

A N O V E L

THE ILLUMINATI



LARRY BURKETT

T H E
ILLUMINATI

Larry Burkett
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藏书章



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P R O L O G U E

THE COLLAPSE OF AMERICA

On February 16, 2001, the President of the United States scheduled an emergency press conference at the White House to discuss his executive order to suspend the Congress. In normal fashion, half of the media staff were assembled at the White House, while the other half were focused on the Senate.

The hastily assembled media room in the Senate building was packed with news people. The last eight years had been a media dream. First the depression of 1996 had sent millions of Americans into the streets to protest as they saw their homes repossessed and businesses ruined. Then the 2000 election of liberal Senator Mark Hunt to the presidency was a clear mandate to government: Restore the economy and stop the rampant crime wave sweeping the nation.

Hunt's reforms pitted him against the Congress, as funding for essential services was drastically reduced. Now, in an unprecedented move, President Hunt had suspended Congress.

"Ten seconds. Stand by. Rolling."

"Good evening, America. This is the World News Network, coming to you from the floor of the Congress, where for only the second time in the last one hundred years the House has decided to take up the gauntlet and actively seek to impeach a president. It did so once before, in 1974, but then-president Richard Nixon resigned the office before he could be impeached. There is no evidence that President Hunt is considering resigning. In fact, he has all but dared the Congress to try to impeach him.

"Here with me now is Senator John Grant, the senate minority leader and the strongest opponent of President Hunt.

“Senator Grant, what is your reaction to the president’s move, and is it constitutional?”

“The president invoked the Balanced Budget Amendment and virtually shut down the Congress. This is an unconscionable decision.”

“Explain the Balanced Budget Amendment, Senator.”

“It is the constitutional amendment passed during the previous administration, which gives the president line-item veto power to control the flow of funds through the government. It was first used to freeze the United Arabs’ assets after they invaded Israel in 1997.”

“How has President Hunt used this bill?”

“Just today he announced that all funding for operating the Congress will be suspended for the duration of the fiscal year.”

“What exactly does that mean?”

“It means that we can’t operate for the next five months. It also means that the president holds the reins of this government, since Congress can’t pay its bills.”

“Kind of the old ‘golden rule,’ isn’t it, Senator?”

“What?”

“‘He who holds the gold makes the rules.’”

“Well, the president may think so, but I’m about to show him he’s dead wrong. I believe there are enough votes in the Congress to bring him to trial. His actions are clearly unconstitutional.”

In his earpiece the commentator heard his director comment, “Keep it up. This is the best stuff since the Nixon investigation. Our Insta-pol shows that we have over 70 percent of Americans watching us right now. Hold it a minute. We have a news bulletin coming in now from the White House. Stand by, we’re going to the White House now. . . .”

“Senator Grant, we have just received an urgent message from the White House. Please stand by while we get this latest update.”

The life-sized monitors in the newsroom sprang to life. The familiar face of Linda Lipsey, WNN White House correspondent, appeared on the screen. “I’m standing in the press room of the White House now, where the president will be addressing the nation in just a moment,” she reported. Even as she spoke, the door adjoining the press room and the Oval Office opened, and President Hunt strode through, flanked by secret service agents. The room, which had housed so many past briefings with other presidents, seemed to take on a life of its own with news people and their crews pushing and shoving each other for the best positions.

President Mark Hunt was dressed in his usual, gray pin-striped Shap Brothers suit. His black hair, with only the hint of gray around the temples, gave him the appearance of a Hollywood-cast politician.

A hush came over the room as the president stepped to the podium with the familiar presidential seal emblazoned on it.

Cal Rutland, the president's ever-present aide, took his place behind and a little to the left side of the podium. And, as he did, Linda involuntarily shuddered. She had covered three presidents for the network and had always worked well with their press contacts, but Rutland was somehow different. His cold, dead eyes were shadows of evil with no sign of life in them. *Or, maybe, no soul*, she thought.

The normal fanfare surrounding a presidential press conference was totally absent. Clearly each member of the attending press sensed the sobriety of the occasion. There was tension in the room.

A solemn President Hunt began, "Ladies and gentlemen, I have something to say that is of the most critical importance to our nation. I wanted the American people to hear this announcement directly. That is why I called this briefing.

"As you well know, fellow citizens, our nation is struggling for its very economic survival. As your president, I am empowered to invoke the Balanced Budget Amendment to reestablish the stability of our monetary system. I have chosen to do this by two methods: First, I have authorized the national budget director's office to freeze all government spending until a new budget can be drafted that will match our income and expenses. Second, I have authorized the implementation of a new electronic monetary system known as 'Data-Net' that will restabilize our currency. Without this, my advisers tell me, the entire economy might collapse. But even with these changes, the crisis is not past. With the escalation of tensions in the Middle East and the disastrous increase in petroleum prices, we face the possibility of a worldwide depression.

"Clearly the Congress lacks the will or the courage to deal with this crisis, despite my consistent warnings that action must be taken quickly."

Senator Grant nearly leaped out of his chair when he heard the president's last statement. "Lies! Lies!" Grant muttered through clenched teeth. Common sense told Grant it was useless to rail at a monitor. *I'll wait my time*, he thought, trying to control his anger. As *minority leader, the networks will want my rebuttal*. Shifting his attention back to the screen, he heard:

"Congress has recently attempted to usurp my authority and return control of the economy to the greedy self-interest groups whose policies got us into this disaster. I simply cannot allow that to happen. I feel too great a compassion for the millions of jobless, whose families will suffer through no fault of their own.

"Reluctantly, I have suspended the funding for this session of Con-

gress," the handsome president stated in an apologetic tone. "Until this crisis is passed, I am declaring a national emergency and assuming total responsibility for the nation's welfare. Earlier this morning I instructed the Justice Department to initiate the necessary petition to the Supreme Court. At two o'clock this afternoon, by a margin of five to four, the justices confirmed my actions. I am therefore reallocating \$800 million, appropriated to the Congressional operating budget, to the government Jobs Services Program.

"Remember, fellow Americans, we are all in this together. You have elected me as your leader to make these very difficult decisions. We cannot allow those who would use your grief for their own benefit to destroy what we have worked so hard to build. Thank you, and good evening."

With that the president walked off the platform and through the open door that led to his office, leaving the stunned press crews behind.

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JEFF WELLS

The events leading up to the congressional showdown in February, 2001, had actually begun two years earlier under the most unlikely circumstances. With the presidential elections coming up the next year, three probable candidates were vying for the position. Senate Majority Leader Mark Hunt was running under the banner of progressive leadership to stop the nation's economic slide into a major depression. Considered a radical liberal by many within his own party, he was finding it difficult to garner the support he needed to replace the incumbent president, Andrew Kilborne. Even with the economic problems, Kilborne was considered to be the Democratic party's best hope.

The wild card was the ultra-liberal Governor Jerry Crow of California. His main appeal was to the fanatics that made up the National Civil Liberties Union, the Gay Power Society, and the National Organization for Women's Rights.

In one of those strange turn of events, an incident at the California Institute of Technology would change the whole complexion of the presidential race and the country.

For decades, an enormous earthquake had been predicted for the California coast. Recent minor tremors had been interpreted as forerunners of the "big one." In a coordinated effort, designed to more accurately predict the location and intensity of the quake, a study group had been established at Cal Tech which brought together some of the best talent available. After several weeks of exhaustive research, the group was preparing to consolidate its findings and issue a statement to the government's office of geological study at the Livermore Laboratory in California.

Most of the research group reached the same conclusions; the earthquake would hit the San Francisco Bay area with a force of approximately 6 on the Richter scale. However, one of the group, a doc-

toral candidate by the name of Jeff Wells, had reached a radically different conclusion. Working from a uniquely different perspective, Wells predicted that the big quake, with a magnitude of at least 8.2, would occur beneath the islands of Japan between January and May of 1999.

As Dr. Jack Rhinehart, the project leader, handed Jeff's paper back, his sarcasm was evident as he addressed his assembled team. "Well, it seems that young Mr. Wells is fallible after all. According to his calculations, or his miscalculations I should say, he has the earthquake occurring next year, and about four thousand miles west of here. Thankfully for us, that will not happen, especially since he shows the epicenter to be in Tokyo, rather than San Francisco, as the correct equations show."

Jeff blushed when the entire group laughed, but he took the teasing good naturedly. Then, looking down at his calculations, he said courageously, "I'm sorry, sir, but I am correct. The other calculations are wrong."

Professor Rhinehart wheeled around, his eyes flashing with anger. "Just who do you think you are, young man? These equations came from the computer center at Livermore Laboratory. Do you actually think your program is right and theirs is wrong?"

To Rhinehart's utter amazement Jeff answered, "Yes, sir, I do. You see, I built in variables to compensate for some additional geological indicators. I believe there are signs in previous test data pointing to a major build-up in the primary plate area under Japan."

"How could you possibly know that?" the professor questioned. No sooner had the words left his lips than he regretted saying them. Suddenly he sounded like the student and Jeff the instructor.

Jeff responded quietly but confidently, "It's just that in setting up the equation I noticed there might be an additional factor that had not been taken into consideration. My equation indicates that the next major quake will be much stronger than expected and centered over the plate convergence in the Pacific. Basically that's right under the population center of Tokyo. Maybe you could have Livermore check it out."

With that, the whole group roared. The idea of having one of the premier computer centers in the world, noted for its physics in tracking and predicting earthquakes, recheck its program equation because a junior instructor said they were wrong, was laughable. Only Professor Rhinehart didn't share in the humor.

His eyes still flashing with anger, Rhinehart challenged Jeff, hoping to belittle him. "I'll make you a deal, Mr. Master Programmer. I'll have Livermore recheck your equations. When they are proven wrong, you will apologize to this group."

After a brief pause, Jeff asked cautiously, "And, what if I'm right?"

"What did you say?" Rhinehart growled as he slammed the papers down on the desk in front of him.

"What if my analysis is correct, sir? Will you notify the proper authorities so preparations can be made? An earthquake of this magnitude in Japan will generate a fairly significant tidal wave."

Rhinehart snapped back, "I will personally call the news media and notify them of your electrifying revelation. I worked on the program in question myself; that's how I know it cannot be wrong. We had nearly thirty mathematicians working with us, checking every possible iteration."

"I don't see how they missed this, then," Jeff said. "I found a paper written by Dr. Landill of the JPL space division on the influence of gravitational forces on satellite orbits. From his calculations, it seems clear that changes in the earth's gravitational forces cause variations in low earth satellites. So I factored in the variations in the orbits of these satellites over the western Pacific. I believe the results are fairly conclusive."

The meeting ended with Professor Rhinehart furiously cramming the papers into his battered briefcase. He was tired of all the talk about the genius Jeff Wells, whose IQ topped out well above the maximum 180 registered by conventional tests. Faculty gossip just added to the boy-genius myth. It was rumored that Wells had developed a complete, computerized star chart by the time he was twelve.

When one of the physics professors said he had seen a program written by Jeff that computed the orbits of all the man-made satellites, Professor Rhinehart had retorted, "So what? So has the group at the Jet Propulsion Lab." The other professor had countered with, "Yes, but Wells did his at age fifteen from information supplied by magazines and on a PC!"

Much of Rhinehart's negative attitude was because he had been the rising star as a student at Cal Tech and then later as a research faculty member. He was not about to share the limelight with anyone. So when Wells was recruited to do his graduate work at Cal Tech, the "green-eyed monster" reared its head.

"He had better breaks than I did early on," Rhinehart said defensively whenever he heard anyone lauding Wells' abilities in the faculty lounge. "His mother was a research scientist and adviser to Presidents Kennedy and Johnson. With her as a tutor, he couldn't help but succeed."

The more he was around Jeff Wells, the more miserable Rhinehart felt because inside he knew Wells was a whole level above his own

intellect. Wells had a singular gift of being able to take very complex equations and reduce them to simplified programs that would run on just about any computer system to which he had access.

Rhinehart had done everything in his power to keep Wells off the geological research project. But in the end the final selection had been made by the faculty team, and Jeff Wells was the first student selected to assist the senior staff. He was resigned to the fact that he could not block Wells' appointment to the project, so the professor shifted his energy to making Jeff's life as miserable as possible—a task for which Jack Rhinehart was well suited.

I've got him now, Rhinehart thought gleefully as he hastened to maximize on Wells' single error thus far. He called his counterpart at Livermore, Dr. William Eison. "Bill, this is Jack Rhinehart. I need your help."

"Good to hear from you, Jack," the burly mathematician on the other end said, but he was thinking *I wonder what this jerk wants. I was hoping I was rid of him when he went up to Cal Tech.*

"One of our research students ran our seismology equations through the university's computers and came out with some different results. Obviously he's made an error and my equations are correct, but I'd like to have you run them through your system."

Yeah, in other words, there's a new star on the horizon and you want to extinguish his light real quick, the Livermore scientist added silently. "Okay, Jack, I'll run your numbers through Certa, but we cooked that program three ways from Sunday already. If there was a flaw, I think we would have caught it. What does your whiz kid think he's found anyway? Have we missed the blow off of Mount Saint Helens again?" Eison asked.

"No, but listen to this! He says his equations show the big quake will hit Japan some time early next year, and it will be about an eight."

"You're kidding! I'll be sure to run his numbers twice. If he's right, I'll move to Arizona and buy some beach-front property."

"You don't mean to say that you think his figures could be right, do you?" Rhinehart asked incredulously.

"Most probably not," the overweight scientist said as he shifted his sagging paunch under his belt. *I've got to get on that diet one of these days*, he thought. *Too much cafeteria food.* "But who knows when it comes to computers? I still don't really trust 'em. One of these days we'll all be taking orders from one of 'em if we're not real careful."

"Probably so," Rhinehart agreed. "Idiot," he said aloud after he hung up the phone.

Two days later Jack Rhinehart was roused out of a sound sleep by

the electronic beeping of his telephone. "Yes, who is it?" he growled into the receiver.

"Rhinehart, it's Eison. That kid who ran these numbers . . . who is he?"

"He's a doctoral candidate by the name of Jeff Wells. Why? Why are you calling at six in the morning anyway?"

"We've been at these numbers for the last twenty hours and we can't find a flaw in his logic. It looks like your whiz kid has hit upon the greatest discovery in seismology since the seismograph was invented."

"You mean to say you believe his calculations?" Rhinehart shouted as he bolted upright up in bed. "But that's nonsense. He doesn't know beans about earthquakes."

"Maybe not, but I can tell you this, his insight is like none I've ever seen in my sixty-two years. We need him here as quickly as possible. Some of our boys don't fully grasp how his equation works. It would appear that he has created a three-dimensional relationship."

"A three-dimensional equation? That's impossible," Rhinehart sputtered.

"Never say 'impossible,'" Eison said with an air of contempt in his tone. "Einstein was working on three-dimensional equations in his last days, but he coded everything so nobody has been able to crack it since. Maybe your boy is the one. Whatever . . . we're sending the jet down to John Wayne Airport to pick him up in an hour. Have him there."

Depression swept over the scrawny instructor as he heard this news. *A dumb kid is going to get the recognition I should have*, he thought as he slipped his heavy glasses on. "I'll come up with him, Bill."

"Sorry, we don't need more hands right now, and we're gonna be overrun with reporters and politicians when this news breaks."

After hanging up the phone, Rhinehart sat in numbed silence. Then he called one of his lab assistants and told him to notify Wells of the waiting plane. He was fuming when he slammed the phone down. "There's no justice," he moaned. "No justice at all."

That plane ride to the Livermore Laboratory would change Jeff Wells' life forever. For the next three days he was bombarded with questions about how he had devised the quantum equations used to integrate all the billions of bits of data used in his calculations.

Jeff spent hours sitting around the big conference table in the "think tank" room at Livermore, trying to explain his equations to the ten top physicists at the research facility. Often in frustration they would throw up their hands and demand that Jeff diagram his concept

on the chalkboard. More often than not, all this accomplished was more frustration.

One day as he was being questioned, Jeff stood and leaned over the table, his big frame giving him more the appearance of a line-backer than a scientist. "I can't explain what I don't understand myself," he said politely. "Somehow I just see problems in more than one dimension. I don't have to think about it. Usually the equations just come to mind."

"But I don't understand, Dr. Wells," one of the obviously frustrated mathematicians said gruffly as he leaned forward in his chair in a manner meant to impress his colleagues. "Who taught you to do this?"

"No one taught me, I guess," Jeff responded as he sat back down in his chair. "And it's not 'Doctor.' It's just plain Jeff."

The red-faced scientist sat back in his chair, careful not to notice the smirks on the faces of several of the less-stuffy scientists.

The focus of the conference shifted from questioning Jeff on his formula to why he predicted the earthquake to be imminent and centered in the Tokyo area. He explained his computations to the small group of scientists, who were transfixed at not only what they heard but what they saw.

Jeff pushed a button recessed into the table top, swinging a hidden computer keyboard into position. As he began to type in the commands that initialized his program, the only sound that could be heard in the room was the slight mechanical ring of the plastic keys as he punched the data in. As if in unison with his actions, the wall on the opposite end of the room divided and began to retract into a hidden cavity, revealing a wall-sized computer screen.

Dr. Eison, along with Jeff, had labored several days to convert Jeff's program to operate on the massive Cray computer system nicknamed "Gerta."

The display screen, covering nearly the entire wall, sprang to life. A computer-generated model of the earth was displayed in full color: The oceans were painted a light shade of blue and the land masses reflected variations of green and brown. The known geological faults were displayed as red dashed lines, and small glistening satellites circled the globe at all heights and directions.

Jeff began to demonstrate his program while Dr. Eison discussed the concept of using variations in the satellites' orbits to monitor changes in the earth's magma. By the end of the thirty-minute session, those in attendance were believers.

Later that day, Jeff was asked to repeat the demonstration for the

benefit of the entire Livermore scientific team and the reporters who had been invited.

"No one can be absolutely certain of the timing of a major earthquake," Jeff said as he sat down at the computer console and began initiating his program once again. "The difficulty is that the forces are released as the earth's plates slide past each other. Friction can cause the force to build up and suddenly release or skip, much the same as when you press chalk against a chalkboard. Sometimes it slides along; other times it grates and skips."

When he heard Dr. Eison clear his throat and noticed the frowns from some of the attending seismologists, Jeff realized he had committed a *faux pas*; he had taken a complex technical subject and reduced it to laymen's terms. That made a big hit with the press, but it rankled those who made their living by keeping things complicated.

"Anyway," he continued, "Dr. Landill of JPL Labs documented minute changes in the orbits of several satellites throughout the last two decades, which were unaccountable except for changes in the earth's gravitational field. These were thought to be random changes and largely ignored, except by the satellite trackers. I felt they might be related to earthquakes on the surface so I programmed an equation to factor in these changes with the known epicenters of recent quakes."

"Impossible," argued one of the scientists who had missed the earlier session. "We have been trying for years to accumulate and process that kind of data. We can't do it even on the Cray 1612, and it has thirty billion bytes of RAM."

"I believe you can now," Jeff responded confidently as he pressed the "enter" key on the big console. Instantly the full-sized screen on the wall blossomed into a scaled replica of the earth in three dimensions, just as it had in the earlier demonstration. With each stroke of the keys, more detail came into focus. Suddenly satellites began spinning around the globe, each in its own unique orbit.

As Jeff manipulated his program, the red lines began to appear once more on the earth's surface. "These represent active known faults," he explained for the benefit of the reporters and scientists who had missed the earlier session. "Notice how the orbits of the satellites crossing over the fault lines cause them to shift."

The shift in the orbits of the low-altitude satellites was the most dramatic; the high-altitude satellites had the least reaction.

Jeff explained, "I have exaggerated the orbital variations to make them more measurable. The satellite orbits you see on the screen are amplified by a factor of ten to the fourth power." Even the most stoic scientists stared in awe as they watched the computer-enhanced graph-

ics display the orbits of several hundred satellites superimposed over fault lines in the earth's surface. Each knew that what he was seeing was as revolutionary to the field of geology as the splitting of the atom was to physics.

"How can we be sure that your program is accurately depicting these changes and not creating them?" someone in the group asked.

"I thought that might be a possibility too," Jeff replied patiently, "so I applied the equation to some past seismic activity to verify the results."

Swiftly moving his fingers across the keys, Jeff initiated another sub-routine. The screen shifted from a total earth view to the continent of Asia. A dark red line dominated the landscape.

"This was the site of the 1996 earthquake in Beijing, China," he said, still typing in commands. "It measured 6.7 and resulted in the loss of approximately 1.5 million lives. As you can see, the actual date and magnitude are displayed on the screen. Thus far, this is historical data gathered from seismographic devices in the area. Now we'll roll the program back and use only the data known before November 16, 1996—the actual date of the disaster."

As Jeff typed in the commands, an observer in the back of the room was drafting a memo to his boss. It read: "Senator Mark Hunt. Believe I have found the man to analyze computer capabilities. He is Jeff Wells, a student at California Institute of Technology. You'll read about his work shortly. Cal." He made a mental note to fax the memo as soon as possible.

Jeff demonstrated his program, using only the information available before the actual earthquake in China. The results were inconclusive. Then he punched up another overlay that included the satellites passing over the area. "This is data from Dr. Landill's observations," he noted. Suddenly, the program came alive. A warning indicator flashed on the screen with an arrow pointing directly at the city of Beijing. The program then showed a steadily increasing probability of a major earthquake, predictable as much as two years in advance. As time progressed, the calculations became more and more precise until one month before the disaster the warning sign shifted to an alarm predicting an earthquake on the order of 6.5 to 6.8 on the Richter scale. The orbit of a low-orbit U.S. spy satellite developed what looked like a wobble on the expanded scale of the computer-enhanced program.

Finally, using data from several other lesser quakes, Jeff demonstrated the capabilities of his program. "It is not as accurate with smaller quakes," he apologized. Some of the less stuffy scientists chuckled.

"That's like apologizing for the brush strokes in the Mona Lisa,"