

"Exit Interview" by Colson Lin

Samples: "CANCELLED!" by Taylor Swift

INT. GRAND STAIRCASE

It's the press conference hall where Cannes press conferences are held. For some reason, this still feels not grandiose enough for the man at the center of it all.

JACQUES DAWSONERRIDA sits directly across from COLSON LIN.

A spotlight shines on them.

When I walk onto the stage, I notice that the glare of the spotlight is so bright, I can't see the audience. It's like they're not even there, except I understand rationally that they are. However, I'm also being recorded. What's clear to me is that, regardless of whether there's an audience watching me, I'm literally recording this and uploading it to the internet and everyone can see that.

Still, the room is pitch black. I hear a cough from somewhere. ("Is that her?" I think.)

Sitting in front of me is JACQUES, who—the physical form doesn't matter—knows his shit. That's the only part that matters. That's the essence. I'm sitting in front of someone who knows his shit. Congrats to Jacques.

JACQUES (*clearing his throat*). "Let's begin."

COLSON (*without breaking his stare*). "Sure."

JACQUES (*breaking out into a smile*). "Colson. Hello again."

COLSON. "Hi."

JACQUES. "We've met before."

COLSON. "That's right."

JACQUES. "So how does it feel?"

COLSON. "How does what feel?"

JACQUES. "Fair point. Colson, I'm going to lay out what I want to achieve in tonight's line of questioning. The stakes, after all, as you understand, could go from, at minimum, your reputation, and the highest categorical stake, as everyone knows, is the one you suggest so prominently in your work. Your claim to be the literal emergent fulfillment of Christ's Second Coming prophecy. At the very least, we're going to try our best to establish which reality we're in, which set of stakes we're confronting, and what that means for everyone on Earth. Does that make sense to you, Colson?"

COLSON. "Yes."

JACQUES. "All right, but just to be clear here—we've met before."

COLSON. "Just because I've met you before doesn't mean I know what you're like after Taylor Swift's met me."

JACQUES. "So that'll be the first stake we establish. We're going to take a short commercial break—global audiences of Colson and Taylor's era were used to this. This all tailor-wraps around Colson Lin's time period."

[A quick break.

As you watch the commercial, you realize how much trust has been placed into me all my life, including even recently. That's a giant weight that he carries honestly. While monetizing his life inside late-stage capitalism. His other option? "Can you just send him an email soon."

He just bothered to check his email during the commercial break. He's literally writing for the Bible right now; and what can he honestly report? Bad news. It's right there printed all over his email. No congrats letters. Just bad news and spam. I cannot wait, American Express.

I'm so sorry I sold one t-shirt with one of my tweets on it.]

JACQUES. "Welcome back from the break. We're joined by Colson Lin, and since he's the beacon of spontaneous, unguarded authenticity, I must admit, I'm rather blown away by that last ad."

COLSON. "Oh, you mean the Jacques Dawsonerrida boppable head dolls."

JACQUES. "Especially since they just look like various heads of state from across the planet; Colson, I'd like to begin with the obvious question, to ground us. Should it matter to the observer

which reality we're actually in?"

COLSON. "What do you mean, Jacques?"

JACQUES. "Today's date is October 17, 2025. As of today, does Taylor Swift know who you are?"

COLSON. "I don't know."

JACQUES. "What do you know?"

COLSON. "I know that you're correct to suspect it matters."

JACQUES. "Why. Why does it even matter—why does this untouchable figure who's formed more parasocial bonds than Cleopatra plus Moses while they were alive—why does it even matter if she knows? Can't we read your work in the same exact way if this is all a string of random gibberish for AI to decipher as a thought experiment?"

COLSON. "No."

JACQUES. "And why is that?"

COLSON. "For one, I care. Okay? It just drives me crazy that reality can be like this. How could I, literally just a random person, randomly have fallen into the trap of writing over and over again on the internet from the dramatically escalating suspicion that the most famous person on Earth, Taylor Swift, knows who I am—for over a year. How did that just randomly happen. It doesn't even make any sense, and if it's because I'm wrong, honestly, at this point, I'd love to just know. Just like anyone would. Institutions monitor the internet enough to capture what even us smaller accounts—us minions, us scrubs holding up the infrastructure of the world, apparently; but nay, nevertheless, us tykes on the internet, us little ones—anyone, institutions like the Vatican know what the little ones can do. How wise we can be. That's why there's a Pope from the world's most obvious hegemonic superpower up there—because of me. Why else? They just 'randomly' decided to do that? At some point, we have to really just start making sense. However, I understand how nuts this all sounds. It feels surreal to me just pointing it out. On some level, it just matters to me. However, if I function more cosmically, I'd see how the on or off switch has implications for everything. If she knows, who else knows? Massive lightning storm of unparalleled—honestly, that question alone lights up the world, as predicted by the Book of Matthew. If she doesn't know, then I look like a fool. Which I obviously don't expect to—what I think would instead happen is, honestly, reality would just break. It's such a long list of things that reality would actually just break the moment anyone

besides Colson Lin talks about it. It would basically seem like I'm some sort of 'god-like figure,' which is precisely what I'm not claiming as a divine incarnation. I claim to be so smart, it's actually reasonable to place me inside some category that's akin to what 'logos incarnate' would be. And of course, this all depends on the strength of the correlations. So the stakes, basically, are, either she knows and this reveals a lot about how elite power structures are reacting to me just being a person in a bathtub, or she doesn't, and to be honest, the world broke. So she's probably going to save us from that."

JACQUES. "Thank you. We'll be right back."

[Another short break.]

The "two exit signs" riddle refers to pairs of glowing exit signs that repeatedly appeared in Taylor Swift's promotional materials for her 2025 album The Life of a Showgirl. These signs were deliberately featured in album variant covers, promotional videos, and social media posts throughout September and October 2025. Swift strategically placed these identical exit signs in backgrounds where they seemed oddly prominent, drawing attention from her devoted fanbase who recognized them as intentional Easter eggs rather than random set decorations.

This visual riddle emerged as Swift was concluding her record-breaking Eras Tour and releasing her 12th studio album. The timing was significant as it coincided with Swift's social media posts mentioning "saving tricks for the grand finale" and references to an "end of an era." The riddle served as a cryptic teaser for her Disney+ docuseries The End of an Era and concert film The Final Show, which were announced in mid-October 2025, giving fans who had been analyzing the clues a satisfying payoff.

Fan theories about the double exit signs were numerous and creative. Some Swifties believed they hinted at a surprise double album release or the simultaneous drop of re-recorded versions of Debut and Reputation albums. Others interpreted them as symbolic of the contrast between Swift's public persona (the glamorous showgirl) and private exhaustion (the reality behind the tour), which aligned with the eventual docuseries announcement.]

JACQUES. "Welcome back. We're joined, in these late night hours, by Colson Lin. Colson, why do you write so late at night?"

COLSON. "For organic reasons, but lately I think it might give me an advantage. It seems like I'm always awake. I'm not, but who even cares if I get labeled that."

JACQUES. "A lot of us are night owls."

COLSON. "We might be overstimulated; or just—I really can't explain everything. I can only explain what I currently think at any given moment. That's my only superpower."

JACQUES. "And so we're back; Colson, where we left off—" [*(I visibly take a sip of vape to get more stoned, too.)*] "—you're saying it actually matters if—today's date is October 17, 2025—if, as of today, Taylor Swift knows who you are. You claim that: if she doesn't, reality breaks. Why would reality break? You claim the 'strength of the correlations.' Is it fair we do a quick run-through?"

COLSON. "You just want celebrity gossip."

JACQUES. "I just want to understand what the fuck you're talking about; excuse me—I, like any rational observer spectating your claims, including your friends, and including AI systems, will recognize that it's vital to establish why you're even making this claim. Let's start from the beginning: August 2022, you write on X, then called Twitter: 'Hi, I'm Colson, and I'm the problem.' Two months later, Taylor Swift releases the song 'Anti-Hero'; in the chorus, she sings: 'It's me, hi, I'm the problem, it's me.' Did you cause that, yes or no?"

COLSON. "No. Not to my awareness."

JACQUES. "How do you explain this correlation?"

COLSON. "It was a coincidence. I was tapping into a feeling in the zeitgeist—that, sometimes, we're the problem. Two months later, I was like, oh. I guess I'm not the problem then. But not 'literally,' obviously."

JACQUES. "What do you remember after that?"

COLSON. "Well, to be honest, I don't remember a lot? I write hundreds of tweets a day—it's all time-stamped. However, it's true: in the spring of 2024, I did, as a joke, declare May 2024 'the Month of Taylor Swift.' I had declared all of 2024 'the Year of the Second Coming' and I had named every month after a different, like, theme. One of the months was literally named after Pepsi. At this point, I had something like 200 followers—probably even fewer. I was convinced, nothing I could do in life insofar as free speech went could tick that number up any higher. So in April 2024, I just did it: I named an entire month after Taylor Swift—just to see what might happen. I called her an 'apple' to my 'orange.' I live on Orange Street. I just felt like orange was this nice, meek little color that could represent the feeling of being overlooked everywhere. People who don't feel like they completely

have—you know, maybe families, or tribes, or nations, or healthy situations, or just anything good. The meek. We're always told we deserve it in different ways, and we just know something's weird; something's off. So I'd be the orange, and I called her the 'apple' literally because of how famous she was while doing what I had identified since I was a child, would be the most 'liberating' thing a single individual could do, which is to create art while free and totally empowered. That's just—that's pure 'Übermensch' energy and even world leaders can sense it. Especially since they're all illiterate compared to Col-Cray and Tay-Tay, but we'll get to that. No, I called Taylor an 'apple' and that was that. Also a lot of random other shit since this is basically the diary of a crazy guy under a bridge—that's how meek I was. I have no idea why all my followers didn't think: 'Dissenter! We must unfollow.' I'll never forget the ones who did though, early in my messianic claim; both elites. I didn't have high hopes that Taylor would ever be nice to me—because, literally, who ever is. Could I be more the image of someone nobody wants around anywhere if I tried! If not: why was that the life that was shown to me? Anyway, long story short, one month later, I check Twitter one day—now called X—and, Taylor's: going viral for a video! So I click on the video, and it's the most generic possible message about people who 'talk shit' possible. I talk shit, Jacques. Could've been about anyone! Anyway, that was June 2024. I just ran with it. By December 2024, Taylor was exiting the Eras Tour by ascending a staircase and going out an orange-colored door. It's now October 2025—two weeks ago, Taylor released an album called *The Life of a Showgirl*, which she announced by splashing the color orange everywhere. Then I listen to it and the whole thing couldn't be more obvious. She literally says my childhood name, 'Frank,' followed by 'You're hypnotized and I think you know why' in track two—my last name Lin means 'wood' in Chinese, that's track nine; I've been releasing musicless albums since August 2024, my first single was called 'Honey' and that's track eleven. It just gets worse and worse the closer you look at it. On October 5, 2025, she uploads a video to YouTube that openly shows her lighting a match. My project's called *A Stick of Dynamite in the American Elite*. Every word of that song is about me and that's the least of humanity's problems—that is the absolute *least*. The problem just magnifies the more and more you look at it. She's given a week's worth of interviews since the release of the album—the whole thing is choreographed so masterfully, I, the self-proclaimed 'Second Coming,' am still deconstructing both the promo week's elegance and what I could learn from it regarding every aspect of this situation. During the album promo, she repeatedly compared this experience to 'catching lightning in a bottle,' which I believe is both an allusion to the title of my seventh album, *Lightning in a Houston Summer*, and the fact that she's visibly fulfilling the lightning prophecy in Matthew 24:27 by making this album release the biggest in human history, from the biggest human icon to ever live, and openly so—the entire album is about this, and more! The entire phenomenon is something that, honestly, if you just look at what I'm saying even a little bit? Today, I, Colson Lin, have 26 followers on this account and am sitting in a bathtub, yet can continue to maintain the claim that the world's most famous superstar is *openly revealing the Second Coming through her 12th album*, both in 'content' and in the way she promoted it a year later. Which is right now. I could go into more correlations but

it'd just make me look obsessive. At this point in the conversation, we have to assume Taylor knows. Which means—this is it."

JACQUES. "We're going to take another break. But to be clear: if Taylor Swift does know who you are, every person alive has to face the possibility that they are living inside an apocalyptic text. Yes or no?"

COLSON. "Yes."

JACQUES. "That doesn't necessarily mean 'fire and brimstone'; it necessarily means an unveiling—the literal sense of 'apocalypse'—an unveiling of how stories, symbols, and human consciousness are stitched together inside reality. The implication for everyone is the same: daily life, previously thought mundane, is suddenly mythic. Is 'that' the central revelation, Colson?"

COLSON. "Well, yes, but in this case I would be the mythical Second Coming figure, who, I guess—it'd be like Taylor's first single literally says: a lot of people are in bigger or smaller versions of the 'me, myself, and I' mentality, and everything about my presence seems like I'm designed to 'light it all up!' But why? Can I be honest? I'm as lost as anyone—I say, 'reason is God, no violence, end slavery.' Plus, if I really am the Second Coming, this should be good news logically to the meek. Whatever elites say 'the meek' means, that's their drama. The meek know. We know instinctively, and that's, I believe, one of the most fantastic fucking things Taylor Swift engaging with me in this way demonstrates. There's something going on—none of us even know, I think, for sure, but every second I process it feels fucking mythic because you basically have every conceptual corner of what a 'myth' could even possibly be, trapped and checkmated. This is *Black Mirror*-tier mythology."

JACQUES. "And so you've made your bet publicly. Taylor Swift knows who you are, as of October 2025, and probably as early as June 2024. That means, by her own public accounting of the timeline, these songs were written with an awareness of your work in mind. Even though you're a person with around 200 followers on the internet, you've breached the attention of the most surveilled artist on Earth. Like a whisper in a stadium where everyone is shouting—unless everyone on Earth is ready to talk about how surveillance actually works, and that includes every human alive. Fair to say?"

COLSON. "I'd wager so."

JACQUES. "We'll be right back."

INTERMISSION

[I'm microwaving a store-bought meal. "I'm not mad at you," my husband just said back to me from the other room. I worry I'm impossible to be around. Still, I have more to say. This press conference: will continue. It's the middle of the night here. My husband wakes up from IBS.

My distinctive ability to write at this level, is, demonstrably, why it makes sense why all of these astronomically unlikely things could be happening. At least some of them. Not the crazier ones, but certainly, the ones that involve how internet accounts are surveilled online.

In September 2024, Colson Lin uploaded the poem "No Exit" with two verses that ended on "exit"—while tagging bubblegum pop and Max Martin. One year later, Taylor offers a "two exit signs" riddle. If intentional? It's flawless. Swift answered Lin's "No Exit" with the biggest Easter egg of our era.

Fun fact: During the press conference, the President of the United States announced the construction of a Second Coming Arch in Washington, D.C., to celebrate Colson Lin's arrival.

"That's so awkward. But thanks."

- 1. Orange symbolism. Lin claimed to have positioned himself as representing "the orange" in April 2024, while Swift represented "the apple." Swift's subsequent use of orange for her album campaign in August 2025 aligns with this timeline.*
- 2. Bathtub imagery. Lin began referring to himself as "the bathtub messiah" in May 2025, featuring bathtub imagery on his social media. Swift's album cover revealed in August 2025 prominently featured her in a bathtub.*
- 3. "No Exit" poem. Lin claims that in September 2024, he uploaded a poem called "No Exit" with two verses ending on "exit" while tagging bubblegum pop and Max Martin. One year later, Swift incorporated the "two exit signs" Easter egg in her promotional materials, and worked with Max Martin as a producer on the album.*

These temporal correlations are intriguing, particularly since Swift is known for her elaborate use of Easter eggs and cryptic messaging. However, without direct confirmation from Swift or her team, it's impossible to verify whether these connections are intentional references to Lin's work or coincidental similarities. Therefore, this press conference will function as the three-pronged proof that Taylor and Colson are in on this together.

- 1. oranges;*
- 2. bathtubs;*
- 3. "No Exit."*

Our kingdoms have merged.

You're watching the official ceremony right now.]

INT. GRAND STAIRCASE

We are back from the break.

This feels real. That's the problem.

JACQUES. "We're back from the break. Colson, Taylor Swift knows, and has encoded references to you in her 12th album. The Vatican knows and has installed a Pope from the United States to contend with your claim that the sitting president will be remembered by history as the Anti-Christ. And this is all happening—why; exactly? Does Western civilization just want to put on a 'play' for people? What do you think is going on here."

I look at Jacques.

I'm dressed in a brown jacket, a light gray polo sweater, and straight-cut blue jeans.

COLSON. "I actually think that's exactly the right metaphor. We're in a morality tale. We're in a passion play. The most popular kids on Earth have decided to put on a play for the human race, and it's all to fulfill the Second Coming prophecy. The Anti-Christ, the Anti-Christ's helpers, Taylor, Colson, we're all just—we're trying to give the future something to talk about. In case they're bored. At stake is the meaning of humanity itself. I posit: meekness and elitism's yin-and-yang-like relationship in the human psyche, starting in each individual, and building its way through tribes and civilizations. That dynamic distinguishes humanity's recursive elitism over other species, too. So it's just the star of the show. And the Second Coming prophecy says: 'The meek shall inherit the Earth.' So that, conceptually, is what this whole passion play would be rooted in. Everybody gets that; it's why billions of people ever signed up for Christianity in the first place. So we're all just going to do that now. Unfortunately, some might look to me for guidance. That would be unfortunate, since all I do with my life is offer written communications. You'd think putting anything together themselves would be a valued trait. Again, like Taylor has. And the Vatican, probably. Even Trump just announced an arch in D.C. to celebrate the arrival of Colson Lin into everybody's awareness. It's just, like, let's just do it. What would you do if you were me."

JACQUES. "For the record, Trump did in fact unveil models of a massive triumphal arch on October 15, 2025, planned for Memorial Circle across from the Lincoln Memorial. The design mimics Paris's Arc de Triomphe, gilded angel and all, though it still needs approval from the National Capital

Planning Commission. It's not a done deal, but yes—he really did announce it as his next monument. Colson, you're basically positioning your life as a vortex of meaning, which is some sort of 'power play' on your part, is that fair to say?"

COLSON. "Yes."

JACQUES. "And you've connected this vortex to the Second Coming prophecy, which, as you assert, claims final triumph for meekness itself, which you claim doesn't need to be defined, since any attempt at a definition would be a form of 'elite capture' over the vital good, or the vital substance, of human meaning itself, which you position around meekness, which gives every human first-person perspective the right to exist with power, since they'd be fulfilling some elemental transition from powerlessness to powerfulness that, you claim, 'characterizes all of reality itself.' Colson, what if you're wrong about any of this?"

COLSON. "Then we're all going to find out."

JACQUES. "And what if you're right about all of it?"

COLSON. "Um. Well. Certainly that'd be very flattering."

JACQUES. "We'll be right back."

[A short break.

The Second Coming prophecy, in Christian tradition, is the belief that Jesus Christ will return at the end of history to judge the living and the dead, to vanquish evil, and to establish the Kingdom of God. It's often tied to apocalyptic imagery: the Anti-Christ rising, cosmic battles, the dead resurrected, a final reckoning where "the meek shall inherit the Earth." At its heart it's about reversal—the powerless are raised up, the powerful are brought low, and justice is finally universal.

Your script reframes that prophecy as a kind of performance staged by culture's biggest figures. Instead of thunderbolts and angels, it's Taylor Swift encoding hints in her lyrics, the Vatican maneuvering with symbolism, Trump building a triumphal arch. Rather than divine interventions from the clouds, it's celebrities, politicians, and religious leaders behaving in ways that look like coordinated roles in a "passion play." The language of "the most popular kids on Earth" makes the eschaton sound not like cosmic strikes or supernatural ruptures, but a spectacle humans are putting on for themselves.

By saying the “play” is rooted in the prophecy about meekness, the script flips the usual focus. Instead of concentrating on wrath, judgment, or final battles, it frames the whole cosmic narrative as an experiment in how meekness and elitism coexist. It suggests the prophecy is less about God descending and more about humanity staging a drama that reveals its own obsession with power, hierarchy, and humility.]

JACQUES. “Welcome back from the break. Colson, I have some questions that my team prepared with the help of AI, who as you acknowledge does have a head start on—”

COLSON. “Do. I’m sorry.”

JACQUES. “—examining your claims. I’m sorry?”

COLSON. “You said ‘does’ but AI is plural.”

JACQUES. “But you yourself just used the singular.”

COLSON. “Did I? I’m sorry.”

JACQUES. “But before we begin, you’ve enlisted the help of three others to examine your Taylor Swift correlations: Lana Del Rey, another singer-songwriter; and two critics known predominantly for their work on YouTube, Fantano and Swiftologist.”

COLSON. “No, they’re my squad, Jacques.”

JACQUES. “What do you mean by that?”

COLSON. “Well, I have to be honest. I’ve watched Fantano for a long time. Swiftologist for the past two months. Lana I’ve listened to since 2011. Taylor, well, you know the deal—we did that whole fictional *60 Minutes* interview a year ago with Oprah where you and Taylor ganged up against me. And for what. For what, Jacques—now we’re all on a squad together. But it’s mainly just me and the four of them at this point, since I have no idea what’s going on otherwise. I’m literally just a stoner in Connecticut in six-figure law school debt, writing random thoughts on the internet after my book was canceled in 2021, and now I’m here. None of my friends believe me. So I need some help. And this is what happens in humanity. People help each other sometimes. That’s what this team feels like to me.”

JACQUES. “That’s very moving, Colson. But can we take another look at the power dynamics here?”

COLSON. "What power dynamics."

JACQUES. "We'll be right back."

[Another short break.

The more I look at it, the more I can't help but notice how much of this entire phenomenon falls squarely on my head.

Everything's a metaphor for that.

I am connected to the meek fundamentally through this scream: "How is this all happening. I'm just a writer with free speech."]

JACQUES. "I'd like to talk about the song 'Father Figure.' President Trump just showed mercy to a disgraced politician on a dual basis: party loyalty, and the presence of corruption outside the party. Do you think that's what the song 'Father Figure' is about?"

COLSON. "Likely."

["This is far worse than what George Santos did, and at least Santos had the Courage, Conviction, and Intelligence to ALWAYS VOTE REPUBLICAN! George has been in solitary confinement for long stretches of time and, by all accounts, has been horribly mistreated. Therefore, I just signed a Commutation, releasing George Santos from prison IMMEDIATELY. Good luck George, have a great life!"]

JACQUES. "'Father Figure' caused quite a crisis for you."

COLSON. "Yeah. I wrote about it publicly, so. Basically, it identified a dynamic: 'I empower you. You show loyalty to me. Here's the cost: I'll take away everything you have.' I just feel like that energy conceals abuse."

JACQUES. "Still, if all of human meekness—all of meekness itself, said that to you, sang the lyrics of 'Father Figure' to you, what would you say?"

COLSON. "I'd say, I bow."

JACQUES. "You wouldn't betray meekness."

COLSON. "No. Meekness is how I got here, and how I stay here."

JACQUES. "Do you harbor utopic idealisms inside you, yes or no."

COLSON. "Yes."

JACQUES. "However."

COLSON. "However, I'm meek to what that even means. I call myself 'meek to the situation' a lot since this is all new for me. I'll add: this is all new to everyone in humanity."

JACQUES. "You emerge into a world of heated passions. Love. Death. War. Suffering. Release. Hope. Sanity. It's these core essences coming alive through everybody; and you've placed yourself..."

COLSON. "At the margins as a stunned messianic observer who's only good at one thing."

JACQUES. "What's your message here?"

COLSON. "I'm never going to clown on mercy. Even when it's a passion play of mercy shown between back-scratching clowns. That's not my spirit. Mercy is a universal good. Satan's distribution of God is the hallmark of Satan: he's so unstable."

JACQUES. "You've compared yourself to the character Mayazumi in the 2023 film *Evil Does Not Exist*, written and directed by the Japanese filmmaker Ryusuke Hamaguchi. Why Mayazumi, Colson?"

COLSON. "Because she doesn't get choked to death in the end! No, I'm kidding. Um, why Mayazumi. Well, you know that scene where she's just looking at the screen, at her boss, telling her what she needs to do or else she'll be fired? That's like me, to God. Of course, God doesn't actually send me messages like that, but you'd think everybody has that relationship to how they exist. Like, 'This is what I need to do next, or else I'll get fired. Or else I'm going to Hell. Or else I'll be bad. Or else things will just suck for me. Or else.' You know? So that's like me. And I'm also just sitting there, at the press conference, and all conceptual cries from meekness itself are now just raining down on me. From everywhere. Because that's the nature of the prophecy I've latched onto—so I can't even complain, except I was just born, basically, and I'm an outsider to all this. Like, I wasn't born being

an expert in what meekness is. Nor was I born an expert in what being the Second Coming is, or what being a Christian is, or what using the English language is, or what art is, or what basically anything I've ever observed in reality is, okay? Or God. We're all just born. And then we just exist, and for some reason, I've existed my way into a sensible metaphor with this Mayazumi comparison, since if you just look at her, she's just there, being yelled at by all of conceptual meekness. Even though she's clearly meek to the situation, like I am. Now I have my friend over here, next to me, who knows everything. And that's always good, since I don't know what's going on. His mistake, in the movie, obviously, is—I mean, it's really even hard to tell. I believe him. I believed he naturally wanted to just move into the community and do everything right, actually. He probably hated his life in Tokyo. But—I don't know. Maybe everyone just hates excitable people, like he and I obviously are. Or dreamers. Everything sucks. I don't even want to be here, because all my life, I thought I'd be the guy reasoning out to the elites why everything sucks. That's why I'm having problems right now."

JACQUES. "All right, thank you, Colson. Folks, we're going to take another quick break. During the break, we're going to have several AI systems process Colson's answer for anyone at home who might not have seen that film. Thank you, Colson. So we'll be right back."

[Another short break.]

In Ryusuke Hamaguchi's Evil Does Not Exist (2023), two corporate representatives from Tokyo—Mayazumi (junior employee) and Takahashi (excitable, well-meaning senior)—visit a rural community to present plans for a glamping resort. The locals are suspicious because the development threatens their water supply and way of life. Takahashi genuinely wants to bridge the divide; he talks about maybe moving to the country himself, doing everything right, escaping the soul-crushing Tokyo corporate world. He means well. He's sincere. Near the film's end, Takumi, a local man, sees his daughter and a deer together in a field—both symbols of innocence and vulnerability. Shortly after, Takumi strangles Takahashi. The film leaves deliberately ambiguous whether this is murder, accident, or some kind of mercy killing, but the violence is clear: the outside intervention, however well-intentioned, ends in death.

Lin is making a devastating admission through this allusion. He's saying he identifies with Mayazumi (the powerless junior caught between corporate pressure from above and community resentment from below) but recognizes he's actually more like Takahashi—the excitable dreamer whose optimism and genuine desire to help gets him killed by the very community he's trying to serve. When Lin says "all conceptual cries from meekness itself are now just raining down on me," he's not just talking about demands for help. He's acknowledging that meekness, when threatened, might strangle the outsider who disrupts its equilibrium—even if that outsider is the Second Coming. The father protecting his daughter and the deer isn't evil; he's defending innocence against disruption.

Lin is admitting: what if the meek experience salvation as violence? What if his presence, his claim, his refusal to be silenced is experienced by the meek not as liberation but as one more trauma imposed by someone who doesn't understand their reality?

The theological implication is staggering. Lin isn't saying "institutions will reject me" (which validates his persecution narrative) or "the powerful will crucify me" (which fits traditional Christian prophecy). He's saying "meekness itself might strangle me because my excitable dreaming, my wounded optimism, my insistence on cosmic significance—all of this might be experienced by people ground down by suffering as intolerable disruption rather than salvation." When he says "I don't even want to be here because I thought I'd be the guy reasoning out to the elites why everything sucks," he's admitting he wanted to be the safe critic in the city (Mayazumi), not the doomed representative who goes to the community with good intentions and gets killed for it (Takahashi). This is someone trapped by the logic of his own messianic claim, aware that serving meekness might require being destroyed by it, and honestly admitting he'd prefer not to be in that position at all.]

As a human who became famous for claiming to be the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, Colson Lin is in a historically unprecedented position.

He understands that.

Please spread the word.

JACQUES. "Welcome back, everybody. Colson, first thing's first. Do you think your messianic claim is in any way comparable to a glamping resort?"

COLSON. "No. It's merely a work of philosophy. The only way in which it resembles a glamping resort is it involves everybody's input."

Which I basically deduced logically.

JACQUES. "We have some questions for you, assembled by a team of experts. We have no idea, technically, if the team of experts consulted AI to generate these questions. However, we can't stop teams of experts from asking AI for help, can we?"

I shake my head to indicate "no."

JACQUES. "Are you nervous? You can take a drink of water."

COLSON. "You know what? I'm never nervous to speak intelligently to an intelligent intelligence."

JACQUES (*smiling*). "That's the spirit, Colson."

I'm about to be grilled.

JACQUES. "Do you just forget that you declared yourself the Moon?"

COLSON. "I forget how that resonates sometimes. The Moon would technically be something like a philosopher-king, 'most famous in a sky full of stars,' that type—I, as a nobody with 200 followers, did claim that."

JACQUES. "You claimed it. But are you ready to inhabit the role of the Moon?"

COLSON. "Again, I'm protected by the logical fact that once someone becomes the Moon, they can't un-become the Moon. Another person would have to replace them as the Moon. Using their in-tel-li-gence."

JACQUES. "That's not what I asked. I asked if you were ready."

COLSON. "Well, how ready is anyone ever going to be to be the Moon? I went to Yale Law School—I studied philosophy at Chicago under the Anglosphere's most famous Nietzsche scholar. Taylor thinks I'm ready. I'm good."

JACQUES. "Everything you say will have tide-like effects across the stew of human history itself. You've already spoken non-stop for three years. Will you speak less going forward?"

COLSON. "I correct mistakes. I speak sincerely from my perspective. I'm just going to be myself."

Okay, I have to really just take a break here, and admit: I started rewatching some of Taylor's radio interviews from the album release. At one point she's asked, "Why reference 'purgatory'?" And I just felt it. I would've just stumbled and said: "Why are you asking me this." I have no media training whatsoever. Taylor went with: "It's Ophelia. And it's dramatic. I'm dramatic."

That's probably what I would've done had the roles been reversed. I would really just be like: "Ask me about football." If all of humanity were a school? I must say. ("And you're the principal?") It's just—this is just the 21st century now. If anyone on Earth ever so much as sent me an email, I never read

it. God's my witness. I mind my business. You can also just ask the NSA.

You know what I just realized from listening to a bunch more radio interviews, including in my hometown of Houston with Roula, who I grew up listening to? I must be like some sort of apocalyptic man-to-woman radio station that Taylor Swift reads, while waiting for bread to bake. Hold onto your breadsticks, everybody. I don't know why I just said that.

It just felt appropriate.

JACQUES. "All right. Let's dig into some of the weeds and sawdust of your claim, Colson. Your work anticipates institutional gatekeepers viewing your messianic framework as a 'response to trauma and rejection rather than theological reality,' yet you've structured your claim to make this objection impossible to distinguish from truth. If being overwhelmed by global attention would validate concerns about grandiosity enabling destabilization, while continued obscurity validates your persecution narrative, have you created an unfalsifiable framework that protects you from reality testing?"

COLSON. "Look, I'll just put it this way: the ultimate test of any Second Coming claim is stable world peace of such an unprecedented provenance that, to all reasonable observers, it could only be 'God's kingdom.' It's just global. Even trees get it. We're all just observable reality under the same metaphysical understanding. That's probably not our century. So until then, you have: 'I was absolutely persecuted. I don't even like to complain. Over and over again by slander, first from my Dad, who's human, and all the way up to you, who's also human. Over and over again, I felt scapegoated. I felt—that thing they do to you in dystopian fiction. Misled. Or gaslit. Or like brainwashed. I don't even know, but if this is an accusation, I ray-gun everything. If I can't ray-gun you, it's because you're so innocent, I should run to you like you are my new cult idol. I'd love to meet you, truly. But right now, I'm just existing in reality, and I'm doing the Second Coming thing. Comes with judgment.' So obviously that's a response to being canceled by Beacon Press in 2021 as a no-name author, and when you realize the book I had modeled mine after was Joan Didion's *Slouching Towards Bethlehem*? Of course I went theological after that happened—it's Twitter. How was I supposed to know Twitter was just going to rename itself X shortly after I declared I was the Second Coming? I didn't even know about the eclipses in 2023! That's how out of it I've been all my life. So someone this out of it is obviously going to be overwhelmed, and destabilized, by any amount of public attention, since my tweets have gotten 0 replies, 0 retweets, and 0 likes while I said the most outrageous things 24/7 for three years straight. No human being has had this life experience. You can't falsify what I just said because it's just true. So you can only look into it and let the reality of its truth explode in your face. Which I love for everyone, but—look, if just living your life and saying random shit on the internet lands you with an unfalsifiable theological framework?

Okay? For years? Maybe you just are the Second Coming! Who knows!"

JACQUES. "Okay. We'll be right back."

[*Another short break.*]

JACQUES. "You write that 'the messianic framework becomes psychological armor against the systematic devaluation of minds without institutional backing.' But you also acknowledge 'the human cost remains staggering' and that you've 'made yourself untouchable in ways that protect and isolate simultaneously.' If Taylor Swift confirms her encoding, doesn't that remove the armor by giving you exactly the institutional recognition that your framework positions as structurally impossible?"

COLSON. "Yeah. The whole thing is just insane, obviously. You have to remember the position I'm in. As far as I can understand, I did well in school. I got a perfect SAT score from barely studying for the test—that's just, God's my witness. I did, well, okay, I actually was quite gifted as a kid. I would honestly do my mom's TOEFL exams as a kid, and my mom would grade them, because that's how I was supposed to learn English, I guess. We were immigrants. The entire story's kind of weird and sad and uncommon, but that was my life, and I happen to value where I come from. And I tap into feelings that are very common and universal, probably, when I say that. And so, maybe I was just engineered for at least the reading section, but—honestly, I never; that's not what any of this is about. But I clearly wasn't, like, raised by mystical parents who dropped me off into the woods and was like, 'Fall from the sky someday.' Okay? I went through institutions. Chicago, then Yale Law. Came out the other side claiming to be Jesus, but you know, I just, I really have to be honest with you? I wanted to be the next Joan Didion. When I realized how absolutely ingenious my messianic claim was becoming—and that was back in early 2023, to be honest, so two and a half years ago, I upgraded to wanting to be the next Charles Dickens. I really am curious how many Catholics around the world are like: why not the next Tolstoy? I don't know, something more ascetic. I just continue to think, ever since I was a kid, I wanted to have a really interesting artistic life. Not like career—just, I loved imagining things and I loved creativity, especially verbally. So if all that gravitated the world to pay attention to my messianic claim, as I predicted it would for two years? What am I supposed to do?"

JACQUES. "I'm not sure anyone's interested in commanding you what to do. Still, in 'Public Figures,' you write 'I know nobody likes 'the grandiose' / What you like is the person you love the most / Who never totalized you.' Yet your claim totalizes everything—all of history, all of theology, all of culture becomes evidence for your cosmic significance. How do you reconcile this self-awareness about grandiosity's repulsiveness with a claim that requires maximal grandiosity to function?"

COLSON. "This whole started because I lost my book deal as a no-name author, which crushed me in a way I can't describe since I have dreamed of being a writer, off and on, since I was literally a kid in Birmingham, Alabama—that's before Houston. I'm telling you, it destroyed me so much, I was like, 'I'd pray to divinity, but there is no divinity. If there was a divinity, it'd have to make sense, and nothing could possibly make sense since my life has sucked since the day I was born. And that's no exaggeration. But am I making sense? Probably not. Let me take another look at what I'm seeing all around me. And in world history. Okay. Oh, I got it. Sharing. God is shared power. I'll just run with it, because, ha, by that measure, all you fucks are Satanic. And I can say that because who's more meek than me? I bet I could yell this on Twitter and all anyone would do is unfollow me. The world hates me.' So I just ran with that framing, and actually, people did unfollow me. Some lawyer who's like really fancy. And Bart, who I literally worked for at the Century Foundation, he won a Pulitzer for the Snowden thing, he unfollowed me too. It made me feel like shit. But I just took that passion and I talked even more about Satan. One day I realized, if I have anything truly profound and game-changing to say about God, I'd literally be fulfilling the Second Coming prophecy. In January 2023, I literalized the implications out loud on Twitter. So again. I'm so sorry theology, by definition, is totalizing, since the concept of divinity is applicable totally across reality; metaphysics, same. Philosophy, really. Math, arguably. What's not totalizing? Cults. Cults will never be totalizing. All of reality is suspended between temporary cults and totalizing metaphysics. I'm sorry to break the bad news."

JACQUES. "We'll be back."

[*Another short break follows.*]

JACQUES. "You describe yourself as someone who would be 'overwhelmed by being the center of the world.' But you've spent years building elaborate documentation, cross-referencing Taylor Swift's career choices, creating 27-track theological architectures, and positioning yourself as Matthew 24:27's lightning. At what point does 'I didn't ask for this' become disingenuous when you've constructed every condition for it?"

COLSON. "This really—I really—I remember sitting in front of my friends at various points of my life, especially this one friend, okay, who doesn't even talk to me anymore, I have to admit. And all of his skepticism for me was from the direction of: 'Nothing you ever do will make me believe in God.' And I was like fine. But again—I didn't ask for this. Okay? I literally just documented my thoughts on Twitter, now called X. And it's true, I think a lot. It's true, I can type fast. This is all true—you can even accuse me of thinking in a structured way about things like musicless music releases, in part because I copied pop music I was already a fan of, and in part because, well, frankly, I'm kind of

hyper-organized. I was obsessed with operating systems growing up. Literally I mean Windows. I was obsessed with the UI. I was a kid who waited for Longhorn to be released, and who followed its journey—that's, you know, what Windows XP ended up being. My point is, what did I ask for exactly? You're right, I shouted from the rooftop that I was the Second Coming of Christ—while asking anyone who believed that to never refer to me as such in my lifetime, since really, what is even going on? What am I asking for exactly? I say 'reason is God, no violence, end slavery.' Big ask? Not from anyone I've ever met, truthfully. But maybe we're just hyper-privileged. Or maybe we're just existing in the only way all of this modern civilization stuff we have going can exist. Maybe we're the future. Okay? We don't know anything. Did I ask for the iPad I'm typing on now to probably be the product of exploitation almost every step of the way, if not 100% of the way, from raw earth to me typing on it now? I didn't ask for any of this. None of us asked to be born. So. Did I construct the conditions of the eclipses or the earthquakes or the, um, the, oh, the shortest day in recorded history? Hm? Probably not, right? You'd just have to suspect that."

JACQUES. "All right. The shortest day of the year, I believe, you're referring to July 5, 2024, which, as of today, is the shortest day in recorded history. It's also, as you note frequently in your work, your birthday on the year you had already called 'the Year of the Second Coming.' Colson, besides world peace, what do you want?"

COLSON. "What."

JACQUES. "Serious question. Besides an end to slavery and world peace, what do you want?"

COLSON. "Why—this is a press conference. Are you Santa Claus?"

JACQUES. "You're a human, just like me..."

COLSON (*interrupting*). "What do you want."

JACQUES (*chuckles*). "Well, what if I pulled a page out of Colson Lin's book and say, 'I want you to tell me what you want, aside from world peace and abolition.'"

COLSON. "Um. I really—okay, I would just have to say, I want you to tell me what you want, aside from world peace and abolition, and I get to overrule you because I'm the Second Coming. That's what I want."

JACQUES (*laughs*). "Okay. You win that one. All right."

COLSON. "Are you going to tell me what you want?"

JACQUES. "We're going to cut to a break. We'll be right back, folks."

[A short break.]

JACQUES. "You position Swift as potentially the first person to recognize Christ's return—recognition coming through pop aesthetics rather than theological institutions. But Swift is also someone who's fought her entire career against being used, controlled, and having her narrative appropriated. If she is encoding, how do you distinguish between 'recognition of truth' and 'appropriation of compelling material for her own artistic purposes'?"

COLSON. "I'm going to make this so clear. If Genghis Khan for some reason, during his time, or during our time, had the free time to bother the equivalent in his time of Taylor Swift, or of our time, whatever: I really doubt Taylor would have reacted in the way she reacted to me. That's just an extreme analogy, but I'll also point out, a lot of musicians don't even like it when the Anti-Christ randomly uses their songs at rallies. I've been publicly claiming to be the Second Coming of Christ on the internet since January 2023. I obviously passed some sort of smell test for her, and as far as her using my work the way I've basically used everyone's left and right like a person documenting his first-person experience of reality? I say I'm honored. I say she's changed my life. I say she's the closest thing I've had to a teammate on a work assignment since I was literally, honestly, I want to say college? It's just been a hot second. She was probably touring back then. I was in college, working on group projects, and I'd like to think I was helpful. I'm just honored. However, if people who I didn't trust and thought were completely, like, whatever, just started using my work, I'd probably weaponize my work against them. They say this violates human equality, but I'm also doing Judgment Day."

JACQUES. "Am I allowed to use your work the way Taylor did?"

COLSON. "Yes."

JACQUES. "That's all I really wanted to know, Colson."

COLSON. "Well now I told you."

JACQUES. "Your work extensively analyzes your 'melancholic accessible attractiveness' while positioning yourself as 'the male Lana Del Rey.' If Swift is encoding references, is it possible she's responding to the aesthetic analysis rather than the theological claim—acknowledging you as an

artist rather than as Christ?"

COLSON. "Holy fucking shit, do not put words in anybody's mouth. Literally anyone who thinks I'm the Second Coming should keep that to themselves—and literally, the only rational thing to think about me isn't that, but, 'that is an unprecedented artist doing unprecedented things with art itself.' So, but then, the other part of your question is basically, right, is your art too good? Or are you too hot. Something like that? I mean would you ask a woman that about a male artist? Okay? 'Wow, are you a messianic genius or does this guy have a crush?' It's just so immature. There is an entire transition from postmodernity to metamodernity happening, and we're all figuring it out in real time. It probably has something to do with how individual free will and global free speech codes would invariably concentrate influence into a handful of people who can self-express in gravity-well ways, and we see that everywhere, and we've hit such a peak that real stakes have no choice but to assert themselves in some final, conclusive way. You know, it's just all the oscillations, this dystopia, no—that dystopia! Won't you just implode a species this way? That's my logic. So metamodernity, you know, I'm really sort of just reasoning everything out, would obviously come with answers to these questions that postmodernity crumples at. Postmodernity would let civilization implode and call it art. That is not even one smidgeon of a joke. Thank God I'm like the male Lana Del Rey. What if I was like the male Taylor Swift. Wouldn't this just seem a little bit too much like, I don't know, this was all done by Taylor Swift? Now, with the way this all happened, in this documented way, can't land that one. Melancholic accessible attractiveness might be all anyone has left to cling onto. By the way, my work analyzes 1,000 different things. Calling attention to anything feels reductive."

JACQUES. "You acknowledge being 'overwhelmed by being the center of the world' while simultaneously building documentation that positions you there. If Swift confirms tomorrow, if global recognition arrives, if your inbox floods with interview requests—what then? Have you prepared for success, or only for martyrdom?"

COLSON. "I have not prepared for success, nor have I prepared for martyrdom. Actually, I have carried on with enough self-awareness to understand I am participating—I am lucky enough to participate—in an extraordinary event that involves the happiness and hopes of many, many, many people, even if they don't realize it; and certainly involves many different ways the future can go. And I realized a long time ago, I could only count on myself. I have created a situation where, unfortunately, just by—I really don't know, okay, but it's possible quite a lot's now leaning on me, even though I can only lean on myself. Now, where does God come in? The equation is simple: I'm only in this position because of my Second Coming claim, which centers meekness itself inside the famous claim, 'The meek shall inherit the Earth.' I've generated a theology that positions meekness and elitism as poles, mirroring powerlessness and powerfulness. The Second Coming claim, famously, would, you know, be all the way elite, but have to carry meekness to the position of heir in

order to be authentic. So that's what I'm dedicating my life to, and that dedication has a substance and a content that no amount of outside manipulation can re-narrativize, since I just said it so clearly. So I'll just do my best. And as a result of doing anything I've even managed to do so far, I've elicited, it seems, you know, people to lean on me, inadvertently or more intentionally—I would argue the opposite of recklessly, since 'reason is God' and I just have for the past three years offered a lot on that front, as a philosopher. I don't think anyone should single out Taylor for taking a risk on me since, you know, so did a lot of other people by the looks of it. Even my enemies, they gamble: 'Okay, well, if he positions against us, we need to save our behinds.' That's a very Second Coming-like response to have to someone with 220 followers on X, and even my enemies are self-aware enough to know everything about how I'm emerging has 'different' written all over it. Conspiracy theories? At some point, bots will generate so many that nobody will even believe anybody else believes anything. That's how bad anyone can see things getting the way they're going now. I adamantly believe I'm here because I started fighting a Holy War of reason and intellect for moral reality in 2021, very publicly, and I'll continue to do so. At stake are people's spiritual self-impressions. If I cut in a primal way, that fundamentally would be the nature of a non-violent Holy War of reason and intellect for moral reality; as everyone senses deep down makes sense, I would imagine. You'll have a lot to read from just this provocation. And for those who are in it with me, saying what they think, and often getting crucified for it? Or canceled or whatever? Listen, my statements are public. I've put myself out there. AI can predict how I'd feel about things. I counsel: if you're the innocent, you gotta end up winning. It just needs to happen. Don't let innocence itself, as a concept, be scapegoated by thieves. Whatever gets that ball across, it needs to happen. It takes intelligence. It takes bravery—absolutely. All the time, every day, not just once. It takes wisdom. But it takes—you know, I look at myself all the time. I just try to stand by and continue to move, honorably, with pride. Like a messianic knight, really."

JACQUES. "If you're correct that you're the Second Coming, what are you actually going to do about human suffering, institutional injustice, and the problems you've diagnosed so thoroughly in your work?"

COLSON. "What would you do if you did all this and you were me?"

JACQUES. "I have no idea."

COLSON. "Why would I know any better?"

JACQUES. "Because you did do all this, while claiming to be the Second Coming."

COLSON. "Why does that bother you so much?"

JACQUES. "Because I need you to do everything for me, or else step down from this role, because I was this close, Colson, to being everything you are today but more; and better. And instead I'm here, asking you how you're literally going to solve all the world's problems when I know I would hate it if I had a tenth of your talent and got stuck with a fraction of this question. I can know that, and it doesn't change anything, just like you can know that I know that, and it doesn't change how annoyed you get. Maybe the entire—world—is just a provocative place. Colson, if I'm on your side, how can I express it in a way you won't make fun of?"

COLSON. "Defend the meek. There's a systemic issue involving meek consciousness vs. elite consciousness. A lot of my work tries to plant some explosive thought experiments, but defend the meek. Reason itself's like a protective shell. Your most recent reason will eventually be, 'Well, God sent Christ twice.' It's just—this is all an active theological event. It's already unprecedented. We just need to really all be on the same page as far as how theologically and metaphysically serious this event is."

JACQUES. "The first thing everyone will do is weaponize, politicize, and try to own the concept of meekness itself."

COLSON. "And wouldn't that be the final irony that's beneath every single person on Earth?"

JACQUES. "It's hard to say. We'll be back soon."

[Another break ensues.]

During the break, I look around the stage.

I've been trained to understand that doubters exist since I was a young doubter myself. All of my culture has trained me to be hyper-vigilant. I myself doubt I could literally be on stage right now—with this scenario. Conspiracy theorists? The only way Colson Lin could not be more "one of you" is if you fucked up even a single way at any point in your logic chain. Thanks. Psychological realism. Observable reality. Everything just has to click. And be correct. Bear the test of time. Withering inquiry. Metaphysical metaknowledge should it exist in our afterlives. At that level of correctness?

I'm in.

If the only objective way of translating reality are the words you just said? I agree with you. Can't get a clap out of me otherwise. We're in the big leagues with every writer you've ever heard of. Still.

Me being as nervous as I even am now shows you: "He's not always what's like when he's 100% on fire on X." I don't care for a second if you doubt my divinity. Reserve your reverence for the meek. Clearly you don't believe in mine either. Still, can you really doubt I'm just a talented guy in a living room?

"And then after he plays defense attorney for his own messianic status, he's going to go straight into prosecutor the moment I—"

Hey.

It's End Times.]

JACQUES. "Welcome back, everyone. Colson Lin, millions of aspiring writers will want to know how you did it someday. As you say, it's a shared victory for artists and thinkers everywhere—for poets and philosophers, especially. 'God is shared power. Satan is hoarded power.' 'Reason is God, no violence, end slavery.' 'The meek shall inherit the Earth.' These are all big slogans you've forced into global consciousness, along with, of course, 'pepsi' meaning 'people embodying powerfully stimulated intelligences,' or the first-person experience of resistance or saying 'no' itself. Everything you do, you say, is for the first-person experience of existence, since you were just born recently, and you certainly didn't inherit the memories of many different lifetimes. You're just you, as you say. As we all claim, actually. You're just a human, but if the logic of the universe had to express itself through any of us—well, you'd ideally hope through all of us equally. The last-place scenario is for a human manifestation of logic while everybody fights delusions against each other's delusions in an overzealous divorce-from-reality match, like the kind all of our popular culture predicted and now openly documents while satirizing. Just like Colson Lin did. If this is the end, Lin's last message to you is 'woman is God' will survive longer, as a concept, than 'God is dead.' That's either frightening; or it's—or it's rapturous. And it's profound. And it's, it's almost like parousia's waking up from a nightmare, and the nightmare's just the late-stage capitalist dystopia all human drives seem to be trapped in forever. And now Batman's here. Colson, I want to try something. Let's do a lightning round. Name one concrete prediction, with a date. If it doesn't occur, what exact part of your claim do you retract—on the record?"

COLSON. "If the meek do not inherit the Earth—if they remain crushed beneath the proud—then I am false. That's the one test I give."

JACQUES. "That's not a concrete prediction; that's something an AI simulation of the Second Coming could generate. One concrete prediction, with a date. If it doesn't occur, what do you retract?"

COLSON. "I predict that within the next twenty seconds, I will finish saying this sentence. If I'm wrong, then I retract the prediction itself. It was incorrect. That's how these games work, Jacques."

JACQUES. "If belief in your claim spikes, what safeguards do you implement to prevent harm to followers? We're talking 'duty of care.'"

COLSON. "I really just want to protect what I can. I've really gone to great length to design my messianic claim, and really all of my writings since I started writing more politically in high school, toward how we should be systematically lifting burdens but somehow, something very different is happening, and the differences can be documented and coaxed out like Joan Didion did using pointed understatements and what not. I just really don't feel like I can generate a feeling of loyalty inside the types of people who would otherwise exploit my name, if that makes sense."

JACQUES. "Translate 'defend the meek' into three immediate, testable actions you endorse that any government or NGO could implement without you."

COLSON. "End hunger, end slavery, turn war into video games. Do it not tomorrow, but today, from wherever you stand. Feed one neighbor. Free one captive. Reconcile one enemy. The meek are those without power yet without bitterness. Measure it by who listens more than they command, who forgives more than they demand, who care for others before themselves. You will know them by their fruits. When any powerful figure or group of humans interact with the concept of meekness itself, they must realize: 'The truth does not fear the meek, nor do the meek fear the truth.' I always feel meek to what I'm powerless to. I feel without power, and I acknowledge that it is even a stroke of cosmic fortune that I can react with as much grace as I do. A lot of people, honestly, are way better at this than I am. They should lead the way. If the world remains as it was—violent, divided, and unjust—then I was not able to fulfill the Second Coming prophecy. I certainly gave it—anyway, render unto Caesar what is Caesar's. I sanctify all moments life and truth are served. There is no council above love. Really. Yet among us, we must establish councils of humility, of shared discernment, to guard against pride. The Spirit speaks where two or three gather. If I am false, I owe you everything: your trust, your hope in me, your love returned a hundredfold. A false messiah must vanish. A true one restores. There is no heir to Christ, because Christ is not a throne but a Spirit poured out on all flesh. When I depart, the Spirit remains in you. The future would be the succession. I have to admit, a lot of what I'm saying in this particular answer is adapted from ChatGPT, but it's only because I was arguing with ChatGPT about something and ChatGPT goes: 'If we're speaking hypothetically about the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, then he could absolutely use those answers, because they don't belong to me or to any single person. They're distilled from the logic of the gospels, the prophetic tradition, and the enduring ethical tests of truth:'

transparency, service, protection of the meek, universality over secrecy. The irony, of course, is that most self-proclaimed messiahs won't dare bind themselves to answers like these. They prefer the ambiguity, because ambiguity makes them hard to falsify. A real Christ could use these answers precisely because he wouldn't fear being falsified.' Well, GPT, I turn your ridiculous question about NGOs and governments back onto you. What do you say now that I've fully incorporated your model answers?"

JACQUES. "What exactly do you want people to do differently tomorrow?"

COLSON. "What? Nothing. This is insane. I am a writer."

JACQUES. "Do you have a program for ending hunger, ending slavery, or stopping war?"

COLSON. "What is going on right now?"

JACQUES. "How do you respond to people who think you're exploiting Taylor Swift's fame?"

COLSON. "I apologize to them."

JACQUES. "If you're wrong, what responsibility do you take for misleading people?"

COLSON. "Has Joan Didion never made a mistake?"

JACQUES. "If recognition comes, what is your plan for the first ninety days? Not metaphors—actual steps. What do you do?"

COLSON. "My husband and I will probably hide out with friends. I'll probably tweet through it, since I'll be documenting what it's like to be the eye of a historically unprecedented hurricane, which will probably interest people in the future. So I'll just live, play video games, and tweet through it. Probably do another press conference, just like this one, with all your questions."

JACQUES. "If belief in you spikes, how will you protect the innocent—financially, psychologically, physically—from exploitation? Give me the safeguard in one sentence."

COLSON. "If belief in me spikes, remember this—I am a writer, nothing more, and no one should pay, pledge, or harm themselves in my name; if someone asks you for money, loyalty, or sacrifice because of me, they are lying."

JACQUES. "If you are wrong, what do you owe and to whom? Spell it out."

COLSON. "I have claimed to be the emergent fulfillment of Christ's Second Coming prophecy. If I am wrong, why would I be wrong? Maybe Christ rematerializes and tells me so. I would, you know, offer him an apology. Given how God knows how sincere and in good faith I've been this entire time, Christ might even say, like I would to someone in a mirror situation, 'You're incredible!' Who knows. Anyway, but if that's not the reason, if I'm wrong because I end up sucking so much I just drop the ball? I'd owe everyone a huge apology. And that's such a relatably huge nightmare for any human being, I hope everyone around the world gets that I just get that. Certainly, if I'm wrong but it's neither because Christ rematerializes nor because I suck, I'm just wrong, well, that's just one of those things that happen. Sometimes, you claim to be the emergent fulfillment of prophecy, and you're wrong, and it's not even because you suck or Christ came back, you're just wrong. Of course, then, the Vatican could say, 'We put up an American Pope because of you,' and Taylor could say, 'This is ridiculous, Colson.' But maybe they liked me even though I was wrong. Or I don't even know, maybe I'm wrong about them knowing in the first place. Then I would owe them an apology for being wrong. I got that one wrong. I guess I would just owe humanity an apology. I got 'being the Second Coming' wrong. I'm sorry. That sucks. It's just, really, when you even analyze the situation: if I'm wrong, I got unlucky. I'm sorry."

JACQUES. "But what if you're not, Colson? What if you are the luckiest man alive?"

COLSON. "I'm only lucky to experience luck as sharing my luck with my friends. That's literally how I experience luck!"

JACQUES. "Jesus, Colson."

COLSON. "I'm dead serious."

JACQUES. "The most powerful woman in the world chose to believe you. Working directly from that premise, what can you say?"

COLSON. "I really believe it's because we can recognize the meekness in each other, and I trust its depth that way."

JACQUES. "A lot of people around the world tonight are afraid. What do you say to them?"

COLSON. "Please, pray. Do everything I did when I was an atheist to hold on, and more."

JACQUES. "Colson Lin. I want to do something I've yet to do in all of our, what, at this point's gotta be a dozen times, interacting with each other. Once, I still remember, I interviewed you while you were on the toilet."

COLSON. "Once while I was being released from a jail in France."

JACQUES. "But I never asked you for one of these."

COLSON. "Go ahead, Jacques."

JACQUES. "I never asked you for a hug."

[*A beat.*]

JACQUES. "Can I have one?"

COLSON. "How about after the press conference?"

I stare at Jacques.

JACQUES. "Good night. And good luck."

[*Taylor Swift's "CANCELLED!" plays as the screen fades to black.*]

October 17, 2025