

Essays & Ideas

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#96An Essay

I Am Justin Timberlake

In case you didn't know there are **two** Justin Timberlakes: one, the actor (read that "pretender") & the other the real person. Justin Timberlake, **the pretender** appears in movies and is brave, resolute and, like anyone who has their lines written for them and memorized, always ready with a wisecrack response to any danger. Justin Timberlake, **the person** is very different. Since everything about an actor/entertainer is carefully manipulated, finding the person behind the mask is difficult. But, I saw the real Timberlake once. Don't ask me how it happened but there was some kind of TV show called "Punked" where some guy played tricks on famous people. I can't even remember the scenario but this guy nailed Timberlake. The dashing young man with choreographed answers absolutely melted down when things didn't go his way. He actually ended up **calling his Mother & crying** over the phone! (I guess, when no one writes the script for him he doesn't ad lib well.)

You may think I'm going to rip on Timberlake and belittle him for what a baby he is. Nope. I'm going to rip on **you** for thinking average (Timberlake) people are in some way "great" people just because a script writer provides them with an inexhaustible supply of "fearless & cool" answers to the most desperate situations. You have watched "mere mortals" getting hit with lead pipes, beaten mercilessly by numerous assailants and receive numerous bullet wounds and not only **not** succumb to their injuries but have a "smart-mouth" remark after every blow. (Yeah, and you probably believe there are two bare wires under the dashboard of every car **just waiting** for someone to come & hot wire it.) Whether it's Timberlake, Stallone, Schwarzeneger, Willis or any other **pretend** hero the MO is the same: be unfazed by brutal physical punishment and always have a smart response and miraculously rebound from the punishment.

But what's worse is that you've seen that so many times that you think **you** could take a physical beating and do nothing more than pour out a series of snide one-liners. We watch movies where the hero is the "rugged individual" who couldn't care less what people think of him. We superimpose that character over ourselves...and then text half-a-dozen friends before we make **any** decision lest we do something outside of the consensus of our friends. (So much for "rugged individualism!")

Fantasizing that we are braver, tougher and smarter than we really are could be perfectly harmless in a safe, stable society. Unfortunately our country is fast leaving "sane & safe" behind as our "Would-be-Dictator" president keeps attempting power grabs. Our hope of "living peaceably as much as in us is" looks dimmer with each new anti-gun initiative pushed by our socialist government.

That brings us back to Justin Timberlake. Not the intelligent, fearless, quick-witted **pretender** but the **real one**. The one that cries to his Mommy when things don't go his way. While we may have convinced ourselves that we too are intelligent, fearless and quick-witted we would be horrified to discover that we are closer to the whining Momma's boy than the Hollywood fictional character.

So what could that mean for our future? It is **absolutely required** that our government confiscate

the guns of private citizens if a dictatorship is going to be established. I believe all the government has to do is pass laws that say, “A\$5,000 fine and five years in prison to anyone **who knew** about a gun **someone else** owned but didn’t report.” and the real Justin Timberlakes will be turning in their fellow church members, best friends and family members with a self righteous, “I’m not going to prison for **your** gun!” rolling off their lips faster than Schwarzeneger can growl, “I’ll be back.”

As much as we may want to flatter ourselves with the fantasy that we’re as tough as any **pretender** in a Hollywood thriller, the fact is that if anyone did no more than slap us around for longer than five minutes we would all probably tell them anything they wanted to know. We would divulge any secret and betray any friend or cause just to get the beating to stop. There would no need of exotic torture methods or great deprivation on the part of our interrogators. We are as soft as an over ripe peach and would bruise just as easy. The image we have of our “movie self” would go down in a series of blubbering confessions and mental surrenders that would traumatize us by their swiftness.

I hold no illusions of my own bravery or ability to hold out against a trained professional interrogator. I fear I will fold up like a five year old deprived of his ice cream. I would probably fold up faster than...than...Justin Timberlake! If you have convinced yourself of your own (fictional) toughness maybe you should quit watching hero movies and examine your own weaknesses long enough to get an honest evaluation of yourself.

I’m not talking about sinister, insincere, self-serving phonies. I’m talking about people who **believe** in the cause of Christ and, like me, hope to never shame Him by their actions. People who are **convinced** they would be “loyal to the death” who will shame themselves faster than Obama can lie if anyone simply pushed on them a little.

So, what’s the answer? **There is no sure thing**, because, like **any** training or preparation you won’t find out it doesn’t work until it’s too late to retrain. But, here is all I can offer **in hopes** that it proves to be good advice.

1. Stay in the Book. Read as much Bible as you can on a daily basis. The Bible is a supernatural book and it is the **only** place we can have something more powerful than nature put into us. And if the bottom drops out of the United States we will need something **supernatural**.
2. Stay in church! Even when you’re mad at your pastor. Submitting to situations that are not 100% as you like them is good practice for having to submit to a future situation that may not be 100% as you like it. Also, just the spiritual input that **only preaching** can instill in the individual may help give you the character you need to “not embarrass the Lord.” (A “House Church” won’t do it. The very existence of most such groups stemmed from some proud, self-important man who refused to humble himself in a local church situation.)
3. Don’t quit, run or try to hurt the offending party when things don’t go your way. **Of course you’re right! You’re ALWAYS right!** But being “right” gives **no one** the right to hurt, gossip or destroy the person they deem as “wrong.” Ask anyone who ever split a church why they did it. Will they answer, “Because I’m **wicked!**” Of course not. They’ll sanctimoniously declare they did it because they were **right**.
4. Don’t turn in anybody for anything! (Of course there are exceptions to that: murder, child molestation disagreeing with you...) We are creatures of habit. Get in the habit of “I’ll tell Mom” and you will be the biggest snitch on the planet once the going gets tough.
5. Pray...and pray...and **pray** that, if the country falls, God will be merciful to you and not let you shame Him in anyway. I am sure none of us want to but reality is so much more cruel than fantasy.

I’m not down on Justin Timberlake or any other Hollywood star who **pretends** to be something they’re not. I’m afraid I’m too much **like** Justin Timberlake.