

Peter Burstyn's been a father for a few weeks. Because his wife is ill, he has to take care of his little son besides work. He does research on virus strains at the Kanab Biological Laboratories in Kanab Utah-USA. He wants to find an antidote that works against all types of Coronavirus, regardless of the mutations. A mishap occurs, but before that, cases of infection occur in China, with which Peter has nothing to do except that he created the virus!

American agents are working on mysterious projects in Italy, Turkey and Laos near the Chinese border. One of them gives a completely new interpretation of how their president's goal of "America first!"

Sometimes reality even overtakes the authors' fantasies!

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Horst Karbaum, born in 1951, has worked as a consulting engineer for almost 50 years. Since 2016 he has been writing books, some under a pseudonym. Under his real name, he has so far published a children's book "Little Peter on his way to the "Promised Land"".

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**Horst Karbaum**

**CORONAGATE**

## Foreword

Dear reader,

*about a week ago I had a crazy idea and I had to start writing it down. Now it is already 60 pages and if it continues like this, I can publish soon, I had written on March 13. Now it is finished!*

That day I saw a video on youtube about the Corona virus. There my mouth remained open with astonishment. Already in 1981 Dean Koontz published a book "The Eyes of Darkness", which played with the idea that a virus was made by humans and released in Wuhan. Honestly, I knew nothing about it until that day.

But there is one thing Koontz certainly didn't foresee, and that's what I'm bringing into play now.

Namely, that there are two ways to make the motto "*America first!*" come true. Let me describe the second.

As always, everything is fictitious and I don't believe that what I have written has any relation to reality, or does it?

Dortmund, Friday, March 30, 2020  
Horst Karbaum

# 1 Kanab Biological Laboratories

The sunrise was worth its money. Peter Burstyn had no eyes for this. The night was short. Little Freddie made a fuss and Peter's wife Sally was still too weak after the difficult birth. So Peter had to do everything. He had taken a preparation course one night when it was about involving the fathers. Change diapers, give bottles, wait for burps and so on. It was all very simple, the doll was lifelike, but it did not move.

Little Freddie can't identify with the doll. Unlike her, he does not lie still. It seems as if he is happy to have escaped the darkness in the womb and to be able to move his legs without constantly bumping into it. In doing so he shows his good mood, which should make Peter happy, but after he threw the third diaper into the corner, because these cursed adhesive strips stuck everywhere but where it was supposed to, he breaks out in a sweat. It is mid of December and Freddie is now three weeks old, but last night he had outdone himself

But now, after Peter has struggled for an hour with his boy, he must hurry up to get to work on time. He jumps into his jeans, takes a sip of coffee that scalds his mouth and storms to the door.

Betty is just coming down the dusty street. She replaces him with his wife and child. He can't take a vacation right now. His project has been given

very high priority, an order from the top. So he was glad that Betty, the good soul of Kanab, had agreed to run the house for him.

Betty has kept Kanab's diner running for decades and now in her mid-sixties her boss Frank Salomon has fired her. She was too slow for him, he said, pretending that guests had already complained. That was nonsense and everyone in Kanab knows that. Betty had become too expensive for him and he hired a little eighteen-year-old with dark skin as a waitress.

Frank may be the worst racist in Kanab, but with the small salary Florence is happy with, he looks beyond her skin color.

Betty has saved up, thank God, and her late husband earned well, so she can live well and without worries. But she sits at home all day long and has no job, which drives her crazy. That's where Little Freddie comes in handy. Little Fred couldn't have done better. Betty Kreuzer, her husband had German ancestors, is an angel and Freddie will thank her later, if he and she live long enough. Yeah, if!

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Peter is driving the old Volvo station wagon today. On the way back he has to do some shopping for the family. Otherwise he always takes his bike and has to listen to lots of sayings. Ecologically

thinking citizens are rare in Kanab, in the south of Utah on the border to Arizona.

Kanab is a dream come true if you want to spend a few days here as a hiker, but those who have to live in Kanab day in, day out don't have much in common with nature, unless they work for tourism. For example in the Visitor Center, where you can get advice and information about sights and hiking trails around Kanab.

Peter works in the Kanab Biological Laboratories. He is a biomedical scientist and knows a lot about viruses, bacteria and everything else that exists in the macrocosm of nature. At the age of twenty-five, he completed his Master of Science in Bio-medical Engineering in San José. He and Sally got married immediately after that and moved to Kanab because he found a job there. That was three years ago and in the meantime he has found his way into Kanab. He even takes part in the annual rodeo. His speciality is riding on one of the wild oxen. They are actually not wild, but if you imagine that their testicles are tied with a rope, you can understand the animals.

Sally is not happy there at all. She gets on the nerves of the small town. She quit her studies to move here with Peter. At first she didn't care where they lived, she had Peter and he was her universe, but Peter is working longer and longer. She waits for him many hours every day.

There are some women's groups and associations she could join, but she finds it difficult to get involved with the other women, almost all of whom were born and raised in Kanab. She tried it once. When her homemade quilt was finished, she couldn't stand it anymore with the Quiltmaker Guild of Kanab. When it wasn't about quilting, cooking and baking recipes were discussed and otherwise they talked about the children and what to think about so that they could have a quick career.

She would have liked to continue her studies, but San José or other universities are far away.

But children have been a topic for the Burstyns from the very beginning. They have thrown themselves into this new phase and if it continued like with her messed up pregnancy and the terribly exhausting birth, then she was heading for a problem again.

She likes the fact that she can now step out of it. Little Freddie is a beautiful child with everything that goes with it, but Sally is missing - still? - the feeling for him. She's hoping that when she recovers she'll be able to do that.

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Peter is in the lab half an hour before he starts work in the morning. It takes him a while to get ready to go through the airlock with his protective

comprehending look: "Oh, you can imagine cilia like little hairs that move and carry mucus and everything else out of your airways. If this movement is prevented, the airways become blocked and harmful, infectious pathogens such as bacteria remain in them.

The virus apparently finds the receptor in the human airways in the cells that are responsible for the cilia and their movement, the receptor, oh sorry, a kind of adapter where it fits like a plug into a socket.

But listen, have you taken correspondence courses in virology? You old paper tiger, you have no idea what I'm doing here.

Ben smiles flattered. "So I'm on a good path! I always think of the best things when I shower. But back to the point.

If there was a Corona virus that worked the same way, but didn't interfere with your cilia things, you could use it as a prevention and let the bad viruses take their place. Am I wrong?"

*Damn it, he gets ideas. How did he find out that the SARS virus is also called Corona virus?* "Something's wrong," he says out loud:

"I'm starting to feel really stupid. Someone who only counts the dollars and distributes how to fight SARS tells me. "Is this really all your fault?"

"No, no, no! Just because I approach a matter with clear common sense and draw logical conclusions from it, you don't have to call me a fool who

is incapable of doing that. Anyway, I want you to keep working in that direction. I'm going to take orders from the very, very top. This is just a formality and you can start right away. Make a virus that's different and fight it!"

"Okay! And which one of us will win the Nobel Prize if it works out?"

"Why, I, of course!" Ben leaves the room laughing. "Well, if that's your fear, I can assure you, no one would give a science prize to a management stud like me. You can take it. I have no ambition."

"Oh Ben, something else entirely: Why were my experimental strains taken out of storage and shipped two months ago? I'm now on the verge of a bottleneck."

Peter happened to notice that several samples from his stocks had been packed and sent to Asia.

"Don't worry. There was nothing I could do about it. It was an order from the top.

"But there were some that I had already started experimenting on..."

"No, Peter, there's no point in discussing it. Just forget about it, okay? And keep it to yourself! This is an official order. Ben has become violent. Peter's never experienced him like that before.

## 2 Good Deals

Cees Steenbrinck lets his cigarillo roll from the right to the left corner of his mouth. He always does this trick after a good deal. A truck is currently driving from his farm near the Cúc National Park Phuong south of Hanoi in Vietnam.

It is a Tuesday in October, five weeks before Little Freddie was born in Kanab, thousands of miles from Vietnam.

In his hand he is holding a diplomatic pouch with many thousands of dollars, which he has just received from his client. For this he has sold him precious merchandise. Merchandise that he's always happy to see disappear from his farm. If the Vietnamese authorities find out that he is catching Malaysian and Chinese pangolins to sell them to Chinese smugglers, he is finished. The penalties for poaching are drastic. *But no risk! No fun!* has always been the motto of Cornelius Antonius Steenbrinck, as his full name is called. He is fifty-four, six foot seven, two hundred and twenty pounds. His hair is full and light blond and in his confusingly light blue eyes you can see his hard core.

Nobody messes with Cees. Rumor has it that someone tried to do it a long time ago, rumor has it, but you haven't even heard a rumor about him since. Cees has been in the Foreign Legion, merce-

nary on his own account in South Africa and now he thinks that the new wealth of the Chinese promotes the best business.

In Africa, he has a branch run by his good friend Piet van Stangeren. Piet and he are the world's largest traders for special animals and their ingredients, which are in great demand, especially on the Chinese market. Many thousands of Chinese nouveau riche owe their potency to them. It doesn't matter whether it's because of the crushed rhinoceros horns or because they imagine their beneficial effects.

Actually, Cees could quit and enjoy his wealth. He has apartments in Monaco, New York and Paris, a house in Portofino and he practically owns an island in the Aegean Sea alone, not big, it takes two hours on foot from one end to the other.

But he no longer does it because of the money, but because of the tension resulting from his illegal transactions. Just now, the pangolins' collector has given him a whole new idea. He told him that this time his cargo will be bought from him by Americans. Whites who have nothing to do with the Chinese at all. He couldn't tell him what they were planning.

"They won't eat them," his client said at the end.

Cees is going to look into it. Something's going on that's supposed to be secret. Secrets and their preservation can cost some people a lot of money. Let's see what they say when he knows what it's

about and offers them his silence. The thought tickles his stomach. He enjoys such things.

The load is equipped with a device that constantly sends GPS coordinates to him. As soon as he knows where it's going, he sits in his helicopter and flies after it. He does that himself. He doesn't let the thrill go to waste.

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"Peter! It's urgent. Come out, there's something wrong with your boy!" He's scared. The petri dish falls out of his gloved hand. The contents are on his protective suit. Peter panics. There's something about Little Freddie! He needs to get out of here and go home.

In the airlock it takes forever to change the air and finally the outer door can be opened. It's a good thing he's got that Volvo instead of his bike. It'll get him back home faster.

His mobile phone rings: "Peter? Betty here. I'm at the hospital with Freddie. "But don't be upset, he's fine, and I'm just there for security."

Peter ends the conversation and turns around. He'll have to take a different route to the hospital. When he gets there, he jumps out of the car and runs into the clinic.

"Where are you going?" the lady at the front desk yells after him.

sealed. It hisses, the man in the lab gets up and goes to the airlock to get the first crate.

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In Washington, two men are sitting in a bar. They talk to each other very quietly.

"I have received orders from the highest level to begin our operations in Europe. Surely these small statesmen really want to take action against our efforts in favour of the USA! "Before they get too cocky, we have to finish them off."

"What do you think we should do the same thing we did in China? I mean, we have to do it differently."

"Of course! There must be no similarities in the proceedings.

From the very beginning, the boss has proclaimed 'America first!' as his motto. If we don't manage to be first against the others on our own, we will prevent them from being first!

We are destabilizing the EU. You go to Rome and give the starting signal. I'll fly to Ankara to order this joker to deploy. He knows the score. On his last visit here, the boss got him involved by reminding him of his support for the Kurds in Syria. He is now doing everything he should do. We attack where they are most vulnerable.

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"I didn't see that now. If something goes wrong through you, you will be the famous hot potato to drop. So get a hold of yourself!"

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Paul Boronsky has just come out of the pompous palace of the Turkish head of government. He has not spoken to himself, of course, but to one of his advisors. When he presented him with his boss's proposal, he first turned pale, but after a short silent pause he started grinning, jumped up and disappeared.

Paul was brought a second mocha and he was asked to wait for the return of his advisor at all costs. It lasted half an hour, than he came back.

"Excuse me, but it took me some time to explain to my supervisor the scenario that would arise if I followed your suggestion. I didn't want to let you go without reporting success. I have to say, you Americans are really creative since the new president took office."

Paul told his interlocutor the following: "I appeal to your mind: Imagine that you are watching a race over 100 m and shortly before the finish the third person pulls the second person over and holds on to the jersey until the first person gives up. This way the former third suddenly becomes first and wins the race.

So when someone says *America first!* today and repeats it over and over again, he can have two options in mind: 1. He makes his country succeed, or 2. He stops other countries from succeeding until they are behind relative to America."

They had shaken hands and Paul left. He will stay overnight and tomorrow he will surely be able to start his way home with new news.

'Yes, he was right, they got creative in an unimaginable and vicious way! All the years he had served one president or another, there were always certain taboos that had not been touched, even if they had ever occurred. One did not even come up with such tricks. They were beyond every horizon one could and should think of. That's changed a lot.'

He is not comfortable with it, but the new strategy is already showing success.

The next day, before he sat in the taxi to the airport, he could still see and hear the speech in the hotel. The Turkish head of government has announced that he will let refugees leave for the EU. This will bring Greece, which is already weakened, to the edge of its possibilities and will cause serious problems for the whole EU, especially when the other weakened patients in the EU, Italy, Portugal or Spain are also feeling bad.

Good work! I am sure he will be received with pleasure. Hopefully Finch will also succeed in his mission.

Seibert knows that and it won't hurt Greifmann that he doesn't join in the evening pleasures.

But every now and then there are remarks from which he must conclude that there is distrust towards him. Will he be able to talk at home in the sense of *The boss and Kern have a Chinese company ... Of course, that was out of the question for me!*

Tonight, after the successful conclusion, he will not be able to break away.

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Peter enjoys making out with Little Freddie in peace and quiet. He has put his right leg right-angled on the left one so that his lower leg is horizontal and the inside of his thigh is pointing upwards. Freddie lays on top of it. His leg wobbles up and down and each time Freddie makes a cheerful squeak.

Now it is almost a week since he picked him up from the hospital. The day's routine has worked out wonderfully. Betty is there during the day and Peter tries to get back from work as early as possible.

Only Sally's condition has not changed. Slowly Peter starts to think. She should have recovered, the birth was four weeks ago. He is worried because his wife doesn't seem to have any relationship with the child at all.

He has felt Betty's forehead curl up before she smiled a little and told him that it is normal for women not to show their feelings for their child after a very painful and exhausting birth. She told him that he had to be patient.

Suddenly he had to cough. Freddie almost slipped off his thigh. It was just fine, but the cough shook him so much that his jerky movements frightened Freddie and he began to scream. Peter quickly puts him down on the sofa and then he can't hold it back anymore. The cough almost tears him apart. His throat is completely dry and nothing changes because of his fits. He gets scared that this will never end. He has gone into the bathroom and sees in the mirror that his face looks all red and swollen. The skin on his face is burning. Does he have a fever?

The last thing he needs is to catch the flu and infect the kid. After he has drunk a glass of cold tap water he feels a little better. But he's worried. He's never had such a strange cough.

So, now he is reasonably fit again and can give Freddie his bottle for the night. The little one has calmed down quickly. He's a very sweet, even-tempered little fellow. As always he eats well and his burp is not long in coming.

It has become routine what father and son do every evening and still both enjoy it. Peter is off early in the evening and can sit in front of the TV with a beer. He loves watching the news. The daily

newspapers have been piling up unread on a stool in the kitchen for the last few weeks.

He switches on in the middle of a TV-broadcast: "*... There were similar events in 2002 and 2003, when everything started in China and claimed a thousand lives right up to the end,*" the announcer just finished his report.

What is he reporting about? A thousand lives? 2002 and 2003? Is it about SARS? Are there new cases in China?

Peter has to cough again, but he is sure it's the excitement this time. One sip from the beer can and he's fine. He is just about to reach for his mobile phone to check the news there, when the speaker on TV goes over to the local news.

"The doctors at Kanab hospital are puzzling over a sudden flu that has spread at breakneck speed among the staff and some patients. One of the doctors ..." and they show a short video sequence showing Dr. Lucas being brought out of his consulting room by two nurses. *"...is particularly badly affected. Since this morning he has been complaining of violent coughing fits, can hardly breathe and has headaches. All measures are currently being taken to separate the sick person from the others in the house. Everyone is faced with a mystery..."*

Peter took out. Suddenly he sees his own cough with different eyes. He has to go and report in. But what happens to Freddie. He can't leave him alone

Peter is clear that he has been infected with the SARS virus that he changed!