PayPal and he told them how to fake his illness and collect monthly cheques through Skype tutorials. That was his brilliant scheme, which he recited exuberantly as we stood in line to meet Greg Jennings, the host of the internationally syndicated "Graveyard Radio." I hadn't seen Jay since New Years', in Montreal, six years earlier. That was before he stood up in the lecture hall, spat on a professor and was kicked out of Concordia University. Once he moved back to his parents' house in Scarborough, he worked part-time refereeing soccer before pulling a knife on his mother and being institutionalized.

In middle school through high school, Jay was lean and fast and excelled in sports. Unlike the other soccer and rugby players, he was also brilliant at math, languages, and chemistry. His left foot got caught on the dust-covered velvet rope of the old theatre as he jumped the cue to stand with me. He was fat and clumsy, bearded and smelling like a thick, damp jungle.

A balding, basement-dwelling Momma's boy objected to Jay's cutting in line. Jay took no notice of the man or my open palms, which I held toward Momma's boy. Jay probably wasn't violent anymore, heavily medicated and living on his own in a small city an hour away, but I didn't want to chance it. I'd only waved to him when he was staring wide-eyed in my direction, because I was afraid of drawing his rage if he thought I was ignoring him.

"I'm going to ask Greg about floaters, I think he should do a show on them," Jay said.

"Uh huh," I said, looking straight ahead.

"Heidegger said that every generation has an issue, one problem to solve. I think the floaters are our problem. I've spent months just concentrating on them, focussing my thoughts..."

Even though he was loud and his voice was uneven, the noise of the crowd rose up as I stared toward the head of the line, flooding out Jay's words. Greg Jennings wasn't at the table for the meet-and-greet yet. Theatre staff had escorted the two other guest speakers, a nuclear physicist who studies UFOs, and a librarian who helped found the field called "forbidden archaeology" amongst believers. After a two-hour show, where Greg started by singing and telling jokes and then interviewed the other two speakers late-night-show-style, most of the audience wanted to get home. We had been standing there for half-an-hour since the stage emptied and the house lights came up.

"There he is," a woman's voice said at the front.

Jay was laughing. He tended to do that between sentences, sometimes between words within a sentence. He was really crazy. He always tried to be crazy, I mean, all the pot and hallucinogens, the late-night conspiracy radio programs and reading nothing but the paranormal literature. It was almost as if he chose to leave the world of the sane in hopes of finding something better. I smiled at him as if I too was in on the joke. Two members of the event staff led Greg toward the tables draped in white cloth, potted plants dotting the background. Behind him were two of his producers, a tall, round man in a black turtleneck and black jeans, and a woman in her forties with wavy hair hardened with mousse. She wore a magenta blazer and a matching skirt. Her face was tanned and presented strong Italian features. She kept in shape or was just lucky and her dark hair was streaked with highlights. Liza Loretta, I thought to myself, Graveyard Radio's

producer. Her look screamed L.A. producer and she stood back from Greg, by a potted plant, her face and the front of her blouse was lit up from the glow of her Blackberry's screen.

Our turn came. People in front of us met Greg, shook his hand and took a picture with him, then shuffled down the table to speak to the two other "experts." My camera was ready in my hand to snap a photo with Greg, but Jay got to him first, shaking his hand and not letting go. Greg Jennings was about Jay's height, with black hair as artificially dark as Wayne Newton's.

"You need to do a show about floaters," Jay said.

"Floaters?" Greg said. "You mean like the floaters in the eye?"

"Yeah the floaters in the eye, exactly! Heidegger said that every generation has one..."

The smell was too much, the scene was too much. I made my way down the table, ignoring the experts signing their self-published books. Liza had also made her way to the end of the table as if we were in lock-step.

"Ms. Lorretti!" I said over the ambient noise.

She lowered her phone down to her trim waist and looked over at me. I stepped closer.

"I'm Daniel Jansen, I e-mailed you last week, about Dr. Beauregard."

"Oh yes, the climatologist."

"Well, not exactly..."

It was another night of no sleep and my heart thumping violently. I had stayed up all night, reading all the guest profiles on the Graveyard Radio website. A recurring guest of theirs, a fellow Canadian, was listed as having been a professor of climatology for eight years at the University of Winnipeg. Kennedy was clearly not shot by a lone nut with a surplus rifle with one magic bullet that day in Deely Plaza and something sure as hell crashed in that farmer's field in New Mexico back in the forties, but the world's scientist faking global warming was a bit much for me. So I looked into it and saw a CBC documentary about the industry of climate change denial and the think tanks funded exclusively by oil companies to send experts on speaking tours to denounce the research of practicing climate scientist. Canada's most famous example of this phenomena was Dr. Tom Beauregard, a former University of Winnipeg professor of *geography* who tried passing himself off as "Canada's first climatologist."

Graveyard Radio constantly tries to expose the conspiracies of "Big Pharma," "The Globalist Elite," and "The Banksters," so having discovered what I had about Dr. Beauregard, I quickly sent of an e-mail to the show's website. Part one of my message was a quick blurb about Dr. Beauregard's credentials and some links to prove my assertions. Then I pasted some more links to show her what various Canadian newspapers had uncovered about our so-called "first climatologist." The next day I had received a reply from Liza Loretti herself.

"I am very interested in your information, can you send me some more links to verify this please?" She had written.

So I did. Knowing that the regular host and one of the weekend guys believe climate change is a natural cycle, I didn't try to prove the science, just the doctor's qualifications or lack thereof. I sent her links from National Geographic-affiliated science journalism sites to national newspaper sites. I sent her the link to a documentary done by the CBC on this subject and wrote down the time at which she can see the journalists expose Dr. Beauregard's exaggerated credentials. I even dug up court documents from a failed lawsuit Dr. Beauregard launched, but withdrew once the facts concerning his credentials and who funds his speaking tours came out in court. She replied again, asking me if I can prove how much money he made and from which oil companies. I had been doing that research before coming to the event that night.

“So to be clear, your complaint is that our guest does not have the proper standing in your mind to voice his opinions about climate issues and you don't like what he said about government scientists guilt in Climategate.”

“No, ma'am, I didn't mention Climategate, I was talking about a suit filed by Dr. Beauregard himself, in which he was forced to withdraw his claims when the truth came out about his own misrepresenting himself as a climate expert.”

She tapped her Blackberry against her chin, she tightened her mouth and deep lines were clear all around her red-painted lips.

“You asked me to prove a connection between him and the oil companies, remember? My complaint is simple, just change his profile on your website. His standing “in my mind” doesn't matter, what I want is fact. One of the links I sent you was his CV from his own website, just base your profile on that, it says he taught geography, not climatology.”

“Did you find out anything about who is paying him?”

“Yes! Tonnes! I have an open word document on my laptop right now that I'll send you tomorrow, filled with evidence. ExxonMobil used to publish lists of who they donated to, I have a dozen PDF files from the mid-nineties to the early two-thousands, listing all the so-called think tanks they've funded. It matches up perfectly with Dr. Beauregard's resume.”

“All right then,” she said, “send the document to me.”

A crowd had bottle-necked behind Jay and a theatre staffer interrupted him and Greg. He tapped Jay gently on the wrist of the hand still holding Greg's. I couldn't hear what he said.

“Are you even going to read it? I've checked Dr. Beauregard's profile everyday since I've sent you my complaint and it hasn't been changed.”

Liza raised the hand holding her phone in the air and waved someone over with the other.

“I've given you a real-life conspiracy! This is real, we know it's happening! Why won't you cover it?”

The other producer and I man I hadn't noticed stepped in.

Jay rode the streetcar with me back toward the subway. He talked loudly about not believing in aliens anymore and being somewhat sympathetic with al-Qaeda. He explained how the letters in someone's name foretell that person's future, so deciphering the letters and their connections to other words is the key to knowing everything about them. His hand was sweaty when I shook it, I was exhausted and I was the only one getting off at my stop. The subway tunnel was hot and quiet and my footsteps echoed along the tile walls.