

TIN FOIL IN A MICROWAVE OVEN

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Present Day. MAN is sitting cross legged on the ground, wearing a tin foil hat. He is talking into a video camera, documenting the following to his future self. It is dark with only the illuminance of surrounding electronics to make him visible. Maybe we hear the faint narration of news reporters from one of these said electronics in the background.

Okay. I'm okay. This is all... okay...

He takes a breath, unsure how to begin.

Dear... future me? Is that what I should say? That's not important anyways

It's 2021 in case you've forgotten. Life has gone to absolute shit. And shit is putting it nicely.

My therapist told me to start keeping a diary of my thoughts and feelings and I thought this would be easier but now that I'm actually seeing myself maybe it wasn't because

Wow

I look awful.

He shakes this off and continues.

It's 2021 and the world is falling apart. Or at least mine is, some people seem to be doing just fine. The world is falling apart- Fuck I'm falling apart I dont even know what to do with myself half the time because nothing is what it once was- nothing is normal and nothing has become everything and everything nothing and...

That doesn't make sense. Nothing makes sense.

How did I end up like this?

I mean I used to be doing great... I had all my shit together, I was happy I was GENUINELY happy and everyone saw me as that but then this century decided to take a hard left turn and I'm not even sure WHAT I am anymore...

There's just all these... voices...

He listens for a moment.

The voices are all I hear anymore and what makes it difficult is I don't know which voice is mine in the midst of the multitude of sentences and silence...

It's deafening.

I can't even hear myself think. These thoughts in my head they're not my own and I don't know whose they are all I know is that these voices need to

GET OUT.

My therapist calls them intrusive thoughts but I'm worried I might have been the one who invited them in...

These thoughts are not my own. I have to remember that: these thoughts are not my own, they are intruders, they are projections pushed onto me by this world I find myself in, they are transmissions from Time- Time that is cruel and cold- and they are not my own.

And thus I wear my helmet.

To ward off these thoughts.

He looks at himself in the camera.

I look fucking stupid.

He rips the tin foil hat off his head and crumples it into a ball in anger and drops it on the ground. He looks at it for a moment in silence, listening. He slowly picks up the tin foil ball and fumbles with it in his hand.

Malleable.

I have become malleable.

I have been molded by the hands of God and the pressures of Time and the gravity of the universe, molded and morphed by forces that are not my own, molded to become This.

Foiled. I am foiled.

This is not how I intended myself to be. I did not choose this. This is not who I am.

Or maybe this malleability IS a choice, am I the one who lets myself be constructed in such a way?

He uncrumples the ball and tries to smooth it out as much as possible. He picks up the sheet of foil and tries to see his reflection in it. He softly laughs and smiles.

Oh there I am.

I can still see myself. Crinkled, sure, but clear enough to be seen.

He struggles to open up to himself.

Life...

Has been hard recently.

And I am

Still learning how to admit that to myself.

It's like tin foil in a microwave oven. You set the timer for ten, twenty seconds, it really doesn't take that long at all. The little light turns on and the ball of foil starts to slowly revolve and the microwave softly hums to itself until

He aggressively snaps.

The sparks start to appear and the fires start to ignite and the electricity starts to burn through my veins- I look up and all I see is fire and smoke as the sky cracks open and all Hell breaks loose and I'm still stuck in this fucking microwave

Until that timer dings

And the fires cease

And the current stops

And the door opens and I am still a tin foil ball but I am free.

Scorched but free.

And just as I have been confined into this tightly wound ball of foil

So I can be smoothed out, released, ready to be put to use again.

Not the same as I once was but close enough. A new normal.

I'm just waiting for that timer to ding.