



Tuesday began like any other workday, or so it seemed as the sun brought dawn to each meridian. Yet an unsuspecting world was in for quite another, rather sublime awakening—for who would have dreamed something as mundane as a bagel would be the catalyst to empower a most extraordinary human being, a Gnostic vestige ordained high in the Himalayas for the past four decades? But it did.

By 9AM, Chicago's Loop was a hive of activity, a vibrant city dealing with its own slice of life as with any other metropolis around the globe. A thinning rush hour crowd still scurried through Union Station, a Chicago landmark whose footprint covered a city block. At each end, escalators ferried commuters topside onto Riverside Plaza, and between them, a wide mid-level mezzanine spanned two stories above Metra's north and south rail terminals below. The walkway was also home to a dozen fast-food eateries, concession stands, and a large tri-level cocktail bar under construction.

Richard Crippen, a distinguished looking fellow of fifty-two was in one of them, seated at an aisle-side cafe table. At 5'-10", of slender build and clad in a navy Armani and Hermes

tie, he looked more like an executive banker than the waiter he was. He slowly sipped a cappuccino, his mind drifting from lead stories in the Sun Times to reflect upon the state of mankind—rueful of how a huge segment of earth’s population had evolved into a decaying species wallowing in corruption, violent crime, and military mayhem. *A pity, he thought, yet soon, a fitting testament to the ancient beatitude: ‘the meek shall inherit the earth.’*

Crippen daubed his pencil-thin mustache with a napkin and again glanced at the Times’ headlines:

**MURDER TRIAL UNLIKELY
REPUTED MOB BOSS TO GO FREE**

when his attention was drawn to an overhead monitor airing the same story.

“Trial resumes later this morning for Frank Santorelli, the alleged crime boss indicted for a double homicide on West Taylor Street. However, Dante Ippolito, counsel for the accused, said he’s confident Judge Allen will have no option but to grant a motion for dismissal, citing the prosecution has failed to produce a key witness scheduled to testify since a week ago, Wednesday.” The newscast then played Ippolito’s interview upon leaving the courthouse yesterday afternoon.

“The D.A. claims they have an eye witness. Well, where is he?” challenged the brash Ippolito. “I’ll tell you where he is—he doesn’t exist. He never has. If you ask me, the entire ordeal is a pathetic media ploy; an election charade that’s getting tedious. My client has better things to do than to be an unwitting billboard for Mr. Coulter’s political ambitions.”

Santorelli’s flamboyant attorney continued spewing rhetoric of how the murder victims were thugs; “known drug dealers with rap sheets a mile long and likely gunned down by rivals. Mr. Coulter’s time would be better spent investigating local gang-bangers. My client is innocent. He happens to own a couple apartment buildings in that neighborhood, nothing more.”

The media ate it up, but Crippen knew different as he watched a smirking Ippolito weave his way through a passel of reporters. Ippolito continued flouting the D.A. as a political hack in contrast to his portrayal of Santorelli: "my client's an honest businessman, a pillar of his community who abhors violent crime as any other citizen."

Indeed, my time has come, he nodded to himself— for a prophetic seed that had lain dormant for over two-thousand years had sprouted, and driven by supernal forces astir within, he had plans of being far more than a passive spectator at Santorelli's court hearing when a chance expletive prematurely launched his life's mission.

"Damn it!" blurted Juan Gomez, who watched helplessly from his wheelchair as a buttery bagel slipped from his grasp and wobbled across the floor, coming to rest against Crippen's ankle like a leaner in horseshoes.