

## Welcome to my TED Talk

Vincent O'Sullivan's last words to me were (and this is a real email):

*"It would be worth trying to write about one day... why contemporary poetry, at least in English, generally finds it so difficult to accommodate politics? Is it because it seems too 'obvious' for a tradition that has now become so allusive, that poets in fact have become a bit scared of such directness and commitment? The seductions of post-modernism almost make post-politics obligatory. But that's another story."*

I missed his last session at Verb because my flight was delayed  
and don't know if he ever wrote that book,  
cos I don't read books about poetry,  
or books of poetry,  
or poetry journals,  
or books.

I will be bludgeoned to death by a fury of falling books  
that I am in but which I still haven't read, my own name  
will slice my head wide open.

I just read articles, online, about

- civilisation collapsing like a face
- public-private-partnership governance and procurement standards in the construction of the new Death Star
- the Manifesto on Algorithmic Sabotage by the Algorithmic Sabotage Research Group of course
- how best to talk about murdering billionaires
- the fire in the hills
- am I an extremist?
- the fire in the hills
- is it still going? or

- the fire in the hills only writes about vengeance,  
and I only write about how to do revolution and dictatorship effectively and ineffectively  
cos I like to get things right and also wrong at the same time,  
arriving at XXXMas like I've opened Tinder with my nose  
like I'm ready for the seductions  
of post-modernism  
to make post-politics obligatory  
like we forgot the triple-X rating includes  
not just the power of love  
but the power of incredible  
violence

People are concerned about tone issues  
when talking about murdering billionaires,  
but it's not important  
how skilfully you dive through the burning hoop  
for points on the board of a game long over -  
that guy? not a gun, it's just the groundskeeper,  
slow in the distance with a long trash picker

When I ask 'how should we talk about killing billionaires'  
I don't mean so your opinion appears  
morally defensible to yourself and others  
I mean *so you don't get arrested*  
even though the public is increasingly  
finally  
down  
with killing billionaires.

Disclaimer:

*I am not a lawyer, this poem is  
not to be taken as legal advice.*

I do need more legal advice  
and search engines don't work anymore  
another reason why we should kill the billionaires.

'how should we talk about killing billionaires' how to talk about  
the ways to stab them through their ten thousand eyes  
scanning the crooked timelines of a new gilded age  
as they stroke their white cats with names gleeful icons of *eeeevil*  
Palantir, Sauron, The Metaverse, The Torment Nexus,  
cats that murder as is their nature  
how should we talk about killing their owners,  
whose reading age lags so far behind  
their bone density?  
The answer of course is  
QUIETLY. And I don't say 'not at all' -  
the alternative to not speaking out loud  
of killing billionaires,  
is writing about  
killing billionaires, and then  
you gotta start  
with the data security -  
encryption keys, speed-reading review sites for  
best secure end-to-end messaging systems of 2024  
not currently owned by a billionaire,  
burning paper discreetly in public without starting a  
fire in the hills -

when all we wanted  
was to enjoy a few jokes at the Christmas party  
about how we should talk  
about the fact that  
we should kill billionaires.  
swarmed as we are by tiny echoes  
of our own outlines  
the very gestures of our texture  
made of miniature mouths  
chewing the borders of our bodies  
tunnelbearing into sweetmeat brains  
til we try to kill  
only phantoms wearing our own faces  
instead of billionaires!

By the time you lock down your comms  
and walk carefully backwards with a broom,  
sweeping your footprints away,  
you find you're suddenly prepared  
for securely making plans  
to kill billionaires!  
Another perverse incentive at the heart  
of the global authoritarian  
capitalist superstructure.

How should we talk about murdering  
a New Zealand citizen  
who bought his way in  
then robbed our government,  
who seized and destroyed our favourite websites  
because we were having too much of a good time  
in the comments talking about murdering billionaires?  
I will take the whataboutism defence, I have talked  
about murdering non-billionaires too  
and nobody cared, cos I'm a petty bitch.

like an actual journalist  
who kept spreading in print that I use a fake Chinese name  
to make myself seem more ethnic  
*I had to dox myself* to prove him wrong. In lieu of receiving an apology  
in a flashfic, I trapped him in a rear naked choke at dusk,  
and once unconscious, snapped his neck with his own garden hose  
and the leverage of a sturdy boot,  
to make it look like an accident.  
The ending was maybe the cruelest part, I wrote:  
...there was no way that his body would be found by anyone tonight...  
Everyone knew  
he was recently divorced  
and had no friends.

I wrote a poem called 'The time a guy laughed at my first ever blowjob and so I drowned  
him in the Waitematā'.

he lives with his parents and  
is not embarrassed, because this is  
The North Shore  
where houses are eagles  
clinging to cliffs, bronze claws glinting at sunset  
You can clamber down  
from rock to rock like a mouse,  
still in your underwear and slip, nervous, overheated  
into the cool lick and tug of tides  
and see the Sugar Factory looming, and the lights of Aukilani  
your only friend in sight, so far off, her sparks  
broken up dancing with their doubles in the water, and  
the accidental rocks, both jagged and blunt.

Now you're Tom Ripley ready  
to do crimes in the dark.

Treading water, I look up to the house where it happened  
My memory looks back from inside  
the view from the bed, double-doors opening  
like a mouth gasping onto the darkness, the  
night's resting bitchface, staring hard  
in the background of a skinny white dick.

Now, after the deed down here, beyond the bobbing body,  
the bedroom's blank face tilts down and says,  
*'I didn't see shit. Who has a balcony in their bedroom  
overlooking the harbour,  
and laughs at an awkward teenage nerd's blowjob?  
We should murder them.'*

means motives opportunity  
an abandoned mouth of Monopoly Money  
I did read \*a\* book, once,  
by Eleanor Catton  
I thought it would be about  
murdering billionaires  
It's set in the hills, is there still  
a fire in the hills? We can only guess  
it's out, fallen  
from the headlines but you know  
there will only ever be  
more fires in the hills.  
The book turned out  
to be about  
being murdered *by* a billionaire.  
Reading is so disappointing.  
I have become a podcast guy

I listened to sixty - six zero - episodes of the French Revolution  
twenty episodes of the Haitian Revolution (best revolution)  
eight episodes of the Paris Commune (pour one out)  
\*one hundred and fourteen episodes\* of  
the Russian Revolution  
Margaret Atwood pops up  
in my emails warning me  
of Revolution addiction  
and this never ends well, she says  
I *am* the oracle of history  
oh I know, I say, what if they came  
for the billionaires and I said nothing  
because it was me who was gleefully murdering billionaires?  
What are you still doing on Substack anyway,  
Margaret Atwood, it's full of nazis.  
I rant and plead, and history's silent smile arcs down

to pierce your dreams like gravity's rainbow  
yes I know about the endings repeated on loop  
yes but yes but if we are very very good,  
can't we have a just little bit of class war, as a treat?  
can we have a beginning, just one more time?

Strip the letters off the skyscrapers  
repatriate them  
to our mouths and our memories  
to erotic fanfic, to sonnets, to international humanitarian law  
Pull down their statues and pile on top  
and ride them dragged through the street like  
the sleigh in the Santa parade,  
kick their heads on loop in the Al-Jaz B-roll  
rip them out of Vogue, shoot their planes out' the sky  
a drawn out chemtrail, bending slow  
cos time is speeding up suddenly-all-at-once  
who has enough left in the bank to wait  
for the Hague I ask history, who?  
she shoots past me, backwards  
deleting her fingerprints as she types, and she says  
all of you just shut the fuck up  
til your lawyer gets here.

But I say out loud to Vincent O'Sullivan's ghost  
We should murder billionaires, right?  
he says 'For the record, I gave you that essay prize  
for the utopian multicultural liberalism of 2004  
not the accelerationist violence of 2024  
you should have read my book'  
and I'm like, uh which book

I ask Kathleen Hanna of Bikini Kill she says  
Get off the internet! I'll meet you in the street!  
Get off the internet! DESTROY THE RIGHT WING

I ask the Algorithmic Sabotage Research Group, it says:  
*"destruction is the power that is left. The only thing worth a penny.  
Everything else will pass and be gone. Only their destruction will last."*

I ask Marcuse he says (in a German accent I can't do)  
'Murder is not a political weapon'  
The physical liquidation of single individuals,  
even the most prominent, does not undermine  
the normal functioning of the capitalist system itself.  
I say but *Herbert* what if I really want  
to murder a billionaire just for the pleasure of it  
to *feel* my *fantasy*  
he says  
The full force of the pleasure principle  
not only survives in the unconscious  
but also affects in manifold ways

the very reality which has superseded [it].  
The return of the repressed makes up  
the tabooed and subterranean history  
of civilization.

I ask the Crimes act, it says

no one shall be deemed to have a seditious intention only because he intends in good faith—

To point out, with a view to their removal, matters producing or having a tendency to  
produce feelings of hostility or ill will between different classes of persons.

Yes, we should intend in good faith  
to remove billionaires  
(by killing them)

I ask my old friend who is a  
senior government counterterror advisor  
if she wants to go for a walk  
perhaps I'll talk to her  
in the calm green room of the valley  
about killing billionaires  
she didn't reply yet, I think  
she knows the best thing  
she could say to me  
the best thing any of us can say is

*I didn't see shit*  
Remember that.  
I didn't see shit  
say it with me now  
I DIDN'T SEE SHIT

So: when I say  
we should plan collectively as a nation to assassinate Peter Thiel the  
white supremacist Atlas Network billionaire venture capitalist  
who is: bankrolling the fascist takeover of a nuclear superpower  
sending robots to do genocide in Palestine  
sending AI to eliminate your wages, burn water, and lie  
and sending The Taxpayer's Union  
to make us stab ourselves in the eyes  
and beg for democracy to be euthanised,  
all to suck the glowing essence of life out of the earth and into his own pouch-pale body  
til he's Immortan Joe in a fucking bunker in Queenstown  
crowned all around by  
fire eating the hills

when I say  
do your networks and logistics well in advance like NZ Secret Santa, and when you are  
sure and when you are ready, and his private jet is tracking towards the country, get an  
envelope and seal up all your goodbyes

when I say  
you could lure him with a trail of rare earth minerals into a no-cellphone coverage zone  
deep in a special environmental area, say, a protected bush valley in a friendly iwi's out-  
of-the-way rural rohe, where I have a little caravan on the ridge, that I'm hoping to set up  
as an occasional artists' residence so New Zealand Asian writers can go for weekends  
away from their tiresome day jobs working for billionaires, so they can gaze into a quiet  
valley where rainbows dip and hide, and where they might consider entrapping and  
murdering a billionaire

when I say 'you should conspire to do a murder, you in particular',  
the important thing is  
the line breaks  
which demonstrate that  
this is  
a poem.  
and a poem is only  
an idea  
that you might feel alive inside  
for its brief lifespan  
a little leaky caravan  
for surviving just one night  
tend aches from struggling through the mud  
your heart might wake up from its layer of dew  
rise, ready to open this gift - of a place where  
we can kill billionaires until the  
billionaires  
surrender.

In conclusion: when I say  
you should murder Peter Thiel the fascist billionaire  
You can show in court that no matter what I really meant  
this is a poem and so by definition  
according to the laws of English  
I can only be figuratively saying that  
you should murder Peter Thiel the fascist billionaire  
what I'm really saying -  
and this is how you're allowed to say it  
according to my DISCLAIMER: non-expert reading  
of threats to kill and sedition in the Crimes Act 1961  
freedom of speech in the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990  
and incitement in section 61 of, of course, the New Zealand Human Rights Act 1993 -  
what I'm really saying is:

we  
should murder  
billionaires.

Merry Christmas,  
and Good Night!