

Sonia
HOLLIMON

Package deal

More to holiday spirit than meets the eye

It's graduation time at a high school in an affluent neighborhood. Let's say it's kind of like Beverly Hills High. Every kid expects a car for graduation. So, Dad and Son head off to

Weird Wally's (90210) and Son finds the brat-pack car of his dreams. On the big day, all the gifts have been opened, except the box marked "From Dad."



Eagerly, our boy rips off the ribbon and tears open the box only to find — a Bible.

Bitterly, Son storms away from the party, packs his things and leaves home. Years later, a phone call from his mother brings him back for his father's funeral.

"Everything your father had is yours now," his mother tells him. "So whatever you don't want, just throw away."

While sifting through his father's papers, our boy comes upon a familiar box. Inside is the Bible he had hurled away so many years ago.

“*Underneath the winking lights and the shiny paper, things aren't always what they seem.*”

Carefully, he takes it out, dusts it off and opens it up. Inside he finds a cashier's check made out for the amount of the car he had wanted for graduation.

Soon the glamour and glitz of the holiday season will be upon us, and everything from malls to halls will be decked out in holiday finery. But underneath the winking lights and the shiny paper, things aren't always what they seem.

For example, the Jews weren't exactly impressed with the wrappings Jesus came in — they wanted power, glory, someone to give the Romans what for — instead, they got someone who told them all about themselves, and the message wasn't exactly what they wanted to hear. They were disappointed, and as often

happens when we're disappointed, they had a big temper tantrum and stormed off to Calvary, Jesus in tow.

Sometimes the wrapping on a gift is everything we could dream of — lots of bows, expensive paper, a box that says "Dillard's" or if we're lucky, "Cartier." Then we open it, only to find that Santa Claus must be recycling cardboard, because that pair of legwarmers inside the box were definitely not part of the Dillard's fall lineup.

The boy with the Bible lost out because he was too proud to look past the wrappings and find out what was really inside. I'm a wrapping person, I admit it. Like most people, I judge things by their outside covers, but since I heard this story, I've tried to evaluate myself and my perception

of others. A lot of times, like the Jews, I'm disappointed by the package. But for those who took the time to listen to Jesus' message and find out who he was, discovered that he had a lot of gifts to give. One of those "gifts that keep on giving" type of deals.

So this Christmas, I plan to put more thought into the packages I'm giving rather than being so concerned about making them the most attractive, so my friends and relatives will want to open them up first. I also plan to start putting a lot more thought into my own personal package. Which means that maybe some days my hair won't be star quality, but I'll try to make sure that my smile is.

Then maybe some intelligent babe will come along someday and see past my overalls and my ponytail, and discover that I'm funny and smart, and really not that evil when I have PMS, and say "Wrap it up, I'll take it."

Hollimon is a senior broadcasting major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

Anthony
NGUYEN

Into the ominous future

We are all living the American conspiracy

The end of the world is coming. And we can't do anything to stop it. The big 2K is just four years away, and I'm psyched (yes, let the deluge of end-of-the-world talk begin). It's

the uniqueness of the end of a year, decade, century, and millennium coupled with the desire to gain fame before the hammer comes down on civilization which makes me



feel this way.

Being a professional journalist — well, OK, I'm a lowly columnist (we can have dreams can't we?), I thought I'd take time out this week to tell you about conspiracies — conspiracies I've diligently discovered through painstaking blind luck, persistence, other-worldly correlations and footwork. All are harbingers of how and when the world will end. So at much risk to my personal safety and without further adieu, here they are:

BE CAREFUL OF OTHER PEOPLE

Dr. Metar Psyik, formerly of the University of Athens at Acropolis, has shocked the scientific community with his claims that people are part of a conspiracy to undermine the daily machinations of society. At the recent Symposium on International Science, Psyik claimed people were being sent subliminal messages via Musak by the vast secret World Power government to procreate wildly.

“*The big 2K is just four years away, and I'm psyched (yes, let the deluge of end-of-the-world talk begin).*”

Free will and liberty would be slowed by overpopulation and create the problem known in technical terms as Life Bite. Life Bite are difficulties supplied by what is known as The Other People. Without the difficulties created by The Other People, life would be easier. Revolutions, which the government would prefer to prevent, could occur on a more efficient basis, making people happy.

Psyik believes that The Other People who you meet are products of this government conspiracy and are there solely to make Life Bite. Specifically, anyone who is "difficult" toward you should be considered the elite agents of the government, privately bred in cloning tanks in a facility known only by its code name: NE-bras-KA. I was unable to get more information from Dr. Psyik, as some of his friends showed up to take him to some fancy event — well, they were dressed in black.

UNITED STATES DOESN'T EXIST

The first great conspiracy in the history of the universe is, of course, that a planet called Urth exists. One popular belief is the Urth was created

in six days. Seemingly some transplanted aliens from Cygni Nine of Draco hold this belief about Urth. Unfortunately no one has been able to corroborate this story about the existence of Urth, and of those that do, tend to run afoul of flying vases. However, the first conspiracy in human history is the supposed existence of a United States of America. My investigation has led me to believe that the United States is one of the greatest cover-ups ever.

Parchments recently excavated from an ancient temple reveal that historians have lied! There was never a United States. Historians and bored cats and dogs invented the United States in order to make others believe that something interesting took place during the last two centuries. It has been discovered that Americans didn't so much rule the United States as pick belly lint in their spare time. The insidiousness of this conspiracy is that it is part of the propaganda formulated by another secret organization known as Rand-McNally. In a recent unofficial survey I conducted of 25 suspected Americans, 96 percent admitted to only existing in the minds of only

one of four people (the X-Fours), hidden for security purposes, in the whole world. After all, no one can actually claim to have met all of the people they purport to know, making it highly probable that the United States is a trick of an enemy power.

The remaining 4 percent of Americans who do not exist in the minds of the X-Fours are just statistical anomalies who stumbled on America by chance, and as such can't possibly exist. If you believe you are an American who doesn't exist in the mind of the X-Fours, then you must be part of this 4 percent and as a result don't exist. Don't worry. Many Americans have been proven not to exist, but have bravely decided to not let this control their lives or fates.

These conspiracies point me to the inevitable conclusion that the world will end when the Earth is, as one theorist put it — "blowed up."

So as some Men In Black plan on taking me out to dinner tomorrow, I hope you realize conspiracies are a common occurrence. I haven't let this interfere in my daily life, and I truly believe the truth will one day be known. But until then, just do what I do — lock your doors and windows. Wear clean underwear. And keep an eye on anyone you see, they could all be government agents. Even you — hey why are you reading this then? Trying to find out how much I discovered about your evil plans, huh?

Nguyen is a senior biochemistry and philosophy major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.