

ALL TECH CUES ARE INDICATED WITHIN THE BODY OF THE SCRIPT, UNDERLINED AND DENOTED BY AN "*" – IN ADDITION, LX CUES ARE NOTATED IN THE RIGHT MARGIN. EXCEPT WHERE INDICATED, ALL LIGHTING CUES ARE **3-SECOND FADES**. ALL AUDIO CUES START AT **FULL VOLUME** – NO FADE-INS – AND END AS INDICATED. ALL **PROJECTION** IS CONTROLLED BY PERFORMER. THE NOTATIONS (VIDEO PLAYS) AND (TEXT ON SCREEN) ARE IN THE SCRIPT FOR REFERENCE ONLY.

JESUS IN MONTANA:
ADVENTURES IN A DOOMSDAY CULT

by Barry Smith
REVISED 1/10

TOP OF SHOW TECH:

* PRESHOW: HOUSE LX FULL, STAGE IN "VIDEO" WASH, "WALK IN" CD PLAYS

* FADE "WALK IN" CD

* LX STAGE WASH OUT

* LX HOUSE OUT

* START AUDIO #1

* LX TO FULL

- - ACTOR ENTERS

[*FADE AUDIO #1 as speaking begins] When I was a kid, growing up in the Deep South, the preacher used to end each sermon by making everyone close their eyes: "Now is the time to accept Jesus! Now is the time! There's nobody watching you but God. So come on down here and pray with me. Come on down and ask Jesus to save your wretched soul!"

So, you can understand why, when I first heard the news that Jesus had RETURNED, I thought: Oh shit ... not HIM again!

Let me back up a little bit.

[*LX - VIDEO]

(VIDEO PLAYS)

This is the Mississippi Delta, where I was born. My grandmother had an 8mm movie camera, so I'd always borrow it and make movies that she didn't approve of. Here's one I made in 1979 about an invisible monster that terrorizes my back yard. The monster's creator explains his genius scheme. Apparently all it takes to create an invisible monster is to throw

LX - VIDEO

a rusty tin can into the lake. Not only did I write, direct, and star in all my films, but I also did all of my own stunts.

My grandmother's camera captured many precious family moments over the years, like reunions, my dog, Tippi, and me, at age 6, learning to dive at the Shelby, MS country club pool. Not long after this I'm bragging to a friend that I know how to dive. I'm not at the pool when I tell him this, but in my back yard. As I climb up on the porch step to demonstrate, it never occurs to me that this might be a bad idea. I'm a carefree first grader and haven't given much thought to the difference between deep water and solid ground. I pick my landing spot and I dive, headlong, into the solid Mississippi Delta dirt. There's a flash of pain and white light as my head hits the Earth. (VIDEO ENDS)

[*LX - FULL]

According to Darwin, I shouldn't have survived this stunt, being unfit for the harsh environment away from my little redneck country club. The only reason I didn't snap my neck right then - end of story - is that God had other plans for me.

I'm 8 years old when God speaks to me for the first time. My parents are in their bitter divorce phase, so I've been shipped off to live with my aunt in Greenville, Mississippi, where I attend third grade at Greenville Christian School. My aunt and uncle have five kids of their own and are hardcore Southern Baptists. They even have a fig tree in their yard.

So every Sunday I'm dragged off to church to be reminded that I'm going to hell. And in brimstone country they don't downplay Hell for the sake of the kids. Hell's a raging inferno where you spend all eternity with worms eating your flesh while begging for a single drop of water to cool your tongue.

I don't want to go to hell, so I try my best to be a good little Christian, but I'm not exactly comforted by that, either.

LX -
FULL

I think the tone was set for me early on by that Abraham and Isaac story. You probably know this one. God tells Abraham that, instead of a goat, he has to sacrifice his son, Isaac. So he invites Isaac for a little stroll, then grabs him, ties him to the altar, raises his knife and at the last possible second is told by God to “wait, hold it, stop, just kidding. I was just testing to see how much you love me.” Like God is some prank show host. Abe, you’ve been punk’d. I know the moral is supposed to be that God is loving and merciful. But what I got is that God is kind of a jerk. Sure, he says he loves you - but then fucks with you just to see if YOU really love HIM. At 8 years old I live in fear that God will command me to sacrifice Tippi. So, my God was basically an insecure single parent with what sounds like a bit of an alcohol problem. Yet - He did take the time to speak to me personally.

It’s the usual Sunday morning chaos at my Aunt’s house, with 6 kids and 2 adults scrambling to get ready for church. It’s almost time to leave, so I find a quiet place in my Aunt’s bedroom to begin the ritual of the shoe fitting.

[*AUDIO #2]

I hate my church shoes. They’re square-toed and sinister and I can never figure out the left from the right without actually putting them on. Even with my eyes closed I have a 50/50 chance, yet I’m always wrong on the first try. I sit on the corner of the bed, the room totally empty, and I pick up a shoe. I lift my right foot, and that’s when it happens. That’s when I hear God say:

(COMPUTER AUDIO) “No. The other one.”

(COMPUTER AUDIO) “No. The other one.”

This is serious burning bush stuff. So I raise my left foot instead, place the boxy little shoe on it, stand up and lo and behold – a perfect fit! A miracle!

[*FADE AUDIO #2]

Boost computer audio to max “GOD” level

I run to tell my Aunt, because when God speaks to you, the first thing you gotta do is run and tell somebody.

“Aunt Ann. Aunt Ann. I was puttin’ my shoe on, and I usually caint tell which one goes on which, so I always put it on the wrong foot first...But this time I was puttin’ it on the wrong one but then God told me to put it on the other one so I did and he was right.”

She bends down, straightens my clip-on tie and says, “Honey, you know that wudn't God. Now you go on get ready.”

Why wasn't that God? Just because I didn't have any stone tablets? I'd never told anyone about my Sunday shoe issues, so I know it wasn't one of my older cousins hiding under the bed pretending to be God.

Why wouldn't God be there for me in that moment of indecision? Isn't that kinda the whole point of God? What, does God only contact you directly when it's time to kill something?

God would not speak to me in this manner again until I was walking alone across my college campus.

Here's what God said this time:

(COMPUTER AUDIO PLAYS) “Take some acid.”

I'm 19, living in Southern California, never been drunk, never smoked pot, never done anything but been a good boy. I don't even know what acid is. But on the advice of God, I decide to look into it. Well, the story from there is pretty predictable – take some acid, take some more acid, shift paradigms a few times, see some Dead shows, take lots of acid, reject all organized religion, take acid so often that one morning there's no coffee in the house so instead I take a quarter tab of acid so I can be awake for my morning English class, realize that my drug use is interfering with my education, so I take the only logical step - drop out of college. I leave the country and live overseas for two years, return to Southern California and immediately move again, 1000 miles away to the

Reset
computer
audio to
“show”
level

mountains of Colorado, crash on my uncle's couch, get a job as a dishwasher and wonder what's next.

What's next is the Gulf War. The original, not the sequel. I'm in Colorado learning to wash dishes while watching CNN coverage of Operation Desert Storm. Each morning I wake up to Papa Bush's lizard-like head talking about Saddam and the New World Order and I know that I'm watching the prelude to nuclear war. Even though I'm 25, I'm sure that I'll soon be drafted, or vaporized, and most likely both. After a week of watching World War 3 unfold, pulling double shifts and scraping tons of leftover food into the dumpster I find myself alone in the back hallway early one morning, sobbing uncontrollably. I'm crumpled in the floor, hugging my knees and bawling because the world is insane and we're all gonna die and I can't pull myself together. And since I've renounced my religious upbringing, I am screwed. So there I am, hiding in the corner, beseeching whatever higher power there is, the higher power that exists somewhere up on the ceiling, to please, please tell me... what the fuck?

The very next day I round the corner just in time to overhear one of the waitresses say: "So all the answers lie within the great pyramid."

I'm looking for answers!

She tells me that there's this guy who lives in town who teaches these free classes about prophecy, and the pyramids and the Native Americans and how it all ties together with us bombing Iraq. She gives me his number and tells me that he has a new class starting tonight.

My first night off in two weeks. (*TEXT ON SCREEN - "3 MONTHS LATER."*)

Well, guess what? Jesus has returned! Those classes about the pyramid and the prophecies and stuff were all leading up the fact that Jesus has returned and is living in Montana.

Look, even if you're into the return of Jesus thing, if someone tells you that he's actually here you're gonna hand them some change and keep walking. And I'm not looking for Jesus, I don't care if he is living just a few states over.

But during the last 3 months I heard some things that really got to me.

Here, check this out: [*AUDIO #3]

The major religions of the world. Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, and Baha'i. Yes, Baha'i - I'll come right back to that one. Each of these religions have plenty of variations, denominations and offshoots.

The people I've been studying with are actually a sect of the Baha'i religion, a small splinter of an already small club. Actually, smaller than that. There are 7 million Baha'i's worldwide, and the ones following Jesus in Montana number roughly 250. If we graph this we see that it doesn't actually register at all. However, if we look at a close-up well, we see that it still doesn't actually register. But that's OK, because you know what they say, "One on God's side is a majority."

This Baha'i religion started 150 years ago in Persia. Bahai's believe in what they call "progressive revelation." Each of these religions are teachings directly from God, and they're like grades in a school - teaching you based on your capacity at the time. So, Moses taught us not to eat paste, Jesus taught us to write cursive, and so on. When each new guy shows up, you're supposed to graduate on to his message, but since lots of people are always making lots of claims, how do you know who's legit? Well, 'cause the old guy leaves behind prophecies foretelling the new guy, making following God's plan like a divine scavenger hunt. And this is what God wants - for us to use our intellect to find our way to his truth.

The founder of Baha'i is called Baha'u'llah, which is Persian for "Glory of God." His arrival is prophesied throughout the bible, and even mentioned by name here in Ezekiel 43 - -Glory

of God, Glory of the Lord. Baha'u'llah. Like those before him, he is what is called a manifestation of God. Since we can't know God directly, he sends us these spiritual mirrors who reflect the brilliance of God. Seeing these manifestations is the closest we humans can get to seeing the divine without having one of those Indiana Jones experiences with the melting faces.

(TEXT ON SCREEN -"100 YEARS LATER")

OK, so that's Baha'i. Now we come to the Jesus in Montana part- with this new character - an American guy, Leland Jensen, who holds a place on the Baha'i national council. In the early 60's there's a holy coup in the Baha'i world, and Leland Jensen is excommunicated for defending God's covenant. Even though he's been cast out, he continues to be a believer, trusting that God must have a plan. A few years later he's put in prison for a crime he didn't commit.

While in prison he is visited by an angel who tells him that God does indeed have a plan - and it's him. The angel tells him that he is the one who has been prophesied to come forth and reestablish God's covenant, thereby fulfilling the role of the return of Jesus. Look, it's all in the **prophecies**. When Jesus was asked in the Book of Matthew when he would return, he referred back to the book of Daniel. Daniel mentions three different dates, meaning Jesus will return 3 different times. We are able to interpret these dates as 1844, 1863 and 1963. 1844 is the year Baha'u'llah's predecessor shows up, 1863 the year Baha'u'llah appears, and 1963 is the year that our hero stands fast against the deviant Baha'i council, making him the only one on the planet now holding true to God's covenant.

But wait, there's more. So much more. That was the quick version. Every religion has their own person prophesied to return. These past three months I've seen how this man not only fulfils the prophecies for the Christian Jesus and the Baha'i establisher, but also for the Jewish Joshua, the Hopi Bahana, the Fifth Buddha, the return of Krishna, the incarnation of

Zoroaster, the great white buffalo, the new and improved Muhammad. This Jesus is a fast food drive-through messiah for all, with chicken and tacos and burgers and a salad bar. He's all of these people rolled into one easy-to-worship guy and he's come to save the day and I've found him! People, can I get an AMEN? (audience: "AMEN!!") [***SNAP OUT AUDIO #3**]

In the old days it was easy - someone strolls by and cures your leprosy, he's Jesus. Simple answers for simple times. But now it's time to use your reason to understand God's plan, because the heart is so easily fooled in these matters of the spirit. Think of Jonestown - buncha people following their heart right to the punch bowl full of Kool-Aid.

Let me explain this another way - Maybe you're familiar with the "Paul is Dead" legend. The theory is that Paul died in a car crash and was replaced by a look-a-like. The remaining Beatles decide to keep this absolutely top secret, except, well...they leave a few clues. Like here on the Abbey Road album. This is clearly a funeral procession, with everyone dressed appropriately - preacher, undertaker, corpse, gravedigger. Paul is not only barefoot, as all good corpses are, but is also out of step with the others. This guy has a cigarette in his right hand, and we all know that the real Paul McCartney, may he rest in peace, is left-handed. Look at this - 28IF - Paul would have been 28 at the time of this picture, you know, IF it weren't for the death thing. The cover of the Sgt. Pepper album is a group of people standing over Paul's grave, with flowers arranged in the shape of his bass. He has a hand raised over his head, a symbol of death in many ancient cultures, and on the other side he's got his back to the camera, a total giveaway that rigor mortis has set in. And look at this - the cover of "Yesterday and Today." Turn it sideways, and there's Paul in his coffin.

Now, Paul may or may not actually be dead, but you have to admit these are some pretty good clues. I'm not totally sold

on this new Jesus, but I've seen some clues in the prophecies at least as good as these. Enough that I should head up to Montana and pay this Jesus guy a visit.

I call up my old roommate, Attorney Dave, and he says he's up for a road trip. So I drive out to California in my '71 VW van, scoop him up and we begin our pilgrimage to Missoula, Montana.

Somewhere around day three Attorney Dave turns to me and says, "So, why does this guy think he's Jesus again?"

I open my backpack and pull out a huge stack of papers- the long version of what I just explained to you - a week's worth of dense reading. He gives it a quick lawyer-like skimming, then sets it aside and never mentions it again.

It's a classic road trip, driving and laughing and camping and eventually rolling into Missoula, right to the very address I've been given, a humble little house in a middle class neighborhood. No cross on the lawn. No Rolls Royces parked out front. We stroll up the brick path and I ring the bell. Can Jesus come out and play? The woman who answers the door tells us that Jesus is out running errands. She invites us in to have tea and wait for him, which we do, but Attorney Dave gets the spiritual willies and wants to get out of there. People have been waiting 2000 years for Jesus to return, but Attorney Dave can't wait an extra 10 minutes for him to return from the hardware store. Fine, whatever. I don't need a lawyer present to meet with Jesus.

So we leave. The next morning Attorney Dave buys a train ticket back to Southern California. There's an hour before his train leaves, so I wait with him in the empty depot.

[*AUDIO #4]

Suddenly two men wearing hardhats enter the depot and make their way towards the vending machine in the corner. There are those who believe that angels take human form to deliver us messages. I've never given this theory much

credence until this moment, when the man turns to his friend and says: “If I don’t get a Snickers I’m gonna fuckin’ die!”

We watch as this man, or whatever he is, pulls his candy bar from the machine, tears it open and takes a desperate bite, then leaves the way he came.

[*FADE OUT AUDIO #4]

Attorney Dave boards his train and I head back to my van, still thinking about the Snicker’s guy. “If I don’t get a Snickers I’m gonna fuckin die!” He’s more passionate about a candy bar than I am about Jesus. I’m no different than Attorney Dave - I’m just joyriding to Jesus - do some camping, smoke some pot, drink some beer by the fire - and what this angel, this messenger has come to tell me is that if I’m not going to fuckin’ die without my spiritual Snickers, there’s no point in even approaching the vending machine. So I don’t. I start the van and drive straight back to Colorado.

(TEXT ON SCREEN “6 MONTHS LATER - ASPEN COLORADO”)

By now the threat of WW3 has fizzled out, but I can’t ignore the fact that the world just doesn’t work, so I still study with my teacher. He is constantly reminding me about the homeless people and the AIDS victims and the swollen bellied African children and how these problems will be eradicated when the kingdom of god arrives.

He really inspires me. I’m so inspired that I decide to make a movie about Sasquatch. I know this sort of thing isn’t exactly God’s work, but I’ve wanted to make movies since I was 12, so I figure there’s no harm in making a little movie while I wait for the kingdom of God, right? So, that winter my friend Mark

make a half hour mockumentary called “Fear Takes A Holiday”. As soon as it’s finished I give a copy to my teacher, can’t wait to hear what he has to say:

[*LX VIDEO] (VIDEO PLAYS/ENDS WITH BIGFOOT CHASE/FADE) **[*LX FULL]**

LX - VIDEO

(90 SECOND VIDEO PLAYS)

LX - FULL

after video(cue is running from camera chasing bigfoot)

He hands back my video tape and says: “How does making a movie about Bigfoot visiting a ski resort help bring about the Kingdom of God?”

Well...he’s right. “How does making a movie about Bigfoot visiting a ski resort help poverty and starvation and injustice?”

It doesn't.

Maybe it’s time to finally get serious about something. Why am I wasting my time trying to make a fur coat I found in a dumpster look like a Sasquatch costume when there’s God’s work to be done?

God’s work is to convert 144 thousand people to the message of Jesus in Montana. This will, according to prophecy, trigger the apocalypse, a nuclear war which will cleanse the planet and lead to the establishment of the Kingdom of God on Earth as it is in Heaven.

I really do want to do what's right, and my teacher has made it clear that, as bad as it is, my little movie isn’t going to be enough to get this apocalypse started.

But my teacher's plan will.

Here’s what we do: Meet at his place and REALLY study this information for a solid 6 months. Then we each head out on the road, hitchhiking, for another 6 months, spreading the word, gathering the 144 thousand. My teacher will not be doing any hitchhiking himself, because God’s army needs generals.

So, for 6 months three of my friends and I sit and listen, and in the spring of 1993 we head out to create a world that works.

We decide that our first destination will be - Jesus in Montana.

(TEXT ON SCREEN “6 months and one week later”)

I’ve done some hitchhiking in my day, and have always embraced the randomness of it. When you stick your thumb out, you’re basically saying, “OK, Universe, what’s it gonna be?”

A carload of giggly sorority girls with a taste for the bizarre? Hollywood talent scout? Axe murderer? Person claiming to be a talent scout who is actually an ax murderer? What's it gonna be?"

[*AUDIO #5 - AMBIENT]

I'm standing alone on the outskirts of Craig, Colorado. You can't hitchhike in a cluster of 4, so my fellow evangelists and I have split up. The sun is setting and traffic is sparse, but I have my thumb out anyway. Just as I'm about to give up and go camp in the woods, an old pickup stops and I climb into the cab with Bob.

He's a coal miner from Billings, MT, and he's driving all the way home tonight. Even though we've just met, Bob is explaining his philosophy to me: "I don't want to be a foreman or a manager, I just want to be a sturdy spoke in the coal mining wheel, so when the work load rolls around to me I'm there to brace it up."

He wants to be a cog in the machine. Most people resent or fear this, but Bob has embraced his cogness.

I'm listening to Bob, but I'm really only listening for my opening. My opening to tell him that Jesus has returned. You can't just blurt this out - you have to have an opening. I'm also looking at the sky. We're driving into some ugly clouds, and my backpack is in the bed of the pick-em up truck, as there's no room up front. So Bob's talking about being a cog, and I'm listening for my opening while imagining a future filled with wet clothes.

A few drops of rain hit the windshield and Bob stomps on the brakes and comes to a complete stop in the middle of the highway. What the hell? Is he afraid of rain? Maybe this is my opening. Maybe I can use the rain, the bounty of God, as something that you shouldn't fear.

"You see, Bob, once you understand the way God works, you realize that rain is all part of the divine plan. Just like the

return of Jesus. I mean, if someone walks up and claims to be Jesus, how do you know they're telling the truth? Well, the answer isn't a simple one, Bob, but it's a good 8 hours to Billings, so if I can just direct your attention to the book of Zechariah."

Bob makes a u-turn in the middle of the highway and starts driving the other way.

"You can't outrun the rain, Bob, just like you can't outrun God's plan."

Bob says: "I saw a piece of plastic back there. Maybe it'll fit over your pack."

He comes to a stop right next to a piece of plastic in the ditch. I jump out of the truck, grab the clean piece of plastic and put it over my pack. It fits perfectly. Perfectly. It has elastic on all four corners, like a fitted bed sheet. It's as if I'd mailed the dimensions of my fully loaded bag to the factory that makes customized plastic covers and arranged for delivery via this ditch.

It's a sign. This is a sign from God that I'm on the right track. When you're out here on the edge, uncluttered, riding the waves of chance, you understand the language of God, and this is God saying, "In exchange for doing my work, I, the Almighty, do hereby provide you with comfort and dryness and a ride all the way to Billings."

I get to the onramp in Billings for an early start the next morning, and the first car that stops for me is the Montana State Patrol. The officer informs me that in Montana it's only legal to hitchhike at the onramps - which is where I am - BUT she points out that while on the onramps, it's illegal to stand on the pavement - you have to be on the gravel shoulder. We both look down at my feet. My left foot is on the gravel, but my right foot is overlapping the pavement by about two inches. I apologize for my ignorance of Montana law, and scoot my foot back three inches, a full inch more than I need to, just

to let her know that I'm not looking for trouble. She takes my license, copies down my information and hands it back without smiling.

Half an hour later a Nissan Sentra stops. I hop in and tell the driver I'm going to Missoula. I introduce myself and he tells me that his name is Butch.

"So, Butch...where are you going?"

"Near Missoula."

"How near?"

"Pretty close."

I let it drop. It's a few hours to Missoula, so I sit back and relax. I'll let him warm up to me a little bit before I tell him the good news. I notice that Butch's car is very clean.

About ten miles into our trip he pulls over to the side of the highway.

"I'm getting off up here."

He means the next off ramp, still so far away I can't even see it.

"I thought you said you were going to Missoula."

"I can take you to all the way to Missoula. Would you like a blow job?"

Well, c'mon...of course I'd like a blow job. Just not from Butch. If the lady cop would have offered, then yes! She had handcuffs and everything. But no, I get a proposition from Butch, and it's clear that turning down his offer not only means that I don't get a blow job, but also that I get thrown out on the highway, where I've just been warned it's illegal to hitchhike, and I know the cop has put my name in the cop database, so I can't plead ignorance, and if I run into the same cop again you can bet she won't even hint at a blowjob.

I have to level with Butch: "Sorry, I don't want a blowjob. I'm going to meet Jesus."

I get out of the car and grab my bag just before Butch pulls away.

Where's the cosmic synchronicity now? Was there some updated memo that I didn't get? Now I'm forced to hitch on the highway, gambling that someone will pick me up before the cops do. And I've hitched enough to know that no one's gonna stop for me on the highway. The onramp is always your best bet, and I have no onramp, so I summon up all the hitching skills I've gained over the years - stand up straight, out where you can be seen, good firm thumb, eye contact with each driver: I am interesting to talk to and I respect and honor your space. My pack is clean and dry and will fit easily in your back seat. Blank slate, each car a new possibility. I do not own an ax, nor am I skilled in the use of one. Smile and wait. And pray.

Ten minutes later, a crappy little Chevy pulls over. Thank you, God. I run up to the car, throw my bag in the back seat and hop in the front. I look at the driver, my savior, and see that he is fucked up. His eyes are half-closed and his head is rolling around on his neck and he can barely keep his hands on the wheel - and we aren't even moving yet. I mean this guy is seriously fucked up.

I decide to meet God halfway on this one.

"Thanks for stopping. Hey! Want me to drive?"

"Aw, would you? That'd be great, man. I've been drinking since this morning."

The thing is, it's still this morning. And he's still drinking. We do a quick switch and I'm on my way to Missoula. Five minutes down the road he pukes into a brown paper bag. Five more minutes and boom! Blowout, front tire, 70 miles an hour! As I wrestle the car to the shoulder he starts yelling "motherfucker," which really helps me stay calm. We get out of the car and he starts puking again, so it's up to me to change the tire. He gets mad at his hubcap for reasons I don't catch, calls it a motherfucker and flings it into the ditch. We're back on the road in NASCAR time, minus one hubcap. He cracks open a Miller and offers it to me, but I refuse, completely

ignoring my opening (“I don’t drink because Jesus has returned.”) It’s starting to rain, and I see that the driver’s side wiper has very little rubber left on it. My passenger sees this and demands that we pull over so he can fix it.

“No, dude, it’s fine.”

“Pull over!” It is his car, so I pull over and he gets out.

I watch through the windshield as he lifts the wiper and it snaps off in his hand. He tries to reattach it, but decides instead to call it a motherfucker and throw it into the ditch. Now I see his pattern. His cars must eventually dwindle down to just a metal frame and a steering wheel, which he then calls a motherfucker and pushes the whole thing into the ditch. Then he buys a new car and starts all over again.

He gets back in and spills his beer on the floor. Now I’m driving through a Montana rainstorm with no windshield wiper at all. He pukes in the bag again. Suddenly a lit paper match flies in front of my face, bounces off the window and lands in my lap. I look over and see my friend trying to light his cigarette, clueless that he’s about to set us both on fire, and I’m thinking – You know, I had a cool apartment, living in a nice little mountain resort town ... now spring is here and instead of playing volleyball and hiking the alpine meadows I’m driving some angry drunk’s piece of shit car to meet this guy who says he’s the return of Jesus.

This had better be good. **MOTHERFUCKER.**

**[*LX - SNAP TO BLACKOUT
AFTER “MOTHERFUCKER”]**

[*FADE AUDIO #5]

[*LX - 5-second FADE TO FULL]

<p>Lx - BLACKOUT snap on “mother fucker” 5 second-fade to <u>FULL</u></p>

-ACT 2-

My fellow hitchhikers and I arrive at the House of Jesus. It's a busy night, the place is packed with followers collating and stapling papers. Everyone's really nice and they all make me feel welcome. And then I see Jesus - he's sitting in the corner, chatting with some people, and I'm suddenly nervous. Can this really be happening? Is this really the man who holds the true plan of God? The one who'll finally bring about a world that works? I've spent the last year of my life studying and pondering the significance of this man, and there he is, five steps away. If you think it's nerve racking to go over and talk to someone cute at a party, imagine trying to come up with an opening line for Jesus.

"Hey...So, what do you do?"

I huddle with my fellow hitchers for courage, and we all approach him together. He's warm and friendly and tells us that he has spare beds waiting for us in his basement.

(TEXT ON SCREEN "TWO WEEKS LATER.")

Life in the house of Jesus.

For the most part it's like any summer vacation. I hang out during the day playing hackey sack while Jesus takes care of his official business. At night we have a big family-style meal. But not the family style I grew up with, with stress and tension and silence - real family style, with jokes and laughter and interesting conversation. After dinner Jesus teaches us about the prophecies, further explaining the task at hand and the role we play. Remember, Baha'i is the latest message directly from God, and when the Baha'l covenant was broken this man was the only person who stayed true to God's plan. So we are known as The Bahai's Under The Provisions of the Covenant. The BUPC.

Our prophesied leader is Dr. Leland Jensen, a retired chiropractor who prefers to be called "Doc." So, his name was

Leland, but he called himself Doc, but everyone knew him as Jesus.

Wait a minute, I know what Jesus looks like. And this ain't it. This is Jesus.

I went to Sunday school. I've seen pictures. Jesus is young and hot and American with sandals and cool surfer hair. Not this guy.

This guy...

This guy is Jesus because he fulfils the prophecy. Period. Remember, it's your heart that trips you up. God wants us to use our intellect to find our way to his message, not our preconceived notions about what Jesus will look or act like when he returns. In fact, those things are there to test us - and tests are how God judges our loyalty.

All that matters, ALL that matters, is whether or not the prophetic criteria are met.

And as I learn one night, with Dr. Jensen, the biggest criterion also happens to be the biggest test.

[*LX - ADD RED] Remember I told you that Doc was in prison? Well, in the late 60's a 17-year-old girl comes to his office complaining of a bad back, so he prescribes, and performs, a vaginal probe. This procedure doesn't sit well with the parents. They call the police, there's an arrest and a trial and Doctor Jensen is found guilty of child molestation.

LX -
ADD
RED

[*AUDIO #6]

OK...the guy claiming to be Jesus - the guy I've been led to ... I find out is a pedophile. He claims he was set up, and that his treatment is a legitimate way to alleviate stress on the lumbar. But who hasn't used that line before?

But what about all these clues! What about the plastic bag and the church shoes and the Snickers? What, is it mentioned somewhere in the prophecies that Jesus will return as a child molester?

[*SNAP OUT AUDIO #6 - (quickly standby audio #7)]

Well, yes. Quite specifically, in fact.

It's while in prison that the angel visits and tells him he is the one who will bring about the true message of God.

[*AUDIO #7]

According to the prophecies in the book of Zechariah Joshua, a.k.a Jesus, will be standing before the angel clothed in a filthy garment. The prison slang for a child molestation rap is "Dirty jacket." And look - set before him at this time will be a single stone with seven facets - a stone with seven eyes. The prison Doc was in is made entirely of stone, and has seven of these watchtowers. A giant stone with 7 eyes set before him clothed in a filthy garment. So, anyone claiming to be the return of Jesus who didn't serve time in this seven-eyed prison for the dirty jacket crime of child molestation is, according to prophecy, full of shit!

[*FADE AUDIO #7]

Hey, Moses was a murderer. That didn't stop him from parting the Red Sea. [*LX - RED OUT]

Here's a question I can see asking at this point: "Were you just, like, totally high?"

Drugs and alcohol are forbidden, and I'm following this to the letter. It's one thing to be pumped full of drugs and locked in a closet without food until you admit that Jesus has returned. Eventually it's, yeah, OK, sure, you're Jesus. Can I please have a banana? But I'm beginning to believe this of my own sober free will.

I think my wretched sobriety is key to this story. Looking back I know why drugs weren't allowed. Had I actually gotten stoned while in Montana, it would have been like: "OK ... you're hanging out with an old man who's a convicted child molester and he's telling you he's Jesus, and you're totally starting to believe him. So, here's what we're gonna do. We're gonna wait 'til everyone's asleep, pack up the back pack, slip out quietly,

LX - RED OUT

run down the road and not look back until Wyoming ... right after a quick bowl of cereal.”

OK, here’s another question: “Why would anyone willingly join a cult?” See, none of the obvious red flags are there, so it never really occurs to me that this is a cult. I’m never asked for any money or to give up my possessions. In fact, Doc feeds us most nights, for free. There’s no sensory deprivation or brainwashing. I’m there studying in earnest with my friends, with my family - I’m finally doing what’s right, and am starting to think that we might really be the bearers of God’s truth. Somebody’s gotta be it, right?

Now, sure, other people call us a cult - because that’s what people who DON’T know the truth like to do.

[*LX - ADD RED] Doc teaches furiously each night until the wee hours - amazing stamina for an octogenarian. For 3 weeks he explains not only the intricacies of why he’s Jesus, but also what the entire book of Revelation means. Revelation is where God reveals his plan for the future, with the 7-headed monsters rising from the sea, the Horsemen of the Apocalypse, the Whore of Babylon, nuclear war, mass destruction, blood as high as a horse’s bridle, gnashing of teeth, moon as dark as sackcloth - good time to be on God’s side. It’s all starting to make sense. These prophecies are amazing. But as always I’m continually guided by own personal cosmic experiences.

LX - ADD RED

Check it out - **(COMPUTER AUDIO)**” Old Leland road. Old Leland Road.” While in Missoula, in the basement, I remember that the year I lived with my aunt - the year God spoke to me about my shoes - we lived on Old Leland Road. Old Leland. This new Jesus is named Leland, and is clearly old. Our address was 2643 Old Leland Road. So I do some basic numerology

[*AUDIO #8]

2+6+4+3 = 15. 1+5 = 6. Now of all the important numbers in the BUPC, 6 is one of the very, very few that has no significance whatsoever.

True, if you turn it upside down it is a 9, the most important number of all, what with Bahau'llah being the 9th manifestation of God, but that's a stretch even for me, and I don't need to stretch this one, because my very next thought, there in the basement of Jesus, is: what if I get a bible, turn to the 26th book and read the 43rd chapter? 2643. I run upstairs and grab one of the many bibles from the shelf. I open to the index and count, up to 26 - Ezekiel. I flip to Ezekiel, chapter 43. It opens very easily to the page, and I see that the 43rd chapter is marked with a highlighter. Oh my God! Of course! Ezekiel 43! Glory of God! This is the very chapter, the very verse you open the bible to and start thumping in order to prove the validity of Bahau'llah and the bedrock of God's entire plan. Holy shit! Paul IS dead!

[*SNAP OUT AUDIO #8]

[*LX - RED OUT]

(TEXT ON SCREEN "Later That Night")

The Buddhists have chanting, the Jews have that cool klezmer music, the Christians have gospel, so certainly the BUPC, the newest, freshest religion, should have a hip, now sound to call it's own. Right?

It comes to me that night in the basement. All those facts and figures that have filled my head for the past year suddenly gush out. I even have the tune in my head.

My hitchhiking friends Mark and Peter and I borrow some crude equipment and record the first ever, to my knowledge ... BUPC rap. This isn't Bigfoot on a ski vacation, this is me really trying to do my part.

A week later there's a BUPC picnic. Everyone is sitting in a large circle in the park and there's a boom box right next to Doc. I pass out photocopies of the lyrics so everyone can

LX - RED OUT

follow along. Doc is 80 and has never heard a rap song in his life.

So he's in for a real treat.

But first, a few quick and basic Bahai facts:

[*AUDIO #9]

* In Persia in 1844, many were anxiously awaiting the arrival of a prophet.

*A man known as “The Bab” - Persian for “The Door,” proclaimed himself the awaited prophet, the predecessor of Baha’u’llah.

* A fast is observed during the Baha’i month of Ala - during daylight NOTHING is to pass one’s lips but the praises of God.

* Baha’u’llah, who denounced the clergy of the day, claimed to be the return of Christ.

KICK IT!!

(COMPUTER AUDIO)

[*FADE OUT AUDIO #9 AFTER COMPUTER AUDIO STARTS]

(TEXT ON SCREEN - Gotta check what happened in '44, A Brother in Persia grabbed a mic and said "YO", Said "I'm the homeboy that you've been hangin' for, My name is Báb, but you know Me as "The Door." Now, He laid down the groove, didn't cut no slack, In the daytime of 'Alá, can't even have a snack, God is one and the clergy ain't jack He said, "I'm Christ and now I'm back")

This is what happens when people try to make music without the aid of drugs.

I watch Doc’s face closely throughout my 3-and-a-half minute song, because I want to know if there’s a special place in heaven for me, somewhere in the Jimi Hendrix wing.

Back in Mississippi, the preacher always gave us one last chance: “You know you want to accept Jesus. And this is the

time. Come down this aisle right now, right now, and we will get on our knees and pray go Jesus together.”

I never made that trip down the aisle. And I’m glad I waited, because about a month into my stay with Doc, I find myself sitting alone with him at his kitchen table. While I ponder my destiny, Doc gnaws on a mango pit.

All that I know about making my way through life, all the desire for a world that works, all the breadcrumbs from God, it’s led me here to the edge of the board again. And now it’s time to dive.

“I believe you. I accept you.”

I’m in, head first. I’m focused, and alive, and dizzy with significance, and as Doc explains that he wants me to go out and tell others about him I can barely hear him, because the blood is pounding in my ears from the realization that I am sitting across from the most important and prophesied man in all of history. It’s Jesus! For real! It’s really HIM! And it’s really me, and now I’m part of the prophecy, too.

I go off that night to sleep in the basement, where I dream wistful dreams of the Apocalypse, and I wake up the next morning refreshed, ready to set the world on fire.

(TEXT ON SCREEN “ONE MONTH LATER...ASPEN”)

The four of us leave Montana, thoroughly converted, and head back home to Colorado as part of the convert-and-release program. Jesus tells us that hitchhiking around is frivolous and that we need a home base. I get a job at a radio station, and Mark, Peter and I rent a house together - it becomes the BUPC center. We have a teaching room, teaching materials, posters, handouts, flip charts, props. Yes, Jesus has returned! Why else would there be a pyramid on this dollar bill?

So I teach some classes. Get some family and friends to listen to my 36-hour spiel. Actually make a few converts. And am always, always, ALWAYS looking for that opening - any way

to turn any conversation with anyone about anything to the topic of the return of Jesus.

“And how would you like that burger cooked, sir?”

“Hmmm...medium. No, actually, well done - well done, not unlike the flesh of all nonbelievers come judgment day.”

OK. So now I'm that guy. I'm that guy who finds religion and is a total drag to be around. I hate that guy. Everybody hates that guy. And now I am that guy. And it's OK, because it's different on the other side. Because I know I'm doing God's work.

The only thing is, there's this constant stream of epistles coming from Montana that are filled with incoherent ramblings and apocalyptic language that would make the Unabomber proud.

And predictions. About every six weeks a new earthquake is predicted, and when it doesn't happen there's a follow-up letter saying something like, “What we meant was a SPIRITUAL earthquake, a shaking of the foundation of your beliefs, just to see how strong they really are.”

These doomsday dates come and go. And come and go. And I keep telling myself - this is just a test. God is testing you.

I gave up the Sasquatch movies, I'm walking a righteous path. I'm finally doing God's work. So what if the people from headquarters are kinda nutcases. Isn't that what they said about the original Apostles at the time? Of course they did! This is only a test! Remember the prophecies! Old Leland Road. Paul is dead. Turn me on, dead man. Turn me on, dead man. Turn me on, dead man...

Monday morning, January, 1994, during a nasty snow storm, I'm waiting at a stop sign on my way to work when a truck skids on the icy road and hits the side of my car. We exchange information and I drive on to work. An hour later my

neck is stiff. Two hours later I have a headache. By lunchtime I'm on my way back home, in pain.

(TEXT ON SCREEN "ONE WEEK LATER")

The car wreck tweaked my hip, so I'm stuck in bed taking loads of pain killers and learning to play the blues. After a week of blues and reds I'm up and hobbling about again, and that's when strange things start to happen. I can't quite figure out which buttons to push at the radio station. I'm forgetting appointments and meetings. The only thing is, I don't realize any of this - I have to be told. My roommates start asking things like - Barry, why did you leave the stove on - and my answer is, "Was I cooking?" I tell my doctor this and he sends me for a full day of tests with a neurophysiologist, after which I'm diagnosed with a closed head injury. Brain damage.

Brain damage? But this was a fender bender. Look at the pictures I took for the insurance company. Hardly a brain damaging twisted heap of metal. Here's a close up. You could take a hit like this without even spilling your beer. This is what my memory of the accident is - like a hearty slap on the shoulder. Like a jostle. But, as I soon learn, the brain is a terrible thing to jostle, and if jostled in just the right way you can tear some brain tissue. And if you tear just the right bits of tissue ... was I cooking?

For the next 10 months I flail along - my memory problems grow worse and I have to quit my job and hang around the BUPC center all day, where I'm banned from using the stove. I spend my mornings wondering if I'll ever be able to think straight again, then spend my afternoons forgetting what I've just spent the morning wondering about. The effects of my injury are a lot like being stoned; I'm slow and unfocused and have no short term memory. The only thing is - it lasts for about a year. I'm not saying this was my first experience with being high for an entire year, **(PIC OF STONER BARRY)** but this particular case of brain damage doesn't include any of the

good effects; things aren't any funnier or more profound, food doesn't taste any better. So the novelty wears off real quick.

One morning while convalescing there's an enthusiastic knock on the door. This can only mean one thing: Jehovah's Witnesses. They've honed in on our little center and stop by pretty often to try to set us straight, and whoever's home at the time gets the pleasure of trying to do the same to them.

But I'm in no condition to argue, so I just listen. But not for my opening, I just listen. The Jehovah's Witness woman tells me that they're trying to gather their own 144,000, and that fossils are a test from God to see if we fall for the blasphemous theory of evolution, and that when their Jesus returns, the dead will rise from their graves, literally.

And as I listen to this I think: Fairy Tale. It's like she's telling me a bedtime story - "And the dead shall rise and the princess will kiss the frog and God's son will float down from the clouds while the dwarves sing 'Hi ho' and all the sins will be washed away. Sweet dreams."

That's when it hit me: She's just making this shit up! Sure, she's basing it on some older, more established shit, but somebody just made that up, too!

And isn't that what I've been doing? Just making a bunch of shit up and then pretending that it's real, in some cases even that God almighty has handed it down to me? Money makes you happy. College means success. Jesus died for my sins. It's all shit that I've made up and decided to live by.

And as the Jehovah Witness lady spins her tales, I can feel these torn neural fibers fusing together and this cloud lifting. It's like waking up after a bad night of drinking and slowly piecing together the horrible events: "Oh, man...did I really hitchhike up to Montana and accept an 80-year-old pedophile as my personal savior? Have I really spent the last year trying to convince people of the exciting benefits of the apocalypse? I've totally got some phone calls to make." I've got a massive

spiritual hangover. I rub my eyes, look around at my situation and say: “What the fuck?”

Yes, the very same words that started my journey also ended it. I had traded the George Bush apocalypse for the Jesus in Montana apocalypse, Baptist for Baha’i. But there I was in the same place, just polishing off these deep beliefs of unworthiness and calling them something else. And it took another headlong dive to make me realize that doing such a thing is a good way to get brain damage, and that brain damage is a pretty good alternative to making up the same lame shit over and over again.

And, as long as we’re making it up anyway, why not just make up some really cool shit? Like ... God is a universal energy stream whose only commandment to me is that I make Sasquatch movies and write bad rap songs. Thank you, brain damage!

I have no regrets about this pious meander. Here’s why - because I took those three years of my life, the searching, the questioning, the struggle to make the figures come out correctly, the quashing of my intuition, the desire to be good in someone else’s eyes - I took all of this...and I wrote a little poem: [*LX - SPOT]

LX -
SPOT
for poem

(Read poem - last line is “BUDDHA IS HAVING ME OVER FOR DINNER...THANK YOU.”)

[*LX - BLACKOUT]

[*AUDIO #10- LOUD] [LX - CURTAIN CALL]

[* LET REMAINING TRACKS ON CD PLAY WHILE AUDIENCE EXITS]

END

LX - SNAP
BLACKOUT
ON “THANK YOU”

MX - #10

LX-CURTAIN
CALL

JESUS IN MONTANA - AUDIO CUE SHEET

CUE NUMBERS CORRESPOND TO CD TRACK NUMBERS.

All audio cues start at full volume. No fade-ins.

(NOTE - SOME AUDIO CUES ARE TRIGGERED FROM THE COMPUTER - THESE ARE CONTROLLED BY PERFORMER AND ARE NOTED IN THE SCRIPT ONLY FOR REFERENCE)

AUDIO CUE/track #	PAGE #	
1	1	
2	3	
3	6	
4	9	
5	12	
6	18	
7	19	
8	20	
9	22	
10-13	27	

JESUS IN MONTANA - LIGHTING CUE SHEET

LIGHT CUES ARE NOT NUMBERED. ALL CUES ARE 3-SECOND FADES, EXCEPT WHERE INDICATED. SHOW CONSISTS OF 6 LOOKS:

- “**FULL**” - THIS IS A GENERAL STAGE WASH, WITH SLIGHT SPOTS ON STANDING MIC, ALL FOCUSED OFF THE PROJECTION SCREEN
- “**VIDEO**” THIS IS THE “FULL” LOOK AT APPROX 50% - USED WHILE VIDEO IS PLAYING
- “**ADD RED**” - THIS IS “FULL” WITH THE ADDITION OF SOME REDS
- “**BLACKOUT**” - THIS IS A “SNAP” TO BLACK, NOT A FADE.
- “**SPOT**” - CROSSING SPOTS ONLY, FOCUSED ON PERFORMER BEHIND MIC.
- “**CURTAIN CALL**” - THIS IS “FULL” PLUS ADDITIONAL STAGE WASH, STILL FOCUSED MOSTLY OFF SCREEN

Lighting Cue	PAGE #	
PRESHOW	1	VIDEO/BLACKOUT/FULL
VIDEO	1	
FULL	2	
VIDEO	10	
FULL	10	
BLACKOUT	16	
FULL	16	
ADD RED	18	
FULL	19	(RED OUT)
ADD RED	20	
FULL	21	(RED OUT)
SPOT	27	
BLACKOUT	27	
CURTAIN CALL	27	