

AMERICAN IDOL

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American Idol
A Black Bed Sheet/Diverse Media Book
April 2011

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Library of Congress Control Number: 2011926042

ISBN-10: 0-9833773-2-4
ISBN-13: 978-0-9833773-2-0

CHAPTER ONE

Congratulations! You are the owner of an authentic Idol, from The American Idol Company. This Idol was made for the sole purpose of worship and reverence, in exchange for blessings and protection. To use this Idol in any other way could result in damage, injury, and or the cancellation of warranty. We at The American Idol Company wish you success and satisfaction in your spiritual journey.

You already know the story. Hell, you follow the news as much as the next guy, right? A couple of obscure businessmen start a multimillion-dollar company mass-producing Idols. New religious craze, or very old religious craze, depending on how you look at it, rocks the nation, then the world. It's not as though you could have missed it, unless, of course, you really just weren't paying attention.

Well, here's the story you don't know, the story behind the story, so to speak. It all started, as so many great adventures do, one night in a bar . . .

"Here's why God's a woman," Desmond Abernathy was saying, his words only slightly slurred at this point. "The need for constant reassurance. You can't just let her know that you appreciate her once in a while, you're supposed to pray every day. You have to go to church, you have to jump up and down about it, you have to sing and dance. How Goddamn insecure is she anyway? The jealousy, no strange Gods before me. I mean, it's like you can't even *look* at another God. And vindictive too, just like a woman, always with the smiting and getting pissed off and the overreactions. She's inconsistent, she has major mood swings. One minute it's all about mercy and forgiveness and unconditional love, the next minute she's turning people into salt and shooting fire out of her eyes. Only women go bipolar on you like that. Don't get me wrong, I'm not saying it's their fault or anything, it's because of the hormones or something."

"You really are a knuckle head, did you know that?" That was Mary Alison Abernathy, Desmond's younger sister. They were exactly nine months apart.

"I don't know if God's a woman or not, but the Devil is for certain." That of course, was Augustus Owen Dean; the legendary partner in what would become The American Idol Company.

None of them knew it at the time, but the aimless wonder of their conversation would soon stumble upon an idea that would change the course of their lives and ultimately, the entire country. We however, have the advantage of hindsight. We're with the ghost of Christmas past, so let's sit back and listen to history in the making.

"Whip me up one of your specials Bill," Gus said to the bartender, "I'm feeling faint from lack of protein."

"No, no way. The Board of Health will shut me down."

"The Board of Health will never know, and if I drop dead from salmonella, or more likely a clogged artery, our secret dies with me."

The wide shouldered barman shrugged and pulled a glass from beneath the dusky mahogany bar.

"Bill's a fucking genius," Gus said, as the bartender mixed his drink. "One shot of Wild Turkey, the same of heavy cream, and one raw egg. It's fucking magical."

"I got him to drink one once on a dare," Bill said, sliding the glass across the bar to Gus. "Now I can't get him to stop."

Gus held the glass up to the light and jiggled it once for effect before knocking it back.

The egg yolk bobbed in the milky liquid like a horrid jaundiced eye.

“My fucking God,” Mary Alison said, shuddering.

“Bill here is a scholar of the classic cocktail,” Gus explained, “a master of mixology, an alcoholic alchemist. He knows all the lost recipes.”

“What’s in a Ramos Gin Fizz?” Mary Alison asked, testing Gus’s claim.

“Two ounces of gin, a half ounce of freshly squeezed lemon juice, two tablespoons of confectioner’s sugar, two ounces of light cream, and two drops of orange flower water. Shake with ice and strain.”

“How about an Absinthe Suisse?” Desmond asked.

“One and one half ounces Absinthe, that’s real fucking Absinthe mind you, not fucking Anisette, a half ounce Orgeat syrup, one egg white, a half ounce single cream, and four ounces shaved ice. Some cunts would put it in a blender. I whip it by hand.”

“What did I tell you?” Gus said.

“It’s a lost art,” the big bartender sighed, “there was a time when a barman was an herbalist, an artist, a doctor, and magician, all rolled into one. A goddamn pillar of the community. These kids today, they don’t know their history. Every time someone orders a Sex on the Beach, something inside of me dies.”

“What do you think, Bill,” Desmond asked, “Is God a man or a woman?”

“A woman, definitely a woman,” Bill said without hesitation, “and a mean bitch too.”

“What about the ‘God is dead’ argument?” Mary Alison asked.

“If she’s dead,” Desmond said, a little too loud, “then she was alive before, so now she’s a spirit, which is what she was supposed to be in the first place.”

“Well who could argue with logic like that?” Mary Alison said smiling, sipping her Whisky Sour. “But I think what Nietzsche meant, was that the Judeo-Christian concept of God had become untenable in an age of science and reason. That religion had been killed by modernity.”

“Maybe so,” said Desmond, “but we should never listen to crazy Germans with syphilis. That’s the first thing they teach you in kindergarten.”

“God being a woman makes sense to me,” Gus said. “Mother Earth, Mother Nature, all of that. The mood swings, the irrationality; the Great Flood might have been nothing more than God on the rag.”

“The lunar cycle matches the menstrual cycle,” Mary Alison said. “There are fertility Goddesses; the idea that human beings are God’s children, God as mother, plus, women are a lot smarter than men, and we look better naked.”

“That’s the truth,” Desmond and Gus both agreed.

“The problem is,” Gus, said, “that everyone has their own ideas about God. Even people in the same religion can’t agree on what God wants and doesn’t want. If everyone had his or her own personal, individual God, then there wouldn’t be anything to argue about. I could say, ‘sure, your God doesn’t like premarital sex and gambling, but mine thinks it’s a-okay’ and that would be that.”

“I think we had that once, it was called Idolatry, and it didn’t work out too well,” Mary Alison said.

“That’s what we need to do,” Desmond said, “go back to Idolatry. That’s where it all went wrong, when Abraham fucked everything up with his one God theory. There everybody was, minding their own business, worshipping their Idols, when along comes this asshole, hearing voices, seeing angels, crazy as a loon, telling people they have to stop what they’re doing and worship the one true God, *his* God. And what about the sacrificial son thing? How crazy is that?”

“But weren’t people being sacrificed to Idols all the time, virgins and such? Wasn’t that the point of the Abraham story, that God wanted to end human sacrifice?”

“Maybe the point is, that we shouldn’t listen to syphilitic Germans or schizo’s who hear voices telling them to murder their children. Anyway, who knows if people were being sacrificed or not. It was over 4,000 years ago. If people were making sacrifices to their Idols, it’s because they wanted to, it was the times. The Idols never *told* them to do anything, they were just lumps of stone after all.”

Gus signaled the bartender and ordered three shots of Johnny Walkers’ Black.

“To Idolatry, the one true religion,” he said, raising his glass.

“To God,” Desmond said. “May she one day get over her inferiority complex.”

“And to women,” said Mary Alison. “Smarter, sexier, and made in the Lord’s image.”

“Amen.”

“Cheers.”

“Shazam.” They said in succession, and drained their glasses.

