



**MY WEEK WITH  
KIM JONG UN**



BY

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## My Week with Kim Jong Un

I've been to some sketchy places in my lifetime but North Korea certainly bags The Lonely Planet Wooden Spoon for 'Worst Place Ever'. How I came to end up stranded and alone there is the subject of some debate on social networking sites that litter the internet, but casting my somewhat unreliable eye back over the events of the past few weeks, as much as I can determine is that it started in the most innocuous of places, a McDonalds franchise on the Kao San Road in Bangkok, my third night in Thailand's capital...

'Bullshit... that's bullshit...' he said again and again as my mind drifted back into the rather tedious conversation.

These pearls of wisdom were being thrust, uninvited, in my direction by a highly articulate and worldly-wise twenty-five year old on his first ever jaunt abroad from the North of England, Wakefield or Warrington or somewhere, most probably, judging by his accent.

'... and if you want my opinion...' he repeated for the fifth or sixth time.

I sighed and raised my finger, stopping him mid-flow, and said:

'Ah, yes, you see, that's where you're going wrong... because I really don't want your opinion... I neither requested nor value it, but you, for some quite inexplicable reason, seem to be under the deluded impression that it's of some importance.'

This seemed to perplex him in some small way. I'll never know what his real name is, but as he was a red-haired clown and we happened to be in McDonalds, I'll simply refer to him as "Ronald".

I continued:

'You asked if you and your girlfriend could join me at this table and so I said "ok" and then you asked what I'm doing here and so I foolishly told you...'

Regretfully, I'd confided in the disagreeable little twerp, "Ronald", the personal information that I'd left London a year prior to travel and pursue my writing ambitions. His girlfriend seemed to like this. He did not. It would not compute in his Amstrad CPC664 for a brain, as I sat patiently for several minutes while he called me a liar, a fraud and a coward. I learned the glistening pearls of information from him that I was in fact pretending to be a writer as a cover story and that I was simply running away from real life. I also learned that I'd never worked in the film industry; this I had obviously falsified as nobody in their right mind would ever leave such a glamorous profession unless they had been kicked out for gross incompetence or theft. It's quite remarkable the truths that one can learn about oneself from a total stranger with which you've shared perhaps two or three pieces of rather bland information. If I'd let him continue I'd have no doubt discovered I was also on the run from a triple Murder charge or was actually in command of day-to-day admin ops for ISIS.

'... and you proceeded to generously share all manner of your unrequested thoughts with me, but you see I'm really not at all interested in your thoughts. To be honest, Whateveryournameis, your incredibly limited and, frankly, insignificant opinion is absolutely irrelevant to me...'

Ronald's opinion was about to bare significantly more relevance to me. Before I could add '*now please excuse me as I'm going to move elsewhere, but do enjoy this table*', which were the words I'd intended would spring forth from my lips, it happened.

And it made quite a mess of the place.

*Early Tarantino gore... Reservoir Dogs.*

## My Week with Kim Jong Un

A searing eruption of pain exploded from behind my eyeballs as my blood spray-painted the 'restaurant' and anybody who was sitting within a three-metre radius; the closest person to me, Ronald's girlfriend, in fact, looked like Sissy Spacek in the climax of 'Carrie'.

It took me quite by surprise and I'll admit, in Ronald's defence, he certainly had talent for landing a solid connection to the hooter. I doubt an infuriated Boston Docker or even Muhammad Ali in his prime could have done a better job at turning my nose into something that now so closely resembled a sweet potato.

Fellow diners fled for the hills. The exodus of McDonalds. Not wanting to escalate the situation any further, and spotting the shimmering gleam of psychosis in Ronald's lunatic eyes as he swung back to take his second whack at me, though this time with the absence of surprise, I (according to witness statements) leaned over, plucked him from his seat like a rag doll onto the floor and then, rather than hitting him back, just sat on him so he couldn't move.

'Have you finished?' I asked him (quite calmly, given the circumstances) as my blood Monsooned all over him. His white T-shirt turned carmine in seconds.

Ronald hadn't quite finished just yet though; this mangy little dog in the fight. He scrabbled and scratched and swore and swung and strangled, but to little avail as fourteen stone of Haynes pinning you down, as blood rains into your eyes and mouth, momentarily blinding you, is ultimately quite difficult to keep up the good fight against.

'It's over. Done. Just give it up!' I stated several times to the compromised Ronald as he wriggled around like a fat little worm on a hook, until finally the aggression drained out of him like the torrents of blood from my newly applied nasal cavities.

Once released back into the wild, the feral little ferret Ronald sprang up from the tiles and sat shaking on a plastic stool, rocking back and forth, struggling to comprehend the Horror-Movie Set he'd created around him as I apologised profusely to the shocked staff, some of whom were busily mopping up a combination of my blood and my uneaten sandwiches and my chicken nuggets from the floor. The indignity. His girlfriend was cooing sweet nothings into his ear to snap him back from his trance and then she apologised and thanked me in equal measure for not actually hitting him back while I had the opportunity. I begrudgingly accepted the apology but pointed out that not everyone would react so diplomatically to such an attack. (I suspect that even Gandhi, under the circumstances of making acquaintances with "Ronald", may have been swayed to momentarily relinquish his deeply held convictions of pacifism to plant the irritating little shit with at least a sucker punch or two...) She agreed and said that they don't usually. It appears that this was not the first time little Ronald had done this kind of thing...

After a couple of hours, several buckets of SangSom (Thai rum) to dull the pain of my throbbing potato nose, and many, many plasters that proved most ineffective at stemming the gory flow, the cranial passage wouldn't stop haemorrhaging blood. Finally, on the advice of some shocked ladyboys I passed on Kao San, I ended up making my way to A&E.

Scans, prods, X-Rays and general microwaving determined that my nose was broken in several places and would require an expensive operation to snap it back into position. This was as painful as it was costly when the local anaesthetic didn't quite kick in (the downside of an ox-level tolerance to toxins) before they crunched it back into its former shape. I cursed the ginger psycho who'd set me back about a thousand quid in medical bills for this privilege. The surgeon informed me of what I couldn't

do until it healed, which was pretty much anything: No drinking, No smoking, No diving, No sports, No tumbles, No any kind of fun. No, No, No, and all in capitals... My initial plan for a month of lazy Island-hopping came a cropper. That being said, he did give me a prescription that read like Pete Doherty's ideal Christmas wish list - a vast cocktail of drugs, including: Tylenol, Tramadol, Reparil, Augmentin, something called Experipsychodelamentin and many more. So I spent a couple of days in my hotel room, whacked-out on the cocktail of painkillers, and then, like a phoenix rising from the ashes, the thought occurred to me... North Korea! I could do some first-hand research on the rogue totalitarian state, necessary for my next novel.

There's a misconception that the chubby, youthful North Korean Supreme Leader-cum-Dictator Kim Jong Un was privately educated at a Swiss boarding school, but this is a falsehood. He was actually educated, in secret, at Rugby School in Warwickshire, England, my old school to be precise, two years below me, under the guise of being a mysterious foreign diplomat's son, and we shared the same boarding house. You make some interesting connections at these institutions. This made the bureaucratic, and traditionally impossible, access to the fortress-like State somewhat easier as I passed through the red tape and the DMZ (de-militarized zone) from South Korea into the Heart of Darkness that is the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea.

### **I ♥ North Korea Ministry of Propaganda Tour.**

#### **Day 1:**

I took a controlled excursion of some of the areas the Party deem fit for outsiders to see. It didn't take terribly long; a few parts of the country that don't have people starving en-masse in the street, while occasionally being instructed by the "tour guide" (handler) to look out of the opposite window when passing many a forced slave-labour prison camp: the Gulags.

It's a barren wasteland. Stoker's Dracula springs to mind, when Harker describes Transylvania. Buildings look like an architectural Mengele experiment and don't get me started on the grey matter that's classed as food... but Kimmy's really got his propaganda locked down so the people are genuinely grateful for their thimble of gruel after fourteen hours of back-breaking labour, seven days a week. I'm sure that I'll eat a little better at the Palace though, safe in the bosom of the Fatherly Leader's prodigal grandchild.

I hit Kim's pad, the Palace in Pyongyang, at about four pm, after the breezily satanic tour. He's got a lot of Palaces in the Capital, and they continue to keep springing up like toadstools on cowshit (despite North Korea's "temporary" economic downturn), but this one is his favourite. It's the flashiest of the lot. The décor suggests the Interior Designer was strapped down in a torture chamber and kept awake for three weeks, forced at gunpoint to watch endless screenings of *MTV Cribs* (repeated emphasis on the one with Mike Tyson's house), whilst being repeatedly sodomised by Donald Trump. The result is as if they've somehow tapped into any tasteful designer's worst nightmare, or a Premiership Footballer's wet dream... I mean, everything is FUCKING COVERED IN GOLD (including the loos)... and mock Louis XIV chandeliers drip from the ceiling of every room. Colossal paintings hang on every wall: portraits of the Man-Gods Kim Il-Sung, Kim Jong-Il, and one or two (which seem more recently added) of Kim Kardashian. This particular Palace is called: *"The Celestial Majesty of The Great Leader's Palace, For The Worker's*

## My Week with Kim Jong Un

*Paradise that is The Glorious Democratic People's Republic of Korea, that Benefits All of the Free Citizens (Pyongyang Palace # 8)*". So, naturally, if one of the proles ever laid eyes on the bling inside they'd be no doubt shot on sight...

I'd wondered to myself what Kimmy's day-to-day responsibilities as Supreme Leader consisted of. He's sat plumped on a giant throne-like beanbag, trimmed in gold leaf, sipping from a pitcher of Hennessy and smoking a joint while playing World of Warcraft on his X-Box. He doesn't take his eyes off the cinema-sized plasma-screen as he bludgeons an opponent to death, but says:

'Yo, yo, yo! What's hangin' dog?'

'All good thanks' I reply 'How's tricks?'

'Bitchin!' he says, 'Got a whole fuckin' country now bro... but Obama's getting on my tits. That was him that just copped it. Wanna play?'

'Uhuh' I say.

'What happened to your nose? Looks like there's a miniature menstruating polar bear clamped to your face, bro... And is that a tampon shoved up its ass?'

The balance of power has shifted dramatically since school.

I grab a controller and park myself down on a beanbag...

### **Days 2-5:**

The days pass by at the Palace in a blur of Hennessy and X-Box sessions with the Supreme Leader-child. It appears that this is ALL he ever does, day in, day out... The food improved significantly though; foie gras (flown in daily on one of Kimmy's private jets straight from a trendy boutique delicatessen, favoured by Elton John and some of the minor Royals, on Boulevard du Montparnasse in Paris) is served with Lobster Thermidor and kimchi (Korean spiced cabbage) on the side for every meal. The quality is excellent.

I have to make sure I don't forget to keep taking my meds.

### **Day 6:**

After the standard Lobster lunch, Kimmy proposed 'come on bro, let's do something different...' *I'd finally started to beat the little shit at World of Warcraft.* '... you'll fucking love this!'

I'm a little surprised to be led out the back of Kimmy's Palace to find a mass of terrified army types bound, gagged and tied to wooden posts... On a giant golden trestle lies an impressive array of weapons: AKs, rocket launchers, bazookas and the like, even some medieval axes and spiked balls-on-chains and other nasty stuff. One of the "relics", a Spring Loaded Triple Dagger, still has a faded gift tag on it that reads: "To my very good friend The Eternal Leader of the Workers Paradise of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Kim Il-Sung. Warmest regards, His Excellency, President for Life, Field Marshal Al Hadji Doctor Idi Amin Dada, VC, DSO, MC, Lord of All the Beasts of the Earth and Fishes of the Seas and Conqueror of the British Empire in Africa in General and Uganda in Particular (aka Idi)"... the devil's in the detail. Kimmy picks up a rocket launcher and inspects it with a connoisseur's eye before he lugs it over his shoulder.

'What's this?' I exclaim. Genuine shock.

'FIM-92 Stinger' he replies.

'Not the weapon! This! This situation. What is it?'

## My Week with Kim Jong Un

‘Oh, right. Bit of post-lunch sport’ he says nonchalantly, lining the weapon up to eviscerate a petrified former General or Commander of his armed forces. He then changes his mind and swaps it for another model:

‘Actually fuck it, the Panzerfaust 3... better for specificity... This bad boy’ll hit the nuts on an ant 20 miles away... German engineering, baby - you can’t fucking beat it!’

I stare at him incredulously.

‘Come on.’ he says, ‘Grab a tool and get stuck in, man... mi casa su casa!’

*Tool? Sport? There’s nothing in the least bit sporting about it...*

‘Woah, woah, woah!’ I say, ‘Time out. You’re fucking kidding, right?’

Kim looks at me like I’m a maniac, like *how could you possibly NOT want to play this* sadistic game of exploding organic toy soldiers?

‘Nah’ he responds coolly, shoving a rocket into the pipe and realigning the bazooka. The General makes a whimper as he prepares to meet his maker: probably Kim’s grandfather, the Eternal Leader, Kim Il Sung. (Word has it the man got around.)

‘But, but, but what have they done?’

‘I dunno... traitors of some kind, probably? They look pretty guilty anyway and I could do with fucking some shit up. It’s good for the digestion... My physician told me so... just before I had him fed alive to a pack of starved wild pigs.’

‘You can’t just kill them for... for... for sport, for no reason!’

‘I can do whatever the fuck I want, bro. I’m the Supreme Leader of the Greatest Superpower in the universe.’

Somehow, I manage to convince Kim not to engage in the brutal activity but instead play a game of my travel Monopoly. He takes to it pretty quickly, like a dictator to corruption, but of course he’s a cheating, spoilt bastard (always was) and steals Park Lane and Mayfair immediately and then helps himself to cash from the bank whenever it suits him. His method at playing Monopoly perfectly mirrors his domestic management and economics policy. I think they might have made him a prefect at school, which would have made him even worse: the early footsteps to taking your place in this world as a corrupt, murderous dictator.

After I’ve had to sit through Kimmy taking every property and all the stations on the board, fairly or otherwise, with houses, hotels, crack dens, brothels, the works, on every square, he says:

‘Come on man, let’s get baked before dinner’ as he reaches for an industrial-scale bong, then adding ‘I’m entertaining tonight. Some of the boys are coming round to eat...’

### **Day 7:**

So dinner the previous evening with the ‘boys’: Kim Jong Un, Robert Mugabe and George Dubya Bush, to be precise... Mugabe spent most of his time slagging off Tony Blair, who was notably absent.

‘Fuck him’ said Mugabe ‘we’re freezing him out. Borrowed one of my villas for a week that time but didn’t bring a bottle of wine or write a thank-you letter... He didn’t even leave a tip for my slaves. Tight-fisted fucker.’

Bush pointed out that Tony couldn’t have made it regardless as he was delivering a lucrative after-dinner speech at the Dubai Four Seasons on how to achieve peace in the Middle-East... there’s general sniggering around the table about this remark...

## My Week with Kim Jong Un

‘We’re still freezing him out anyway’ added Mugabe, somewhat testily.

I asked Bush why he’s on such good terms with the other two as this seemed a bit at odds with his former foreign policy.

‘Are ya kidding?’ whispered Dubstep nervously, ‘Don’t underestimate mah judgement... Rob ain’t got no oil, so ain’t worth shit t’invade, and Kimmy actually HAS some WMDs... He’s got The Bomb, man. Hot potatie. Gotta tread careful in them circumsises!’

Kimmy drunkenly launches into his Sea Of Fire speech again, and everyone starts laughing. Bush then adds ‘Middle Eastern Peace Envoy...’ and they burst into hysterics. This provides the basis of HOWLS of laughter inside the banquet room for the entire evening. My nose hurts and I pop some more of the Experipsychodelamentin and wash it down with some of Kimmy’s Hennessy. A little wobbly, I make the mistake of actually referring to Kimmy as ‘Kimmy’ to his face, a nickname he’s hated ever since the schooldays and one that only the foolishly brave or criminally insane would ever utter in his presence. It’s made worse by the fact that Bush thinks it’s hilarious and starts repeating it and it spreads like wildfire as Mugabe catches on.

‘Fuckofffuckofffuckofffuckofffuckofffuckofffuckoff, stop calling me that!’ shouts Kimmy petulantly.

And that was how I came to find myself on day seven, chained to a stake, in Kim Jong Un’s back garden as Kimmy, Bush and Mugabe played with various gruesome weapons.

‘Can you lot just fuck off!!!’ I shouted. ‘This isn’t fucking funny, you know’

‘I want the rocket launcher’ screamed Mugabe like a disgruntled adolescent.

‘Na-ah’ said Bush, ‘I called shotgun’ while Kimmy began to swing the Morning Star (the medieval spiked ball and chain thing)... choose your friends carefully.

‘Really, really fuck off... it’s NOT FUNNY!’ I bellowed again in protest, but they were all having too much fun playing with their military hardware to pay the slightest bit of attention to my trifling discomfort.

Mugabe primes a shotgun. Kimmy’s chosen medieval. Bush raises the rocket launcher and squints as he aims it in my direction.

I’m in shock rather than awe...

I’m now sitting here back in Bangkok at The Atlanta, an old Colonial-style hotel, mulling over my experiences. It doesn’t seem quite real though it was so vivid but I can’t quite recall how I got back here... did I make a break for it and cross the Tumen River into China? Did Kimmy give me clemency for old time’s sake; not bog-flushing him at school? Did Tony Blair perhaps make a Skype call from his penthouse suite at Dubai’s Four Seasons and persuade them not to explode me, or were they just fucking with me all along for a bit of *sport*?

I’ve finished my course of medication for the nose and it’s healing very nicely. Doesn’t look quite the same as it did before, though perhaps it gives a certain devil-may-care quality.

I’m sipping my tea in the courtyard and the fellow on the next table strikes up a conversation. He’s a youngish doctor from London, mid-thirties. His opinion may be of some relevance to me. We talk about my nose and Ronald and the operation and the meds I’ve been on.

## My Week with Kim Jong Un

‘Experipsychodelamentin?’ He says, ‘you want to watch out for that one. It’s pretty new to the market and there’s some funny psychoactive side effects’

‘Yes, I’ve noticed. I’ve had a very strange week on it...’

‘Did you have the North Korea hallucination?’ he asks.

‘Yep’ I say.

‘Yeah, that’s pretty common. Did Bush, Blair and Mugabe come round for dinner?’

‘Bush and Mugabe, but not Blair... they’re freezing him out.’

‘Right. Of course.’

‘But Blair couldn’t have made it anyway, as he was too busy promoting peace in the Middle-East...’

He sniggers at this.

The End