

STRANGE ORNAMENT

C hristmas came eleven months late this year. So I'm told there will be hundreds of thousands, less stockings dangling above the red brick fireplace this year, hundreds of thousands less elbows jousting round the table for space this year. And why, you ask? It's the elephant in the Zoom, the same reason that the only emotion that I can make out in the uncovered half of your face is fear. Merry Christmas. It has been a year.

No, those aren't silver bells you hear. They are sirens, seems like every place in the world. There is a country-covering flood. There's an all consuming, catastrophic fire in the environment that is black-eyed-slumped bleeding over the ropes, extending its compound fractured arm to tag us. Its allies turned ardent foes. Merry Christmas.

Unlike the hands of our children, all single filing into Macy's to see Santa. Empathy and compassion are

listless. Demonstrations are at their thickest. To find an ongoing protest site anywhere on a map, just got to close your eyes and pick it. Authority. Don't make me laugh. It has been so badly abused here.

There is no clear skin from which to graft. Half of all Americans are jobless and it's ironic that race is a topic that has been running since the dawn of time, but has never made any real progress here. Fear is the principal running our learning institutions, shots, ring out and halls like school bells, forcing bodies to expel students over attendance.

If any semblance of peace on earth, goodwill toward man seems demolished then why is it a holiday worthy of you and I acknowledging? The following is a list of reasons we can be woke and do Christmas and the absurdity of an omnipresent God being socially distant.



REASON ONE: Oppression to free us all from the concentration camps to the comment section, the common thread is that common ground only seems to feel right beneath our feet. When the ones with whom we have least in common are all buried underneath, but Jesus. Our low-born high priest removed His royal white fleece, rolled down His blue collar and deliberately placed His neck beneath the system's left and right knees.

TWO: The residents of skid row: johns, pimps, prostitutes, black-eyed, lips-swole. Sick souls betrothed to crystal and fentanyl standing with postures, like bent spoons over lit stoves.

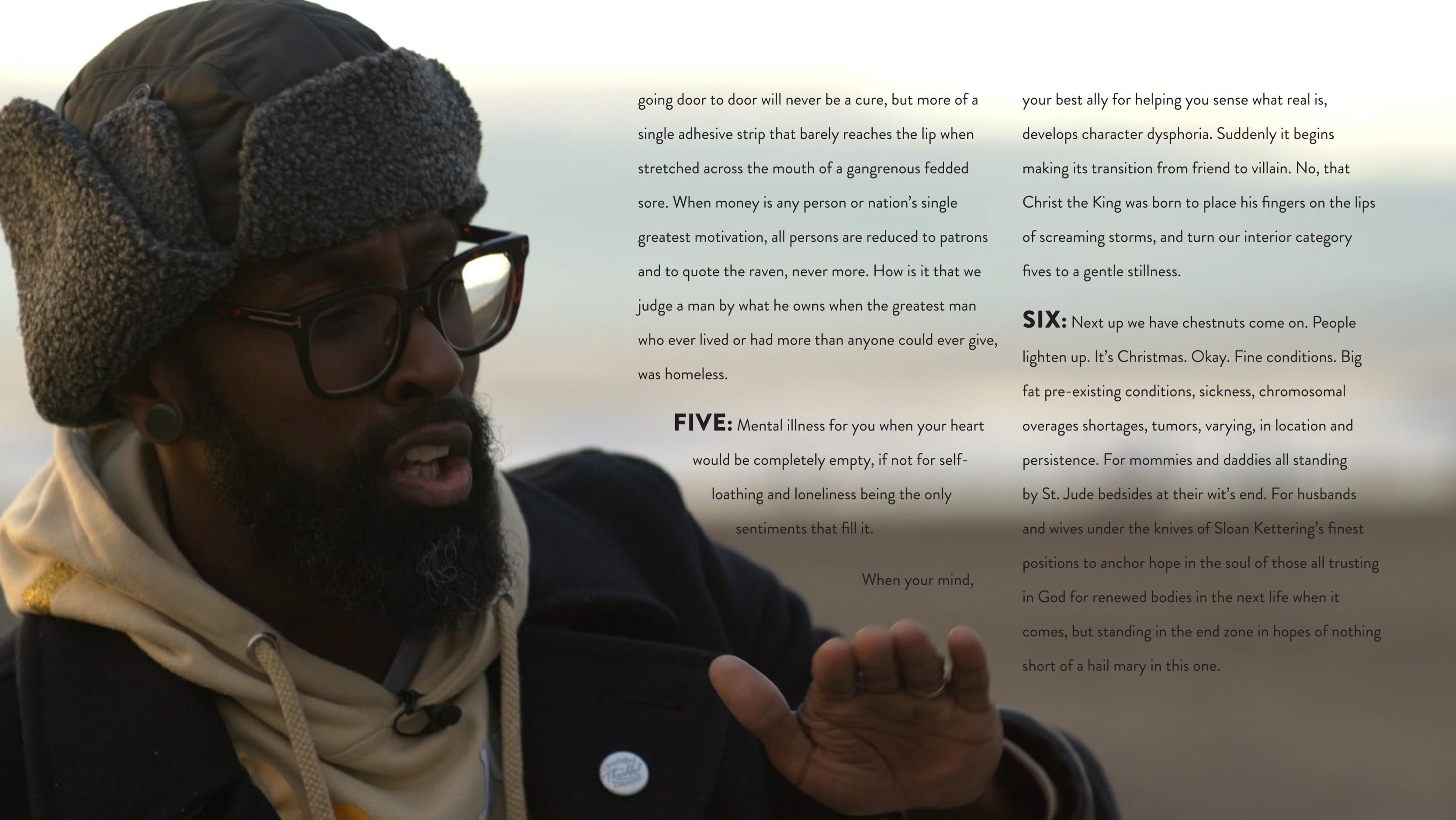
Sampson's taking straight razors to their own heads, leaving bleeding scalps of all skin types exposed. You know, the low, the type with whom our Lord notoriously did roll. His birth was the first stone in a brick row that would get those prematurely or wrinkled by the weight of the streets, back into His fold.

THREE: Madeline McCann, every child like Madeline McCann, a three-year-old who fell into the hands of a man. So gruesome. He could give Freddy goosebumps, his cruelty takes the cake and sadly leaves few crumbs. Christian Bruckner, a bad egg free reins, not caged due to a system blunder so egregious. His name goes to show that even one holding the title disciple could do so not knowing Jesus.

So we hold this season in high esteem and deem it as the birth of the most hallowed human being, fully God and human being, incorruptible, judge, jury, and prosecution. There are moments in this life where we scratch our head and wonder what the Father's doing. The Christ, God's promise to us, that He will fought out every cold case from the very first maliciously spilled drop of fluid. Justice is the one thing He has never stopped pursuing.

FOUR: The poor. For those of us who know





going door to door will never be a cure, but more of a single adhesive strip that barely reaches the lip when stretched across the mouth of a gangrenous felled sore. When money is any person or nation's single greatest motivation, all persons are reduced to patrons and to quote the raven, never more. How is it that we judge a man by what he owns when the greatest man who ever lived or had more than anyone could ever give, was homeless.

FIVE: Mental illness for you when your heart would be completely empty, if not for self-loathing and loneliness being the only sentiments that fill it.

When your mind,

your best ally for helping you sense what real is, develops character dysphoria. Suddenly it begins making its transition from friend to villain. No, that Christ the King was born to place his fingers on the lips of screaming storms, and turn our interior category fives to a gentle stillness.

SIX: Next up we have chestnuts come on. People lighten up. It's Christmas. Okay. Fine conditions. Big fat pre-existing conditions, sickness, chromosomal overages shortages, tumors, varying, in location and persistence. For mommies and daddies all standing by St. Jude bedsides at their wit's end. For husbands and wives under the knives of Sloan Kettering's finest positions to anchor hope in the soul of those all trusting in God for renewed bodies in the next life when it comes, but standing in the end zone in hopes of nothing short of a hail mary in this one.

AND ABOVE ALL SEVEN: The Gospel, the message that makes plain that the measure of God's full deserved wrath fell instead upon the head of His spotless Christ and not you. Using Mary's fresh out the box womb as a dressing room, it took nine months to slip into His costume. If He wasn't born, He couldn't die.

And if He didn't die, we couldn't very well swap shoes before Christmas day, we'd all been enslaved. Shackled under yoke, little more than cattle. His crucifixion came and the bid was placed. Christ raised high in the sky. Like God's auction paddles. Stop it. You mean when the bid is more than what you're bidding for, you not only avoid a bidding war, but true love can sound like a gavel dropping, not talking shopping. When I say that Christmas has always been about expense to demonstrate how expensive

every soul beneath the great blue expense is. The manger birth was the down payment Christ on the cross. The final installment.

But if the One offered was more than the cost, then surely the above ground cave was the coin slot He reached in and found profound change in having more than met the cost. He now raise Him, demonstrating His love and its profound greatness. It sounds strange, but the same one who said He's the door had a wreath of thorns placed on His head.

Our Heavenly Dad's gift left ravaged flesh wrapping paper, torn to bits left dangling like a strange ornament from a tree on Calvary. That we might one day bow the knee and place our presence under it.

Merry Christmas.

