

The Strange Case of a Mind Shift:
A Personal Journey to Self-Sovereignty

by Frank Marcopolos

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((((((ONE))))))

If they played it in the movies, it'd be different. I'd be more handsome, for one thing. Probably a rugged sort of handsome that lets you—the viewer—in on the secret that while I certainly know how to handle a firearm, I also pet the neighbor's puppy whenever the opportunity presents itself.

The other thing about it would be the lighting. The Handsomer Me would be exiting the bar—Ivy's on Greenwich—and the bar itself would be lit, dressed, and edited with warm colors, rich and vibrant and alluring. Contrasting this would be how they made the street into which I was walking look: stark, color-bleed, and bleak, like a noir comic book scene portraying the tragic, heart-rending death of a beautiful woman that propels the hero into unimaginably heroic action. And Handsomer Me would be right in the middle, in slow-motion probably, nattily dressed in black and white, but lit and edited so that the fabrics looked reassuring nonetheless.

That's how they'd do it in the movies. You The Viewer wouldn't be able to feel the cold in my fingers, wouldn't be able to see the regret in my mind of forgetting my gloves again, nor could you feel the warmth that the residue of seven glasses of wine were providing inside of me at that camera-perfect, chiaroscuro moment.

In non-movie time, it was December of 2010 when I was stepping out from the glow of Ivy's and into the street freeze. The pervading topic among “the smart crowd” in America

at that time, the “buzz,” was the ObamaCare legislation. I was an ardent Obama Democrat then, and before leaving Ivy’s I’d gotten enmeshed in a debate with a friend, “Alex” (not his real name), about it. I put forth the theory that everyone has a natural-born right to healthcare, and single payer (with that payer being the federal government) was far superior to the insurance-company-payer model we had in place in America. Alex countered that ObamaCare was unconstitutional and would lead us further down a slippery slope into total technocrat tyranny. Armed with all that wine in my belly and a bit of natural smugness borne from a liberal arts education, I had dutifully parroted the arguments provided for me by the mainstream media during the discussion, thinking Alex’s argument was rather quaint and perhaps a little racist. I felt quite comfortable that I’d clearly won the argument, and that everything was well on its way to becoming awesome in America.

Leaving the bar—black Alfani overcoat, black slacks, black Kenneth Cole Reaction square-toes, black Fred Perry zip-up sweater, white tie, white Van Heusen button-down collar—the winter cold pierced my defenses spiked with needles of wind, a unique New York City freeze that rattled your bones and made you long for places like Miami, or Los Angeles, or even Hell itself just so long as you could escape the shearing attack of New York City Weather. The wine, however, was providing me with an internal furnace which kept every part of me toasty, save for my ungloved fingers. I snugly pocketed them when I turned a corner and saw something massively important that I completely dismissed at the time. Funny how life does that sort of thing.

A simple thing, really, as all portals tend to be—a poster stuck to some temporary wooden construction wall with one corner, the right bottom corner, flapping in the chill-wind. It was one of those DHS “See Something, Say Something” posters, but someone had taken a red marker and written something across it in large, urgent letters. The urgent letters said, “Snitches Get Stitches!!!”

A part of the movie *1984* flashed through my endrunkened mind, and then it immediately vanished. I jogged down the subway steps, went home, and didn’t think much more of it or the argument I’d had in the bar until a long time afterward.

In movie-visual parlance, calendar pages flew off into oblivion, and the Obama presidency marched on. It soon became clear that, except for the healthcare issue, President Obama was betraying everything Candidate Obama said he would do. I began wondering: why had he continued the Bush tax cuts for the rich? Why hadn’t he closed Guantanamo Bay, even though he signed an executive order saying that he would? Why hadn’t he ended the Afghanistan war? Why did he have Kaddafi and 40,000 mostly black Libyans killed? Why did he kill an American citizen without a trial? Why was he allowing his Attorney General to ship guns into Mexico so they could be used by Mexican gangs to kill their competitors who DIDN’T launder their money through the international banks who contributed millions to Obama’s campaign? These questions and a bunch of others kept running through my mind. It didn’t make any sense for him to turn his back on his base like this. We all wanted change from George W. Bush because, as Democrats, we saw everything Son-of-a-Bush did as evidence that Republicans were

pure evil, puppets of the global mega-corporations. We Dems thought all we had to do was get *our* candidate in there—a Democrat, a person of the people!—and everything would turn around. Obama’s historic election, we thought, would instantly transform the world into a nirvanic space full of peace and love and understanding. Except that it didn’t. If anything, things had gotten worse. Much worse. And I couldn’t quite figure out why. In movie terms, the American landscape was becoming more like Charlie Chaplin’s “Great Dictator” than Aaron Sorkin’s “American President.”

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((((((TWO))))))

It's now January of 2012. According to the most reliable account, January is named after the Roman God of beginnings and transitions, Janus, who is also the God of gates, doors, doorways, endings, and time. He is usually a two-faced God since he looks simultaneously to the future and the past.

The world as it stands today teeters on the brink of an economic meltdown ([1](#), [2](#), [3](#)). Wars are [ongoing](#) across the globe. Angry protestors [are on the streets](#) in many cities. America is quickly [becoming](#) a police state. Far too many people across this land of beauty *feel* like something has gone horribly wrong, but they can't quite figure out what to do about it. Indeed, many people are wondering if there *is* anything we can do about this world gone mad.

Since the debate in Ivy's, all through 2011, I noticed that the nightly news refused to provide satisfactory answers to my questions about WHY the geopolitical news didn't seem to make any sense. The TelePrompTer readers skimmed off the top of an issue, never really getting down to root causes, or real solutions, or why everything was framed within such a tight Overton Window, I noticed. It seemed to be enough for them to read the news, have a guest from each side of a topic state their opinions, and then move on (in between boner-pill commercials.) With the seriousness of what was going on in the world, I knew I needed to try and make sense of what was really going on. I decided to look elsewhere.

As a fiction writer, English Literature major, and former literary magazine editor ([“The Whirligig”](#)), I somewhat naturally turned mostly to literature, to stories, for some perspective on what was unfolding on the geopolitical stage. I was seeking some modern answers from old stories, and—Janus willing—a large dollop of hope. I kept reading, delving into books and magazines and alternative-media websites, searching for answers. (I also decided to quit drinking for a while at this time. I wanted to see if my brain function would improve if I stopped killing off all those brain cells. Maybe I could even better comprehend the complexity of world events.)

I somehow—miraculously, it seems to me now—stumbled upon Robert Bly’s masterpiece [Iron John: A Book About Men](#). It got me pointed in the right direction, I think: “The knowledge of how to build a nest in a bare tree, how to fly to the wintering place, how to perform the mating dance—all of this information is stored in the reservoirs of the bird’s instinctual brain. But human beings, sensing how much flexibility they might need in meeting new situations, decided to store this sort of knowledge outside the instinctual system; they stored it in STORIES. Stories, then...amount to a reservoir where we keep new ways of responding that we can adopt when the conventional and current ways wear out.” As a voracious reader of stories, including those that are collectively called “the classics,” Bly’s words struck a loud and distinct chord of truth for me.

Bly’s book takes us through the maturity stages of life, based on the narrative progression of the Grimm fairy tale, “Iron John.” The fairy tale, of course, uses symbols exclusively

to convey its messages, and Bly unpacks these symbols so that the story's real meaning can be clearly understood by a modern reader. In general, it is a time-honored tale of the proper stages of progression for male maturity—from unlocking the “wild man” by stealing the key from beneath your mother's pillow all the way to the massive, gold-laden reward of living with mature integrity.

[*Iron John*](#) is the type of book that you go through and want to highlight almost every single part because it's so enlightening. There are so many “Ah-ha!” moments it's unbelievable. The book revealed, basically, everything that had been missing in my life, *why* it was significant, and how I could go about fixing it. This was an enormous revelation to me. Growing up without a father, all of this was brain-busting news that I had a hard time swallowing. I could barely believe it. And I couldn't believe all of this essential knowledge was housed in ancient stories of all places, many of which I'd been previously familiar with, but had no way of being able to understand with an immature, ignorant, liberal arts mind. The blindfold was ripped off. I was beginning to see the true nature of things.

So, I started looking around for other fables that might help me grow the hell up, and at as brisk a clip as possible. I mean, here I was—thirty-something years old, with an intellectual maturity of a sixteen-year-old boy. It was freaking embarrassing is what it was.

So, Internet searches then led me to [Dr. Paul Dobransky](#), and his concepts of Mature Masculine Power and MindOS (the operating system of the mind), which at that point, obviously appealed to me a great deal. One of the things Dr. Paul teaches is a lesson drawn from another fairy tale, “Bluebeard.” While the story (and re-imaginings of it such as Angela Carter’s “The Bloody Chamber”) is often used as a cautionary tale for women, warning against violent men, there is one aspect of the story that is relevant to mature masculinity. That is, a mature man always has one metaphorical, locked, mysterious room (*NOT* a real room filled with dead bodies!) that’s off limits to everyone but himself. Dr. Paul uses “Bluebeard” to illustrate the key issue of always having some aspect of your life that’s just for you, hidden away like Superman’s Fortress of Solitude. A Solitude Fortress allows you to re-charge your masculine batteries when they get run down by life. If you ever do relinquish the key to that fortress, it results in bloodshed, much gnashing of teeth, and abject misery for everyone involved.

MindOS, while too deep to get completely into here, illustrates the psychological concepts of personal boundaries, inner resources, doors/handles, observing ego (a.k.a. “the science of cool”), and the 4 basic human temperaments and how they relate to each other. (Needless to say, I highly recommend Dr. Paul’s work, which can be accessed here: <http://www.menspsychology.com>.) Where *Iron John* goes through the maturation stages from boyhood to manhood, Bly leaves us there without knowing what do with our new-found maturity. Dr. Paul takes it from there by mapping out the operating system of the mind, and then going beyond that into the area of Mature Masculine Power by using the following equation:

Progress on Career/Life Mission + Success with Women = Mature Masculine Power

The upshot of the equation is that if you're not on your life mission, your level of Mature Masculine Power will be dangerously low, causing a significant amount of unhappiness ("depressulinity") and all sorts of destructive behaviors toward yourself, others, and even society (manifested in things like violent gangs.) One example of *not* being on your mission is having a job you hate, which is fairly common these days.

To use a movie plot-device mechanism, we'd probably need a montage somewhere right about here, showing a long chain of progress in a short amount of movie time. But I can't really do that here, so we'll just keep things more-or-less linear, which may not be 100% accurate. (My memory is somewhat less than optimal, even when alcohol-free.)

Anyway, I now knew I *needed* my Fortress of Solitude (a.k.a. my crappy apartment) in which to work on the development of my life mission and my mature masculine power by applying the wisdom of ancient teachings revealed in stories. Underlining this lesson is *The Count of Monte Cristo* by Alexandre Dumas. This novel (and movie, especially [the 1993 version](#)) dramatizes the stages of male masculinity brilliantly. Reading this novel, in conjunction with the teachings of Bly and Dobransky, a key piece of wisdom became clear: it is incumbent upon every person to take responsibility for his/her own circumstances, regardless of upbringing. In other words, even though I didn't have a father to properly shepherd me through these stages, if I didn't go through them at some

point—self-directed if necessary—only *I* would be worse off for it, trapped in my own jail, my own Chateau d’If, if you will, for all eternity. There’s a reason why there are a million legends, stories, myths, movies, comic books, and novels based on what Joseph Campbell calls the “Hero’s Journey,” where the hero must accomplish a really hard goal (a.k.a. “life mission”) with the odds stacked heavily against him (a.k.a. “life.”) It’s because the fictional journey in these stories is a metaphor for life itself, an essential teaching from each elder generation to the next in the forms of metaphors and symbols, and so on. Unfortunately, too many of these lessons have been “Disney-fied” for modern audiences, rendering them impotent and useless, save for the inflation of the portfolios of Disney stockholders.

According to these lessons-in-stories, if you’re not on your mission, you’re wasting your life because you’re not consciously developing your masculine power to manifest in a just society; if you get knocked down on your mission and don’t get back up and keep fighting, you’re wasting your life because it means your mission wasn’t all that important in the first place; if you don’t take ownership of the results you’re getting, you’re wasting your life because you’re allowing others to control your destiny, which is a recipe for disaster. I certainly didn’t want to waste my life, so I got down to work thoroughly assessing what my life mission actually was and why.

*

((((((THREE))))))

I've gone through a lot of different seasons in my life. College baseball player, U.S. Army paratrooper, cellar manager for a wine auction shop, hospital administrator, voice-over talent, and more. But what I always did, in all seasons, through any weather so to speak, was write. Writing has been a life-long love affair that just refuses to burn out. It's something I've loved doing since I was a little kid. So, I knew that my life mission would have to be literature-oriented. The question was how to manifest that in a realistic way to earn a living. Enter the Kindle and the 2011-era e-book revolution of Amanda Hocking, John Locke, Joe Konrath, and others. It quickly became clear to me that I needed to become an entrepreneur and publish my own novels as an "indie publisher." I had run [*The Whirligig*](#) by myself for 6 years, after all, and turned it into one of the most respected underground literary publications going. So, I was going to have to do something similar with this new publishing venture. "Whirligig Media" it would be called—that much I knew, but not much else at that point.

To maintain an income base, I needed to enhance my day-job professional credentials, so I decided to embark on a long, 4-exam process which would protect me somewhat in the professional marketplace. This would be so grueling that I knew I couldn't sacrifice any more time or brain cells to alcohol, so I decided to keep *not* drinking, at least until it was over. I also needed to boost my overall health, so I searched for a nutritional plan that might help me lose those stubborn thirty pounds or so that were becoming more than a

minor nuisance. That was when I found [The 4-Hour Body by Timothy Ferriss](#). Highly recommended for life-changing body transformation.

I stayed sober, lost 35 pounds by following the Ferriss formula, passed all 4 excruciatingly difficult exams, started “Whirligig Media” and published 4 of my e-books, including my debut novel, [Almost Home](#) in 2011. In addition, I published 1 audiobook and 34 audiostories and poems, acquired an official USPTO trademark, gained over 7,700 Twitter followers and counting, and began investing in real assets for the first time, all while holding down that pesky day job. Are these things monumental, Tony Robbins-sized successes, where it’s as if “MTV Cribs” can use my house for an episode? **NO**, but they *are* a starting point. (In fact, I’m still living in my crappy “apartment of solitude.”) But they are the foundation of an upward spiral of positivity to which I see no end, really. The undeniable fact is that I’m just getting started.

This new, mature way of understanding the world, of understanding that it is no one else’s responsibility but my own to run and take ownership of my own adult life, led me to become more curious about how the defining principle of self-sovereignty could then apply to politics and government in America. I wondered if it had something to do with what the electorate allowed Turncoat Obama and all politicians to do, resulting in the current deplorable state of affairs in America and the world. I thought about the ice-pick-cold day in December outside Ivy’s when I had forgotten my gloves, and how much my world-view had changed from that day. How silly, childish even, my former mental self seemed to be. My friend “Alex” had been right all along. It seemed so juvenile to me now

to think that the federal government should be allowed to interfere in ANY aspect of my peaceful life, or the life of my business, for that matter. To think that any federal government could “take care of me” is akin to thinking a fox can “take care” of a hen house, I now know.

But “Alex” wasn’t through with me yet. He sent me something in the mail called a “Pocket Constitution,” whatever that was. “Weirdo,” I thought. One day, though, I started reading it, and it dove-tailed perfectly with everything I was learning about self-sovereignty and a more mature outlook on life. I mean, it was all in there, in black and white, as it pertained to the relationship between man and state. “Snitches get stitches!!!” popped back into my mind. The government wanted Americans to snitch on their neighbors? All of a sudden, that act of vandalism took on a much greater significance in my evolved mind. The last thing in the world we needed to be doing was spying on each other and reporting back to Big Sis, especially when the chances of dying from terrorism are [less than](#) those of dying from a honeybee sting.

It seemed to me like the end of the Truman Show when Jim Carey has to choose which world to be in, and he chooses the world of risk, the world of uncertainty, the world where it’s not guaranteed that nothing will harm him. And he makes the right choice because a risk-free life isn’t worth living. It’s a prison, a slave plantation.

So, I started looking even more closely into what is called “freedom movement” consisting of people like the End the Fedders, Dr. Ron Paul, Ann Barnhardt, Alex Jones,

Luke “WeAreChange” Rudkowski, Comedian Joe Rogan, Catherine Albrecht, Sheriff Mack, Mike “The Health Ranger” Adams, Nomi Prins, Adam “AdamvstheMan” Kokesh, Lord Christopher Monckton (the man Al Gore refuses to debate), Liz “Raw Milk Freedom Rider” Reitzig, David Icke, and many others. I watched their videos online, read their articles, read their books. (The [Kindle](#) has increased my read-rate by about 70%, I’d say.) All of the info now coalesced into a coherent, logical viewpoint, which, it seemed to me, actually made sense of the geopolitical events that only months before seemed completely assinine and incomprehensible. This philosophy, call it “libertarianism,” “constitutionalism,” “freedomism,” whatever you want, actually has the power to change the world for the much, much better. *It actually makes sense, top to bottom, side to side, upwards, downwards, any way you look at it.* Freedom was important enough for the American Founding Fathers to stake their lives on—and now it was clear to me WHY. Any other social construct ever invented inevitably led to tyranny and oppression of those at the bottom of the pyramid.

Most people, like my previous self, reared on [television](#), [vaccines](#), and [sodium-fluoride-water](#), find these “freedom advocates” and their views radical or “fringe.” And before my awakening, I would have, too. But I now feel like if you allow others to have control and power over your life in any way, you’re effectively trapped in a prison, even if it’s not the kind of prison where you can see and touch the bars entrapping you. “A prison. For. Your. Mind,” as Morpheus tells Neo in *The Matrix*.

I now believe self-sovereignty is the only way to ensure freedom, peace, and prosperity both personally and for the country I love. The simple bottom line is that more freedom equals more prosperity equals more security.

FADE TO BLACK.

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((((((FOUR))))))

EXT. – GREENWICH STREET, NYC (TRIBECA), IN FRONT OF IVY’S BAR –
DUSK

FADE IN FROM BLACK.

A ruggedly handsome MAN, with the kind of good looks that let you know he knows how to handle a firearm but also pets his neighbor’s puppy whenever the opportunity presents itself, is walking briskly toward Ivy’s Bar. His breath is visible from the cold, his gloved hands hidden inside his black Alfani overcoat, which tops a black Fred Perry zip-up sweater, white tie, white Van Heusen button-down collar, and black slacks. His square-toe Kenneth Cole Reactions gleam with high shine. The left lapel of his overcoat is adorned with a “Ron Paul 2012” button.

The street is color-bleed and bleak, while the interior of the restaurant beams with vivid and vibrant colors.

The MAN walks in and greets another MAN like a long-lost brother, smiling and hugging him.

MAN #1: Alex! M’man!

MAN #2: Frank! Long time.

FRANK: Yeah, bro. But I need to thank you.

ALEX: For what?

FRANK: For waking me up. What's been up is, I shifted my mentality, y'know. Based on some of the stuff *you* were telling me about last year, and I got my humanity back, or whatever you wanna call it. I realized that I have personal sovereignty because it was provided by my creator—NOT the government or any other outside entity. It's a direct connection between the source of all consciousness and my own consciousness. Plain and simple.

ALEX: Exactly right. Yup. Glad to see you finally came around, buddy!

FRANK: Yeah. But it *does* mean that I am responsible for the quality of my life, which can be scary. Especially 'cause my life could still, y'know, use improvement in so many areas. That's scary, it really is. Y'know, uhh, I'd always thought that the government had my best interests at heart, I really did. I'd grown up thinking that while politicians might screw up here and there, and there might be some corruption occasionally, y'know, overall, overall they try to do the right thing for the people. I now realize we've *all* allowed politicians to have *way* too much power over our lives. We're kind of complicit in their actions, and, in the same way, it's up to *us* to remedy the situation.

ALEX: Yeah, self-reliance, personal sovereignty, and preparedness, it turns out, are forms of empowering wisdom. After that initial shock of fear, your mind quickly moves into a realm of supreme empowerment. That wisdom, that illumination, can then be used, like a floodlight to enable you to see what for so long was ensconced in ever-darkening shadow: your true nature, which is divine, your true mission in life, and your everlasting truth.

FRANK: Yes! Exactly! These days, I wake up daily with a crazy-cool energy, ready to keep fighting the good fight with an irrepressible smile all over my face.

ALEX: Right, I get you. Me too, man. And how did it start? Like everything always starts. By *you* making a choice, a decision.

A pretty blonde BARTENDER in a blue V-neck T-shirt leans over the bar, toward ALEX and FRANK, revealing an alluring view of her significant cleavage.

BARTENDER: ‘Scuse me. You guys want a drink or what?

ALEX and FRANK turn their heads away from her, look into the camera, and raise their eyebrows.

They’re expecting an answer.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Frank Marcolos began writing as a kid in the evenings after summer days of competing—always unsuccessfully—against the older neighborhood kids (the evil “teenagers”) in the P.S. 207 schoolyard. After long, hot days of sporting failures, he discovered that by writing stories, his fictional heroes (almost always coincidentally named “Frank”) could always end up saving the day from the taller, menacing forces arrayed against them. He usually composed these stories by flashlight as he wrote in a black-and-white Mead notebook while seated on a shelf in his bedroom closet.

For some reason, this love of creating alternative—glory-promising—realities never died within him, and continues to this day. (Thankfully, his boyhood habit of naming all of his main characters “Frank” *has* died, however.)

Frank still lives in Brooklyn, New York, not far from that very schoolyard where he spent so much of his youth failing at various sports. He notes with sadness that the current trend in public education is to chain up all schoolyards during the summer, presumably so that the painted-on-cement bases can’t be stolen.

Frank rocks a cable-free lifestyle, and *always* knows where his towel is. [ALMOST HOME](#) is his debut novel. From 2000-2006, he was the editor of the critically acclaimed literary zine, [THE WHIRLIGIG](#).