

Justin M.D. Nelson



IX

Articles of the Revolution

# **IX**

## **ARTICLES OF THE REVOLUTION**

A Novella by

Justin M.D. Nelson

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*"The brutalities of progress are called revolution."*

*-Victor Hugo*

# CONTENTS

[Article I](#)

[Article II](#)

[Article III](#)

[Article IV](#)

[Article V](#)

[Article VI](#)

[Article VII](#)

[Article VIII](#)

[Article IX](#)

[About the Author](#)

# ARTICLE I

**The police are the right hand of the government; the media is the left. Revolution depends upon their ignorance, impotence, or compliance.**

No dictatorship can survive without a military to enforce its will and a media to propagate it. For your revolution to succeed, it is imperative that the forces maintaining order be dealt with accordingly. There are more creative ways to overcome the right hand. This includes COMPLIANCE, calling upon them to fight for you, or disregard you. The other is IGNORANCE, acting under the radar of the police and the media. However, if neither one of these is an option, you have to make certain, at the very least, that your strength and influence is greater than or equal to theirs, relying on their IMPOTENCE to accomplish your goals.

\* \* \*

Bryan made sure the scarf was wrapped around his face before he looked around the protest for his brother. The protesters seemed endless, a river of masks and scarves flowing down the dark street.

He heard someone call out his name.

*"Bryan Creed!"*

He turned his head. Standing up on a streetlight, holding on with one hand was his brother. Matthew Creed was a taller, more imposing version of Bryan. He ran towards him holding his hand up high.

"Matt!" he called out, fighting his way through the protesters. He was seventeen, among people just a little older than him, but he still felt like the rest of the protesters towered above him. Matt, just three years older, jumped down to greet him.

"This is one hell of a turnout," he said amazed.

"Of course, it is," said Bryan, "These are mostly students. They don't have anywhere

else to go."

The two of them began walking together, just a little faster than the rest of the protesters, hoping to make it to the front.

"The Council should have anticipated this," said Matt, "What the hell did they expect when they shut down the College. This doesn't just affect you and all the other students. It affects kids, the homeless, and just about half the city. How could they not see this coming?"

"Maybe they did," Bryan replied, "Maybe they knew this would happen."

"They don't seem too worried about it," Matt said, looking out into the crowd, "And that worries me."

They made their way down the road, in the late hours of the evening, heading towards the Council Hall. Angry chants went out from the crowd as people waved signs over their heads.

OUR CITY; OUR MONEY; OUR GOVERNMENT  
THE LANDOWNERS DON'T OWN US  
DEATH TO THE COUNCIL

Just as Bryan and Matt made their way to the front, they passed a news reporter speaking into a camera.

"As you can see, thousands are in this march making their way to the Council Hall. This is in protest of Council's decision to shut down the College. The entire protest has been organized by the General Assembly, so there is fear of some violence. There have been no signs yet, but it is expected that..."

Her words faded away as they made it to the front of the march. Bryan saw familiar faces across the front. They were all members of the General Assembly. Matt took his place with the other leaders at the head of the parade. Bryan marched right beside him. On the other side was another leader, Fatima. She turned and greeted both of them.

"You heard that reporter, didn't you?" she asked.

"Oh yeah," said Matt angrily, "Just wait, if anything does go down, she'll disappear, and no one across the city will hear a word about it."

"Unless one of us actually starts it," Fatima reminded him, "Then everyone will

know about it."

"Let's just hope it doesn't come to that."

They marched beside shops and restaurants and old homes, heading toward the center of the city. Off to the sides of the streets, people lined up watching, as though watching a funeral procession. Some backed away from the march. Some remained silent. Bryan felt hopeful as several joined in the march themselves. Occasionally, someone shouted from the sidelines, calling them cowards, hypocrites, and traitors. But the shouts did not last long, and those that shouted the message faded quickly.

As they crossed over the bridge, the Council Hall came into view. Lights shined from the grounds of the lush green lawn all the way up the columns and toward the dome. But the building itself did not catch their attention. Waiting before the Hall, on the opposite side of the bridge was a line of soldiers, the Military Police. They heard a voice boom over a loudspeaker.

"This is Charles Ikeman, General Protectorate of the Military Police. The Council Premier advises you to march no further, for your own safety."

Instinctively, Bryan got closer to Matt. He wanted to slow down, but Matt and everyone else in the front of the march kept a steady pace. If anything, they seemed to be speeding up.

"This is your final warning! Do not come any closer!"

Beside him, those leading the march locked arms with one another and began picking up the pace. Behind them, angry chants and yells rang out.

There was a rushing sound, like the sound of a rocket taking off. Straight ahead of them, something rose up from the blockade. It arched upward and began to come back down. Bryan watched it, noticing it seemed to move in slow motion. It went over him, into the middle of the march just behind them. It hit the ground and caused a large crash. The sound hurt Bryan's ears, and the accompanying flash hindered his vision. The next thing he knew, a suffocating mist filled the area, and the protesters arched over, choking on thick gas.

Bryan looked, and saw a few protesters turning back, but not many. The majority raced through the fog, placing scarves over their faces, and running across the bridge toward the Council Hall. He put his own scarf over his face, and watched through teary

eyes as protestors picked up rocks and debris, anything they could get their hands on, and charged forward toward the guards with their shields and their armor. Objects went flying into the air, over the line of soldiers and toward the building. Windows smashed and yells rang out. A new line of soldiers came charging forward. This time, Bryan shivered as he heard gunshots ring out, along with the sound of screams. Through his watery eyes, he could see people running from the Council Hall at breakneck speed.

Matt ran up to him, shielding him from the line of fire as he held the scarf over his face.

"They were waiting for us!" he yelled, "You were right! They were waiting for us!"

They turned and ran back toward the bridge. Bryan took one last look and saw a man on his knees in the middle of the road, facing the soldiers, with his hands high over his head. Matt looked as well, but neither could see the man's face, only his silhouette.

Shots rang out, and the man fell backward, a brilliant array of lights and weapons aimed at his corpse.

Both Bryan and Matt heard bullets race past them. They ducked their heads and ran back out into the city, joining the thousands of others in full retreat.



# ARTICLE II

## **Strike the powers that be where they are weakest.**

As stated in Article I, governments depend on their police force to maintain order. Direct violent conflict is usually unwise and impractical because lashing out against the police in outright warfare is a waste of time, resources, and in many cases, suicidal. This makes it necessary to take a more insidious approach.

Every powerful government has someplace that is their Achilles' Heal, whether it is their money, their military, their resources, or even the bureaucracy itself. To overthrow the powers that be, it is necessary to find this weakness and exploit it.

\* \* \*

Back in their apartment, Bryan sat at the table, looking over his textbooks. The television set in their dirty living room displayed constant news feeds. Bryan paid no attention. He sat focused on his work. Matt entered the room and sat a cold beer down beside him.

"Good God, man," said Matt, sipping a beer himself, "The College shuts down, the city falls apart, and you're still studying. Why do you even bother? You're already smarter than anyone else at the College, even the professors."

Bryan just smiled up at him, knowing he was giving him hell. Just before his seventeenth birthday, he passed all his exams and welcomed into the College, the city's formal higher educational institution. No one as young as him had entered the College in thirty years, not as a student anyway. He went into studying law, right up until the Council of the city placed soldiers outside the doors of the College, keeping the students out.

"Well, someone has to be making plans, right?" asked Bryan, sipping the beer, "Telling the Council to go to hell isn't going to fix everything. We have to figure out what happens afterward."

"You shouldn't be worrying about that," said Matt sitting down, "You should be out with Marie or visiting with friends or out causing trouble, whatever kids your age do."

"I mean, could I possibly get in any more trouble than we did tonight?"

There was a somber tone in the joke, but it was enough to make them both smile and finally laugh. Matt looked at him.

"You're coming tonight, yeah?"

"I go where you go. When's everyone else going to be here?"

"In about an hour. After what happened today, they're going to be..."

"Bloodthirsty?" asked Bryan.

Matt nodded, and Bryan knew it was all too true. The General Assembly remained nonviolent for most of its existence, but the evening's incident would likely be enough to push them over the edge. Since both of them were dedicated to peaceful resolutions, Matt would try to stop that from happening, but Bryan was not sure he could.

The anthem came over the television set. Both of them faced the screen, knowing it was a message from the government.

"And now, a message from the Council Premier, Anton Ness."

A tall, silver-haired man in a pinstripe suit stood at the podium.

"My fellow citizens," he said calmly, "The Council has indeed concluded an emergency session. In light of the standoff that occurred in the Northern District just outside the Council Hall, the Council has seen it fit to put new rules into place. First off, we have dismissed the current General Protectorate of the Military Police, Charles Ikeman.

The name rang in Bryan's ears. It was the man outside the Council Hall earlier that night. He turned to Matt.

"What does he mean by *dismissed*?"

Matt shook his head.

"Killed, exiled, demoted, who the hell knows? Point is we're never going to hear from him again."

"Serving as the new General Protectorate will be Gregory Pandaris, who's long and illustrious career makes him a worthwhile candidate.

Bryan felt sick to his stomach. Pandaris was one of the commanders of the soldiers

who shut down the College. He remembered watching furiously as him and his men chased everyone off the campus, students, professors, children, the elderly, even the sick and the crippled.

"This promotion, as well as the laws proposed by the Council will need to be passed by the High Court, which it is expected to do before the end of the week."

Bryan kept watching. A steady news bulletin came through even after Matt retreated down to the basement to meet with members of the General Assembly. Bryan kept watching until, right on schedule, the power to the building went out, and the television went out with an angry click.

Through the thin walls, Bryan could hear angry groans and yells. It always amazed him when he heard it; he figured everyone should be used to it by now. The substandard housing, the power outages, the rationed food and provisions, all so the Landowners could take more and leave less for everyone else. But the more he thought about it, the more he figured it was probably a good thing people remained angry. That anger was the very reason the revolution was being fought.

A few minutes later, Bryan raced downstairs and found members of the General Assembly huddled together. About twenty of them occupied the poorly lit room with a din of conversation floating above them. Bryan knew most of them were students, much like him, living in the apartment buildings with them.

A map of the city lay in the center of the table, along with a book filled with names and pictures. Around the table, a young man in a large pair of glasses examined it closely. Matt raised his hands, and the room fell silent.

"The General Assembly will come to order," he said, and turned to Benjamin, "What's the word, Ben?"

The young man in the glasses did not look up. He kept his hands on the table as he looked down at the city.

"The Landowners remain largely in the Eastern District, but operate out of the center of the city," said Benjamin, his voice ringing out across the room, "Over ninety percent of the council members from the Northern and Western District have accepted funds from the Landowners, and just over half of the council members from the Southern District have either accepted or will accept Landowner funds. While only about nine of the

fifteen members have accepted funds, but all members of the High Court have had contact with Landowners in some form or another."

"They're not even trying to hide it anymore, are they?" Matt said with disgust in his voice.

Fatima walked up beside Benjamin, looking radiant, even in the dim lighting.

"What about the College?" she asked, "Any idea how many working within the College remain loyal?"

"Loyalists within the College?" at this point, Benjamin looked up, as if searching for the answer over the crowd, "I'm afraid it's impossible to say at this time. No doubt, the Council has already reached out to those in the institution. Not just the professors, but also the doctors, the caregivers, the religious leaders..."

He looked back down at the map, shaking his head.

"It's too difficult to say."

Matt stepped up to the table, addressing those gathered.

"One thing is for sure; what happened tonight cannot go unnoticed. The attack will cause outrage, which we can use against the Council, and by extension the Landowners.

"It won't be that easy," said Benjamin, "The media split before anything could be recorded."

"It doesn't matter," said Fatima, "They knew closing down the College would cause this much outrage, which means they're banking on their own military strength. There's nothing else for them to hide behind."

More debate followed. Bryan watched for several minutes as words flew across the table. Thirty people sat present at the meeting; not all of the leaders, but enough. A voice called out from the back.

"They fired first, didn't they? I'd say that demands a similar response from the people of the city."

This was met with great approval. Bryan noticed that Matt, however, did not seem moved.

"We can't stoop to their level. Do you have any idea how much greater of an impact it would make if we responded to this act of violence with an act of nonviolence?"

The group stirred, audibly disappointed with the suggestion.

"I agree with Matt," said Fatima, "Nonviolence is most powerful when confronted with violence. It shows strength to refuse to give in to vengeance and retribution. There will be plenty of time for retribution when the battle is won."

"How many more need to die?" another voice called out, and others cheered in response. Bryan looked and saw that the voice came from Dorian. With his shaved head and his leering face, Bryan always kept Dorian at a distance. Matt responded, as calmly as he could.

"The Military Police are citizens, *our* fellow citizens. They don't want to take part in..."

"The Military Police," Dorian moved up front, grabbing the table and taking control, "Are completely in the hands of the Council and the Landowners, just like everyone else. They could not care less about us. And even if we bring them to our side, what then? Do we have them arrest the Council and bring the members to the College to await trial?"

Matt looked right into Dorian's eyes, trying to keep his patience. Bryan noticed the aggravation in his eyes.

"I've already told all of you why a violent response is not the answer, and why the future of the College must be secured in the new government.

Across the room, a voice went up.

"So you advocate taking out one institution and replacing it with another?"

Matt did not flinch.

"I advocate putting power in the hands of both the people and those who know what to do with it."

Dorian took Matt's shoulder. Bryan noticed an insincere smile cross his face.

"Matt, I respect your ideas about the College but are you sure that you aren't making this... somewhat personal?"

For the first time, Matt became silent. Bryan knew what he felt because he felt it as well, a bewildered disgust, as though someone just threw hot water in their faces. On top of providing higher education, the College also served as a sort of hospital, a home for the elderly, and a refuge for orphaned children. What few religious ceremonies existed within the city also took place almost exclusively within the College. While rising to prevalence within the rebellion, Matt's story, and by extension Bryan's, became common

knowledge.

Orphaned at a young age by a supposed police investigation, Matt essentially raised Bryan with the help of the College. They gave them everything they needed to grow up happy and free. Bryan had almost no memory of his parents, but he possessed fond memories of being raised by both the caregivers, and by his brother. This fact was now being used against them as evidence of their sentimentality, and Bryan couldn't stand it.

"Perhaps," said Matt, somewhat shaken, "I know first hand the good that the College can do."

"And so do the rest of us," said Dorian stepping forward, a subtle hint that it was time for Matt to stand down, "Fortunately, the College can continue to be a part of the new society without being part of the new government. The new government can be pure, governed entirely by the people, with no large institutions to corrupt it."

Dorian, tough looking and just a little older than Matt, grabbed the table, taking control of the meeting.

"The attack at the bridge is just the latest in a long line of crimes committed by the Council, and by the Landowners. But their power comes from the Military Police. Without them, they will have nothing to protect them from us. I say it's time to end the debates, and time to fight fire with fire. Give a weapon to everyone in this city, and rise up against the powers that be."

A loud cheer went out when Dorian finished these words. Matt wanted to speak out, but he seemed to realize his objection would go unheard. Bryan understood. Along with Benjamin Fatima, he seemed to be the only one who did.

# ARTICLE III

**Forge a clear identity, a clear objective, and plan through to the end.**

It may seem superfluous, but it is imperative that, when fighting, you have a clearly defined enemy. It is possible to become so caught up in a movement that you forget what the movement was about. Never lose sight of the final objective. In the end, it may be all you have.

\* \* \*

Even though he held Marie's hand, Bryan felt deeply uncomfortable walking down the sidewalk of the Eastern District. Marie's clothing wasn't new, but they positively glowed next to his hand-me-down tee shirt and pants. The grand, luxurious homes of the District sat on high hills overlooking lush green lawns and carefully tended landscapes. Expensive cars sat in their driveways, and the only litter that Bryan could find anywhere was the various toys left out by the district children. Even the road and sidewalks seem to glow from the sun beating down.

Marie spoke happily as they made their way toward the College.

"So we all walk into class, and there's Dr. Sheridan. She's sitting at her desk, her arms are crossed, her head is leaning forward and we can all tell she's fast asleep."

Bryan's eyes went wide and his mouth dropped in shock.

"Dr. Sheridan? Asleep in class?"

"I know," Marie said with a laugh, "we couldn't believe it either."

"What happened then?"

"Well, one of the guys in the front row, I think it was Ryan, tried to wake her up. He said really timidly, 'Doctor? Doctor Sheridan?' This startles her just enough to wake her. She looks around the room kind of confused and says 'Oh, right. Um...' She picks up her lesson plan, which I'm pretty sure was just a sticky note in the textbook, and says 'Read and review chapter twenty-two.' After that, her head tilts down, and she goes right back to sleep."

Bryan laughed with his hand over his mouth.

"Wait, that isn't the best part! One of the other students, I think his name is Jeffries, he starts complaining. He looks around at us and says 'I don't get why she's allowed to sleep in her own class but we're not allowed to...' Before he can finish, Dr. Sheridan picks up her book with just one hand, doesn't even look up, and throws it across the room at Jeffries. It hits him square in the head and she yells out 'Chapter twenty-two!' and goes right back to sleep."

Bryan doubled over laughing.

"I can't believe," he said once the laughter had subsided, "Dr. Sheridan did all that. I didn't think she had it in her!"

Both of them knew Dr. Sheridan well. She taught law at the College, in the same position for over thirty years. On top of being universally loved by her students, she was brilliant in matters of law and politics.

"She'd been up all night beforehand working for the General Assembly, and I don't think she was going to take any nonsense from anyone."

"And that's why we love her," said Bryan.

"Hey!" someone called you, "Would you two keep it down."

They turned. On the porch of one of the houses, a man and woman sat drinking iced tea. They scowled from their porch, and Bryan became very conscious of his condition, as a non-landowner in Landowner territory. Marie stepped forward.

"If we offend you so much," she said, with her arms crossed, "Then go inside to do your pissing and moaning. We're on public land and we don't want to hear your complaining."

Bryan felt immense pride as the couple looked appalled.

"Now you listen to me..." said the man, standing up.

"Whatever you have to say, I'm not interested. Save it. Go buy a Councilman, or have one of the Judges kiss your ass."

The woman took the man's arm and led him inside. He did not stop glaring at Bryan and Marie until they were both inside.

"Thanks, Marie," said Bryan, "Who were they anyway?"

"Oh, who knows? Probably work for one of the Property Consultants."



"What's that?"

"A polite way of saying Landowner."

A few minutes later, they found themselves at the College. In the distance, Bryan saw a familiar figure coming their way. It was Matt. Both Bryan and Marie waved at him as he came closer. From where he sat, he could already tell something was wrong. Matt did not just look tired, he looked somehow defeated.

"What's going on, brother?" asked Bryan, "What happened at the rest of the meeting?"

Matt smiled and greeted Bryan with a hug. He held his shoulders, preparing him for bad news.

"The rest of the meeting didn't go well," he said in a distant voice, "The leaders of the General Assembly decided against protecting the College."

Bryan felt sick to his stomach. Next to him, Marie took his hand, a look of concern crossing her face.

"So they're... they're just going to let the College be overrun?" she asked appalled.

"Apparently so," Matt replied plainly, "they felt there wasn't enough of a strategic advantage to rooting out Loyalists in the College."

"That's insane," said Bryan.

"But there's more," said Matt, "there's talk within the General Assembly of resorting to violent resistance."

Bryan's heart sank when he heard. Just as Matt said, it was terrible news, but not unexpected. He put his head down between his knees and put his hands on the back of his head. Marie moved in front of the two of them.

"Hey, this isn't so bad," she said, "Matt, you can still speak out against it, and you'll still be able to protect the College while you're serving the Assembly, won't you?"

Matt looked down, discouraged.

"I can't. They relieved me of my position."

For the first time in years, Bryan had the urge to cry.

"Fatima, Benjamin, and me; all three of us refused to leave the College out of the revolution, so the General Assembly voted to remove us. Fatima talked about creating our own fringe movement, but I doubt that it would do any good."

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