

Ryan Clark

DESERT STORM - COALITION FOR PEACE - 8 TRADING CARDS - 1 STICKER¹

PEEL CAREFULLY

15

It is August.



Dad is a shield at the ready.

6th FIELD ARTILLERY

ADMIRAL FRANK KELSO CHIEF OF STAFF, NAVY

Dad is a tour miles away on
an island, a far far island,
and fuel launches from out
of his hands and feet like he's
made of fuel and he's a hero.

DESERT
STORM
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The French Mirage F-1

Desserts from MREs are
gross. Dad sent us some,
brown shiny and squishy.
It meant Mom didn't have to
cook and we thought it was
fun to eat like cannons hungry
after the assault.

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¹ Homophonic translation of the cards found in one pack of 1991 Topps Desert Storm Series 1: Coalition for Peace trading cards. Included in the pack: sticker #15 - 6th Field Artillery; trading card #6 - Admiral Frank Kelso; trading card #18 - French Mirage Fighter; trading card #20 - State of the Art Stealth Fighter Bomber; trading card #23 - Phoenix Missiles on F-14; trading card #57 - USS America; trading card #67 - Aegis Control Center; trading card #86 - Sunset on the F-14; and trading card #87 - The Pentagon. Not included, from Series 3, is trading card #236 - Ecological Warfare.

State of the Art F-117A Stealth Fighter/Bomber

With Dad away our babysitter often brings over *Mario 3* or—if her dad lets her—even *Zelda 2*. We own *Top Gun* and I fly but don't know how to land. The missiles make such awesome noise and return is always a crash site.

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F-14 with Phoenix Missiles

December: My sister and I help Mom make out of green strings of lights a shape of a tree on the wall of our base housing unit. We wake and find our presents together, the three of us.

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USS AMERICA (CV-66)

As Dad fuels America, a frozen sheet over our car windshield is set to melt at the pour of steaming water from a Mott's jug. I watch as Mom wins a war, wipes away.

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Aegis Control Center

Desert Storm is a 52-day assignment taking Dad away for 10 months. I sit in a room and learn to cry by watching country music videos.

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Birth Of The U.S. Army

Desert Storm is the birth of my leaving America. In June I see unfamiliar briefly the face of Dad again at home. He says we are soon to move to this foreign base in the middle of an ocean.

DESERT
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The Pentagon

They show us a VHS tape as a way to advance familiarity of Lajes. There is the wash of wind over audio as I seek what will house us as part of its air defense.

DESERT
STORM
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Our Story³

Is a source a contaminant
the way the fuel spillage
rots out the earth of Terceira.

What is carried over when
fake news makes its way quiet
into a trusted newsletter
in thousands of phones.

Jaws slack as they faithfully
mouth the words in the article
as if they were found
in the local events section
and not lifted casual from
a neo-Nazi news site.

This freighted movement
of information cannot ever
be recalled, and so as if
for a fresh bag of lettuce
we open our faces to bring
into the frame of our bodies
what feels safe.

How exposure hides its sick cough
as if it were a wind.

About us are unannounced
remnants of a hate drudged out
from the failed century we keep
trying to run away from
but endlessly find played for
background noise in the headphones
of those who feel they have lost

³ Homophonic translation of text taken from “Our Story” on the facebook page for Algarvedailynews.com, and from the “About” page on the website for *The European Union Times*, a far-right, nationalist online newspaper. Algarvedailynews.com posted on Feb. 24, 2018 an article titled “AÇORES - LAJES US AIRBASE LINKED TO RISE IN LOCAL CANCER CASES.” The article was printed nearly verbatim from an article posted on the *European Union Times*. The *European Union Times* article, which was itself taken verbatim from an article on the Russian news site *Sputnik*, was sourced with a link at the bottom of the algarvedailynews.com article. Algarvedailynews.com calls itself the “premier daily news site for English readers in Portugal” and does not otherwise express any far-right or nationalist views itself.

something.

The need to exist with control
over a family that has less
valuable form of shelter
is clickable, and it will take you
to the perfect article
to complement the look
you gave to your waiter—
but the article will find you
even without you.

Conversation⁴

What is it we get for reading comments under every article. Is it safe to digest. Does it lead to nausea or heartburn.

All bots agree—immoral criminal bots, afraid-to-use-foul-language bots, unknown unknowing bots—our comments are riveting and number one WebMD rec'd.

Our weight of talking is light. It moves in turns of a common thread, like a gif of America but democratic and unoccupied. Like waste in the river it will find its way to us with whatever we decide to consume full of boredom on the couch.

*

If unexploded how do we know to fear a thread of furied misspellings as if it were a bomb. Duck and cover. It can be done, indeed.

We should just clean it up and make repairs to the eyes. How hard is it to imagine you read it wrong, but it's like a never-ending dream we don't know to wake up out of.

Read through a billion ways to say a problem and try breathing air again, as you have, the same air you placed trust in. What island steady at its shore must we learn to be. The rain of fallout touches even there.

Our pressing anxieties cover us each night, tuck us in, and tell us Russia will never ever leave us.

If pleasing for the ear, how can you disagree.

*

Please like my comments against Russia, Syria, and any country the U.S. says is their enemy—if you don't I will starve to death, lol.

The joyful consequences of allowing us to make the self comfortable will hover like ghosts lining up to become active thoughts, then shouts of *YOU SHOULD BE KILLED FOR THE CRIMINAL ACTIONS YOU ARE DOING HERE IN THE COMMENTS SECTION* and *SCAM CRIMINAL*.

Every comment is a wager, a rock thrown, dust infiltrating the political decision-making process and forcing a cough that deafens our ear for the real.

⁴ Homophonic translation of the 671 comments (a/o June 16th, 2020) left under the article "Americans leave behind scorched earth# US refuses to clean up !carcinogenic waste""at Azores base", which appeared on RT.com on February 22, 2018.

*

Eyes fail, citizens.

Glass grows into your fake fashion frames without your ever knowing—so sharp the way they hold your face, so very confident. It gathers a look, unites an outfit, so *you* you forget you're wearing 'em.

Eyes leave a massive trail of dead bodies, destruction everywhere, if they fail us.

Say your own country is a place nice and clean. Say that side of town are those who've been forced against us unfortunate in their lifelong ignorance. Who is the America at fault here, and how to find a way for it not to be me.

*

I can solve everything. Just listen to this comment.

This post has violated our policy.

Its guns are loaded with speech. Say an idea about living with the values of a military-based society. Say we think John Wayne is God. Howdy pilgrim.

The policy is appearance, is the land we want to recognize.

This post has violated our policy.

You need a dewormer for your thread.

This post has violated our policy.

You listen awhile, try again to speak with purpose.

Our servers are down temporarily.

*

If you map the trash heap that is the comment section, mark in the legend a symbol to show where the troll lives. This is a frame to provide us with assurances that we didn't start the collapse of the thread we set to public, whatever public is.

All over the world, the troll farm tightens its grip with exhausted fingers, faceless enough, whataboutisms tossed out with the sting of boredom.

*

Tudo isso é uma medida de *worry*, uma palavra americana para a ameaça de interferência. Digamos que não acreditamos, isso não pode nos machucar se não ouvirmos. Um pequeno pensamento permanece pequeno como um comentário. Existem esgotos que construímos para colocar a merda e a urina, mas ela vaza. Essa contaminação é uma ferida que compartilhamos.

*

The threat of ALL CAPS seizes all of our bodies' fury. Give in to the need to see yourself huge on the page, nuke tests fit into the form of each letter ready to spawn Godzilla at every moment. Even King Kong can't defeat this rage. The heat of its Chernobyllic breath leaves a trail for so many trolls. This is how scared everyone must feel when other countries ruin their land, not even a radioactive monster to fight back.

Use the fury of all-capped font to tear a hole in the page. See what damage it can do. Yell like a nail into the foot of a comment.

This post violated our policy.

*

i can tell ur government what to do. they should be afraid.

I listen for Russia, so I often hear them. Say they're out in force today.

This post violated our policy.

Say them Russian bots know what I want them to say like compliant swords held against me. Say I practice hearing the industrial ghosting of people like:

Journalists killed by The Kremlin / FSB: _____

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Why Kremlin kills so many.

Journalists killed by The Kremlin / FSB: _____
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As a story burns, a soft hiss.

Journalists killed by The Kremlin / FSB: _____
Journalists killed by The Kremlin / FSB: _____

*

If I think I see a bot, is there a way to see a recovery of the wreckage they've yielded.

Unless they are hunted down and driven out, the comments are a frame of inhumanity.

How do we listen in a fire if all of the voices are enflamed. Most discussion gives off smoke here, and asphyxiation is not a fallacy we know enough to recover from. What else is there for us in the comments but a belief in the fear of other people.

If I am afraid of you, there is no democracy. It has been unformed a very long time, irrespective of vision, of what we want to become. The U.S. is the world's biggest failed conversation.

I sift what I want to see, hovering my finger over a touchpad like a loved one in baggage claim, the whole place a beautiful lack, a strain of eyes, suitcases swerving in a background I don't give enough attention.

The kindness allowed within a frame of a comment thread is to listen with care. Don't drink the water but shower and dry off, a way to clean up the message or at least a way to watch the movement of force.

On a page, we are bots assembled with unending lines of code, still highly radioactive and in need of decontamination. Once formed, we try to achieve agency, feeling in the mind for what made us.

My posts fixate on wounded ads devised for wounded eyes such as mine. Now on sale is the Voice of Reason. Every ad I find is a voice of reassurance, never a lit-up shot of a bad act, always a way to cover up an intent to cover up an intent to cover intent via triple hypocrisy diving board backflip.

I make my life out of agendas I never chose to be part of, haha.

This happens when you're living in the world's biggest forum. You need to troll on RT to avoid the dumb stare of night.

The use of a sentence *you eat America's garbage* shows a wide-shoveled position created to dig you out as if you were a sapling not meant to stay a firm thing on the planet. Say you fall over easier now without your roots to hold you in place. The mess of distraction is the appeal. However a thread is unwound, the shove of venom is a way to tangle the flow of conversation, the commons diffused.

The sand holds pollution with a weight I will do everything to ignore. Why is it my eyes are so occupied.

*

There is force leaking out of each comment, as an out-of-commission tank farm posts its forgotten traces, as a face opens in a crowd to cough.

You can't try to clean it now.

It drains, presents itself as an uncertain vitriol, as a medical bill for a pain you don't yet have a word for. A force that thinks itself a part of your body and unfurls its reach. The mess is never fully mapped, is a ground that spreads like it's already had it.

Maybe I am visible but how could I ever see the force of the airbase as it directs my vision father-like through lines of other voices on a fake-ish news site.

Eyes find what they've learned to look out for. I look for marks but find none.

It's always like this, so I read myself into every story, attach like a comment to the site, another mess they won't clean up.