

Chapter 1

The Sword of Damocles

When you're really good at something, nothing beats getting paid to do it. And Damocles was very, very good at what he did.

He had hired on as a courtier to the tyrant Dionysius, who ruled Syracuse in Sicily in the fourth century B.C. Then, as now, being a tyrant was not all fun and games. In fact, running a dictatorship could be a real headache.

But no self-respecting tyrant would ever be caught without a courtful of jolly types whose job it was to take his mind off his troubles and make him feel good about things.

Through comedy, drama, optimism, and flattery, these entertainers were charged with keeping the royal mood sunny side up. Show biz for an audience of one.

And nobody was better at the job than Damocles. He was the quintessential optimist, the ultimate positive thinker, the definitive master of flattery.

But apparently, in time a more realistic Dionysius began to weary of the relentlessly rose-colored view of life advanced by Damocles. His everlasting good cheer and obsequious fawning were beginning to get on the king's nerves.

Determined to make his point with Damocles, legend has it that Dionysius invited him to a banquet. Once seated, Damocles looked up to find himself sitting directly under a sword suspended by a single thread.

The not-so-subtle message Dionysius intended Damocles to pick up on was that life is not all undiluted happiness and success. The threat of danger hangs over all of life's endeavors. Suspended over life's good is the constant menace of evil.

I can identify with Damocles.

Like him, I prefer to accentuate the positive. I'm attracted to upbeat, optimistic people, and I try to avoid gloomy pessimists who look for the dark lining on every silver cloud.

Life can be good and pleasant and happy. It brings to each of us its share of joys both small and great.

Watching a baby's smile.

Falling in love.

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Graduating with honors - or sometimes,
just graduating at all.

Acing a college exam.

Winning a promotion.

Becoming a father or mother.

Buying your dream house - or sometimes,
just being able to afford buying
a house at all.

Watching your team win.

Learning a new skill.

Yet, for all the good and beautiful and joyous that life holds - and for all the effort we may put forth to look on the bright side - a certain vague sadness and indefinite fear constantly haunts us.

Fear, because we are not safe. Fear of the crime, disease, accidents, or disasters that can snatch us - or those we love - away at any moment. Fear that we may somehow lose our most prized possessions or relationships. And, in recent years, even the fear of possible nuclear annihilation.

Sadness, because no matter how good life gets, we know we're dying. Why does life have to be so short? We begin with high hopes and bright dreams, with energy and drive. But all too soon the accelerating years cruelly assault our bodies, minds, and plans, stealing away much of what makes life worthwhile. We've only just begun to live, it seems, when suddenly it is time to die.

The daily news forcibly reminds us that, for all the admitted good it may possess, our world is nonetheless blighted with an appalling burden of evil. Here where we live the tears never stop. The hospitals are never empty. The jails are always crowded. The nations are never at peace. Here, the daily news is of terrorism and scandal and divorce and starvation and child abuse and drug addiction and war and death.

Here on our planet, violence is entertainment and life is cheap. Decency and morality must fight to survive. Here on earth our lives are filled with fear and pain and worry and heartbreak as we march our weary way to the grave.

Our world is a vast colony of unspeakable misery, a seething caldron of personal and national violence, a whirling sphere in space without a single safe haven from the all-pervasive reach of selfishness.

It's as if good and evil are locked in desperate combat - as if two titanic forces somewhere in the universe are having it out to the death with Earth as the battle zone.

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Is it possible that behind all the wars of Earth a much greater war rages? Is it possible that every occurrence of earthly conflict - from a playground fistfight to a world war - is simply one skirmish in the ongoing war behind all wars?

Prepare now, in the pages just ahead, to break beyond the here and now. Prepare to stretch your mind to take in something bigger than anything you'll ever hear on the network news. Prepare to expand your focus to consider a reality so far-reaching that it staggers the imagination.

For in the pages that follow, the curtain will be drawn back to expose an enormous controversy between good and evil that many of us may never have dreamed existed. For, indeed, we are in the midst of a war that reaches back beyond human time - that reaches out from planet Earth to the entire cosmos.

And this battle is for real. This is no Star Wars/Star Trek science-fiction drama. But despite its stark reality, the world's media have chosen to deny and ignore it, reporting instead simply on its obvious effects. Which explains why so much of the evil reported by the media each day seems so random, so senseless.

It's the old problem of being unable to see the whole forest for concentrating on individual trees. Step back now - far enough to see the forest, to take in the big picture, to discover the "Why?" of evil by seeing it in its context.

Prepare yourself. For now we begin to open... THE LUCIFER FILES.

Database 5, File H-9073.811, Record 291

[Late 1980s]

Strategy Directive 11437.52

RE: Substrategy Reminders

I don't need to remind you, as my Central Imperial Staff, that in harmony with the Grand Strategy, it is to our benefit in some areas of the world to be direct and open in doing our work.

However, you also know that in many other areas, covert operations are more effective. Results from implementing the Secular Humanism Task Force sub-strategy are actually in advance of our estimates.

In those designated areas where the sub strategy is in effect, Targets [human beings] must be led to believe that neither the enemy [God] nor I exist. This is vital.

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The reality of a place called Heaven - of a real and personal god or devil - must be forcefully opposed. The book of lies [the Bible] must be presented either as irrelevant or as wholly human in origin. Its early history must be presented as legend or allegory. And any serious belief in the truth and reality of these things must be dismissed as hopelessly naive - as the sign of an unsophisticated, unenlightened, immature mind.

Keep our image benign - even humorous. Encourage the old stereotypes - the horns-and-pitchfork images. And keep the Targets busy making light of the book of lies and the existence of either god or devil.

Aggressively oppose any speech, book, or other communication you encounter that exposes the War and its agents as real. In the designated areas, we simply must stay under cover. As usual, pass this directive on to your subordinates.

Lucifer,
Commander-in-chief,
Imperial Forces
King of Earth
Most High God in Exile
UNIVERSAL EMPIRE

Special note to the reader:

A brief explanation here on the organization of the Lucifer Files may prove helpful. The files contain five databases containing entries from the following time periods:

Database 1 From Lucifer's creation to the entrance of sin

Database 2 The war in Heaven

Database 3 From the creation of man to the birth of Christ

Database 4 The period of Christ's life on earth

Database 5 From the time of Christ to the present

This book will contain only a small sampling from the Lucifer Files. Selections will be of three types:

1. Imperial orders
2. Strategy directives
3. Journal entries

The first two file categories are directed to Lucifer's top level of command - the Central Imperial Staff. The third category, "journal entries," is Lucifer's personal record of events and of his own thoughts and feelings.

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As written, the files contained an abundance of expletives which have been deleted in the abstracts appearing in this book.