

# **THE DEVIL'S TRI-TONE**

By Derek Henig

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## **PART I**

### **THE SETTING**

This is the story of how I defeated, or escaped... not really sure... anyway, let's just say overcame, Mantris.

"Who the hell is Mantris?" You ask?

Well, I made up the name, but suffice it to say Mantris is what I would consider to be the sort of inspiration behind the concept of the Devil, or Satan, or the friggin' Dark Side of The Force! I know. It sounds crazy to me too. Just saying it out loud right now sounds insane because I would've been the first to say I don't believe in this crap.

"No such thing as the Devil."

Now, having experienced this nightmare. Having been to Hell and back, I can tell you I'm not such a skeptic anymore. Let me just get into my story, so I can explain, and try to reserve your judgement until the end.

It all began... Jesus, it sounds like I'm starting a fairy tale, let me try that again.

It all started... that sounds equally terrible. Ok, third time's the charm.

I was sitting on my couch with my buddy Dave. We were listening to an interview with Neil Young. I can't remember the question that led to his answer, or if there even was a question. However it started, Neil gets to explaining this idea, that the musical key signature of E flat Major, that the vibrations of that note and key are most in tuned with the literal Universe. That the universe vibrated to an Eb Major. He called it something like the Key of Heaven, or God's Tone, or something like that. I don't think he's much of a scientist, so not sure what he had to back that up.

"That's deep," Dave said, and yea he was as high as you think.

"Right?" I replied, and before you ask — I was equally stoned.

"Ember?" Dave said.

Yea I know my name is weird

"What's up dude?" I replied.

"What key signature do you play in the most?" Dave asked, and I thought about it for a moment.

I'm obviously a musician if you hadn't picked up on that. My thinking lasted a couple minutes because I started thinking of something else.

"Ember?" Dave said, bringing me back to the moment.

"Right," I said, "ummm, I guess D?"

Dave started to laugh a moment later, "Too... too bad man. You're just a half a step away from Heaven, bro!" Dave and I bent over in laughter.

A little nerdy musical humor for anyone out there who didn't get it. There are twelve notes to work with for music, and each one is a half step away from the next. A half step after D, is an Eb. Ok, joke explained, let's get back to my story.

After our laughing fit, which probably lasted five minutes, I leaned back into the large couch and stared around my apartment as I thought.

My apartment was in the basement of my mom's house, I said reserve your judgement, and was mostly unfinished. The floor was cement and four large brick columns were spaced evenly around to hold up the house above. I had a few area rugs to show that one space was the bedroom, and another the living room. Both had the absolute bare essentials furniture wise. The kitchen area went mostly unused.

Posters of my favorite album covers plastered the walls, and then huge tapestries hung from the ceiling over each space. They were full of every color imaginable and patterns that seemed to flow into the next. I was lost in the visuals above me when a funny thought occurred to me. I pulled my eyes away from the tapestry and turned to look at Dave who was staring at one of the Pink Floyd posters I had tacked onto the wall in front of the couch.

"If that whole thing is true," I giggled, "what Neil Young said. Then, there's probably like a Devil's tone," and I let out a short laugh.

"Woah, makes sense," Dave agreed looking back at me with a stupid grin on his face. "Be careful man, don't play the wrong note."

Obviously he was just joking around, but he didn't know that what I was thinking in that moment was about what a load of shit this all had to be. What the hell did Neil Young know about the friggin' Universe? That, and that I was planning on doing exactly what Dave was saying. I was going to play the wrong note. Just to show how ridiculous it all was.

## **PART II**

# **THE CHALLENGE**

The next day, good and sober, started off as any other day. I went to work. I have a gig as a janitor in an elementary school. Not as bad as you might imagine, and the people I work with are cool. I get to listen to music most of the day and I decided that I was actually going to go through with this whole idea of finding the Devil's tone.

First, I thought I could start with the whole God tone idea. See if I could feel something good first. What songs are in Eb Major? I asked. And what do we all do with a good question. Google it!

Ok, hello [songkeyfinder.com](http://songkeyfinder.com) ... perfect. First on their list is...

"Demon" by Imagine Dragons.

Ha! That's kind of a comical start right there. The first song in the tone of God and the Universe is Called, "Demon." Ok, what else?

Adele: Rolling in the Deep  
Coldplay: Clocks  
Foster the People: Pumped up Kicks  
Jimi Hendrix: All along the watchtower

I wonder if the original, by Bob Dylan if you don't know, is also in Eb Major... Google says, "no it's not." Ok, keep list going.

Elton John: Your Song  
Bruno Mars: Treasure  
John Mayer: Neon  
Adele: Chasing Pavements  
Adele: Skyfall.

Ok... all these Adele tunes in Eb Major is starting to make me believe it is the key of the Gods.

The list goes on for another 37 pages. So, I chose a bunch and threw 'em on my phone to play throughout the day. I wanted to see if I felt something special... something God-like and let me tell you... I... didn't feel anything.

Work was mostly uneventful, no vomit today... yayy! Always a better day when there's no vomit in it. Do you want me to stop saying vomit? Ok... I'll stop saying vomit. Now.

I made my way home from work and down to my apartment. I scooped up my guitar from the stand by the couch, sat down, and started to fiddle. I started playing all the chords in the key of Eb Major. Eb Major, F minor, G minor, Ab Major, Bb Major, C minor, and D diminished. I played them all, and then focused more heavily around the Eb Major chord, just strumming it and picking the notes.

“What would be the Devil’s tone, if the God tone exists?” I thought as I played and played.

It hit like the easiest solution. In fact, they freakin call it the Devil’s Interval. The tri-tone!

“Man, I gotta stop smoking weed,” I thought.

The solution was so obvious. So, in your face. The key or tone of the Devil is the tone that directly contradicts the Eb Major. The note halfway along the 12 notes that lead back to the Eb. The A.

If you don’t know what a tri-tone is or what it sounds like, there’s one easy and awesome example, and I immediately found the song on my phone and began to play it.

Purple-freakin-Haze, by Jimi Hendrix.

[play opening line]

That opening line, those two chords that are being played before he comes in with the killer lead guitar. That’s a tri-tone. Two notes that belong together less than pineapple and pizza. It’s one of those sounds that you naturally cringe from, but some have made it work into something we can listen to and enjoy. A level of skill you gotta appreciate.

I began playing Jimi’s opening tri-tone chord, and realized that it was just a half step away from hitting the Eb. If I just slid my fingers up the neck one fret, one half note lower, one step away, I’d have one of the notes playing an Eb, and the other playing it’s tri-tone, A.

As I played, I couldn’t help think how it didn’t make any sense. I’ve played many songs in the key of A Major, and A minor, and I’ve never felt like I was in communion with the Devil. Just like listening to all those songs in Eb didn’t make me feel Saint-like. I sat there, on my couch, and just kept playing Jimi’s tri-tone, in Eb.

Then, I sat up, and stopped playing. The only thing that made sense was that it wasn’t about a single note, or chord, it was about the pairing of the notes. It wasn’t about playing songs in the key of A. If the Eb represented the tone of the Universe, then the Devil, or the anti-universe, would have to be the tone that decimates the Universe, right? Destroys the cosmic vibrations, or whatever.

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This is what smoking pot does to your brain by the way. Thinking on a cosmic scale, Universal, scientific, and completely ridiculous all in one.

So, naturally, I got up to light a joint, and smoked while I jammed on the guitar for a while, just thinking. No tri-tones, just jamming and thinking. Properly stoned, I got back to work on trying to make something happen with these tri-tones. After a few minutes, I paused as a flourish of paranoia spread over me.

Am I like those people trying to create a black hole on Earth in the interest of knowledge? “Yay, we made a black hole!!” Followed shortly by the immediate swallowing of the planet. “Hey, at least we did it, right?!” Stupid.

Yet, here I am thinking about releasing or communing or getting possessed by, the Devil. Not sure what would happen if I figured this out, but the outcome is literally supposed to be unleashing the master of Hell. Or unleashing Hell itself Why the fuck am I doing this? Oh, right, because that’s a bunch of bullshit anyway. It’s not like I was really doing this to prove anything real or not, I think it was just something to do. As a musician, or any artist, you gotta follow whatever thread you can grab hold of for inspiration. Who knows? In my quest for the Devil, I might write a hit song and move out of my Mom’s basement! I’ll make that deal with the Devil for sure!

Pushing passed the moment of paranoia, most likely brought on by the joint I just smoked, I got back to playing Jimi’s tri-tone... but up that half step to get that Eb and A pairing. I just kept playing it over and over again like he does in the song. I played with my eyes closed, thinking, feeling... trying to see if I felt anything.

“Ember!” my mom called while knocking on the door upstairs.

My mom was cool, gave me complete privacy down here. Never barged in, even if she could. She just wanted me to meet a girl, so I would turn my life around or whatever. So, along that desire, she kept my space as adult-like as possible.

“Yea, mom,” I called as I ran up the plain wooden stairs two at a time. They creaked with each landing foot. When I opened the door, my mom smiled at me. I could do no wrong in her eyes.

“Would you like dinner, honey?”

“Actually, I’m good tonight, was going to get some take-out and work on some music.”

“Oh, don’t be silly. You don’t have to eat with me. I’ll deliver and there’s your takeout.”

“I’m not going to argue with that. Thanks mom.”

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“Of course, honey,”

I went back downstairs, back to the couch, and started playing again. Nothing was happening though, and also, playing that tri-tone over and over for anything longer than 5 minutes was excruciating. It works in Purple Haze because it's just the opening, and the lead guitar makes it work.

Another thought occurred. Nothing is happening at all. So, it's not just playing the tone, but then what?

Time was the only answer I could come up with. Time. If you hear a tri-tone once it's not going to kill you. If you play the key of Eb once, it's not going to alter the Universe either and make the World into sunshine and rainbows. Obviously. So, the answer must be time. Some sort of length of time, like a mantra!

Yea! That makes perfect sense. Like a mantra. When people talk about meditation, it's this repetition that leads to an escape or like a oneness with the Universe or something like that, I don't really meditate. But I've read about it. So, if I create a tri-tone mantra and listen to it for as long as I can, I should feel the Devil, or release the Devil, or prove that this is all a load of garbage.

I could theoretically just listen to that opening to Purple Haze on repeat, but then I thought about playing it for longer than that five minutes. I think I'd end up committing murder if I had to do that. So, only other option I could think of was to try and create my own mantra. So, that's what I decided to do.

I came up with something after a few minutes. Something simple, but it was full of the tri-tone pairing between that Eb and A. It was still not the prettiest of melodies to listen to, but it was a little more bearable, than the opening of Purple Haze on repeat.

I recorded it on a simple analog recorder I had, and set it up on a loop to play forever. I plugged in my headphones, laid down on my couch, hit play without any hesitation and closed my eyes.

## **PART III**

### **RISING ACTION**

I was slipping, or sliding. Like every part of me needed to turn and move to the left, but I was helplessly continuing straight. My momentum driving me forward, when I needed to turn. Helpless to avoid it. Powerless. At first I thought I was just dreaming, you know, one of those falling ones. But, I was awake. So, perhaps I was just more stoned than I thought, and having an out of body experience. It was definitely an out of body experience, but this was no trip.

It was all happening so fast. I was sliding away from my body, out of my body, out of the World. I could feel my body disappearing from my senses. I couldn't see, or hear, or taste the air anymore. I kept slipping and sliding away into a void. Into nothing. And then all was gone. I had no sense of anything. Not of space, and just an idea of time. Barely a sense of self. I was gone and completely disconnected from everything that tethers us to reality.

I screamed, but there was no sound to make. No body to make the sound for me. I clawed at the air, but there was no motion to make. No arms to raise, no fingers to scrape. I was nothing. I wasn't together or separate. I had no beginning or end. I was infinite, yet trapped at the same time. All I had was thought. The only part of me that was me was my mind. Not my brain, but my mind. Clearly they were different. Clearly there was some identity that existed beyond my physical form, but what was I? I don't know.

If this was death, it wasn't heaven. It wasn't bliss, it was agony. Just imagine it. Imagine a complete loss of your self, of sensations. Complete energetic disconnection from all there is. I screamed and screamed in my thoughts. I tried to feel something. Anything. Seconds ticked by in my mind and they turned into minutes. Imagine the irritation of a straight jacket, being blind, deaf, and somehow able to not feel a thing. The only thing I knew was that my body was out there, and it was empty. Dead.

I screamed more, but nothing new happened. I was losing my damn mind. Absolutely losing it. I reached out and stretched my mind, trying to find some semblance of an edge to my existence. Some way I could define myself other than saying "I think therefore I am." Fuckin' philosophers. If they only knew what this felt like. Sure, I am.. I exist because I'm thinking, but if all you are is thought, and no feeling. What the hell kind of existence is that? It's HELL!

The minutes turned to hours, and days. I could have just remained a thought, not worrying about how or why or what to do. I could have surrendered to being nothing but a thought, but the irritation of it was unbearable for me. Knowing my body was out there, another form of existence was out there, I had to figure a way back. I couldn't resign myself to this nothingness.



Days turned into months. I don't actually know the amount time, but it's what it felt like in my mind. Months of reaching out, stretching my mind, trying to discern something. Finally, I could start to sense a little. Not in the same way as before, but I could sense the existence of other things out there. I couldn't feel the texture of those things, just that there *were* other things. Like eating food, but never having any flavor from it, or even the texture. Just knowing that it went in your mouth, down your throat, and into your body for digestion. You could sense that it happened, but you didn't actually sense any part of it happening. That's where I was after months. After months I could tell that there was existence out there besides me, but nothing about that existence. Wow! What a revelation!

The months turned into a year, and then two years.

God damnit! The frustration was fucking unbelievable. There were days and weeks when I would surrender and just endlessly scream with nothing happening. A week long shriek, which ultimately amounted to nothing. That just pissed me off even more. Made me more agitated. An itch I couldn't scratch. A thorn in my side I couldn't reach. A phantom limb pain. Take your pick. It fucking sucked.

At about the three year mark— again, I don't know exactly, but the one thing I had to keep me attached to my former reality was counting what I perceived as days in this void. My tally brought me to about three years when I broke through. It was as if there had been a black curtain over my eyes and I just finally peeled it back to see what was beyond. It was just a flash of the World and I didn't even know what I saw, but I saw.

Another year passed before I got control of it... and I wasn't exactly seeing in the traditional sense. I didn't have eyes after all. I was picking up on the energy from light waves, electromagnetic waves. Kind of like seeing with sonar, like a bat, but better. Hard to describe how it was different, so let's just say I saw in the traditional way. Doesn't really make a difference to the story.

I was blown back from what I saw. If I had a heart it would have stopped beating from the shock. I was staring into my basement apartment. Nothing looked different. Over the four years of getting control of this, nothing changed. Four years in this void, and everything in the real World looked to not have changed by a second. My body was on the couch with the headphones plugged into the ears, but then the eyes opened and the hands reached up to pull the headphones out of the ears.

I watched my body sit up straight and take a deep breath and then smile. The smile turned to straight giddy laughter. Tears rolling down the cheeks of my former face. I knew I could also sense sound now, as I heard my body yell in ecstatic triumph. Raising his hands in the air and shouting in exaltation. More laughter followed and more tears of pure joy. Joy I had never felt in that body before.

He began inspecting himself. My body had a new inhabitant, and this new inhabitant was taking the new wheels for a spin. I ended up eventually calling this new inhabitant, Mantris, because of the whole connection to creating a mantra with the devil's tri-tone.

Mantris ran over to a mirror that was hung up on one of the brick columns and inspected further. I was snarling in my thoughts and yelling with no sound again. He started taking off his shirt and I was feeling violated beyond belief.

"Ember!" My mother's voice pierced through the door at the top of the steps and Mantris stopped unbuttoning his shirt. He looked up the stairs, and slowly began buttoning his shirt back up as he climbed the stairs slowly.

"Coming," he said, in my old voice. He opened the door and smiled at my mother, who smiled back.

"Here you go," she said, handing him a glass container full of what looked like steak and potatoes and grilled vegetables. "Your takeout has arrived."

Mantris reached out and grabbed the food, and just smiled back not saying anything.

"Don't let me keep you," my mom said, "just delivering." She winked and walked away.

Mantris chuckled to himself as he closed and locked the door behind him. Inspecting the contents of the glass container, his eyes bulged with excitement. He opened it on the coffee table and picked up the steak in his bare hands and began to chomp. Mantris moaned as he ate, and picked up the grilled vegetables and baked potato wedges also with bare hands and ate until the whole container was empty. Then, he leaned back into the couch and let out a different moan. One of exhaustion, of pain, and pleasure.

I know my mom, and she usually gave me way more food than necessary so I'd have enough for lunch the next day. This bastard ate all of it, and I could see my former stomach bulging with the contents.

I couldn't watch anymore. I couldn't stand to see my body doing things completely outside of my control. Not just out of my control, but controlled by another being.

I didn't really have to think about it as I slipped back into the void just as Mantris was in the middle of releasing another deep breath and moan. It was easy, like this void is where I really belonged. I welcomed the silent nothingness for the first time in four years. Or what I thought was four years. A place to think. What to do from here? After an hour or so, I returned back to see what Mantris was up to with my body. Not like I

could stop him, but he was in the same house with my mother and I didn't know what he was capable of. I thought that if I just knew, maybe got angry enough I could thwart him if he tried to attack her.

I pierced through the black curtain that divided our Worlds and my heart, or where a heart would be, fell again. I don't know why I was expecting something different, but the first thing I saw was the same moment that I left. Mantris in the middle of releasing his breath and groan. An hour in my void was not even a fraction of a second in reality. My whole being squirmed with this new understanding.

The way I figured it in that moment, I had two choices. Watch Mantris parade around in my body, watch the World I can't belong to with an endless and helpless longing. Or, spend eternity in a void of nothingness, alone.

Shit.

## **PART IV**

### **THE CLIMAX**

Yes!

Thankfully, I thought of a third solution. Here it goes:

I'm going to use this time warp thing to my advantage. I can spend all my time in the void thinking of a way to get my body back. Then, when I have the solution, almost no time will have passed on Earth and I can dispel this Mantris before he even wakes up in the morning! I have math on my side here, and I hate myself for feeling like math is my hero, but, damn it, it is.

It took me 4 years in this void to break into reality which appeared to have been only a second for Mantris. So, roughly, 4 years here in the void, equals one second in reality. It's around 7 o'clock for Mantris right now. This asshole will wake up, if he were me, around five in the morning. That's.... ten hrs. Ok... that's the easy math. I'm going to need a minute here. Listen... I don't have a pencil to carry the one's and shit.

...

Ok, It actually wasn't too hard. It came out to 36,000 seconds until he wakes up... so that translates to 144,000 years of time in the void. So, if I want my body back by breakfast, I have 144,000 years in the void to make that happen.

God, I hope it doesn't take that long.

Quickly... about a month in to this new third plan... I realized two things. First was that the ultimate solution was easy. I had to get Mantris to listen to my tri-tone mantra. He'd be expelled from my body, and I can hopefully just take it back.

The second thing I realized, is that my plan for cracking this before he wakes up wasn't gonna work. I did all that math for nothing like I was in *The Martian* calculating how long I can make my shit and some potatoes keep me alive. See teachers... math is not on my side after all.

I had no choice but to enter the World, and leave the void, which meant I'd have to live on the Earth clock. Mantris would age normally with however long it took me to figure this out. I had to conclude that the more I stretched myself, the more power or control I had. Like taking those four years to figure out how to peel the vail back and get a glimpse of reality. If I spent my time in that reality, I could perhaps stretch myself further inside it and somehow get Mantris to listen to my tri-tone mantra and get my body back. He'd slip out into the void, and I'd slide in.

Get your mind out of the gutter...

Action time.

I left the void and I didn't detect a discernible difference in time. Mantris was still on the couch breathing heavy deep breaths with his hands on his stomach. It looked painful, yet he was smiling from ear to ear. I guess he liked my mom's cooking. Who knows how many decades or centuries he'd been in the void, or maybe he'd been there for all of time. Was he an evil Devil I'd unleashed to the World? Or did he just get trapped like I was now? It didn't matter I guess. Whatever he was, I was going to get my body back.

I couldn't do anything until I started to make something happen. I didn't know exactly what I was doing, but I kept trying to feel things, or sense things. That's how I broke out of the void. The more I did, the more I grew to understand what I was experiencing.

I remember learning in High School about Einstein saying something like, "everything is light," which had to do with the electromagnetic spectrum and energy. That all matter in the Universe was basically light. Turns out it's true, which is what I was experiencing. It was like I said before. Sonar, but more complex. These light waves went through me and I could tell where they were going, from where they came, what energy they had and so on. I wasn't really hearing sounds either, but the sound vibrated the air which altered the light waves just slightly and I somehow made sense of that instinctively.

Believe me, I don't really understand it, I just know that this is the basics of what's happening. Just because you can walk, doesn't mean you understand the mechanisms that are behind that action. Same idea. I could see and hear, who really cares how?

I got to the idea of trying to influence these waves, these light waves. Radio waves, micro waves, infrared. All of it. If I could manipulate them, and not just sense them, then I could get my recording to play for Mantris somehow.

I watched the days turn into months on Earth as I tried to figure this all out. I was starting to actually get somewhere. I was able to mess with radio waves to disrupt signals. That's it. You could be listening to your favorite radio station, and BAM... scratchy. I did that. Or, at least I could have been the one doing that.

The months turned into a year. A whole freakin' year.

I was making progress so slowly, but what really bugged me was watching Mantris living my life better than I ever did. Yea, I know... made me feel way worse about myself. Seeing the potential I guess. He was out of my mom's basement in two months, quit my janitor job, and started a house cleaning service instead. Why didn't I

think of that? In a year, he had a whole team and was no longer doing any cleaning. He wasn't evil to anyone either. Everyone seemed to love the guy. I still hated him.

I tried to ignore him. I had the whole of Earth to look at if I wanted while I focused on manipulating those radio waves. Soon, that year turned into a few, and I knew Mantris aged accordingly. I was getting good with those radio waves though. I could soon scratch out a single note. First all I could do was mess up the whole signal, but now I could cut off the smallest amount I wanted. But it wasn't enough. If I was going to get my mantra to play, I needed to be able to manipulate the radio waves to play what I wanted them to play... to even send them where I wanted them to go. Like, to a specific cell phone so the phone then played the sounds that the signal told it to play.

I couldn't help my curiosity after a time, so I turned my focus back to Mantris to watch for a while while I still worked. All my life I struggled to talk to girls, but he went up to them without fear or hesitation. He eventually met a girl that he stuck with for a while, and he seemed to treat her great. I swear, I loathed myself more as I waited for him to snap, and yell at her, or even hit her. Shit, I wanted him to snap. Just wanted to see him do something evil to help me hate him more. Nothing. The guy was perfect and he was getting married now. Watching him was pissing me off, and I was losing focus on my task, so I looked away from his life and kept my focus on the middle of an ocean. No distractions.

A few more years passed, and I hadn't peered into his life since right before he was to be married. I was getting close with my radio waves. So close, but I had to look. The curiosity was uncontrollable. When I looked back, he had a family. Two girls and a boy. I imagined myself kicking him out of my body and stepping in to fill the role of husband, father, CEO. I didn't know if I could even handle it, or want it, but I didn't care. I would kill him if I had the chance. I'd leave his business behind if I didn't like it, leave those kids behind, and live my life the way I wanted to. I didn't owe him or that family a thing. It wouldn't be my fault. He certainly didn't show any concern taking over my life.

It took me years. Even spent a few decades worth of time in the void anytime I had to think. Save time, right. Earth was for action only. It took me about a decade, but I did it. I could hijack radio waves at will. Any radio wave that was ever sent, I could hold them in a pocket of my void and even manipulate things there. I could take their signal and control and change it however I wanted. It was time. I just didn't see things going the way they did.

## **PART V**

# **THE DENOUEMENT**

I don't know if you've been paying attention to my little chapter titles throughout this little adventure we've been on together, but most likely you haven't. That's ok... I'll lay out the significance now.

They're laid out in the basic structure of a story. The Setting, then The Conflict, the Rising Action, the Climax, and now The Denouement, which is fancy French speak for the conclusion where things get wrapped up. What should have you scratching your head a bit, is the last chapter title... The Climax. The climax is when things reach the most intense and exciting action packed part of the story. Yet, you might feel like the way the last chapter ended was more to set up this chapter to be the climax.

You are wrong though. It was the climax, and this is the end. The most intense and exciting bit happened already without you even knowing it. Without you understanding what occurred. I'm tricky that way, but I'll explain.

Once I figured out how to influence the radio waves so well, it was too late. My body was old and frail. Mantris was on his death bed. Yea, I lied. It didn't take me a decade, it actually took me over five decades on Earth to figure everything out, plus an extra five decades or so in the void when I needed time to think. The choice I had to make was obvious, and in your heart now, you probably understand what that was and what decision I made.

The choice was this. Take over my body again, and die in a manner of days. A century of toiling in lonesome agony to die surrounded by strangers. To live only days longer in a sick bed. Or, I could start fresh. Start all over again. I could start at any age, any gender, any social class or standing. I could be the fucking king's son if I wanted. I could be the fucking King! All I had to do was to get them to hear my mantra.

The possibility grew further in my mind. I was now fucking immortal! If I was nearing death, or simply wanted a new life, I could listen to my mantra on Earth, and enter the void. That person would get their body back at whatever age I gave it up, and I could go find the next one.

Holy shit, this is amazing. A blessing. Mantris didn't make this connection. However long he was in the void, he didn't understand this. Where should I begin? With the King himself? A President?

I decided what would make a life of immortality more fun, was a little rolling of the dice. Why not, right? I could re-roll anytime I wanted if I wasn't happy. So, that's why you're listening to this right now. I rolled the dice, and the dice landed on you.

I did try just playing the mantra over the radio, but everyone turned it off right away. So, I spent another fifty years in the void making this. I took some radio waves that were sent to some phone that had all the details to play a Podcast. This isn't even my voice. Just the radio waves I manipulated from that Podcast. Some idiot that calls himself The Roaming Scholar.

I told a story, and you listened, because I told you I win in the end. Because I told you it was about a hero. It was basically my story, just told from a modern perspective. There were no cell phones in the sixties when this really started for me. No google. A few little lies to keep you listening, while my mantra played in the foreground. Yea, it's been playing the whole time you've been listening. And don't bother trying to turn this off... it's already too late.

Remember the trick right? Time. Like a mantra played over and over. It's already begun, I can feel it. The hooks are already dug in so to speak. There's no where to run. You should start feeling yourself leave your body any moment, and I'll find myself taking over a new life. I don't know who or where I'll be, but I'm excited. And don't worry too much. I'll live your life better than you ever did. I'll appreciate it more, love it more, enjoy it more. Then, when I've had my fill, you'll have your body back. So, let me end this by saying... Thanks for the loan.