

The Last Man to Live Forever

Placido Juarez, the last man to live forever (at least legally), told anyone who cared to listen he had never been scared to die. “I’ve just been putting one foot on top of the other, day in, and day out,” he’d say.

So, although he still possessed many of the “tangible” things a supremely rich, highly-modified human being required for the enjoyment of life, and the freedom to use them, too, he wished they’d let him out of the house just one more time, if only to stroll down the street in the warm spring air, for old time’s sake.

A distant uncle of Normal Hogan, he grew up on Mars in the early E2,100’s CE or “Recovery Age,” a time of rapid scientific advancement, when science, Mars and the ongoing-rebuild of Earth were feasting on the final conquering of Humanity’s limited lifespan—when the expectation was to “Live forever, with a body like you’re 18, and all the memories you want to keep, or get back.”

He would also complain patiently, to anyone who cared to listen, “No one gets to choose their Ma and Pa. I didn’t get to, either. That shouldn’t be a crime.”

He had a relatively unique viewpoint, too, because his mother, Elsa Tomyko, was a moderately-modified human being, but his father was the UN&C (United Nations & Corporations), the Planetary Government of Earth. This same government allowed, encouraged, and paid for his development, and developed the gene mix that was Placido’s “Father.” The idea was to create a super human; the problem is, it did.

However, Placido felt *entirely* human, and although at one point he ended up owning most of the Earth, his way-too-human greed wound up being his downfall. As Palmer poses in “Palmer’s Poems, Volume One:” “Pride is always found just before destruction.”

By E2198, Placido had amassed, in the most conservative estimations, 331 Seprillion dollars in the 152 Eyears he’d been alive. Although, of course, that would all end up being donated to the State.

But in the year 2177 (244 M Anno Humanis) his exact holdings were unknown and would not be accounted for until long after his death, although at this rate, at least, that might take awhile.

He was born and raised as *the* grand experiment; to his genetics-industry-researcher mother, only, in one of the scientific warrens that were offshoots of tunnels extending outward from Mare Ellineum under a wide, flat plain near the surface of Mars.

Placido was a genetically engineered lump of way-to-human flesh and an assembly-coded father, pumped with IC’s, remote sensing and control, data retention and networking systems to

increase his system's capacity that would make him a transition being in the development of true humaractics.

He was carried to full term, and was a "quite easy delivery," according to Ms. Tomyko, already a mother of two, but in outstanding physical shape.

The quite bright, but slowly careful, muscular, red-headed engineer with a winning smile and perfect teeth, (and quite popular with the ladies), acted like every day was a surprise, although most of his friends and all of his competitors knew his penchant for preparation.

But that was the problem with people who lived forever. They became perfect competitors. They started out as very good, and over the years became even better, at everything they did. Time and experience lessened the negatives, accumulated and accentuated the positives. Along with the self-interest gained cultivating friendships with politicians and other powerful people, a relatively few well-connected forever beings (or "Feebs") became unaccountably rich, and there came a point over the years that the public realized how great a threat to the common man they'd become, and really thought about the future consequences, and killed most of them in the revolution of E2088.

Seeing this whole enchilada opening up earlier than most, Placido, in a bid for total control, sued the UN&C; with his cadre of international lawyers, finally gaining control of the Government of the Earth mostly on a technicality, aided and abetted by powerful interests and slippery courts and judges.

In E2089, "The People," having been raped by technology and the "1/100" percent over the past century, finally, successfully, massively, rebelled; assisted by a fortuitously coincidental communications blackout on Earth, the Moon and Mars caused by a giant solar flare. And afterward always thought God was on their side. They became TechStat.

The coup was intended to prevent the possibility of this "living forever thing by the rich" from happening again, although, by then the cat was way out of the bag. Even though the masses, aided and abetted by a consortium of back-to-the land military functionaries using hacked social networking channels, whacked most of the known feebs in the "War For Forever." Placido was spared, mostly and especially because he was the first, and they needed to keep him around to demonstrate control by making an example out of him.

Although at first prohibitively expensive, living forever was not to be denied to the burgeoning middle classes on Mars and beyond. Although still highly illegal, the engineering and replication of feebs was now fairly common, every single one of them running sometimes very transparent scams to hide their involvement in a crime that carried the death sentence, like for mob bosses of old.

With the advent of inexpensive cloning, “living forever” would become, ultimately, even more persistent. And just like drug testing before that, gene testing as a condition of employment in government limited the acquisition of talent and the effectiveness of bureaucracy. Also, just like in the past, entering a good university many times required “spoofing” or cheating on required testing. This was usually a requirement for the landed class to get a good job and have a future.

Lifespan, as usual, had become a function of state regulation driven by moneyed interests; although more than the allotted births could be earned with distinguished or heroic military or civilian experience, or scads of Mars bucks.

When he was sentenced for the crime of being who he was, the *new* government, the “Technical Statistics Leadership Group,” TechStat, or TSLG, in deference to the State’s involvement in his creation, went easy on him. The court, while restricting his movements forever to a small domicile, granted Placido “motherhood,” of a single clone, “Placidotwo.”

Over the network, in a sensory chamber, Placido was free to experience the tactile sensations, experiences, and memories of his clone, although he always felt like there was something missing. It was like being kept in a gilded cage, much like a Chinese emperor in Earth’s 19th century, or an employee of a rich media company.

The possibilities and problems that long life and perfect health brought to society were transforming, to say the least. Such is life, Placido thought to himself: “As it was in the beginning, is now and always will be.”

However, before his predictable fall, a landed Senator from Phobos had rubbed Placido the wrong way. She would learn that, quickly, but then Karlina Stornetsky was a Palmerite, and looked at infinity a little more differently than other humaractics.