

24 hours in the life of an Obsessive-Compulsive student.

Just Another Day

**Buy The Complete Version of This Book at
Booklocker.com:**

<http://www.booklocker.com/p/books/2377.html?s=pdf>

Just Another Day

Chapter 1

It's Monday evening, and I'm about to turn in for the night. It's been an uneventful day really, nothing quite unusual. I'm not certain what most people would think of my life if I described it, even if an attempt at explanation was put forth. But sometimes, I feel like it would be good for someone to understand. Of course, I possess no illusions as to people's ability to comprehend my experiences. It's really all logical and illogical simultaneously for someone like me. Understandably, the world has serious difficulty in seeing past the latter quality of such events.

In any case, my alarm did not surprise me that morning at 6 a.m. Nothing quite surprised me anymore. I wasn't quite asleep so the prospect of actually rising didn't seem so negative. My mind had been racing for the past 3 hours.

SHADI SROUR

Of course, I thought about my girlfriend. We had been seeing each other for almost a year. I'm not particularly sure how she put up with me, but I suspect it might have something to do with how clever my mind can both create camouflage and yet carry out its essential task of analyzing the world and my actions down to the finest detail.

We both attend the same college, and it makes for a less complicated relationship. Relativity, of course, must be observed in the level of complication. It's hard to say exactly when the worst of this all started, but it's been pretty consistent for years.

Lying in bed that morning, hours before the sun would rise, I let my mind wander. My mind's wandering, however, probably cannot be compared to the average person's use of such terminology. This wandering was brisk, firm, and detailed. I'm not quite sure what the initial thought took the form of, but it seems to me that I was thinking about the past.

JUST ANOTHER DAY

My mind replayed a memory from about a year ago. I couldn't be sure of the date, which proved to be a problem. I was, at the time, thinking about another woman, but the episode seemed minor while it took place. In fact, my memory had relegated it to a place reserved for insignificant events. I had been somewhat interested in this woman, but this interest hardly lasted a few hours. Thus, the entire event seemed almost foreign to me, and I couldn't quite place it. When had I talked to this woman? When had I expressed my interest in dating her? And that's when it hit.

It begins slowly. A tingle in the stomach. An indescribable feeling—one that I could equate with the most horrendous suffering that a living human could possibly face. It creeps, and crawls, and envelops. Soon, it fills your entire being with the fear, the dread, the horror, and the agony.

Typically, when pain exists in a part of the body, there is a medication that can relieve the pain in 15-20 minutes. And yet, for this feeling, for this intense suffering, I could find no relief.

SHADI SROUR

There was no relief, and there is no relief. I've had this feeling before, many, many times. And you can think to yourself, God, please help me.

The pain still comes.

Interestingly enough, the mind seems to devise a solution to this fear. Searching for anything to slow the spread of the pain, to give an instant of relief, the mind will go to any length. And so, the review began.

Doubts upon doubts began to accumulate that sleepless morning. Did I pursue this other woman while in a relationship with my current girlfriend? Did I, in fact, cheat on my girlfriend? The moral question daunted me. Betraying someone's trust represents an unacceptable concept to me, and the guilt of such action would likely paralyze me.

And, following my instinct, I searched my mind for the truth. I knew that I would never cheat on anyone. I know that I will never cheat. And yet, the doubt and uncertainty overwhelmed

JUST ANOTHER DAY

me. I couldn't even keep up with the questions that my mind was throwing at me.

What if my moral code had not been established one year ago? What if I was a different person? How could I be sure that I didn't do something wrong? How could I prove that I had pursued this other woman before starting my current relationship?

Of course, I recounted every detail, every event, all surrounding events, and I pieced together the evidence as if the verdict would somehow set my mind at ease. I investigated everything, took notes on a notepad that I kept next to my bed. I paced my room, in circles, mumbling and talking to myself as if I were absolutely mad. And perhaps I am mad—the thought has crossed my mind on numerous occasions. But the truth of the matter was that I didn't quite care about madness at that moment—the moral obligation of finding the truth daunted me. I could not separate myself from the task of discovering exactly what had happened on that fateful day.

SHADI SROUR

I called her, as I recall, and we talked about school and careers and so forth. I remember detecting her affectionate tone quite early in our conversation. The guilt in me rose to an unbearable level. I attempted to piece together events that could divulge the temporal nature of the crime. It was the same weekend that my friends and I had gone to that fascinating restaurant that closed down just recently.

Oh my, that restaurant.

I had opened another mystery that required my attention, for at that restaurant there were scantily dressed women. These women danced in the classic belly dancer style, and I began to fear the worst. Had I interacted inappropriately with one of the dancers? No, of course, I hadn't. It was that disgusting man across the aisle that had done it. I reviewed this new mystery in my mind to be certain of my innocence in the matter.

The dancer had come around, moving elegantly amongst the audience. The man caught her attention, and slipped the dollar

JUST ANOTHER DAY

bill into her clothing with heavy sexual intention. I focused on that moment, remembered the dollar bill, and noted each moment as it precisely moved from his hand to her body. Something in me still couldn't be certain.

It's hard to explain to people that you doubt everything.

Your senses, your eyes, your memories, your logic, your sanity, your morality, your innocence.

And yet, I doubt all of these things. The memory of that dollar bill stayed with me for a few moments, and I was filled with guilt from the ambiguous verdict.

In any case, the dollar bill simply formed a collateral issue. If I could only focus on the main issue, that of the conversation with the woman, perhaps I could finally move on with my life guilt-free.

I've been told by many teachers and testing facilities over the years that I possess a very high intellectual capability. It's very strange to consider then, that such a person could not see the

SHADI SROUR

futility of my pursuit. The case simply could not be solved. In a way, this made me feel better. But only for a moment. The insidious guilt quickly returned, forcing me to reconsider the case. If one only looked hard enough, took enough notes, and added up the weight of all available evidence, surely doubt could be removed. I knew how stupid such thinking was, but could not turn back the force of my mind. It really didn't matter that the verdict would always be ambiguous. It truly did not matter that I was certain that I could not have cheated. None of these facts mattered. The doubt lingered, and the guilt accumulated. My instinct told me that if I just kept circling around the memories and considering all angles, my guilt would alleviate. And sometimes, I would reach a conclusion—one that essentially confirmed what I already knew—that I was innocent. But the guilt would return with double the strength within a few minutes, and I would begin the circling again.

JUST ANOTHER DAY

Two problems surface with such attempts at quelling doubt. First of all, there seems to be a problem with a specific type of memory in people like me. We can put a doubt to rest for a few minutes, being fully satisfied that innocence has reigned supreme. In five minutes, however, the topic of cheating comes up again, and I begin to wonder whether I had solved the case or not. This inevitably leads to starting the cycle from scratch, increasing the guilt, anxiety, and shame.

The second impetus that leads to returning to the scene of the crime revolves around new questions. This morning, for example, I found myself feeling satisfied that I had been faithful to my girlfriend, only to think of a perspective on the event that I had not yet considered. Could it be that this new evidence would change the verdict? Nothing could be left to doubt, of course, and ignoring new evidence could not withstand the moral authority of my overactive conscience. Again, I was led down the stairwell into the depths of my mind. In fact, I couldn't imagine a more

SHADI SROUR

hellish place than the court within my conscience. I was on trial—a trial that never ended, and a trial that could never end.

Back and forth, back and forth, I walked in circles around my bed. I looked at the clock—4 a.m. Well, at least I've only been at this an hour, I thought. If I keep working on the evidence, perhaps I could finish by 6 a.m. That would give me some time to take a shower, clean-up, and go to the exam at 7 a.m.

Somehow, I couldn't stand the thought of distractions. I couldn't fathom taking an exam under such conditions. My mind was devoted to piecing together the puzzle. It was dedicated to solving the crime and bringing myself to justice if necessary. I was convinced that no crime could possibly deserve such punishment. The punishment of the trial itself made me cringe.

Thoughts blazed through every structure of my brain, faster and faster. I visualized entire maps with lines connecting events and facts. Words were strung together with pictures, pictures with captions, lines with checks, checks with circles, and a thousand

JUST ANOTHER DAY

other symbols that only I knew the meaning of. This language of doubt, this language of mystery and guilt, makes little sense to outside observers. When checking an event to see if infidelity occurred, for example, I would review each piece of the memory like a film. Each frame would be scrutinized for any deviations from moral propriety. If any question would arise as to my motivation during the individual frame, a new case would be opened.

Trial after trial began, case after case, and I seemed to always be declared innocent by my mind's court, yet the guilt would remain. New evidence would accumulate, and the cases would reopen.

Attempts to create certainty are doomed to failure in people like me. It's a constant battle between finding certainty and questioning the new mode that created the temporary relief from guilt. The system of checks and maps worked for approximately twenty minutes that morning. Soon, however, the court became

SHADI SROUR

too intelligent for such tactics. I began to question whether I had actually checked a piece of evidence off or whether the check was imagined. I knew, of course, instinctively, that I had in fact accurately checked the information. The fabric of security that my system had temporarily achieved began to crumble.

I began to doubt more and more. My head filled with insignificant details of events that would have been long forgotten by an average human. Memories played games on me, and I couldn't trust any systems of assurance any longer. Guilt built to levels that a human spirit was never meant to endure. It was only 5 a.m.

Dizziness began to overtake me, and I tried to sit down. In an instant, however, I was back on my feet, wandering in circles and mumbling over expansive stacks of memories. I know if anyone saw me they would immediately diagnose insanity. I'm glad I am so good at blending in with people. I'm so good, in fact,

JUST ANOTHER DAY

that most people consider me a good friend who is slightly strange in character. Slightly strange is preferable to insane.

I needed to leave my room to get a drink in the dorm. At moments like this, I thank God that my roommate didn't show up the first day of school. The school still hasn't noticed, so I live by myself in this college dorm. Anyhow, I opened the door and looked down the hall. With all doors closed and the silence of the morning, I walked down to the drinking fountain.

This dorm is quite new, and the piping should be as well. I reminded myself of this every time I took a drink from that dreaded fountain. After thinking about the regulations that banned lead from piping in buildings, I reassured myself that these new pipes contained no lead. Regardless, it never hurts to be safe with water. I pushed the button and watched the water arch across the fountain.

One two three four one two three four one two three four
one two three four.

SHADI SROUR

I never drank until the water had been running as long as I had counted. I took several sips and swallowed. I did remember to count before drinking didn't I? The thought frightened me. Reason told me otherwise, but the doubt grew. I told myself that I didn't have time for such trivialities when moral considerations such as infidelity still needing my attention in the room. Back in the room, I felt exhausted. Two hours of sleep and too much thinking had left me in a coma-like-stupor in my bed. The guilt didn't leave. No, of course, it didn't. I simply felt tired, dizzy, and guilty simultaneously. After another hour of court, I heard my alarm.

24 hours in the life of an Obsessive-Compulsive student.

Just Another Day

**Buy The Complete Version of This Book at
Booklocker.com:**

<http://www.booklocker.com/p/books/2377.html?s=pdf>