

CHAPTER SIX JULIAN UNITED STATES



There was to be a trial. Julian would defend the human race.

When asked by his friends about his time in Europe, Julian answered “I got to know people who were very different from me, and discovered they’re weren’t different at all.”

When all together in Prague, Marcus the Labrador had overheard Julian and Wayne talking about hidden in plain sight. He suggested they’d be surprised if they researched the concept for animals. It was the first thing Wayne did when he got home to Arizona, passing on the information to Julian. Animals have a place where they feel completely safe, cats hide under a bed, dogs in a closet, but animals also have a place in plain sight where they feel equally safe. They do this by assuming the same attitude they had while hiding.

When he was seven, Julian had been given a unique leather bound book. . . but it wasn’t a real book. When you opened the front cover, the inside pages had been glued together, a section had been cut out, leaving a empty space. When the book was on the shelf, no one could tell it was any different from the other books. He loved to hide candy there. His first experience hiding something in plain sight.

Wayne came to visit for the Easter holiday. One evening, not feeling well, he asked to stay home while everyone went to a concert. Julian phoned to check on how he was feeling. “I left something for you in the antique chest in the living room.” The next morning at breakfast, Wayne asked “I looked in all the drawers and didn’t find anything.” “I’m so sorry, forgot the most important thing. There’s a secret drawer. When you open the two top drawers, you’ll find a smaller drawer in the middle. You can’t open it unless the other two drawers are open. Wayne laughed - “A precursor to the safe deposit box?” Hidden in plain sight.

As their parents talked after dinner in the living room, Julian and Wayne played backgammon, both were expert players. Julian made a move he knew Wayne would instantly see as foolish. An experiment in sending a silent message.

Easter Sunday. Julian and Wayne were in charge of hiding the eggs for the young children's hunt. The challenge was where to hide the golden egg, the only one with a prize. Julian's dog, Marco, walked up to him, sat down and began his eye to eye stare. Julian - "Let's hide the golden egg in Marco's collar."

After all the other eggs had been collected, the golden egg was yet to be found. Since the yard was large, both a vegetable garden and orchard, it was time for some clues. Depending on where Marco the dog was standing at the time, the answers changed. "Is it in the orchard?" "Yes." Another few minutes of searching, another question. "Is it in the vegetable garden?" "Yes." Gino, the boy who lived across the street, started laughing. The golden egg was moving! Marco walked over to Gino, nudging him, lifting his head to show his collar. Julian and Wayne smiled. "Here's to HIPS." Not believing in coincidences, the concept of hidden in plain sight now a definite pattern in his life, Julian knew there was a reason. His instinct was that it might have something to do with the upcoming trial.

Before leaving Prague, everyone had promised to keep in close touch. Messages back and forth with all his new friends were constant. It was decided it was important to figure out a way to communicate with one another that no one else could decipher. Asha - "Could we use colors, each with a different meaning?" Shilli - "Neil and I learned morse code. We used it all the time, tapping on a table, even blinking. No one had any idea we were communicating." Julian - "We also need some way to let each other know if one of us is in trouble."

In school, the more Julian learned about game theory, the more confused he became. What he read seemed to prove unsettling things. Adding to this, his friends constantly made fun of his possibly being a witness in a trial. Every day at school he heard "Permission to approach?" If Julian asked a question, the response was "Do we have verifiable proof?" When he had a different opinion than a friend - "I've been unjustly accused." "Hey, Julian, a question for you. We know where the Statue of Liberty is. Where, exactly, is the *Statue* of Limitations?" Next week, school would be out for the summer.

Julian and Wayne were excited about the upcoming Outward Bound Program. It would be far from easy, a rugged expedition with lots of challenges, new skills, confidence to build.

July 4th. Independence Day in the United States. The high school bleachers were filled as people waited for the darkness and the fireworks to begin. Several children from the local hospital, all in wheel chairs, had the place of honor on the athletic field. Minutes after the first rocket shot into the sky, someone from the bleachers threw tear gas bombs onto the field. The kids were trapped, their wheel chairs locked. Everyone in the stadium started coughing, rubbing their eyes, Those closest to the field ran to grab the children, carrying them to safety. Who would cause harm to innocent children? The cruelty of the human race was sometimes impossible to understand.

Julian and Wayne both wore unusual T shirts, a word on the back, its definition on the front. After weeks of people asking “Where can I get one?” they decided to start a small business. Remembering how people in Prague had successfully replaced money with the barter system, they approached several silk screening companies. “Would you be willing to print the shirts for a trade?” With Julian a computer whiz, and Wayne an artist, they offered many talents for the exchange. They decided to use not just words, but also quotations. “A lie unchallenged becomes the truth.” “Trust me!...” “No, you’re the enemy...” “No, I’m not, I just have the enemy’s clothes on.” A Hopi saying - “Lose your temper, lose a friend. Lie and lose yourself.” “There’s no use running in a train.” “ASLTW. Actions speak louder than words.” They made a special limited edition of two shirts for their mothers. “Whatever brings you happiness, may it be yours.”

Deciding which words to use for their first printing was the most fun. Obfuscate. Attrition. Entropy. Occlude. Ubiquitous. Inexorable. Eldritch. Conundrum. Ineffable. Eponymous. Inchoate. Their favorite word was Contronym - a word with two opposite meanings.

One afternoon, while Julian was picking vegetables from the garden, a bee flew toward him, stinging him on his right arm. Knowing bees pollinated a third of the world's crops, he did some research and was shocked to find that bees were disappearing, not just in the United States, but all over the world. Colony Collapse Disorder. If pesticides were affecting the bees' nervous system, what were they doing to humans? His bee sting was not a coincidence.

Julian was still no closer to knowing what issue he would bring to the court. Asking one of the attorneys if he could choose more than one subject, they said "Best to stick with one." He was very interested in creative technology.

One night his dog, Marco, jumped on his bed, asking "What do you like to do most. What do you love to do?" Julian - "I like to think. I like to read. I like to learn."

Changes needed in literacy and education would be what Julian would champion. Once he began his preliminary research, he would send petitions to students around the world. The longer it took for the trial to begin, the more signatures he'd have. Marco curled up next to him as they both went to sleep.