

For the book *If I Were King (Advice for Donald Trump)*, Harry Blazer, Editor

*The premise - You have been elected king of USA by a super majority popular vote and have the support of the masses and a mandate for change. You have full authority to do whatever you want. There is no Congress, There is no Supreme Court. Whatever you declare becomes “the way”. You cannot be assassinated. You have as much time as you want to take. And when you are ready to stop, you can decide on which form of government that will be put in place after you leave. What would you do?*

## What Would Solon Have Done?

By Elana Freeland

*Journal of first governor of Cascadia, August 16, 2020*

For weeks now since the broad infrastructure collapse, I’ve been busy night and day helping my community resuscitate basic human needs like utilities, housing, food, water, etc. People have finally given up arguing over the CIA’s role in dragging down the latest President-elect but are still arguing over whether subsequent “acts of God” were intentional or natural, though I suspect that we no longer know what “natural” means anymore, given the geoengineering and GMO technologies to which we’ve been subjected for decades.

This afternoon, a Selection Committee paid me a visit, two each from Idaho, Washington, Oregon, and Alaska. Before that visit, I’d become accustomed to the label of “maverick” for my “radical ideology” of democracy as I understand it, especially my idea of structuring political leadership along the lines of maintaining order on the one hand while leaving citizens free to explore what

best encourages individuality and initiative on the other. Not in my wildest dreams would I have guessed that my ideas would at last be valued.

But then, desperation has its own needs.

I invited the eight visitors in. Once they were settled, the co-chairs began by stating that probably like me, they were glad to see a criminal era of power come to an end, however its end arrived, and that we now had an opportunity not just to start over again but to begin something entirely new.

Silently, I pondered the words “entirely new,” hoping they didn’t mean the bogus justifications for “progress” that I’d heard for years. Surely their interest in me wasn’t that my ideas were “new.”

Briefly, we shared what we knew about the nation’s collapse, from what we’d seen before communications had shut down (or been shut down) to the rumors we had to go on. No one was sure what coastal cities had been swept out to sea, other than Washington, D.C. Military headquarters were now underground in granite-based Colorado, along with U.S. Space Command and the Intelligence Community, and the nation (such as it was) was under military law and FEMA’s ten regions activated. For now, each region was basically on its own to repair infrastructure and maintain the order of the day until no one knew how far into the future. Governors were being appointed until popular elections could be reinstated.

The Selection Committee had come to ask me if I would be willing to serve as governor of Region 10.

I was thunderstruck. While the criminal system had been running business as usual, trustworthy leaders with initiative had been consistently passed over, if not marginalized and discredited. Now that the nation lay in shambles, we were needed.

I was then handed a draft of responsibilities expected of a regional governor. I took my time reading through the broad powers one might expect of a sovereign or king, with minor checks and balances coming from citizen review committees and advisers. For the first time since the founding of the nation 250 years ago, ten sovereigns would replace a centralized government. If I accept, what I say will be the order of the day. I cleared my throat for two immediate questions.

“Any idea how long it will be before the popular vote is reinstated in each region?”

One of the co-chairs responded. “As long as it takes for the regions to stabilize one by one. As we all know too well, we lost our constitutional way decades ago and have a long way back—or forward, if you look at it that way. If the governor’s powers seem virtually unlimited, it’s because we need to move quickly and surely. We can’t afford the time for endless negotiations and meetings. We must counter chaos with order as soon as possible.”

There was something about how the co-chair phrased that last sentence that made me wonder about his affiliations.

I asked my second question. “How does the national standing army—our military—view its role in the FEMA regions?”

An uncomfortable silence followed. Finally, one of the Alaskans shrugged. “We don’t really know. Where does civilian law end and military law begin? We assume that if the region is stable, it will have no need for military presence.”

“But we’re not sure,” the Indian woman from Idaho added. “We’re assuming that the military is busy dealing with the possibility of foreign threats now that we’re so vulnerable.”

“Which was its original mandate,” I said thoughtfully. “So it’s the Wild West one more time and a reinstatement of the Posse Comitatus Act?”

She shrugged. “Hopefully not the Wild West my people remember.”

I nodded, meeting her eyes. It seemed to me that her meaningful look was saying that I would do well to take the military and its ground- and space-based technology into consideration if and when the regions were at last fully operational and independent . . .

The co-chair I had wondered about pulled us back on track. “We’ve come to you first because your reputation is that of a leader people trust, one who knows how to yoke his leadership to real service and not self-interest. But keep in mind that we do not know how long you will be required to serve as a governor with broad powers, so please remain flexible.”

Interesting wording again.

The other co-chair removed a sheaf of papers from a folder. “If you need to review our bylaws and affiliations before making a decision, here they are. It is our assumption that none of us are in this for personal gain. Our only desire is for a peaceful transition back to a functional, law-abiding society.”

His words didn't relieve my overwhelm. I glanced at the mass of paper now in my hands and said I needed time to think. As the committee departed, I was reminded of the rumors of lawless bands roaming Region 10 and the guns loaded and ready by people's doors. I understood: time and lawlessness wait for no man; I promised to have an answer by morning. With communications still down, we agreed to meet again at my home the following morning. They would bring as much information as possible about the state of the nation and the world.

Once they were gone, I whooped and hollered around the living room. An opportunity to implement what I'd studied and thought about for decades! Like Solon in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE, I had been chosen as archon.

I glanced at the clock we now had to keep wound. Where was Kate, my trusty sidekick? She'd gone to check on older neighbors and should be home soon. I cleared the dining room table and laid out pads of paper and sharp pencils, wondering if she would say nay or yea to the governorship.

Solon's first act had been to cancel all debts. I decided to do the same. I sat down, picked up a sharp pencil, and began to write:

**Decree: All personal debts and those of small locally owned corporations—not transnational corporations—are hereby cancelled. We are making a fresh start.**

Big transnational corporations like Microsoft and Boeing had mooched more than enough corporate welfare from taxpayers; they would henceforth be

taxed and held responsible for whatever they owed communities. And if the Bill of Rights was reinstated after decades of abuse,

**Decree: Protection to corporations as artificial persons under the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment<sup>1</sup> is hereby revoked.**

Whatever debts the four states of Region 10 owed the now-collapsed federal government would be cancelled, with such monies going toward rebuilding our infrastructure.

**Decree: Annual federal income tax is hereby discontinued.**  
Goodbye and good riddance, Internal Revenue Service.

**Decree: Home foreclosures that banks and mortgage companies have been unable to sell for six months or more are hereby donated as tax write-offs to shelter families now homeless.**

Now that we would be operating as a region,

**Decree: The four states of Region 10 (Alaska, Washington, Idaho, and Oregon) are hereby known as Cascadia.**

By the time Kate came in the front door, I was in full stride. Happily, she was ecstatic that I'd been chosen for the governorship and hurriedly made tea while I read off my first five edicts, each of which she wholeheartedly approved.

"I like the name Cascadia. God knows we need all the unity we can get at this point." She brought the teapot and cups to the table.

Recalling what the Indian woman from Idaho had alluded, I began to write, reading aloud:

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<sup>1</sup> Josh Clark, "Why do corporations have the same rights as you?" *How Stuff Works*, April 1, 2008.

**Decree: The Posse Comitatus Act is hereby reinstated and the National Guard retained as Cascadia's standing army.**

“Posse Comitatus?” Kate sat down and poured tea. “Most Americans have either forgotten or never heard of that old law. Are you sure you’re not just waving your red cape in front of the military?”

I felt strongly about this one. “No, that’s not my intention. Federal troops have been descending upon states for decades, with or without a governor invitation, and they may continue to enter FEMA regions. But I want it on the books that ‘invitation only’ visits are expected.” I winked at her. “After all, it’s the Wild West again, right? We have to try to rope in the old guard and hold them to the law, however dangerous it might be.”

Kate’s brow furrowed. She may have liked the idea of my governorship, but not the possibility that it might be dangerous. Still, she had to know there might be risk.

She sighed. “All right, I hear you, but now let’s talk about communities. Decrees can provide the framework for communities and then they can do their own individual tweaking and we’ll learn from each other. First is community health, *real* health—not overpaid doctors and Big Pharma drugs. Instead of shoving health to the backburner and calling it a ‘personal choice,’ let’s put it front and center.” She glanced out the window. “Have you noticed how clear the skies are now? No chemical cloud cover . . .”

She was right. American health had sunk steadily since the chemical jet trails and agribusiness talking Americans into eating processed and GMO foods.

**Decree: Each household will join with other households to form a community garden free of chemical pesticides, fertilizers, and GM seed. Public funding will match household outlays.**

**Decree: All adults will be required to attend seminars on basic human health from various viewpoints—Chinese medicine, Ayurveda, Western allopathic, vegan, raw foods, exercise, etc.—for a minimum of 12 hours. The effects of ionized and non-ionized radiation and vaccinations will be included.**

**Decree: All GMOs (“terminator” seed and foods) are hereby banned from Cascadia. Devices that test for GMOs will be made available at each food distribution center.** Local supermarket management will be required to research genetically modified foods to discover why so many nations have banned them. Supermarkets are to be reorganized as *mercados* to accommodate local produce kiosks as well as products trucked in for sale and profit.

“We’ll need to handpick oversight committees to make sure these decrees have teeth, and those GMO testing devices are going to be expensive,” Kate sighed, making a note.

“And Kate, make a note that we’ll need an anonymous suggestion and complaints box with easy access somewhere downtown, maybe in the park.”

“Hopefully, there’ll be a few compliments now and then, too,” Kate said, smiling up at me as she wrote.

For decades, Americans have had few opportunities to impact how their communities are run. They've lost not just confidence in coming up with solutions but the ability to think critically and impartially. Thanks to isolating factors like television, the entertainment industry, Internet, and iPhone, they're no longer able to tell the difference between a difference of opinion and an attack. It will take time to prepare them to self-govern and work out differences without resorting to name-calling and backbiting.

Kate was reading my mind. "I hope they don't fix the cell towers too soon. People are starting to learn to really talk to each other again."

*Cell towers.* "Kate, we've got to connect the cell towers to health."

I rummaged around on the science bookshelf and found the figure I was looking for.

**Decree: Cell towers will not be closer than 400 meters (1,300 feet) from the nearest home or public building.**

Kate grabbed Neil Postman's *Amusing Ourselves To Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business* (2005) from the bookshelf and turned to his description of the Abraham Lincoln–Stephen A. Douglas debates in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. She read aloud:

The first of seven famous debates between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas took place on August 21, 1858, in Ottawa, Illinois. Their arrangement provided that Douglas would speak first, for one hour; Lincoln would take an hour and a half to reply; Douglas, a half hour to rebut Lincoln's reply. This debate was considerably shorter than those to which the two men were accustomed. In fact, they had tangled several times before, and all of their encounters had been much lengthier and more exhausting. For example, on October 16, 1854, in Peoria, Illinois, Douglas delivered a three-hour address to which Lincoln, by agreement, was to respond. When Lincoln's turn came, he reminded the audience that it was already 5 p.m., that he would probably

require as much time as Douglas and that Douglas was still scheduled for a rebuttal. He proposed, therefore, that the audience go home, have dinner, and return refreshed for four more hours of talk. The audience amiably agreed, and matters proceeded as Lincoln had outlined.

What kind of audience was this? Who were these people who could so cheerfully accommodate themselves to seven hours of oratory?

Neither of us expected Cascadia to try to go back in time, but with the proper limitations on electronics, Cascadians might actually begin to read and think again, entertain each other more, turn to each other, share rides, barter.

“Speaking of getting rides,” I ventured, “until we know the disposition of the Seven Sisters oil supply, I think we should issue gasoline stipends to each household, depending upon need and numbers.”

“As long as buses and trains and shared rides come first,” Kate stressed.

“Good point,” I said, writing it down.

**Decree: Public transportation will be given priority over private gas and oil consumption. Gasoline stipends per household will be available, depending upon need and numbers.**

“Another oversight committee,” Kate grouched, jotting it down.

“Not to mention all the people we need to talk to who specialize in all these areas and will have their own advice on how to proceed,” I grouched in return. At least we had past successes and errors to study. We weren’t entirely starting over, but it certainly felt like it.

I tilted my chair back and ran my hands through the little hair I had left.

“Oh, brother!”

Kate looked up from her notes and smiled. “Feeling a little overwhelm?”

I leaped up to flip through the DVDs I'd downloaded over the years. "Yes, but that's not what I'm agonizing over. I'm really going to need your help on this one. It's another bedrock edict, perhaps *the* bedrock edict, but I don't know how to do it or even if I *can* do it, but I know it has to be done."

I found what I was looking for and popped it into the DVD player. It was President John F. Kennedy's secret societies speech. Secret men's groups had murdered him, and as far as I was concerned, secret men's groups had destroyed the nation, too. On the monitor, we watched the dead man from a bygone era tell it like it is:

The very word "secrecy" is repugnant in a free and open society; and we as a people are inherently and historically opposed to secret societies, to secret oaths and to secret proceedings . . . We are opposed around the world by a monolithic and ruthless conspiracy that relies primarily on covert means for expanding its sphere of influence — on infiltration instead of invasion, on subversion instead of elections, on intimidation instead of free choice, on guerrillas by night instead of armies by day. It is a system which has conscripted vast human and material resources into the building of a tightly knit, highly efficient machine that combines military, diplomatic, intelligence, economic, scientific and political operations . . .

When the clip ended, we sat in silence. Kate blew her nose and wiped her eyes; she had never gotten over Kennedy's assassination. "Let's do it," she said with resolve.

I looked at her, thinking how much I love this intrepid woman.

"Hitler banned the Freemasons," I said as we resumed our places at the table.

"For a while," Kate amended. "Russia banned them for a while, African nations are still struggling to ban them. It's not easy."

"I don't think I can ban them, given their First Amendment protections, but

I may be able to come up with a few ways to limit them so we can at least keep track of their political machinations.”

I knew several Freemasons and probably more who kept their membership a secret. A lot of men joined because of the male family tradition, and of course joining helped them get ahead in business and politics.

Kate tapped her pencil. “Most don’t necessarily join for the esoterics, do they? Only after they’re in do they fall into the various degree traps, and those who only go through the first three Blue Degrees have little idea of what their annual tithes are actually paying for.”

“But even the vows for the Blue Degrees are blood-curdling, Kate. Take the Entered Apprentice vow: ‘. . . *my throat cut across, my tongue torn out, and with my body buried in the sands of the sea at low-water mark, where the tide ebbs and flows twice in twenty-four hours, should I ever knowingly or willfully violate this, my solemn Obligation of an Entered Apprentice.*’ Do men actually think those ancient vows are just window dressing?”

Kate shivered. “The public needs to know.”

“Especially about the oaths that supersede public office oaths.” I was getting upset. “Those damn secret oaths have wrecked our legal system. What makes a Brotherhood “secret” is its *practices*—membership lists, initiation rites, degrees, oaths, etc.”

“So make it illegal for judges, lawyers, jurors, district attorneys, police and intelligence agents to join secret societies?”

“And if it is discovered that they are members of even *one* secret society,

whatever their degree, they will be guilty of a felony. No misdemeanor for this serious breach of trust. Exploiting the freedom of belief protected by the First Amendment while taking oaths of loyalty that bypass public office oaths is tantamount to treason.”

Kate murmured thoughtfully, “But how to enforce it?” Suddenly, her face brightened. “I know! Each Lodge has a Tyler, right? Well, each Lodge that chooses to continue under your new Hammurabi Code”—she smiled at me—“has to appoint a government liaison responsible for keeping updated lists of members’ names, degrees, and positions in society.”

“Excellent.” I wrote the next two decrees and read them aloud:

**Decree: The early American lyceum system is hereby reactivated to educate citizens as to the essential points of successful governance, including why secret societies, as with the division between church and state, must be disallowed from executive, legislative, judiciary, and intelligence if we are to have a reasonable expectation of honest representative governance.**

**Decree: Political servants, judges, district attorneys, lawyers, jurors, military officers, intelligence agents, and police at all levels are forbidden to join secret societies. Brotherhoods or secret societies include but are not limited to Freemason Lodges and their offspring (Elks, Moose, Eagles, Mormons, etc.), Knights of Malta, Jesuits, Opus Dei, Ordo Templi Orientis (OTO), etc. Citizens who are not public servants and choose to join secret societies are required to post their names, Lodge memberships, degrees,**

**and positions in society. Each Lodge will appoint a government liaison to provide updated lists upon request.**

Kate looked uneasy. “Will Brotherhoods contest the decree under the First Amendment?”

“I don’t think so,” I answered. “They’d have to submit to a public airing and I don’t think they’d want that. That’s why they conduct covert character assassinations and murders under the cloak of darkness.”

The truth was that I’d welcome the opportunity of secret societies crawling out from under rocks.

“All right,” Kate sighed, writing a few notes and trying to throw off a niggling anxiety about her family’s safety, now that her husband would be challenging powerful cabals. “I love the idea of reestablishing the lyceum, but what about the rest of education? This is an opportunity to fix what has been declining for decades under the feds—namely, a good, solid school system.”

“Time to re-read John Taylor Gatto!” I got up again and thumbed through a pile of xeroxed essays on the bookshelf. “I just happen to have the speech he gave when he accepted the New York City Teacher of the Year Award on January 31, 1990, ‘Why Schools Don’t Educate’.” I looked up at Kate. “Who better to guide us than a 30-year teacher?”

I held it aloft and turned to the last paragraph. “Our greatest problem in getting the kind of grass-roots thinking going that could reform schooling is that we have large vested interests pre-empting all the air time and profiting from schooling just exactly as it is despite rhetoric to the contrary.” Quietly, I added,

“You’re right, Kate. Our national collapse has presented us with a golden opportunity to make Gatto’s dream come true.”

Kate was writing. “So another task force, this time of adults and the youths who know only too well what is missing.”

I sat down and skimmed Gatto’s speech. “Independent study, community service, adventures in experience, large doses of privacy and solitude, a thousand different apprenticeships’—“

“Plenty of opportunities for adventures and apprenticeships while we’re getting communities going again, and they’ll feel needed because they *are* needed—“

“—and they’ll learn on the job,” I stressed. “I never realized how like the old America Gatto’s ‘guerrilla’ Lab School is. Think of how it will rebuild the latchkey-TV family, Kate, and the old American sense of community in which everyone is a teacher *and* a student, like in the lyceum days.”

Fire was coursing through me for the first time in years. “Without television and cell phones and iPads and social media, we’ll turn to each other. And without those deadening factories we call schools—but if there are still schools, *no* WiFi in them—knowledge will begin to live again and thrill us with its opportunities for understanding our human condition.”

Tears welled in Kate’s eyes as we stared at each other.

I wrote:

**Decree: A task force made up of teachers, parents, and students will evaluate the previous public education system and ideas of educators like**

**John Taylor Gatto to advise on a new education system to open in one year's time.**

All of a sudden, I grasped the obvious. “The *Pax Americana* empire-builders divided us into small states instead of larger regions to divide and conquer by furthering self-interest over regional-interest. They always wanted centralized power!”

“Now, they’re probably planning to run it from Colorado,” Kate added ominously.

I slapped my forehead as insights came hot and heavy. “Of course, they are! Just like they used the pioneers to conquer the Wild West, they’re planning to use us to rebuild. Size matters, doesn’t it, Kate? Ten regions might just work as a loose federation, maybe like the cantons of tiny Switzerland once worked. But if we return to depending on artificial intelligence technology, those who run the AI will run us again. If satellites are still up and running, we’ll have to make a decision in the not too distant future.”

“Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof,” Kate wisely advised as she saw the furrow between my eyebrows deepen. “You’ll need to talk with Canada about what they’re doing, since we share a border.” She made a note.

“Which reminds me: Alaska is part of Region 10, our Cascadia, but shouldn’t it have its own region, given how far away it is?”

“Discuss it with the two Alaskans on the Selection Committee, at least until telephone connections are reestablished.”

At exactly that moment, the phone rang for the first time in days. We

looked at each other and laughed.

“Synchronicity strikes,” Kate said as she always did when synchronicity struck.

Already, the landline had become a foreign, devilish technology. I answered tenuously, pushing the speaker button so Kate could hear.

“Hello?”

“Houston, we have contact.” It was Jeanette at the post office. “Just letting the two of you know that we have local service again.”

We laughed again. “In town, Jeanette, in our area, or . . .?”

“Good question. I haven’t tried to call out of town yet. Gotta go, though, lots of joy to spread.” She paused. “I *think* it’s joy I’m spreading, but a big part of me has enjoyed the silence.” She hung up.

Kate stood up. “I’m with Jeanette, though I’d like to check on people like our adult children.”

We knew they were inland but not much else. Now that I looked more carefully at Kate’s face, I saw the worry lines.

“You know how resourceful they are, Kate.”

She shrugged in a way that said she couldn’t help it, she’d been worried.

I stood up and hugged her. “I’m sorry. Here I am, caught up in getting the community back on its feet, and now this—“

She hugged me back. “I know. You’re a one-track kind of guy. I’m going to try to call them and pull together some leftovers for dinner. But I’m warning you: I’m going to bed at 10 p.m. No all-nighter for me.”

Out-of-town phone service was sporadic, but Kate managed a static-plagued call to our daughter in Denver, Region VIII. She vouched for her safety and that of her brother in Santa Fe, Region VI. They were in touch.

Relieved, Kate turned to the kitchen. While she heated up leftover pasta and I made a quick salad, I said, "Let's take a break and watch *My Dinner With Andre!* We haven't seen it in years, and given what we're doing . . ."

Her eyes sparkled. "Oh, yes! Let's set the decrees aside for a couple of hours."

So we popped *My Dinner With Andre* into the VCR and ate while reliving a conversation from the early 1980s, marveling how prophetic it had been.

*Andre:* Okay. Yes. We're bored. We're all bored now. But has it ever occurred to you, Wally, that the process that creates this boredom that we see in the world now may very well be a self-perpetuating, unconscious form of brainwashing created by a world totalitarian government based on money, and that all of this is much more dangerous than one thinks? And it's not just a question of individual survival, Wally, but that somebody who's bored is asleep? And somebody who's asleep will not say "no"?

. . . See, I think it's quite possible that the 1960s represented the last burst of the human being before he was extinguished and that this is the beginning of the rest of the future now, and that, from now on there'll simply be all these robots walking around, feeling nothing, thinking nothing. And there'll be nobody left almost to remind them that there once was a species called a human being, with feelings and thoughts, and that history and memory are right now being erased, and soon nobody will really remember that life existed on the planet.

"My God, Kate," I whispered.

"And no one heard the warning because it was entertainment," she whispered back.

We looked at each other, both stunned by her profound insight. Simultaneously, we uttered, "Lyceum." People must learn about the alpha

brainwave technology of television and movies.

After she went to bed, I plowed onward, writing decree after decree about ownership of property and goods, freeing marijuana felons from prison and erasing the felonies from their records, closing prisons-for-profit, , a task force to study how the criminality of our courts and police forces had worked (policing for profit, civil asset forfeiture, etc.), decentralizing Cascadia banks, encouraging a barter system alongside money and private non-interest loans, setting up a task force to study jobs and salary gaps for services rendered . . .

At last, I needed to sleep. The Selection Committee was due at 11 a.m. I'd have some time in the morning to do a quick review of the decrees I could share with them if they needed an idea of what I had in mind. While brushing my teeth and looking in the mirror, I went over my new catechism: *Build a transparent base. A smaller region should be easier than sea to shining sea. Expose the fact that secret societies founded the United States and formed secret alliances that eventually destroyed us. Be watchful . . .*

Good night.

While the future governor of Cascadia slept through the wee hours of the morning, a meeting was already in progress across town in a local church basement not that far from Freemason Lodge No. 1. Communications were down for most people but apparently not for this select group of six Brothers sipping coffee and eating the breakfast prepared by Job's Daughters while a satellite-linked computer downloaded data. The Brothers present were an Idaho banker,

an Oregon police commissioner, a Washington State district attorney, a local businessman, and a state supreme court judge with his techie in tow. Almost all of them were former military officers.

They had already listened to the tape of the conversation between the to-be governor and his wife, thanks to the microphones planted in their home by the two Brothers on the Selection Committee. Earlier, they had decided to reactivate telephone service so they could begin screening calls. They were now discussing what else might be among the governor's decrees, given that the conversation had ended when his wife had gone to bed, but the worst was already known: Lodge membership would be disallowed to those in political office.

They were now in the same crisis mode as that of 1789.

As the morning progressed, they communicated via satellite with the Motherhouse now safely in Denver (Region VIII). One idea was for the two Brothers to press for an interview with the Lodge Brother on the choice list before a decision, but it was obvious that the "ethical" candidate was a favorite with the other six on the committee. Just before the two Brothers had to leave for the Selection Committee meeting at 11 a.m., hasty plans were set in place.

The meeting then broke up, each Brother feeling the weight of his oaths. Time was short and whatever was to be done would have to be done fast without the benefit of well-oiled media spin. *War is hell*, each thought in his own way, and politics were definitely war. They would do whatever they had to do to save the considerable territory their Lodges had gained over the past few centuries.