

The Third Bomb

by Rudy Rucker

*Story Copyright (C) 2006, Rudy Rucker.
Images Copyright (C) 2006, Rudy Rucker.
1,600 Words.*

I'm imprisoned on a jungle island. I think it's in the Caribbean near South America. Can you hear me? I'm sending this out live on the Web by talking to myself under my breath so that it makes a slight hum or moan in my larynx. The sound resonates up my throat and into the SWN transmitter that Dr. Robards implanted it in my back tooth today.

SWN means Saucer Wisdom Network. Dr. Robards is the prison dentist. I've been live on the Web ever since the anesthetic wore off. My molar had an abscessed cavity; the man put in a large plastic filling with, I firmly believe, a transmitter inside. What makes me so sure? When I was leaving the office, Dr. Robards looked at me and made the Saucer Wisdom gesture, cupping his hand down and moving it rapidly to one side. I saw this very clearly.

But, yes, maybe prison life is getting to me. Maybe I'm going crazy, sitting in the corner of my cell crooning to myself and thinking I'm broadcasting. Radio Free Me. It's very stressful here, that's for sure. They pipe country music and political speeches into our cells, always with crackling static and unpredictable shifts of volume. It's been weeks since I had a good night's sleep. The ugly noise gets into my head, driving my thoughts.

There's a guy here from Quebec with a really strong voice. Jean-Claude. Sometimes he sings over the piped-in crud, bellowing "O Canada" or "La Marseillaise," temporarily drowning out the horrible music: the grainy-voiced alkies, the caterwauling prowler-gals, the warbling yearners, their witless rhymes like hammer-blows.

Right now, as I'm broadcasting this, it just so happens that we're hearing the voice of our President. He sounds angry, like he always does. I wish I could blow off his head a second time. Not that it would matter any more than it did the first time I did it. Earth's doomed to become an alien refueling station unless the people of the world rise up together. I'm calling for armed revolution. Moaning into my tooth.

My jailers are fellow Americans. Some of them wear military uniforms with no identifying insignia, other dress in chinos and white shirts. Most of the other prisoners here are foreign. All of us are suspected terrorists, none of us is going to get any kind of normal judicial process. It's terrible to see the United States from the outside like this. To a man, our captors are deeply imbued with the sense that they're *right*.

How did I end up here? I blew off the head of the President of the United States; it was a close-range double blast with a twelve gauge shotgun. I was working as a dog handler for a duck hunt on a Michigan estate belonging to one of the President's cronies. The Saucer Wisdom Network machinated for six years to embed me into this post so I could take my shot. But, sad to say, blowing off the President's head didn't make a damned bit of difference. He grew a new head right away, alien echinoderm that he is.

Now, in retrospect, I see that the Saucer Wisdom Network should have expected this outcome. Far from being paranoid and delusional, we in the SWN have been too conservative. The situation is worse than any of us had thought. Not only is Earth beleaguered by a race of alien sea cucumbers, but the President *himself* is a sea cucumber. He's working full time to foment nuclear war so as better to serve the Galactic Empire's UFOs

The President's inner circle hushed up my assassination attempt. Harry Watson, the guy who owned the estate, certainly saw what went down, but right away one of the President's men gave Harry a light blast of buckshot to the face. The Secret Service took Harry to the hospital and loaded him up with those drugs that wipe out traumatic memories. Even if old Harry does remember anything, he'll damn straight know to keep his mouth shut.

There's so much that the public doesn't know. Thank Gaia I've got this subvocal laryngeal transmitter in my tooth. I've got nothing to lose by broadcasting the truth, that's for sure. I'm doomed.

The reason my jailers haven't executed me yet is because they're busy interrogating me. When my time's up, they'll stage my death as a suicide, like they always do. There's been three "suicides" on my cell-block since I arrived.

But it seems like there's some kind of gap in the chain of command. Rather than grilling me for information about the Saucer Wisdom Network, my interrogators are bent on getting me to confess to being an Islamic terrorist. Which makes me a round peg in a square hole. Terrorism is square; UFOs are round.

Agent Marc Walladi calls me in for debriefing every day. I keep telling him the truth about why I tried to kill the President: he's hell-bent on steering our planet into nuclear war. But Walladi acts like he thinks I'm either lying or crazy when I try to give him the deep background: about the third bomb and the fizzled tests and the sea cucumbers. On the other hand, maybe he's playing dumb to draw me out. Maybe, come to think of it, they deliberately put the transmitter into my tooth so I'd spill even more. Maybe my signals are going no place but to the titanium laptop on Agent Walladi's steel desk. I better not give out any details about the SWN's inner operations.

It's hot in this cell block, maybe a hundred degrees. We're all tense and sweaty. The hideous country music warbles on; the guards suffer from it too. A passing guard beats his club against the bars of my cage; he's yelling at me to stop moaning; he's calling me names. Idiot. I yell back at him.

"Storm trooper! Sold-out tool of the alien sea cucumbers!"

I go back to my tooth-moaning, but a little quieter than before. I definitely don't want the guard to come inside my cell.

Two cells down, Jean-Claude starts singing "Gens du Pays," a Quebec anthem. The guard goes to beat on Jean-Claude's bars instead of mine. So now I have a little peace again.

A German hippie girl named Ulrica told me about the third bomb a few years ago. Thing is, near the end of World War Two, the U. S. actually prepared *three* atomic bombs: one for Hiroshima, one for Nagasaki, and one for Berlin. The U. S. dropped the third bomb on Berlin after the blasts at Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

There are two seeming logical holes in the story: first of all, the U. S. would have had no legitimate motive for bombing Berlin, as by then Germany had already surrendered. Second of all, it's a matter of historical

record that Berlin was not devastated by an atomic blast on August 11, 1945.

As for the motive — it's not hard to suppose that our leaders authorized the Berlin bombing for financial gain, as a power-game gambit, for revenge, or simply out of inertia. As for the lack of historical record — yes, the third bomb was ignited over Berlin, *but a flying saucer swallowed up the blast*.

Goddamit, here comes the guard again. I'm too excited, I'm moaning too loud. Maybe I can scare him off.

“Lickspittle lackey! Don't even think of coming in my cell! I'll rip your face off.”

Oh oh, he's getting out his keys. But, thank god, there goes Jean-Claude again, even louder than before. The guard roars back to Jean-Claude's cell, billy-club upraised.

Quickly now. Ulrica showed me a notarized translation of a report by a Berlin beer-garden waitress named Vilma Hertz. Shortly before noon on August 11, 1945, Hertz was on break, smoking a cigarette and staring up at the sky from the shade of a chestnut tree. A US B-29 Superfortress was droning high overhead. Hertz spotted a black object dropping from the plane. Just as she formed the thought that the object might be a bomb, it bloomed into a pinpoint of blazing light. But a moment after that, a silvery disk swept across the sky to envelop the burgeoning explosion.

Yes! A UFO ate the third bomb. The aliens were on the spot and ready for it; they'd been alerted by the Hiroshima and Nagasaki blasts of August 6 and 9. And *why* did the alien craft swallow the blast? Obviously they use nuclear blasts for fuel. Oh shit, the guard is back.

“Leave me alone, you monkey redneck! I'll moan all I want. You want me to throw my slops at you?”

Gaia help me, he's coming in. He's holding — are those pliers? He knows about my special tooth! Walladi doesn't like the information I'm sending out!

Listen fast now. UFOs are very commonly sighted near nuclear test sites. The army shot down a couple of the saucers, everyone knows that sea cucumber aliens are preserved in Area 51. Here's something new: the government hushes up the fact that most of the above-ground nuclear tests have been duds. The blasts were soaked up by the saucers, and *that's* why they went to underground tests.

“Get away from me, you filthy animal! I'll kill you!”

The UFOs want a regular series of blasts taking place in Earth's open air and that's why they want unending nuclear war. That's why we have a so-called war president in office! He's not a human being! He's an alien sea cucumber!

Oh no, here come the pliers! Rise up for peace, people of the earth! Rise up!

---End---

About the Author

Born in Kentucky in 1946, [Rudy Rucker](#) moved to Silicon Valley when he turned 40. At age 60 he

retired from his computer science professorship at San Jose State University. He has published twenty-eight books, primarily science-fiction and popular science. An early cyberpunk, he also writes SF in a realistic style that he characterizes as transreal. His most recent novel to appear is *Mathematicians in Love*, from Tor Books. Rucker recently finished a novel, *Postsingular*, which uses his recent *Asimov's* stories "Chu and the Nants" and "Postsingular" as back-story. He spends an inordinate amount of time writing and photographing for his [blog](#).