

GREGOR SPÖRRI

LOST GOD

DAY OF JUDGMENT

APOCALYPTIC THRILLER

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

Apocalyptic ideas are found as early as in the ancient creation myths of Assyria and Babylonia. 3,800 years later, Christians, Jews, Muslims, and followers of many sects are still waiting for God's final battle against Satan.

The story I'm about to tell you is essentially about how the apocalypse unfolds and what motivates the power behind it. Full disclosure: Readers have written to me that certain parts of the book caused them trouble falling asleep, gave them bad dreams, changed their view of the world, triggered fierce discussions among their families and friends, hurt their religious feelings and confused them so much that they no longer knew what is real and what is fiction. So let me tell you: *Lost God* will not be a simple and harmless story.

The action of *LOST GOD* takes place around the globe and beyond. That's why there are so many places and characters in the story. Because events take place in the immediate future and unfold as you read about them, I tell you the story in the present tense, sometimes in the style of a report. So that you always know who is who, you can find a list of the main characters below.

As multifaceted as the characters and their challenges are the issues surrounding the apocalypse. To help you understand all contexts and my idea behind everything, I have included explanations here and there. For texts of historical origin, I have used various sources and translations. Most original texts had to be shortened and modernized. A note about the biblical figure Sahar and her eyewitness report: I made her up. Her account is based on the Ethiopian Book of Enoch, but has been fleshed out and embellished with fictional material.

The prolog, on the other hand, is based on a true incident. Some background: In 1978, I founded a business specializing in interior design for dance clubs and bars. In 1988, I traveled to Egypt to

gather ideas for a club with an Ancient Egyptian theme. But there was also another reason — I wanted to investigate the mysterious forces that were said to have been active in the Great Pyramid of Khufu for thousands of years. The idea came to me when I read about the French general Napoleon Bonaparte, who, after winning the Battle of the Pyramids in 1798, explored the Pyramid of Khufu all on his own. When he left the structure hours later, he is said to have appeared rather distraught. His aide-de-camp was worried about him, but Napoleon refused to say anything. Only many years later, in exile, did the Frenchman reveal that he had received in the pyramid an ominous vision of his future. Fascinated by the story, I soon came across the book *A Search in Secret Egypt* by Paul Brunton. In the 1930s, this English journalist had apparently spent a whole night alone in the pyramid. In his book, he tells of experiences both eerie and beautiful, but also of terrible panic attacks. After daring to lie down in Khufu's sarcophagus, he claims to have experienced an overwhelming realization of the immortality of his soul.

These two men's experiences downright challenged me to get to the bottom of the matter. I thought I knew what I was getting myself into and was prepared for just about anything. But I didn't, and I wasn't. My trip to Egypt ended with an unexpected shock that completely upset my view of the world. The memories of it never left me. To this day, I use every opportunity to conduct research in Egypt. More information on my website: Grespo.com

The Egypt shock, my research, the exploration trips with Erich von Däniken – Swiss pioneer of the ancient aliens theory, as well as the conversations with H. R. Giger – master of dark surrealism and creator of the monster from the film series ALIEN, inspired me to write this novel. More information on the book's website: Lostgod.com

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A big thank you to my home country Switzerland: Jürgen Hatt and Marco Longhitano (astronomer).

A special thanks also to Erich von Däniken, who, with a wink, gave me permission to put my words in his mouth and quote from his books.

I bow to (Hansruedi) H. R. Giger (1940-2014)

I dedicate this book to Barbara, my dearest,
who has supported me for so many years in all my projects.

THE MAIN CHARACTERS

Donald Trump: 45th president of the United States.

Erich von Däniken: Researcher of the ancient aliens theory.

Scott Nolden: Administrator of NASA.

Eileen Brooks: Commander of the Space Shuttle Atlantis.

Tom Taylor: Pilot of the Space Shuttle Atlantis.

Sally Brown: Science journalist, media representative of Space Shuttle mission STS-136.

Gunther Wolf: Mission specialist and bearer of secrets.

David Goldstein: Head of a Spacewatch project at Kitt Peak National Observatory.

Heather Smith: Program developer for this Spacewatch project.

Ned Kelly: Tester of the new Spacewatch software.

Wesley Parker: Astrophysics professor and specialist in extraterrestrial life forms and contacts.

Abigail Peers: Staff member of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

PROLOG

(From my travel diary)

April 12, 1988

King's Chamber, Pyramid of Khufu, Giza, Egypt

6:10 p.m. I'm lying flat on my back, staring into the darkness above me. I let my vocal cords vibrate. The deep humming sound from my throat produces a stunning resonance effect. There's a roar in my ears, as if I were lying in a loudspeaker cabinet rather than in Khufu's stone sarcophagus. I sustain the humming sound for as long as I can – then take a deep breath – and continue.

10:20 p.m. My larynx and my back are hurting. So far, I'm not feeling any cosmic forces, nor am I experiencing a shift in consciousness. I climb out of the sarcophagus and leave the King's Chamber. Spooky silhouettes, created by my flashlight as the only source of illumination, scurry across the corbel vault of the Great Gallery. At the bottom of the vault, which is over 25 feet high and 150 feet long, I squeeze myself into the next shaft. It's almost 130 feet long and leads to the Queen's Chamber. The room is empty. I squat down on my backpack in the middle of the chamber and turn off the light. Even though it's warm, I'm shivering. There's something eerie about being all alone inside this legendary monument.

April 13

1:40 a.m. I startle. Something's crawling across my face. A spider? A scorpion? I brush it away with a swift movement of my hand. I must have dozed off after chanting the syllable *OM* – representation of the highest divine principle – for two and a half hours.

Much to my disappointment, it turns out that no energetic forces are at work in this chamber either.

I clamber back to where I started. From there, I enter another shaft, over 300 feet long. It leads 100 feet downward into the base of the pyramid. For the last few feet to the so-called Rock Chamber, I have to crawl on all fours, with my backpack strapped to my belly, because the shaft is so narrow.

The air in the 1,000-square-foot chamber is stuffy and damp. I let the beam of my flashlight wander. A pit opens before me, about 30 feet deep. To its right loom two roughly-hewn boulders, taking up half the space. They look like giant, unfinished sarcophagi. For whom were they intended, I wonder? I take a few pictures, then sit down between the “sarcophagi,” and switch off the light.

3:45 a.m. I stare at the fluorescent hands of my diver’s watch. No energy waves. No shift in consciousness. Not even a tingling between my ears. What’s keeping the cosmic energy from entering me? What am I doing wrong?

Frustrated, I go to the entrance. As I’m waiting for the guards, whom I paid a pretty penny to lock me inside the pyramid, I play through the next experiment in my mind. This time, it’s going to happen!

5:00 a.m. It’s still cool, yet sweat is oozing from my pores. Akram, the son of one of the pyramid guards, is climbing a few feet above me, barefooted. I’m having the hardest time trying to keep up with him. No wonder – at the annual contest for the fastest climb up the Pyramid of Khufu, this kid left his competitors in the dust. And they now pay great respect to the “Pyramid King,” until it’s time for the next unlawful showdown.

My heart pounding, I climb the last few stone blocks – until I’m standing on the very top of the 455-foot-tall monument. The feeling is sublime. In spite of the darkness, the view is magnificent. In the east glitter the lights of the awakening city. In the southwest

looms the shadow of the Pyramid of Khafre. The view downward is no less spectacular. I'm getting dizzy and realize: one misstep, and I'm dead.

Originally, the three Pyramids of Giza were encased with bright, polished limestone blocks. So-called pyramidions (capstones) formed the peaks. These ancient Wonders of the World weren't isolated structures – they served as hotspots within a vast city of temples, of which nothing is left today.

I crawl to the center of the pyramid's flat top, where a wooden tripod is anchored to mark the original building height of 481 feet. Akram is astonished to see all the things I'm retrieving from my backpack: a water-filled Coke bottle, tent poles, duct tape, a long-sleeved sweater, a neoprene hood, gloves, and a diving mask. First, I put the tent poles together. Then, I attach the bottle to the pole with duct tape. Next, I put on my sweater, hood, gloves, and mask. The boy's eyes are getting bigger and bigger. I hand him my camera and instruct him to take cover at the edge of the pyramid top. I tell him to press the shutter button as soon as something happens.

At that moment, the sun rises, and Akram shouts, "Yalla! Yalla!"

I slowly raise the pole with the bottle at the top to a vertical position. It's a wobbly balancing act. Cautiously, I prop my contraption against the wooden tripod. As I position the bottle by the tip of the tripod's center rod, I instinctively duck my head. But nothing happens. I push the bottle a couple of inches higher. Still nothing. I keep correcting – a bit to the right ... to the left ... down again ... higher ... Nothing. Nada.

Akram suddenly points downward and shouts, "Must go! Must go!"

Cursing, I put down the contraption and step to the edge of the pyramid top. Down below on the plateau, two white-clad figures are flailing their arms. I ask Akram if this is his father. He shakes his head violently, hands the camera back to me, and begins to

climb down. I want him to take a souvenir photo of me, but the Pyramid King has already disappeared between the stone blocks. All I can do is take a moment to snap a couple of pictures of the surroundings. Then I pull the diving gear off my head, shoulder my backpack, and follow Akram. I leave the contraption behind.

I don't recall how I make it down to the plateau without falling. But I do remember clearly how Akram takes to his heels as soon as he arrives at the bottom. My escape route, however, is blocked. Judging by their shrill voices, the two Arabs are launching all sorts of threats against me. I do get that it's illegal to scale the pyramid. The "sheriffs" therefore have an easy time convincing me to leave them a generous baksheesh in exchange for my free passage.

Caprice Palace Hotel, Cairo, Egypt

I go back to the hotel and take a nap. I'm having bad dreams.

After dinner, I run into Jochen at the hotel bar. He's a German engineer whom I'd met on the flight to Cairo. I told him about my plans, so he's eager to learn how the pyramid experiments went.

"Total bullshit," I growled. "It's a new-age fairytale they tell suckers to separate them from their money."

"And what about Napoleon and this English writer?"

"Made-up hogwash."

Jochen massages his chin. "Maybe you're just not the right guy for this."

"Oh, like, I'm not subtle enough? I don't have the right antenna or something?"

Jochen grins and nods, and asks what it was like on top of the pyramid.

I make a dismissive gesture. "Nothing happened whatsoever."

Jochen keeps probing. "Did you do it right?"

I quote from one of my books: *“If you position a liquid-filled bottle at the location of the original pyramid point, the cosmic energy entering the structure there will cause the bottle to burst.”*

“A purely physical experiment without any spiritual requirements on the experimenter,” Jochen has to admit.

“Exactly! And I’m dumb enough to haul half of my diving gear up there to protect myself against the splinters raining down.”

Jochen pats my shoulders to comfort me.

We order beer for Jochen and cola for me, raid bartender Ahmed’s supply of pistachios, and talk about Egypt, its pharaohs, pyramids, and mysteries until well after midnight.

April 14

Caprice Palace Hotel, Cairo, Egypt

After breakfast, Jochen bids farewell. He travels on to Luxor. On my way back to the room, Ahmed suddenly pops up in front of me. Sputtering a mishmash of German, English, and Arabic, the bartender says something like, “A friend of mine has some really beautiful stuff to sell. Are you interested?”

Ahmed’s motive isn’t hard to figure out: He wants me to go see a dealer he knows. If I buy something, he gets a commission. Today is my last day in Egypt. I’ve seen everything on this tour that’s worth seeing to me. I have plenty of souvenirs for family and friends in my luggage. Only for myself I haven’t found the right thing yet, so I accept his offer.

The Peugeot 504, which has seen better days, is slogging through the morning traffic. While the taxi driver’s feet are dancing on the pedals, his fist keeps pounding the steering wheel. Making headway in this chaos seems to require ruthless tailgating and non-stop honking. I look at the dashboard to find out how many millions of

kilometers this clunker already has on its back. But the speedometer and odometer are just as dysfunctional as the ventilation.

When we finally reach the city limit, traffic decreases rapidly, and I can breathe again. Ahmed did mention that our destination is outside of Cairo. But I am a bit surprised to find us driving on a desert road toward Alexandria.

Instead of urban canyons, we now see palm groves, scrubland, and sand hills passing by the rolled-down windows. We overtake donkey carts and roaring trucks that trail foul-smelling clouds of soot. We swerve around potholes, burning piles of palm fronds, and animal carcasses. Most of them are stray dogs and cats that got run over. A few of them are donkeys, their limbs outstretched, their bellies bloated with putrid gases. Now and then, I hold the camera out the window and push the button.

Two and a half hours later, we get off the desert road and turn onto a dirt road. We're near a peasant village called Bir Hooker, the driver informs me. The 504 bumps down the driveway to a house, surrounded by date palms and a clay brick wall. Children are playing outside the gate. They come running and poke their laughing faces inside the car. The driver honks.

I get out. The children surround me, clamoring. A very remote place for a souvenir dealer, I'm thinking – when I see that he's already on his way the gate. He's half a head taller than me and wears the traditional men's garb – the jellabiya. I'm guessing he's over 70 years old. His sharp-edged, proud face has something of a pharaoh.

The driver parks the Peugeot under the palm trees and gets comfortable on the back seat, with all the doors open.

Nagib, as the old man introduces himself, first chases away the kids, then leads me behind the house. I look out for a salesroom, but there's nothing other than a wooden bench and a small table. Nagib asks me to sit down and disappears into the house. Shortly thereafter, he returns with tea and dates. As the beverage is steaming in the glasses, he digs out a shisha from under the seat and

settles down beside me. Sucking at the pipe, he looks me over from head to toe. Finally, he asks in broken English, “Where you from?” “Switzerland.”

“Hmmm ... What do you want?”

I look at him askew. “I’m here for souvenirs.”

Now *he* looks at me askew. “What souvenirs?”

I’m confused. “Ahmed at the Caprice Hotel – you know him?”

The old man nods. “My nephew.”

“Okay. Well, your nephew told me you have some very beautiful things for sale. And since I’m looking for something decorative for my home –”

“Decorative?” Nagib looks at me condescendingly at first. Then he asks what I do for a living and why I’m in Egypt. I wonder how this is any of his business, but still end up telling him about my company and the pyramid experiments. He listens attentively and occasionally asks a question. When I mention the rock chamber underneath the Pyramid of Khufu, he briefly raises his eyebrows. Then nothing happens for quite a while. He smokes and gazes into the distance. I drink tea and chew dates.

Finally, Nagib puts down his smoking gear. “My nephew was wrong. What I am selling is not what you are looking for. I will write Ahmed a message, and the taxi will take you back to the city.”

I feel like a total idiot. The whole day is ruined, and so is my mood. “Ahmed’s gonna get an earful from me!”

Nagib gets up. A young woman comes out of the house. As I will learn later, she’s his granddaughter. The two start chattering. I can’t understand a word. The woman goes back into the house, and the old crank takes his seat again next to me.

Again, nothing happens for a while. Then Nagib mutters, “I could show you something. For a fair reward, of course.”

I’m irritated. “You just said you don’t have anything for me.”

“I’m only going to *show* you.”

“And I’m supposed to *pay* you for that?”

Nagib tells me that he sells art treasures taken from old tombs to well-heeled collectors from all over the world. This makes me wonder what gave the bartender the idea that I'm a collector of antiques. Those people usually wear fine fabrics and silk ties, whereas I walk around in a T-shirt, washed-out jeans, and worn-out sandals. I can only think of one answer: Ahmed overheard last night's conversation between Jochen and me, and drew completely wrong conclusions.

"It is very, very old," I hear Nagib's voice in my ear.

I look up from my sandals.

"Only few people have ever seen it ..."

I look at Nagib from the side. He's gazing into the distance again.

"You want to know what the Great Pyramid is all about, no?"

I look surprised.

"Man fears time, but time fears the pyramids."

What is he talking about?

"Once you have seen what I am willing to show you, you will be looking at the pyramid with totally different eyes."

Is the old man pulling my leg? "You know the true purpose of the Pyramid of Khufu?"

"No. But I know some old stories about it."

Nagib's farmhouse has a flat roof. The clay-plastered walls shimmer in pale blue. Curtains, rather than doors, separate the rooms from each other. Nagib leads me to a chamber of about 150 square feet. In it, there are a dresser with a cloudy mirror, a sofa with a dingy red blanket over it, a wardrobe, and two wooden chests. The room feels very cramped. The furnishings, while old and worn out, seem way too swanky for an Egyptian cottage. As the son of a period furniture maker, I believe I recognize that these are English pieces from the late 19th century.

Nagib invites me to sit on the sofa, fishes out a bunch of keys from under his garb, leans over one of the two chests, and opens it. I

crane my neck, but his back blocks my view. When Nagib turns around, he's holding a longish bundle wrapped in brown leather. He places it next to me on the sofa and unties it. Underneath the leather, dirty-white linen appears. He unfurls the fabric.

With a mixture of curiosity and wonder, I look at the musty-smelling object. It's shaped like a gag, about 10 to 15 inches long, two to three inches thick, flattened on top, with two bends along its length. From one end protrudes something akin to a piece of bone. What is this? A chopped-off goat's leg? Is the old man leading me on? I look more closely. The hairless, brownish, partly moldy skin is burst in several places. The fibrous tissue underneath looks as if mice had gnawed at it.

I pick up the eerie object. It weighs a few ounces. Baffled, I turn it around – and freeze. An icy chill runs down my spine. What I'm holding in my hands can't possibly exist. I force myself to look up from it and at Nagib. He's standing above me, his face blank. For a moment, we stare at each other. His deep-black pupils mirror the knowledge of an unspeakable mystery from long, long ago.

The fictional story starts here

ACT ONE

December 15, 2018

Downtown Houston, Texas, USA

The woman in the yellow mini dress tussles Tom Taylor's short mohawk and purrs, "Give me a call, brother, if your pants get tight."

Tom smiles, knowing that he won't need to. Dirty Diana will reach out to him long before pent-up hormones have a chance to bother him. They exchange a fleeting kiss before the buxom, coffee-skinned lady climbs into her convertible and drives off, her hair blowing. He looks after her for a moment, then crosses the street and steps into a Starbucks, determined to fight the void behind his sternum with something sweet.

Eating and drinking with his left hand, Tom fishes an iPhone from his chest pocket with his right. Siri reads the texts to him. "You have three new messages. Cloe wrote yesterday at 10:46 p.m.: *You owe me dinner. Smooches!* Mandy wrote yesterday at 11:39 p.m.: *My pussy misses you!* Charlie wrote today at 8:18 a.m.: *Tom! U gotta check this out!*

The 32-year-old takes a sip of iced chocolate mocha, digs his teeth in the blueberry muffin, and taps on the link, which takes him to an article in the New York Daily News. As soon as the page loads, a mouthful of muffin gets stuck in Tom's throat.

Russian cosmonaut confirms UFO contact

Dmitry Zhukov, a doctor stationed at the International Space Station, discovered the UFO this morning. During a live transmission from space, the Russian said, "I was scared to death when that thing appeared outside the windows of the ISS."

Meanwhile, the truck-sized UFO satellite is orbiting the Earth on an elliptical path. A NASA spokesperson played it down: "We suspect it's the third stage of a Saturn V from the seventies. After it separated from the Apollo spacecraft, the stage flew past the

moon toward the sun, orbited it at a large distance, and now accidentally found its way back to Earth."

Experts from all over the world consider this statement to be wrong, as there is almost no similarity between the object photographed by Zhukov and a moon rocket. Many ask with good reason: Why is NASA trying to lead us on again? After all, this is not the first time. On July 21, 1969, 600 million people were watching the first moon landing with bated breath. Suddenly, there was radio silence between the astronauts and ground control. People feared the worst. But two minutes later, the connection was back. NASA's terse explanation at the time: The breakdown was caused by a technical defect due to overheating. But according to leaked intelligence, no such breakdown ever occurred. A secret audio file, whose authenticity was confirmed by Neil Armstrong shortly before his death in 2012, finally proved: The space agency lied. There was no disruption. Rather, the moonwalkers continued their conversation with Houston on a different frequency. But why? The following is an excerpt from the audio file transcript. (Are you sitting down?)

Neil Armstrong: "Houston! What is that?"

Edwin Aldrin: "Do you have an explanation?"

Houston: "Do not worry, stick to the program."

Armstrong: "My God, it's amazing, that's great. Do not think you could ever imagine!

Houston: "Roger."

Armstrong: "It's a kind of ... What the hell is that?"

Houston: "Change frequency. Use Tango Bravo."

Armstrong: "There are lights."

Houston: "Change frequency. Use Tango Bravo and choose Jezebel."

Armstrong: "Okay. But this is incredible."

Houston: "We are losing the connection and calling you on Tango Bravo."

At this point, the frequency was changed.

Houston: "Control center calling Apollo 11 on Tango Bravo. What is going on out there?"

Armstrong: "Those things are huge. They're enormous. Oh my

God! They're watching us!"

Aldrin: "You will not believe what we're seeing here."

Houston: "We are not alone, correct?"

Aldrin: "No, we're not alone."

To avoid panic on Earth, Houston committed Armstrong and Aldrin to absolute silence before returning to the old frequency. Anyone who still believes NASA has nothing to hide should check out the statements of the astronauts Charles Conrad, Donald Slayton, Edgar Mitchell, Edward White, Frank Borman, Gordon Cooper, James Lovell, and James McDivitt, as well as those of the two X-15 pilots Joseph A. Walker and Robert White. These highly intelligent, unshakeable men all made the same statement after their space and stratosphere flights as Edwin Aldrin: We are not alone. There are UFOs. We have seen them with our own eyes.

Tom has a hard time believing in extraterrestrials. With a critical eye, he studies the photographs taken by the Russian from the space station. The UFO satellite consists essentially of two hexagonal tubes. These are connected by a kind of ball joint. On the outer end of each tube is what appears to be a honeycomb-shaped lens or prism, in which sunlight reflects. The steel-gray hull is embellished with a strange engraving that looks like a narrow crescent moon, and it seems to be covered by a rust film. Tom rubs his forehead. Rust is an iron oxide that contains water. It is produced by a chemical reaction of iron or steel with oxygen and water. In outer space, however, there is neither water nor oxygen. Besides, modern satellites are made of magnesium–beryllium alloys and composite materials. There's nothing that could rust. Tom quietly shakes his head and continues reading.

The North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) has cataloged more than 1,000 active and 4,000 inactive satellites, as well as 2,000 burnt-out rocket stages. The command center is responsible for tracking launched intercontinental missiles, as well as for detecting, investigating, and warning against attacks by

missiles, airplanes, and spacecraft. All objects orbiting the planet are monitored around the clock. Yet when questioned regarding the possible identity of the UFO satellite, neither the NORAD officers nor any other government representatives were willing to comment. Even the president, usually not shy to release a statement or at least fire off a tweet, has stayed mum. An extremely disturbing situation. Fake-news purveyors, conspiracy theorists, and UFO sects, however, are taking advantage of the official silence. They eagerly fill the information vacuum. No explanation is too crazy.

Here are the top five:

- (1) It's a old Soviet spy satellite from the 1960s.
- (2) It's a laser cannon, positioned in outer space by the Reagan administration in the 1980s and still aimed at the Kremlin.
- (3) It's a rescue capsule, ejected from the Roswell UFO just before the latter crashed in the summer of 1947.
- (4) It's a communication unit used by Atlanteans.
- (5) It's a powerful space bomb from Adolf Hitler's lost arsenal of secret weapons.

Tom scrapes the crumbs of the muffin from his plate and licks his fingers. He remembers reading about pilots of the Allied Forces, who reported after flying combat missions over Germany that they were repeatedly approached and circled at high speed by red-hot flying machines, without ever being attacked. The Allies' secret services took these so-called "foo fighters" for technically advanced Nazi reconnaissance planes. Others talked about extraterrestrials observing the war from their UFOs. Neither explanation has been proven to date. It is documented, however, that the Germans had been working on secret aircraft, rocket engines, and weapon systems until they surrendered in May 1945. After the end of the war, the victorious powers removed entire shiploads of plans, equipment, and researchers from Germany. Wernher von Braun, responsible for the development and construction of the V-2 rocket, was one of these researchers. He came to the United States, was denazified and subsequently employed in the missile

program. By the peak of his career, he and his team had gradually developed the dreaded V-2, which could reach a ceiling of 128 miles, into the Saturn V, which ultimately took Armstrong and Aldrin to the moon.

His fingers still between his lips, Tom wonders whether the Germans at the time might have been able to build a secret super-rocket of which the world knows nothing to this day. Do the rust spots indicate that the object is indeed from the 1940s, when ordinary steel plates were still used to build rockets? Could the missile have been bolted together in an underground tunnel, protected against enemy air raids? Was it so damp there that the payload gathered rust? Tom shudders to think it could be a Nazi bomb. What would it carry? TNT? Poison gas? Radioactive material?

December 16

Molenbeek, Brussels, Belgium, Europe

A controversial imam proclaims during his sermon: “All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the worlds. His power and knowledge reach from one end of the universe to the other. It is he who created seven heavens and the same number of earths. The divine command descends into your midst so that you may learn of creatures similar to us, living in the other worlds and prostrating themselves obediently before Allah. Just as the creation of all the heavens and earths as well as the creatures in them are under the sign of Allah, so it is in his power to gather them whenever it pleases him. This satellite carries the emblem of the one true faith. It was sent by our heavenly brothers and sisters to prove Allah’s great plan to unite all the worlds under his roof one day.”

In 2017, ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi had to admit military defeat and the end of the “Islamic State Caliphate” in Iraq and Syria, which he had declared in 2014. Before the “caliph” went

underground, he called on his supporters to attack the United States and Europe. They followed his call. By the end of 2017, close to 100 Islamist-motivated attacks were committed worldwide. Numerous other terror attempts were often thwarted only barely and with much luck.

Ever since its territorial defeat, the dark power has increasingly been trying to gain foothold in Africa, Southeast Asia, and the northern Caucasus. In addition, ISIS strategists – based on sympathizers’ and other Islamist terror groups’ vows of allegiance – have devised a new fiendish plan for their targets in the West. Now the moment seems to have come to put this plan into action.

December 17

This morning, the sermon of Molenbeek was posted on all social-media platforms, with multilingual subtitles. Hours later, the video is blocked, but receives all the greater attention on relevant websites, Salafist propaganda channels, friend-to-friend networks, hacked radio stations, and the Darknet.

The sermon itself would be harmless. It only echoes what’s written in the Koran and even the Jewish Torah: God created not just one earth with life on it, but seven of them. The imam’s claim that the UFO, with its crescent-shaped sign, came from one of these seven worlds could be dismissed as a harmless bunk, were it not for this related appeal released by the ideologues of ISIS:

Our earth is a disgrace in the scheme of the seven worlds created by Allah. Far too long has it been dominated and defiled by unbelievers. They oppress us. They ostracize us. They discriminate against us wherever they can. Until now, our resistance has been timid. But now that we have received a divine sign, it is the duty of every Muslim to heed the ever-true word of Allah and eradicate the unbelievers from this world. Do with them what you will, but do not rest until the last blasphemer has been silenced and

no sinful breath pollutes this earth anymore. For only then shall we be worthy to be accepted into the holy covenant of the seven worlds. So go and fight to the death for Allah's just cause. The Islamic State is history – long live the Holy Alliance of Islamic Soldiers!

The Ottoman Empire was a caliphate and thus the secular framework within which Islam was expressed for 600 years. The fall of the Islamic empire coincided with the end of the First World War. Ever since, generations of fundamentalist Muslims have been wondering how it is possible that 1.6 billion devotees of the one true religion no longer own their own empire and govern the events of the world.

And so the seed of the new dark power falls on fertile soil. The prospect of a glorious Islam, in which every believer gets the respect he deserves and earns enough of a livelihood to raise and feed a family, is spreading like the wind throughout the refugee camps and ghettos of Western cities. Quite a few of the hundreds of thousands of frustrated young men, who are without work or a viable future, can no longer resist the call of the Holy Alliance of Islamic Soldiers (HAIS).

Town Hall Square, Vienna, Austria, Europe

At the entrance to the square, an archway decorated with candles welcomes visitors to the Christmas market. 150 booths offer Christmas gifts, tree decorations, arts and crafts, culinary delights, and hot beverages. Skaters glide across the ice surfaces and winding paths of the adjacent park. The trees surrounding the square sparkle in festive splendor. Inside the city hall, children are decorating gingerbread and writing their Christmas wish lists. The atmosphere is peaceful all around.

A teenager with a black quilted jacket and a knit cap, who has been elegantly cruising the ice surfaces and paths for half an hour, at-

tracts the attention of a group of schoolgirls. They smile at the handsome boy. He smiles back and turns another round. When he passes the group again a little later, his smile is gone. The girls wave at him. He opens his jacket, pulls out a Czech Škorpion submachine gun, and shouts, “Allahu Akbar!”

Screaming, the girls collapse under the gunfire. Their cries are still in the air when the boy digs his blades into the ice and dashes off. Shooting wildly in all directions, he cuts across the park at a furious speed. Having emptied all four magazines he had with him, he turns the gun against himself, still skating.

Less than an hour later, HAIS claims the attack.

December 18

Oval Office, White House, Washington, D.C., USA

“Your moon-rocket story is a total disaster!” rages the president. He slaps the latest issue of the Washington Post against the chest of the NASA administrator and space advisor. “Why are you doing this to me?” Donald Trump runs in a circle. “You know these newspeople are like hyenas. Now they’re tearing into me again!”

Scott Nolden looks pained. “We were thinking –”

“You weren’t thinking anything!” shouts Trump and raises a threatening index finger. “Your brains were turned off!” He stops pacing. “There must be a way to figure out who this goddamn piece of junk belongs to.”

Darell Sherman, the president’s scientific advisor, looks no less pained. “This thing is not on any list, and there’s no spacefaring nation that would ever have used such a symbol.”

Trump plants himself in front of Sherman. “Then why are you pulling this crap out of your asses?”

“We’re sorry. We just couldn’t accept at first ...”

“Accept what?” barks Trump.

Sherman takes a deep breath. “That we have no clue what it is.”

Trump stamps his foot. “But this goddamn imam already knows —”
“Excuse me, Mr. President.” A Secret Service agent sticks his head through the door.

Trump turns on his heel. “You’re interrupting.”

“Your visitor, sir.”

Trump looks at his watch and nods. “Send him in.”

The security officer disappears. Two minutes later, a stocky older man in a bright-blue jacket enters the Oval Office.

Nolden can’t believe what he’s seeing. “What in heaven’s name do you want from *him*?” he whispers in the president’s ear.

“He’s on a lecture tour through the U.S. and Canada,” Trump mumbles back.

“So?”

“I was told he might know something about the satellite.”

Nolden shakes his head in disbelief. “The UFO-gods guru?”

“Over one-third of Americans believe in UFOs.”

“The guy’s a crackpot, not a scientist!”

“He sold 70 million books on this subject.”

“Harry Potter sold 500 million copies. You’ll be ridiculed if news of this meeting gets out.”

Trump waves the Washington Post in front of Nolden’s face.

“Does it matter at this point?”

Nolden drops down on the sofa with a groan.

Trump gestures the blue-jacketed man into the office and introduces everyone.

Sherman, who prefers to stand, leans against the fireplace next to George Washington’s portrait.

Erich von Däniken takes a seat on the sofa opposite the president and the NASA administrator. “You asked to see me because of the satellite?”

Trump nods. “That’s right. We want to hear your opinion.”

Nolden grimaces. “The *president* wants to hear your opinion.”

Trump shoots Nolden a look of disapproval.

“We’re at a dead end,” says the voice from the fireplace.

“I’m not surprised,” says the 83-year-old. “Do you know what’s in my books?”

Three heads shake no.

Däniken looks from one to the other. “Are you at least familiar with my theory?”

“Not really,” says Trump.

“Just marginally,” says Sherman.

Nolden mutters, “My work entails journalists asking me about your ideas every now and then.”

Däniken smiles. “And what do you tell them?”

“That it’s all nonsense. Baloney. Bullshit.”

Däniken’s smile narrows. “Do you believe in the God of the Bible, Mr. Nolden?”

“Of course.”

Däniken’s smile is gone. “A highly intelligent guy like you thinks my theories are nonsense, but believes in a supernatural divine being – one that, on the one hand, is capable of creating a universe and everything in it; and on the other hand, makes human beings out of clay, speaks from burning bushes, loves the smell of burnt offerings, approves of slavery – and in order to punish the disobedience of his chosen people, the Israelites, has an assortment of perversions in store that are worthy of a sadist, but certainly not of a god.” Däniken takes a deep breath. “Fifth Book of Moses, Deuteronomy, Curses for Disobedience: *If you do not obey the Lord, your God, and follow all his commands and decrees, he shall tear your families asunder, destroy your crops, bring plagues upon you, strike you with fever and consumption, cover you with horrible boils from the soles of your feet to the top of your head, and punish you with rashes, scabies, blindness, and confusion of mind, until you become mad with anguish and pain.*”

Däniken gives Nolden a provocative look. “With all due respect, sir.”

Nolden’s face turns to stone.

“Even though no one in his right mind would argue that we are the only intelligent species in this galaxy, it’s virtually a sacrilege to think that the Earth could ever have been visited by representatives of an extraterrestrial techno-civilization. Give me a break.”

Nolden looks down at his shiny Italian shoes.

Sherman seems to be thinking hard.

Trump appears impatient. “So, can we talk about the satellite?”

Däniken sighs. “It’s not so simple.”

Trump twists his mouth. “What do you mean?”

“Without background knowledge, you won’t know what to do with my information.”

Trump puffs himself up. “You’re talking to the president of the United States of America. All I gotta do is snap my fingers, and the very best people are available to evaluate your information.”

Däniken points at the Washington Post on the side table between the sofas. “You’ve *already* snapped your fingers, Mr. President.”

Trump sullenly pushes a strand of hair from his face.

Däniken offers a conciliatory smile. “I suggest that we first take a short excursion into the world of the ancient aliens and then talk about the satellite.”

Trump, still grumpy, checks his watch. “I don’t have all day though.”

“I understand, Mr. President.” Däniken takes a notebook computer from his briefcase and puts it on his lap. “According to the ancient aliens theory, extraterrestrial intelligences visited the Earth during mankind’s early history and created human civilization, or at least shaped it in a lasting way. As for me, I am firmly convinced that such an event took place. When it happened and the people of the Stone Age witnessed the powerful appearance of the aliens and their spaceships, these cavemen were completely out of their depth, both intellectually and linguistically. It had to be a divine apparition. And so we read in the scriptures of God’s house or dwelling place in heaven, of fire-breathing, winged chariots, of

stairways to heaven, and of glowing clouds upon which angels descend to earth and rise upward again.”

Däniken opens a text file. “In the Old Testament, there’s even an eyewitness account of such an event. The Book of Ezekiel says: *I saw an immense cloud coming, with flashing lightning and surrounded by brilliant light. The cloud burst open, and a bright light shone from within, like the glow of glistening gold. In this light, I saw four creatures, and each creature had four wings. Their bodies gleamed like burnished metal. Between the winged creatures was something that looked like burning coals, and fire moved back and forth among them. As I looked closer, I saw a big wheel beside each creature, touching the ground. And each wheel was intersected at a right angle by a second one, so that the wheel could go in all four directions without being turned. When the winged creatures moved, the wheels moved with them. And when the creatures rose from the ground, the wheels also rose. I heard the sound of their wings, like the roar of rushing waters, like the tumult of an army, like the thundering voice of the Almighty. When the creatures stood still and lowered their wings, the sound did not stop. Above the heads of the creatures, I saw something like a platform, sparkling like crystal. On top of the platform was what looked like a throne of lapis lazuli. On the throne sat a figure like that of a man. From what appeared to be his waist up, he looked like glowing gold, and from there down, he looked like blazing fire, and brilliant light surrounded him. Thus the Most High and Glorious was revealed to me in all his radiant splendor.*”

Däniken looks up. “So the almighty God has to use a helicopter-like vessel to get from heaven to earth? Rather peculiar, don’t you think?”

Nolden lifts his gaze from his shoes. “You’re cherry-picking a convenient quote from Ezekiel’s work, ignoring both the historical and the religious context.”

Däniken waves away his objection. “Ezekiel’s eyewitness account was part of my first book, *The Chariots of the Gods*. That was in 1968. Joseph F. Blumrich, then a chief engineer for the Apollo program, read the book and was outraged that a layman like me

dared to fantasize ETs into the Holy Scripture. In order to refute me, he analyzed Ezekiel's report by means of several Bible editions and the Torah." Däniken looks around the group. "At the end of the lunar flight program, Blumrich published his book: *The Spaceships of Ezekiel*. In it, he declared my Bible interpretation as absolutely correct. He was clever, because he actually applied for and received a patent on the biblical wheel that can go in all four directions."

Nolden utters a snide grunt.

"But not only the Bible and the Torah tell of gods cruising around in flying machines. Even ancient Indian scriptures, the Vedas, have exact descriptions of such apparatuses –"

"Question," interrupts Nolden. "You've traveled all over world in search of evidence for your theories –"

"For over 50 years."

"Have you ever encountered an artifact of extraterrestrial technology? Something that your astronaut gods left behind on Earth?"

"No."

"Not even a rivet, a piece of wire, or anything like that?"

"No."

"And what does this tell us?"

"Nothing."

"Ah."

"Because such artifacts couldn't even exist."

Nolden lets out a loud laugh. It sounds like rattling sheet metal.

"What a pathetic excuse."

Däniken's eyes flash belligerently. "The mother ship came from outer space, parked above the Earth, and disappeared again. What are we supposed to find? The shuttles – kind of a hybrid between a helicopter and a spacecraft – were high-tech machines made of lightweight components. No one would leave something like that behind. So that leaves only the search for discarded junk. But if the ETs actually left any broken parts behind on Earth, it doesn't mean you'd be able to find them thousands of years later. Case in point:

the Seven Wonders of the World. Except for the Egyptian pyramid sites, which consist mostly of ruins, there's not a speck left of them. Fire, wars, and forces of nature have completely destroyed these ancient colossuses. And what little may have remained of them was recycled at some point."

Again, Nolden laughs out loud. "That's all fantasy. No evidence!"

Däniken pushes himself off the sofa. "I guess I better go."

Trump holds him back. "Wait."

"What is it that convinces your supporters?" says the voice from the fireplace.

Däniken turns to Sherman. "The evidence that supposedly doesn't exist."

"Can you name any?"

"Of course. For example, there are imaginary straight lines that run thousands of miles across the mountains and valleys of Europe. Along these lines, strung out like a pearl necklace, we find ancient sacred sites such as stone circles, dolmens, and menhirs – also known as monoliths. What's baffling – aside from the achievement of being able to draw such imaginary lines – is the fact that the distances between these sites correspond to the distances between the planets of our solar system and the sun. On a reduced scale, of course."

Skeptical looks from the sofa and the fireplace.

"In Brittany, France, thousands of menhirs are scattered across the landscape, standing like marching columns in rows of eight, nine, or ten. Seen from the ground, the whole thing makes no sense. But if you get on a plane and look at the area from above, it turns out that the menhirs form gigantic Pythagorean triangles."

Däniken beckons Sherman over and shows a short video on the stone wonders. When it's finished, he casts a challenging look around the group. "Things like these exist all over the world. So I ask you: Who explained the solar system to the people of the Stone Age and enabled them to make a scale model of it? Who taught them astronomy, mathematics, and geometry? Who showed them

how to place rocks into the landscape in such a way that the arrangement only makes sense when viewed from great height?”

“You have a bad habit of denying ancient cultures basic evolutionary skills,” objects Nolden.

“Utter nonsense,” says Däniken, agitated.

Sherman is a scientist through and through. Nevertheless, he seems a lot more open-minded toward Däniken’s theory than Nolden.

“So you believe the knowledge that made it possible to build these sites came from external sources?”

“Correct.”

“From the god astronauts?”

“It’s not quite as simple as that –”

Trump looks at his watch again and raises his index finger in warning. “Keep it brief, okay?”

Däniken nods and continues. “It appears it wasn’t God’s lucky day when he created man. Barely on earth, man starts questioning his creator’s authority. He doubts him. He rails against him. And he keeps flouting his commandments and prohibitions. But even among God’s own retinue, the angels, not all are faithfully devoted to him. The celebrity renegade Samyaza or Samael, better known as Satan, is just one among many who rebel against God.”

Däniken opens another text file. “The Bible’s Enoch has this to say about it: *It happened after men had multiplied and beautiful daughters were born to them. When the sons of heaven beheld them, they became enamored of them and said to each other, ‘Come, let us select wives from the progeny of men, and let us beget children with them.’ Then they swore all together and bound themselves by mutual execrations to commit this crime against God. They were two hundred angels, who descended upon the earth. Samyaza was their leader. Urakabameel, Akibeel, Tamiel, Ramuel, Danel, and twelve others were their chiefs. And the two hundred sons of heaven took wives and cohabited with them. And the women conceived from them and brought forth the nephilim [Hebrew for giants]. These devoured all that the labor of men produced, until it became impossible to*

feed them. Then the nephilim turned themselves against animals and humans, in order to drink their blood and to devour them.”

Däniken raises his head. “Apparently, the connection between angels and humans produced veritable monsters. Flavius Josephus, a Roman-Jewish historian from the first century CE, described the angels’ descendants like this: *They were much larger and entirely different from humans. They struck fear and horror in all who beheld them. Whoever has not seen their bones with his own eyes can not believe how immensely large they were.*”

Trump tries to imagine such a monster.

Nolden isn’t having it. “Myths and fairytales.”

Sherman asks, “Angels and humans? How’s that supposed to work?”

Däniken smiles. “Adam and Eve are the result of a mixing of the genes of ‘Neanderthals’ and ‘gods.’ So we’re sort of related to them.”

Again, Nolden laughs out loud. The rattle is painful to hear.

Trump elbows the NASA chief, silencing him.

Sherman smiles. “Whacky – but interesting. Go on.”

Däniken returns the smile. “The sinful angels, however, did not only lie with women. They took disobedience to the utmost, by teaching humans, against God’s pronounced will, how to make armor, weapons, exquisite garments, mirrors, all kinds of ornaments; how to use paint, beautify eyebrows, and so forth. Impiety increased, fornication multiplied, and they transgressed and corrupted all their ways.” Däniken looks around the group. “It appears that it was the sons of heaven who taught our women the art of seduction.”

Stunned faces.

Nolden wants to say something, but Däniken raises his hand. “There’s more: The angel Akibeel taught men how to write. Amazarak taught sorcery. Asaradel and Barkayal taught how to observe the stars and the moon. Tamiel taught astronomy.” Däni-

ken's eyes light up. "And this is how science came to human beings."

Sherman squints. "Could this be related to the story of Adam and Eve, and how Satan tempted them to taste the tree of knowledge?"

Däniken nods. "As we're going to see in a moment, Satan alias Samyaza alias Samael is not the devil that the churches want to sell us. At some point, God had enough of the disloyal angels' wrongdoings. He wrathfully hurled them from heaven, so that peace might return in his kingdom. Or, in more contemporary terms: The commander-in-chief of Mission Earth banished the delinquent crewmembers from his ship onto the Earth."

Trump raises his hand. "Am I understanding you correctly – we went from the Stone Age to modernity because of a gang of criminal aliens?"

"Samyaza and the 17 chiefs of the 200 angels were part of the cadre. They weren't idiots or ordinary criminals. They knew exactly what they were doing when they opposed their commander, who must have been a rather difficult guy. As the Bible says: *I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God. You shall have no other gods before me. I am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to those who love me and keep my commandments.*"

Däniken looks from one to the other. "It's quite possible that Samyaza and his entourage were rebels or insurgents of sorts, who revolted against the domination and deification of their dictatorial commander." Däniken sits up. "In any case, they were the history's first whistleblowers. They wanted us to be able to mentally prepare for the scripturally prophesied return of 'God' by letting us know who they really are: a spacefaring, technologically advanced species. Believing that later generations would understand their message, they instructed our ancestors to build monuments with integrated geometry, mathematics, and astronomy, all over the planet."

Däniken looks at Nolden. “This message, however, is being deliberately ignored, and therefore billions of people mentally still live in the Stone Age.”

Däniken’s eyes wander to the decorated Christmas tree by the window of the Oval Office. “I do understand why my theory meets with so much resistance. If Christians had to admit that their God was really an alien, then original sin and the redeeming death of Jesus would be obsolete as the cornerstones and driving forces of Christianity. The pope and the churches would go out of business. Tens of thousands of bishops, cardinals, and other enlightened folks would be out on the street, just like that. If the Jews had to admit that Yahweh, when he gave them the Ten Commandments, was just an ET who came down to Mount Sinai with noise and smoke, they would probably blow up the Temple Mount. And if Muslims had to concede that Allah was in fact a spaceship commander, and that the archangel Gabriel – messenger of the holy revelation to the prophet Muhammad – was a senior officer, they would probably fall into chronic depression.”

Nolden’s face freezes.

Sherman is thinking hard.

Trump puts his palms together and stares at the carpet in front of him.

Däniken takes the notebook off his lap and places it on the table. “Hermann Burgard, a German linguist, has been studying the temple hymns of the Sumerian high priestess Enheduanna for 20 years. He retranslated these 4,000-years-old cuneiform scriptures, stripped of all religious psychology. His work fully supports my theory: Thousands of years ago, humanoid beings landed in the Middle East. The Sumerians called them *dingir*, which means: decision makers who travel in flying machines. Their base was a kind of space station or mother ship that circled around the Earth. Burgard has multiple proofs that modern technologies are described in mankind’s oldest records. And thus we come full circle to Ezekiel, Enoch, and other biblical figures who had contact with

the ETs.” Däniken leans over his computer and opens a photo file. “This is an impression from a Sumerian cylinder seal. It’s easily a thousand years older than the earliest Bible texts.”

Three pairs of eyes stare at the small screen.

Sherman has to look twice to believe it.

Nolden chokes.

“The satellite!” Trump croaks.

Däniken gives the men a moment to grasp the inconceivable. Then he explains the image. “A hexagonal tube, no doubt. At the top and bottom, it has these strange lenses. To the left and right of the tube, two god kings are depicted. Their outstretched arms and the spears, pointed at each other, indicate that they’re not well-disposed toward one another. The figure on the left could be Enlil, the chief god of the Sumerian religion, but also of the Akkadian, Babylonian, and Assyrian religions, as well as a symbol for other deities of ancient oriental peoples. The figure on the right could be the Sumerian wisdom god Enki, who is also considered the god of magicians, artists, and craftsmen. His special achievement, by the way, was the creation of man.” Däniken looks around the group. “They bear different names, but are largely identical to the biblical figures. Interestingly, Enlil and Enki are supposed to have been brothers. Both are shown with wings, which symbolizes their ability to dominate the skies. The ancient wing symbol, by the way, refers to all celestial beings and adorns the overalls and uniforms of pilots to this day.” Däniken points to the edge of the picture. “The ground seems to be littered with clay tablets, which means that there are probably other records of this event.”

Trump discovers the crescent above Enlil’s head. “That’s not good.”

Däniken reassures him. “The crescent on the satellite can stand for many things, but certainly not for Islam, as this imam claims. After all, *hīlal* was already in pre-Islamic Arabia a term for the narrow sickle of the waxing moon and for the moon god of the Thamud people.”

Trump breathes a sigh of relief.

“With the seven worlds created by Allah, it’s a bit more complicated, because they’re not only mentioned in the Quran. The scriptures of the Jewish Kabbalah – probably the most mysterious secret doctrine of all – even mention their names and describe their inhabitants.” Däniken moves the notebook back onto his lap and looks for the relevant file. “So: *The first world is called Geh. Its inhabitants grow trees and eat from them. Their world is shadowy, and there are many large animals in it. The second world is called Nesziah. Its inhabitants eat plants, which they do not have to sow. They are small in stature and instead of noses have two holes in their faces. A red sun is seen in their world. The name of the third world is Tziah. Its inhabitants need not eat like other beings. They are very beautiful. There are great riches and many handsome buildings in their world. The ground is dry, and two suns are visible. The fourth world is called Thebel. Its inhabitants eat everything from the water. They are superior to all other beings, and their world is divided into zones in which the inhabitants differ facially and in color. They make their dead to live again. Their world is far away from the sun. The fifth world is called Erez. Its inhabitants are descendants of Adam. The sixth world is called Adamah. Its inhabitants are also the descendants of Adam. They cultivate the earth and eat plants, animals, and bread. They are mostly sad and often make war on each other. There are days and nights in this world, and the groupings of the constellations are visible. In the past, they were visited by the inhabitants of Thebel. The seventh world is called Arqa. Its inhabitants sow and harvest. Their faces are different from all other faces. They visit other worlds and speak all languages.*”

Däniken pushes himself to the edge of the sofa. “Adamah could be our Earth. The god astronauts could be the inhabitants of Thebel who once visited Adamah. And this satellite could be –” Däniken snaps his laptop shut. “A time capsule that they parked in outer space for us.”

Questioning faces.

“Like I said, the clay tablets at the feet of Enlil and Enki indicate that additional information exists about the dispute between the divinities. I believe that the satellite contains explosive information – left behind by fallen angels, rebels, or whatever we may call them, for a generation of humans ready to face the truth.”

A leaden silence, lasting a few seconds. Then Sherman says, “If you’re right, then this capsule has been cycling the Earth for half an eternity already. Why haven’t we discovered it much earlier?”

Däniken takes a deep breath. “What I’m about to tell you is going to sound totally crazy.”

Nolden scoffs. “Even more crazy? Seriously?”

Trump makes an encouraging gesture.

Däniken takes another breath. “Well, I think the grays had their fingers in this pie.”

Trump squints. “The grays?”

“UFO crews,” Däniken specifies.

Rattling laughter.

Trump stomps on the NASA chief’s feet, silencing him immediately.

Sherman mumbles, “The second world is called Nesziah. Its inhabitants ... are small in stature and instead of noses have two holes in their faces.” He looks at Däniken. “And it really says so in the Jewish Kabbalah?”

“Not only in the Kabbalah. In the Secret Book of John and the Gnostic myths written down by Irenaeus, we also find references to the grays as well as an unspecified connection to the biblical God. In addition, there have been thousands of UFO sightings, some of them attested by prominent personalities, going from the present day all the way back to the distant past.” Däniken looks around. “It appears that the grays have been watching us for some time. Until now, however, they’ve made no attempt to introduce and explain themselves to us. Maybe they didn’t want to scare us. Or maybe our world is just a kind of zoo to them. They study us, but otherwise leave us alone. I also asked myself why we are dis-

covering the time capsule right now. Then it came to me that the grays might have manipulated its orbit.”

“Why would they do that?” Sherman asks.

“If we don’t do anything about Islamic terror, our civilization will go down the drain. That’s as sure as night follows day. You’re aware of the HAIS proclamation. They want a global religious war. And if they keep acting the way they did yesterday in Vienna, they will get their war.” Däniken pushes himself off the sofa. “Unless we shake up the world before it comes to that.”

Donald Trump gawks like a blowfish. He’s all about shaking things up, but ...

“It’s time to hit the reset button in the minds of the faithful.”

Trump sits as stiff as a stick.

“This freak is trying to brainwash us!” Nolden exclaims.

Däniken shakes his head vigorously. “I’m not trying to do anything. The rethinking must start with the believers themselves.”

“That can take another hundred years,” says Sherman.

“That’s why we need a trigger.” Däniken walks around the sofa. “We need a shock.” He fixes his eyes on Trump. “A god shock!” He bends down to him. “Mr. President. Send a spaceship to the satellite. Open Pandora’s box!”

**This thriller is available as ebook and paperback at
[Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)**

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