

I sleep in a hollowed-out Sherman tank, filled to the brim with cocaine and titties. I wake up every morning buried in hot, voluptuous ass. I have an army of one million loyal infantrymen, a castle, an airplane hangar I use as a jewelry vault. I have slaves. My living room has a movie theater, a small lake and a petting zoo full of freshly shaved virgins. One time, I sentenced thirty people to death. One was a thief and the rest were his family.

My name is Abu Dhabi, General Commander of the The United Arab States of Palisade, and I am an authoritarian dictator.

I'm a totalitarian, a draconian despot, the human embodiment of Hitler's wet dream. An allied country gave me a fleet of MQ-9 Reaper Drones but I continued to employ kamikaze pilots. I carpet bombed a pod of orcas, because they were driving tourism up in a neighboring country. I sometimes even run. Over my slaves, recreationally.

Statues of me line mosque walls. Sermons are preached in my name. My face smiles brightly on every Wheaties cereal box; I've outlawed "Fruity" Pebbles because my bible doesn't tolerate anything "fruity."

As long as I serve God, I rule this country as I please; total control is God's only will. If you take anything away from this story, let it be this:

**Democracy in Palisade is not God's plan.** We have an understanding.

So--needless to say--I wasn't super happy when my citizens asked for a constitution.

### **Democracy in Palisade is Not God's Plan**

by Weston Goodman

#### **Part 1**

Now I'm sure you're asking yourself--why would your citizens want a constitution, when a dictatorship is so much better?

Believe me, I know... Some people just don't understand the powers at work. Stupid idiots, if you ask me.

It all started about four years ago...

\*fade to black\*

\*scene change\*

\*flash a cute picture of my face, winking\*

\*fade back to black\*

\*flash the words "Four Years Ago" across the screen\*

(I'm giving scene directions in case someone turns this into a movie)

It was a Monday morning like any other: hot, dry, suffocating. I woke up, like I do everyday, spooning the worn plush of my teddy-bear explosive. Jiggling out the hatch of my tank-bed, I swung down the protruding barrel and landed with a gentle thud. Some of my wives lay scattered around the Sherman, their naked bodies limp from sleep, their nipples perky from my aggressive air conditioning policies. As I tip-toed across the tiger-fur carpet, I grazed the head of my wife Farqoot. She awoke with a start, muttered something under her breath and then peacefully fell back asleep. With a quick nod to my servant Cedric, Farqoot's unconscious body was slung over his shoulder and carried off to the dungeon. I'm not sure what she muttered, but with a few days of waterboarding we were going to find out.

It was looking like a good day.

I hopped in the shower, brushed my teeth, and casually flipped through my overflowing closet. That day I was looking for something gray and chic. Even though all my robes are some

form of “gray” and “chic,” I settled for a cute little koala-skin robe and then finger-blasted the trigger of my M4 Carbine. As the gunfire echoed throughout the halls, my wives began to stir. Here in Palisade, we don’t have alarm clocks: we have my orders, and rarely are they prefaced without gunfire.

“Ladies, it’s time for breakfast!”

My wives awoke and followed me downstairs.

That morning we ate croissant sandwiches: scrambled eggs, cheddar cheese, and tenderly cooked puppy-bacon. I’ll have to ask the chef, but I think it was beagle.

After breakfast, I felt quite full, so I went for a light walk. Meandering around the fluffy green walkways of my rose garden, Cedric waddled along my side. His chubby little fingers gripped a security brief, while his upper lip trembled with sweat. He rambled on about various uprisings and political demonstrations, but I wasn’t in the mood. All I could focus on was his rotund little body.

He must’ve stood five-foot-two, rolling next to me like a rubber band ball. Every step was uneven, his forward momentum awkward and uncontrollable. He donned a full set of steel body armour--yet somehow-- his fat folds were still extraordinarily evident. He was a knight. If knights were pathetic and incompetent. Sometimes I’ve been tempted to replace him with a dog. Unfortunately, we don’t have enough to spare. I eat too much bacon.

“Excuse me sir, but this is not a matter we can continue to neglect.”

“What?” I said; I wasn’t paying attention.

“The uprisings sir! They’re getting out-of-hand! The Rebels are not happy with your rule”

“Happy with my rule? As if they have a choice! Do what we always do. Cleanse them.”

“With holy water?”

“No, you idiot. Napalm fire. The usual.” Gosh, sometimes he’s so clueless...

“I don’t think in this particular climate that’s a wise move sir. Not that I think you’re not wise. You most certainly are. I just think a more diplomatic solution would be equally--if not, more--effective. These Rebels want a constitution--we don’t want to give it to them--let’s just negotiate...”

I couldn’t believe what I was hearing.

“Negotiate? Cedric, I am God’s will. Please, don’t be stupid. God wants one ruler. That’s why I’m here. I will not let God down by giving up my power. Him and I-- we have an understanding.”

It was true. We did. I’m a (total)itarian. Not a (partially-in-control)itarian. That’s all because of God.

“Of course, your highness, of course. Your wish is my command. What would you like me to do?”

I thought about it for a minute. I’d be lying, if I said I didn’t. Ruling is a heavy burden. A constitution would certainly lighten that load.

Then I remembered my purpose. God put me here for a reason. This is my country. My will. My inheritance. No one can take that from me.

I looked Cedric dead in the eyes.

“Kill them, Cedric. Kill them all.”

## **Part 2**

And thus began a four-year civil war. Presumably, many died. I spent most of my days inside, so I’m not entirely sure. All I know is that Cedric stormed into my War Room every morning with a pack of seasoned generals. Each day, they progressively got older; marching in with less and less enthusiasm; their hair grayed, their eyes sunken, they aged like cheese in the desert sun.

I--for one--was never deterred. Civil wars, like any wars, are won with patience. The only battle that matters is the last. Plus, God was on my side. This I knew. We had an understanding.

During those years, my generals and I concocted a four phase plan to regain supreme power and--not to toot my own horn--it was pretty fucking genius.

### **Phase 1: Propaganda.**

Every dictatorship needs a solid propaganda campaign and--oh boy--did we have a great one. We broadcasted twenty-four hours a day. Pictures of me smiling, laughing and joking around with the elderly. Vibrant posters that read in bold letters, "**I'm the best you're ever going to get.**" We held weekly parades, where soldiers marched through the city in their most ornate uniforms and shot people at random. We also gave out cotton-candy.

\*queue montage of vibrant propaganda posters and fun parades! \*

### **Phase 2: Raise Capital.**

We nationalized our oil in the 70's like most of our Middle-Eastern neighbors, but we couldn't afford to divert funds/attention to oil with this Civil War on our hands. So--naturally--we made some concessions. The US rented our oil fields for a fifty-year lease. We made SOOOO much money hahaha.

\*queue montage of oil rigs and grand ballrooms full of cash\*

### **Phase 3: Death Camps.**

We brainwashed our citizens; we were swimming in money. The only thing left was the Rebel forces. Here's the thing: Rebels don't wear uniforms. It's not always easy to tell who is on whose side. I had this great idea though--I said it a little earlier--I'm not sure if you remember, but it was genius. Honestly, sometimes I amaze myself. I'm so glad I'm me and not anyone else... Anyway, I had this brilliant idea: **kill them all.** We built these camps around the outskirts of Palisade where we starved our prisoners of war. Men, women and children died, but 'tis life.

\*queue montage of labor camps and dead bodies\*

### **Phase 4: Win.**

Well--that was the plan--but as you'll see it didn't quite work out that way.

\*Fade to black. There's no montage for losing\*

By all accounts, we were winning the war. The Rebels had their band of loyal followers--no doubt--but most of them were either captured or killed. The remaining members hid under the guise of normal citizens. To think I was kidnapped, at this point in the war, was honestly remarkable. Embarrassing, really...

I was asleep. Me and Farqoot were cuddling (side note: apparently, she muttered "I love you"... how sweet, amiright?:), when out of nowhere I was jerked upwards and thrown across the room. I didn't even have time to identify my assailant before a burlap sack was briskly shoved over my head. The brute punched me a few times in the stomach (rude) and threw me in the back of a humvee (or at least what I thought was a humvee).

### Part 3

I spent a few hours listening to the white noise of tires running over gravel. I fell asleep and--next thing I knew--I was yanked up and escorted down a sandy path. Well, in fairness, "escorted" is a strong word. I think "dragged" is more appropriate.

I dug my feet into the ground, but every time I generated any real resistance, I was met with incredible force. First, I was struck with the butt end of an assault rifle, then I was kicked in the stomach with a steel toe boot. By the time we reached our destination, my kidnappers were literally shooting bullets at my feet. It wasn't exactly my favorite Wednesday on record.

One of the brutes ripped the sack off my head. As my eyes came into focus, the barrel of an AK-47 materialized between my eyes. I don't say this often, but I was kinda fucked.

"Oh hello there," I said.

I was on my knees in the courtyard of an abandoned compound. Sand was being whipped up into the air like glitter in a shaken snow-globe. Essentially, it was windy-- is what I'm trying to say. Please excuse the flowery prose.

"You evil, twisted, piece of shit," the Rebel said as he kicked me again. This time, he got me in the arm.

A group of eight men stood in front of me, dressed in battered cargo pants and bullet proof vests. They wore head scarves and heavy duty boots. Fully automatic AK's hung around their shoulders.

"You've torn our country apart, Abu Dhabi. You pathetic fucking scumbag. I'm so fucking tired of your childish antics. You kill, you pillage, you wreak havoc on this country, with no regard for your citizens' best interest. You rule like--."

I laughed. Some people can be so naive.

He didn't think it was as funny as I did. He kicked me several times, his goonies joined in as well. Needless to say, it hurt a lot:(

"What do you have to say for yourself!? You fucking murderer!!!"

I thought about it for a second. Maybe five. I tend to find it's best to wait as long as you possibly can to answer such important philosophical questions. It builds suspense.

"What's your name?" I asked the Rebel.

"You want to know my name? The name of the man who is about to put a bullet through your head? The man who will finally bring justice to this country. Alright... fine. My name is Muhammed."

I rolled my eyes. "How original..."

His goonies smirked. That felt good:)

"Well Mohammed, you"--I point to him--"are an idiot. I am the best you'll ever get. Do you not understand that? I built schools, hospitals, sports arenas; I gave this country industry. I gave this country a future. You demand a constitution, but God does not want you to have a constitution. I kill those in my way--and sometimes those nearby--but that is the freedom that God has gifted me for my obedience. God put me here, Muhammed. There is no better alternative to God's will. There is only the threat of God's limitless wrath."

Mohammed shook his head. "We must not believe in the same God then."

"Clearly," I said, tiredly.

He walked over to me, slowly, and lifted up my chin so I was looking into his eyes. I would've brushed his hand away, but I was zip tied.

"Do you remember ordering that airstrike on our base in Kiran?" he asked.

"Not particularly," I admitted.

“Well you carpet-bombed our housing projects. You killed hundreds of men, women and children. You killed my wife. You killed my son. They burned alive at your orders and you will burn alive at mine. Abu Dhabi, you are going to die today. How does that make you feel?”

Blah, blah, blah...

“I’d prefer a nice bath, but do what you wish.”

Muhammed’s Rebels strutted over, eager to watch me burn. They showered me in gasoline.

“This wasn’t really the kind of bath I was talking about,” I joked.

They marched back to Muhammed’s side, waiting for him to light the match. I watched them, closely, almost admiring the glimmer of hope in their eyes. These men, so honorable, so intent on bringing justice to this country, bringing democracy; I was almost inspired. They really believed they were doing the right thing. They believed this was best for our country. A part of me--granted a small part--felt pity. If only these men knew: God will never let there be democracy in Palisade. God and I--we have an understanding.

“You’re making a mistake,” I warned. “Don’t do this. Just leave here as fast as you can. If you kill me, God will reign his fury down on Palisade. Please just walk away!”

“Are you begging for your life? Oh, this is precious!”

“Hah! Begging for my life? You really don’t understand, do you? Kill me! Seriously... I dare you! My death won’t bring democracy to Palisade. It will bring anarchy. It will bring God and His mightiest forces here to pillage this country for all its worth. How can you not see that? I am the best that you’re ever going to get. God and I-- we have an understanding.”

“Well fuck your understanding. You think you’re such a holy man? You hide behind religion to justify your evil, but this is not God’s plan. God is noble. God wants you to die just as much as I do.”

I laughed again. What a fuckin idiot.

“Where was God when I killed your family?” I joked. “If God is so noble, why do I even exist?”

The look on his face...

He didn’t like that one bit. He wacked me across the face with his AK. Once, twice, three times he drove the butt-end into my nose. I cried a little... I’m not gonna lie.

He reached into his pocket and pulled out a carton of matches.

I sat there eagerly. They couldn’t kill me. God and I--we have an understanding.

The sound of a whistle flew by my ear. Muhammed’s skull burst like a water balloon. More whistles. Blood squirted into the air as sniper fire picked off each one of the rebels. They fell to the ground like synchronized dancers in a coordinated routine, falling one after another in perfect unison.

I sat there, amused. I just watched eight men get turned into scarlett-gore-fountains and all I felt was the satisfaction of met expectations. Blood was still spewing out of their lifeless bodies. It pooled into puddles on the ground.

A squadron of camouflaged men ran from the inside of the compound. They were led by a soldier with gray hair.

The gray-haired-soldier-man made his way over to me until he stood above me. His stocky figure casted a shadow on my face. He reached down, cut my zip ties and offered me his hand. I took it. He lifted me up onto my feet.

“Are you Aber Dhobi?”

“Abu Dhabi, but yes” I said.

“Jesus fucking Christ. Bang-up job you did over here. You’re a lunatic, you know that? What the fuck were you thinking?”

“They captured me. I didn’t have a choice.”

“We’ve given you some of the most advanced military equipment in the world and they just walked into your castle and kidnapped you? Bullshit. You let them take you. You stupid fucking A-rab. You were testing us. And we pulled through this time, but it’s not always going to be like this, you hear me? We’re losing our patience.”

“I understand,” I said.

“We’re re-negotiating the terms of our arrangement. You listening? It’s not a 50-year lease on your oil fields anymore. It’s a hundred years. And the profits are split Eighty/Twenty. Eighty percent for us. Twenty percent for you. You fuckin hear me?”

“Yes. That’s fine” I said as if I had a choice.

“We’ll figure out the paperwork later. Get in the humvee; we’ll drive you back. You really are a lucky fucking bastard, you know that? We got here right in the knick of time. You better thank God that you’re still alive.”

“Oh, I will,” I said.

I glanced down at his camouflage uniform and the star-spangled-banner on his breast--a universal beacon of democracy in every crevice of the world that didn’t have resources worth exploiting. It was the red, white and blue of a country so invested in its own self-interest it was willing to abandon its principles. I looked at the flag on his chest--my God--and said: “thank you.”

My God is a hungry God. All I have to do is feed Him oil and, in return, I do what I please. God and I--we have an understanding.