

Philip Kobylarz

### Fishing for Television

“Got a story that ain’t got no moral, let the bad guy win every once in a while”

—the Spinners

Because I live in a valley surrounded by pointy mountains, rows of rusty knife blades, a pyramidal series of bonsai gardens created by an artist whose underlying themes are obviously chaos and desolation (they taught us how to find underlying themes in college), I cannot receive what is everyone’s basic right in America: free television.

A thin signal flows into the old fashioned rabbit ears, a relic in itself, or themselves— basically it’s a glorified coat hanger taped to a clock radio circa nineteen eighty one. Early, early Etruscan art. What the beautiful people are doing in the fresco space of the screen, however flat or round it is up to you. Today

it's mostly pornography or sports (not necessarily in that order), the recent political scandal, or a decade's worth of murder.

The news relays the choice topic du jour: the fuckedupidness of the Middle East. I guess they forgot it was once a holy land. Topic two is always death in its more glorious forms. Always lots of gore and guts just like in the scariest of our hyperviolent scary movies, full of nightmares beyond the realm of abhorrent that we are encouraging our children to soon dream. They'll know how it was. The hell of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Yippee!

But there's only really one story. She's dead. The modern incarnation of the 50 foot tall woman. Yes, indeed, Anna is dead.

Our nightmares, however, aren't dreamt anymore. They're what's happening in meaty real time on teevees, ubiquitously showing war war war war war war war war and war. And we don't really have to fight them, we just have to watch. We only have to press the Nielson button, the old poll, the next poll. Those polls and not the kind girls dance and spin on. It's the only relevant ballet that's left.

The war doesn't matter anymore, The reason is simple.

She's dead.

The hottest reality t.v. show is the one that really doesn't have a goal, no winners, only bloody melodrama that no one even cares about not even the people who think they are reality movie stars. No million dollar prize, maybe a spot in an Adam Sandler featurette or Dr. Pepper commercial. Some such prize that amounts to freakin' nothing and the fuckin' taxes that have to be paid on it. It's all an old Coke bottle top that promises something exactly like thirst. So drink up while you can even if it makes you puke.

And we puke a lot. Or we feel like it. Or we take a host of prescription drugs that prevent it from ever happening.

*Day 2: Diary of the New Show*

It's us to us, we the people, we the real people of the crazy dream of coolness as life. We want to buy the ultimate freedom on QVC because we know its only going to be there for a limited time. It doesn't matter what the cost. We have cards for that.

Instructions: all it takes is the perfect movie plot, created in storyboards totally elementized (the genre to be decided at a later date) that includes murder, sex, aliens, and a great Costa del Sol locale, sun drenched bikini-ed Spanish babes and the world's best tequila imported from Mexico.

The story of all stories.

The best advice is not to wonder what Theodore Kaczinski mused as he was losing his mind in a Waldenesque cabin enveloped by northwestern white pine on the border of nowhere and nowhere. Yeah, it's o.k. to write each other vapid e-mails of anonymity, of emotional *sturmunddrang*, but every once in a while, actually write it down. Paper, ink, that sort of thingy. Read the Randy Weaver book over and over again. Have nightmares of robots busting out your windows with duct-taped guns in their hands because if you do they will be true.

## **Armageddon— part 832, chapter nine, the end of the end ending.**

I like the city to stay awake for me. I enter what you call sleep and I monitor how eveningtude unveils her brunette locks by walking around the country club in which I live and gazing nonchalantly into windows that the rich feel no reason to cover in drapes. They are rarely doing anything more than watching t.v or solemnly drinking booze and watching t.v. or sitting in a room in which a t.v. is on but they are looking in another direction thinking about watching t.v. or what will come on next.

### *After I Heard Anna Had Died*

Here is what happened. I saw some people either fucking or committing murder. I couldn't quite tell. They were moving wildly, muscles flexing, heads, one head with a mane of hair thrown back, the electric eels of flesh and soft lighting, a painting fell from the wall.

Here's what anyone has to know about winters here: there isn't much to do. Sure, there's skiing but when the temperature is below zero, it feels like your face is being peeled off by acid. And what is skiing anyway but falling down a mountain while trying to not kill yourself or crack a rib. So you do this: brave the elements while walking around a rich neighborhood/golf course/serendipitous park combination and you look in windows. The ultra rich, as we all know, never pull their shades because they like to show off their

wealth and furniture ordered from the best catalogs. Floral prints are always big. Stuff made out of glass that should never be.

Why the rich have no class has something to do with Americans' displacement from Europe. In this neighborhood built on a gently undulating plane that is meandered in half by a small river and stitched in by 6,000 plus foot mountains, there are numerous Kokopellis. They adorn houses and mailboxes and I'm sure serve as interior knick knacks.

One barren mountain that juts into the sky like an unsharpened meat cleaver where no humans ever go is named Indian Peak and that must be the inspiration. Native American culture exists only as a smoke-filled casino of one-armed bandits that lies on the north side of a highway that bisects the state and leads to two ends of nowhere. Remember the crying Native American who laments pollution? Well, here, the tears have all dried up and no one ever has to see their suffering. And the city in which I live is named after a Chief.

The night I went out to see the murder/romantic interlude was crystal clear with meteors flying overhead. The geese leave green Cheetos of shit all over the golf course that you inevitably walk in and trek behind you like vegetal footprints. In the distance there is a rumbling of a train that is more so felt than heard. Who knows what they hold as there are only a few stores in town owned by the big chains and no restaurants worth mentioning.

Voyeurism is a last resort when there is nothing better to do. This explains all the sex on the internet. It's all American sex and there are thousands of other countries but we do it best. Or we do it the worst and try hard to be romantic about it. These are the facts and I'm sticking to them. I am no criminal, just an observer of how weird life has become past the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### *Isn't the Sky the Weather Channel?*

Every day is a gray one. The weather here is ominous, especially if it indicates anything about the afterlife. Half of the country is steamy and warm in the middle of winter, the other is freezing its ass off. Or course, I'm in the freezing part— weather so cold that people don't even want to have sex. The clouds hang above the mountains and loom over them like hunchback of non-existent Notre Dames. However, despite of the horribly frozen weather that makes the thin veneer of snow crunch and whine like Styrofoam cutting Styrofoam underfoot, that couple on a wintery Thursday night were going at it like rabbits in a warm den. Or someone was murdering someone.

Here are the facts. I saw a struggle. A painting fell off the wall. I think I heard the telephone ringing, unanswered. Or was it my imagination? Am I tainted by so many CSI programs and Datelines about death? Late, sleepless nights reading entries in Crimelibrary.com. Who knows? I know what I saw. Two naked people writhing like snakes. He was pulling her hair and her arms were reaching behind trying to strike him. The lights went out and I heard the sounds of something hitting the walls. That's when I ran. I ran under the shining stars above, entering into the puffs of breath that froze immediately in the frozen air. I ran because I felt guilty. I ran home and sat in a room and wondered.

The whatever-I-saw-happening still can't take away the fact that she is dead and moldy but she still lives in radio broadcasts about her and her John Redcorn-like mythical son that just might be true and the thousands of men and pilots of industry that boinked her but couldn't touch the barely real thing she kept inside like a splinter from the True Cross. Some early morning a.m.s will be like this for everyone: the rantings of cable, a thin trickle of a river spilling by over well washed white bread loaves of rocks, the scent of a rattling air conditioner unit flowering the air concrete block clean, and the memory of homeless people sleeping territorially sleeping under lights in a dry basin of a city park in Tucson, AZ. Remembering this in Boise, Idaho on a warm March night. Places she has never been, until now. With me, in memorium.

She weighed 178 pounds when she died. No one cried when she died. People heard it broadcast on t.v. as they scarfed down Kentucky Fried Chicken and they thought for a moment, between swallows of industrial strength mashed potatoes and coleslaw that it was a shame, then they took a sip of cherry vanilla Pepsi.

In the newspaper on Sunday, glorious Sunday when the rain starts and stops and the sun comes out to christen the mountains in halo drapes of yellow then gold then revealing bronze extra gleam, I saw the report that ends the story. So much of the news is about ended stories.

Two people were cited by the police department for disturbing the peace. The old couple neighbors who with their skinny scared Labrador that barks at anything called the neighborhood watch, they had heard some noises, maybe a robbery, and the police were then called because we do have a 9-11 service so why the heck not use it? The horny older couple didn't get cited with a ticket but the police did come out and

they pretty much saw the same thing I saw although in a different position (we can only wonder) and from a totally different perspective. And they probably lingered more because they had the right to.

Here is the moral of the lesson as all stories are supposed to have them. Watch how much fun you have because at the height of ecstasy, the cops can come a knocking and you are being watched by everyone and nothing you do is private and she is dead and there are legions of Marilyn Monroe worshippers but none, less me, who are truly, truly devoted to her memory and for it, and the cult of my others, namely, you the reader reader, are condemned to a darkest sulphuric realm of hell: an internet memorial webpage.

The new infinity.

Guess what? The new telephones books have arrived in their bright yellow bags and no one absolutely even gives a shit.