

The Mind of the Apathetic Clarkie Wanders...

by Zack Ordyman

I once heard someone say that, "if you start nowhere, you can only go somewhere," and that's kind of the way I'm looking at this article. I once began an attempt at a long letter (sure, it was over email, but I think it still qualifies as a letter) in an aimless manner, not unlike the caffeine-fed nonsense you are currently reading. I wrote something like, "Well, where to start? I guess my life story will do." And I wrote it all down.

I was about eight screens and several hours into it when I finished and realized how boring my life looks on paper. It's all been just so ordinary so far, it wouldn't make a good movie script. And it didn't really make for a very interesting letter either, but at least it did help me to fill some space. I'm hoping it will do the same here.

I'm from various suburbs of New York City in New York's Rockland County. Some people think that the name of the county that I lived in is a weird answer to the question of where I'm from, but that's just how it's done. It's not like you've really heard of West Nyack anyway, unless you drove through it on the way upstate, so my answer is usually "Rockland County."

My parents were both children of the city. My mother, from Brooklyn, and my father The Bronx. I could go back further and tell you about their parents, but I'll just say that I'm half Polish and leave it at that.

I have one sister. Her name is Dana and she's seventeen. We don't get along all that well. Don't tell anyone, but occasionally I think she's kind of cool. Like when she's not doing her long-running Satan impersonation.

I lived in a house until I was 9, when I moved to another house. In my lifetime, my family has had three dogs. The second of the three was hit by a car and killed shortly after we moved. The third dog is still alive.* The first one, Prudence, is best left unmentioned.

I sleep-walked my way through high school and ended up at Clark.

Parts of my life have been a lot of fun, others I would rather skip past in my mental photo album.

...And there you have the basic rundown of the story of my life. You could consider that to be the Cliff's Notes version of the letter I mentioned. Now when I tell you that I have had a dull, average life, you won't just be taking my word for it. Well, I guess you still will be taking my word for it, it's just that I used a lot more words this way.

Did you ever notice that the more words that are written or spoken about something, the more inclined you are to believe them? Just a thought.

But anyway, none of this is hiding the fact that I still haven't really written about anything. Or at least anything worth reading. No one is going to argue that there are marks on this paper as a result of what is now being written, but the collective worth of these marks... is another question. Luckily, Randy has low standards.

OK, I tried to write about my life, until I got bored with the idea. What else, then? Maybe I should just end this here. Who knows how long this collection of bullshit would be already if it were double spaced? Who knows how much longer I'll spend writing this, while I could be sound asleep? Who knows how much longer it

will be before the Yankees win the World Series again?

Here's a topic my mind discovers occasionally when it wanders: the question of the meaning of life. G-d knows [brief aside: I don't know if I mentioned it before, but I'm Jewish, and for some reason Jews are supposed to abbreviate the word God into G-d. I'm not very religious anymore, but this idea still stuck with me] why I tackle such an unanswerable question with my free thoughts, but I do.

I don't often think about death, but I do think about life. I might be laying down on my bed, playing a guitar that has never been in tune, listening to a CD, and reading details or entertainment weekly or something, and I'll just think, "Why? Is this all there is?" Now it would make sense if I were to be reading an article about Joan Osborne or Courtney Love or Hootie and start thinking about a greater purpose, but I could just be reading something as average and boring as my roommate's diary that he still thinks I don't know about, and grand questions will dance into my head.

Another quote I once heard, and I wish I remembered who said this one because it's a great quote, goes, "the meaning of life is entertainment."

It sounds depressing, but there is a lot of truth

to that. People regularly pass up opportunities to partake in activities that could justifiably be seen as The Meaning of Life-spending time with your loved ones, working on a project that you have devoted your life to- in order to do something as unfulfilling and average as watching TV. Why? Because it's entertainment, and no other reason is necessary.

Entertainment is the most universally recognized activity. Nearly any other activity is open to questioning, but if you're reading a magazine or watching TV, hey, you're doing some-

thing. It's something that you want to be doing. Kind of like procrastination... actually, it's like what I'm doing right now.

Putting off writing a paper that's due tomorrow (as if there are any other kind worth writing), to write this stupid thing. What is this? It's nothing. I've admitted it before, I'll admit it again: there is nothing here. But still, I sit here in Johnson 142, at my computer, while there are probably ten other things that I could or should be doing. And why am I writing this, instead of my paper? Because I want to. Because I have to write that government paper, and I shouldn't be doing this, so naturally, I'm writing this.

And that's really it, isn't it? Entertainment is the meaning of life, because it is a "waste of time;" and so entertainment could be viewed as some form of procrastinating life. Therefore, you could argue that procrastination is the meaning of life. All of which means that I must be living life to it's fullest right now, as I sit here, typing at my keyboard, and not finishing my government paper.

* Since the initial draft of this article, dog #3 has passed on and dog #4, a golden retriever loosely referred to as "Cosmo" has entered the family. Pity this dog.

