

# CHAPT 2 (1ST HALF)

Anonymous is a loose and nebulous confederation of Internet users who tend to congregate in a number of "stronghold" websites of a certain character. These websites include 4chan (particularly the "anything goes" /b/ imageboard), Encyclopaedia Dramatica, reddit, and other forum or imageboard websites that do not require registration to contribute. Anonymous features no distinct or recognized organization or leadership, operating instead by the momentum of Internet populism... Perhaps the only commonality among people affiliated with Anonymous is a militant, fundamentalist view on the freedom of information, censorship, and corruption, especially with respect to governments or organizations leveraging governments.

- Endgame Systems report on Anonymous, late 2010

Stolen by Anonymous in February 2011

The CNN presenter, a British female, is otherwise indistinguishable from the hundreds of other anchors who collectively and haphazardly preside over something akin to news. Ten minutes before the segment began, she'd likely been reminded by the producer as to who I was and provided with a brief summary of what might allegedly be happening that made this interview desirable. The producer <sup>HAD</sup> would have spoken to me that morning via e-mail and paid attention to random sections of what I've told him; at best, he will have since conveyed some portion of this to the presenter, likely along with a few things he's been told on the subject by some other person who is entirely wrong about all of them. We're all set for cable.

~~WELCOME TO CABLE NEWS.~~  
"The hacker group Anonymous obviously likes to stay undercover. But our next guest says that he's been associated with them for years. He says he speaks for the organization and shares their views. Gregg Housh is the administrator of a website called 'Why We Protest.' And he joins us now live, from Boston. Prepare to show your face, Gregg!"

~~IN FACT I'VE BEEN DOING~~  
... she challenges, in the general direction of the in-studio feed in which I stand unmasked as usual, having done television interviews under my real name for over a year now.

*is the common*  
"You say you speak for Anonymous. We can't verify that, so talk me through it."

*Here we go AGAIN.*

"I have... never said that I speak for Anonymous," I reply. "That is a very bad thing to say in the eyes of Anonymous. Simply by being here in front of you, I'm not Anonymous. Here's my name, here's my face." I had explained this to the producer - and, before that, to dozens of different journalists who had insisted on referring to me as the "official mouthpiece," "spokesman," or even "leader" of Anonymous. *Here we go*

"Okay, forgive me for that, but I thought when you'd spoke to my producer earlier on that you said that you thought that you could speak for Anonymous."

"I can speak for what's going on. I'm in all the chat channels, I'm in all the websites, I've been involved in past Anonymous actions such as the Church of Scientology. But I'm personally not taking part in any of the illegal activities. I'm just trusted by these people and I'm around all their inner circles."

"Tell me in your own words what you think they're trying to achieve."

"You know, everyone on there - so many people from so many different countries - all have their own ideas. But they all revolve around the idea that information is free. And one of the big goals is..."

*FOX*  
I pause for a moment, deciding to change tacks. This wasn't the proper venue *in* which to *try* to explain the bigger picture. Nor was it the proper time; December 2010 marked the beginning of a shift that is best recognized in hindsight. It wasn't yet evident that the operation Anonymous had just conducted would lead to a war with the U.S. government that continues to escalate at the time of this writing.

In the hours before the interview, Anonymous participants had launched a distributed denial of service attack, or DDOS, against the respective websites of MasterCard, Visa, Paypal, and Amazon, taking several of these down for hours. The first three had each, *within a few* *days of each other*, announced that they would no longer process donations to Wikileaks, *JUST DAYS BEFORE*

*FINANCIAL*

*IN SUPPORT OF*

THE NEWS ORGANIZATION  
which itself had just begun the release of some 250,000 U.S. diplomatic cables. Amazon, meanwhile, had ceased to provide the use of their servers to the organization. All, it seemed, had buckled under pressure from the federal government, which itself had been carrying out a secret war against Wikileaks and its principals for quite a while now. Months later, we would learn more about how that war was being conducted and how widespread the conspiracy had become; for now, I at least knew enough to get the CNN barker off my back.

"We live in a certain society where journalists have certain freedoms, the press has certain freedoms," I begin. "And from this side of the fence, it looks like Wikileaks is working as a journalistic organization. They're working with *The Guardian* and all these other existing organizations. So we think they should get those same protections. And we find it very interesting that these financial organizations are cancelling their accounts or denying them charges, like MasterCard, Visa, PayPal. And listing off very clearly-

1st -  
Amazon

"How, though, do the aims effectively justify the means?" she asks me, and likely no one else prior to me, "the means being disrupting me and millions of our viewers from using Visa, MasterCard - and Amazon, which, let's be honest, let's face it, they weren't able to bring down today. And right before Christmas! How do the ends justify the means, you think?"

"There's a very tough balance to keep here. And I'm smiling because I've been asked this question several times today. We don't want to interrupt the public's livelihood..."

"... but you are."

NEED A THOUGHT  
... "because in the end we want them on our side. Some people have been affected, but in all honesty, even when Visa's website is down completely, you don't go to Visa's website to use your credit card. The payment process was working perfectly fine."

That Anonymous' operation had not actually inconvenienced the millions of viewers she had said it had fazed the woman not a bit; nor does she seem concerned about having just

NATURALY I LEFT  
IT'S KNOWN BY CIVIL  
HM MORE

was largely when

The next few years of my childhood were uneventful. After I turned nine, dad suddenly showed up driving a Porsche. He explained to mom that he'd gotten a new job, driving high-end vehicles from their original lot to another where they might sell better. This was true in a way. At any rate, I got to ride around in a couple of those cars before they were chopped or sold out of state. Then dad disappeared once again.

Childhood continued. At home, I was no help to mom. At school, I made a couple of friends with whom I remain close today. But always in the back of my mind, there was the threat - sometimes the anticipation - that dad would change his mind again and come to kidnap me. A day didn't go by that I didn't wonder what he was up to now.

IN MY MOTHER'S LIFE, AND SO IN MINE.

But there were other men, some of whom I liked, some of whom I only like in retrospect, years after having given them a hard time. One of them, Rick, was a professor. Another one, Craig, was especially patient with me - which is just as well, since I gave that one more shit than I'd given to anyone previously, and still regret it to this day. But by that time I considered myself man of the house. After all, I was already making loads of money at the age of 13.

61266  
WIRE  
DETAILED

By the time I was 13 I was making loads of money, and considered... MAN OF THE HOUSE

At that time, there was an arcade in the area called Tilt. They had filled up the entire basement of a mall with video games. And this was the second heyday of arcade games, when Street Fighter 2 had just come out and one's status was determined in large part by one's ability to excel at it. I earned a lot of status in those days - which is good, because when you beat someone else, you keep playing, and it was rare occasion that I had more than a dollar to spend for the afternoon.

WAS FILLED  
AND EXCEPT I DID, SO I HAD A LOT OF MONEY THEN  
EVERY BOY'S

One day, a new machine appeared. Lotto Fun was something akin to the little wired machines that models operate on local news segments given over to the state lottery. Animated ping pong balls hopped around in a see-through container, each with a number on it. The user picks six numbers, which would appear on the screen on the left. Each time you pushed a button, whichever ball is closest to the gap would fall in. The more numbers you got correctly, and in order, the more you won. And it was a sliding scale, like a slot machine; if you put in four tokens and won, you got 16 in return.

?

THAT EASY. I ENTERED THE 'TOKENS MARKED'

It was, at that point, a week before class picture. A week later, I came to class wearing the nicest clothes I had ever owned.

There was more than one Lotto Fun machine at Tilt. I taught a friend the game's secret tell, lectured him on the finer points of the scam - learning the pattern that the security guards walked so as to avoid having one come by when one was selling at the token dispensers, paying attention to the ceiling cameras, etc. - and took a 25 percent cut of his daily take. At that point, I hadn't seen any of the mobster movies, I didn't know anything about RICO or racketeering or anything else of the sort. But the fundamentals of crime are universal. My friend wasn't quite as proficient as I was but he could pull out \$50 in a day. Soon I was making about \$400 a week - an extraordinary amount of cash for any 13-year-old, and almost unimaginable for a kid from a poor family.

Back at home, I kept my increasing supply of cash in a tennis ball canister. One night I came home to find my mom sitting at the kitchen table, the canister open on the table. Concerned, she asked where I was getting this kind of money. I told her, no drugs, no violence. She pressed me, still not understanding how I could possibly pull off something like this. I explained the situation with the arcade. She laughed and told me that I probably couldn't even get in any real trouble for that. [Looking back, that was the moment when I realized that I could probably get away with quite a bit more. I bought a moped.]

One day, I had just walked into Tilt when an employee stopped me. He was about 25 years old, a big guy with a mustache and a beard,

"We need to walk," he said.

Out of options, I followed alongside of him.

"Am I in trouble?"

"No, no, no."

"Are you calling security?"

"No, no."

He took me to one end of the arcade where no one could overhear us. He'd been watching me for a while, he explained. He knew what I was doing, and he had a pretty good idea of how much money I was making. And he wanted in.

Being the dumb kid I was, I told him exactly how much I was making. As such, he ended up with about 25 percent of the overall take from then on. But he also made sure that I had a solid perimeter, free from security guards. And of all the ceiling cameras, he informed me, about five percent actually worked, and none of those were in our area - one less limiting factor in the time my friend and I could spend selling at the dispensers.

Things proceeded like this until Tilt finally removed the Lotto Fun games, likely on a scheduled rotation. In the six months or so that I had run the operation, we probably took out something around \$10,000. At any rate, my growing suspicion that the law simply didn't apply to me had been confirmed.

As my adolescence continued and my savings dried up, I found myself in need of a real job.

The first of these was at Wendy's, where I lasted about two weeks before throwing a soda

at my boss' face. For some reason I thought McDonalds might work out better. Instead, I ended up throwing my manager onto the grill, burning his hands; this was in retaliation for

him stupidly burning me with the fry basket out of sheer negligence but apparently

McDonalds policy does not take into account the occasional necessity for revenge, because I was fired. Anyway, jobs weren't my thing.

School wasn't my thing, either. I hassled my teachers with endless questions in order to improve their job performance, but the administration failed to appreciate my assistance.

One day, when I found myself sent to his office one too many time for his liking, the principal told me that if I showed up there again, I'd be suspended. On my way out, the