

Bones
<http://nogoodsonofabitch.com>

GOOGLE

I.

Hi, I'm Bones. Welcome to Bones Ink, home of all things Bones. Here you'll find a scattered rambling of my thoughts, opinions, political diatribe, and so forth. Yeah yeah, I know, I'm a good five years past the decline of that whole "blogging phenomenon". But, "what the hell," I tell myself. "You'll enjoy reading all your thoughts you had in the past one day." And maybe that's true. And well, no time like the present to find out, right? So, with a little bit of willpower and a healthy amount of luck, maybe I'll actually keep up with this thing. Anyway, enough babbling for now. There will be more than enough of that to come, I'm sure.

-Bones

August 19, 2011

I wrote that. Rather, I will write that. Or, well, I mean, I *did* write that, I just haven't written it *yet*. Yeah, I know, it's confusing. But stick with me, ok? Cause if you're confused, I think you'll begin to understand how I've been feeling. But, I'm getting ahead of myself. I tend to do that a lot these days.

Well, it's already evident that I won't be able to make any of this clear to you without starting from the very beginning. So I guess that's what I'll do. Hell, maybe explaining it all to

you from the way I saw it - all the way back to that first drunken night sitting in front my laptop, all the way from the start - maybe it will help me to understand how it's going to end...

It was late on a Saturday night, sometime earlier this year, and I was drunker than shit. I'd spent the night out raising hell in the bars with my friends, and now I was back home, wide awake, drunk, and with nothing important to do the following morning that might inspire me to go to bed. I often wonder how things would have turned out had I just called it a night like any normal 28 year old would have done at 4 am. But instead, I brewed myself up a cup of Ramen, that poison-tasting MSG-filled swill that comes in the Styrofoam cup, and sat down in front of my laptop.

I began my routine of surfing the requisite daily news – Drudge, Fark, The Onion, etc. But in my drunken state I wasn't really capturing anything of any value, and there weren't many new updates since I'd done the same thing while fucking off at work that afternoon.

Eventually, I found myself about to engage in a little internet past time that we've all tried one time or another. No, not that, you perverts. At this point in the night, I was too drunk to be able to handle a real-life girl, much less a two-dimensional bit-mapped one. No, I'm talking about the other thing we've all done. I was going to Google myself.

I hopped on over to google.com and in that one lonely textfield in the middle of the page, I typed "bones."

The results were far from intriguing.

A link to Dr. Bones, Doggie Veterinarian. A link to "Bones and tendons, structural architecture of the foot." A link to excavation pics of ancient Egypt.

Nothing terribly fascinating to a guy with a nights-full of gin flowing through his veins. I decided to narrow the results a bit. I typed "bones and decaur, GA."

Again, nothing eye-catching.

A link to Love and Bones, a downtown gift and card shop. A link to some Atlanta steak house. Etc etc etc.

I scrolled down to the bottom of the results where all the remaining page numbers were lined out in order, with the word “goooooogle” stretched atop them. For some reason, and to this day I still don’t know why, I moved the cursor over the little “3” link, and clicked on it.

And again, surprise surprise, the results were completely irrelevant. I scrolled down to the bottom of the page, thinking that I’d click on the “4” and continue this meaningless and unsatisfying exercise. And there, at the bottom of the results, the very last one, was something that caught my eye.

Bones Ink – the rants and ruminations of a long-haired programmer in Decatur.

Hmm, well that sounded familiar. So there was another long-haired computer dork living in my little east-side town? I wondered how I’d never stumbled into this guy in the three years that I’d lived here. I mean, a techie named Bones is not all that rare – hell, there was a Star Trek character with that name. But in Decatur? That’s a little odd. Decatur’s not exactly a metropolis.

I guess I was a bit intrigued. Well, “intrigued” might be a little strong. Sure, seeing a link to a website of what seemed to be your doppelganger was odd, but when you’ve been building websites for ten years, you’ve spent a hell of a lot of time on the internet. And as you well know, there’s a lot weirder shit than that out there. I clicked on the link. Maybe this Bones fellow knows some fine Decatur chicks. I could do with a fresh crop, no doubt.

I watched the site load onto the screen. An ugly green background with a white column going down the middle, paragraph upon paragraph of text rolling down atop it. The header graphic read “Bones Ink,” with a tagline underneath of “write drink and be merry.” So maybe the guy’s a little cheesy, but hell, obviously a drinker. I took a quick glance at the upper-most post.

Angie and I just got back from Savannah, and a helluva good time was had. And coming back to a house that had not been burglarized, burnt down, or decimated in an alien invasion was a nice surprise. As you well know, I’ve always been a bit of a paranoid...

Booooooring. Apparently this other Decatur Bones wasn't gifted with a knack for gripping storytelling. One paragraph, and already I'd had enough. Reading these pathetic "rants and ruminations" (why does every blogger think he's the first one to use "ruminations") of some dude and his hoity-toity girlfriend piddling around some sleepy Southern town, soaking in its "idyllic charm," was going to do nothing for me but kill the buzz I'd spent \$100 to develop. I was about to hit the Back button when something caught my eye. The date of the post read "February 26, 2013."

I laughed. You call yourself a programmer, Bones? Might want to try tweaking the server time, bro. Newbie mistake.

I looked down at the next post, expecting it to be dated sometime circa 1776, the idiot...

Here's a couple pics of Angie and me from the Engagement Party. Thanks to all who came. Thanks for all the wonderful gifts. And thanks, of course, for the free booze :-)

Dated February 3, 2013. Ah, so my shitty programmer friend is getting married. How fucking delightful. I'll be sure to send you a gift, pal, as soon as year 2013 rolls around. Heh. Or should I say, "LOL!"

Dork.

The "Here's" at the beginning of the post was a link. And so maybe I was a little bit curious. I wondered if I'd recognize the guy. Maybe seen him out at Trackside or Brickstore. I clicked on the "Here's." A new window opened and the pictures began to load, one at a time, slowly. Another rookie move – optimize those images, Bones! Man, this guy was beginning to piss me off.

The first picture to come up was of a decently attractive girl sitting on the rail of somebody's porch, a bright moon in the dark sky above her. She was smiling widely and holding a red SOLO cup in her hand. Must be Angie. Hmm, not too shabby there, Bones. You may not

be much of a programmer, but you can hold your own with the ladies. Comes with the name, I guess.

The second pic was an extreme close-up of two faces. One of those damn pictures where one of the people posing is holding out the camera, pointing it down and snapping the shot. I hate those pictures. The flash makes everyone in the photo's face as white as a ghost, everyone's nose looks about 8 inches bigger, and everyone has a double-chin. Why do people do that? Shit, this one was so bad that you couldn't even recognize the subjects of the photo. Why would you post that? I could tell, however, that the person on the left was dear old Angie. So, presumably, the guy on the right – the jerk-off holding the camera – was Bones. But damnit, I wouldn't have been able to tell even if I knew the guy. The flash had gone off right in his face and completely washed out all his features. Man, this guy's an idiot.

The third picture finally loaded. It was a long-haired blond dude with a goatee and... Damn, this dude looked a lot like me. I mean, fucking a, man, like, a lot. I leaned in closer to the screen and looked again. Man oh man, we had a lot of similar features. Sure, he wore his long hair in a ponytail, but it was the exact same color as mine. I didn't wear facial hair either, but his goatee wrapped around a smile that was just like mine – crooked, and awkward, as if a staged photo was really uncomfortable for the dude. Same big nose. Shit, had I been a little more sober, I would have been convinced that I'd just stumbled upon my evil twin.

And then I noticed his eyes. They were blue – too blue for that dark black goatee. They were MY eyes. I would have bet my worthless life on it. They were my fucking eyes. I wasn't looking at a picture of some goofy long-haired programmer that lived in my home town...

I was looking at a picture of me.

And I freaked. I grabbed the mouse and whipped the cursor over to the "x" in the top corner of the browser and banged the left button, closing the browser down and getting that picture, that freaky fucking picture of me – ME! – out of my sight. I rolled my chair back and stood up so quickly that I knocked it over behind me. I raced out of my office and into my

bedroom. I stood over my dresser, pressing my palms down on its surface to keep me upright, and stared at myself in the mirror.

What in the hell was that?

I stared into the eyes of the drunken long-haired goatee-less guy who was looking back at me. What did I just see? Man, if it weren't for that goatee on the dude, I would have surely thought that there was some Decatur creep out there, posting pictures of me and claiming they were of him. But I've never had a goatee.

Yet, those eyes were mine. No doubt about it.

No doubt about it.

After a few minutes of staring at myself in the mirror, the shock subsided. And then it just all seemed surreal. And a few minutes after that, it didn't even feel surreal. It didn't feel real at all, actually. I began to question if I'd really even seen what I had thought I'd seen. What had sent me running into my room like a terrified kid who just got barked at by the neighbor's dog. The details of that picture began to fade. Man, I'm drunk, making shit up to scare myself. That's what's happening. The guy in the photo probably looked nothing like me. Hell, I was toasted.

You know how your memory works when you're drunker than shit? The short term goes faulty. The specifics crawl deep down into the middle of your brain, and you can't grasp back onto them, as you're merely able to process the big glaring stuff floating around the top. You're aware of what just happened, but within minutes your memory of it takes on the qualities of a dream. Feels...faraway, I guess.

And by then I had convinced myself that I hadn't seen anything at all. And I believed it. For some reason, I had completely spooked myself. Why? It didn't matter. I was hammered.

"You drink too much," I said to the white figure in the mirror, whose face was just beginning to regain some of its color.

"Heh. You're damn right," I replied to myself.

I reached above me and yanked down on the cord hanging from the fan light on the ceiling. Everything went black. I stumbled over to my bed and plopped face-first onto it. I passed out.

II.

I woke up the next day around noon with a mad hangover and a tremendous case of the guilts. Man, did I always hate those hangover guilts. The kind where you'll just be standing there, minding your own business, and all of the sudden they'll fire a shudder that ripples through your body and punches you in the soul. The kind where you occasionally have to exhale deeply just to release some of that negative energy that brews inside of you.

I didn't even know what I was supposed to feel guilty about. It happens sometimes, doesn't it? Did I start a fight? No. Did I say something wholly inappropriate to a girl at the bar? No. Did I try to kiss a co-worker? No. Then what? Where were these damn guilts coming from?

I had completely forgotten about my little Google episode from the previous night. If only it had remained that way.

Well, I couldn't put my finger on the source of my pained brain, and it hurt my head even more to keep trying, so I gave up and spent the day sprawled out on the couch staring at the TV. I had no desire to get on my computer.

The next morning when I headed to work I still wasn't feeling up to par. The hangover was gone, but I was still mildly crippled by the shakes and the passing bouts of anxiety. Back in the younger days a hangover would be gone by the following noon. But now that I was nearing thirty, they seemed to stretch at least halfway into the second day.

As I mentioned before, I wrote applications for the Internet. Been doing it since I graduated from college. So, I'd spend literally all day online. And I'd begin work the same way every morning – checking out the updates to my daily sites: Drudge, Fark, The Onion, etc. And I

was about three entries down in Fark when the memory came back. Hit me like a baseball to the back of the head.

BAM!

Last night I saw a blog of mine that I've never created.

My whole body went limp for a moment. All external sound disappeared, and I was pounded by a case of the waa waas. I literally saw stars, and not those flickers in the corner of your vision that pop up during the really bad hangovers. No, I'm talking about the bright flashes that darken everything else that you were just looking at. Had it been the day before, when the hangover had rendered my muscle control so inadequate, I would have shit my pants. Which would have been exceptionally bad today, considering that I was wearing khakis.

Last night I saw a blog of mine that I've never created.

Was that real? I hit Ctrl-L on the keyboard and the location bar of the browser highlighted. I began to type in the url.

http://www.bones...

What was it again? Bones Art? No, Bones... something. Bones... Ink! I typed it in...

http://www.bonesink.com

And I put my index finger on the Enter key. And I paused. I couldn't do it. I froze. I realized that, well, I didn't *want* to see it. Whatever it was that I had seen on Saturday night was nothing but the side effects of eight hours of heavy gin and a pack and a half of cigarettes. I didn't need to go surfing weird sites at work to prove that last Saturday I was drunk enough to creep myself out with fantasy. I looked at that url again.

http://www.bonesink.com

I hit Ctrl-L again to highlight the location bar, and I typed over it –

http://www.theonion.com, and hit Enter.

It was Monday night, and that meant Trivia Night with the gang. I wasn't up for it at all. I was still feeling pretty tweaked with anxiety and those damn guilts. Man, a full two days later and still I was hurting from the effects of the Saturday bender. I decided that a couple beers and

some tough history/geography/sports/entertainment questions might be just what I needed to kick this shitty feeling.

My trivia skills weren't for shit that night. I don't think I contributed one answer for our team. I couldn't concentrate. Kept thinking about that damn website. My website. Heh, it sounded ridiculous just thinking that. No, I didn't contribute a thing. But I did end up polishing off three pitchers all by myself, precariously dodging my pals' queries as to why I was getting so canned on a Monday.

Well, guys, you see, I stumbled upon a website of mine on Saturday, and since I didn't actually build this website, I'm a little creeped out by the whole affair. And so, like our favorite country singers, I guess you could say that I'm drinking to forget.

I didn't forget. And I didn't say that, of course. I'd prefer my friends think I was a drunk rather than a lunatic.

I stumbled into my house at about 11:30 after an irresponsible and dangerous drunken drive home. Man, work was going to suck tomorrow. Hangover number two for the week. I figured I'd head straight to bed and try to sleep off as much of this buzz as possible. But as I turned towards my bedroom, I noticed a faint blue light pulsing through the doorway of my dark office. My laptop screensaver.

There's a blog of mine out there on the internet. That I never created.

I turned in the direction of that blue light. Go to bed, Bones. I walked over to my office, reached my hand through the doorway and flicked on the lights. Go to bed, Bones! I walked into the office and peered over at the laptop. The screensaver displayed a swirling bulb floating over a light purple background. Just some generic animation that had come pre-installed on my machine. I stared at it.

Go to fucking bed, Bones!

I couldn't. It's like I was hypnotized. I was drawn to that damn pulsing light like a mosquito is drawn to a Bug Zapper. But unlike the insect, I was well aware of what the end result was going to be. And it wasn't going to be good. And, yet, I couldn't stop myself. I sat

down in the chair, leaned over the laptop, and jiggled the mouse, deactivating the screensaver to display the peaceful plains-scape of the default Windows XP wallpaper. I double-clicked on the Firefox icon and watched the browser load. I sat there for a moment, right hand on the mouse, left hand floating just above the keyboard. I stared at the browser and its default homepage. Heh, Google. Of course.

Finally I hit Ctrl-L, the location bar highlighted, and I typed *www.bonesink.com*. And before I could begin my deliberation over this potentially disastrous idea, I mashed the Enter key.

It loaded. Bones Ink. Write drink and be merry. Same site as I'd seen on that drunken Saturday night. It was real. Fuck me, it was real.

Write drink and be merry.

Well, tomorrow begins another week of work. Another week of days spent heavy-nerding and nights spent planning for the wedding. Angie and I both agree that the ceremony couldn't come soon enough. All this organization and penny-pinching and small-talking over the phone with relatives I've only met once and it was ten years ago is... well, shit, it's worth it. I wouldn't change a damn thing. But, of course, I'll sure be happy to get through it all and get on with the honeymoonin' :-)

He posted last night. Last night, while I was laying on the couch nursing a monster hangover, this guy, whoever/whatever the hell he is, was writing this post. But where? And...when?

-Bones

February 9, 2013

2013! Ha ha! 2013! Still posting from the future then, Bones? You crazy bastard who looks like me, lives in my town, and has the same job? Still posting from the future? Ha ha! You crazy son of a bitch!

I yanked the mouse to the right, sending the cursor flying over to the scroll bar, banged the left button, and yanked the mouse down, sending the web page scrolling upward, paragraph upon paragraph whipping by. At the bottom was the list of linkable page numbers, 1-13. I imagined the word “goooooogle” stretched above them and laughed out load. LOL. Ha!

I clicked on the number “13” and watched the page load. I scrolled down to the bottom. I was going to read the first post. And then I was going to read the second. And then the third. And I was going to figure out what in the hell was going on.

Hi, I'm Bones. Welcome to Bones Ink, home of all things Bones. Here you'll find a scattered rambling of my thoughts, opinions, political diatribe, and so forth...

August 19, 2011. A little under two years before his most recent post. I read the next one.

Howdy internet. Have I introduced you to my girlfriend, Angie? Well, Internet, meet Angie. Angie, meet Internet. What can I say about Angie? Well, besides being beautiful, funny, and just slightly weird enough to be into a dude like me, she's also my saving grace. The one who saved me from the depressing doldrums of...

Yeah yeah yeah. Angie. I know Angie. We, uh, met on Saturday, I guess you could say. Heh heh. The post was dated August 23, 2011. I scrolled up to the next one.

Well, tomorrow is the big day. Moving day. Tomorrow I'll be leaving my familiar abode of the last seven years and moving into my new bungalow that Angie and I will presumably soon be sharing. I didn't think I'd miss this place, but now, sitting here for the last time in front of the one remaining unpacked item – my laptop – I'm beginning to get a little nostalgic. I've spent many a night in this room, banging away on my loyal machine that has always sat here on this shitty glass computer desk that I purchased from Office Depot so many years ago.

Whoa. I looked down at the glass table in front of me that I had purchased from Office Depot last year.

I'll be throwing this desk out tomorrow. I'll be throwing out a lot of old familiar items tomorrow. But not the kegerator, of course! The kegerator that has rested right next to my desk, its peaceful hum keeping me company. The skull and crossbones tap reminding me of old friends and birthdays.

I looked over at the kegerator next to my desk. Heard its hum. Its terrifying hum. Looked at the skull and crossbones tap that jutted up from the base – the hollow eyes of the skull leering at me. The mouth laughing at me.

I'm going to miss this old office. So long, old friend. So long, Bones Alley.

I paused. Looked around my office. Looked at the shitty posters tacked to the wall. Looked at the bookcase stuffed with Stephen King and Ayn Rand. Looked at the kegerator. Took

it all in. All the items, the defining elements of this room that my friends had always laughed at me for naming. Naming it Bones Alley.

I closed the browser. Sat there for a moment. A strange feeling of calm passed through me. A strange sort of understanding, I guess. I finally got it. This website was really, genuinely, truly mine. In the future. I had somehow stumbled upon a website that I was writing five years from now. I didn't know how it happened or why it was happening, but it was undeniably clear that, yes, it *was* happening. I stood up. Looked around the room one more time. And then headed to bed.

III.

I didn't go to work the next day. Called in sick. I wasn't lying, either. I was sick as a dog. Hungover. Puking. Seeing spots. Had a case of the guilts so bad that I feared I might relapse back into the depression I suffered in high school. The suicidal thoughts and feeling of meaninglessness and worthlessness and all that stupid shit.

Around noon I opened up the fridge and grabbed a beer. It would be the first of many that day. Yeah, I know that sounds bad – getting brain-blasted on a Tuesday when you are supposedly too sick to go to work. But, it wasn't like that, really. It was that damn fucking website. I wanted to go back to it – learn more about myself. What I'd be doing in five years. But for some reason I just didn't have the balls to go back to it sober. It's funny, it's like it was a pretty girl at the bar, and I was telling my friends that, "Yeah guys, I'm gonna go talk to her, let me just have one more drink first."

And around 4pm I was good and sloshed and ready to learn. I headed back into Bones Alley, sat down in front of my laptop, opened the browser, and typed *www.bonesink.com* in the location bar. And hit Enter. The latest post began with, "Well tomorrow begins another week of work..." He hadn't updated it yet. Since Sunday. I felt a weird sort of disappointment, like when you click on Drudge for the twelfth time in the morning and he hasn't posted any new news. I

scrolled down to the bottom of the page, down where the linked numbers were – 1-13. I clicked on “8” and read the top post.

“Thinking of Angie,” it was titled.

I shouldn't post this. It's way too personal. But, you know, I've been going back to the therapist these days and she says it's good for me to talk, or write, about my thoughts. Even the bad ones, the embarrassing ones. So what the hell, right?

It's like zen, I guess. Ying and yang. For every good, there's a bad that comes with it. Of course, I don't know shit about zen or ying and yang or Snoop and Dre or any of that, but it sounds right. Anyway, I've been feeling those thoughts of sadness, meaninglessness – where I get that sort of “glass ceiling” on happiness, where the joy I feel just has to stop at a certain level for no reason other than that I just can't let myself be truly happy. How could I? It's all temporary, you know? No matter what, I'm going to die. We all are. And that thought stops me from reaching a certain point of joy.

But here's the good part. Angie. She makes me overcome these thoughts. She makes me believe in God. That happiness is ok. That these thoughts are bullshit, and life is good. And I believe her.

When I was a Freshman in high school, and my parents had taken me to the therapist for the first time, she told them that “Brian has a tendency for suicidal thoughts.” A tendency! “But it's not something that needs to be controlled with medication. Just be aware of it,” she said.

A tendency. Aka, might. "He has a tendency for suicidal thoughts." He MIGHT blast his brains out. Mr. and Mrs. Frazier, you MIGHT come home one day to see your son's body crumpled on the kitchen floor, his head spread out over the counter like the ingredients for a cherry pie. You MIGHT spend the rest of your lives afraid to look at the sink, to rinse out your glasses, cause you'll see visions of your son's skull fragments and brain matter lining the drain. But remember, it's just a MIGHT. Just a tendency...

But these thoughts are just a bunch of bullshit when Angie's around.

I noticed that my eyes were tearing up. This shit was hitting me hard. I was really feeling it for the guy. I could empathize. Hell, of course I could, I was reading my own thoughts, man. But my thoughts – my current ones – were racing through all kinds of dichotomies. One, there was a complete feeling of sympathy for the guy – for me. Two, there was this biting feeling of hurt, knowing that five years from now, that I would still be feeling this way. That it doesn't go away. Three, there was a feeling of anger at the guy. How dare he post this shit? How dare he let the world know how we feel? Our most horrible thoughts? How dare him, the mother fucker!

And four, there was a feeling of bitterness. And this was the weird one. I was mad at Bones, at me, not so much for his public posting of our mental issues, but for the fact that he had an "out." Angie. That he could get past those thoughts because of his girl. I didn't have that. No, I was dealing with this shit on my own – flying solo – and this pussy had a co-pilot, and it was working for him. I was envious. Jealous. Angry.

At myself.

Whoa.

The post went on, but I couldn't read any more. It was just too damn much. Shit, I was already feeling down, being drunker than hell in the afternoon on a work day. I couldn't take anymore of this guy's sorrowful self-realization. But that ying and yang, Snoop and Dre, line *was* pretty good. Heh.

I scrolled down to the bottom of the page and clicked on the “10.” I read one of the posts in the middle.

So, with my wedding proposal that I’ve probably bored you to death with, I had made myself a deal. With the engagement, I would get a second tattoo. Angel (Angie) didn’t protest. And so, without further adieu, here it is...

The “here” was a link. I clicked it. A new window opened. An image began to load. It was close-up of his bicep. And there was a bright, fresh tattoo of an eagle head on it. It was a pretty damn good looking tattoo. Right there on his right bicep. I looked at my arm. It was bare. I leaned down and raised my pant leg and looked at tattoo #1. A drunken, regretful keepsake from college Spring Break. A tattoo of a skull right there on my ankle.

I grabbed my cigarettes from my pocket, pulled one out of the pack, popped it into my mouth, and lit it. The first cigarette I’d ever smoked inside my house. Hell, who cares, right? I’d be moving in a few years. I stared at the picture of the eagle head tattoo – watched it blur, gain clarity, blur, gain clarity in my drunken vision – while I held the cigarette in the fingers of my right hand and the shitty Bic lighter in my left. Stared at the tattoo. I didn’t realize it at first, but I was still pushing the button of the lighter down with my thumb. The flame continued to burn. I didn’t realize it until the lighter got so hot that it began to singe my finger. I released the pressure on the button. Looked down at the silver metal top of the lighter. Man, that must be hotter than shit. I looked at the bare spot on my right bicep. Looked down at the lighter.

And then, without thinking, instinctively, I jammed the hot, silver top of the lighter into my arm. Right where the tattoo was to be.

I smelled burning flesh. Felt the pain ring around the spot where the lighter was singeing the skin, felt it spider web through my arm, up my shoulder, into my head, sending neurons of pain – alarm! – throughout my body.

I removed the lighter from my arm as the heat dissipated. I looked at the spot on my bicep. It was bright red. Surely, it would be a scar by tomorrow. I glanced back up at the laptop screen.

The window with the picture of the tattoo was gone. The post about the tattoo was gone. He couldn't get a tattoo on his right bicep because there was a permanent burn-scar there! I had changed the future!

I got up and headed to bed. It was only 5:00 pm, but surely, work tomorrow was going to suck.

IV.

Yep. Work was awful. I was now having to sit through a hangover on top of a hangover. I had the shits, the guilts, the shakes, and I puked in the bathroom twice before noon. I accomplished absolutely nothing that I was paid to do. In fact, I don't believe that I spent one moment even thinking about work. No, I just thought about the website the whole time. And I thought about time travel. What, exactly, was it that I was experiencing? Obviously, it was the future. There was no denying this, considering that the "Website Bones" had clearly described our past. I found myself googling all I could about time travel, alternate universes, etc. Every time a co-worker would step into my cube, I'd quickly Alt-Tab over to my code editor. Normally, I wouldn't think twice about it – you're damn right I'm surfing on work hours – but with this crazy brain-set I was on, I felt like I was surfing porn. How in the hell could I explain this newfound fascination with metaphysics?

Basically, I was trying to understand how I could, here in the present, know about my future, but my future-self could not be aware of my present-self. Does that make sense? Shouldn't I have stumbled upon a post that described how I had once read my website five years previously? Wouldn't I have left myself a message on the site? On the portal between these different times that I'd stumbled upon?

But I couldn't find a satisfactory answer. Fred Allan Wolf, Stephen Hawking, Robert Anton Wilson – none of these guys could give me the information I needed.

What they did teach me, however, was the concept of infinite dimensions. That for every action we take in this present universe, infinite results are spiraling off in infinite other universes. If I decide to step off the sidewalk at lunch and walk across the street, in one dimension I'd get smashed by a bus. In another, a car. In another, I'd make it to the other side. In another, I'd meet an old friend halfway between sidewalks. In another, I'd never even be at that sidewalk. In another, I'd be dead.

But none of this explained my particular situation. Obviously, as I'd revealed with my new lighter scar, I could affect this *other* dimension. But in this *other* dimension, I didn't know that I knew about it in the past. How could this be?

And then I looked down and noticed the wires on my desk. There was the wire coming from my mouse to my CPU. And there was the wire coming from my iPod to my headphones that lay over to the side of the mousepad. These two wires ran parallel to each other atop the desk for a few inches. And then they crossed. Just briefly crossed. And then ran parallel to each other again. And this crossing – this brief crossing – explained it all.

My universe was currently running parallel with my future-self's universe. And they cross about five years from now. What I do now doesn't actually happen to Bones, because our dimensions haven't connected yet. But the results, the permanent results – like the burn scar – occur in *his* dimension, because they're there when our dimensions do cross! He's not experiencing what I am here, but he's experiencing the *results*.

Fucking a.

One drunken Saturday night google, and I'd discovered what could quite possibly be the most fucked up mutation of logic and reality possible. This changed everything.

More importantly, *I* could change everything.

I left work about 4:00 pm that day. I told my boss that I was sick. It wasn't hard to convince him, considering that I was pale and sickly, shaking, and you could probably hear the rumbles and gurgles coming from my stomach in the next cube over. No, it wasn't hard to convince my boss to let me scoot early. Want a little advice? If you ever want to leave work before the closing bell, start the request with, "My stomach's been bothering me..." You're set. No one wants to hear anything more about it. It's the guy version of "I'm having menstrual cramps."

So I ran across the office parking lot to my car. I was excited. I couldn't wait to get back to that blog. But first I was going to swing by the bar. By now I wasn't even kidding myself – the only way I was going to sit down in front of that laptop was with a head-full of gin. I was ok with that. In fact, I could use a few good hours of thinking time to incubate on my newfound discovery. I needed to come up with another action in this present universe that would change the future one. That would change that website.

I know what you're thinking – that I was starting to sound a little freaky. Like getting a God complex or something. But I don't think that was it. For real.

Have you ever posted a comment on a message board and then you kept going back over and over to the site, refreshing the page, anxiously and impatiently waiting to see how some stranger was going to reply to it? To see what the result of your post was going to be?

Well, imagine how I felt then. I wasn't dealing with silly little comments here. No, here I was dealing with a life.

I stepped into the Dragon's Lair and grabbed a stool at the bar. Funny, today was Wednesday and I was drunk as shit here just two days ago. And after about 3 hours, 4 beers and 4 gin and tonics, I was pretty much out to lunch again. And I was thinking of Angie. And that weird bitter feeling, that bizarre jealousy of the Future Bones started creeping back in. I don't know how to explain it really, but I just kept dwelling on how this guy had found himself the perfect girl, and I was still spending my nights getting shitfaced. Single. Where was my perfect

girl? I was beginning to feel like Bones's nerdy friend – the guy who was always fifth-wheeling with the loving couple. The obnoxiously loving couple.

Fuck that couple. And fuck that website. Change of plans. Tonight I was going to hook up.

I found myself lurking around the bar, striking up drunken conversations with random girls sitting together at tables. It was pathetic. I'd stumble up to a group and mumble something that sounded charming to me at the time, but which the girls probably couldn't even understand. And they would try to be courteous. Try to respond. But it was a pity response. And as drunk as I was, I still knew it was a pity response. Finally, after a few minutes of this, the girls would turn back to their original conversation – the one I had interrupted – and purposely not look back up at me. It's the passive way that girls say, "Not interested." And I would stand there for at least another minute or two, waiting for a chance to hop back into the discussion. But the opportunity would never present itself, and I would just keep standing there – the creepy silent drunk at the end of the table.

Oh man.

I repeated this exercise with at least three different tables. How humiliating. By the time I left that bar I was so fucking angry I would have fought the first guy to bump into me on my way to the car. But no one did, and I hopped in and drove home drunk.

I arrived at the house, grabbed a beer, and sat down in front of the laptop. I opened the browser, typed www.bonesink.com and watched the page load. No new posts. I randomly clicked on one of the page numbers at the bottom. The top post of the next page to load was titled, "Love at First Site. It happens..."

It was like a punch to the gut. A cheap reminder of my pathetic attempts to get laid tonight. It felt like Bones was picking on me.

Alright, big shot, tell me. Tell me about love at first sight. Bore me with more of your self-serving tales of Angie. Asshole.

So let me tell you about the first time I saw Angie. This was well before we were engaged. And believe it or not, it was well before we'd even been introduced to each other. Almost 3 years, actually. In fact, I remember the exact date – October 15, 2005. I remember the date because it was the night of some friends' Halloween Party, and I'd been looking forward to it for weeks. But of course, here it was, the day of the party, and me with no costume. So I was down in Little 5 Points, frantically running in and out of the freaky shops that populate that area, trying to find something that would make people think I'd at least put forth an ounce of effort.

I was standing outside one of those shops – Stratosphere, it was called – bending over to guard against the wind as I lit a smoke (yeah, I was still smoking back then. Fool) and when I raised back up, I saw her. She was walking towards me on the sidewalk. She was wearing a University of Georgia ballcap and her hair was pulled through the hole in the back in a ponytail. She was wearing a windbreaker and jeans. Wow. She was beautiful. Even before she had gotten close to me I could tell. And I have shitty eyes. Forgive me for trying to wax poetic, but it's almost like she had a glow. I don't know, maybe I didn't see a glow, maybe my memory added that little special effect later. But she was beautiful.

And as she walked past me she glanced over in my direction. And our eyes met. I was stricken by those green eyes that shone out from under the rim of her ball cap. I gave her a nervous, awkward smile. She smiled back. And kept walking.

Something hit me right then and there. I knew this was the girl I was going to marry. I knew it. It was truly love at first site. It happens.

For real.

Of course, since this is life and not a fairy tale, I eventually forgot about this moment. Or, at least, it slipped deep down somewhere in my subconscious.

And then, almost three years later, we would run into each other again – introduced by a mutual friend. And that memory of the first sighting would immediately re-ignite in my brain and it would take every muscle in my body to hold me back from bringing it up and completely creeping her out, I'm sure.

And it would be about four or five dates later, after splitting a bottle of wine, when Angie would turn to me and say, "Do you happen to remember about three years ago..."

It happens, my friends.

Fuck this guy. Fuck Bones and fuck Angie and fuck their cute little stories. I couldn't even hold up a goddamn conversation with drunk sluts tonight, and this asshole is talking about love at first sight?

Well, Bones may have had his Dickensonian love stories, but he didn't have what I did. Power.

And I knew exactly what I was going to do to see some changes on this website. October 15, 2005 was three days from now.

He was writing about this Saturday.

VI.

I finished off the rest of the week like I had started it – drunk. I didn't, however, go back to the blog. No, at this point, I was just drinking to drink. Because it felt... familiar, I guess. I'd go to work, function poorly, then drive to the Dragon's Lair for a bite to eat and a bunch of stiff

drinks to make the night go by. I needed to keep myself blotto to numb the paralyzing trepidations of the upcoming weekend. Of the day when I would see my future wife for the first time.

And finally it was Saturday morning. And I was hungover as all hell, of course. I'd woke up feeling this way for so many days now that I think I would have felt worse had I woke up not feeling sick. I had a breakfast of a bagel and Budweisers, and once I was feeling good and high again, I got in my car and drove to Little 5 Points.

I was standing outside one of those shops – Stratosphere, it was called – bending over to guard against the wind as I lit a smoke...

And there I was, standing in front of Stratosphere, the old familiar skate shop, presumably right where Bones was standing in his dimension. I wondered if the other Bones was reeking of alcohol too, and I laughed out loud at how damn ridiculous that thought was. I bet no one else in the world, or any other world, had ever had that same thought. I doubt the future Bones who, shit, I guess could be considered the *present* Bones at this moment, was wondering if his extra-dimensional other smell like beer. Ha!

And that thought led to another that was quite chilling. The Future Bones, in his dimension's past, was down here in Little 5 to find himself a Halloween costume for a party tonight. I wasn't going to a party tonight. Hadn't even been invited to one. This wasn't the same situation as his was. Because his past and my present weren't the same. Our universes don't cross until *my* future, a good few years from now. It was why I could know about him but he didn't know about me. My day wasn't *his* day.

And therefore, there may be no Angie today. No brief passing where our eyes meet and I fall in love. It might not happen in my universe the same way as his, and I may not see her.

This thought practically broke my heart. It was so upsetting and disappointing and shocking that a wave of depression rushed through my body with such force it almost knocked me off my feet.

This ruined everything.

And then...

And then I saw her. Holy shit, I saw her. There she was, crossing an intersection a couple blocks down. From this distance I couldn't make out any details, but I was absolutely certain that it was her.

She was wearing the windbreaker and a white ball cap – a UGA one, no doubt.

It was her. Walking towards me.

And it clicked. This was *really* happening. I was watching my future fiancée coming towards me, and I knew exactly what, when, and how this was going to pan out.

The enormity of it all was almost too much to bear. I felt like I was losing my mind. I was right in the middle of experiencing something that had already happened – and I knew it! But how many times had it happened? How many universes had a Bones who had seen a beautiful stranger at this spot and had fallen in love? And in how many universes was this situation happening right now? And how many had a Bones who *knew* the situation before it occurred? How many of me, us, were there?

It was too much. I began to feel light-headed. I felt like the world was moving in slow motion. All external sounds stopped, and I could hear nothing other than a loud buzzing and the sound of my own heart beating. Everything in my vision went blurry except for her. I was aware of absolutely nothing in the world but her.

She was getting closer!

I could make out her features now. She was beautiful. My future fiancée. My fucking future fiancée! I became conscious of another feeling – what was it? It was a strange electricity buzzing in my chest – that feeling you get right before you make that first phone call to ask out that girl you've been completely and totally enamored with. Was this love?

Fucking a, was I serious?

Was I feeling love for this girl that I'd never even seen in person before, wasn't even seeing up close right now? Could it be possible that love, maybe, was bigger than all of this? Could actually transcend dimensions? Was the same in every universe? That the concept of a soul mate was more than just a clichéd excuse for the lonely people who hadn't "found theirs yet?" Could it be?

No. Hell no. What the hell was I thinking? These were exactly the thoughts I should NOT be having right now. I needed to shut them off. Immediately. A soul mate, Bones? C'mon, man. This feeling was probably nothing more than an unfamiliar response to an extremely unfamiliar situation. I'd been reading about me loving this girl all week, and so now I was subconsciously trying to recreate that feeling. That's all. Or, hell, I was drunk - maybe it was beer goggles. Heh.

She was getting closer. She was just across the street. A mere intersection away from the guy who was going to marry her. She had no idea. I did.

I was standing outside one of those shops – Stratosphere, it was called – bending over to guard against the wind as I lit a smoke...

So, this is the girl who saved you from sadness, Bones? The one that made everything ok?

The one you're going to get.

And I'll still be alone.

Fuck you, Bones.

She was crossing the street. Not more than twenty feet away. I reached into my pocket and pulled out my box of cigarettes. I removed a cigarette from the pack, put it in my mouth, and put the pack back in my pocket.

Ten feet away...

I reached into my other pocket and pulled out a lighter.

Five feet...

She hadn't noticed me yet. But in a few more seconds she would.

...bending over to guard against the wind as I lit a smoke...

I bent over, looking down at the lighter in my hand as I raised it to the end of the cigarette in my mouth. I flicked the little circular serrated piece of silver. Watched the flame appear. Watched the paper of the cigarette crackle and turn gray. Watched the red ember of tobacco begin to glow. Watched the first wisp of smoke corkscrew up from the end.

She was right in front of me now!

...and when I raised back up, I saw her...

I didn't raise back up. Stayed crouched over, staring at that burning tip of the cigarette extending out from my mouth.

She walked right past me. She didn't see my face. I didn't see hers. We never made eye contact.

And our first encounter – the one that would be love at first sight, the one that she would bring up over a bottle of wine years from now – never happened.

And the consequences – the results – of this “missed” opportunity were going to be big.

I just knew it. Could *feel* it.

And so it was.

Maybe Bones and I didn't share the same past. Maybe our worlds would continue to rotate differently for the next few years. And maybe if I'd thought a little harder about it all, I would have realized how ludicrous it was to expect to see Angie here, at this time, in my world. But my intuitions were correct. Our worlds may be different, but apparently they shared similarities. Important ones. Ones that would lead to consequences when our universes did meet.

I didn't need to be going to some silly Halloween party. I didn't need to be down here shopping for some silly costume. But I *did* need to be down here. And in my world, maybe I would have been down here to grab a beer or pick up a pair of shoes at Stratosphere or something. Who knows? Who knows why I would have been down here had I not discovered that website?

But I did discover it. And I *did* come down here. And the *results* of my coming down here were going to be felt by Bones in his world.

And the only question remaining was, what exactly did I do?

I stood there for a moment and finished my cigarette. I then walked back to my car, got in, and drove home.

I walked through my front door, through the den, into my office, and sat down in front of the laptop. I stared for a moment at the peaceful landscape of the Windows XP wallpaper. I double-clicked on the Firefox icon. Watched the browser load. Typed www.bonesink.com in the location bar. Watched as the website loaded.

I half expected to see the post he had written last Sunday. The one that began, "Well, tomorrow begins another week of work."

But it was gone.

And there was something else in its place.

It was titled, "Long time, no updates..."

And it began, "Well, I almost did it this time. No trial run. No chickening out. This time was going to be for real."

I didn't want to waste time reading it all, though. I needed to see, or not see, a few things first. I glanced down to the next post, which should have read, "Angie and I just got back from Savannah, and a helluva good time was had."

Gone.

And the post that should have been below that one? The one with the engagement party pics?

Gone.

I quickly scanned the page with the eye of a seasoned surfer, looking for keywords.

Looking for “Angie.”

None.

I glimpsed small pieces of text as I scanned. Each post was significantly shorter than the last time I’d visited.

The first one I noticed wasn’t even ten words long.

I often wonder what Hell is like.

I viewed similar passages as I scrolled to the bottom of the page. I looked down at the list of page numbers. There were only eight. Not thirteen like before. I clicked on number 2 to load the page prior to this one.

I scanned it for any reference to Angie.

Nothing.

My mouth slowly grew into a small smile. Oh man, had I changed this thing or what?

I glanced down at a random post in the middle of the page.

Humans fuck. Dogs fuck. Humans profess love towards one another. Dogs sniff each others’ asses. Does this make us any different? Dogs cry when their children die.

Humans cry when their children die. Dogs fuck and dogs cry. Are we any different? Or are we just a bunch of dogs? Sniffing ass. Fucking. Anything to stop the crying.

I scrolled down to the bottom, clicked on another page number, scanned for the word, “Angie.” Nothing. Instead:

Last night I went on a date. Or whatever you want to call it. I don't even remember her name – just some random chick that an old friend told me, “You'd really enjoy talking to” or something. Sympathy date. I got hammered at dinner. Spilled my beer on the table. Gave her money for a cab ride home. Spent the rest of the night sitting alone at the bar as my old friend chewed me out over the phone for blowing it. I wish I could say that I give a shit. Even a little bit. But I don't. It's all so fucking temporary.

The post above it said the same thing.

It's all so fucking temporary.

I clicked back to the first page. Looked at the post right below the latest one.

I look back over this blog sometimes and I try to decide if it's hilarious that this is how I will be remembered. Or if it's the saddest thing ever.

Oh my God. I did this.

There was a dude. He was depressed. He met a girl and the world was saved. And then there was another dude who decided to light a cigarette and not look up after he did. And the world was destroyed. I did this.

Now you remember what it's like, don't you, Bones?

Hurts to be alone, doesn't it?

I read his latest post.

Well, I almost did it this time. No trial run. No chickening out. This time was going to be for real.

This time I was going to blow my fucking brains out.

VII.

Well, I almost did it this time. No trial run. No chickening out. This time was going to be for real.

This time I was going to blow my fucking brains out.

I took the day off from work. Grabbed lunch at Taco Mac. Chicken wings. My favorite. Had an Oatmeal Stout. Smoked a cigarette. Got in my car and drove 30 minutes down to an old familiar secluded spot. "The Pub" is what my friends and I called it. Back in high school when I had friends. Back before they got sick and tired of my "melodrama" and just kind of faded away.

It wasn't a pub. It was just a patch of woods that ran up to a pond. We used to hang around there after school because it was secluded and we could smoke cigarettes and throw them in the pond and not get caught.

I stood there at the edge of the pond looking out into the water, remembering the old days with the gang. I smoked a cigarette. Threw the butt in the pond. I pulled the gun out of my pocket and sat down.

I remained still there for a moment. Tried to dig deep into my brain and see if there was anything in there that might have the motivation to talk me out of this. There wasn't.

I put the end of the gun in my mouth. Put my finger on the trigger. Just one simple squeeze of the index finger. Then maybe the rush of air? I don't know. Then nothing, that I know. Just a simple squeeze.

Something caught my eye.

I looked over to my left, gun still sticking out of my mouth. The feel of metal against the back of my front teeth. There was something white over in the trees, half-buried by weeds. I don't know why, but I just had to know what it was.

I put the gun down on the ground, stood up, patted off my jeans (which seems kind of unnecessary, considering they would soon be covered not only in dirt but blood), and walked over to the white object.

It was a soccer ball.

An old one. Real old. Thing must have been sitting here, hidden, for years.

A soccer ball.

Some poor kid was probably out here kicking it around, just fucking off like kids do, and must have kicked it out too far. Out deep in the trees where it was lost in the weeds.

I tried to think about what this kid must have looked like. I pictured myself. Me at twelve or thirteen. Just a young dumb kid kicking a ball. Just kicking a damn ball and being happy enough just doing that. Just kicking a damn ball. I thought about myself at that age. It was before the depression had begun to manifest. Back when everything was

bright. Nothing mattered but Nintendo, the pretty girl down the street – Amy Cook was her name, and kicking a soccer ball. I thought of shopping for school clothes with my mom at the end of summer. I thought of sleep-overs. Dollar movies. Backyard camping. Summer nights wandering the neighborhood with my pals, complaining about how there was nothing to do, not knowing that one day we'd cherish the nights of "nothing to do."

Laughing. Studying. Worrying about the stupid shit.

I bent down to pick up the ball, and had second thoughts. Naah, I'd leave it there. I looked behind me at that gun lying over by the water. That gun that was in my mouth moments ago.

What would my folks think? That little kid who seemed so happy up until high school, when the slow decline began. What would they do when they found out their little boy was dead?

I walked up to the gun. I picked it up. And threw it as far as I could into the pond.

I thought about the little kid who lost his soccer ball so many years ago. He probably ran home crying, thinking his lost soccer ball was the end of the world. Never knowing that his soccer ball wasn't the end, but maybe, just maybe, a beginning. For me.

I imagined that little kid was me. Sending a little helping hand, a little symbol, a "hang in there, pal", to his future self.

I'm going to give this another try. I'm heading back to the therapist tomorrow. We'll see what happens. I'll keep you posted, ok? Thanks for listening...er, reading.

-Bones

. . .

Sunday. I found myself stumbling through the woods, pushing through the thorny vines that stretched between the trees. Cutting my hands. Sticking to my jeans. Tearing at my face. I barely noticed, I was so drunk.

I was heading to The Pub.

Funny, in his world, The Pub was a patch of woods at the end of a pond. In my world, The Pub was some shitty playground in a park next to the high school.

Weird. We both had a Pub.

But I knew his Pub. I used to visit this place in high school, too.

And now I was going to see the soccer ball.

Thing must have been sitting here, hidden, for years.

How many years? More than five? Long enough to be sitting here now, here in 2005? Here in my world? Would the soccer ball be here?

I had a feeling that it might.

I made it to the pond. I stood on the shore looking out into the water. Heard the sounds of birds chirping, twigs falling from the trees, insects buzzing. I thought about Bones standing here in his world with a gun in his mouth. Standing here, moments away from putting an end to his shitty life. A life that had once been not shitty. Had been full of happiness and security and potential. Love. Maybe kids. Who knows? It didn't matter anymore, cause he had decided to blog about it, and I had found the blog. And I had changed it. For me.

Just one simple squeeze of the index finger.

I had led the guy to this point. This pond. This end. And something had saved him. For some reason he was not supposed to die that day. Some silly simple reminder of his past made him change his mind. A soccer ball.

There was something white over in the trees, half-buried by weeds.

Thing must have been sitting here, hidden, for years...

I turned over to my left. Like he had done. Or *will* do.

There it was.

Over in the trees. Just like he'd written. Will write. But it wasn't half-buried by weeds. Not yet anyway. I walked over to it, bent down over it. It was bright white. Not brown and cracked and half-deflated like I pictured it will be when he sees it.

Just a bright white soccer ball resting up against the trunk of a tree. A simple soccer ball that was going to save his life. My life. Our life.

How long had it been here? Not long, evidently. Couldn't be more than a couple weeks, max. Just resting here, waiting for me to find it years from now.

Or was it waiting for me to find it now?

This ball. This stupid little soccer ball. This savior. This spotted sphere that would save our lives.

This soccer ball that was going to save our lives.

Ok. I'd done what I'd come here to do. I'd seen it.

Now walk away, Bones. Leave it alone. Leave it alone so it can do what it's supposed to do years from now. Leave it alone so it can save us.

I stood up. Turned away from it. Took a few steps back into the woods. Away from the pond. The direction from which I'd come. To go back to the car, back to the laptop. The blog. Back to nights of drunken solitude in Bones Alley, where I'd wait for the impending depression

to come. To take me to that point that he was at. That led him to this pond. With no hope of salvation. No hope for the arrival of Angie.

I thought about the little kid... Never knowing that his soccer ball wasn't the end, but maybe, just maybe, a beginning. For me...

... I imagined that little kid was me. Sending a little helping hand, a little symbol, a "hang in there, pal", to his future self.

Close, Bones. Close. But not exactly. You mother fucker.

I ran towards that soccer ball with as much speed as I could muster. My drunken, hungover, broken body filling with a rush of exhilaration that I hadn't felt in years.

I ran towards to that soccer ball.

And I kicked it as far as I could into the pond.

...

I quit my job recently. I just couldn't take it anymore. Just couldn't sit at my computer, with the internet right there. Without thinking about what I'd done. Without thinking about that website. And how it had changed.

It had changed just as I'd expected it would as I was driving back from the pond.

That final post – the one where he wrote about giving life one final shot – was gone.

Of course it was. Because when he was standing at the edge of that pond with a gun in his mouth and his finger on the trigger, when he should have been distracted by an old soccer ball half-hidden by weeds in the woods, he wasn't. Because it wasn't there. There was nothing to save him.

And the last post on the site was:

I look back over this blog sometimes and I try to decide if it's hilarious that this is how I will be remembered. Or if it's the saddest thing ever.

And that post never changed.

I couldn't take it, being at work, sober, thinking about that post. Without going back to the site, day after day, hoping to see something new up there. Some new post to prove me wrong. That the results of my actions didn't always *have* to be felt in his world.

But the post never changed. Nothing new appeared on the site. And it never would. Because I'd already destroyed my opportunity to make eye contact with Angie. Because I'd already kicked that soccer ball into the pond. Those changes couldn't be undone.

I think about my parents. What they'll do when they get the news that their son's body was found at the edge of some pond. When they have to identify him in the morgue. When they arrange a funeral. How they'll blame themselves for not doing more. For not seeing the signs. Never knowing that there was nothing they could do. Never knowing how extraordinarily out of their control it really was.

They'll remember me from the days as a happy kid.

Their only son.

It isn't guilt that I feel. Not really. At least I don't think so. No, the feeling is a little more complicated than that.

Because of me, someone (me) is dead in another universe. But clearly that isn't the *only* other universe. How many are there? Infinite? And if so, in how many of these universes am I dead because of my actions in this universe? How many Bones would still be living, would be happy, would be in love, if I hadn't done what I've done? How many parents are crying over the body of their dead son? How many universes did I change? How many of me did I destroy?

Oh God, what did I do?

And I think about what will happen to me when I die. Will I go to Hell for what I've done? Is it murder if you cause a death in another universe? Is it murder if it's *you* who you've killed? Is it murder? Or is it suicide?

Will I go to Hell for this? Will I be held responsible, not just for the one death of Bones, but for *all* the deaths of Bones in *all* the other universes? And in how many universes have I done what I've done in mine? How many of me have caused the deaths of countless versions of me in countless universes? And will each of us go to Hell?

And is there a Hell for each universe?

Or is there just one – just one all-encompassing Hell shared amongst all universes?

And will it be just me there? Or will it be all of us?

I think it might be all of us. I think my punishment will be an eternity of seeing myself burn. Seeing an infinite number of me. Burning.

Suffering for what I've done.

Yeah.

I often wonder what Hell is like.

I often wonder what Hell is like.

And so now I spend my days in Bones Alley. Drunk. Googling myself. Trying to find another bonesink.com. If there was one, there must be others. There must be others that are still changing. Where new posts still appear. Proof that I'm still alive in some other universe. Proof that I haven't changed them all.

And I've not found one yet. But I won't stop searching. I can't. I'll continue to google. And drink. And write in this blog.

-Bones

November 11, 2005