

DISPATCHES FROM THE VACCINE MANDATE WAR

by

Barry Eitel

CHARACTERS

BERG (20s) - An ambulance driver for the Federal forces of the rank EMS Lieutenant.

MIKE (50s, white, male) - Head of a small Ohio militia fighting a losing war against the federal government.

R (40s) - State Department employee and high-ranking, although secret, official in the Federal forces.

TIME

October, 2024. Mid-morning.

PLACE

A room in an abandoned police station in central Ohio. One year after a 2nd Civil War was declared following federal vaccine mandates.

(A creaking interrogation room in an abandoned local police station in central Ohio. MIKE, sits handcuffed in a chair. EMS Lieutenant BERG sits on the floor, in the middle of telling how they got involved in the Vaccine Mandate War.)

BERG

...and when Arizona seceded and expelled all their vaccinated into the Utah desert, c'mon! That's evil! Seeing those Instagram stories, I just thought, I have to do something. I knew I'd be too chickenshit to actually go to the frontlines, and I have asthma, so ambulance corps makes sense.

MIKE

You fuckin' brainwashed libs are all the same - I actually feel sad for you. Doing the work of the antichrist for him!

BERG

Who's the antichrist? Biden? Jill? Or someone behind the scenes? Soros?

MIKE

The whole bunch.

BERG

Don't get me wrong, everyone in charge leaves a lot to be desired. But they aren't the dudes leaving people to die of thirst in the desert.

MIKE

You just infected me with your deadly vaccine. You just killed me.

BERG

That's intake policy. I would say I'm sorry about that, but I'm not really sorry, you dumb bastard.

MIKE

I'll make you sorry -

BERG

You cried for an hour straight after a little shot. It was just a small pinching sensation!

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MIKE

Yes, the pinch of my Constitutional rights dying to death.

(BERG begins to interrogate MIKE.)

BERG

Ok, Christ, I always get so pissed trying to talk sense into you people and lose my train of thought -

MIKE

Hey, now you know what it's like when you see someone kneeling for the national anthem -

BERG

Not taking that bait, because I know you're a mass murderer and I know you're behind these Applebee's bombings.

MIKE

I have no idea what you're talking about.

BERG

Michael 'Big Middle Finger Mike' Trivecchio, alleged head of the Midwest Murderlovers Militia -

MIKE

Our official title is Save the Children Ohio -

BERG

You're going to tell me y'all weren't the mastermind behind this plan? It's beautiful in a monstrous way - thirteen Applebee's between Ohio, Indiana and Kentucky, dynamited. Scores killed. Make all the fencesitters pick a side - vaxed or antivax.

MIKE

We'd never do anything like that -

BERG

Not according to what you put on Facebook - I could send you to Gitmo right now for what you've said about our dear POTUS or even your little governor, and he's a Republican!

MIKE

It's war, people talk tough.

BERG

No, Mike, in war people are supposed to act tough. Which is why I need you to tell all the losers in the federal government why

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BERG (cont'd)

you wanted to blow up those Applebee's. Be a man for once, alright?

MIKE

It isn't true!

BERG

Some things are more important than the truth, eh? You get that, right? Isn't that why you and your boys beat your neighbor to the verge of death?

MIKE

He was on the School Board! He voted to suffocate our children by making them wear masks the entire school day!

BERG

It had nothing to do with him complaining to the county that you piled brush against his fence?

MIKE

No, it had to do with kids' civil rights and, anyway, it's my goddamn property, I can pile brush wherever I want!!

BERG

Don't you realize how pathetic you sound? If you really want to get your message out there, you got one option. Admit to these cameras that you planned the bombing.

MIKE

No.

BERG

Because the other option is life in prison. This is my vow to you, plead guilty to this, I'll make sure you get a small sentence in a vaccinated prison. I'll get you classified as a POW, you'll get out as soon as the war is over. After we nuke the Daytona Five Hundred or whatever the fuck.

MIKE

And if I refuse?

BERG

Terrorism charges. Life in prison at some black site. Maybe death penalty, but no one would even know. Your political insights would die with you, heard by no one except the person doing the lethal injection.

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(MIKE, despondent, thinks.)

MIKE

I need to think about it.

BERG

You're fucking yourself up right now, I'm giving you an out and you're fucking it right up.

(R enters the room, in a rush. MIKE is startled. BERG stands at attention.)

R

At ease, Berg. This is taking too long.

BERG

He wants to sign on and admit he's a real badass, but his feelings are a little bruised right now. We caught him before he could blow up those poor folks that only wanted to enjoy a little Oreo Shake!

MIKE

I'm being honest!

R

How did you coax him out of hiding?

BERG

Offered discount ivermectin on Facebook Marketplace. Like lambs to the slaughter.

R

Why is an ambulance unit getting involved in a catch and kill?

MIKE

Who are you?

R

Deep state, need to know basis, your worst nightmare. Unimportant.

BERG

I saw his posts about elected officials and knew I had a patriotic duty.

MIKE

For driving an ambulance, you sure are on Facebook a lot.

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BERG

Buddy, I was raised online. You think you're so special with photoshopping Trump's head on Rambo's body? Not only do I got your posts, I got all the public records about your brush dispute, video of you yelling at the school board, your group's Telegram channel, enough to put you away for decades.

R

Oh, we've stopped putting people like him in prison. Temporary prison population reduction orders. Our jails are for our own shoplifters and weed smokers. For anti-vax terrorists like him, well...it's a reduction order.

MIKE

You can't execute me! I got rights!

R

Didn't you declare that you were a sovereign citizen?

BERG

Look, I did use a Pfizer dose on him -

R

It's fine, a whole boxcar full of them expired yesterday because we the track was needed to get toys on store shelves before the holidays. Could you imagine - we'd have a whole second revolution on hands!

MIKE

I didn't want any of this! Yes, I posted some stuff online. But I never planned a bombing. And now I'm vaccinated!

(MIKE is about to cry. R slams the table.)

R

You got two options, and they both mean the dose was wasted.

BERG

Sir, I was making some progress here -

R

Admit fault and sign a statement. You want to make it manifesto-y, have at it. Then - execution. The other option, execution but no one knows about. No GoFundMe. No martyrdom. I know what I would choose.

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BERG

We don't have to kill him.

R

He's dying, and I'm making it back to Foggy Bottom by dinner.

MIKE

I can't admit nothing because I don't know nothing!

BERG

The evidence is inconclusive. I don't want more blood on my hands and you don't either.

R

I could give a shit. Hell doesn't exist.

BERG

He's very stupid. Didn't the memo go on and on about how sophisticated the device was?

R

Thirteen Applebee's across multiple states blowing up simultaneously? You bet your ass it was sophisticated. I don't even know where these yokels got the tech - some sort of encrypted messaging trigger.

BERG

He can barely photoshop Trump's head on Rambo's body. It was so pixelated.

MIKE

I needed help from my nephew.

BERG

He might have organized the group behind it, but he definitely didn't light the fuse.

R

What's your deal?

BERG

Too many people have died, and I can't contribute to that number, no matter what they believe.

R

I love this conscience stuff. So rare these days.

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BERG

He's not innocent, but I don't think he's guilty, either.

R

Like they say, close enough for government work.

(R takes out a hypodermic needle full of a scary-looking substance.)

MIKE

Government work! It was government work! False flag - it happens all the time. He's right, I'm stupid! The people in my group are mostly stupid. We can't put together a bomb - it took five of us to change the oven clock.

(R thinks for a moment.)

R

Shit. Maybe this was us.

BERG

Is this State Department humor?

R

That bomb setup was brilliant. You blow up the Applebee's, everyone thinks it was the anti-vaxers, get the fencesitters on our side.

MIKE

I knew it! I wish I had my phone on me, I'd catch you red-handed!

R

It's textbook. We're bringing in what we usually do overseas to our home turf. How times have changed.

BERG

So you think you know who did it?

R

If you're a gambler, I'd place my money on some Mormon with a lanyard in the Pentagon. But you'll never find out.

(R prepares to inject MIKE with the needle. BERG tries to stop him.)

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BERG

Wait, please, if he didn't do it, we don't have to do this.

R

Yes, we do. And you're going straight to the front with my recommendation. You got a whole military career ahead of you. Very bright.

BERG

The front?! No, I got asthma!

R

Don't worry, it's mostly pushing a button these days. Actually, I'll recommend you for a medal, too.

(R addresses MIKE.)

R (cont'd)

Say a prayer or whatever.

(MIKE closes his eyes. R puts his thumb on plunger of the hypodermic needle. Suddenly, BERG grabs R's hand that holds the needle and pulls it away from MIKE.)

R

You kidding me with this Oberlin pacifist shit?

BERG

I did it. I planned the bombing.

R

Get the fuck outta here -

BERG

There's been so much death on all sides, and I thought if there was one more spectacular act of carnage, maybe the war would end...maybe public opinion would swing so far against them, I don't know. War does this - war made me this way, I used to be a sweet kid from the Chicago suburbs. Thank you for stopping me, thank you for foiling it. It's over, I will give you everything.

MIKE

Whoa.

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R

Dammit. This is so much more paperwork. You couldn't have told me afterwards off-camera?

BERG

I can't let one more person die.

R

Shit. Conscience is actually a bug, not a feature.

(R produces a key and unlocks MIKE's handcuffs.)

R (cont'd)

Alright, Mister Pfizer, you're free to go. Welcome to the New World Order. Come back in three weeks for your second dose.

MIKE

Fuck you!

R

Man, go tweet about it.

(MIKE crosses to BERG.)

MIKE

You're too good for them.

BERG

No, I'm not. And you all make me sick. I don't have to lie to anyone anymore.

(MIKE exits.)

R

And that means court martial for you. Can't see that turning out well. But I'm sure there will be some folks very interesting in learning from your creative talents. You're very sophisticated, and we can be very persuasive!

(BERG sits in the chair that MIKE vacated.)

BERG

All we can do is try our best, and admit our mistakes, and try to do better the next day. Right?

(R takes out his phone and makes a call.)

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BERG

Right?

(BLACKOUT.)

END OF PLAY