

## THE MAN BEHIND THE CURTAIN

By John F. Hall

It was 20 years ago when the terrorists hijacked two commercial airliners and flew them into the World Trade Center's twin towers in the Financial District of Lower Manhattan, in New York City, and killed 2,996 people. Country singer Alan Jackson wrote the song,



“Where Were You (When the World Stopped Turning)” after that tragedy. I like the Chorus lyrics that he wrote: “I’m just a singer of simple songs, I’m not a real political man. I watch CNN but I’m not sure I can tell you the difference in Iraq and Iran. But I know Jesus and I talk to God, and I remember this from when I was young, faith, hope and love are some good things He gave us, and the greatest is love.”

Like Alan, I’m just a writer of simple, true stories, but I know Jesus and I talk to God. And I really believe that, someday, I’ll get my ticket and ride the Glory Train to my Master’s house in heaven. I had hoped to be able to spend my December days just writing stories, sitting on my front porch swing, and watching the birds fly by. I have an old telephone line that has been around since 1953, and someone wants to take that line away for the sake of broadband progress. Now, I admit that I am a stubborn old Irishman, and I don’t take kindly to someone in an Ivory tower telling me what I must do to keep him happy.

In the movie, *The Wizard of Oz*, Frank Morgan played several roles. The most memorable was his role as the Wizard of Oz. In the movie he said: “Pay no attention to the man behind the curtain!” The theme of this true story is about another man hiding behind a curtain. I will refer to him to him as the “Wizard.” This story is also about faith and inspiration. In Mark, Chapter 9, Verse 40, are these words of Christ: “For he that is not against us is on our part.”

Driving home from church one Sunday, I was wondering how I was going to be able to stop the Wizard from harassing me and my wife, Paula. For the past seven months, this man behind the curtain, has been harassing us; pulling strings to have his minions do the harassing. His egocentricity will not allow him to back away from pressuring me to give up my old copper, analog telephone line. It is true that power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. This Wizard earns \$22 million dollars a year and has hundreds of thousands of employees at his beck and call.

How do I know that this person is “the man behind the curtain,” that is pulling all these strings? The answer is easy and it does not take a rocket scientist, like my dad, Charles J. Hall was, to figure it out. It takes motive, which this man publicly boasted that he would do, to get rid of all copper phone lines by 2020. It takes being able to use a telecommunication facility, under his control, to accomplish his objective. What I wonder is why would this person single me out? My dad had a word to describe the Wizard, but that word is not printable. In times like this, I miss my dad. He was my adviser. When I

was eight years old, my dad was a researcher at American Standard. His boss decided that researchers were useless, so he fired my dad. About that time, things went south.

The house he was renting burned to the ground. We lost everything but the clothes we were wearing. My mom was gone. My dad had no car and no money. I remember standing in a strange city and being homeless with my dad. He did not want me to become a ward of the state and be put in a foster home. They were atrocious at that time. So he put me in an orphanage. A wealthy couple wanted to adopt me, as their son wanted a brother, and the mother could not give birth to another child. But my dad said, "No." It took him two years, but he climbed back up from the hole he was in. He became a member of the NASA team that helped put a man on the moon. What I learned from my dad is to never give up no matter the circumstances.

As an eight year old kid, I prayed a lot. There is a song written by Vep B. Ellis called, "Take it to the Lord in prayer." These are his lyrics" "What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and grieves to bear. What a privilege it is to carry everything to God in prayer. Have we trials and temptations, is there trouble anywhere? Our precious Savior, He is still our refuge. Take it to the Lord in prayer. Some things we have not, because we ask not, when we ask a friend who's there. When we're weak and heavy laden, cumbered with a load of care, we should never be discouraged, when we take it to the Lord in prayer. Oh what peace we often forfeit. Oh what needless pain we bear...We should never be discouraged when we take it to the Lord in prayer."

It was Abraham Lincoln that said, "The man that represents himself has a fool for a client." He was right and I strongly recommend that no one attempt to file a lawsuit without having legal counsel. But I know enough about the law to be a dangerous opponent. I remember a verse found in Mark, Chapter 5, Verse 36, Jesus said: "Don't be afraid; just believe." During this pandemic, I decided to try to write one story a week and mail it to granddaughters Jade, Lexie, and Skyler. I also mail a copy to my extended family, that I created: Mike, Trish, Audrey, and Dr. Butler.

I was coming home from church one Sunday and talking to God. I had no clue as to how I was going to be able to drag the Wizard into Federal Court. And I thanked Jesus for his help. In Philippians, Chapter 4, Verse 6, are these words: "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." I told Lexie that I get ideas from Christ on certain things. She asked, "What ideas come to mind? I said I would tell her in this story.

I like to take a nap after church and fell off to sleep. Jesus does not talk to us directly. He talks to us in our dreams, and in things that happen to us in this life. I call it Divine Inspiration. During my nap that Sunday, three words came into my mind as I was dreaming. The words are: harass, interstate, and disclosure. The Wizard was harassing me by just calling my house, not saying anything and just hanging up. These calls were coming in from all over the United States, and the Wizard was not disclosing his identity. I put two and two together and came up with 47 U.S. Code 223 (1) (c). Jesus was

correctly on point. All three elements are found in this law: it had to be an interstate call, it had to have an element of harassment, and the caller not disclosing his identity.

I also found another law called Truth in Caller ID Act of 2009. This Act amends the Communications Act of 1934 to make it unlawful for any person in the United States, in connection with any telecommunications service or internet protocol (IP)-enabled voice service, to cause any caller identification (ID) service to transmit misleading or inaccurate caller ID with the intent to defraud, cause harm or wrongly obtain anything of value.

Now I admit that this 76 year old Vietnam War Veteran stumbled on my first Proof of Service move. And I did become discouraged. But once again, I took it to the Lord in prayer and He gave me three words: caller ID manipulation. Representing myself in Federal Court in Paducah, Kentucky is called pro se. The Court has specific rules that I have to follow. I have to use their specific forms and I have to hand write everything. Since I have rheumatoid arthritis in my writing hand, writing out hundreds of claims is very painful. But no one said that life would be easy or fair.

William Shakespeare wrote: "All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players; they have their exits and entrances; and one man plays many parts. . ." The Wizard has his counsel for his defense in Louisville. She is extremely intelligent, but dishonest. I think she was seeking a summary judgment as a matter of law. But as in the game of chess, I made a check mate move. I used the Seventh Amendment to the United States Constitution and my right to demand a jury trial. That right is inviolate. But that right must be demanded and presented to the Wizard and to the Court. Also, demanding that right knocks the so-called professional mediators out of the picture. The Wizard had used them all the time. But this time, I took them out of the picture and off the stage.

I try to be a good mentor to Jade, Lexie, and Skyler, by my stories. As my Chaplain, in my Christian Fraternity, said to me; "I was taking a stand on principle." The Wizard's name is John T. Stankey. He is the President and CEO of AT&T. So what is it that I want to win in this battle of words? For the past seven months, I have been taking hundreds of pictures of Caller ID information off my flat screen TV. I will consider my role, as a lawyer, pro se, successful if I can get the Federal Court to rule on the admissibility of those pictures in both state and Federal Courts in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Maybe, I might be able to leave my footprints on Kentucky jurisprudence.

I'll end this story with some of the lyrics of a song written by Frank Dycus, Kerry Kurt Phillips, and Billy Yates for the late country singer George Jones. The song is called, "I don't Need Your Rockin' Chair." These are their lyrics: "I don't need your rockin' chair, your Geritol or your Medicare. Well I still got Neon in my veins; this gray hair don't mean a thing. I do my rockin' on the stage. You can't put this possum in a cage. My body's old but it ain't impaired. I don't need your rocking chair. I ain't ready for the junkyard yet, 'cause I still feel like a new Corvette. It might take a little longer but I'll get there. Well I don't need your rocking chair. Retirement don't fit in my plans. You can keep your seat, I'm gonna stand. An Eskimo needs a Frigidaire, like I need your rockin'

chair.” I’ll take on “The Man Behind The Curtain,” thanks to the inspiration from Jesus Christ.

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