

Together, as We Continue Towards the End of the World

Recently, it has felt like the world has been ending. Each world event to hit the news ticks away a little more at the Earth's hit-points bar. Each human rights violation from another mega corporation, each nonsensical bigoted spitting of some conservative cuck on Twitter, each CEO to make some outlandish disconnected-from-reality comment, each rich landlord posting in forums discussing how to raise rent and further take advantage of their tenants, has, I think, prepared me for the end.

As a location manager for a fancy private boat club at a Chicago harbor, I brush shoulders with some of these rich people every day. I fondle their rich person's money they've tipped me, the cash still smelling softly of their well manufactured, testical adjacent pants pockets. How insulting. And yet I breathe it in deeply and thank them for their contribution, flashing them a smile and yearning for more. I clean their trash and refuse from their boats, grateful for the opportunity to service such special humans on this planet.

And then the world ending finally reached Chicago in the form of wildfire smoke billowing in from Canada. I had read about it and seen photos of a grim-looking New York just weeks prior, but it was still a distant concept as opposed to a dangerous reality. Yet here it was, knocking on my door and pressing its face into my window pane.

Having staff scheduled to be on the dock for upwards of eight hours in this apocalypse, I ran it up the ladder that I thought a cancellation would be appropriate. Against all odds, five minutes later, I was granted permission to cancel boating for the day. So, a message was drafted to send to boat club members.

It read as follows: "Hi MEMBER NAME, with air quality in Chicago being the worst in the world today, and the outlook not looking better tomorrow, we have decided to cancel all boating to protect the safety of our members, your families, and our hardworking dock staff. Sorry for any inconvenience. Stay inside, and stay healthy!"

In addition, we attached a couple of screenshots of a government website displaying how hazardous conditions were with warnings to stay inside. Members thanked us for the heads up, and wished us healthy refuge in return.

Except for one.

A member named John. A member who always came off as kind and soft spoken, but a member whom I never trusted and could see behind his humanlike appearance to the lizard person hiding inside of his skin. He replied: "*I* would still like to go out. *I* went for a long walk today with no ill effects and neither *me* nor *my* wife fall into a high-risk category. Besides, the wind and waves look fine." I nearly pissed myself with anger while reading the message, and then nearly pissed myself again reading it a second time. The wind and waves would probably

look fine on the day North Korea storms our borders and drops nuclear bombs on all of our major cities, melting people around you in fire and flame. Would you still want to go boating then? Would you still make poor people stand on the dock for hours cleaning and prepping your boat, holding your hand as you step aboard, waving cheerfully goodbye as you mediocly pull out of the slip and putter out of the harbor to boat all of fifteen minutes before anchoring in the Playpen to sip stupid sparkling beverages before boating fifteen minutes back to mediocly dock the boat as your wife disembarks the boat early and walks to the car ahead of you because any extra moment of time she spends with you in person is an amalgamation of uncomfortable pain, insufferable boredom, overwhelming nausea, and lifelong regret? Probably.

The following is the same story told from the perspective of the esteemed member John.

“God, what another glorious American day with zero borders stormed and no bombs dropped from North Korea. I must rush to the guest room where my wife has chosen to sleep and wake her, so we can go on a triumphant morning walk and breathe in the fresh American air. And to cap everything off, I will go for a boat ride because surely that’s something that I, John, lizardman of America, should be allowed to do with my freedom.” Suddenly his phone buzzes and as he reads the message from the pathetic, downtrodden dockstaff, he lets out a shriek and rips off his skin, before scuttling up his walls and snapping his teeth in a fit of rage. “These lazy assholes are acting as if the world is ending.”