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2012: Countdown to the Big Whatever

By Thomas Eldredge

2012 promises to be a big year for conspiracy blathering. I'm looking forward to some of the best doom forecasting since 1999. The conspiracy community has been gearing up for this kook jamboree for decades, and now, I'm kicking off the festivities with a remembrance of the worldwide tragedy that didn't happen on Y2K, and a hard look at what 2012 probably doesn't have in store for mankind.

Y2K was all about computers and Jesus. Computers were originally conceived and invented by Richard Nixon to help fight the Nazis. Tricky Dick, a God-fearing man, engineered the first prototypes to shut down promptly at midnight on December 31, 1999, so Jesus wouldn't catch anyone playing on the internet when He returned to collect the righteous. This design was implemented in most digital devices until the practice was abandoned in the mid-90s, better known as Satan's decade.

Right up until the end of Satan's decade, a small but vocal minority believed that Jesus would return to Earth on his 2000th birthday, probably accompanied by an energetic band and professional stage lighting. Most people, especially God-hating atheists, did not share this belief. Despite their lack of faith, they were wary that the mass computer shutdown engineered by Nixon could have a melodramatic effect on people who have an irrational fear of technology. This rational fear of irrational fear led to a widespread belief that, even if Jesus didn't return, things would probably get ugly.

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For better or worse, Jesus didn't show. It was pretty anti-climactic all around. A few computer systems spontaneously became sentient, but they were destroyed by a Metacortex programmer named Thomas Anderson.

Theological speculation suggests that Jesus actually did return on New Year's Eve 1999. Unfortunately, when He arrived, most of the world was completely wasted and He was generally unimpressed with humanity, so He decided He'd give the righteous a few more years to straighten us out. The year 2000 passed without any biblical repercussions.

Nearly a decade since, it has become clear that the righteous aren't going anywhere anytime soon. It has been smooth sailing for a while. Once again, humankind has been comforted by the fact that the world didn't end on schedule.

Humankind has been stressing about imminent doom from the get-go. Human history can be broken down into cycles of worrying about impending doom, then being relieved when that doom doesn't materialize, or being relieved of worrying when it does. Despite the welcome assurance that most of humankind has been busily predicting the end of the world for most of history, there remains a distinctly upsetting fact: The world is always ending somewhere, at least for someone.

The year 2012 will almost certainly be a catastrophic year. People will die, planes will fall out of the sky, India will take a larger share of the communications market, and an immigrant laborer will date a white girl. Depending on the scope of your world, this might be business as usual, or it might be the bitter end of everything you know and love. Since people's scopes vary so widely, doom is a pretty safe bet and not a bad investment.

Nostradamus was one of the first in well-documented history to successfully market doom and disaster. Nostradamus was well aware of the cycles of human history and used them in a bold strategy to promote his work. The first part of his strategy was to write in poetic quatrains to create artistic ambiguity. Then he proceeded to predict as many disasters as possible, relying on probability and self-fulfillment to implement the predicted forms of doom.

The last part of Nostradamus' plan was perhaps the most ingenious. He died. In dying, Nostradamus insured that all the disasters he predicted would happen to other people, and it made him less accessible to those who might demand clarification for such predictions.

Long before Nostradamus, the Mayans both predicted and created doom on an unprecedented scale. The Mayans created complex systems to manage doom. Natural doom was averted by creating artificial doom in the form of mass human sacrifice. This system worked so well that Mayan predictions of ultimate doom are still given deference by people who are prone to think ideas like ultimate doom are not crazy.

2012 heralds the end of the Mayan Long Count, which began in 3114 BCE. This is one of the longest cycles in the Mayan calendar and denotes massive changes in the human and mythological

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world. The nature of those changes is subject to a variety of entertaining speculation.

Reputable online journals such as satansrapture.com, 2012endofdays.org, and, of course, funkboxing.com have already begun to educate the public about what to expect for 2012.

Although I have not read the speculations on these sites thoroughly, I speculate that it's probably got something to do with dinosaurs. The progressive survive2012.com suggests ways to protect yourself from whatever speculations they suggest – again, probably dinosaurs.

Dinosaurs and doom are an economic opportunity for those willing to assume the risk. The problem with successfully marketing doom is that you have to make sure you don't alienate your demographic. Planetary doom is completely unmarketable except in movies. Doom in the developing world is okay, but it's hard to collect from. The individual doom market is already saturated by insurance, private security, and the evening news. The most lucrative doom is the doom that leaves you exposed and afraid, but not necessarily dead: dinosaurs.

Dinosaurs are coming in 2012. The best course of action is to purchase or lease an absurd stockpile of weapons, ammunition, Spam, and Sterno, and build a crazy homemade defense system that includes a Tesla coil for some reason.

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