

The MAN We Choose To Forget

By Sam Sukumar

"The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing." – Edmund Burke

We're Not Witnessing Collapse—We're Watching A Choice

Society is not collapsing. It is being taken apart—deliberately, methodically—by those who know exactly what they're doing.

Each time disaster strikes, the response is predictable: *How could this happen?* The media scrambles for explanations, analysts dissect the details, and experts express their shock. But the real question isn't *how*—it's *why*.

And more importantly: *Who knew?*

We are told two convenient lies. **First: that those in charge didn't know. Second: that they tried, but failed.** But history tells a different story. More often than not, *they knew*. They could have acted. They chose not to.

This choice—the quiet decision to allow harm, to prioritize profit over lives, to protect power at all costs—is what we refuse to name. It does not fit neatly into ignorance or incompetence. It is something else entirely.

It is **The MAN**.

The MAN

Malice—knowing something will cause harm and doing it anyway.

Apathy—seeing harm and choosing indifference.

Negligence—knowing what must be done and refusing to act.

The MAN is not a single person. He is a system—self-perpetuating, resilient, and deeply embedded in policies, institutions, and the quiet choices of those who benefit from it. He does not act alone; he is the sum of decisions made behind closed doors, in boardrooms, in government offices—where accountability should exist, but does not. *The MAN is not a villain lurking in the shadows; he is the inevitable outcome of a system designed to protect itself.*

The most dangerous part? **He rarely leaves a trace.**

The MAN thrives in two places:

- **In Systems of Power** – The institutions that shield, enable, and sustain him.
- **In the Mirror** – The justifications that keep him alive within us.

The MAN is **not distant**. He is **not untouchable**. And he **cannot be fought until he is seen**. But *once you see him—what will you do?*

The Man In Systems Of Power

Power does not exist in a vacuum. **It is not random. It is not neutral.** It is built, structured, and maintained by systems that shape laws, control narratives, and define morality.

These systems do not break down by accident. They do not fail because of incompetence. **They function exactly as they were designed to.**

To serve those who built them.

To shield those who profit from them.

To convince the rest of us that their failures are **unfortunate mistakes, rather than deliberate choices.**

Within these systems, The MAN is not an anomaly—he is the intended result. The rules are not broken. They were built this way. The structures do not fail him; they shield him. The consequences do not punish him; they ensure his survival. He is not a rogue actor disrupting the system—he **is** the system.

And as long as these systems remain unchallenged—

He remains untouchable.

The Perpetual Chase: How The Man Feeds The Graceless God

The MAN has one job: to keep you running.

He doesn't need you to *win*—only to stay in the game.

This is why his greatest trick is the illusion of progress. He doesn't need to force you into submission when he can convince you that your struggle is *investment*. That your exhaustion is *momentum*. That if you just hold on a little longer, sacrifice a little more, the finish line will appear.

But the finish line always moves.

In Business – Equity is not about fairness. It's about ownership. And ownership, once a measure of stability, is now a measure of leverage. You don't own a business to keep it—you own it to grow it, flip it, and re-enter the cycle.

In Work – Salaries rise, but so do expectations. Titles change, but work-life balance erodes. Retirement is always *one more decade* away.

In Finance – You're not told to save; you're told to invest. Not to secure what you have, but to *risk it*—because stagnation is now seen as failure.

In Personal Success – No matter how much you achieve, the metric shifts. First, you just wanted stability. Then, financial freedom. Then, *generational wealth*. The MAN ensures you never feel like you have arrived.

And the more you run, the more you must leverage.
The more you leverage, the more you must run.

Until one day, you mistake the chase for freedom.

And The MAN no longer has to control you—because you are too afraid to stop.

The Man In Work & Business

The workplace is where most people come face to face with malice, apathy, and negligence—not through a single villain, but through the policies, incentives, and power structures that normalize

exploitation. The MAN is not one corrupt CEO or one unethical policy. He is the entire system that rewards profit at any cost and punishes those who push back.

It is where profits are prioritized over people.

It is where failure—if it benefits the powerful—is not punished, but rewarded.

It is where accountability **does not trickle up. It only trickles down.**

Boeing 737 MAX crisis – Engineers warned about safety issues. Executives ignored them. The result? Two crashes, 346 lives lost. Not incompetence. Not ignorance. **Negligence—profit over people.**

Purdue Pharma & the opioid epidemic – Internal emails prove executives knew OxyContin was dangerously addictive. Instead of addressing it, they doubled down on marketing. Not incompetence. Not ignorance. **Malice—death as a business model.**

Tech and AI risk – AI is advancing faster than regulation can keep up, but major tech companies actively resist safeguards while chasing profits. Experts warn about bias, misinformation, and security risks. They are dismissed. Not incompetence. Not ignorance. **Negligence—choosing chaos over caution.**

But business does not operate in a vacuum. It is protected by the laws that claim to uphold justice but instead shield those who hold power. And when profit conflicts with justice—**justice loses.**

Every time.

The Man In The Legal System

The law is meant to be blind.

Impartial.

Just.

But in practice, The MAN ensures that justice is not a right.

It is a privilege.

Sold to those who can afford it.

Denied to those who cannot.

Mass incarceration & political imprisonment – From for-profit prisons that turn human lives into revenue streams to authoritarian regimes that silence dissent, the legal system does not fail the vulnerable by accident.

It is designed to serve power first, and people second.

Legal corruption – In many nations, justice is not merely unequal—it is for sale.

The wealthy dodge accountability.

The poor receive maximum punishment for minimum crimes.

Sentences are harsher when you cannot afford a lawyer.

Bail is impossible when you have nothing left to give.

Injustice does not happen in the shadows.

It is written into policy.

It is signed into law.

It is enforced in courtrooms every day.

And yet, history will not call it what it is.

It will be labeled a flaw in the system.

A misstep by those in charge.

A failure of bureaucracy.

But failure suggests an attempt was made to do better.

This is not failure.

This is the system working exactly as intended.

The Man In The Media

The media was once called the fourth estate.

A check on power. A safeguard against corruption. A force for truth.

But The MAN has turned it into something else:

Not a weapon of suppression—

But a tool of misdirection.

Corporate media distractions – While billionaires hoard wealth, while policies are written behind closed doors, while wars rage in forgotten corners of the world, the headlines tell a different story.

Scandals.

Outrage.

Celebrity gossip.

A cycle designed not to inform, but to exhaust. **Apathy—not through suppression, but through saturation.**

State-controlled propaganda – In authoritarian regimes, the media does not report the truth. **It fabricates it.**

But even in so-called free societies, narratives are carefully curated—not always through direct censorship, but through ownership, through advertising, through unspoken rules about what stories are allowed to be told.

The result is the same: **News that serves power first, and the public second.**

The most effective form of control is not censorship.

It is distraction.

The Man In Religion And Spirituality

Faith should be a force for truth.

A guide for conscience. A source of moral clarity.

It should challenge injustice, not protect it.

It should expose corruption, not sanctify it.

But The MAN has no use for faith as a force of resistance. *He reshapes it into something else, an institution of control.*

Religious institutions covering up abuse – From clergy sex abuse scandals to financial exploitation, places meant to provide spiritual refuge have instead shielded predators.

Leaders who claim moral authority are protected. Victims are silenced—told to forgive, to obey, to pray rather than demand justice.

Faith as a political weapon – Religion has been used to justify persecution.

Not as an exception. As a pattern.

Discriminatory laws, fundamentalist violence, and blasphemy laws do not preserve faith.

They preserve power.

True faith seeks truth.

The MAN seeks control.

And when the two are in conflict, only one survives.

The Man In Education

Education should be the great equalizer.

The force that breaks cycles of poverty.

The tool that gives every child a fair chance.

But The MAN has ensured that it remains something else.

Not a ladder.

A gate.

The student debt crisis – Higher education is no longer a path to opportunity. It is a financial trap, engineered to extract wealth from those least able to afford it.

A system meant to lift people up now chains them to decades of debt.

Not by accident. By design.

Neglect of rural education – Millions of children sit in overcrowded classrooms, in crumbling schools, with outdated textbooks—if they have schools at all.

The problem is not a lack of resources. **It is a choice.**

Education was meant to be a ladder. **The MAN has turned it into a wall.**

The crisis of neglected education is not a failure of resources.

It is a failure of will.

Consider the **Midwest and Southern United States**, where rural schools lack basic facilities, teachers are underpaid, and textbooks are decades old. These communities do not lack children eager to learn. They lack the investment given freely to wealthier districts.

Or **Dalit schools in India**, where discrimination is written into the funding structure. Schools serving Dalit and tribal children receive fewer resources, reinforcing generational poverty under the guise of budget constraints.

Or **rural villages in sub-Saharan Africa**, where foreign aid often funds private, for-profit schools while public education crumbles. The result? Education is not a right. It is a privilege—sold to those who can afford it, denied to those who cannot.

The world does not lack teachers. It does not lack books. It does not lack knowledge.

It lacks the will to make them accessible.

The Man In Healthcare

Healthcare should be simple.

If someone is sick, they should receive care.

If there is medicine, it should go to those who need it.

If there is a cure, it should not be locked behind a price tag.

But The MAN does not see healthcare as a human right.

He sees it as a marketplace.

And in a marketplace, life is not the priority.

Profit is.

Pharmaceutical price gouging – Life-saving drugs like insulin and cancer treatments cost pennies to produce, yet are priced at thousands.

Not because they have to be. Because they can be.

If you cannot pay, you do not get to live.

COVID-19 vaccine hoarding –The pandemic revealed a truth that had long been hidden: health is not a human right. It is a privilege reserved for the wealthiest.

- In **the United States**, unused vaccines were discarded while vulnerable populations abroad pleaded for access.
- In **India**, while cities saw mass vaccination efforts, rural areas struggled with shortages, proving that even within nations, healthcare is a commodity.

- In **Africa**, while pharmaceutical companies held patents hostage, nations waited for lifesaving doses that never came.

This was not a supply issue. It was a profit issue. Moderna, Pfizer, and Johnson & Johnson lobbied to block **global patent waivers** that would have allowed poorer nations to manufacture their own vaccines.

Not because there weren't enough vaccines.

Because allowing equal access was never the plan.

This wasn't mismanagement. **It was apathy—on a global scale.**

The world does not lack medicine. **It lacks the will to make it accessible.**

The Man In Environmental Destruction

The climate crisis is not a distant threat.

It is not something that might happen.

It is happening. **Right now.**

And The MAN is not scrambling to stop it.

He is profiting from it.

Fossil fuel industry lobbying – Oil companies have known about climate change since the 1970s.

They did not sound the alarm.

They did not shift course.

Instead, they spent billions funding disinformation campaigns.

To keep the public confused.

To keep politicians compliant.

To keep their profits untouched.

Water privatization – In cities, in villages, in entire countries, corporations buy public water supplies—then sell them back at impossible prices.

Not because water is scarce.

Because when a necessity becomes a product, desperation becomes a business model.

The world is not dying. **It is being killed.**

And the ones killing it? **They know exactly what they're doing.**

The Man In The Mirror

The MAN is not just an external force—it is a system we uphold, knowingly or unknowingly. Governments, corporations, and institutions do not sustain themselves; they are sustained by people—by choices, by habits, by the quiet justifications that turn complicity into routine. The MAN does not persist because of a few corrupt individuals. He persists because we let him.

Systems do not run themselves. Policies do not enforce themselves. Injustice does not persist on its own—it requires people to look the other way.

It is people—**ordinary people**—who choose, day after day, to uphold these systems, to ignore them, or to resist them.

The MAN is not just a force outside us. He is a condition we allow to take root. **He is a state of being.**

A slow transformation.

A quiet erosion.

A shift that does not happen in a single moment, but in a series of small decisions—each one feeling reasonable, each one feeling necessary—

Until one day, a person looks back and no longer recognizes who they were before.

The MAN is the slow erosion of conscience.

The MAN is the moment when survival overrides morality.

The MAN is the justifications whispered in the dark.

He is not just above us. **He is within us.**

This is not about them. **This is about us.**

The Making Of The Man

No one is born as The MAN.

No one wakes up one morning and decides:

Today, I will prioritize power over principle.

Today, I will put profit over people.

No one wakes up one day and chooses to uphold corruption. The MAN does not require grand betrayals; he thrives in small concessions. He grows not through dramatic acts, but through **a slow erosion of conscience**—a decision here, a justification there, until what was once unthinkable becomes routine. He does not emerge fully formed; he is built, one rationalization at a time, in a world where compromise is incentivized, and resistance is punished.

And yet, the world is filled with people who enable harm, excuse injustice, and look away when it matters most.

The transformation is not sudden.

It is slow.

It is deliberate.

And at first— It is almost invisible.

It begins with a rationalization.

A justification.

A single step away from what is right.

At first, the compromises feel necessary.

Then, they feel normal.

Then, they feel like the only way forward.

Until one day, a person who once hesitated, who once questioned, who once cared—

No longer does.

The First Compromise

The first step toward becoming The MAN is never a grand betrayal.

It is not a crime.

It is not a scandal.

It is something small.

Something that feels necessary.

A decision made in the name of practicality.

A silence held in the name of survival.

The employee who witnesses workplace abuse but stays quiet because *“I have a family to support.”*

The teacher who enforces a policy they know is unjust because *“It’s just how the system works.”*

The voter who backs a corrupt politician because *“The alternative is worse.”*

The first compromise is the hardest. But once it is made, the next one comes easier.

And the one after that? **Easier still.**

Until one day, the compromises no longer feel like compromises.

They feel like the only way forward.

The Growth Of Apathy

Apathy does not arrive all at once.

It seeps in slowly, like a poison— **Numbing the conscience.** Dulling the edges of what once felt unacceptable.

The first time, a person hesitates. They feel the weight of the choice before them.

The second time, it stings less.

The third time, they barely notice.

And soon— **Doing nothing feels normal.**

“It’s not my responsibility.”

“What difference can I make?”

“Everyone else does it.”

At first, these thoughts feel like a shield. **A way to escape the burden of guilt.**

But over time, the shield becomes a cage.

Apathy does not just make a person indifferent. **It makes them complicit.**

The Justifications Of The Man

The MAN does not see himself as corrupt.

He does not wake up thinking, *Today, I will do harm.*

He believes he is practical.

He believes he is realistic.

He believes he is making **the only choice available to him.**

The MAN does not reject morality. **He reshapes it.**

He bends it.

He twists it.

He molds it into something that fits his needs.

“The world is cruel. I am only playing by its rules.”

“If I didn’t do this, someone else would.”

“I have no choice.”

But the truth is, he does have a choice.

He always did. He just stopped believing it.

The Man’s Fear Of Seeing Himself

The greatest threat to The MAN is not rebellion. **It is reflection.**

As long as he does not stop to question, he can continue.

As long as he does not look too closely, he can justify.

To maintain his power—whether in a boardroom, a government office, or the quiet corridors of his own mind—

The MAN must keep moving.

He drowns in tasks and distractions.

He repeats his justifications until they no longer sound like excuses, but truths.

He builds walls between his choices and his conscience, ensuring they never meet.

Because the moment The MAN stops—**truly stops**—

He might see himself for what he has become. **And that is the one thing he cannot afford.**

The Man And The Erosion Of Identity

No one becomes The MAN overnight.

The shift is slow.

Incremental. Almost invisible.

It happens in phases:

The First Excuse – "I had no choice."

The Second Rationalization – "It's just business."

The Third Detachment – "This is just how the world works."

The Fourth Transformation – "I'm only doing what anyone else would do."

Each step makes the next easier.

Each compromise makes the past harder to recognize.

Until the person who once hesitated, once wrestled with conscience— **No longer does.**

He does not look in the mirror and see a villain. **He sees someone who adapted.**

Someone who survived.

Someone who did what had to be done.

But survival at what cost?

Because by then— **He is not someone new. He is someone less.**

The Cost Of Resistance

The MAN's greatest weapon is not brute force. **It is exhaustion.**

Resistance is possible. **But it is costly.**

And The MAN ensures that cost is high enough to make most people think twice.

The whistleblower's dilemma – Speak the truth, and lose everything.

A career.

A reputation.

A future.

The journalist's bind – Challenge power, and lose the platform to do it.

The stories that need to be told will never be published.

The worker's burden – Push back, and lose the ability to provide.

The mortgage.

The healthcare.

The security.

The system does not need to silence everyone. **It only needs to make speaking up feel impossible.**

And so, most people don't fight.

Not because they don't care. Because they are tired.

Tired of struggling.

Tired of being punished for doing the right thing.

Tired of knowing that the system is designed to grind them down.

The MAN survives not because people are evil. **He survives because people are afraid.**

And because, after enough battles— **Even the strongest grow weary.**

The Currency Of Compliance

Most people don't choose The MAN. They comply with him one small decision at a time.

- The employee who sees an unethical policy but stays silent because "it's not my place."
- The voter who tolerates corruption because "all politicians are the same."
- The company that pledges social responsibility while quietly lobbying against real reform.

The MAN survives not because of grand conspiracies, but because of tiny justifications. And the question is not *whether you are part of the system—but whether you will let the system define you.*

The Quiet Revolt: Micro-Defiance Against The Man

The MAN doesn't just fear revolutions—he fears refusals.

He fears when you stop chasing the next thing. When you pull your attention out of the algorithm. When you invest in what cannot be monetized.

Resistance is not always a battle. Sometimes, it is the quietest thing in the world: a person who chooses not to play the game.

Here's how small, intentional acts of defiance weaken The MAN's grip:

Opting Out of Perpetual Leverage – The system thrives on reinvestment, on keeping wealth moving so that true ownership is impossible. What happens if you step off that treadmill? What happens if you choose *enough*?

Withholding Attention from the Algorithm – The more data you give, the stronger the system becomes. What happens when you stop feeding it? When you don't scroll endlessly, when you consume with intention, not compulsion?

Quietly Saying 'No' – The MAN does not need your approval, only your participation. What happens when you stop overworking for a company that sees you as disposable? When you refuse to engage in an outrage cycle that exists to exhaust you?

Supporting What Cannot Be Owned – The MAN struggles to control what does not scale. What happens when you invest in deep, unmonetized relationships? When you support local economies, self-sufficiency, or skills that cannot be automated?

Reclaiming Time as a Non-Transactional Act – Productivity culture teaches that every moment must be optimized, monetized, or justified. What happens when you do something for no reason at all—when you sit still, when you rest, when you create without asking if it's useful?

The MAN wins when you believe there is no way out.

But every small defiance chips away at his power.

The Thin Line Between Resistance And Compliance

Not everyone can afford to be a hero.

Not everyone has the luxury of risking everything for principle.

The MAN survives not because most people are cruel— **But because most people are trapped somewhere in between.**

Too aware to be innocent.

Too constrained to be entirely free.

Not every employee at Purdue Pharma was evil.

Not every politician in a corrupt system is ruthless.

Not every activist is pure.

Most people justify their choices in the moment.

It's just a job.

It's just how things are.

It's not up to me.

But integrity is not one grand moment of courage. **It is a series of small, daily refusals to compromise on truth.**

And in a world that rewards compliance— **Those refusals are everything.**

Reclaiming The Self: Becoming Something Else

The MAN does not need you to love him.

He does not need your loyalty. **He only needs your silence.**

He wins when you look away.

When you tell yourself it's not your fight.

When you convince yourself that nothing you do will ever be enough.

But every time a person chooses to listen to their conscience—

No matter how quietly.

No matter how briefly.

The MAN loses ground.

Breaking free does not require grand gestures. **It does not demand martyrdom. It starts small.**

Questioning a policy at work.

Challenging a lie when it's easier to stay quiet.

Supporting independent journalism.

Paying attention when the world is designed to distract you.

Every small defiance chips away at his power.

It only takes someone willing to stop.

To look in the mirror. **And to say: "No more."**

History is shaped not just by those who abuse power, but by those who quietly refuse to comply with it.

Resistance is not always grand, but it is always costly.

- **Václav Havel and the Power of the Powerless** – In Soviet-controlled Czechoslovakia, Havel argued that living in truth—even in small ways—was a radical act of defiance against a system

that thrived on deception. He did not lead armies. He wrote essays. And yet, his words fueled a revolution.

- **Claudette Colvin Before Rosa Parks** – A 15-year-old girl refused to give up her seat to a white passenger in Montgomery, Alabama, months before Rosa Parks. She was not famous. She was not protected. But her act of defiance helped set the stage for the Civil Rights Movement.
- **Edward Snowden's Moral Reckoning** – He was not a politician, not an activist. He was a contractor for the NSA. But when faced with evidence that mass surveillance was violating civil liberties, he made a choice—to speak.

Not everyone can be a whistleblower. Not everyone can lead a revolution. But everyone—everyone—will face a moment where they must choose between compliance and conscience. And in that moment, small acts of truth can shake the foundations of power.

The Final Question

Most people will never sit in a boardroom where policies are written.

Most will never sign the orders that shape the world.

Most will never stand at the top of a system.

But everyone—

Every single person—

Will be presented with a moment of choice.

Will you look away from injustice because it does not affect you?

Will you allow apathy to erode your sense of responsibility?

Will you convince yourself that the harm you enable is *just business*?

The MAN doesn't need you to love him. He doesn't need your loyalty. He only needs your exhaustion. He doesn't have to oppress when he can convince you that struggle is liberation. That if you just sacrifice a little more, work a little harder, leverage a little further—you'll finally be free.

But what if you aren't climbing? What if you're on a treadmill?

The MAN's greatest trick isn't just making us forget who he is.

It's making us forget that the game was rigged from the start.

And as long as you believe that more is the answer, you will never ask if you've been asking the wrong question all along.

Naming The MAN is only the first step. The real battle is deeper. It's not just about recognizing power—it's about seeing the game The MAN plays. The game that keeps us running, chasing, exhausted. The game of leverage, of debt, of an economy built on never having enough. That is the next layer of awakening. And that is where we must go next.