



Gracies Dinnertime Theatre

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The Arab-Israeli Conflict: Origins of Hate and Stuff By Vera

A friend and I had a rather macabre conversation a couple years ago. It was regarding the location of the next major world war. At that time, America was involved in the Balkan conflict, but we both had a sneaking suspicion that the Middle East would eventually ignite the world powers in a way that hadn't been seen since the Cold War. Slowly but surely, those suspicions are being realized, mainly in the form of retal-

iation against Islamic Fundamentalism and Those Nations Who Harbor Terrorists™.

But there is so much more to this conflict than meets the eye. The real struggle began roughly 4,000 years ago (give or take a few centuries) in a land of mythic proportions: Canaan. Or, at least I think it was Canaan. Maybe it was Haran. Well, bottom line is, it was an ancient land of mythic proportions. And in that land dwelt a tribal leader named Abraham and his wife, Sarah. Abraham was a pretty cool guy. God spoke to him practically on a daily basis.¹ God told Abraham that He would bless the Earth through

¹ Back in those days, God still did things like that.

Abraham's offspring. Problem was, Sarah was barren. In their younger days, Sarah and Abraham did a lot of wandering, going wherever the Lord told them to go.² But eventually, Sarah found the desire for children overwhelming. At this point, Abraham was 86 years old and Sarah was 76. The subsequent exchange Sarah had with her husband may have gone a little something like this:

Sarah: Damn it, I want kids.

Abraham: ...Okay.

Sarah: Shit for brains, I *can't* have kids.

Abraham: Oh, right. D'oh.

Sarah: Wait, I have an idea! I've got this Egyptian slave named Hagar. She's young. She's healthy. Why don't you get her pregnant and we'll raise the kid as our own?

Abraham: That sound good to you, God?

God: Listen to Sarah, Abraham. She's walking the walk and talking the talk. Word.

Sarah: Now where's that turkey baster? Oh, duh, it won't be invented for another 6,000 years. Okay, Abraham, you can screw her. Just this once. I don't mind.

Abraham: No prob, honey.

Nine months later, Hagar gave birth to a son. He was named Ishmael ("God Hears"). At this point, things started to go sour between Sarah and Hagar.

Sarah: Fuck, this isn't going the way I had planned it. My husband of over 60 years finally has a son...but he's not *my* son. And now Hagar is gettin' all up in my face 'cause she thinks she's better than me.

Hagar: Damn straight I'm better than you! You're old and shit. I hate you, beatch.

Sarah: Well, shit.

Sarah and Hagar continued to live at odds. However, Abraham did not intervene, because Hagar was Sarah's property. A few years later, God paid a visit to his homey, Abraham.

God: Guess what?

Abraham: Uhhh...what?

God: You and Sarah are going to have a son of your own.

Abraham: God, that's whack. I'm 99 years old! Sarah is 89!

God: I'm *God*, for fuck's sake. Ain't nothin' too miraculous for me. I'll make a covenant with yours and Sarah's son. Through him, you'll be the father of nations. It'll be cool.

Sarah was eavesdropping on all of this, by the way...

Sarah: Yeah right! I'm way past menopause! How am I supposed to have a baby now? Hahaha!

God: Sarah?

Sarah: Oh, shit...I mean, yes, Lord?

God: Did I hear you laughing?

Sarah: ...no.

God: Yes I did. I heard you laugh.

Shortly thereafter, Sarah and Abraham conceived a child.³ Sarah bore a son. She named him Isaac ("God Laughs"), saying: "God has played a trick on me. All those who hear of this shall laugh!"

A few more years passed...Ishmael and Isaac were now young boys. At this point, the schism between Sarah and Hagar stopped being just a spat between two women, and became the stuff that legends are made of.

Isaac: Say, we're brothers, right?

Ishmael: I think so. Wanna go play tag in the field?

Isaac: Sure!

Sarah: What the hell are you doing, Isaac?

Isaac: Uhh, nothing...

Hagar: Ishmael! You're not allowed to play with him!

Ishmael: But he's my brother!

² Sort of like an ancient form of AAA.

³ Bad visual, I know.

Hagar: No he isn't.

Isaac: Mom, I was just playing with my brother...

Sarah: You don't have a brother.

Sarah told Abraham that she wanted Hagar and Ishmael to leave. Again, Abraham was powerless to intervene because of Sarah's position in the household. So he gave Hagar some food and water and sent them away. Mother and son wandered in the desert, and it wasn't long before Hagar lost all hope of survival. Just then, an angel of the Lord appeared before them.

Angel: Check yourself before you wreck yourself, Hagar. God has heard Ishmael's cries, and He will not allow your child to die. He will make a great nation for Ishmael. However, his descendants will always be at odds with his brother's descendants.

Hagar: Okay, I feel better now because God is watching over us...

Isaac's descendants formed the Twelve Tribes of Israel, the basis for the genealogy of the Jewish people.

Christianity also eventually originated from Isaac's line. Ishmael's descendants became the Arab tribes. There has been, and probably always will be, animosity between Abraham's two families. On one side we have Judaism and Christianity, and on the other, Islam. All of these religions worship God – Elohim, Yah, Allah, Jehovah...It's just different names for the same deity. None of these faiths have a more valid claim to Abraham's monotheistic legacy than the others. If anything, we're all part of the same dysfunctional, mess-up, and incestuous family.

...Did I mention that Abraham and Sarah were also brother and sister?

Sources

Raver, Miki. *Listen to Her Voice: Women of the Hebrew Bible* Chronicle Books, San Francisco. 1998.

Zulc, Tad. "Abraham: Journey of Faith" *National Geographic*. Vol. 200, No. 6. December, 2001.

DESTROY
 DESTROY
 DESTROY
 To tear down or break up;
 To ruin completely; spoil.
 DEMOLISH
 To subdue or defeat;
 To kill; crush completely
 To leave one devastated.
 sound familiar, reporter?
 it should. you were on the
 receiving end last year.
 Ready for MORE?
 5/3.630PM.TheRock
 we will rock you again.
 love, gdt



God Bless You, Mega Man By Justin Mayer

I was procrastinating as always. A pile of assignments that I didn't want to do sat on my shoulders, so of course I was schlepping around the Internet, wasting time. While schlepping, I found the one thing that made me say aloud "I love you, Internet": an online collection of old Nintendo music in MP3 format including the music of Mega Man 2. All of it: Wood Man, Metal Man, and that sneaky Doctor Wily. That music did things to me. It brought me back to a time I forgot I ever lived in: sitting in Jonathan's family room playing Nintendo after a Little-League game.

I didn't like Jonathan all that much. I feel bad about saying it now, but I used him for his Nintendo. I would feel worse if the kid hadn't stolen my Legos. You can probably relate to this. If there's one thing a kid cherishes it's his Legos. Him walking out of my house with his pockets full of Legos was like walking out of the bank with a gold bar down his pants. That really put him on my shit list and I didn't feel bad about using him for his Nintendo after that, but now I can't help but wonder if that was the reason why he stole my Legos.

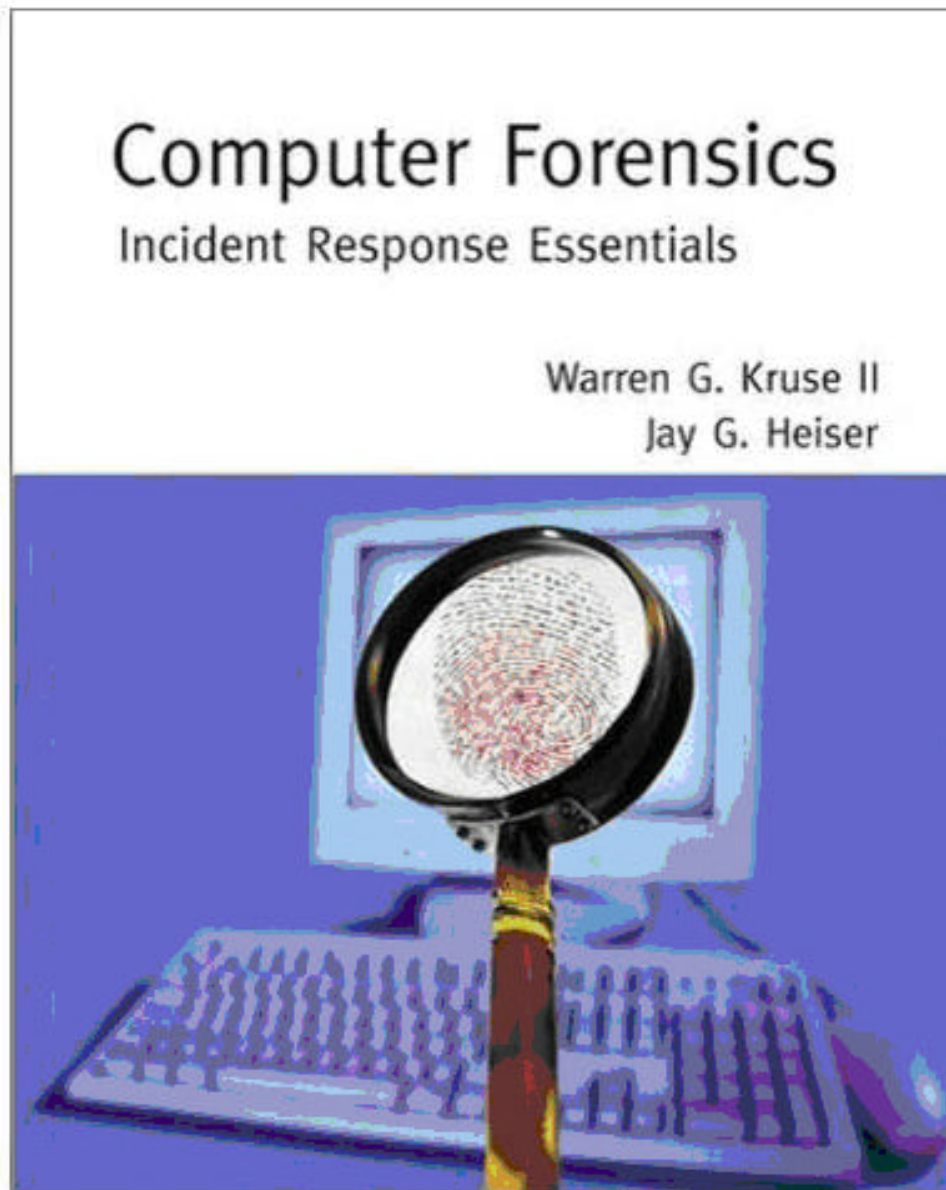
All Legos aside, and as much as I didn't like Jonathan, those were some very happy times for me. When I played the Mega Man theme on my computer eleven years later and twenty minutes ago, I was lost in a nostalgic stu-

por. Suddenly I was reminded of simpler times. The fact that I could actually hum along without missing a note nearly brought a tear to my eye. For a Nintendo game, the music is actually pretty decent. I'm sure Capcom had some top notch composers on its payroll; Quick Man's theme is right up there with Vivaldi's best work. That 8-bit anthem pulled up parts of my episodic memory I was surprised I even had.

I've often heard my Dad talk about how he misses the 1950's. I'm almost positive he doesn't miss the 1950's per se—that was a pretty scary time to be alive what with the Reds creeping around the backyard and all—but he misses being a kid and not having to worry about anything.

I don't miss the 1980's and early 90's, because that was a scary time to be alive too. What I miss is being a kid in the 1980's and early 90's. When you think about it, there was never a time in the history of the world when it wasn't scary to be alive. The only thing that didn't make it scary was that we were just kids. What we miss is that time before we lost our innocence; before your best friend was hit by a stray bullet or your brother died of cancer. Our innocence could have lasted any length of time, and some of us are still lucky enough to have it, but whatever the case, everyone had it at some point. These things happen to us all. That's what I miss, and that's what Mega Man reminds me of. That time when the most tragic thing that happened to me was when Jonathan walked out of my house with a pocket full of Legos. He still has them too, that rotten kid.

Whose fingerprints are on your computer?



Date: April 30th

Time: 8:00 pm

Where: Webb Auditorium

[Http://www.sparsa.org](http://www.sparsa.org)





**Hooray for *The Ginch*:
A Sophisticated Review of RIT's Hot New Show
By R. Meinhart**

I said that I would write a review of *The Ginch*. The brain-child of Jakob Lodwick and friends, *The Ginch* (an abbreviation from the longer Greater Institute News and Chronicle Hour) airs every night but Friday night at midnight and twelve-thirty on RIT Channel 19 and I said that I would write an article about it. I researched the show and its creator thoroughly; watching every back episode that I could,¹ speaking with the star/creator himself, perusing the show's website, and even went to see the taping of Episode 104: George. What did I come up with? What did I find?

I found all of the following: Naked men, large nipples, the reading of *Mary Worth* comics, painfully awkward moments deleted, *Charles in Charge* talking about stricter penalties for students receiving financial convicted of smoking pot, the arranging of frozen peas, Jungle Boy, pieces of ham graciously being given as prizes, the con-



sumption of stale french fries, ridiculous games of Doooble Dare², audience participation, conveniently placed stickers, naked Charleston-ing, beer being sprayed, consumed, and dumped everywhere, anti-terrorist hicks, not-so gourmet cooking, the Uuddler and Goose-choke, and clothes-less handstand contests. This list is not inclusive.

Set up in a talk show style with Lodwick as the host, *The Ginch* features guest appearances by Lodwick's friends and crew, most regularly being Ream Kidane, William Cotton, Marta Crowe, and Chris Ehrmann. It is also completely written, directed, designed, and post produced by the same group: a handful of people with excellent senses



of humors and an overall flair for improvisation. The filming of the show, while not currently publicized is indeed open to the general public. Consider this your very own official invitation to become an audience member of the taping of Episode Five on Sunday, April 28th at 5 p.m. in Webb Auditorium in Building Seven.³ Check out blumpy.org/ginch for more information, or for a few laughs in and of themselves: blumpy.org is the home several of Jake's other movies, including: Jakob's Breakup, Death Chaos 9000, and Alcohol: Nature's Poison. Brilliant.

I can't write anything more about this show, really. My Editor agreed with me, between our audible fits of laughter. It's too random, too energetic, too funny.

This following space reserved for what would have been the rest of my review of *THE GINCH*. Between falling to pieces laughing and being in awe of the raw random energy of the show, I decided to chuck it all and leave you with one final thought: Just watch it.

¹ Yes, all three of them.

² Extra o's added for the loong oooo sound, as in the "oooooh" in "Ooooooh baby." Say it with me, "Doooooble Dare."

³ Make sure you bring your copy of *Gracies Dinnertime Theatre*. It's your ticket.

Untitled**By Gary Hoffmann**

too many things I'd like to forget
 smiling - grin open-toothed -
 through a soft foggy night
 lit dimly in parking lots
 still wet from rain or tears
 memories like ghosts - not white
 not black but precisely
 the color of existence
 standing cozily around me
 singing lullabies and weeping
 caressing more gently
 than you ever did
 memories like coffee - artificial insomnia
 swishing darkly back and forth
 as I stare endlessly at
 the porcelain cup of my mind
 lost drearily in a diner at midnight
 past midnight in a lonely city
 empty city of ashes
 memories like dust floating
 silently down shafts of sunlight
 to be stared at on hazy afternoons
 of cloud-watching and hiding
 indoors and playing cards
 everywhere invisible
 except by your eyes

poetry!

Apology**R.Meinhart**

There is an old man sitting
 on the decrepit steps of
 Joe Luca's Barber Shop. He
 Smiles at me daily as
 I roll through the
 Stop sign on the corner
 Of Pitt and South on my
 Way hurriedly home
 From my life. I
 Keep meaning to stop
 And say hello, rather than
 Just share a glance, but
 I never do. They told me
 Not to drive on these
 Streets at dusk, because
 I am driving a Volvo
 Afterall. I am so
 So sorry now.

contestant who loses the contest
Loser. One that fails to win
 Someone who knows not and
 knows not that he knows not
 One that fails consistently
 a person with bad luck or poor skills
 One that is bad in quality
 a person with a record of failing totally
A Magazine (that rhymes with ferporter, of course)
 that consistently gets beaten
 in competitions including but not limited to tug of war
MAY 3@6:30PM. The Rock.
 Be there. love , gdt

What is this magazine?

This is Gracies Dinnertime Theatre, a magazine of satire, literature, poetry and art. We publish out of Rochester, NY but we have readers around the globe. We exist as a medium for your expression and invite you to contribute.

Anyone is welcome to submit.

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