

Foreword

I wrote *And Lead Us Not* twenty-five years ago. I thought the whole world would like it. I did.

But reality set in. The world of editors, publishers and literary agents did not jump at it. They said my political satire “wasn’t realistic,” “lacked verisimilitude” or “simply was not believable.”

One editor addressed the novel ideas my character, Wally Zeringue, proposes as President in the story. Although I showed a flair for writing, she said I lacked the expertise to make suggestions about how to save the nation from economic ruin. (In other words: “You’re a writer. Don’t think you can come up with solutions no one else has ever thought about.”)

In the end, with one rejection after another, I shelved the manuscript and went on to other writing projects.

Then something happened: Reality changed.

My novel didn’t change, but the things I wrote about a quarter century ago (things which the publishing world said were unrealistic) started happening. In fact, they’re still happening!

In recent months a number of friends and relatives who read my novel when I first wrote it have called to tell me I came out too early with the book.

And my sister, oh, my sister! She said, “David, you’re Nostradamus!”

Anyway, like I said, I moved on to other writing projects, but a number of the characters I had created in *And Lead Us Not* still lived in me, and I found myself employing them, like Hollywood actors, in my new writing projects.

I even let them keep their names and many of their quirky mannerisms.

Wally Zeringue, for instance -- who plays the role of a high school drop-out who accidentally becomes President in *And Lead Us Not* -- plays the role of a brilliant but crazy high school English teacher in my blog, "Bayou Da Vinci."

Wiley Zeringue, the malcontented younger brother of the President, also appears in "Bayou Da Vinci" in the role of Wally's dark alter ego.

Dan Bitterman is perhaps typecast, but he is comfortable in his character as a frustrated reporter for a weekly newspaper, so he reprises that role in my short story "The Obscene Tree."

Mrs. Strassel and Winston Tully also appear in that short story but in lesser roles.

Anyway, anyway, my sister (the one who has delusions that I am a sort of Nostradamus) suggested I resubmit *And Lead Us Not* to the world, not the publishing world, but to the world of readers on the internet.

So, that's what I'm doing here. I'm self-publishing *And Lead Us Not*.

This is not the course I envisioned for my story about Wally Zeringue and Dan Bitterman and the others, but I liked this story when I wrote it, and I still like it today. It's a damn good novel.

I hope you and the rest of the world feel the same way and have a good laugh when you read it.

David Pierson

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