

# **Burnt out. Burnt over.**

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LJMcD Communications

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The logo for LJMcD Communications features the letters 'LJMcD' in a large, elegant, cursive script. Below this, the word 'COMMUNICATIONS' is written in a smaller, clean, sans-serif, all-caps font. A thin horizontal line is positioned directly under the 'LJMcD' text.

Nothing to do. Exhausting.

Exhausting.

Exhausting.

Nothing to do.

But. Ring.

Then, reddionne-purposed now, s's swat! And this is how AJ Soundy, one of the senioritianne analysticas kept ready in the medium common-pool of available men—qas yash 'lso women—got plucked out once a while for the occasional airing, to be used when a general purpose analyst with no axe to grind is needed in a pinch. AJ seldom was called up for this. He was plump with specially-assigned deep inactivity, so took the long way 'round to get to the—to the room—okay stop here,

what's the slip, say the room's, did you, or where is it? Did you not crap I, am halfway there I, write it down, where? Yes, where? I better ought to have wrote it down because I am halfway there—yes. The slip came into Soundy's hand from a seldom-used pants pocket. He started out again, relieved. The slates'r going under, tip tap, why'd I buy these mail-order trousers anyway hah, tap, tip tap, tip, he told himself he'd get rid of him once back in the hole. What hole? His hole. He grinned out over one long drainrate set in the walk tip tap tip tap tap why'd they need such a big one must have a water top tap problem tap tip here tip tap tip tap tip tap tip off past the drain, and farther.

The door of the circular squat building filled with rooms opened. In he went. Soundy took no notice of the cold within wh' he had not been given anything meaningful to do hardly at all since being put on special assignment ten agos—he pulled out his tablet, and approached door three. That was the number, they said kick the wall pow, stop. He would be doing the interview in, and, the screen flipped a'lit, and he thumbed down the pages one-two-five-ten-ninety there, he would be tip tap nope it's inside now, and none interviewing this patient, but the tip tapping was insidious. His head's named Lon, full of it, like Carpre—e, no a song you can't shake playing in his head that how am I do I can I how all the time. How to pronounce it. Go in now.

And when seeing him say help tip it is tap rude to mispronounce tip tap tap tip and so do not say the name better savvy than sorry or he, the door opened—better get the knob, so it can't be claimed to be a haunted door opening by itself, but maybe he inside opened it, but. Why would he?

There.

Hi, I'm Doctor Soundy, I was—told you and I'd be having a talk today. Hi there.

And he put out a handy-shake, but the brown-haired patient in the chair seemed to not even notice him, let alone take his hand so, but. Though it's very rude of him, do not react—because, on the plane of consciousness he must be in, there may be

different rules of etiquette or no such rules at all.  
SOUNDY. SAT.

All right—after consulting his tablet, he looked up and said, So, Mr. Carpre. I'm here to ask you some questions to be used to assess you. These questions have no right or wrong answers. This is not a test. We are working to match you up with the most appropriate licensed therapist. What you tell me today will be used to help with that matching. How're you feeling, Mr. Carpre? Or—may I call you Lon? There's nothing formal about this session. So. May I?

Lon sat looking, his hands down invisibly at his sides, and Soundy at first thought Lon was looking at him. But, then, he shifted in his chair, to

test this, and, Lon was not looking at him any more. Not because he'd moved from looking to not looking, but because his overall countenance was fixed. Soundy'd simply moved out of his gaze—if it was even a gaze—it may have been nothing at all, like, tap, tip, tup. If a painting's looking at you, it is, but, if you step aside, it normally isn't, and so, forth. Forth, so. So. What to do. What to say.

So try this.

Lon. What's your take on all of what's been happening to you lately? Have any thoughts to share about it?

No change. None. Soundy sank a bit internally, thinking, Here I am again, in a nothing room, with a nothing thing to do. And, this—this is just so tie tap



tip tic toc tic tic toe tap tic, sigh. Sigh. The look of Lon, so much like himself—what is in Lon, is Lon seeing, or not? When I say the word Lon, does anything click at all? What if I call him Larry, or Lou, hey, what the—Hey, Larry. Hey Lou. I bet I know the trouble here, Larry-Lou. The trouble's they got your name wrong in their great big name machine. They got it wrong it says there in the record you are often catatonic. Often unresponsive. God damn, I got it. I do. They been asking you, Lon, hey—wake up, man, say something, when they ought have been saying, Lou, hey—wake up, say something, or—Len, wake up say, Les, wake up, Larrry, uh Lou-Lane maybe even Lily 'r La-Lola, esh Lillienne too, hey whu' ffck a' hey, maybe Lake

Len Liv or—Lady? Eh? Lon! Lon! Hey—any name but Lon. Lon got to be wrong, and you are pissed at being called the wrong name f' so long, so—you are on strike actually, right Len Lou Larry Lane Lawrence, eh? Lawrence or Margaret, which will it be? Choose!

Lon sat.

Soundy didn't care. It didn't matter. Like it doesn't matter when the mortician spears the dead heart, or the autopsy tech blenders-out the lungs or-or no, you cannot kill what's dead already, no, you cannot kill what's dumb already, no, you cannot deafen what's nulled-out already, this Lon. I—uh oh this, Lon. Soundy sat looking. Soundy thought this and these moments here, are so as my life, you

know. So as my life, and—he lay his head in his arms on the tabletop, and let the silent tears come, that normally only were let come in the dark of the bed, but what's, the difference? The difference really between then, and now, let it come. Let it.

What?

On his back, my back—Soundy's back what non get off sit up look!

Lon! Lon—

At Soundy's look, Lon took his hand off his shoulder, saying, It is hard, brother. It is hard. For honest men like us. Honest with what we are who we are, and why. Come on, sit up. I—I will tell you what you need to know. But. On one condition.

What? shuddered out shakily, the stunned-cold Soundy—What? he asked again, being unsure if he'd asked or not 'ready.

Lon sat across from Soundy, again.

The condition's that—you report back that I said nothing. That I sat in a fog.

How, uh, eh—how—how can I do that? It is not true.

It's true after you leave here. Might not be true now, but—truth is always in flux today. True today, a lie tomorrow. True this moment, changed the next. You much know this's so, eh—did you say your name coming in, ah, yes—Soundy. Dr. Soundy. You did say your name. Must have, 'cause I know it, or—maybe I just know it simply 'cause its true. Eh,

Soundy, eh? Can that be, Soundy Sunday Someday,  
eh eh ah, oh—which of those are your name,  
Doctor? Pick three. They're small—like most  
everything, when at last seen honest. Pick.

Ah my name is my name—

And, Soundy caught himself. Sat upright,  
again. Awake. A doze, it had been a doze, one if  
those. Too many those lately. Damn it damn. Too  
many! Must not fall 'sleep, but there's not much  
more to do when he sits there like that. What is in  
him while he's sitting there? Has he been this way  
all his life or there's been some trauma—follow the  
line of the left side of his face. Everybody's line  
down the left side of their face is different. Yes,  
different. But, he says 'nd he is saying, that is true

Dr. Soundy, so true but tip tap tock tie why think of such things in these beach chairs on this beach. Aren't the waves so very wonderful? They come in, and then come in again, each one of the God knows how many since water came to be, and these shores also came to be. God knows how many and they all seem much the same but every one's brand new and different—isn't it something what the life span of a wave is huh, Doc Soundy? Every wave lives seconds, just seconds, though. There might be one some time of a time that starts far enough out and gains more strength than most, and then lives minutes.

Soundy looked over at Lon, at the exact moment that Lon drank God knew what from his

tall thin green plastic glass, and said, But what?  
Just minutes? Why just minutes? Can there be a  
wave that takes days, weeks, or even years to come  
in, and on over, up the beach, to a stop as a wet  
stain, that the sand just sucks down gone under  
itself like it never was at all? Can there be, do you  
think? Do you think?

Sure yah right there in front of your face,  
Soundy.

Hey, what—e—

Wake up! See it! It's right there in front of  
your face.

Wake up!

Soundy again caught himself, and then b-but  
no there, real life, now, b' all beach rar-round him,

what, no, the edge of the table, his hands pushed on,  
no, why sit there sat, Lonnie? The beach off' beac'  
confrerencial rack-chair, buh, no—yes, wake!  
Please, ple', there's a—a giant a—supergiant of a  
wave rearing blue, black, all 'round Lon out there in  
his other side. Why sit there, while that? Deep  
blackest blue water full of shadows, 'll criss-  
crossing, and, as a boy. Father mother at the back  
said—thought even-so child-he wanted to swim,  
said—Oh, no! Look into the waves. They're too big  
and fast but worst of it all, there's—things riding in  
them. Shadow shapes with no names, until you're  
struck, slit, bit, or 'ven worse, see—there's things  
riding your way there to bite you, slam you, bloody  
you up, strike you down-drown you, ess—knock you



down, end you—down ess-s-s-s, ess! Soundy's something's snapped, Lon—stop saying a' me, Can there be a wave, Doc, can there be so many waves so long so wide and fast to last weeks, months, years, and forever? How many more will come at you me, 'fore, a'fore—you know what I'm saying, Doc—yah ye', you are not stupid, what's on your wall, things on your wall say you're not stupid ah uh no Mommy and Dad-dad were so God-damned proud—buh, the waves too many since then, up down up down, count them out the—are the downs winning—and is this that there the final—if there's to be a final is that the final look? Look, throw down the glass Lon, help me to know! Across the table there you are how can you be t'other side of

the beach-'brella in the chair drinking down calm of  
your smile no no gahhh—there it is rising, Lon, is  
that it rising, Lon the final its final deep dark blue  
with danger sharks, jellyfish, bad men, this job, that  
job, more coming and gone too washing over the  
table from you. Why are you doing this? To me, why  
this to me? Here and there this special assignment  
to do nothing at all, to stay out of the way, we wish  
you were gone, Mr. Soundy, we wish so what that  
you tried yo'best that doesn't c'—ohh Lon do not  
hose the room down that way not with me in it Lon  
I will wash away to less than atoms ah, as though I  
haven't done so already. Right, left, yes because you  
are stupid yes can there be a wave lasting a—hang  
on the desk edge, left, right, yes—because you are

worthless some can even last a lifetime here comes  
er ome ess no no sharks rocky wood drifty-snaggles  
seafoamy log-sticks all barkless all bare eh' holy  
universes worth of shattered seashells—'lso hires  
and fires and all's in between, were missed, Mr.  
Soundy. Yes you, sir Soundy. Because you are  
nothing. It won't matter. It won't, because here hits  
it 'n you mister Soundy, you being worth nothing, so  
thin cheap 'n bone-dry, it flows uphill, because of  
you. 't shallows down, with you inside, because of  
you; rolls thinner, a' slower, still, because of you; 'til  
flats out to a damp stretch, then slow, stop, and,  
then the whole of the beach, which will live on  
much longer, sucks it down dry-gone and, it may as  
well never have been—it being namely—the watch

says what, oh, the watch says the average time for this style of session has been reached. Thank God—been so long, too long, too exhausted. Look up.

Exhausted because of you, Lon.

Fall away.

Fall.

Lon sat unchanged and so the two sat 'cross of each other the smoke clearing. Smoke clearing—smoke done clearing. So.

So.

Doctor Soundy flipped shut his tablet, and rose to leave. It had been, as Lon's file said, catatonic. Unresponsive. Catatonic unresponsive catatonic unrespons—

Leave, out, tip, the door-tap, tip, b'-back  
upstairs tip tap tock get up there tic type the report  
tic tic tic then, done for the day back to nothing to  
do again. Nothing to do. Sit. Nothing to do. Nothing  
to do, nothing to do. Sit. Nothing. To do.

Sit.

Exhausting.

Exhausting.

Nothing to do.

Exhausting.



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