

Accusations of cargo cultism are well founded. Think of it as an offering to the policy gods: make them smile and maybe I'll wake up one morning in another life, say, a three-story brownstone in Georgetown and a Vassar girl for a wife. Her father taught international relations at Colombia when he wasn't managing the family trust; her mother was an editor at Vogue. We met at a party in Boston; I was preparing for a post-doc at Rand, she was a fact checker for Harpers. She followed me to Santa Monica, and after living together for six months I proposed. We waited until I'd made it to State--an assistant to the deputy undersecretary charged with monitoring the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction--and then we had Jenn. The next day her parents gave us this house as a gift. I eventually moved to Brookings, and we had Ian.

I still attend the Tuesday brown bag lunches at State, and on Thursdays I try to make it to the AEI mixers, just to touch base with the other side. Twice a year I visit the bathhouse and share frantic couplings—and even threes and fours—with the other prelates of empire.

After the kids are school age, she takes a part-time position as a lobbyist. Confession: I'm thinking she may have succumbed, once or twice, to the charms of power. Of course, having strayed myself, I never feel a need to draw attention to the slip-ups that give her away.

And let's not forget the neighbors: he's a Rep's chief of staff, she teaches at Sidwell Friends, and they introduce us to a small circle whose doings warrant comparison to the Hellfire Club. I imagine dark rituals in the tunnels beneath the city, the same ones where Dolly Madison hid during the British invasion. Goat headed masks, black marble altars, Dionysian frenzies--that sort of thing. And maybe even a retired FBI agent running the whole thing...

The sounds of Los Angeles interrupt my reverie. A helicopter passes overhead, and I watch a spotlight crawl across the backyard. My friends can't understand why I choose to live here; myself, I can't imagine living anywhere else. L.A. is the hometown of anyone raised by a television.

What's that? The whole City of Quartz, LA as the megalopolis on the edge of tomorrow/the future/forever rings false? Alright, I'll admit to baser motives, as well. According to MapQuest, Arianna Huffington lives exactly 4.2 miles from my front door, a fact confirmed by my car's odometer on many occasions. A guy has to dream, right?

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- Integration of fertility reducing pharmas into public water works in regions at the highest risk;
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- Research into the effects of the so-called "sexual trafficking in women and children" upon population trends, with an emphasis on isolating those elements with a statistically significant negative impact upon population growth;
- Development of a new generation of powerful anti-depressant and mood-enhancing pharmas with fertility reducing properties;
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