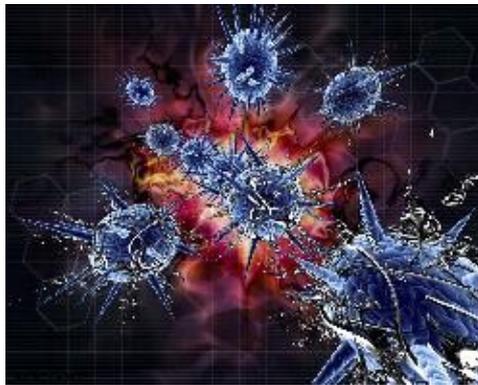


VIR021450

By : LexLuthor

The chilling tale of a person wracked with guilt from the things they have done. (I am not so good at summaries D=)



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It's amazing the amount of information you can obtain and how willingly people seem to give it up. Well, I guess they aren't just giving it up, but they're allowing people to take it. I was really good at gathering information; in fact, I was really good at a lot of things. But now, none of that really matters I guess. I was so good at what I did, that people took notice. And not just, regular people. People who meant something, people who influenced a lot of the world. I was pretty down at the time, I had lost nearly everything. In hindsight, I am sure that was all arranged, so I would be vulnerable when they came to me. I was offered a job that paid a lot of money, I mean, a LOT of money. When the idea was first pitched to me, I thought it was ludicrous, but they gave me some time to think it over; and while I did, I got to enjoy every single amenity they had to offer. So finally, I gave in. At first it seemed too good to be true, which, I guess it was. I was asked told that there were individuals that wanted to study the way that someone could spread a biological attack on the world via bacteria, viruses and other things. After much thought, I realized that we could just make a game. There were companies and research centers all over the world that were using games as a way to get people to help solve complicated things like the way proteins fold and mapping neurons. So I thought, why not use it to see the most effective way to spread a biological warfare attack. The game was put in various app stores across the smartdevice system, and soon we the data was just pouring in. In order to do this legally, we were required to put in the terms of service that the data could be sent to the app developer for some sort of BS, I don't remember. While a lot of information came in, it all needed to be looked at with a scientific eye, one that I happened to have. I worked with the computers processing data, figuring out the optimal conditions for bacterial, fungal, viral, etc. attacks. It wasn't just weather conditions, social conditions played a big part too. All social issues were accounted for. Whether or not there had been an election, if a local team had won a big game, if it was wedding season or mardi gras. Everything was accounted for.

I remember the day I sold my soul. The big guns approached me in my penthouse overlooking the area and told me that they were very impressed with me and had an offer that I wouldn't be able to refuse. I was whisked away and fine dined while they told me of their plan. There was this, a biological arms race of sorts between the nations that wasn't going too well. An enemy country of ours had been figuring out a way to synthesize biological warfare systems that were specialized for different areas. I was told that I would be their only hope to stop this. I was told that I needed to help them produce some kind of counter-weapon or we'd be stuck with our necks out and everyone's life was on the line. I told them it was too difficult to control all of the different elements that are needed for specialized attacks. The head scoffed a little and looked me dead in the eyes and said "all events are controllable" and without needing further explanation, I knew to believe it. They told me they would come back in a week to get my answer. If I didn't want to help, they would understand, but I would have to live in their little commune for the rest of my life because of the amount of knowledge that I had. I had nothing to go back to outside of this commune, so I don't think it was an issue to stay there. But I hated the thought of never ever being able to leave, which I am sure they had calculated for. I think they had calculated for everything.

I went through all of the possibilities of the ways that the attack could be spread. I calculated all of the factors. A team of scientists and I worked on creating the perfect warfare weapon. It behaved similarly to the way that certain viruses do (retroviruses). It implants its RNA into your DNA through a series of, so you replicate it when you replicate your own. From there, the DNA is set so it mutates to do different things during different stages. For the first couple of replications, the viruses that are produced are for fortifying the virus against your system. Then after that, it mutates to viruses that are programmed to spread to others by irritating the lungs, so you cough and so forth. The virus is then programmed to go dormant for a number of weeks but

staying in areas of frequent contact. This allows the virus to go unseen for awhile until a number of people are infected.

Then the virus goes into death mode. It starts attacking your organs and your brain, causing hallucinations and outburst of violence, which is meant to induce blood-to-blood contact between people. Once deathmode kicks in, you have about 3 weeks of a slow body decline, but mental torture to live through. I figured this way, no one will really know what's going on until it's too late. Confusion is the best way to cause chaos. We worked on it for weeks, and weeks. When I was done I was so proud. I wished I had someone I could tell about my accomplishment. That I had finally done something that would save so many people. We toasted to my genius and I felt like all of my mistakes had been erased. That night I had a dream in which I was on a high pyramid surrounded by everyone on earth. They were all giving me gifts and presents, begging to be near me. Begging to let me help them. So I ran down the stairs with my arms outstretched. The children were first and I hugged them all while music played in the background. I spun around all of the little ones and moved on to the teens and the adults. Once I had finally rejoiced with everyone, I looked around and realized all of the children were screaming. They were clutching their stomachs and shouting towards the heavens. I ran over to them to console them. I asked "what's wrong, how can I help you, what can I do?". The child I was near looked at me in my eyes, except his eyes were just swirls of color, but I could see them full of pain. With his last breath he said "it is too late" and went slack on the floor. Shocked, I stood up and looked around to see everyone with the same fate. The teens were now huddled on the floor screaming while the adults were touching their stomachs gingerly as if in discomfort. I awoke from that nightmare sobbing, and I knew what I had done.

For the next couple of days I was on edge, I tried to pretend like none of that was true. It was all just some silly dream that was the product of too much champagne and illicit drugs. A couple days after that, things went back to normal. They offered me new projects to keep me busy, and with those, I forgot why I had that terrible feeling in the pit of my stomach at all times. I was treated like a hero among the big wigs which lead to an unintended and frowned-upon relationship. One night, whilst drunk, they informed me that VIR021450 was incredibly successful in test runs, and had been slipped into the drink of an enemy leader. Angered, I flew out of bed and called the person who promised me it was all theoretical. Although it was a little after midnight, they answered the phone and I demanded an answer as to what was going on. They told me it was too risky to talk about it on the phone, and they'd have a car arrive for me within the hour to bring me somewhere we could talk. I threw the phone across the room and stormed into my bedroom where my partner was on the bed drunk and crying. I demanded that they immediately left, while shoving the leftover clothes in their arms and pulling them by their shirt towards the door. I slammed the door, screamed as loud as I could and got myself together while trying to ignore the flashbacks of my nightmares.

I was dropped off at a location in the complex I had never seen before. I stormed inside to see the powerhouse behind the organization. "I urge you to sit down, have a drink and listen carefully" said the head of the powerhouse. Just to be spiteful, I poured and drank a giant glass of water before sitting in the chair with my mouth shut, glaring at them. The head sat down in front of me, looked deep into my eyes, and spoke. "The world has been a very dangerous place for some time. Nations have amassed weapons that you'd never even imagine. We, are tired of being threatened. We are tired of living in fear that we will lose control of everything we've worked so hard for. I will admit we lied to you, but it was because we knew that you'd never agree to help if you knew that your discoveries would be put into effect. What you have done, has given us the means to take back the power that is rightfully ours. Yes, people will die, but that is how it goes sometimes. It is better to be the hand that delivers death than to be the people left strewn in its wake."

"You can't contain the virus" I said pleading with them. "Everything can be controlled, as it always has been, as it always will be" the head said in response solemnly. "You can't know that" I shouted banging my fists on the table, standing up. "This wasn't controlled. I was never supposed to find out about this, but I did. You can't control everything!" I yelled out as I hit the pitcher of water

splashing it on the members of the powerhouse and the head. Everyone gasped and pushed away from the table, trying to dry off as I stood there with my fists balled glaring at the head, just waiting for a response. The head looked at me unfazed and stood up letting the water drip off of their clothes. "There will be a car out front waiting for you to take you back to your place. May I suggest that you get a good night's rest and tomorrow, you go back to work and we'll forget this little incident" the head said stressing the last part. I waited for everyone to leave before I walked outside to the car waiting for me. I got into the car, and was taken to the address I gave. I walked to the front door and knocked quietly, hoping not to awaken the neighbors. My lover opened the door and looked at me, their eyes puffy and red. I reached out and they led me inside. The last thing I remember before falling asleep in their arms, my head on their chest, listening to their heartbeat, was that I finally understood that I was happy again.

I quickly got back into the groove of things. I continued to work on my projects and allow myself to get emotionally close to my partner, and we decided to move in together. A few weeks later, I was at home listening to the news. I was late going to work because I needed to pick up allergy medication as me and my partner had been having a reaction to the flowers blooming or something. I wasn't paying much attention until I heard something about a child who had a mysterious illness. The child had been fine, and they suddenly started losing touch with reality. They became very ill and in the end, died from organ failure. The real kicker was that it had gained media publication because the child's parents were the leaders of the country. The last thing I remember before blacking out was "it is too late".

When I came too, I was in the hospital with doctors surrounding me. I tried to talk but realized there was a tube in my throat. I reached up to tug on it and one of the doctors put their hand on me. "Just rest, you are too weak to maintain, so now, you must rest" and with that. I slept.

The next time I remember waking up, I was in a room with two doctors whispering in the corner. I closed my eyes and breathed silently in order to hear what they were saying. "We can't keep them in the coma for much longer, they're going to go brain-dead" one said. "Well, it's been weeks and nothing has been happening, and the orders are to not do anything until it's started" the other responded. The first doctor sighed loudly and stood silently for a minute. "We'll keep them in the coma for another week. If it's not done by then, I am ending this immediately" they said and walked out before the other could say anything. The second doctor muttered under their breath and walked out leaving me there alone. I opened my eyes, trying to get them adjusted to the faint light that was coming in from under the door. A million questions were running through my mind. Why were they keeping me in a coma? What hadn't happened for weeks? Who was ordering them to keep me like this? I checked to see if I could move my limbs, which I could, although there were tubes and wires coming from everywhere. It took me 30 minutes before I could figure out how to get out of the bed without tripping wires and possibly alerting someone to my situation. All of the hospitals in the complex had central computers, and I had seen enough passcodes in my day to log into one of them. I logged in and tried to navigate my way around the system, trying to find my information. It was lucky for me that I had awoken when I did, because it seemed the hospital was between shifts. I listened very carefully for people walking around outside, but no one was. It was hours before I found my information because they had logged me in under a fake name. I read through the document, my heart began to sink. I was being kept in a coma while someone was waiting for the effects of VIR021450 kicked in. My blood was positive for the virus, but I wasn't having any symptoms. I mentally ran through all of the times I could have been exposed to it. Was it at my job? Has it been spreading throughout the commune? My mind flashed back to the water that I had at the meeting and everyone's reaction to it when I accidentally knocked it over.

Because I knew the layout of the buildings so well, and due to the fact that everyone thought I was still in a coma, it was fairly easy to escape. I started off running towards the exit of the commune when my lover's face flashed into my mind. I turned around and ran towards my house, although I knew what I would find when I got there. 15 minutes later I was bursting in the door, shouting their name looking around.

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Before I walked into the bedroom, I could smell the scenario that was inside. They were lying on the middle of the bed, curled up into a ball, covered in vomit and blood. I jumped onto the bed bringing them close to me screaming, hoping they were still alive. I tilted their head towards me and it rolled back, jaw slack, eyes dull and grey. I sat there weeping, knowing that eventually they were going to find me, but I no longer cared. I knew, however that if I was caught, I would be studied, because I was somehow immune to the effects of VIR021450. Go figure. I went outside and dug a grave, laying my lover to rest. I went inside, packed up all the money that I had, and some clothes and got into the car, driving as fast as I could away from the past years of my life.

I stopped and picked up some alcohol before driving to a motel to drown my sorrows. I locked myself in there for days, living off of alcohol and whatever drugs I could find. About 3 weeks later, there was a big story in the news about a complex of people that had died mysteriously. It only took about a month before there was a death on the other side of the country. By then, people were in panic mode. I had decided to leave the motel, after seeing the latest stories on the news about the grisly and unexplained deaths. I drove over to the place I lived before I ever signed my life away. I got a couple necessities from the ghost-town stores that are around here and sat here to write this down. Every night I have the same nightmare; the one I had that first night. Instead now, the faces are of people that Iâve seen on the news. Grandmothers, children, wives, brothers, sisters, all of them. Every night itâs the same thing. So Iâve stopped sleeping which has made things difficult. I no longer watch the news because I already know whatâs going to happen. There is a part of me that wants to test my blood for the cure, so I can help the survivors, but I already know itâs too late. I am so afraid of death, because I know where I am destined to go after I have caused the death of so many. I canât close my eyes because I see their faces but I canât keep them open because I am so tired. Oh God, what have I done?

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