# Christopher James



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# **Prologue**

This is a plot for a film or a play triggered by the emergence of the COVID 19 virus and the disruption it has had on society and also how the establishment has handled the situation. The story also encapsulates how society is coming to terms with uncomfortable and awkward items like homosexuality, social distancing, and vaccinations. It also highlights how development and progress is being hijacked by commercial interests and corporate greed. But more than that it is a comedy which takes us on a hilarious ride in which an unknown gay singer/singer unwittingly becomes the saviour of the planet, at least, for a short period in time.

We are living in the post COVID-19 era and life is just beginning to return to normal,.. that is,.. the new normal. Restaurants and pubs have re-opened and everybody is enjoying their newly found freedom.

In order to give singer/songwriters the opportunity to show off their musical and songwriting talents to a live audience, a non-profit Singer/Songwriter organisation called Lakeside Stories puts on a talent competition in a local 'down and out' pub called Jajum. The competition offers a cash prize of 200 euros for the winning act. Lakeside Stories also provides all the acts with a registration form to fill in. In doing so they sign away their ownership to the publication rights for all the live recordings made during the contest.

The artists are all amateur musicians, but displaying varying levels of talent. The contest is organised such that they present themselves with one song each in front of a live audience. Immediately after their performance they receive direct feedback from a critical, and in some instances, very rude jury panel before receiving the thumbs up or thumbs down verdict from the live audience.

After two medium talented female acts have presented themselves, Nigel gets up on the stage. He is awkward, very self-conscious and visibly gay. He describes himself to the audience and panel as a cross between David Bowie and Robbie Williams but turns out to be neither. He is absolutely tone deaf and has a horrible out of tune, high pitched and penetrating voice. It would appear that the frequencies emitted by his voice are excruciating to all within audible distance.

Both the jury panel and the live audience are unanimous in their verdicts and he is absolutely humiliated in front of the live audience. First by the jury panel. "Have you considered a career in brick-laying" one of the panel jokes, followed by some comments like; "Does your bathroom have sufficient audio padding?" "Do you sing your children to sleep at night?" "Have you asked Robbie Williams for a duet?" The audience are lapping it up at the expense of poor old Nigel, who leaves the pub disgraced and in practically in tears. On his way out, one the Lakeside Stories organisers thanks him for his valuable contribution to the event,...and for the publication rights, in a final sarcastic comment during his dramatic exit.

With the remnants of the COVID-19 virus slowly disappearing into the history books, things have never been so sociable, upbeat and positive in years. Then just as things are really getting back to normal, the world is hit by what some virologists and health experts had predicted would happen. A second wave, but combined with a new mutation of the COVID virus! Only this time things are much different and worse.

The new COVID 20 virus claims 100% of its victims. There is no known treatment which can prevent or even delay the deadly outcome of the new virus. To compound matters, the virus is weightless, airborne and can travel long distances rendering social distancing and PPE useless. It can even penetrate the air-conditioning filters and thrives in drinking water. The world population is doomed it would appear.

In order to find a vaccine before the whole human race becomes extinct, all countries decide to pool their most talented virologists, scientists and health organisation experts as a last resort to come up with a vaccine or a cure before it is too late. The urgency for a for a vaccine to be discovered has triggered unprecedented collaboration between countries from different political and religious denominations.

Numerous laboratories are set up all around the world in which the virus is being monitored and tested for its reaction to potential drugs and other substances.

As of yet it has not reacted to any of the substances being tested, even those which did have some kind of slowing down effect on the COVID-19 virus like anti HIV drugs, malaria pills and steroids. Unfortunately not even disinfectant can kill off the new potent virus.

As the pandemic grows, the virus claims more and more lives and mass graves have to be dug. Steel factories are being converted into mass crematoria and the world is in meltdown and doomed as it would appear.

After months of testing without any significant results, all of a sudden there is a breakthrough at one of the laboratories. During a certain test they notice a sharp reaction of the virus which for the first time starts to self-destruct when exposed to a substance.

The international laboratory staff are filled with jubilation. Finally people from all around the world with different racial and cultural backgrounds have made an important discovery. The news leaks out and spreads like wild fire. The world awaits in suspense for confirmation of the new breakthrough. However when the test is repeated, the virus no longer reacts to the substance initially being tested. The optimism soon turns into disillusionment and arguments flair up and cracks start to appear in the global collaboration. Now the world unity is being threatened once again by lack of trust and differing opinions and ideologies.

Refusing to accept the failure of the test, one of the scientists in the laboratory decides to look further and discovers that there is a close circuit tv recording of all the activities carried out in the laboratory. He gets hold of the CCTV video footage and plays back the original recording at the time when the virus first reacted. The only difference he can spot between the repeat tests was the fact that during the initial test one of the lab. assistants entered the room and played a recording of the singer-songwriter contest to her colleague on her iPhone. She herself was one of the singer-songwriter contestants. After her recording

had ended which didn't sound too bad the recording continued with the following artist being Nigel,... and exactly at the moment when Nigel begins to sing, the virus reacts and starts to self-destruct.

The scientist immediately requested the lab. assistant to bring her iPhone into the laboratory to test the recording of Nigel on the virus. Low and behold it worked. Every time the virus was exposed to the horrible sound of Nigel's singing it starts self-destructing.

Again, the news spreads fast and within a week it had leaked out on Twitter that a potential cure is within reach. The Singer-songwriter organisation Lakeside Stories, who holds the publishing rights for the recordings can't believe their luck and are engaged and they are eager and willing to collaborate with the World Health Organisation and major governments in return for an astronomical amount in royalties.

Within days the production and distribution of Nigel's song is in full swing. The recording is being streamed on Spotify and iTunes, also it is made available on CD, EP & USB sticks and broadcast on all TV and Radio stations. Lakeside Stories in the meantime, are raking in the millions in royalties. Simultaneously Nigel is also enjoying his newly found status of superstar and possible saviour of the world.

Within weeks after the publication of Nigel's recording the number of deaths from the Covid-20 virus goes into steep decline and after a month people are beginning to relax again. Unfortunately their relief would be short-lived, as after a few months the virus starts showing signs of resistance to Nigel's recording and it is becoming obvious to all that it will not be sufficient to stop the virus for very much longer.

The scientist who had first discovered the virus' reaction to Nigel's voice decides to get Nigel into the studio to record a new song. A very expensive recording studio is booked and Nigel turns up with some new lyrics, and for want of a better word, a melody line. Phil Spector is granted temporary leave from prison, where he is serving a life sentence for murder. This in an attempt to produce and record a perfect new song of Nigel's.

No expense is spared on the production. The new recording however is not having the desired effect on the virus and Phil Spector discusses the problem with the scientists and the medical experts. They conclude that in order to get the virus to react they will need to re-record the song in the same acoustic environment as the initial recording.

There is just one big problem. The pub Jajum, which was the location of the singer/songwriter contest has since been closed down. The building had been sold off and converted back into a regular house, hence no longer serving as a pub. After a short consultation between the council authorities and the new owner, it was decided to have the new occupants evicted and financially compensated for the loss of their house. The best building contractors are commissioned to reconstruct the pub exactly as it was during the Lakeside Stories singer-songwriter contest. The Lakeside Stories organisation manages to secure the contract to record the new song together with Phil Spector as assistent producer.

Lo and behold, the results are perfect. As predicted the new recording works and causes the virus to self-destruct again when played. The world can breath a sigh of relief again.

This time knowing that the virus would eventually also become resistant to the new recording, plans were being drawn up to record even more songs from Nigel such that a catalog of his songs can be pre-recorded and used whenever needed for protection for the longer term.

Nigel, who is loving all the attention, is not stupid and has also become wise to the fact that he was not receiving sufficient recognition and reward for his amazing contribution to the human race. He begins to think of ways in which he could exploit his newly acquired position to his personal benefit.

Instead of agreeing to multiple songs he decides to offer just one song at a time, each with specific pre-conditions attached. The condition for his 3rd song is a Grammy award in the category best male singer and Time magazine Man of the Year. Needless to say his wishes quickly become reality and he gets his Grammy and Time Magazine Man of the Year awards with all the associated press coverage.

With his popularity growing, Nigel begins to think about more extreme and challenging demands for his future compositions. At one point he decides to request, as a former Catholic, that he can present his new song to pilgrims on the St.Peter Square in Rome together with the Pope. As a token of respect for the fact that Nigel is gay, Nigel requires that the Pope will have to wear a Rainbow coloured cape and say the words. "Its great to be gay" in all different languages including Latin "Non est magnum, esse personas homosexuales".

The Catholic Church are not amused by his extreme demands, but they find themselves under immense pressure from both their fellow Catholic followers and also many world leaders to accept Nigel's outrageous demands. Finally they are reluctantly forced to comply and Nigel makes his historic appearance with the Pope wearing a rainbow coloured cape.

This makes Nigel an even more respected and powerful figure than the pope. Nigel is on a roll, and for his next song, Nigel requests multiple Nobel prizes, for Peace, Science and Literature, dwarfing Bob Dylan's recent achievement. Further he is drawing up new demands to record a new song using as background singers, Kim Jung Un, Donald Trump, Vladimir Poetin, Angela Merkel, Greta Thunberg, Robbie Williams & Lionel Messi.

Now that Nigel can have basically anything and everything he wishes, he starts getting bored and fed up with it all. The fame and fortune is no longer of interest to him and he starts to long for a previous time in his life when he was once happy and in love. This takes him back to his school days where he had a male school friend who he fell in love with. Although their friendship was mutual, the other boy was not gay and when Nigel sought a more intimate relationship with him, he promptly ended their friendship. Subsequently they parted and went their own separate ways.

Seeking revenge for his lost friendship, Nigel demands for his next song that his former school friend divorce his current wife and leave his family with 2 children to come and live with him in a gay relationship. Needless to say the man absolutely refuses, however there is too much at stake. After some subtle, but not so gentle persuasion from a special taskforce comprising of the CIA, KGB, MI5, Mossad, Taliban and Hezbollah, he is reluctantly forced to go along with the plan, and gets divorced. There is a lot of publicity and Nigel's friend is granted hero status as he reluctantly moves from his ex-wife and kids to live in a gay relationship with Nigel. His wife and children are provided with compensation in the form of a surrogate husband and father for as long as it takes. George Clooney is forced to accept the job, commissioned by the same persuasive international task-force. George is good looking and fulfils his role perfectly both as surrogate dad and loving husband.

The press have assembled at Nigel's friends house to cover his departure and the simulaneous arrival of George Clooney. Nigel's friend is completely distraught, but his wife is visibly excited and thrilled at the prospect of getting George Clooney as a replacement. Later that evening there are comical and desperate scenes at both Nigel and his friends house as Nigel gets into bed with his friend while George has to do the business on the other side of town. George has been promised an Oscar if he performs well so he is doing his best while Nigel's friend is a bit more reluctant and depressed.

The excessive and escalating nature of Nigel's preconditions are beginning to make people in high places very jumpy and nervous, realising that Nigel needs to be kept alive and under control.

Then all of a sudden Nigel contracts a deadly form of cancer and seems doomed to die within weeks. Needless to say for his next song Nigel demands a cure for his type of cancer.

Everybody is in total panic, but as it turns out, an American pharmaceutical company secretly already had a fully tested cure for cancer which they were still busy getting it patented.

Due to the urgency they are forced to publish the cure and make it freely available which was one of Nigel's additional conditions. Again under huge pressure, they comply and Nigel is miraculously cured. within weeks thousands of other cancer patients are receiving free treatment and being cured too.

At this point Nigel's global popularity has spiralled and has no limitations. He has single handedly saved the world from the deadly virus, exposed the evil and greed of the American pharmaceutical industry, brought nations together in peaceful collaboration and got a public apology from the Vatican for their discrimination against homo's and lesbians. Nigel is a mega star.

After winning his battle with cancer, things take an unexpected turn for the worse and Nigel is killed as he gets struck by a bus. He dies before he is able to record anymore songs. As his final song slowly loses its effect on the virus the world nervously awaits the deadly resurgence of the virus, and ultimately the extinction of the human race.

In the meantime we are almost a year further and a new COVID virus wave is expected. Again the virus has mutated. This time COVID 21 is just like a common cold, with only a sniffy nose and a slight cough. No life threatening symptoms at all. The significant difference of COVID21 is that apart from some very mild symptoms it attacks the deadly COVID-20 virus and can make a person immune to COVID-20. It just requires that everybody must somehow contract the new virus and spread it to facilitate group immunity. The messaging in the UK is changed to Spread the Disease, Save lives and protect the NHS.

As a result massive festivals are being organised all around the world in which people are mingling at very close range, sharing drinks and other items. Everybody is touching each other in order to ensure they get infected with COVID-21 and hence become immune. Nigel's friend is re-united with wife and family and is awarded the Victoria Cross for bravery and personal sacrifice. George Clooney can go back to his own wife and receives the Oscar together with a slap on the face from his jealous wife.

Back at the new expensive Lakeside Stories Studios located in Malibu, the directors are working on a new recording with their new associate director Phil Spector. Phil managed to get a presidential pardon by Donald Trump for his contribution to society. Phil however, is still very grumpy and trigger happy, especially when he doesn't get his own way on how much reverb and delay effects should be used when mixing the background vocal parts.

The End

#### About the author



Christopher James is a singer/songwriter and a writer of articles and short stories. Worked initially as a professional musician in his early years before moving into IT for a career in IT. Now nearing retirement he is spending more time writing. Lakeside Stories is a non-profit singer-songwriter organisation that Chris runs together with his singer-songwriter partner Laurens Reij. Chris wrote this story to accompany a song he wrote at the start of the Corona era in March 2020 entitled I Think I'm Going Down.

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www.chrisjames.nl christopher.john.james@gmail.com