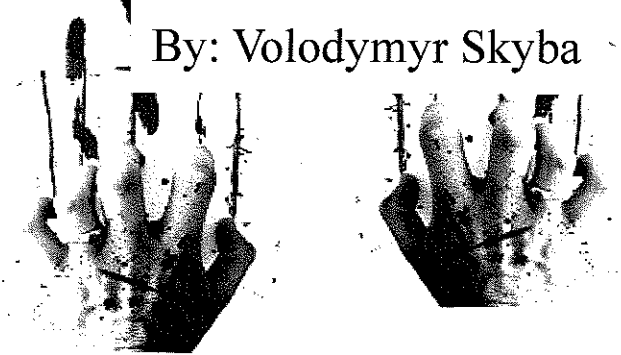


# INFECTION



By: Volodymyr Skyba



**QUARANTINE**

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**In a place so vast and great...**

**...no one is safe.**

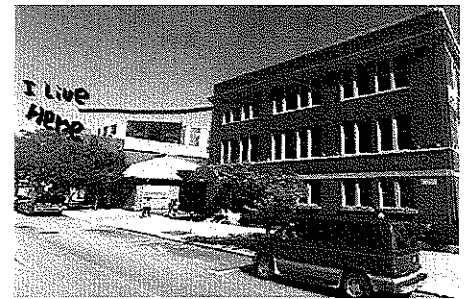


## Prelude

No one thought it would get to this point. They all thought it would end in a matter of days. But slowly those days slowly progressed into weeks, weeks into months, months into years. Now, for all I know I just might be the only one alive in the state. My name is John East, I lived in the city of Peoria, Illinois all my life. Until now. I am trying to move away from large metropolitan areas. There are too many of the dead there. Too many to handle alone. It was said that the virus started out in Africa and spread like wildfire across the countries and pretty soon it hit the U.S. It spread until every last state and populace in North America had the disease. It didn't reach my place immediately, but a few days after the outbreak of the virus, it came in numbers that were unimaginable...

### Day: 1 .

I really don't know why I started writing this journal but I thought it might be useful for someone else if something was to happen to me. What happened today started a sequence of events that almost brought me to the brink of insanity. I remember seeing a man in his mid-twenties with a large wound in his chest dragging himself across the street. I went to him to ask if he needed help but as I approached him he lunged at me like a wild animal. We tumbled to the ground locked in combat, his mouth snapping to lock in on my flesh. A man, who's name I later found to be Darious, helped me out by pulling the "insane" man off of me. During the struggle, the man bit Darious in the arm ripping out a piece of flesh which he swallowed. I felt a bit wheezy and sat and leaned against a lamp post. After what seemed like an eternity the police finally arrived, tazing the insane man into submission after which they bound and gagged him. An ambulance arrived taking Darious to the hospital. I was later informed by a friend that worked at the hospital that Darious died from the infection of his wound.



My Place

### Day: 2 .

I tried to find information about Darious's funeral with no results. I sat and read a book called "Something Wicked This Way Comes" by Ray Bradbury to pass the time. It was a good book. I called Mike Hill, a good friend of mine from my college days. I told him I needed to talk to someone and he said to come over any time.

After ending my call, I turned on the news and heard a report of an outbreak of some kind of new rabies in China, India, and Africa. The report did not have exact details, but the reporter stated that news would be reported as it became available. The news agencies were sending out reporters to each country to gather information about this outbreak. Sounds pretty fascinating, but very creepy.

## Day: 3 .

Darius's funeral is tomorrow, and I'd rather die than not go to it. After all, he saved my life. I learned from news reports that same day that two of the three reporters with their camera crews sent to the countries with the disease outbreak were missing. I wonder what happened to them???

## Day: 4 .

What happened today was beyond belief... I was running a bit late for the wake at the funeral home today because of large traffic jams. It looked like people were leaving the city in vast numbers. I ran a couple of lights and made an illegal U-turn on the road. But I made it. In my haste to park in the lot, I hit a few parked cars, but I didn't really care at that point. As I rushed into the funeral home I was immediately overwhelmed by the stench of decay and the sight of blood on the walls and floor. I slowly made my way into the chapel, and nothing could have prepared me for what I witnessed next. It appeared to be a massacre!!! Bodies all over the floor. Some of them moaning... When I suddenly felt a pull on my pant leg and looked down to see Darius. All tattered, he crawled towards me with something sticking out of his mouth, a piece of flesh, resembling a finger. I kicked him dropping him against the wall. I walked the entire area of the room, absorbing the damage and looking to see if any of the dead were anyone else I knew.

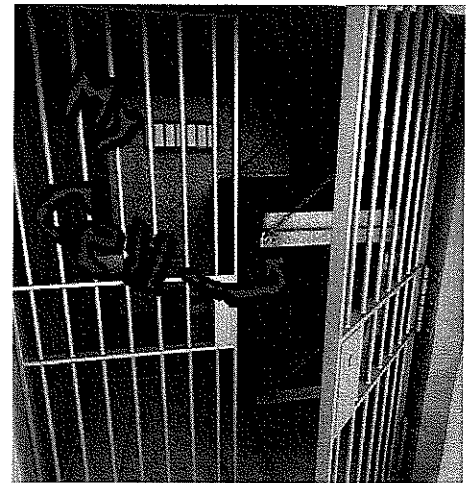


As I did this until I heard a soft moan from behind me. At first it sounded like an injured suffering animal, but slowly the sound progressed into a grumbling sound of at least 5 people. I turned to see a mass of bodies moving towards me, some limping, some crawling, some flailing their arms, with one thing in common. They all had some sort of bite mark wound and that the fact that they were all dead. As I ran out of the funeral home, looking over my shoulder I could see that all of them were coming after me. I hopped in my car, but the engine wouldn't start up. I tried again, they were surrounding me, little by little. One of them, an older one threw her herself at the rear window, shattering it with her weight. The engine roared to life and I stepped on the gas and speed off. I was at least a good mile away when I heard a loud growl from the back of the car. I turned around and saw that the old woman didn't give up and was holding on the entire time. I hit the brakes and put the car in reverse and speed backwards into a wall. I knew that no living or in this case unliving thing could survive a hit like that. I looked back and unbelievably, she was still moving and very capable of attack, even though she was practically in shreds. So I got out of the car and I really don't remember what I did next for survival instincts overtook me. I

later found myself later in a police station, where the police said that I beat the tar out of an old lady, they wouldn't listen to my story or even check out the funeral home. I guess I'll be here for a while...

## Day: 10 .

I can't write very long, I've been running for the past 4 days which had become an infernal nightmare. This is what happened. I was held in confinement for 2 days, couldn't do anything but wait for my hearing. (I knew I would be found guilty based on the circumstances, in my mind I saw no point in this). The next day chaos broke out at the police station, People yelling, screaming, some crying. A man ran by me shrieking madly, I wondered what caused his madness and looked to see that the man was missing his right arm and his shirt sleeve flapping as he ran on. I sank back into my bench and sat down. I starred at what was going on around me trying to hold back my emotions. Then I cried, and cried, and cried... until the zombies, it's what I call them now, started piling up against my cell door. I didn't know what to do, after all the books I had read about the zombie, it never said anything about this type of situation. I was on my own. I heard the hinges of the bars slowly coming undone, I didn't have much time to plan what was to happen next.



I dismantled the bench, picking up one of the rusty legs to wield as a weapon against the zombies. I braced myself for the attack. As I was getting ready, the cell door collapsed, letting the zombies in and leaving me at a disadvantage of getting an escape route. They charged in, and as they did I kicked off the wall and did a flip off the top bunk and dove over the zombies. They turned slowly and started after me. I knew I had to get out fast out into the open where I would have numerous ways of escape. In a room or building, a dead end corridor or a room with a locked door is the worst thing that could happen facing a group of zombies. I charged out side, shimmying over the dead, making sure each step was accurate and precise, for a wrong step might lead to a painful bite and ultimate death. Night had settled in, only the street lights guided me away from the police station, with its death and carnage. But the streets were not safe for everywhere there was mayhem, destruction and of course, more zombies. Luckily, the dead move slow, only in cases of starvation can they actually charge at you with speed... I'm going to have to



move quickly or find a car I can start to escape this metropolitan area and find a safe place to rest.

## **Day: 11 .**

I finally found some peace, in a small shelter on the roof of a house far from the inner city. I surprised myself that I could walk this far alone on foot. I slept soundly, dreaming of nothing other than that of the walking dead. When I awoke in a cold sweat I realized that the dream was a nightmarish reality. There were at least 10-20 zombies surrounding the house and I knew this may sound ridiculous but the only way to escape was to jump from house to house to find safety. My first jump wasn't well timed and I almost missed the roof catching the ledge with my hands. As I was pulling myself up, I felt a tug on my leg but I got out of the zombies grip in time. After the first jump it got easier, I timed my jumps better and before I knew it I was half way across the block where I jumped down to seek a safer place.

I walked a little until I saw that I was being followed, it wasn't the dead though. It was a pack of hounds with red eyes glaring. It apparent that they had rabies and were ready to attack. I started running, they speed after me. I jumped on top of a car to stand and defend myself, which was a mistake I will try not to make again. The first dog jumped immediately after me. Using the steel pole from the bed at the police station I smashed its skull on impact. The rest of the pack surrounded the car and barked in fiendish anticipation. I looked for a way out but the situation looked hopeless. If this was the end I wasn't going to out without a fight. I dove at the nearest dog landing on its head killing it instantly. As another dog attacked me from the front, I grabbed it and smashed its head against the car. A dog from the back lunged on me and brought me down, it should have been the end of me. Suddenly I heard a gun shot ring out from behind me, striking and killing my attacker on impact. I looked up around me and then dove to the ground as a hail of gunfire left the rest of the dogs dead on the pavement. As I started to look up again a new round of gunfire started. A shower of bullets hit the van next to me, shattering its windows and showering me with glass, which felt like hail falling from the sky. Suddenly without warning I received a blunt hit to the back of the head which laid me out cold.

## **Day: 21 .**

I woke up in a room with no windows, a small candle on the floor next to the cot I was laying on was the only source of light. I probably suffered from a concussion because I know I woke up a few times but fell back to sleep. I don't know how long I was out but it must have been days based on the growth of my unshaven face. Who were my saviors from the rabid dogs? Why had they become my captors now and why did they bring me to this place? These questions I yelled for help but this action was hopeless. I picked up the candle and walked around the room to look for a way out. I felt the walls of the room looking for a door that would lead me out. I located a small steel entrance door with no door handle which was locked from the outside. I was thirsty and hungry and needed help and answers to my questions. I began to pound on the door yelling for help. At first there was no response but then I heard a voice that sounded familiar that told me to be patient, that I would be brought nourishment. A short time passed and I heard the opening of the locked door with a squeaking that indicated that the door needed some good lubrication.

A figure with a large lantern in one hand and a tray with food and water in the other entered the room. I couldn't make out the face of the person until I heard his voice again. Hey John, you feeling better? You sure like to sleep long just like in college. It was Mike Hill. I was angry and glad at the same time to see that it was him, someone I could trust. Mike told me about how he was part of a small band of resistance fighters that had been banded together for survival against the zombie masses. He told me that after he didn't hear from me he figured that I had become one of them. Mike was always the one with the right answers in school, I'm glad he was wrong this time. He said that he and a scouting group came upon me that night of the attack by dogs while looking for other "normal people". The dogs were rabid and carrying the disease of the zombies. They weren't sure if I had been infected from the attack because the dogs did manage to scratch me during the fight. They weren't going to take any chances so they brought me here and quarantined me to see if the disease developed. He told me that they had been holed up in this abandoned warehouse for the past week but were under siege from the zombies and were getting ready to evacuate and seek safer shelter. Their group leader was a doctor and Mike needed to let him know that I was Okay and get his clearance for me to join their group. He told me to sit tight for a few minutes and that he would be back. He left and locked the door behind him. He never came back.

Shortly afterwards shots rang out and I heard a lot of screaming and yelling. The zombies had broken through and my captors were fleeing and leaving me behind. Great! Now what to do? Wait to become lunch for the attackers or try and break out. I looked at the door and it wasn't going to break or budge. I felt the walls looking for a weak point and found a bump on the wall. I smashed it with my elbow and foot causing it to crack and suddenly there was light pouring in through from the other side. I kicked the wall some more to create a bigger hole and saw people. A mass of people standing around packed together like downtown New York on New Years Eve. The mass of faces turned toward me and as they walked toward the hole I saw that they were not friendly faces. Zombies! I felt my luck had run out and started to panic. In my panic I started yelling,

“There is no way out, There is no way out!!!” I ran across the room, seeking another escape route with none to be found. There was a loud crash that brought down the rest of the wall and the first zombie entered the room. In my panic I threw myself across the room into a wall, hoping it would knock me out to avoid conscious death, but that didn’t happen. Instead my impact broke through the wall and into another room, giving me a glimmer of hope. Dashing across the room, the zombies quickly followed, and then I saw my chance. A single door, with an exit sign over it was my way to escape. I practically flew through the door feeling the wind against my face, I kept running. I didn’t turn around, I just ran, and ran, and ran...

## **Day: 27 .**

I’ve been walking for the past week... at least by my count of sunrises and sunsets I’ve seen. I’m on a highway traveling south according to the position of the sun. I feel that I can’t go on, but I know that if I stop the dead will catch up with me. I start to cry again. I then heard the steady methodical clunking of the twirling propeller of a helicopter. I looked all around to see where it was coming from. Then I saw it, it was flying over a large grassy field a distance of at least a half mile away. I leave the paved road and start running toward the helicopter. As I’m running I stumble over a large brownish sheet of cloth. I grab it and tie it to a stick and start waving it frantically. The helicopter and its crew noticed my signal and flew in closer and landed for my rescue. I jumped in. I laid back and closed my eyes. I released a deep sigh of relief. I was safe at last. Wasn’t I????



**The End “I Hope”**