



The Delusional Winnipeg Con Man who Lured People all Over the World into Believing his Schemes

By BERNIE BELLAN

Introduction

The story you're about to read originally began as a work of non-fiction. Although everything in this story is true, I've changed the names of most of the individuals mentioned in this story – to protect their identities.

This story is about a very sick man who lives in Winnipeg and who has caused terrible damage to many different people over a long period of time by promising he would invest in projects with different individuals. The reality, however, was that the person making all those promises was – and still is, deeply delusional. In fact, while he has very little money, for years he has believed he was someone of immense wealth – and has been telling people all over the world that phoney story. Further, because he is actually highly intelligent and, at one point, had a very successful business career, he has been quite adept at convincing different people all over the world who were looking for someone to help invest in their particular projects that he would invest in those projects.

I originally posted that story – in two parts, on two separate days, to this website in early February 2026. When I posted that story though, I didn't hide the name of the person who is now the subject of this story. Two days after the first part of that story appeared on this website, however, I received a warning email from a lawyer - who happens to be someone I've known for a long time, but who also explained that he's a cousin of the individual who was the subject of my story. In that email the lawyer wrote that, unless I removed that story from my website immediately, I could be sued for defamation.

That lawyer said that he was acting for the parents of the man about whom I had written my story. Receiving that email incensed me because, as you read on, you will see that many of the individuals who suffered greatly as a result of what had happened to them when they were contacted by the “con man” about whom this story is written, had attempted to reach out to the con man's parents, asking them to do something to keep their son from continuing to deceive individuals with promises that he would invest in the various projects which these individuals hoped to see succeed.

But – that email had the desired effect. As I will explain, I've had previous experience with being threatened with a defamation lawsuit and I had no desire to go through that experience again. So, I took the story down.

This story though, was something I was very ambivalent about writing in the first place because it's about someone who suffers from a very serious mental disorder and, in my career as a journalist, I've preferred to stay away from doing medical stories, especially ones that relate to psychiatric illnesses. I have had writers who specialize in medical stories work for me and I know how much effort they would put into understanding what it was they were writing about when it came to specific illnesses. It's time consuming to do the necessary research and not easy for a writer who doesn't have a medical background to understand the terminology involved in doing those kinds of stories.

This story, therefore, is not intended to offer a deep dive into the one particular form of mental disorder that, it seems apparent, has affected the principal subject of this story - in this case a delusional disorder

– or psychosis. I don't know his medical history, so when I say that he has a delusional disorder, I'm offering that assessment based entirely on his behaviour, not on any actual medical reports.

In speaking with his mother many years ago, after I had first met the man who is the subject of this story, I was told by her that her son is bi-polar. Whether he is or is not bi-polar though, he is totally delusional. About that, there can be no doubt. Further, his behaviour clearly fits a diagnosis of a delusional psychosis, so I am going to refer to him throughout this story as someone who is suffering from a delusional psychosis. For the purpose of this story, I've given him a name which is not his real name: Fred Devlin.

I have no idea what may have triggered the delusion that so clearly manifests itself in Devlin's behaviour, but the harm he has caused to so many people over the years is a clear indication that his disorder has not been brought under control or, even if it has been brought under control at times, it couldn't have been for very long, since I spoke to many individuals who had been contacted by Devlin, going back quite a few years – all of whom told similar stories of being totally deceived by him. I won't pretend to understand what may have led Devlin to become so totally delusional that he can no longer distinguish fantasy from reality. He has been hospitalized many times, according to individuals with whom I spoke, but it is apparent that even when he's been hospitalized, he still behaves in a delusional manner.

According to material found on the internet - "Delusional disorder is a psychiatric condition characterized by the presence of one or more fixed, false beliefs (delusions) lasting for at least one month, without other prominent psychotic symptoms like hallucinations or disorganized thought. Individuals often function normally apart from the delusion, which can be non-bizarre (situations that could occur in real life)....Their delusions are not caused from drugs or general disorders."

"Delusional psychosis (or delusional disorder) is treated primarily through a combination of antipsychotic medications and psychotherapy, such as cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), often requiring long-term management. Treatment aims to reduce symptoms, improve functioning, and build trust, as individuals frequently lack insight into their condition and may resist care."

I don't know enough about Devlin to know what kind of treatment he may have received over the years but, whatever treatments there may have been, they clearly didn't work. He has carried on a long pattern of promising substantial financial support to a great many different individuals – who put their trust in him, often signed contracts with him and, in many cases, spent huge numbers of hours working on projects, only to learn that it was all for naught because Devlin was a total fraud. Many of those stories will be told in the following pages.

Further, when he has been confronted over his lies, Devlin has consistently lashed out at anyone who would dare suggest he's delusional, threatening those individuals with lawsuits or other forms of retaliation. Even as I've been writing this story, apparently word of what I've been doing has filtered back to Devlin, and he's threatened different individuals who have been telling me their stories that he will commit great harm to them if they continue to cooperate with me.

Some of the individuals whose stories are told in this story related to me that they would often get phone calls from Devlin while he was hospitalized in different psychiatric wards. He would make excuses for his being hospitalized - that he was sick with various physical illnesses whose nature would vary, but he would never admit that he had been placed in a psychiatric ward.

It is also possible that, since he is totally delusional, he did believe that he was in the hospital for reasons that had nothing to do with him being mentally ill. At one point, for instance, when he was asked by another psychiatric patient why he was in the psych ward, Devlin replied that he owned the hospital and he just wanted to see how they were treating patients there. As you can read when I tell that story in more detail later on, the psych patient who asked Devlin that question didn't think there was anything unusual about Devlin's answer. That tells you all you need to know about the state of mind of the person who told me that story.

Although I was somewhat amused that he didn't find Devlin's having told him that he owned the hospital where they both found themselves at all difficult to believe, I found that a great many of the other individuals who were caught up in Devlin's con also suffered from various psychological disorders of one sort or another. In some ways it goes to explain how otherwise intelligent sounding people might have fallen for stories that one would normally expect would be dismissed as utter nonsense.

One of the mysteries in learning about Devlin though, was who was putting him into the hospital on those occasions when he ended up in the psych ward? Was it his wife? Was it his parents? It really doesn't matter – but his wife and his parents have been complicit in allowing Devlin to perpetrate his delusional behaviour for years and, I would argue, bear responsibility for the damage he has caused to so many different people. What does matter is that he has engaged in communication with so many different individuals over a great many years while suffering from the delusion that he is immensely wealthy and is capable of offering huge financial help to trusting individuals. (There are other aspects of his delusion too, about which I'll write, such as that he is guarded by agents from Israel's Mossad, that he is very involved in helping maintain Israel's security, and that he owns huge tracts of land in Winnipeg and in Israel.)

One of the things I learned during the course of my investigation into Devlin's long career as a con artist - and I have to reiterate that he didn't actually realize he was a con artist, was that he likes to spend his days in a very fancy Winnipeg hotel that's very popular with Winnipeg's business crowd – the Fairmont, where he holds court. Devlin has a regular table in a restaurant there and is well known by many of the staff there.

He also likes to hang out at another nearby spot that's also popular with the business crowd: Hy's. In fact, after I had finished writing most of this story I was surprised to be contacted by Devlin himself, inviting me to meet him at either the Fairmont or Hy's. That very strange meeting, which happened to take place at Hy's, forms the basis of the final chapter of this story.

One of the things I asked Devlin at that meeting, however, is who was paying for all his meals at those two establishments? As I will show, Fred Devlin has no visible means of support, which means that

someone else is providing him with the money that is allowing him to continue perpetrating his con – even as I write this. I asked Devlin that very question when I sat face to face with him, but when he still insisted that he is fabulously wealthy – a trillionaire nine times over as a matter of fact, I persisted in asking him whether it's not the case that his parents have been providing for him for years? In fact, it's his parents' role, also his wife's, in allowing Devlin to carry on his nonsense for so many years that has allowed him to inflict so much damage on so many people's lives.

Many of the individuals with whom I spoke - or with whom I exchanged a lengthy email correspondence in one particular case, recounted their having reached out to Devlin's parents in attempts to have them intercede once those individuals realized that Devlin was a complete fraud. Those attempts were all met with the same explanation from Devlin's parents, I was told: that Fred Devlin was not well - and to leave it at that. In no case did his parents offer to intercede, even when told how much Devlin's behaviour had so negatively affected so many individuals.

You may be asking yourself: Why write about someone who was – and still is, so clearly mentally ill? The reason is that what Fred Devlin did - to so many different people and, even as I'm writing this, is apparently still attempting to do, was so awful, that when I was first told about him in an email I received on January 16, 2026, my initial reaction was: What could I do to expose this guy and keep him from harming anyone else? My thinking was that if I wrote about him and published something on my website, at the very least others who might be contacted by him, but who would do an internet search to verify who he was, would see my story and realize he's a total fraud.

Unfortunately, when I was threatened with a lawsuit over what I had written - and I immediately withdrew what I had published, I thought that instead, I'll write the same story, but I'll use a different name for the subject of my story - and not use his wife's or his parents' real names either.

In addition, I had already promised everyone with whom I spoke for the purpose of gathering material for this story that I would not use their real names in whatever story I would write. I didn't want to embarrass any of them by revealing that they had fallen for Devlin's deception. Thus, my giving everyone different names than their real ones is consistent with what I had told each of them I would do. What I had told each of the individuals whose lives were impacted by Paul Devlin though, was that I wanted to write about what had happened to each of them and include it in a larger story.

Each part of this continuing story will tell a different story – as told to me by each of the individuals with whom I communicated over a period of time in an attempt to understand just how Fred Devlin had convinced each one of them that he was fabulously wealthy and he was going to help each of them with particular projects in which they were involved. How Devlin found each of these individuals is in itself a mystery. Apparently, he is very adept at networking, so that one individual whom he would contact would put him in touch with another individual – and so on, to the point where he built up a large network of contacts.

As I've become immersed in this story, however, I've been playing a more active role than simply as a journalist trying to write a story. I've been quite involved in trying to help one of Devlin's victims - who suffered the worst financial losses of any of the individuals with whom I spoke who had told me they

had fallen victim to Fred Devlin's promises of financial help. I've been trying to help this one individual launch a lawsuit against Devlin. Although we did garner the interest of one of Winnipeg's top civil litigators, in the end the notion of filing a lawsuit against Devlin was abandoned for the simple reason that it's pointless to sue someone who has no money or assets and, as the lawyer explained, it would not be possible to attach either Devlin's wife's name or his parents' names to any lawsuit – no matter how much one might argue they bore responsibility for his behaviour by not keeping him under careful supervision.

I've also been attempting to contact various police agencies to see why no fraud charges have been filed against Devlin. That story is ongoing as I write this, but here we're running up against bureaucratic police behaviour – in which one police agency is reluctant to cooperate with another police agency. To illustrate, a detective in the York Regional Police department did open an investigation into Devlin back in January 2026 at the behest of an individual who lives in Toronto who was one of Devlin's victim but, since Devlin himself lives in Winnipeg, that detective sent the file to Winnipeg Police Service. However, the detective in the York Regional Police department attached a file number to that file. When the individual in Toronto who had filed the complaint with York Regional Police contacted WPS to ask whether a file had been received from York Regional Police the answer he was given was that the “case file number you refer to would not be associated with a WPS numbering system as our case numbers would start with a letter, year, and file. (C2600XXXXX).

“As such, I did not find a any case number associated with Mr. ... in our police records.”

What was strange though, was that the detective with the York Regional Police had sent that file by registered mail – and it had been signed for by someone in the WPS.

When the person who filed that original complaint asked WPS to search for the file, he did receive a confirmation that they had found the file – but would not provide any further information. So, who knows? Maybe long after this is published we'll hear something about the WPS actually launching an investigation into the person we're calling Fred Devlin here.

I've also been trying to help another of Devlin's victims - this time someone who lives in Africa, try to restore his reputation in his community. This poor fellow had gone so far, at Devlin's behest, as to set up a charitable foundation in the phoney name of Devlin's supposed group of companies - using money borrowed from someone in his community, after Devlin had promised him he would provide funding for that charitable foundation. That African individual has told me several times that he is thinking of committing suicide, both because he is now a pariah in his community for having promised the members of his community that a large charitable foundation was about to be set up there, and because he is in debt to a money lender in his community to whom he owes a great deal of money with no practical means of paying off that debt.

I actually went so far as to send this poor fellow enough money to stave off the money lender from coming after him for a few months. As I write this, I don't know what the African individual's status is re the debt he owes, although I am staying in constant communication with him – in no small part because I don't want him to kill himself over what Fred Devlin did to him. The story of the African

man who just wanted to help others by starting a charitable foundation – that was supposed to be funded by Fred Devlin, is told in the second last chapter of this story.

So, I have more than a dispassionate interest in telling a good story. I've placed myself directly into the story itself - and my hope is that, at some point I'll be able to report that, at the very least, Devlin is no longer perpetrating his frauds on anyone else. That could happen in one of three ways: The individual whom I've been assisting in finding a lawyer who would be willing to sue Devlin has also been in contact with police authorities. Perhaps there will be a charge or charges laid against Devlin but, in truth, it's been more than three months since the police were first contacted about Devlin by that individual and, to date, nothing has happened.

The second possibility is that we may discover that Devlin actually has a sizeable amount of money – perhaps given to him by his parents. He does spend his days in fairly expensive surroundings – as I noted. While a lawsuit seems improbable at this point, the lawyer who was considering whether to file one certainly agreed that there are very solid grounds to file one, but warned that it would be fruitless unless it can be shown that Devlin either has money or owns some assets of real value.

The final possibility is that the individuals who are closest to Devlin – his wife and his parents, would take concerted action to put a stop to his behaviour. All they have to do, realistically, is make sure he never comes into contact with a phone or a computer ever again. It's by contacting unsuspecting people all over the world and feeding them a line about how wealthy he is that Devlin has been able to carry on his gigantic fraud for so many years. But, if he's not able to contact anyone – via a phone or a computer, then it would be possible to put a stop to his behaviour. Is that so difficult to do? I suppose the answer is yes, it's very difficult to do. How do you keep someone from obtaining a phone these days? At the very least, if he could be monitored closely then Devlin might be prevented from reaching out to more innocent victims which, unless he's stopped, he is bound to persist in doing.

I should note that, in writing a story that is still ongoing, I'm having to make constant additions to the story as new information comes to my attention. For instance, even though I've already noted that I had published a story on my website about the real person whom I've chosen to refer to as Fred Devlin here - and I did remove it, I have now been made aware that apparently someone managed to retrieve what I had posted even after it was expunged, and another website was created with the sole purpose of republishing what I had written. Thus, I might still be held accountable for what I originally published – even though I did remove it from my website. But, since that story has apparently been quite accessible for quite some time, according to what I was told, and I haven't heard anything more from the lawyer who warned me I could be sued for defamation, my guess is that Devlin's parents realize that suing me would only cause them greater embarrassment than if they simply did nothing.

Perhaps, too, the embarrassment of seeing that story still disseminated on the internet might be enough to motivate Devlin's parents to keep him in check - something, I would suggest, they have been fully capable of doing ever since he developed his psychosis. Since his parents have refused to discuss their son's condition with me, I have no idea what steps they may have taken over the years to harness his behaviour, ever since they learned that their son is mentally ill. I do feel compassion for them – and

how much anguish their son must have brought to their lives, but the fact is he has brought so much grief upon so many others that any compassion I feel for them is outweighed by the anger I have that they have been complicit in allowing him to con so many people.

Chapter 2

Meeting the con man for the first time in the summer of 2021

I actually met Fred Devlin several years ago – but never imagined that he was as delusional as I’ve now been made quite aware. As I noted in the story that did appear on my website until I removed it, Devlin believes that he is someone of incredible wealth. Not only that, as I noted at the beginning of that story, he also believes he has had a brilliant business career (and owns over 300 companies or 3,000 companies – depending on when you may have been talking to him. For instance, when I first met him – in 2021, he told me he owned over 300 companies. When I met him again just recently that figure had grown to over 3,300 companies).

He also claims that he is a fervent supporter of the State of Israel, has strong connections to the Mossad, and owns a great deal of land both in Winnipeg and in Israel. Finally, now that he had made his billions (or his trillions, as the case may be), he maintains that he only wants to devote himself to helping others - whether it is by investing in various business ventures or by engaging in philanthropic endeavours.

The problem, as I was to discover as I waded further and further into Devlin's bizarre story, is that nothing he believes about himself is true. That, in itself, is not so unusual. Many people suffer from different forms of psychosis. The difference between most people who suffer from a psychosis and Fred Devlin, however, is that he has not stopped believing his fantasy for many years now. How long he has been suffering from his psychosis I am not quite sure because, as you might expect, no one close to him in his family is willing to talk about his illness.

And, that is one of the questions that has been plaguing me as I set out to do research for this story: Could Fred Devlin have been stopped through early intervention by individuals close to him? This fellow has been married for many years. What role has his wife played in enabling his delusional behaviour? And what of his parents? As I will explain, they have been well aware that their son is very sick. For how long, I'm not quite sure but, as I will relate, his psychotic behaviour clearly began manifesting itself when he was in his thirties – and he's now over 60.

Devlin has been in and out of psychiatric wards - that much is apparent from stories I have been told by different people who talked to him at different stages in his life when he was actually hospitalized in different psychiatric wards. (When I was finally able to confront him about his history of being hospitalized because of his psychiatric disorder, of course he denied that's ever been the case, but then said he didn't want to talk about it.)

Still, after learning so much about the hurt Devlin has caused to so many people, I kept coming back to wondering what more could have been done to prevent him from inflicting so much damage - and pain, upon so many individuals over a very long period of time, as a result of his harbouring such a deep delusional psychosis? That question is at the heart of what has been motivating me to write this story.

Even as I write this - and so far the process has taken me several months, I continue to receive communications from different individuals whose lives have suffered terrible impacts as a result of having come into contact with Fred Devlin. I feel so helpless when I receive another message - whether it's through an email, a text, a WhatsApp message, or occasionally a phone call, telling me that someone has just received another message from Devlin - again repeating the same delusional nonsense about his being fabulously wealthy and, that if they waited just a little bit longer, he was going to come through with the financial help he had promised them.

As I've already noted, at the beginning of February 2026, I had written the first two chapters of what I thought would be an interesting and probably for most readers, an absolutely unbelievable story about Fred Devlin. I had posted those chapters to my website with the idea that it would certainly attract interest - and it sure did. It had over 1,000 views within two days.

But, the idea of turning that story into a much longer story broken into chapters? That was the furthest thought from my mind at the time - for a number of reasons. For one, I'd never written a story that long and I knew how challenging an assignment that is (at least, that is - to write a good, long story. In the course of my career as a publisher and editor, I've received many books from publicists - often authors themselves, that I thought were simply awful - and could, at the very least, have used a good editor. The advent of self-publishing has led to a flood of poorly written books that, had they been submitted to a real story publishing firm, would no doubt have been rejected without hesitation.)

The other reason I was reluctant to turn what I had already written into a much longer story was that, at first, I thought I didn't really have enough material to warrant taking on such a daunting project. As time went on, however, and as I began to delve ever deeper into the subject matter that first attracted my attention, I began to hear from more and more individuals who were eventually to become part of the story you are about to read. I soon realized that the story was so much more complicated than I had first thought. In fact, I thought, it probably would best be treated as a continuing series of stories - much like a blog, on my own website, in which I could add new information as it came to me each day.

I wanted to expose that individual by having his name out there for anyone else who might be contacted by him with him telling them he wanted to invest in their projects. That way, I thought, anyone doing an internet search for his name would come across my story and immediately realize that this character is totally delusional - so no one would be duped by him again.

Could I have changed what I had written into something semi-fictional by changing everyone's names and kept that story up on my website? Perhaps. But then the story wouldn't have had the same impact, would it? Who would have known who it was about whom I was writing? That's the problem with writing a "roman à clef" which, I admit, is certainly a problem with the way I'm telling the story here. My hope is that this story will serve as yet an added warning to be on guard for con artists, especially when advancements in artificial intelligence have made it so much easier to fool people into believing stories that sound quite credible. The difference in Fred Devlin's case though has been that as he tells his stories, he sounds all the more convincing because he actually believes them. When I finally got the opportunity to confront him about his trail of deceit, however, even though he kept sticking to the line that everything he says about himself is absolutely "true," I was able to trip him up by asking him why essential details, such as how many companies he owned, had changed from when I talked to him in 2021 to now. (You'll see that if you read my entire interview with Devlin, which will be posted later this month.)

Here's a short excerpt from my asking him about the number of companies he alleges to own:

"Me: How many companies now is it (in the group of companies)?"

"Devlin: 3,300... 3,306.

Me: When I spoke to you in 2021, it was 300.

"Devlin: I was being honest. Okay."

The absurdity of it all might leave you laughing, but bear in mind that I was firing rapid questions at him during that interview, trying to expose how ridiculous he was in talking about how wealthy he is. For almost everyone else to whom I've spoken about Fred, however, the impression he leaves is of someone who has quite a bit of money but doesn't like to disclose the source of that money for reasons of confidentiality. That doesn't sound so far fetched, does it?

Even as I write this I'm still in touch with people who have been contacted by the person I'm calling Fred Devlin. Several people have already read my first chapter and got in touch with me to tell me their own stories of being acquainted with Devlin.

I'm now so deeply involved in trying to help various characters in this story obtain some degree of justice over what Fred Devlin has done to them though, that I feel I owe them a duty to see this story through to the end – which may mean that I'll be adding to this story for quite some time.

For instance, as I mentioned, I became involved in attempting to facilitate a lawsuit against Fred Devlin by one of the individuals who suffered the worst financial loss at his hands. While others with whom I spoke wasted hours of their time thinking that Paul Devlin was going to invest in their projects, this particular individual actually suffered real monetary loss as a result of his having signed what he thought was a fully legitimate contract with Devlin – in which Devlin assured him that he would be compensated if he were to stop paying any debts he owed to creditors. That promise to be compensated for debts ended up costing that individual a huge amount in penalties for unpaid debts.

And, even though, as I've explained, the lawyer who said he's ready to file a lawsuit advised against it for the reason that Fred Devlin doesn't seem to have any real money of his own, who knows? Maybe we'll find that he has been given a great deal of money by his parents. Someone has been paying the charges he's been racking up at the Fairmont, Hy's, and other pricey establishments in Winnipeg.

As well, I've been helping another of Devlin's victims – this time someone who lives in Africa. As I write this, that poor fellow has been contemplating committing suicide, he tells me; his life has been ruined so badly by his having fallen for another of the con man's schemes. I've been spending a great deal of time with this poor African fellow – in fact, helping him quite a bit financially, in order to keep him from doing anything rash. That's how badly some people have fallen prey to the con man who is the subject of this story.

Devlin's story of conning people goes back to at least 2008, I discovered in talking to one individual who has had contact with Devlin for at least 18 years. Over a period of many years, I found in talking to others, Devlin had convinced a great many individuals that he was someone of immense wealth who was interested in helping them further their ambitions - whether those ambitions were related to business or, in another instance, to creating a charitable foundation.

But, as I've already noted, I did publish two chapters about the con man on my website, and I received that warning letter from the lawyer telling me that I could be sued for defamation if I didn't remove what I had written from my website.

I had previous experience with being threatened with a defamation lawsuit. I had written an exposé of a prominent Manitoba investment fund which, I alleged, was hiding the true state of its precarious financial situation from investors in that fund. I learned from that experience that a lawyer can pick apart a story to find minute flaws and claim that his or her client was defamed as a result, no matter how inconsequential those mistakes may have been to the larger story. Even though I was vindicated in the end in that particular instance by my story eventually proving largely right - and the investment fund was forced into receivership, having to hire a lawyer to fend off a lawsuit taught me that "libel chill" is a very effective tool when someone powerful wants to squelch criticism.

Something else happened to me though, after I published those two stories to my website, and as I continued to probe ever more deeply into the story about which I had begun to write. I began to hear stories from more and more individuals how they, too, had been duped by by the individual whose real name had been exposed in the stories on my website. Their stories were all so fascinating – often bizarre, that I began to think: No one is going to believe this; it's so outlandish.

So, if it will make you want to read on but, as you're reading you're going to say: This is so absurd I can't believe this really happened, then consider it fiction in the same way that writers such as Norman Mailer, Tom Wolfe, and Gay Talese would combine elements of fiction in writing about events that were largely true. I myself don't know how much to believe of the stories I was told by so many individuals about the person who ensnared them all in what ultimately was one giant delusion, but regardless how much of what they told me was true, the stories were endlessly fascinating.

And that's what this story is really about. It's about someone who was - and still is, so completely deluded that when he tells someone that he's a "trillionaire," for instance, or that he owns "3,339" different companies around the world well, hard as it is to believe, this guy actually believes what he is saying is true.

As I began to do research for this story I read about individuals who suffer from a delusion psychosis. I referred previously to a definition of delusional psychosis, but just to reiterate, according to the Cleveland Clinic, "delusional psychosis is a mental health condition in which a person can't tell what's real from what's imagined. There are many types, including persecutory, jealous and grandiose types. It's treatable with psychotherapy and medication."

During the course of my over-40 year career as a newspaper publisher, I've met a number of strange individuals - a few of whom deserved to be put into straitjackets, but never had I met anyone whose story was so strange that when I began telling friends the story, their almost immediate reactions were along these lines: "We don't believe you. It's too crazy to have happened."

I take as inspiration for this story a story that I read and reviewed several years ago, titled "Proof of Life," written by someone by the name of Daniel Levin. That story tells the story of Levin's having been engaged to seek the whereabouts of a young American man who had gone missing in Syria in the early days of Syria's civil war.

Levin describes meeting a wild mix of characters in various parts of the Middle East. Whether the stories they were telling him were true or not he couldn't actually tell for certain, he admits, but they were all so alluring that he followed up each and every one of them. In the end, he does come to a rather sobering conclusion about what happened to that young American but, like just about every other story about someone who's gone missing during a period of great turmoil, it's almost impossible to distinguish fact from fiction as to what really happened.

Still, it's Levin's telling of the story that I found so captivating. In the end, it didn't matter whether he had cobbled together a series of disparate stories that often contradicted one another; the cast of characters he assembled was interesting enough to hold your attention without wondering whether anything Levin says they told him was true or not.

I actually interviewed Levin because I was so interested in knowing what motivated him to enter into a story that was labyrinthian in scope - and I wanted to know more about the techniques he used to get stories from some very scary characters.

I admired his perseverance in chasing down the story - at great risk to his own safety, and I have often thought of his determination not to be deterred from following wherever his story may have led him - no matter how dangerous following that road may have been.

And, because I myself still have such a hard time believing what I've been told in the story you're about to read, rather than simply writing a piece of journalism based on accounts I have been told - which all contain so many gaps and rabbit holes, I thought it best to write something more speculative in which I will imagine what may have led different individuals to fall prey to Devlin's delusion at different times.

In the same way that Daniel Levin had to fill in many gaps when he was writing his story - to the point where it could easily be considered a work of fiction, I've had to fill in many gaps in writing this story - also to the point where I now wonder how any of what I've heard and read happened could really have happened?

The story begins in Winnipeg, where Devlin grew up – and still lives. According to individuals with whom I spoke who knew him when he was younger, Devlin had a normal childhood. Further, he showed exceptional promise as a student and looked to be headed toward a very successful career path. His wealthy parents were both successful in their respective careers.

Fred claimed to have been successful in business, starting from a very early age - when he was only 18 years old. In one published account he says that he had already developed several properties in Winnipeg by the time he was in his early twenties, and was already CEO of an Ontario-based development company.

Following is a story written about Fred in 1990, when he was just 24. (For the purposes of this story, I've changed his name in the 1990 story from how it appeared in the real story.) The story appeared in a business publication, a copy of which you are not likely be able to find anywhere. Luckily, I was able to obtain a copy of the story from someone who had managed to get a hold of a copy of the story. How he was able to do that he would not tell me.

Here is the story:

"When you first meet Fred Devlin, you are immediately impressed both by his youth and his sincerity in what he is doing with his life. At 24 years of age, he has already spent several years in the business trenches, having been the president of his own company since 1986.

“As careful with his words as he is with his investments, he has been programming himself towards success since his initial reach into the speculative market of real estate.

“With his first acquisition of a small property in Winnipeg, he formed Xanadu Enterprises (note: also not the real name of his company). While buying and selling properties yielded significant financial reward, making a fast buck was far from this young entrepreneur's dream.

“ ‘The property market is not one which facilitates speculative investment and overnight profit,' he says. 'Rewards are gained through the acquisition and development of real assets, which, only under proper care, over time, can reach their true potential.’

““Though Fred continues his career in the real estate industry, he decided to return to University to complete his degree in Economics, and target his newly expanded company, Xanadu Corporation, in 1987.

“Combining business with his classes has kept this self admitted workaholic on a six-and-a-half day killer schedule. From seven in the morning to midnight, his days are divided into six hours for classes and related study and six hours are devoted to his business ventures.

“Intending to enter the Master of Business Administration program in the fall of 1990, he has found that the practical experience gained through his real estate developments has complemented his classroom theory.

“With developing and managing real estate projects as his company's mandate, Fred has concentrated on the Osborne Village area. (Osborne Village is an area in Winnipeg that is close to the downtown.) He finds the area to be ideal for his projects, with its trendy restaurants and shops, while being in proximity to the amenities of downtown.

“To this end, he recently developed Cauchon Place, a luxury condominium project, in conjunction with Tri-Star Development, an Ontario-based company of which he is Chief Executive Officer. The first phase of the project, located at 99 Cauchon Place, has been completed, and all units, valued at \$130,00 and up, have been sold.

“Within two to three years Xanadu Corporation expects to have five more units ready for mixed commercial and office space. The expansion of his company has allowed Fred to take on new investors, secure a larger line of credit and utilize various tax advantages.

”Foregoing much of the immediate gratification of someone who has achieved financial success, Fred still lives at home with the two people he refers to as his best friends, his mother and father.

“ ‘I’m a fairly family oriented person and they support me unconditionally in whatever I attempt, even though I don’t always take their advice,’ he says with a smile.

”Always looking for new projects to develop, either independently or with a small group of investors, Fred is now acquiring two apartment complexes that have been converted into commercial space, again in the Osborne Village area. He also has his eye on another type of development: ‘A senior citizens’ complex,’ he says, ‘where the environment is designed to suit the tenant’s specific ethnic and social needs, rather than the needs of the developer,’ is ‘high on his priority list.’

”Anther project on the drawing boards, with a long-time friend, is a medical office, with a group of interdisciplinarian specialists who would have direct ownership in the building. ‘I’m not a fan of strip malls,’ says Fred. ‘They become indistinguishable from one another and attract an eclectic assortment of tenants. What medical office wants to be next door to a video store selling adult films? You want some control over your working environment.’

” ‘We need to stop trying to copy other cities. Just because something works for Toronto or Vancouver does not make it automatically right for Winnipeg.’ Fred adds that ‘a city has to grow to justify developments like The Forks, The Exchange District and Portage Place, with the buildings following a logical and consistent plan.’ He foresees a trend in multiple use space, combining commercial, retail and living areas in one well designed building. ‘I don’t want to sound arrogant, but I feel I have a destiny to do something of great value with my life,’ he says. ‘I want the world to know I was here.’

” ‘A building, for example, should be more than just a structure; it should improve the quality of life for the people who work and live there. That’s what I want to achieve.’

“When you consider that this young man started off in 1986 with an investment of \$3,000 and is now 50 percent owner in a million dollar investment company, maybe we should listen.”

Pretty impressive, huh? How much of what was written in that article was true is impossible to know, but I did some investigating of some parts of what Devlin claimed to have done. I did a search for Tri-Star Development, for instance, but could find no reference to a company in Ontario by that name - although it's possible that one may have existed in 1990. As for "99 Cauchon Place," all that turned up was a nice looking two-unit town home on 99 Cauchon Street - but no luxury condominium project called 99 Cauchon Place.

And, as for the project that Fred wanted to develop with a friend - I contacted that friend, whose name I recognized in the original article – and was someone I knew. He told me that he had left Winnipeg in 1989 and had never entered into any sort of a plan to develop a medical office with Fred.

The author of that article passed away several years ago. I would have loved to have asked that person whether they ever did anything to corroborate any of Devlin's story. Looking back on the inconsistencies that I was able to discern, it points to an early pattern of Devlin's dissembling - something that was going to emerge as a much more severe issue later in his life.

One line in that story though, really resonates, when Devlin says: " I don't want to sound arrogant, but I feel I have a destiny to do something of great value with my life. I want the world to know I was here.'

Was that the first hint that Devlin had delusions of grandeur? Perhaps, but as I was to discover, Devlin actually did embark on a course that would most likely have led to his becoming a very successful businessman had something not happened to him at some point when he was around 30. In fact, Devlin did obtain a Masters of Business Administration - in 1992.

The only other chapter of his life that I could come across, aside from that article written about him in 1990, was when he assumed a position of some authority in the area of aviation and there was a reference to him in a 1998 article noting his having become executive director of something called the Airport Area Business Development Zone. (Later, when I received a surprise message from Devlin inviting me to meet with him and did actually meet with him, he claimed to have been involved with the opening of something called Winnport. You can read the complete transcript of that meeting at the end of this story.)

What happened in Devlin's life in the intervening years between 1998 and now I'm not exactly sure. I happened to know Devlin's parents - not well, but well enough to have asked them years ago when it was that their son started to develop the delusion that he was a fabulously successful businessman? As one might expect when it comes to talking about a son or daughter who is clearly disturbed, Devlin's parents did not want to discuss his situation beyond admitting that he "wasn't well."

That conversation with his parents – specifically his mother, however, did not occur until about six years ago, when Devlin himself had called me out of the blue, saying that he wanted to meet with me because he wanted me to write a story about him. I did agree to meet with him. I vividly recall that

meeting because it was quite a warm summer day in Winnipeg and we had arranged to meet on the outdoor patio of a well-known Winnipeg pizzeria.

Not knowing what Devlin looked like, but since he had told me he knew who I was from seeing my picture in my newspaper, I arrived early so that he would be able to find me seated at a table. I was quite surprised when, despite the warm temperature that day, up walked a man wearing a trench coat - and dark glasses. He didn't take off those glasses until well after we had begun to talk. That in itself was not so unusual; keeping that trench coat on though? That was simply weird.

As we engaged in conversation, Devlin mentioned that he quite admired my writing and what I had done with my newspaper. In fact, he said, he'd like to talk about buying it.

"Oh really?" I thought. Well, that's interesting. But, it was when he began to describe his vast business enterprises that I began to wonder whether this guy was for real.

However, Devlin had come prepared. He had a briefcase with him - and out of that briefcase he pulled a small photo album. Among the pictures he showed me were ones of an executive jet. That jet had a logo on it - a logo, which Devlin said, was the logo of his company. He also mentioned that the late Winnipeg business mogul Izzy Asper had taken a liking to him and, in fact, had mentored Devlin for a time.

"Impressive," I thought. But why hadn't I heard of him? I wondered. I asked him that same question.

His answer was that he kept a very low profile, so as not to attract attention to himself. Also, since he was now so fabulously wealthy, his main goal in life, he explained, was to devote himself to what he described as "tikkun olam," which is a phrase in Hebrew meaning "repair the world."

To that end, Devlin said, he had established a charitable foundation and was engaged in various philanthropic projects around the world. And that's why Devlin wanted to meet with me, he noted. He wanted me to write about all the good work he was doing in the world.

Well, that didn't quite fit with keeping a low profile, I thought, but then again I was just the publisher of a small Jewish newspaper in Winnipeg. Writing an article about him for my paper wasn't necessarily a contradiction of his wanting to keep a low profile. (It's not as if you can say about being profiled in what was then The Jewish Post & News or what is now jewishpostandnews.ca: "If you can make it here, you can make it anywhere.")

So far, so good, I thought. What Devlin was saying might be true. He just might be a very wealthy businessman - one who wanted to do good in the world. (Remember that description he gave of himself in that 1990 article.)

To reassure me that he was on the up and up, Devlin handed me a business card - with his group of companies logo emblazoned on the front. What was even more impressive was the address that the card gave as the headquarters for his group of companies: Luxembourg!

"Wow!" I thought. This guy might be the real deal. Luxembourg? You have to be of some substance to be headquartered in Luxembourg. Devlin told me to contact the CEO of his company, someone I had

also never heard of, by the name of David Simkin (and, in this case, I'm using the real name that was printed on the back of that business card rather than a phoney name because, as far as I could ascertain, there is no such person as David Simkin. He's just another figment of Fred Devlin's delusion.)

Simkin's name and email address, Devlin indicated, was on the back of the card. The card said that the head office for his company was in Luxembourg. At that point I told Devlin that I would look into his company with an eye toward doing a story about him. Despite his rather strange appearance and the fact that I had never heard of him, who was I to dismiss him as inauthentic? One thing about our leaving to go our separate ways that set me wondering about him when we both got up to leave, however, was his obvious discomfort when I thanked him for my meal. He seemed quite uncomfortable with having to pay the bill, small amount that it was notwithstanding.

I returned home and immediately began to look up his company name on the internet. I could find a name all right, but nothing beyond that. There was no description anywhere just what is was that this group of companies actually did or even what were names of any of the companies in the supposed group of companies.

I did send an email to the email address for David Simkin that was given on the card Devlin had handed me - and it didn't bounce back. But when, after a couple of days of not hearing anything from this Simkin character who, Devlin had said, was the CEO of his vast group of companies, I began to suspect that the whole thing was some sort of twisted joke.

I happened to have Devlin's mother's phone number, so I called her. I told her about my meeting with her son. Her response, as I've already noted, was: "He's not well." She also added: "Go easy on him."

All right, it wasn't the first time I had met someone who had embellished their achievements and wanted me - or one of my writers, do a story saying how successful they were. I simply put Devlin out of my mind and left it at that - for a while.

Several months later, however, I got another phone call from Devlin, this time saying he wanted to talk seriously about buying my newspaper. Now, I should explain that, while I could dismiss him as a phoney, I did know his parents had money. I figured that even if he himself had no money, he could probably get his parents to put up the cash - depending on what amount we were talking about. (I should also explain that, at that point, I was quite willing to sell The Jewish Post & News. In fact, I had been actively seeking a buyer for some time - to no avail.)

I did agree to meet with him, this time at a very well known hotel in downtown Winnipeg, the Fairmont. (That hotel would come to figure prominently in many of the stories I was to hear later from many of the individuals who had fallen prey to Fred's tangled web of deceit. And, as you will see if you read to the end of this story, it was to the Fairmont I headed when I received a surprise phone call from Devlin months after I had begun to write this story, inviting me to meet with him in person.)

We met, had a cup of coffee, but nothing ensued. There was no discussion of his buying the paper beyond his saying it was something he still wanted to do. But, what of all the good works he was doing all around the world? he asked me. Was I still willing to do a story about him?

"Is this guy for real?" I thought. I remembered the words his mother had used: "Go easy on him." I told Devlin that I was sorry, but I just couldn't find anything at all to substantiate what he had told me about his vast group of companies, so unfortunately there would be no story. I didn't want to say to him what I really thought, which was that he was a total nutcase.

And, that's where my involvement with Devlin ended - except for a chance meeting somewhere a few year later (where it was, I can't remember) when Devlin happened to be with a woman whom he introduced as his wife. I was also with my wife, whom I also introduced. We left it at that.

Chapter 3

An explosive email arrives in my inbox on January 16

I would probably not have given another thought to Devlin had an email not arrived in my inbox on January 16, 2026.

That email came from someone I'll call Charlie. It was so explosive in how it described a vast pattern of broken promises and shattered trust which Devlin had engendered among a wide number of individuals that I was totally floored by what the writer of that email wrote. (Again, I've changed Devlin's name in the email from his true name.)

The subject line of that January 16 email was "The Winnipeg Con Man." Here is that email in its entirety:

"This report is being posted by a group of individuals who connected privately after discovering that we share strikingly similar experiences involving Frederick Devlin, also known as Fred. Our experiences span anywhere from approximately two years to as long as five, ten, twenty, and in some cases thirty years.

"Across this group, many of us were in frequent communication with Fred, who consistently presented himself as an extraordinarily wealthy and powerful individual with vast global influence and resources. He represented himself as a business leader, investor, or partner and repeatedly assured people that significant funding, compensation, or major opportunities were imminent.

"Over extended periods of time, many of us were told repeatedly that money, contracts, payment, or formal agreements would happen next month or very soon. Despite these ongoing assurances, no verifiable proof of funds, legal documentation, contracts, or concrete follow through ever materialized. Expectations and conditions for moving forward were frequently changed, and individuals were encouraged to continue investing time, labor, trust, and emotional energy without any tangible results.

"As time went on, the claims being made became increasingly extreme and difficult to reconcile with reality. Among the statements reported by multiple individuals were claims that he was the world's first trillionaire, that he owned thousands of companies, that some of those companies generated billions of dollars per hour, that he owned hundreds of hospitals, hundreds of airports, and thousands of aircraft, and that he controlled vast global infrastructure. He also claimed ownership of thousands of acres of land in both Winnipeg and Israel.

“Additional claims reported include involvement with intelligence agencies, building the Third Temple in Israel, statements that Osama bin Laden was still alive and being held for future rehabilitation, and claims of direct communication with God and receiving guidance from God. He also claimed personal relationships with world leaders and public figures and suggested that he would assume positions of power under certain circumstances. None of these claims were ever supported with evidence despite repeated requests for verification.

“He also represented entities referred to as Xanadu Group of Companies Worldwide and Xanadu Foundation Worldwide as major global organizations under his control. Based on the experiences shared within this group, these entities appear to have no independently verifiable operations, assets, or legitimate structure. Multiple individuals report having worked for extended periods under these names without pay, believing compensation or success was imminent, only to later realize that no payment or formal organization existed.

“Organizational Roles and Unpaid Labor

“Members of this group report a consistent pattern involving individuals who were presented as part of an organizational structure surrounding Fred. These individuals were described as executives, managers, legal advisors, financial professionals, technical staff, or personal assistants connected to the entities he promoted.

“Several individuals report that his spouse was present during meetings and communications with prospective partners or workers, sitting alongside him while representations were made about business operations, funding, and future opportunities.

“Multiple people were introduced to individuals described as senior executives or operational managers who were said to oversee large numbers of companies or global activities. In some cases, individuals were told they were responsible for managing thousands of companies or acting as official representatives on his behalf. These roles were presented as legitimate and authoritative, yet compensation, contracts, or formal structure never materialized.

“Some individuals report being encouraged to create their own business cards, travel internationally, and attend meetings while representing him or the organizations he promoted. These activities were carried out under the belief that the companies were real and that long term compensation or equity was forthcoming. In at least one reported instance, individuals were aware of staged humanitarian activity that appeared to be conducted primarily for promotional imagery rather than meaningful aid.

“Other individuals report providing extensive professional services without pay, including legal work, financial and accounting services, website development, administrative support, and personal assistant duties. These services were reportedly performed over extended periods under the belief that formal employment, payment, or senior roles within a large organization were imminent. In some cases, individuals were asked to assist with sending legal notices or cease and desist communications aimed at discouraging others from speaking publicly.

“Across these experiences, it remains unclear whether certain individuals involved were themselves misled, enabling the behavior, or acting in some other capacity. What is clear to the group is that a wide range of unpaid labor and representation was sustained by repeated promises that never resulted in legitimate compensation, contracts, or verifiable business operations.

“Victim Experiences and Patterns of Harm

“Members of this group report a wide range of deeply concerning victim experiences that illustrate how trust was established, exploited, and maintained over long periods of time.

“One individual reported first meeting Fred while both were present in a medical setting. During that time, Fred presented himself not as a patient, but as an extraordinarily powerful and wealthy figure, claiming ownership or control over the facility and suggesting he was operating undercover to evaluate staff. This individual was told repeatedly that he would be financially supported for life. Over time, Fred encouraged him to identify other people who could also be helped financially, creating a chain of introductions built on trust and false assurances.

“Several victims describe being drawn into prolonged, high intensity communication lasting months or years, including frequent phone calls that extended for hours at a time. During these interactions, victims were promised large sums of money, major investments, salaries, or company acquisitions. In some cases, victims were led to believe they would receive life changing financial support or that their businesses would be purchased for significant amounts. Each time deadlines approached, timelines were pushed back by months, with repeated explanations and new promises offered. This pattern continued over extended periods, with victims investing substantial time, planning, and emotional energy based on assurances that never materialized.

“Another individual reported being promised financial rescue after suffering significant losses in a separate situation. Fred allegedly assured this person that debts would be paid, a new business would be launched, and a substantial annual salary would be provided. This individual was reportedly instructed not to pay existing creditors and was warned that doing so would jeopardize the promised support. Relying on these assurances, the individual experienced cascading financial consequences, including loss of credit, housing, personal property, and severe disruption to family life. This experience is described as having resulted in total financial collapse and lasting personal harm.

“Multiple individuals outside North America reported being approached with promises of humanitarian support, development funding, or life changing financial assistance. In at least two reported cases, individuals were instructed to create promotional materials using company logos and to stage charitable activities in impoverished communities, including distributing small amounts of food while being photographed. These images were then allegedly used to promote an image of vast wealth and global humanitarian impact. Victims report being promised assistance for themselves and their communities for five years or more, receiving no financial support, and in some cases spending their own limited resources in the process.

“One individual involved in these humanitarian related representations stated that Fred told him he was in direct contact with senior leadership or directors at major international aid organizations,

including USAID, World Vision, Save the Children, and the World Food Programme. These claims were presented as proof of legitimacy and influence, yet no evidence of such relationships was ever provided.

“Other victims describe being used as intermediaries or connectors, introduced to political figures, industry leaders, or international contacts under the belief that legitimate large scale deals were underway. These efforts often involved months of preparation, meetings, and negotiations involving proposed transactions in the millions of dollars. Victims report that these deals consistently collapsed at the final stages, after extensive time and effort had already been invested.

“International Scope of the Conduct

“Members of this group also report that the conduct described above was not limited to a single location or jurisdiction. Individuals involved are located across multiple regions, including the United States and Canada, and in some cases were connected to activities, communications, or meetings abroad. Victims report involvement spanning locations such as Florida, California, Nevada, Manitoba, Ontario, Israel, and multiple countries in Africa.

“Several individuals report being encouraged to participate in or support proposed international business, humanitarian, aviation, or political initiatives, including travel, meetings, and coordination across borders. In some cases, individuals traveled internationally or were asked to act as intermediaries or representatives in foreign countries based on representations that large scale transactions, funding, or humanitarian efforts were underway.

“As a result, the time invested, financial loss, and emotional harm described by victims occurred across multiple legal jurisdictions, complicating efforts to seek accountability and increasing the number of individuals potentially affected. Victims report that the same patterns of representation, delay, and nonperformance were repeated consistently regardless of location, suggesting a widespread and sustained pattern rather than isolated incidents.

“Attempts at Family Intervention”

“Members of this group also report that concerns were raised directly with his family members in an effort to prevent further harm and encourage intervention. According to individuals involved, family members acknowledged long standing issues and expressed a desire to keep matters quiet in order to avoid upsetting Fred.

“Despite being alerted to the concerns raised by multiple individuals, the response described by victims focused on minimizing confrontation rather than addressing the underlying behavior. Victims report that Fred continued to receive financial support for daily living and social activities, allowing him to maintain the appearance of legitimacy while continuing to hold meetings, conduct outreach, and make representations to others. Many victims believe that the lack of intervention contributed to the continuation of the behavior described above, increasing the number of individuals affected over time.

“Taken together, these accounts describe a pattern in which extraordinary promises, constant engagement, emotional manipulation, and shifting timelines were used to sustain belief and

participation, resulting in severe emotional, financial, and psychological harm to numerous individuals over many years.

“Members of this group report a wide range of impacts. Some individuals describe being encouraged to work for months or years without pay under the belief that compensation or equity was imminent, which never occurred. Others report significant financial strain after rearranging their lives, careers, or commitments based on repeated assurances that funding or payment was coming. Several individuals describe being threatened with legal action or intimidation when they attempted to question claims or speak publicly about their experiences. Others report emotional distress and long term psychological impact after years of being strung along by false promises and grand representations.

“Many individuals also report being asked for access to personal or professional contact networks, raising concerns that trust and reputations were being leveraged to gain credibility with others.

“As a result of connecting and comparing experiences, members of this group have taken steps to protect others. Some have contacted the Winnipeg Police Service and crime and fraud units within multiple Canadian agencies to request investigation. Some individuals are pursuing civil legal action. Others are warning their friends, families, and professional networks after believing they may have been targeted or approached in similar ways.

“This report is not being posted out of anger or malice. It is being posted because the consistency, duration, and severity of the experiences reported by many individuals raise serious concerns. We believe others deserve to be warned so they can protect themselves and insist on independent verification before engaging in any personal, professional, or financial relationship.

“If you have had a similar or concerning experience involving Fred Devlin, we encourage you to share your experience so others can be informed.

“This report reflects the collective experiences and observations of multiple individuals. All readers are strongly encouraged to independently verify any claims before proceeding.”

Wow! That was quite the email. But why was I on the receiving end? I wondered. It seemed to be intended for others who might have been taken in by Fred.

But, I was deeply curious why I had been sent that email, so I responded:

“Hi,

“Interesting that you got my name. I wonder where that came from? I met Fred a couple of times over the years and knew immediately that he wasn't right, but I humoured him and made him think that I believed the nonsense he was feeding me. I didn't take me very long to establish that nothing he was saying was true - except maybe for the part about Izzy Asper having thought that he had great potential. Fred likely had great ability at one time (he did show me a photo of him descending a jet with his company logo emblazoned on the jet) - but apparently something happened somewhere along the line that led to his delusional behaviour. I contacted Fred's mother (whom I hold in very high regard) at one point and asked her how she thought I should respond to Fred's request that I do a story

about him - and her response was to treat him gently - which I did by not calling him out to his face. What I don't understand is how he suckered so many people into believing the crap he was feeding them. How long would it have taken to verify that his 'Xanadu' group of companies didn't exist?

Regards,

“Bernie Bellan

“Former publisher,

“The Jewish Post & News

“and current publisher,

“jewishpostandnews.ca”

I didn't hear back immediately from Charlie. As events transpired, it was only after a couple of months had passed that I did hear from him - apparently after he had been persuaded by another individual who turned out to play a key role in putting this story together for me (I'll call him Rick), that he (Charlie) could trust me.

I received a text message from Rick the same day that I had responded to Charlie in which Rick told me that he had all the information I would need to write a full exposé of everything Fred had done to so many individuals.

But, what kept gnawing at me was that there were so many references to a host of different individuals, all involved somehow in helping to perpetrate this vast fraud, at which Devlin was at the centre.

According to that January 16 email, ***“Multiple people were introduced to individuals described as senior executives or operational managers who were said to oversee large numbers of companies or global activities. In some cases, individuals were told they were responsible for managing thousands of companies or acting as official representatives on his behalf. These roles were presented as legitimate and authoritative, yet compensation, contracts, or formal structure never materialized.”***

Who were all these individuals who were supposedly senior executives or operational managers? I wondered. As time wore on, I never came across anyone who could be said to have been working as a senior executive or operational manager in any of Devlin's companies – because none of those companies ever existed! Thus, as I noted earlier, there are so many rabbit holes in this story – and so many of the individuals to whom I spoke also seemed to be suffering from their own mental illnesses, I still have no idea how much of what supposedly was written in that explosive email was true.

What I did discover though, was that the email had not been written by Charlie, it had been written by someone I'll call Rick. Why Rick wanted to disguise his identity when he sent me that email, I'm not sure. What I did find out, however, was that Rick himself would veer in and out of normalcy – and what began as a level headed discussion between us ended with him angrily cutting off communication with me for a very long time. Then, when I decided to try to reestablish contact with him, he was

perfectly normal – again. Rick proved invaluable in putting me in touch with others who were able to provide me information about how Devlin had conned them, so I still owe him a great debt of gratitude

Chapter 4

The guy in LA who figured out who everyone else was that had been conned

As I noted in my last chapter, it was some time after that January 16 email arrived before I realized it had been sent by the person I'm calling Rick here - even though the email was supposedly sent by someone else. I still don't understand why Rick chose to disguise the fact that he was the one who sent the email that detailed the litany of deception that the man I've been calling Fred Devlin perpetrated.

There are so many things I still don't understand about Rick. He's gone from being extremely cordial to vicious and back again to being cordial.

At first I didn't keep a record of all the texts I received from Rick. He kept throwing out names I had never heard of – as if I had any idea what he was talking about. I tried to get him to slow down, just tell me who all these different individuals were whose names he was citing.

Rick kept coming back to one name in particular. I'll call him Jonathan. Rick wrote that Jonathan was trying to get the RCMP in Ontario (where apparently Jonathan lived) to conduct a criminal investigation of Devlin. Since texts are often jumbled I had to keep asking Rick to explain why Jonathan, in particular – out of all the names Rick had mentioned to me who were victims of Devlin's vast cons, had a story that might convince a police force in Canada to investigate Devlin. What about the others? I wondered. Didn't they all have reasons to file complaints with police forces.

Over a period of days – in which I was constantly exchanging texts with Rick (I should explain that I'm mostly retired and can devote myself to writing about stories that grab my interest, as opposed to what I used to have to do previously, which was often to write about subjects in which I had no real interest.), I kept asking Rick more and more questions to get a better idea of the scope of Devlin's activities through the years.

I told Rick that the January 16 email I had received whetted my appetite to the point where I would publish on my website that email along with my own story how I had come to meet Devlin. My original intention was to keep adding to that story as I learned more information about Devlin's bizarre pattern of duping individuals into thinking he was rich and powerful. However, as I've already explained I was intimidated into pulling that story off my website once I got that libel chill letter from a lawyer.

Even though I chickened out on that one, I told Rick I still wanted to pursue talking to the various individuals he had named in various texts whom he described as having fallen prey to Devlin's machinations. In time I was able to speak to seven different individuals, all of whom gave me permission to record my conversations with them. Strangely enough, once I had wrapped up speaking

to everyone who I thought could offer a piece of the puzzle that is Fred Devlin, I was contacted by one more individual, whom I happen to know very well. That person's name had come up in some of Rick's texts - and not in a favourable way.

That particular individual said they knew their name had been discussed in negative terms by one or more of the individuals with whom I had spoken and they wanted to set the record straight - but not on the record. They kept me on the phone for more than two hours, but always insisting that nothing they had said could be reported. So, what was the point of their calling me in the first place? I wondered.

That particular conversation, frustrating as it was, was no stranger than some of the other conversations I had with some of the other individuals whose names had been mentioned at various times in Rick's texts. Conversations were often meandering and had little to do with the story I was trying to chase down. But, I'm a good listener - and I let everyone who wanted to ramble on do that. Trying to make sense of what they told me had happened between each of them and Devlin wasn't easy and I kept coming back to the original question that first occurred to me when I met Devlin: How long would it have taken you to realize the guy was a nutcase?

Following are excerpts from texts I received from Rick - and remember, I didn't have a clue who he was talking about in most cases. Again, names have been changed to protect individuals' identities where they asked not to have their names divulged. The texts may seem somewhat disjointed and incoherent, but reading them will give you a sense of how wide a net Devlin cast in his delusion that he was a hugely successful businessman.

The first text here begins with a reference to someone named Bryan. I had been told earlier by Rick that Bryan Hunter was with the RCMP and was working on an investigation of Devlin at the behest of Jonathan who, as I noted earlier, was urging the RCMP to investigate Devlin.

"...just waiting for Bryan to get to work on Tuesday so he can transfer the case from York police to Winnipeg RCMP and get started with the investigation

"Charlie in Africa is still getting death threats and harassment from random strangers

"Avi ... is ready to speak with you now and share his story about Fred - his number in Vegas is ...

"Also Dan Winthrop is ready to speak with you now too. He's the guy Fred used to fly around the world to these imaginary meetings to buy millions of dollars of planes and airports and all kinds of crazy stuff. He's been with Fred for years doing this and has all the evidence and stories about everything. His number is ...

"I'm still trying to get Jonathan Soloway to call you but he has trust issues with journalists

"Once you talk to Avi and Dan, you'll have all you need.

"I'm telling you man this is almost like a major motion film it's so beyond crazy.

(The following text is about someone whom I'll call Dan thanking Rick for the work he's done to try to bring Devlin to justice, also referring to being willing to talk to me.)

“Dan says ‘Thank you so much I do really appreciate the tone of your email and also your great work. It was very timely for you to do this and the end result from my 40 year project was absolute devastation. Fred destroyed and lied in person to top executives of an international company for years and now I'm in the mud because I associated with him. Yes I definitely will talk with this guy’ (That would be me).

“ ‘I will probably fly to Winnipeg to have a chat with him. I've been reviewing my story in my head and trying to make it succinct. So I will send you my story before I talk with this guy. Your timing was absolutely excellent. I don't know if my work will ever continue that I've spent so many years on. But you as a businessman and a publisher knows what it's like to persevere. I accept the suffering that I'm going through now and better to face that Fred is a psychopath now than further down the road. Fred definitely needs to be stopped and is using the names of top leaders in Winnipeg as companies that he says he owns.

“ ‘So you're doing great work and I honor that.

“ ‘Thank you’ “

A couple more weeks passed between texts with Rick. I wrote to him: *“...you keep saying charges are about to be laid, and from what I can see all that the RCMP have done is assigned a case number to Jonathan's complaint.*

“It's hard for me to believe that the RCMP was taking the complaint seriously.”

Rick responded: *“You have no idea the obstacles and challenges we've been through to get to this point. I've already cried about every obstacle along the way, so I'm not gonna repeat myself and bore both of us. I understand I'm just frustrated and I want this to be over with and I want that psychopath to be locked away, so he can't hurt any more people.*

I wanted to know though, what exactly Devlin had done to Rick that caused him such anguish. I asked him: *“Can you quantify how you lost millions of dollars? Was it put into some sort of investment?”*

Rick responded: *“I didn't lose millions through a direct cash investment. The loss was through reliance and opportunity cost over roughly two years. Fred promised a \$10 million investment to acquire and scale my magazine and represented that \$1 million would be advanced to stabilize me personally while the larger transaction was finalized. Based on those representations, I stopped pursuing other investors, shared my full business plan, disclosed confidential and personal information, and spent thousands of hours in daily calls, planning sessions, and operational preparation with Fred, my staff, and outside collaborators.*

“We had approximately 20 people lined up and ready to execute once funding arrived, and the company's growth was effectively put on hold while we waited. During that time I passed on other legitimate opportunities and investors because I believed the deal was real and imminent. The financial loss is the value of years of diverted labor, stalled growth, foregone funding opportunities, and business damage caused by reliance on repeated promises that were never fulfilled. That is what I mean when I say I lost millions of dollars.”

I returned to asking the original question that had been troubling me from the first time I received that original email on January 16: *“How can so many highly intelligent people have been conned by Fred - and for so long? I smelled a rat the first time I met him. What was it about him that persuaded so many ostensibly intelligent people to go along with the nonsense he was spewing out when what he was promising could never be backed up?”*

Rick responded: *“That question is exactly the right one, and it’s really the heart of the story.*

“Fred didn’t succeed because people were unintelligent. He succeeded because he was highly adaptive and targeted people’s specific vulnerabilities. He didn’t tell the same story to everyone. He mirrored each person’s values, language, and aspirations, then slowly escalated his claims once trust was established.

“In my case, I’m highly intelligent and have run a successful media company for decades, but I’m also autistic. That combination can mean I take people at their word. I’m less attuned to manipulation cues, and I’m more willing to suspend disbelief if something feels theoretically possible. Over time, especially with constant contact, that matters. When someone speaks with absolute confidence day after day, hour after hour, the brain normalizes the claims.

“The unifying factor across victims wasn’t stupidity, it was money used as leverage. Fred consistently dangled imminent, life changing financial relief. Promised investments, salaries, ownership positions, acquisitions. Once people believed funding was coming, they reorganized their lives around it. They stopped pursuing alternatives. They waited. That waiting is where the damage happens.

“He also used social proof. He placed people into roles within a supposedly massive organization, introduced them to each other, referenced meetings with officials, institutions, and high status figures. Each person assumed someone else had already verified the claims. No one realized they were all operating on the same unverified promises.

“Some victims were vulnerable due to age, idealism, faith, or personal hardship. Others were experienced professionals who believed they were seeing only a small piece of a much larger, already validated operation. Fred exploited optimism, trust, and the very human tendency to believe that extraordinary opportunities sometimes really do exist.

“In hindsight, the claims were impossible. But cons don’t work in hindsight, they work in real time, incrementally, when skepticism is postponed just a little longer each day because the payoff is always right around the corner.

“That’s how intelligent people get caught. Not all at once, but slowly, while trying to act in good faith.

“I’m absolutely willing to go on the record and share every aspect of my experience in detail, including timelines, communications, documents, and the specific representations that were made to me over the two year period. My goal is transparency and preventing further harm to others. I will also work with everyone I’ve interviewed and spoken to so that they can share their stories with you directly as well.”

After reading that particular text - which was well written, I came to the conclusion that the January 16 email I had received had been written by Rick, not by Charlie. I wondered why that was, so I asked Rick why he had used Charlie to send that email? Rick refused to answer that question and said that he felt like he was being "interrogated" by me. I told him that his response only added to my puzzlement over this entire story - which I still find so baffling to understand. Rick's responses to subsequent questions became increasingly frazzled.

In our final exchange of texts - when I persisted in asking him why he had written that January 16 email, not Charlie, he wrote: *"You're throwing a monkey wrench into the whole thing right now by being a little too pushy and a little too aggressive"*

"This is always been about stopping Fred from taking more victims, not about you writing a story about our traumas"

"The only person who benefits there is you"

In the meantime, I wanted to begin speaking to others who had been victimized by Fred Devlin.

The first person I spoke to by phone is someone I'm going to call Dan Winthrop. Dan Winthrop was an aeronautical engineer who had a plan to bring jet planes from Israel and convert them into water bombers.

Chapter 5

The plan to buy jets in Israel and convert them to planes that could fight forest fires

Just as Rick had blown hot and cold in responding to my questions - which I found so difficult to understand since he was the one who had initiated contact with me, a lot of the others with whom I was to come to speak over the ensuing days were also extremely ambivalent about speaking with me. Some of them expressed distrust of journalists, others said that what Devlin had done to them had so harmed them psychologically that they didn't want to speak about it.

I thought it was all so strange. Here we had a group of individuals who had all been victimized by one man. Granted, I could understand their being somewhat embarrassed to talk about what had happened to them, but didn't they want to retaliate at Devlin by having their stories told? I wondered. Further, in one particular instance, as I've noted, I went so far as to put one individual who had lost a great deal of money as a result of Devlin's manipulation in touch with a very prominent Winnipeg lawyer who agreed to have his firm consider filing a lawsuit against Devlin.

The first person with whom I spoke over the phone was Dan Winthrop. Dan had a background in an aviation-related industry that gave him some common background with Devlin who, as I previously noted, also had business experience in the aviation industry. It was that commonality that had apparently led Devlin to reach out to Dan many years ago - with a proposal that became so detailed and complex that it led to Dan's devoting many years of his life in pursuit of making that proposal come to fruition. Dan's story was my first exposure to a plan which Devlin developed which was so intricate

that Devlin himself must have devoted many hours to, at the very least, studying it – as well as leading Dan to think that it was going to be brought to fruition.

In the process, as I was to discover subsequently, Devlin involved many others in the plan, including a lawyer who wrote contracts for various parties. Of perhaps more importance, as I was to come to learn, that same lawyer also prepared non disclosure agreements in every instance where Devlin entered into plans with individuals. Devlin did not want anyone with whom he was in contact to discuss their dealings with anyone else. In hindsight, that should have been an indication that Devlin had some awareness that what he was doing was all invented nonsense, but it is also possible that he was also putting into practice his previous business experience, which might have taught him that obtaining non disclosure agreements before discussing detailed business plans was a very necessary and important step to take in every instance.

Following is part of my conversation with Dan Winthrop. I should note that, although Dan went off the record when it came to discussing a specific project that Fred Devlin had told him he would help promote – and I won't mention that specific project in my writing about my conversation with Winthrop, it was when I had a subsequent conversation with an Israeli now living in the US that I was able to learn more about that project, which involved converting jets purchased from Israel Aerospace Industries into water bombers of some sort.

Me: *“Dan, you said that you first encountered Fred Devlin about 16 years ago, is that right?”*

Dan: *“Yes, I think it was either 2008, 2010, you know, I can't remember.”*

Me: *“And how did you come to meet him? What was the background? Did he contact you?”*

Dan: *“Okay, my friend (we'll call him Reg) was at a cafe at Confusion Corner, of course you know where that is. And he was sitting at a table next to Fred, and my friend was a social butterfly, and Fred, his modus operandi, as he's trying to pick his next victim, he talks to anybody who's around him.*

“So he starts talking to Reg and giving him his story, that he has some aviation holdings, and that he's a business man, and Reg was a really, really nice guy - he was First Nations, a wonderful person. And so Reg phoned me up after that, and said, oh yeah, I met this guy, Fred Devlin, and you know, I'd like you to meet him. So there was a period of time between when Reg met him, and then when I met Fred.

Me: *“So, you met - did you come to Winnipeg to meet him?”*

Dan: *“Yes, I go to Winnipeg on a semi-regular basis because one of my kids lives there, and then one day, I met Fred.”* (At that point though, Dan went off the record, saying he didn't want to say what it was that he did for a living, saying *“that's going to open up a breadcrumb trail that I don't want to happen.”*)

Me: *“All right, so you meet him, and then what happens?”*

Dan: *“So, we're sitting there and Fred has this story, and he shows me his pictures... you know, some early pictures of him running around in limousines, and he also told me about his background doing his master's degree at the University of Manitoba, and that he first started out doing some renovations*

or buying property on Corydon Avenue, and that's where he made his first million or whatever, and he also uses options - real estate options.

“That's his big thing. He really likes to have options on that stuff, and he was dressed rather street level, very casual, and told me that due to his his prominence in the business world and all the rest of that stuff, that he just decided that he was less of a target if he dressed in street clothes. So, anyway, he has his briefcase.

“He shows all of his stuff, and then we get in Reg's car - some sort of red Japanese car, and we drove him (Devlin) back to his quote "penthouse," which was on the Assiniboine or Red River - I always get those rivers mixed up and we dropped him off there, and, off he went, but he said that that day, he had purchased 201 Portage, the TD building, and he was just coming from that. So, he gives a (copy of) a story that I think it's the one story that's out there on Manitoba Business or something.” (That would be the story which was reproduced earlier in this story.) *“And he says something about knowing Izzy Asper.”*

Dan went on to explain how important the Izzy Asper connection was to Devlin's "back story," saying *“he never would have made what he made, and he wouldn't have his stories unless somehow he got involved with, Izzy Asper. And, I've got to go very slow as I think through all this stuff, okay?*

“He said that he owns Harvard. Harvard is the company that owns 201 Portage Avenue, and I think the Hill family is behind that.

“And I remember, and this is part of the thing that's weird about Fred is that he said about 201 Portage, he's leasing out a lot of space to the Royal Bank. And then a couple months later, I see the Royal Bank sign on top of the TD building there.

“And so Fred steals other businesses' ideas on what they're doing, and he incorporates them into his back story. So when you're looking around, and you're listening to Fred mentioning Shindico and Sam Katz and you know, he's actually stealing the identity of these people and weaving it into his own blanket of fantasy.

“And what else did we discuss that day? It was many, many years ago, but he talked about his ties to Israel and, you know, his financial relationships with Israel. And he's a big supporter of Israel, even in his fantasy world.

“Um, that's, that's one of the core structures of how he operates - his dedication to the state of Israel, which comes up in all of his legal stuff and everything else. So, that's how I met him. And then, you know - nothing happened.

“We just sort of kept in contact for maybe 12 years... just sort of talking on the phone. Occasionally, I would go out for coffee with him. One time, he talks about West Hawk Lake. He says he owns the marina there.”

At that point Dan went off the record again when he talked about his own career.

But Dan said he did have a project idea that involved doing something with a company in Israel. He broached that idea to Fred. At that point in the conversation Fred really began to ramble. The following excerpt is highly edited:

Fred came in and said, you know what? I really like what you're doing. In 2021 I put down all my thoughts and I did a good analysis.

It's actually very, very good stuff. I'm surprised even to read it today. And then Fred said, "Oh, I like that idea. I'm going to finance that." And previous to this, you know, I heard lots of stuff about Fred and Xanadu capital and whoever that dude is in Luxembourg.

"So Fred can't think of an idea. What he does is he's parasitic. So he goes on other people's ideas and then he contributes his financial fallacies to say 'I can help this project move along'" and stuff like that.

"He preys on innocent people that he meets.

"That's number one. He finds out what their hopes and dreams are and then tries to connect that way to finance them. So if you were going to build, you know, a gigantic physical publishing house, like they got in Steinbach, you know, Fred would say, 'well, I can finance that for you.'

"And the other thing Fred does is that in order to infect like COVID other people, he goes for your connections. So that is his modus operandi. He can use your connections, talk to them, and then infect them also with his financial stuff."

At that point the conversation took a totally different twist as Dan began to tell a story about going to a country that had been torn apart by civil war. As the story went on, he described meeting a "colonel" in that country who had just discovered "158 warehouses" full of weapons. Apparently the "colonel" was terrified by what he had discovered and he was afraid for his life over what he had uncovered.

I had no idea what the point of the story was and how it related to Fred - until Dan explained that Devlin had told him he had a very strong connection to Israel and that if Dan *"ever saw anything that could affect the state of Israel, the security, to let him know. So I phoned him up and left a message. I said, I need two airplanes out of Malta now.*

"The bottom line was that this could have been used against the States or Israel..."

"So you're never going to believe any of it, but I did see that. I did see that happen, but Fred never supplied me with the planes to get this colonel out so they could flip and deal with this stuff..."

"But my thing was that, you know, Fred said he's connected.

"I said, 'give me some planes,' which he didn't. As a matter of fact, he said 'don't phone me ever again, because you terrified my wife...right? Because I left her a message. So that was my story."

It was on another trip to Winnipeg that Dan said he had an opportunity to watch Devlin in action - doing his networking.

Dan described the scene: *"Fred's wandering around talking to all the executives with his briefcase.*

“I’m talking to my buddies and he’s picked out all these people. And so he’s living, you know, the life of whatever his fantasy is in front of real people, telling them his story. So I’m watching this, you know, and he’s having these long conversations with people from head offices, stuff like that.

“And it looked to me that, you know, he’s doing his thing, making his connections. So, you know, he really thoroughly lives this kind of life and it’s you know, suspect I thought maybe he’s a little bit eccentric, like Howard Hughes.”

The conversation went on for some time, but not much else of interest emerged. As I’ve noted several times, Devlin’s background in aviation stood him in good stead when it came to trying to persuade various individuals that he was seriously interested in working with Israel Aerospace Industries. Dan Winthrop, especially, invested a great deal of time in a project that would have seen Israel Aerospace Industries convert jets for use as water bombers, spraying chemical retardants on forest fires.

Chapter 6

The lawyer who worked with the con man for years

As I was piecing together this rather incredible story, I was repeatedly told that one of the things Devlin would insist upon when he began communicating with someone - supposedly for the purpose of backing them in one sort of investment or another, was that they sign a non disclosure agreement.

One name kept coming up: Bob Anderson. Anderson, I was told, was the person who would send out these nondisclosure agreements. In two instances, I was also told, Bob Anderson sent out cease and desist letters to individuals, one of whom, Jonathan Soloway, had entered into what he thought was a legitimate business relationship with Devlin, but who was so angered and frustrated over Devlin’s constant delaying providing the funds which he had promised would be forthcoming that he went so far as to contact Devlin’s parents. Apparently that angered Devlin to the point where he asked Bob Anderson to send a cease and desist letter to Jonathan. The other letter, as Bob was to tell me during a phone conversation, was sent to a psychiatrist in a hospital where Devlin was being treated.

It was in my talking to Rick that I learned about Bob Anderson and the integral role he had played in leading the many individuals who fell victim to Fred Devlin to believe that Devlin was absolutely on the up and up. Because Rick was the one individual who was the first to come to know all the other players in this story, I relied upon Rick to be the intermediary between me and each of the individuals to whom I eventually spoke - either over the phone or, as was the case, through emails with one particularly unfortunate individual in Africa who told me he was contemplating suicide over what Devlin had done to him.

But, as Rick explained to me when he first broached the name Bob Anderson to me, it was Bob Anderson who had aided Devlin in his duplicity. Rick added that he doubted Anderson would be willing to speak with me because, Rick thought, Bob would be too embarrassed to own up to his role in this whole sordid story.

In time though, Rick got back to me to say that Anderson had agreed to talk to me after all. I was somewhat surprised when I heard that - and wondered what had led to his change of heart?

Now, I have to admit that, although I've had a long career in publishing, I wouldn't have thought of myself as a well known journalist. Sure, I've Googled my name a couple of times (who hasn't?) and what comes up are a number of stories with which I've been associated over the years. I'm most proud of work I did over 20 years ago to expose an investment fund in Manitoba known as the Crocus Fund. It really had nothing to do with the Jewish community per se, but, each year for many years The Jewish Post & News would publish an annual investment guide. It was in 2002 that I wrote an exposé of the Crocus Fund which, I suggested in my article, was in very deep financial trouble.

For that, I was threatened with a lawsuit (to which I referred earlier in this story). But, in 2004 the Crocus Fund was placed into receivership and further, I went on to become the representative plaintiff in a class action lawsuit filed on behalf of Crocus Fund shareholders against a number of defendants. That lawsuit eventually garnered over \$12 million in damages for Crocus Fund shareholders. I'm quite proud of the role I played, both in exposing the house of cards upon which the Crocus Fund was built, and in being able to help bring some degree of compensation to Crocus Fund shareholders. So, when you Google my name, as perhaps Bob Anderson might have done, you're going to come across some references to my role in the whole Crocus Fund affair.

I mention all this as a preamble to what is about to follow, which is an account of my phone conversation with Bob Anderson. In what now ensues I try to retain as much of the flavour of our actual conversation as possible. Thus, there seem to be sudden leaps in Anderson's train of thought, but that's not all that unusual. After all, there's a well known president whose speaking style is so incoherent that even he is aware of that, but tries to pretend that it's deliberate by describing it as "the weave." To a certain extent Anderson weaved in and out of thoughts, too.

Bob Anderson phoned me one day in February 2026, to say that he was willing to talk to me. I told him that I was going to record the conversation, to which he responded: *"I just want to tell you it's an honor and a pleasure to talk to you about what I read about you. You have led a meritorious life, self-sacrificing, particularly for the Jewish community, and it sounds like you're the ultimate voice of reason that they need more people like you. And I just want to take my hat off to you and the service you've offered and bestowed upon your community up there, and I just am proud to be talking to you."*

Well, talk about exaggeration! I'm not sure there are many who would go so far as to describe what I've accomplished over the course of my career in quite such laudatory terms - and I honestly wondered whether I was being set up for what would turn into nothing more than a round of total B.S.

So, I responded: *"Well, thank you for that. Okay, this isn't about me. But let me start by asking you, When did you first meet Fred Devlin?"*

Anderson: *"It was about 20 years ago."*

Me: *"Do you want to tell me the circumstances?"*

Anderson: "Sure. Okay, well, I mean, I don't have to tell you that, but I met him about 20 years ago up in Winnipeg. I met him in person." (Why would he say he didn't have to tell me that, I wondered? Why not?)

He went on: "It was the first time I had contact with him. And I'll try to give you a little short story, .. I'm not actively practicing law, but that was back when I was actively practicing law, and I was engaged by a group up in Canada who had a real bleeding heart for Bolivia, and they wanted to buy a bank ... Like, put it in the foundation." (I still don't know what he was talking about, but as is often the case when you're interviewing someone, you don't want to disrupt their train of thought, so you just let them wander on - strange as what they may have just said sounds.) "It was a bank that was struggling in Bolivia." (I have to admit that the first thought that came to mind when he mentioned a bank in Bolivia was "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid." Anyone who's seen that movie would understand what I'm talking about.)

Anderson continued: "So I went all the way up to Canada, and Mr. Devlin - Fred Devlin was a prospective investor they wanted me to talk to as I was their kind of international tax counsel for the project." (Again, who were the "they" Anderson was referring to, I wondered?) "And I met him in person. We had about a 15- to 20-minute meeting, and he was very well-dressed, very well-spoken.

"He was very well-groomed, had a good sense of humor, and, you know, we seemed to kind of have common ground on spiritual... Even though he's Jewish, I'm Christian. We had, you know, the fact that he felt family... His priorities in life were similar to mine, you know, God, family, and country kind of thing. So we just kind of hit it off personally.

"He seemed like a real nice guy, and then I just kind of lost contact. I mean, we didn't have any contact for many years. You want to go to the next step?"

Me: "Before we do that - when you met him, what did he present himself as? What did he claim to be?"

Anderson: "He was just, you know, it's funny. In fact, I'm just trying to think. He was just a businessman, a successful business real estate investor. Real estate. Business real estate."

Me: "Did he mention at that time the Xanadu group of companies?"

Anderson: "Not at that time. No, sir. No, sir...He kept bragging, kind of bragging. Well, not bragging, but he was... The number one thing in his resumé was his relationship with Izzy Asper...And then we had a hiatus of several years."

I then told Anderson that, of all the people with whom I had spoken, his relationship with Devlin went back the longest (20 years). I said to him: "I've been trying to understand when did Fred completely flip? And apparently it happened sometime when he was around 30 that he started developing these delusions.

"Apparently he was quite capable before then. I believe he had a position with the..." (and I'm deliberately omitting where Devlin was employed because if I get too specific a lawyer might say that I

didn't sufficiently disguise Devlin's true identity.) "And he did get his Master's in Business Administration at the University of Manitoba.

"So that all checks. So, you know, for me, the curious part is when someone develops a delusion, a psychosis, when did it happen? And according to his mother, she corroborated that it happened sometime when he was around 30 and he's 60 now. So you would have met him when he was in his 40s.

"And I think what's happened, my observation is that it's gotten worse in more recent times, his delusions. But I want you to continue. You said there was a period of time then when you didn't have any contact with him, right?"

Anderson: "Right."

Me: "So when were you in contact again?"

Anderson: "Well, just to put a finishing on the Bolivia story, I went ahead and did that project with the Canadians." (The way Anderson said "the Canadians," you'd think he's talking about a really shady group, like say, "the Chechens.") "But, you know, Fred ended up not wanting to invest."

Now, at this point Anderson's language got really twisted, but I want to retain the flavour of it: "I had a little suspicion of being capable of investing and then it was a nice opportunity for somebody who had a heart for the living people, you know, like an altruistic, a neo-mercenary kind of a heart, which he presented himself as representing. But anyway, he had no involvement in that project, lost contact with him for, it could have been 10 years, I mean, it's just been a lot of years. I mean, it could have been, it could have easily been 10 years, 15 years.

"And then he just kind of, he got in contact with me about, I think it was for the explicit purpose of doing an NCND, a non-disclosure agreement." (I wasn't sure what Anderson meant by "NCND." I knew a nondisclosure agreement is commonly referred to as an NDA, but I had to look up NCND. The closest I could come to that term is what is known as an NCNDA: a Non-Circumvention, Non-Disclosure Agreement. Here's the definition of an NCNDA: "a specific type of contract used in international trade or business deals where one party wants to ensure that the other party does not bypass them ("circumvent" them) to do business directly with their contacts or intermediaries, while also keeping shared information confidential.")

"I don't know why he, I guess he probably figured I would do it for him for free or something. He kind of preyed upon, as I look back on it, he kind of, I guess, you know, felt like I might do it for him on a friendship basis or something like that.

"And I did do it and he loved it. I mean, it's a great agreement. It's really tight, I've spent a lot of time on it, it's only a couple of pages, but it's a very tight NCND.

"And then from that though, the reason I'm making a point of that, most of my, like, quote-unquote, representing him, not as an attorney, but just as a quote-unquote advisor, most of it was sending this NCND out to all these people. Like every so often he'd send an NCND here to protect me and, you know, protect him. So I would send a cover letter and an NCND and that's most of the contact, that's

like 99%, 90%, 90% of the contact I had with people on his behalf was sending out this NCND for them to sign and execute.

"I don't know why..., I guess he probably figured I would do it for him for free or something. He kind of preyed upon, as I look back on it, he kind of, you know, felt like I might do it for him on a friendship basis or something like that.

"And I did do it and he loved it. I mean, it's a great agreement. You know, it's really tight, I've spent a lot of time on it, it's only a couple of pages, but it's a very tight NCND.

At this point I have to step back - and give my head a shake - something I did metaphorically throughout my researching material for this story. Here was a lawyer - talking about creating very "tight" non-disclosure agreements or, as he referred to them, as "NCND's" - and he's clearly very proud of the work he did for Devlin.

But, what the hell was it all for, I wondered? And didn't he ever stop to think - just why was he sending out those NDAs or NCND's or whatever the heck he wanted to call them? What was it in whatever agreements that various parties were signing with Devlin that Anderson was requiring of the recipients of whatever it was he was sending to them that had to remain so absolutely confidential that no one could even talk about what was in those agreements with anyone else?

Since my conversation with Anderson though, I have seen actual agreements between Devlin and some of the individuals who were to become part of his vast delusion. I admit those agreements are very impressive. They spell out in precise detail the respective obligations of Devlin and the person with whom he was entering into an agreement. They are very detailed contracts - and clearly reflect the knowledge and experience of someone who had an extensive business background.

Which makes me wonder all the more - when did someone of such obvious talent and experience go completely off the rails? My own brief encounter with Devlin eight years ago didn't offer me the kind of insight into his approach that others must have witnessed - where they would have been dazzled by his extreme self-confidence, composure, and apparent vast business experience. In time, as I was to speak to others who were taken in by Devlin - and some of them mentioned names of some very prominent individuals who had also come into contact with Devlin and who had also spoken quite highly of him, I began to realize that his delusion was so intricate - and he so totally believed in what he was telling people, that it was possible to get a better understanding how he was able to completely fool so many people into thinking he was the real deal.

I must also disclose that I have attempted to contact some of the people whose names have been mentioned to me as also having been part of Devlin's network - and who hold very prominent positions in the business world. In one instance, I did get a response from one of those individuals.

I had written a similar email to several different people, in which I asked about the extent of their relationships with Fred Devlin.

I would send emails to head offices of companies or organizations, explaining who I was and why I was trying to contact specific individuals. In one instance, I did receive a response. In the following

email, I've left out the real name of the person who is the subject of this story. I've also omitted the name of the person I was trying to contact"

Hi,

I'm writing a story about someone by the name of is totally delusional and has defrauded many different people all over the world.

I'm told that had some contact with ... at some point. I'd like to speak to ... about the nature of their contact with ...

I can be reached at

Thank you.

Bernie Bellan

Publisher,

jewishpostandnews.ca

Here is the response I received:

Hi Bernie,

Thanks for reaching out.

This is a troubling email! I'm afraid I don't know Mr. very well. ...oversees the development of ... helps to facilitate investment into ... markets it nationally and internationally. Mr. ...reached out to ... in order to inquire about opportunities at ... so we gave him some information and connected him with a couple of folks to continue his conversations, same as we would for any company or individual considering investing in operations at It's been several months since we last spoke.

I wish you the best with your project!

....

I thanked ...for responding to me:

Hi,

Thanks for getting back to me. I wonder what became of the contacts you gave His pattern of behaviour has been to insinuate himself into someone's life by making him seem to be someone of great importance and wealth, and then once he has someone's interest - to broach the idea that he would be willing to invest in a particular project that someone may be trying to advance. He would also try to obtain contacts from whoever it was that he was discussing a project idea with.

The problem is he is absolutely delusional. He has no money and all his talk of putting up investment dollars has always been total nonsense.

I hope that whoever it was that you might have put in touch with ... didn't get too far into it with him. He's deceived people all over the world into thinking that he's someone of great wealth.

While the story is fascinating, it's also very sad once you know how many people have been deceived by Right now I'm working closely with someone who's been trying to get a police investigation of launched, but it's been a bureaucratic nightmare as different police forces claim that it's not in their jurisdiction and they keep passing the buck.

I've also put that same individual in touch with one of Winnipeg's leading law firms. Their head of civil litigation says that there's a solid case to be made against, but the problem is he's absolutely penniless so what's the point of seeing him?. I believe he's being supported by his very wealthy parents, but the lawyer says that they can't be held liable for their son's behaviour.

And, as I wrote to you, it's all so crazy that I decided to write a story about it. But even as I've been writing it I've been finding out more and more about ..., including just recently when I was told that he had contacted you andfrom

You were good enough to respond to me.

.... hasn't.

Thanks at least for responding.

-Bernie

And so, even though I began this story by asking how so many people could have been taken in by what was clear to me almost from the moment I met Devlin, was his total delusion that he was a hugely wealthy businessman and owner of a vast network of companies, as time wore on - and I spoke to more individuals who had fallen prey to his charming blarney, I began to understand how each individual was unaware there were other individuals who had become part of Devlin's delusion. (And that is why those nondisclosure agreements or whatever Anderson called them played such a crucial role in keeping each individual who was to be victimized by Devlin ignorant of others who were in similar situations.)

It occurred to me as I was writing this story that the fact Devlin was so insistent on anyone with whom he was supposedly entering into some sort of business arrangement sign a nondisclosure agreement perhaps meant that somewhere in that twisted mind of his he had a sense that what he was doing was actually a total fraud. Or, perhaps his past business experience would come to the fore and he would put into practice lessons he had learned years before without actually realizing that he was exhibiting totally delusional behaviour. I don't think I'll ever know if either of those suppositions is correct.

I asked Bob to describe what he would send to the various individuals to whom he sent nondisclosure agreements. How would he explain why he wanted them to sign NDAs (or whatever he called them)?

He said that he'd send *"a cover letter out explaining the request to sign the agreement...So I'd send, you know, just, hello, how are you, please see the attached agreement. That was the extent of these letters I'd sent out."*

Me: *"Any idea approximately how many of these letters you sent out?"*

Bob: "10 to 15."

That at least gave me some idea of the scope of Devlin's network - and how many more people might have been approached by him within the past few years of whom I wasn't aware. Remember, Bob had said that he had first met Devlin 20 years ago and then had lost contact with him for 10-15 years. It was only after they reconnected that Devlin asked Bob to start sending out those NDAs, which must mean it was likely only within the past 5-10 years that his delusion took hold completely. Also, each of the individuals with whom I spoke, other than Dan Winthrop, told me they had come into contact with Devlin only in the past five years. Dan Winthrop, you may remember reading, said that he met Devlin 16 or 18 years ago - he wasn't sure.

All this makes me wonder what was going on in Devlin's life in the more distant past. I know that he had been hospitalized on several occasions - in the psych ward, in different hospitals, based on accounts given to me by different individuals. And, I know that when I met him he claimed that he had stepped back from running his vast network of companies and was at that point interested in pursuing his philanthropic work.

But, something must have happened that led Devlin to become so active in establishing contact with different individuals in recent years - always with the intention - or so he would tell them, of investing in different businesses or, as proved to one of the most damaging lies he told - of helping that individual in Africa to whom I referred earlier (Charlie) establish a charitable foundation.

Since no one in Devlin's family has ever been willing to talk about Devlin - beyond saying that he's "not well," it's very hard to know what else he might have been up to in all the years since he had attained a very senior business position. Was he for a very long time attempting to inveigle himself into people's lives under the premise that he was a wealthy businessman who wanted to invest in their businesses or help bring a project to fruition?

I can't really answer that. But it is apparent that within the past five years Fred Devlin was quite active in contacting various individuals and spinning his incredibly deluded fantasy.

To return to Bob Anderson's story, which takes an interesting twist. He had explained that he had sent out a large number of NDAs on behalf of Devlin and then, he said: *"I lost contact with him again."*

But, Bob continued: *"Shortly after that, we got real hot and heavy, I mean, you know, he wanted me to come up to Winnipeg and he wanted to be the family counsellor and all this stuff - to the point where he had plane reservations and I was about to step on a plane to go up there and see him."*

"Then all of a sudden I got this call, you know, he was in the hospital, he was sick or something like that, which I don't really buy the story now. I think he just couldn't afford a plane ticket or something like that. And then several years after that, I think he had this relapse, probably one of these relapses into the hospital, probably for the mental side, you know."

"I think he might have said he hurt himself. And then several years after that, he got back in touch with me again and wanted me to write some more of these letters, which I did. And then I lost contact after a couple years after that and then he resurfaced a couple years ago."

"And then for the past couple years on and off, he's been requesting the same type of thing. And then in the process, offering me all these opportunities and, you know, all these potential contract agreements and going to make me rich. And he always wanted to give me a piece of the equity."

Now, if you're confused by the apparent contradictions in Bob's story, then join the club. What period of time was he talking about, I wondered? At one point he claimed that he *"had lost contact with him again,"* but then he says *"Shortly after that, we got real hot and heavy."* So, how long was it that he didn't have contact with Fred?

It doesn't really matter because this entire story is about one huge delusion: Devlin's unshakable belief that he was an extremely wealthy and successful businessman. Trying to figure out the chronology of events that occurred - such as when did Bob Anderson actually have contact with Devlin is almost impossible since Bob's narrative is all over the place.

I asked him though, what were the "opportunities" that he said Devlin offered him?

Here's what he answered: *'Let me pull up his letterhead. Let's see, I'm pulling it up here. Okay. He said I was going to become Chief Global and Senior Advisor. And he gave me this address called Boulevard Grand, Duchesne, Charlotte, Luxembourg City.'*

Me: *"The headquarters for his global group of companies - right?"*

Bob: *"Right, right."*

Me: *"Man, his delusions are fascinating, but you can just imagine the imagination that went into them."*

Bob: *"No kidding, no kidding."*

Me: *"So did he ever offer to pay you for any of the work you were doing?"*

Bob: *"Oh, yeah. Oh, and as a matter of fact, he paid me a thousand dollars or something a couple times, but I think that ended up coming from his father. I think he borrowed it from his father or maybe his wife or maybe even his mother or his father himself. It might have even been one of his brothers. I've had sporadic contact with most of his family."*

That payment provided a crucial piece of evidence that Devlin's family was well aware what he was doing - and, in fact, was complicit in his behaviour. Based on that, when I was later to talk to Jonathan (whose name I mentioned early in this story as someone who had lost quite a bit of money as a direct result of Devlin having convinced him to stop paying his debts; I'll explain all that in another chapter), I told Jonathan that he should sue Devlin, his wife, and his parents. In fact, I told Jonathan that I knew of several Winnipeg lawyers who might be willing to take on a lawsuit of that sort. I did contact a very well known lawyer and, as of the time of writing and, as I'll explain, the law firm was willing to take on the case to sue Devlin on behalf of Jonathan, but the lawyer who was going to handle the case said there were no legal grounds for extending the lawsuit to Devlin's wife or his parents.

Bob, however, noted that getting that \$1,000 payment from Devlin wasn't easy, but he was sure the cheque was signed either by Devlin's wife or his father; he couldn't recall.

I said to him that *"the point of my trying to find out about the source of his funds is Rick has been pretty adamant that without the support of his parents, he wouldn't have been able to carry on whatever he's been doing."*

Bob: *"It was just amazing. I'm sure the company line he gave to all the other people he talked to, to Rick and Jonathan and everybody else was that he had some impediment where he couldn't transfer all of his millions of dollars into North America. I mean, I kept saying, 'If you're the richest guy in the world,' which is what he claimed at one point, 'why can't you send \$100 or \$200?' And he said, 'well, I just don't have any cash. I can't get cash.' "*

I said to Bob that what he just told me led me to react the same way I had reacted when I had heard everyone else's story of their dealings with Fred Devlin: *"It sounds like this guy just wanders in and out of reality. And when he's in his delusional state, he starts contacting people. I'm not sure how much thinking was going into it. His delusion simply takes over."*

Rick, though, had mentioned that Bob had sent a couple of "cease and desist" letters, as well as NDAs. I wanted to ask Bob about those cease and desist letters. I said to him: *"I was told Fred had sent out cease and desist letters. Did you author those letters, as well?"*

Bob: *"Well, when he was in the hospital, he claimed they were keeping him against his will. He would dictate a letter and I would just send it out on his behalf. I'd say on behalf of Fred Devlin. I made it very clear that I was just parroting what he had told me to say. I don't think it ever did any good at all, it sounded so desperate, I really kind of felt sorry for him."*

As I noted earlier, Bob explained that he had sent two cease and desist letters. One was to a psychiatrist in a hospital where Fred was being treated. The other, however, was to Jonathan Soloway - the fellow in Ontario who actually lost a lot of money as a result of Devlin's promises to Jonathan that he would be paid a huge salary if he entered into a contractual relationship with Devlin to develop a Real Estate Investment Trust. Jonathan did not take kindly to Devlin's failure to fulfill his obligations and subsequently began to send threatening letters to Devlin saying that he was going to sue him for breach of contract. That's when Devlin asked Bob to send Jonathan a cease and desist letter.

Bob now admits he is deeply embarrassed over having sent that letter, saying he's since "apologized" to Jonathan. Bob says: *"And here Fred had me send this letter to him like he was being preyed upon by Jonathan. It was just the opposite."*

At that point in my conversation with Bob, he went off on a totally different tangent, telling me he had *"a deep interest in outer space and rockets."* What? Where was this going, I wondered?

He began to describe his particular interest in *"outer space entrepreneurship."*

Now, before you lose interest, I have to disclose that in another conversation that I had - previous to my conversation with Bob, I was told that Devlin's past experience in the aviation industry had played a

prominent role in his having networked with someone else - this time an Israeli fellow by the name of Avi, who now lives in the US. That will be the subject of a later chapter, but suffice to know that Devlin was able to convince many intelligent people that he wanted to enter into an arrangement whereby he would bring jets from Israel to be converted into water bombers in Canada.

And that's where Bob Anderson picks up the story: *"I got an email from a lady named Dalit Galon (not her real name) and she's in Canada, but she's like a public relations representative for Israeli aerospace. I looked her up - you know, on AI, she's a legitimate person. And Fred's big project was going to be to convert 67 planes from Israel in Canada into flame retardant sprayers."*

I said to Bob that I had heard that story from someone named Avi. I asked Bob whether he knew Avi? He said he didn't.

Bob continued with his story about Devlin and his having contacted people involved in the Israeli aerospace industry: *"I have correspondence, I don't think he could have faked these emails. I have correspondence from him to these people, and these people replying to him."*

I said to him: *"Yeah, I can see how people can get enmeshed in this kind of web. It's not conspiracy, it's just delusion."*

Of course though, nothing ever came of Devlin's grand plan to bring jets over from Israel to Canada. Bob eventually came to the realization that there was nothing of substance in any of Devlin's supposed plan: *"The main thing really that came through to me is, the thing he wanted to do most - was just talk. We got to talk, we got to talk, and we get on the phone, he's taking my time to talk for half an hour, and then he said, 'Well, I got to go, we'll continue next week.' He never comes to any conclusion."*

I responded: *"Well, that's the pattern of someone who's delusional. Okay, so was there a certain point where you just realized that this is all just fakery, and that he is delusional? Or was it just gradually, over time, you came to that conclusion?"*

Bob: *"I'd get to a point and say, 'Fred, we've got to have some money here, a retainer or something, I just can't deal with talking and spending my time', and I'd kind of cut him off. He'd come back in six months and say, 'well, I think I've got it all worked out, including the money.'*

"And I kept thinking maybe - like Elon Musk will make these crazy things. To me, putting a civilization on Mars is about as crazy as what Fred would talk about. Although, of course, Fred claims he's richer than Elon, he knows Elon."

And then Bob was brought back into reality by Rick: *"That's where I got the face slap,"* he says. *"You know, he (Rick) shook me up. He was the first person that said, 'Look, you know, this ain't right. This ain't so. I've got all these other people (who had been victimized by Devlin).*

"But he was the first person that really shook me into reality. And I just felt like a dog for, you know, just going along with this thing. And then that's when I apologized to Jonathan and I apologized to Rick.

"And I just felt like a dog. And, you know, I blame it on me for being gullible. You know, I don't hold any grudges. I shouldn't have been that gullible. You know, I'm no spring chicken. I'm 76 years old, but I still should not have been that gullible."

I said to Bob: *"But you see, as I wrote to Rick last night, I really wanted to speak to you because you were coming at it from a different perspective. You weren't being asked to invest. You were sort of facilitating Bart's delusions to a certain extent."*

Bob: *"Yeah. Unfortunately. Yeah."*

And then Bob asked me something that left me confused for a moment. He said: *"Let me ask you: Did you get the museum open?"*

Me: *"What museum?"*

Bob: *"I read an article that you were going to convert a synagogue."*

I realized then what it was to which he was referring. It was a story I had written some years back about a plan by a Winnipeg doctor to partially convert Winnipeg's oldest synagogue building into a partial museum. I was quite impressed that Bob had actually read that story. It told me he wasn't just buttering me up when he was laying it on so thick at the beginning of our conversation about what an honour it was to speak to someone who had done so much for the Jewish community of Winnipeg. Of course, that's nonsense. I'm just a former newspaper publisher. But it did tell me that Bob had actually read at least one article I had written.

I explained to him that I didn't know what the status of that museum project was, but it did remind me that I should follow it up with that Winnipeg doctor. I said to Bob: *"As far as I know, they're just doing feasibility studies now. Honestly, I don't believe that project will go anywhere. But unlike Fred Devlin's ideas, it does have some basis in reality."*

Bob said: *"You come across with a stellar resumé and life's work, and you've done a lot of great things. I just want to commend you, sir, and it was a pleasure to talk to you."*

I responded: *"Okay, thanks very much, Bob."*

He said: *"Take care. Yes, sir. Let me know if you need anything."*

I signed off, saying: *"I certainly will. Thank you very much for calling. Have a good day."*

Chapter 7

The con man meets a fellow psychiatric patient in Victoria Hospital

As I read through transcripts of conversations I had with the various individuals who would come to play different parts in what is quite a crazy story, some of those conversations were so weird that I wondered why I ever agreed to talk to certain people.

One such conversation took place with someone I'll call Jack. Now, while Jack seemed perfectly nice, just like Rick, Dan, and Bob before him, the conversation veered off in crazy directions.

It was Rick who had told me about Jack, saying that it was Jack who had connected him with Fred Devlin. Jack's connection to Rick though, as I was to learn while talking with him, was through their mutual interest in cannabis.

Jack said he first met Fred Devlin in 2022 when both were patients in the psychiatric ward at Victoria General Hospital in Winnipeg. There's no need to go into any detail about Jack's particular condition, other than to note that he said he suffers from a "seizure condition."

To treat that condition, Jack explained, he uses cannabis. Here's how he described what has happened to him when he has had a seizure and has been rendered unconscious: *"When I go to the hospital for care, they place me in the psychiatric ward because they believe I'm a street drug user and not someone with a neurological condition that there's no treatment for."*

So, it was when he was hospitalized following one of those seizures that Jack says he met Fred: *"So in the hospital, I met Fred and he seemed like a blessed person, and he talks about helping other people, and he had a business card for a charity, and his theme is Tikun Olam, Repair the World... and he calls his foundation Xanadu Foundation."*

I said: *"Sounds familiar,"* but what I wanted to know is how he put Devlin together with Rick? I said to him: *"Now, because Rick says that you were the common link, that you must have known Rick."*

In his rambling way, Jack explained how he had come to know Rick: *"So my workplace, there were gang members and weapons involved, and I intervened, and I had a spinal cord injury, and a head injury, and that was 2005. So I was disabled with a seizure condition."*

"Since then, and I came to, and after refusing palliative care, I found cannabis, and that's what I was prescribed by my neurologist. And that's how I came to Rick and his website."

Rick, it turns out, has a very popular website devoted to the promotion of cannabis. He also has a business selling cannabis. (I won't disclose the name of Rick's website because, just as I promised everyone else in this story with whom I communicated, I would keep their identities hidden.)

Jack, however, wanted to describe in great detail the medical benefits of cannabis, but I wanted to bring him back to explaining how it was that he put Rick and Devlin together. He said that when he was younger he worked at a gas station and he used to read magazines at night while he was at the gas station. One of the magazines had an article about Fred Devlin. (I referred to that article in the business magazine at the beginning of this story.)

It's actually quite amazing that having read an article in a magazine over 30 years earlier, Jack remembered the name "Fred Devlin," but when he met Fred in the psychiatric ward, he immediately recalled that article - and that the article had mentioned Izzy Asper was a mentor of Fred's.

Jack said he actually knew Izzy Asper (who died in 2002): *"I am an acquaintance of Israel Asper and I spoke with him when I was 17 and 18. I spoke with him a number of times. We used to see each other. We used to frequent the same place on Fridays."* (I love his use of the word "frequent." That's open to

all sorts of conjecture what he meant by that.) *"So we would see each other on a Friday -f reqlently. And we spoke a number of times. And if you've ever spoken with Israel Asper, he is clear in guiding."*

I was rather astonished that Jack was able to recall an article he had read some 30 years earlier. I said to him: *"And this is some 30 years later, right? So, you remembered Fred's name from having read that article?"*

Jack: *"I have been documented with an over 160 IQ, intelligence quotient."* (Who knows? Maybe he was telling the truth. It is rather remarkable that he remembered an article he had read 30 years prior.)

Still, I wanted to get back to how he put Rick and Devlin together. Jack explained: Devlin said he was *"looking for a businessman to start a business and bring cannabis as medicine."*

That led to Jack contacting Rick and putting him in touch with Devlin. As I explained in my chapter about Rick, Rick was wanting to expand his publishing business and Devlin had promised him \$10 million toward that end.

It was in January 2026, however, that Jack met Devlin once again in the psych ward at Victoria General Hospital. This time though, Devlin blamed his having ended back in the psych ward on Rick, saying *"Rick is doing something to harm him (Fred) and his reputation and his (Rick's) website's been taken down..."*

But, Jack said, he told Fred *"I'm not very certain about Rick. So I will not be easily convinced that Rick is doing anything."*

Jack then veered off into a long tangent - something that by this point I had become accustomed to hearing when it came to speaking with individuals who had had an association with Fred Devlin.

It was also when he met Devlin the first time during his stay in the psych ward that Devlin invited Jack to *"join him with his charity foundation."*

As Jack explained: *"I'm a Christian man. I'm also a Catholic. I'm also a Baptist and I also love Judaism. So, when it comes to a religion that's based on Mitzvahs and doing good deeds to help other people, I love that. So, I decided I would help Fred repair the world and try to do something better than is existing right now with him."*

"So, we would get together and we started seeing each other and socializing and meeting together regularly. And we've been doing that for the past two years, roughly. 18 months, 20 months, somewhere in there."

Jack went on to describe a story about having bought cannabis for Devlin's wife who, Jack said, suffers from migraines. He also claimed that *"Queen Victoria suffered from migraines and used cannabis daily for a neurology condition. That is historic and documented."*

(A quick check of the internet contradicted what Jack said, although there may have been a glimmer of truth in what he alleged. Here's what a Google check came up with: "Reports suggest that Queen Victoria may have used cannabis tincture to alleviate menstrual cramps or pain during childbirth, as

prescribed by her personal physician, Sir John Russell Reynolds, who frequently used cannabis in his practice. However, these claims are not definitively proven and remain disputed by some historians.)

Jack said he spent \$945 on cannabis for Devlin's wife (That's some expensive cannabis, I'd say!) "*but it was a disastrous for him and his wife. And this is how he has repaid that friendship for everyone with his deceit and fraud.*"

Our conversation, which had already been 30 minutes, continued, but nothing else of consequence was said - if anything that I've already described of our conversation can be said to have been of any consequence.

Chapter 8

He promises to help an old childhood friend set up a Real Estate Investment Trust

To this point, while I've given accounts of different individuals who may have spent a great deal of time working on projects that Devlin had promised he would back financially and, while I don't want to diminish the value of the time they all lost involving themselves in what turned out to be Devlin's total delusion, none of them could say that they actually lost money as a result of having become involved with Devlin.

Sure, Rick spent what he says were hundreds of hours planning the expansion of his publication – based on Devlin having told him he would back him, and Dan Winthrop spent what he says were years trying to bring his aviation idea to fruition. In neither case though can they say that they put up real money to advance their ideas. Bob Anderson says he was only paid \$1,000 for all the work he ended up doing for Devlin, but he admits that he has only himself to blame for having spent so much time without being compensated.

Avi did end up spending time on the phone with Devlin but again, he can't make much of a case that it cost him financially.

Such was not the case with Jonathan Soloway. In fact, Jonathan was one of the last people to whom I spoke directly who had been a victim of Fred Devlin and that was only after Rick had cajoled him into believing that I was honestly interested in helping him – by exposing Devlin as a total fraud. I've already noted that Jonathan's particular case was so well documented by him having kept copies of every email and every document that Devlin had ever sent him that I told Jonathan I thought he had a really solid case in a civil action if he were to file one – not only against Devlin, but Devlin's wife and Devlin's parents as well.

He told me that he couldn't possibly afford a lawyer to represent him, so I said to him that I might be able to help him with that. I told him that I knew a number of very good lawyers in Winnipeg who are experienced civil litigators and that, if he wanted, I would reach out to one or more of them to see whether they might be interested in representing Jonathan in a lawsuit against Fred.

I emailed one lawyer whom I regard quite highly and gave him a brief summary of the case that I thought Jonathan could have against Fred. That lawyer responded the same day, saying that he was currently on vacation, but that he would get back to me when he returned to work.

It was a while before I heard from that lawyer so, in the meantime I thought I would contact some other lawyers whom I thought would also be well suited to handle a lawsuit for Jonathan against Fred. One lawyer with whom I had a very amiable conversation said he couldn't possibly take on the case because he knew the Devlin family too well. Another lawyer said he was in the process of retiring from practice and regardless, cases of this sort are so complex that it was far outside of his field of practice.

Eventually though, I heard back from the first lawyer I had contacted. He said that he had turned the matter over to the head of civil litigation in his firm and that I could expect to hear from him.

Normally, a lawyer would not discuss a matter of this sort with anyone except his or her client, but there was an extenuating circumstance in this case: I had agreed to put up a retainer for the firm if they agreed there was a solid case to be had against Fred Devlin.

When I was first writing this part of the story I didn't know what the status of Jonathan Soloway's putative lawsuit was. I had heard back a few times from the lawyer I had first contacted to ask whether his firm might be interested in mounting a lawsuit on behalf of Jonathan, but each time the answer was that he would have to put it to the firm as a whole to decide whether it would be worthwhile to take on the case. I had explained to the lawyer I had contacted that, if the firm thought it was a bona fide case, I was prepared to put up the retainer that is normal for a law firm to require before proceeding with a case of this sort. My thinking was that, if the firm did file a law suit and it proved successful, then I would get a percentage of the resulting award.

Jonathan had sent a detailed package of documents to the lawyer I had contacted which gave an itemized accounting of how he had been defrauded by Fred Devlin.

Here is what he had sent, on February 28, 2026:

Please find attached a PDF detailing the full employment timeline and the hours I invested in my executive role in connection withand the Group matter.

This document sets out:

- *A chronological summary of my work contributions*
- *The estimated total hours invested at a senior executive level*
- *REIT structuring, financial modelling, compensation framework development, and strategic planning*
- *Representations made to me regarding compensation and ownership interests*
- *Written communications and text messages wherein Mr. ... represented that Group would assume responsibility for my outstanding debts and that I was to refrain from paying them personally*
- *Statements made to me indicating that an executive in my position could not be in bankruptcy*

In addition to the attached summary PDF, I am in possession of:

- *Signed agreements relating to compensation and ownership*
- *Supporting PDF documentation*
- *Screenshots of text message exchanges*
- *Compensation modelling documentation*
- *Materials reflecting equity and ownership representations*

Please advise how you would prefer the full evidentiary package organized and delivered for review. I am prepared to provide a consolidated, indexed digital binder or hard-copy materials as required.=

I look forward to your guidance regarding next steps.

Jonathan did hear back from the head of the law firm around the middle of March (and I was cc'd on that email). In it he was told that the matter was now in the hands of the head of litigation for the firm.

On April 1, 2026, Jonathan received the following email from the head of litigation:

It was a pleasure speaking with you today regarding your matter.

As a preliminary matter, I addressed the suggestion that this matter might form the basis of a broader claim involving multiple affected individuals. Based on the information currently available, there is no evidentiary foundation to support such an approach. Your circumstances appear to be more consistent with an individual claim arising from alleged breach of contract and misrepresentation. A broader proceeding would require evidence from multiple individuals demonstrating a pattern of conduct involving financial loss, which is not presently before me.

As for your case, I have conducted a preliminary review of the documents you provided. Below is my understanding of the facts and our discussion. Please let me know if I have misunderstood or omitted anything:

Sometime around August 2024, you entered into discussions with Mr. ... and what you describe as the "...Group of Companies Worldwide Holdings Group." Based on representations made to you, you travelled to Winnipeg for meetings, participated in discussions regarding the development of a REIT, and entered into an employment agreement.

Under the employment agreement (Note: the full employment agreement can be found beginning on page 68.) you were to receive compensation of \$250,000 annually commencing June 1, 2025, as well as additional compensation on termination. You also advised that the agreement contemplated you holding a 49.5% interest in a proposed company.

You then engaged in executive-level planning and related work in reliance on those representations. You estimate that you spent approximately 1,850 hours performing work in preparation for the establishment of the REIT.

You now believe that those representations were false. You have not received any compensation for your work, including salary or other payments.

As discussed, the role of counsel at this stage is twofold. First, to determine whether you have a viable legal claim, including identifying the appropriate causes of action. Second, to assess the nature and quantum of damages that may be recoverable. To complete that assessment, it will be necessary to review the employment agreement and all supporting documentation, including evidence of the representations made to you, your reliance on those representations, and the losses you have sustained. Depending on the terms of the agreement and available evidence, your claim may proceed either in contract or tort (e.g. negligent misrepresentation, detrimental reliance, quantum meruit, and other causes of action). I suspect you do have one or more actionable causes of action. Damages are less clear. Enforcement even more tenuous.

Based on the information currently available, there is some uncertainty as to whether Mr. ... has sufficient assets to satisfy any judgment. You indicated that there may be a possibility of recovery through discussions with his family in the event of a successful claim. However, that outcome is uncertain and should be considered when evaluating the cost-benefit of litigation.

As a next step, I recommend that you retain our firm to conduct this initial analysis and assessment. Subject to clearing conflicts, this would require execution of our engagement documentation and payment of an initial retainer of \$5,000. You indicated that Bernie, associated with the Jewish Post and News, may be prepared to fund your legal fees and asked that I contact him to confirm. I will do so. For clarity, you have authorized me to discuss your matter and our conversation with Bernie. I have copied Bernie on this report.

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this further, I remain available.

(I should note that the reference to my association with The Jewish Post and News was wrong. The Jewish Post & News no longer exists but hey, lawyers can make mistakes.)

Jonathan didn't send me all the documents he had sent to the lawyer whom I had first contacted, but he did send me the "Master Employment Agreement," which Devlin signed, and which spells out in great detail everything that Fred Devlin was promising to Jonathan Soloway.

In terms of chronology, Jonathan's experience with Devlin was quite recent – going back only a little more than a year. When I talked to Jonathan I began by reviewing what I had already learned about Devlin. I wanted Jonathan to be aware that I knew quite a bit about Devlin, but I was quite interested in speaking to someone who had actually lost money as a result of Devlin having ensnared him in his delusion, not just someone who had only spent time working on a plan that was delusional.

I said to Jonathan that Devlin has left "no prints" on the internet. A search for his name or the Xanadu Group of Companies would turn up nothing because, as I explained to Jonathan, what I had found out was that nothing Devlin had boasted as having done or as owning when he spoke with so many other individuals was "real."

Since writing this, however, I've now become aware that someone was able to retrieve the original article I had written about the person I've been calling Fred Devlin and has reposted that article under a different website. The person who reposted that article used something called the "Wayback Machine." Don't ask me what that is. All that I know is an article I had first posted on February 22, 2026, then removed two days later, is back on the internet.

To return to my conversation with Jonathan Soloway - I went on: *"It didn't take me too long to realize this guy is nuts, and that's why I left it alone after I talked to his mother"* - until I received that January 16 email.

"But," I continued, "now that I realize that he's a very dangerous nut, it's a different story. "What I'd like to know is whether his parents have been involved with this? Because it's one thing if his mother or if both his parents are paying for Fred and his wife's car or house, whatever it is, but do they realize that, according to what I've been told by more than one person, their son likes to go to the Fairmont Hotel for breakfast - carrying a briefcase, and that he sort of holds court there - pretending to be a very important businessman?"

Jonathan concurred: *"He walks in there like a big 'macher' (a Yiddish expression for someone important), like everybody knows him there. He sits down for breakfast there. But the thing I really, I find so incredible is, his wife, she has to be completely complicit here because what else does he do during the day?"*

I said that's something I'd like to find out too, adding that I had been told his wife has been present at many of Fred's so-called "business meetings." What has her role been in enabling Fred to carry on with his delusional behaviour, I wondered?

Jonathan said: *"He thinks he's... some sort of like, how do I say? He thinks he's some sort of divine intervention from God that he will help you. That's how he comes across. And he's put on this planet to help people.*

"...so if you're someone who is destitute and you've got problems, then you're someone he loves to help.

"And how he finds these people in itself is a question. I guess, being on social media and seeing who are friends of friends and maybe tapping into them."

I said to Jonathan *"I'm not going to try and find every last person that Fred Devlin has contacted because the stories are all of a pattern. He finds someone - I guess mostly through social media, finds out something about them, tells them he'd like to help them - and pretty soon he has them believing he's some fabulously rich businessman who will help them financially."*

Jonathan then asked me about my own background: "So are you the Western Jewish News?" (That was another Jewish newspaper that my late brother and I, along with another partner, bought in 1987 - mostly to get rid of it to eliminate the competition for the paper we owned, which was The Jewish Post.)

"No," I explained to Jonathan, "I used to be the owner of the Jewish Post & News - which used to be called the Jewish Post."

I added that my brother, who had been the editor of the paper, died suddenly in 2009, and I took over as editor and publisher until I gave the paper away in 2024 to a non-profit Jewish service organization called the Gwen Secter Centre. I told Jonathan that I still work with the print newspaper somewhat, but I focus my attention more on my website, which is called jewishpostandnews.ca.

Jonathan said that he hadn't paid much attention to Winnipeg's Jewish community since he left Winnipeg in the 1990s, but he knew that his mother was a subscriber to the Jewish newspaper. I told him that I knew her name.

I also told Jonathan that I had done investigative journalism in my time, but I had never come across as crazy a story as the Fred Devlin story. I said that I knew Fred suffers from a delusional psychosis and that I wanted to do whatever I could to stop him from harming more people. That's why, I said to Jonathan, I wanted to learn a lot more about what had happened between Fred and him because, after talking to Rob Griffin, I thought that Jonathan had the most convincing case that could lead to a successful lawsuit against Fred and his family.

Jonathan said "the one thing they've got to do with Fred is take away his phone - or just take him away, period. I think they got to put him in a straitjacket."

I said, "that doesn't happen - unfortunately, but I'm going to try and keep other people from being victimized by him." And that's why I wanted to help Jonathan find a lawyer who would file a lawsuit for Jonathan.

"If you can sue Fred then I can report on any of the allegations the lawyer would include in your lawsuit," I said to him. And my simply reporting those allegations would prevent another lawyer from suing me for defamation, I added - something that I had been threatened with when I first posted something to my website about Fred - and his family.

That's why I wanted to learn as many of the details of what had gone down between Jonathan and Fred, I explained.

I added: "And if it causes his parents great embarrassment, so be it. They should have put a stop to this years ago. And they didn't."

Jonathan said: "I think at the beginning, if I understand it correctly, he (Fred) did very well in business financially. But then, he lost a lot of money... it was some investor he had.

"And then, I think that's when his parents stepped in and started to help him. All I know is he was involved with (name of business omitted). That's all I know."

I wanted to turn the conversation to finding out what exactly was the nature of the business deal Jonathan and Fred were supposed to have had. I had been told by Rob Griffin that it had something to do with real estate, so I asked Jonathan if his background was in real estate?

I don't want to describe in specific terms what Jonathan's business background was because anyone reading this who might have known him would know exactly who it is who I'm writing about and, just as I had promised everyone else whom I interviewed, I wanted to give them anonymity.

Suffice to say that Jonathan had held an extremely important position within the construction industry in Toronto for over 25 years. "At one point in my life, I was travelling about 200,000 miles a year," he noted.

He continued, "So I travelled all over the world for almost 11 years. And I was invited by the federal government to be part of the Team Canada trade mission to China and Hong Kong.

"I left my job after 25 years. And I didn't really know what to do. So I became a consultant. I was ... group consultants for a while. And I did a couple of jobs here and there. And it was never really paying the bills properly, whatever it was.

"And I decided then to go get my real estate license because real estate here was extremely huge. It was a crazy real estate market we had here for about 18 years. And by the time I got my real estate license, that's when everything turned.

"I went into real estate at the very worst time. I mean, the past two years, I've hardly made any money. I've been extremely struggling for that matter.

"And that's where I stand today."

But when did his involvement with Fred Devlin start, I wondered?

Jonathan explained: We went to school together as kids, like five, six, whatever it is. I mean, I knew him... I mean - Jewish geography when Winnipeg was small. Everybody knew everybody. I mean, I grew up with the YMHA... where almost all Jewish kids went... I knew his parents, too. I mean, I spent some time at their house. I was a childhood friend of his, but... I kind of fell out of his life for about 40 years. He reached out to me one day on Facebook out of nowhere, and we rekindled the friendship that we had missed for well over 35 years."

I asked Jonathan: "Do you remember when that was, how long ago it was?"

He answered: I don't remember exactly, but I'm going to say it was sometime around a year ago. I'm trying to think here...It would have been like February of last year - but wait, I might be wrong. It might have been the year before."

I said: "But, whenever it was, it's been quite recently."

Jonathan: "Right. I was in Winnipeg in September of 2024. So I came back to Winnipeg to see Fred and I stayed with my mother. I was there for three days. That was the first meeting I had with Fred it, was September of 2024. So I would have met him on Facebook several months before that, in 2024."

I said: "Okay, so just tell me what happened then.'

Before he launched into his story of what happened between him and Fred, Jonathan said he had to tell something about himself. Again - to keep his identity hidden I won't divulge the detail of what happened, but suffice to say, he lost quite a bit of money in a failed investment. Some things happened in his personal life - aside from losing quite a bit of money in an investment, but I won't describe that either.

In short, Jonathan's life was falling apart. He "didn't have a car," he was living at his brother's and, as he had noted earlier, the real estate business in Toronto had gone bad.

And then Fred showed up in his life. 'When I met Fred, you know, he was like 'the saviour. Like he's done with everybody, he told me, he was going to help me.

"And he knew I came from the construction industry, and he wanted to set up a real estate REIT (Real Estate Investment Trust) with all his properties that he had in Winnipeg, in Cleveland, and in Toronto, and I thought that this was a great idea. He told me all about Xanadu, and about his airplanes..., that he owns Air Canada, that he owns the World Bank, that he owns, like, all this pie-in-the-sky stuff, whatever it was. It was just crazy.

"And... I believed him, mostly because he was a childhood friend of mine and I knew him. I had no reason for him to be telling me a lie, I guess is what I'm trying to say.

"Now, it didn't cost me any money to hear his other stories, and even though I knew the other stories weren't true, the way he put together this idea for a REIT - well, he knew all the ins and outs and he was very convincing... and we talked about putting this together, and blah, blah, blah...

"But, first and foremost, one of the things that was very strange is that every time things were going to get together, it just never got together. Like, Fred always had some sort of something, saying: 'Jonathan, I can't do that this week, because I'm going to Israel tomorrow, or I can't, you know - or I've got to go to the hospital, or whatever that might be, he had an excuse for everything. It doesn't matter,

"There was always a reason that it wasn't going to happen. So fast forward to 2025 - we made a plan that I would come into town (Winnipeg) in May of 2025, and that by the time I left, that we would have a contract put in place, because the intention was, he said for sure that we're going to put this together, and we'll have this together on the first of September...Originally," he said, "he wanted to try to raise capital for all this, with all the people that he knew.

"And then he decided at the very last minute, that he'll use his own properties, which was what I always thought was going to happen, because when you're setting up a REIT, you need these properties, but these properties, he already had. There was no reason to go search for other investors to begin with. Long and short story is, one of the first real problems I had with Fred was, we finally did a contract, and I had a legal contract written up, and it was signed on the 31st of May," but Fred never fulfilled any of the terms of the contract.

"When I was in Winnipeg, he had mentioned to me, like, Jonathan, you know, look, there's no reason for you to try to get a part-time job right through the summer, whatever it is, you know, I'll make sure that you're looked after financially, and I'll get you paid, and whatever... And, you know, he promised

me all these things, but when I got home, sure enough, he wasn't paying me. He wasn't going to pay me anything, and he said that he thought I had money in my bank account, but I didn't have enough.

"He made all these excuses, saying 'I can't pay you right now.' Then, every discussion I had with Fred was really very thorough. The discussions would last, like, an hour on the phone.

"You know, he was, how do I say... what's the word I'm trying to say, I guess, if I could say it the best way, he was very grandiose...In many ways he always had an incredible story to tell you - and one that sounded really real. But, around the end of September, around Rosh Hashanah, Fred tells me that he hurt his head, and he's got to go to the hospital, and while he's in the hospital, he tells me that what he's going to do is 'If I can survive until the 3rd of January of 2026, then everything's going to be refunded, you're going to have all this money, because you're an owner in this company, and blah, blah, blah.

"And I said, 'Well, Fred, I have all this debt. I've got to service this debt. I don't have a way to wait until January, otherwise I've got to get a job or do whatever it is. So, from the hospital, I get an email from him, I mean, a text from him, that he's going to have Xanadu Group take over my debt, and that I'm never going to have to worry about my debt anymore. And he sent me several text messages about this, saying give me all your debt right now, and let me see what I can do. He was going to take this one thing off my back, and the company was going to look after it, and that would be that.

"And that was the best thing I'd ever heard. And fast forward until the end of October, like two months later, now I'm told that the company told him he can't pay off my debt, but he'll help me negotiate some sort of deal with my vendors, he'll get on the phone with them if I have to as well, for me as well, too. So, we made a couple of calls to one or two of my creditors, he was on the phone and talked like he was like some sort of lawyer or whatever it is, but then I realized right then and there that, you know, all these kind of promises that Fred had promised to save me and to look after me, it just never worked.

"It was just a lie, the whole thing - all the promises, the contracts - they were all crap.. And I'll say something about Rick now. Several months before I got so deeply involved with Fred, Rick reached out to me on Facebook.

"I didn't know who he was and he just said to me, 'I see you're a mutual friend of Fred Devlin's and Fred's going to be doing some work with me as well too in California, and I have this magazine and so on.

"I never paid much attention to what Rick wrote. I just said, 'Well that's nice, that's great, 'and I even said to Fred, 'I met a friend of yours, Rick, and I didn't know anything about this. Fred didn't say anything. All he said was 'Yeah, I'm going to be doing some stuff with him,' but what I didn't know is that how Fred got extremely angry at Rick, that he had told told me he was going to do something with Fred.

"I didn't realize until afterward that Fred didn't like that I was talking to someone else he was supposedly doing a deal with.' "(Now I understood better why Bob Anderson kept sending nondisclosure agreements to different individuals. It makes one wonder though, even though Fred was clearly delusional, somewhere in the back of his twisted mind he knew what he was doing was all one

great big con. Does he wander in and out of reality, I wonder - and starts to remember the crazy things he's told different people? Who knows?

I never had the opportunity to speak to any of the psychiatrists who must have treated him over the years. My hope is that someday, someone close to Fred is going to tell the truth about his psychosis - and why those close to him allowed him to carry on his delusional behaviour for so many years. Even as I write this, I keep receiving messages from different individuals saying Fred just contacted them recently - and threatened them if they didn't continue to fulfill their arrangements.)

Jonathan continued: "When this all happened I got a call from Rick around the exact same time where the lid was being pulled off on all this, and that's when I really realized that I'd gone down this rabbit hole, I'd taken three flights I'd taken to Winnipeg, and I think back at some of the things that we went through, like you know - Fred wanted to come to Toronto, but he stayed with me - at my brother's house with me. I thought if you're a billionaire, what the hell would you want to stay in my house when you could stay in an expensive hotel - like everything just never added up, that he never had any money."

Jonathan went on to say that he's a big history buff and when Fred learned that about him, he told him that he wanted Jonathan to write a story about the history of the Middle East. (Devlin's thought processes were so confusing for me to try and follow. Each time I looked back over the transcript of a conversation I had with someone who had some sort of connection to Fred Devlin I would see crazy twists in what Devlin would talk about. Devlin's focus would easily turn to something else totally unrelated to where a conversation first started between him and a prospective business partner.)

I asked Jonathan whether Devlin had ever mentioned someone by the name of David Simkin? You may recall that when I, myself, first met Paul Devlin, he handed me a business card for his supposed group of companies with the name David Simkin given as the CEO on the card. I still haven't been able to establish whether there was an actual individual by the name of David Simkin - although I suppose it's a fairly common Jewish name but, as I mentioned at the outset of this story, if there ever was anyone named David Simkin who had some sort of connection to Fred Devlin, I've never been able to get in touch with him.

Jonathan said that Devlin had mentioned the name "David Simkin" to him many times, adding that he, too, had been told Simkin lived in Luxembourg, where he was CEO of the Xanadu Group of Companies. Devlin told Jonathan that Simkin had come back to Winnipeg and Devlin was trying to find a place "for him to live in." (Strange, isn't it? Devlin has to stay with Jonathan in Jonathan brother's house when he comes to Toronto and the CEO of a worldwide group of companies headquartered in Luxembourg has come back to Winnipeg - and he doesn't have a place where to live.)

I told Jonathan that David Simkin was all part of Devlin's incredibly detailed delusion. I noted that, while his entire story was crazy, at least he was consistent in describing to different people how his group of companies was so vast, that it was headquartered in Luxembourg, and that its CEO was someone by the name of David Simkin. Where he deviated from his basic story, Rick told me, was in relating to people how many companies were in the Xanadu group of companies and how much wealth

Devlin had. According to Rick, the number of companies Devlin told him were part of the Xanadu group was over 3,300 – not 300, and Devlin wasn't just a billionaire, he was a trillionaire!

Now, while you may be giving your head a shake at the absurdity of all this, there were many times when Devlin would keep his nose-stretchers in check. I only talked to a few of the individuals who were conned by him – and those were all individuals who were willing to admit they had been so badly deceived by Devlin. But there were many others, I was told, who had taken meetings with Devlin – and the names I was given were of very respected businesspeople, who didn't dismiss Devlin as some sort of nutcase.

That tells me that, despite his psychosis, he had some awareness that he had to tailor whatever story he was telling someone to that particular individual. The fact that he did obtain an MBA and did have a successful business career - at least, according to that story in the Manitoba business magazine and the subsequent mention of him in another business publication would certainly lead one to understand that, even in his fantasy that he was a brilliantly successful businessman, some vestiges of his past business experience would allow him to mount a very sophisticated facade when the occasion required it.

That goes to explain the level of complexity of the deal that Jonathan agreed to enter into with Fred.

I asked Jonathan how it was that Fred contacted him? Jonathan had said that he hadn't had any contact with Fred since grade school – which was over 40 years previous. I wondered whether Fred had found him on Facebook, for instance?

"Did he find you on Facebook?" I asked. "Was that it?"

Jonathan answered: "I believe so. I don't remember exactly. I'm not a big social media person, so he probably did find me on Facebook."

I explained why I had asked that question: "Well, the reason I ask is I'm so curious about how he networks with people. He seems really adept at getting in touch with people who have some substance to them, and he sort of relies on name-dropping to cement his reputation."

I noted that "one of the people I spoke to had actually gone to the trouble of setting up a meeting between Fred and (Israeli Prime Minister) Netanyahu."

I asked Jonathan whether he had heard that story himself?

"Yeah, yeah, yeah," Jonathan responded. "When I heard that, I said, 'that's incredible.'"

I said to Jonathan: "But, of course, it was all delusion." I went on to say that Avi (who was the fellow who had arranged that meeting acknowledged that it was "a good thing Fred didn't show up." Otherwise, Avi would have been deeply embarrassed at Bart having met with Netanyahu.

But then Jonathan added a new story that, to that point, I hadn't heard: "The other thing is, so Fred, apparently out of his own money, was working with a guy named Ari Deron, who was the former head of the Mossad in Israel."

I said: "What? The former head of the what? The Mossad?"

Jonathan said: "Fred said he was the former head of cyber security for the Mossad."

(I did a Google search to see whether there was ever anyone prominent in the Mossad by the name of Ari Doron. Here's what I came up with : "Based on available records, there is no evidence of a high-profile former Mossad member named **Ari Doron**. The name appears to be primarily associated with a fictional character, Lt. Ari Doron, in the 2001 novel *Martyrs' Crossing* by Amy Wilentz, who is an Israeli soldier, not a Mossad operative."

I explained to Jonathan that I had spoken to someone by the name of Avi – who was the person who was going to set up the meeting between Fred and Netanyahu, but Avi never mentioned anything about a Mossad connection. It did occur to me, after hearing what Jonathan mentioned about the Mossad that, during one of my phone conversations with Rick, he had told me that Fred had told him that he was always accompanied by 20 bodyguards from the Mossad. Maybe I should have included that earlier in this story.

I asked Jonathan whether, when all was said and done, the REIT plan that Fred had contracted with Jonathan to establish, had cost Jonathan a lot of money?

His answer was: "No, I didn't lose a lot of money with Fred. I lost a lot of time with Fred."

I said: "You lost a lot of time. That's the story with everyone. People wasted their time."

Jonathan continued: "Immense amounts of time. Immense amounts of time. I mean, the quantified dollars, I mean, three flights to Winnipeg.

"As I said, I stayed with my mother. You know, a couple of drinks that we went out to that I paid, you know, that he didn't. I didn't lose hundreds of thousands of dollars with him, but I lost an immense amount of time here.

"And the contract that he wrote with me, he was going to pay me \$250,000 a year. And if he didn't exercise the contract in a certain amount of time over the two years, he'd have to pay me \$1.5 million. Yeah.

"And this is what we wrote in the contract. And again, like I've had some employment lawyers here who told me that the contract's pretty solid, but it means shit if he has no money."

"What I do believe, and again, this is just my thought here is that his parents, his mother in particular, are aiding and abetting him here. She did agree that they paid for his house and she said, it's a lower class house in Winnipeg.

"And one thing I've never understood is, Fred's wife - where is she in this equation? People say that she's complicit in what Fred has been doing...and I would have to think she is. The one thing I knew about Fred is he is completely inept when it comes to technology.

"Like, he didn't know how to print anything, how to write anything, how to sign anything. Like it was just - very strange. I used to say 'Fred, why don't you even have an assistant that would do all these things? Like, when I had to sign the contract, I have to send it to his wife as a PDF document have her

print it off, have him sign it and have her scan it back to me because he didn't know how to do any of those things... the simplest things, but he didn't know any of that.

“Yeah. It was very, very strange. He didn't know anything to do with technology whatsoever.

“What really fascinates me about it all is what you said about his being totally delusional. When I think of Fred I think that he is living some sort of a life that he doesn't even know he's living in.”

But, as both Jonathan and I learned - to our chagrin, after having heard from the head of litigation of the law firm that had looked at Jonathan's case, there was no point in suing someone who had no apparent assets - no matter how much it was evident that he was being supported by his parents - who have substantial assets.

As for the criminal investigation to which I referred in an earlier chapter, Jonathan hasn't heard back from any police authority - neither the Winnipeg Police Service, nor the RCMP, so the only conclusion that can be drawn is that there is no interest on the part of any police service in pursuing a fraud investigation of Fred Devlin.

At a certain point, however, I was no longer simply writing about events – I was now an active participant in trying to bring some sort of justice for everyone who had been a victim of Fred Devlin's delusions. I suppose some might consider the degree to which I've involved myself in a story that began with an email somewhat surprising, but it was when I began communicating with the person whose story will be told next that I was moved to go beyond simply writing about what Fred Devlin had done. I actually sent a fair bit of money to help one victim of Devlin's elaborate con who, I was quite afraid, was on the verge of committing suicide.

Chapter 9

His phoney promises to fund a charitable foundation in Africa lead one trusting individual to contemplate suicide

Of all the deceptions in which Fred Devlin engaged over the years, arguably the one that inflicted the most damage was on the man I've been calling Charlie, who lives in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

As I've explained, that initial email which I received on January 16, 2026 was supposedly sent by Charlie (whose real name sounded much more African than that). While I was impressed by the quality of writing that went into that email and responded to it immediately it came as a surprise to me that the follow-up email which I received did not come from Charlie. Instead it came from the man I've been calling Rick.

Why was Charlie's name being used as the author of an email whose contents were so explosive if, in fact, it was someone else entirely who had written that email?

I'm still not sure of the answer to that question. Clearly Rick had his own reasons for not attaching his name to that January 16 email, but when I finally did hear from Charlie it wasn't until March 7 – and what he wrote was so plaintive that I was prompted to send him some money.

Here is the line of communication that began between Charlie and me – and which is still ongoing as I write this:

emails between Charlie and me sent on March 7, 2026

Hi Bernie, I'd like to kill myself and leave a note, because I've got a bad reputation now because of Fred. Next week I have to pay \$1200. Fred told me to borrow it and start a charity he was going to fund on January 25th, but so far he hasn't done anything; it seems like he forgot. I need to find this money and I don't know how. I'm considering suicide because I have no other options.

Thank you.

Hi Charlie,

To whom do you owe the money?

Bernie

He's the owner of a cooperative and savings association, and luckily he knows Fred too, because he gave me that money in two installments. Fred also emailed him asking about the banking procedures for transferring the money from Luxembourg. He also knows Fred. He owns this association. He gave me that money because he saw Fred on the video call and it was Fred speaking. But at some point, Fred denied it; we have all the evidence.

Fred said he was going to put down \$450,000 or \$300,000 in January to start the projects. Everyone in my town knows this story, and everyone is a witness.

Charlie

Did the fellow who gave you the money make you sign something?

Bernie

Yes, he did

He gave us 1000 dollars, and we have give him 1200\$.

Charlie

I don't understand. This fellow gave you \$1,000 but you've given him \$1200. Do you mean that you owe him \$1200?

Bernie

Yes, the \$200 is for his benefit. If you borrow \$500, you have to repay \$600. If you take out a loan of \$1000, you'll repay \$1200. I owe him \$1200. And besides, we wanted to take out a loan of \$3000, but I had my doubts. I'd like to kill myself because I've lost my reputation. Fred even sent me to the leaders

of my town, telling them he was going to improve living conditions here and create many jobs, telling them he was going to implement "Congo Improvement Projects."

Charlie

Maybe I can negotiate a deal with this guy that you owe money to. What if I offer to pay him \$500? Will he let you off the hook? \$1200 is a lot of money.

Bernie

If you could help me by just paying him \$600, that would be great because he can give me another three months. And I can also arrange to pay in installments. But it will depend on your availability. I really thank you so much.

Charlie

Before I agree to send any money I want to see something in writing from the guy you borrowed from promising that he will give you another 3 months to repay the other \$600.

Bernie

That's a good idea, we can thank you because you just saved my life. I'll do it, but on Monday. Because tomorrow I can just tell him this and complete the document. Once we receive the money, that's how we can sign. But also, here our official language is French. The document will be written in French.

Charlie

By the way - I'm Canadian. Our dollar is worth far less than an American dollar. I will only give \$600 Cdn.

But you're going to have to tell me more about how you got involved with Fred.

Bernie

Fred had contacted me alone since 2020. He told me he was a businessman with an organization called Xanadu Charitable Foundation which he wanted to establish in Africa, and that I would be the future project manager, but first and foremost, I had to be a volunteer, and I agreed to that. My story is very long; I'll gather all the evidence tomorrow and send it to you.

I have several documents that Fred sent me, letters of recommendation to show to the leaders of my city. I have everything, and Fred himself knows this. Try asking for it; he can't refuse because he knows I have all the evidence.

Charlie

emails sent March 8

Hi Bernie, I was talking to Rick. He told me to send more emails about Fred's situation. I told him I'm waiting until we can finalize things with you, or until he tells you first. I've already promised the landlord I owe him half this week, and we're going to complete the paperwork with him tomorrow. But

right now I'm completely overwhelmed; I don't know what's going on anymore. You said you don't really know my story? But I wrote it to you a long time ago. (Charlie is referring here to the January 16 email. For some reason he was still maintaining the pretense that he wrote that email.) Double-check your emails. And if you have any questions, you can ask me.

Charlie

Yes, I read your story, but it doesn't tell me how Fred found you. I want to know exactly what you did when Fred contacted you.

I also want to see something in writing that shows what Fred promised you.

Finally, I want to know the same thing I've asked everyone else: Did you ever do anything to check out whether what Fred was telling you bore any relation to reality?

All that I've heard from everyone I've talked to is how convincing Fred was. Am I the only person who's met Fred who realized early on he was full of shit?

Bernie

At my age, it wasn't easy not to believe an older person like Fred. The evidence and documents I have are, firstly, the confidential agreement he had me sign, and secondly, a letter of reference he gave me to show to the leaders of my city so they could investigate, telling them he was going to build here. I even managed to print t-shirts for his organization with my own money, and one day, I even managed to feed 250 orphaned children in Fred's name. The promises are in our conversations, and sometimes we had video conferences with him. I'm not here to smear him because I respect him greatly; I'm here to tell the truth. I have screenshots, images, and documents to prove all of this.

Charlie

Charlie, I've got to know who wrote that original email I received from you on January 16. Was it Rick? If so, why didn't he send it himself? Why did it come from you?

Bernie

For the first time, Fred sent me a Messenger invitation. After I accepted, he told me I was lucky and that God loved me very much because I had just met a great person and the owner of a large organization called Xanadu. A few days later, he told me I would be Xanadu's future representative in Congo. I was surprised too, and I immediately checked his profile. I found he was real, even though I still had some doubts until we started video calls for conferences. We continued our discussions for a year. Afterward, he told me I had to work hard to get the representative position. He suggested I volunteer to gain experience. I was easily convinced because during our video calls, he was always sitting in a luxurious office with computers. I couldn't have any more doubts. And that's where it all began.

Charlie

email received from Charlie March 9

Hello Bernie, I acknowledge my mistake in not realizing Fred was mentally ill. It was difficult for us not to believe him because during video conferences he seemed serious. I was right because he always made promises he never kept. He also told me he had meetings with Donald Trump and Benjamin Netanyahu. I also wonder how someone who talks to these adults can have the time to talk to me.

Regarding the names of the people I know that Fred told me he spoke to about his businesses, I suspect he defrauded and lied to.

Charlie

On March 11 I sent Charlie \$600 Cdn. It wasn't easy completing that transaction. In fact, I attempted to send the money several times through different methods. I finally settled on using something called Remitly, but I had to have a phone number for Charlie. It turned out that he gave me the phone number for a friend who is registered with Remitly. When I entered Charlie's name as the recipient, however, the transaction didn't go through – and it took me some time to get the money back into my bank account. I was quite upset with Charlie over his not telling me that the phone number he gave me wasn't his – but in the end I was able to send the money to him successfully – after I changed the name of the recipient to his friend's name.

emails sent March 12

Hi Bernie, I'm writing to you to thank you for everything you've done for me. I only recently met you, but you helped me with problems that weren't yours. I've never met someone as kind-hearted as you. You've sacrificed so much for me; you're so kind and understanding, like a parent to me. I handed over the money today, and I've been granted another three months. I'm looking for a job, and if I find one, I hope I can finish the rest on my own.

I have a report I'm going to send you. It's a report from the field trip I did across the entire country. Fred told me he was going to implement a project here called the "Congo Improvement Project." He told me to identify the problems facing Congo and propose solutions. It was work I did with all my heart, but in the end, Fred was always there to betray me. The report is 33 pages long. It's work I myself greatly appreciated. Right now, it's become a real obstacle for me because I used Fred as a reference on all my CVs, and no one can trust me anymore because I defended him so much here. I said he was a good and genuine person. I deeply regret my life. Fred has just destroyed it.

Charlie

Hey

Charlie,

I was glad to help. Your story was one of the worst I heard of all the people Fred sucked into his orbit. I'm still wrestling with how I should write this story. Your part of the story is especially poignant because you actually put out money that you didn't have - all in pursuit of a worthy project that was intended only to help people. I consider myself very lucky in that I was born and grew up in a great country like Canada. I've done okay financially but my no means am I rich. Still, I contribute a lot to charity. Helping out someone like you is all part and parcel of the same thing as far as I'm concerned. And just because it was difficult

getting you the money - and I got upset with you a couple of times - doesn't mean I won't help you again. If you find it a real struggle paying off the rest of what you owe let me know. I'm prepared to help more if necessary.
-Bernie

email from Charlie March 14

I understand, Bernie. Luckily, you understood everything. What Fred did to me will hurt me for the rest of my life. Here, several people keep asking me, "When are you going to implement the project with Fred?" I always feel ashamed everywhere.

Charlie

email from Charlie March 17

Hi Bernie, I hope you're doing well. I received some annoying messages from Rick. He told me he doesn't believe in anyone anymore, and that we're all corrupt. I didn't reply because I didn't understand. I can't threaten anyone; I can only respect what's in order. Personally, I wanted to write a long letter and then kill myself. I didn't need to bother anyone or say too much. I was really surprised to see his messages saying we're corrupt.

Charlie

emails sent March 18

Just ignore him Charlie. I don't really know him but from what he's written to me lately he's clearly not well.

Bernie

Thank you so much for your advice. This time Fred isn't calling me anymore. He did call me once, offering me money for a small project to calm me down, but I knew it was just a scam. In the next two weeks, I'm going to explain Fred's story to the people in my town, because many people are waiting for funding from him and they don't know what happened. In the meantime, I'm waiting for a job here. If it works out, everything will be fine, but if it doesn't, I'll still be in a bad situation.

Charlie

The fact Fred has stopped calling you could mean one of two things: Either he is at times aware of his behaviour and can control it for periods of time or more likely, there are people closely monitoring him now and trying to keep him from continuing his delusional behaviour online. I'd be curious to see whether he continues to leave you alone. Keep me posted and of course I hope things work out for you.

Bernie

Maybe.

Do you know why I wanted to kill myself? It's because I sang (?) Fred a lot here in my town. We were promised great leaders that we would create jobs here, but now everyone sees me as a liar, nobody believes me anymore, everyone says I'm a scammer too. It's difficult for me, that's why I'm desperate.

Charlie

Well, if you need to show people something that will prove you never intended to mislead anyone I've been writing a story about what Fred Devlin has done - and is continuing to do. I've finished the first 4 chapters and you're welcome to read it if you like - and share with anyone who is angry at you. Of course, it's in English but I can try to translate it using AI.

Bernie

emails from Charlie March 19

The big problem is that Africans think that a crazy white person, a scammer white person, and a poor white person don't exist; it's difficult to convince them. Africans think that white people are perfect.

Charlie

Hi Bernie, I tried to sit down with my father and some of the elders in my town who know Fred's story well. Because I'm the son of a reverend pastor, and Fred had promised my father he would build him a church. Now I've made them understand that Fred is a con artist; he also has a mental problem. I apologized to them. They told me it wasn't possible, but in the end they understood, though they were very surprised to hear it. My father cried. The elders in my town told me I must be in cahoots with Fred and that maybe I'm the con artist. They asked me about the money I borrowed, and I told them I'm paying it back myself. They asked me how I met him and advised me not to trust people anymore.

Charlie

emails sent March 20

Well, you can tell them that there's at least one white guy out there who's nice, who believes in you, has helped you and is doing everything he can to stop Fred Devlin from making your life and other people's lives miserable.

Bernie

Thank you so much, Bernie. They also have some questions, asking me how I had the courage to sacrifice myself like that for someone like Fred. Bernie, maybe you only know the debt I owe because of Fred, but you don't know the story behind me, and that's why I wanted to kill myself. For my part, I can only thank you for giving me hope for life again. But here at home, no one can believe in me anymore. I can't leave my city, I can't work here except start a business because everyone knows I'm waiting for funding from Fred. I'd also like to ask you a question out of curiosity: do you have any people here in Africa? Do you know Africa? Have you ever been to Africa?

Charlie

emails sent March 21

Sorry Charlie - I don't know anyone in Africa except some people in South Africa - and I don't really know them. I just have a good friend who's from South Africa who still has lots of friends and relatives there and he's introduced me to some of them online.

I don't understand how the people in your home town still believe that Fred is going to provide you with funding. How much proof do they need to understand he's a very sick person and nothing he has ever said is real?

Do you want me to send you what I've written for my story so far? I supposed you could translate it into French if necessary. Maybe then people would understand how crazy Fred is.

Bernie

Hi Bernie, I was with another team today, some of the people Fred had promised to start with me. I tried to explain things to them, and they understood, even though it wasn't easy for them. Tomorrow I have a general meeting with them and some of the leaders here. I can even send you the photos tomorrow. Despite everything, it's very embarrassing for me; no one believes me anymore. Some even tell me they'll never trust me again.

I'm hated in my community now. How can I continue living this life with a bad reputation? Bernie, if you ever stop seeing my messages, know that I'm no longer in this world. It's not easy being hated by your community; you can't buy a reputation, it's earned through your actions. Goodbye.

Charlie

Charlie - don't lose hope and please don't think of killing yourself. Of course I understand what a difficult situation you are in. Is there anyone in your town that I could speak to to try to tell them that you were just an innocent victim of a very sick person - who also victimized many other people? What would it take for your reputation to be reburnished?

Bernie

Bernie, I'm African, but somewhat civilized. I know Africans well, which is why I don't want to put you in contact, because he'll only ask for money. The only solution is to change my environment. When I pay off this debt, I'm just going to move far away from here. Otherwise, I risk getting stressed. I'm waiting for tomorrow's meeting, and then I'll tell you what happens next.

Charlie

emails sent March 24

Hi Bernie, I have a long letter to write to you today because I had a big meeting with everyone who knows Fred because of me. But first of all, I apologize if this is going to bother you. By the way, I wanted to show you the plaque that a village chief made for Fred, because Fred promised he would arrive here in 2023. He also asked me how Fred is doing.

Charlie

I hope your people listen to you & understand how you were completely fooled by Fred.

Bernie

Yes, only the wise ones understood. The others say that if I didn't take the money, it means I was Fred's accomplice. The others say they're going to file a complaint against me. The others understood. Here, where I come from, promising an orphanage and not keeping that promise is a great sin; it's taboo here. But I don't see my future in this city. I have a bad reputation right now.

Charlie

On March 26 I wrote to Charlie that the lawyer I had contacted about taking on Jonathan as a client had told me that he had asked the head of civil litigation at his firm to get in touch with me. I also told the lawyer that there was someone else who had been very badly hurt by having been duped by Fred Devlin - but that this poor fellow lived in Africa. I said that I really hoped a lawsuit could proceed so that Fred Devlin's parents might finally take steps to harness their delusional son and keep him from contacting anyone ever again with a promise to invest in a project with that person.

I sent Charlie a copy of what I had written for this story to that point.

He responded: *Thank you so much, Bernie. I just translated and read part of it. Congratulations on what you're doing; you're a true writer. Fred called me 10 minutes ago saying he wants to work with me, but fortunately, I ignored him.*

Charlie

Can you keep a record of every time he calls you and I hope you keep all messages he sent you.

Bernie

Yes, I keep just messages and mails

Charlie

ok that's good. Do you think you could send some to me - not all of them, just ones where he promises he's going to fund the charitable foundation he wanted you to set up. I want to use them in my story - with the names changed of course.

Bernie

But he did a lot of things via video calls and other things in writing.

Charlie

emails sent March 27

I don't know that anything I would do would make any difference, but I'd like to have as much written material as possible for what I'm writing.

Obviously, you can't send me videos or memories of conversations.

Bernie

I have a lot of evidence and documents because I have a Xanadu folder on my computer with everything. Unfortunately, I gave my computer as collateral to the person I owe, so I can only use some of the evidence on my phone. Fred is asking me how much money I want to give him back his website because it contains all the information about him and who he claimed to be. He's afraid I might reveal it.

Charlie

Charlie sends me a screenshot of a text message sent from Fred to Charlie:

"Your land, your house, your pharmacy your phone your books, computer and your future revenue. You sided with my enemies and will legally lose everything."

March 28 Charlie sends me another screenshot of a text message from Fred to him:

"I have hired lawyers to take all your life's assets. You have until 12noon Central time to take down internet slander and apologize on facebook.

"You have assisted in publicly attempting to lie and ruin my reputation.

"If you decide to lie about our good relationship my family and I will sue you. If you continue to slander my reputation you will be sued. You better take down the slander sites immediately."

emails sent March 28

Bernie, as I told you long ago, I'm not here to smear Fred, but to tell the truth. I wanted to commit suicide because I'm worthless in my community because of him. I have all the testimonies, as well as witnesses who know my story with Fred well. There are even documents he sent me to show the leaders of my town, showing him that he was going to implement several projects here. Since I needed a job in the future, I was always obedient to him because I had no choice. I printed t-shirts, I bought food to feed 300 orphans twice a year in Xanadu's name, and Fred congratulated me, telling me I was the best. He lied to my father, saying he was going to build his church because my father is a reverend pastor. I have a lot of evidence that proves everything. He told me to spend what I have to buy hectares of land he was going to finance in January, but so far he hasn't done anything except deceive me. He was video conferencing with several people from my village using my phone, telling them he was going to finance it in January. Now everyone in my community is against me. If you talk about Fred or Xanadu, they might kill you. I deleted all my posts about Xanadu and burned the knitting (?) too. Right now, Fred is threatening to destroy me.

Charlie

Can you forward me actual messages showing that they were from Fred? Someone could say that you wrote these messages yourself.

Bernie

Hello Bernie, Fred spent all night threatening to kill me, saying he's going to take everything I have spiritually, and that anyone I work with will hate me. He said he can't help me with anything anymore and that I'll be back to square one. For my part, I'd like to take my time and write at least 5 or 6 pages about my story with Fred, because right now I'm still saddened by what he keeps saying. He writes things and sometimes deletes them; luckily, I'm taking screenshots. Sometimes he calls me and insults me. He told me if I publish his website where all his information is, I'll die and he'll kill me spiritually.

Charlie

Also, on March 20, Charlie began sending me messages on WhatAapp in addition to emailing me.

His first message was: *Good morning Bernie. I'm Charlie. I asked you for your WhatsApp number because that's where I can easily send you several pieces of evidence and that's where I always communicate.*

Attached to Charlie's message were several images, most of which were indecipherable, but two of which showed Charlie - one with a group of kids from his community who, I assume, were to be beneficiaries of the charitable foundation Charlie was going to create - using money from Fred Devlin's Xanadu Foundation. The other photo was of Charlie meeting with women from his community. From one of his previous emails I surmise that he was trying to explain to them that he had been duped by Devlin.

Also attached to Charlie's WhatsApp message was a message from "David Simkin," the supposed CEO of the Xanadu Group of Companies. It's particularly galling that within Devlin's enormous delusion he actually would have gone so far as to create a fictitious character who became part of his story - and whose name was used to add a patina of respectability to what was utter nonsense.

Sequel to Charlie's story: I eventually sent Charlie another \$800 so that he could pay off the rest of the debt he had incurred by having t-shirts made with the charitable foundation logo on the front, along with food that he bought for 300 orphans in his community.

I've remained in touch with Charlie, who tells me how difficult it is for him to find work in Africa, even though he's highly educated and speaks seven different languages. The immense toll that being strung along by Fred Devlin for years will never be ameliorated.

Chapter 10

The con man asks to meet with me and ends up being thoroughly grilled about the cons he's pulled

On April 9, 2026 I finally had a chance to meet with Fred Devlin again. The day before, I was totally surprised when I saw a message from him saying he wanted to talk to me - and gave his phone number (which is the same phone number I had for him from years ago).

I called him - and he was quite pleasant, although he said he was suffering from pneumonia. After just a couple of minutes, however, he said his wife had just walked in and he couldn't talk.

The next day he messaged me and asked whether we could meet. I said "yes" and we agreed to meet at either the Fairmont Hotel or Hy's. He said he would let me know. It ended up being Hy's.

When I walked in Fred was standing beside the bar. He looked remarkably the same from the last time I had seen him, although a little dissheveled. There were no apparent signs of his having had pneumonia.

He asked the server if we could have a private table somewhere and she told us that we could go upstairs to the dining room, which was empty. We sat down and I placed my iPhone on the table, as did Fred. I told him that I wanted to record our conversation so that everything he might say would be on the record. He agreed and also said he was going to record it himself - presumably to make sure that I wouldn't alter anything.

In every instance where he refers to the name of his company or supposed group of companies, I've omitted the actual name - even though in the rest of my story I refer to his group of companies as the Xanadu group. In a couple of instances he referred to real people during our conversation, but since they are not mentioned anywhere else in this story and play no part in the story I've told, I decided to retain their real names.

I want to explain what follows is not easy reading. Fred Devlin clearly suffers from a psychotic delusion and my intent is not to make light of his illness. There are many people who suffer from various psychoses and many of them are capable of committing great harm to others if their psychoses aren't treated - or, even if they are treated, the treatments fail.

What makes Fred Devlin's story so unusual, however, is the harm he was able to inflict and is apparently still inflicting on so many others by his believing the story he had somehow developed to explain his life. Even as I was talking to him I could see that his calm, measured tone could seem quite convincing to most people with whom he would connect. I deliberately went after him as hard as I could though, to see whether I could break his composure by asking him questions quickly and not giving him the opportunity to start rambling on about his group of companies, his charitable endeavours and, most important, his vast wealth.

By the end of our conversation he was shaking and kept saying he was tired. I honestly felt sorry for him, but I wanted to get him on the record contradicting his story fully in so many ways so that no one reading this would doubt for a moment that Fred Devlin is fully psychotic and can be quite dangerous when he tries to envelop trusting individuals in his web of deceit, regardless whether he himself is unaware just how deceitful he really is.

One more note: As is the case with most conversations, speakers often interrupt one another, thoughts don't get fully expressed - and even though the transcription program I used is quite accurate, a lot of

what Fred Devlin said was indecipherable. I've tried to do justice to what was said, but I've left out a lot of the pauses and words that made no sense.

Here is how the conversation went:

Devlin: Now do you want me to just talk or you ask questions - or do you have questions?

Me: Well, of course I have questions, but if you want to start off by saying something, go right ahead.

Devlin: It's gonna take a series of interviews to cover my life, but I'm gonna give you everything. I'm gonna give you evidence. I will show you that everything I always say is true. I started my life at... started in Israel when I was 10. My father went to teach at the Weizmann Institute. We went through Europe and then to Israel. We were in Greece on the way to Israel, and there was the (raid on Entebbe). Okay. We got to Israel, ran into by chance Benjamin Netanyahu, who had lost his brother. And we gave our condolences and that was the first meeting I had with Benjamin Netanyahu. We lived there. I went to school there. I was infatuated with the soldiers and the guns and the bullets and... a soldier, a friend - Michael Perl.... I don't know if you know Michael Perl - but his brother gave us all these empty shells. I went to a sporting goods store, bought a gun, a starting pistol. I converted it into a gun and I guarded my campus in Israel, and that was what I was meant to be. So my life is about guarding Israel, the ... Foundation worldwide, which is just a name, it's actually a numbered company based outta Luxembourg and the ... group of companies Worldwide Holdings are also a numbered company under ... Investment Corporation, which you can look up at the Manitoba Companies office on Broadway.

Me: Let, let me stop you there. First of all, I'm not so sure about the whole story about meeting Netanyahu, but regardless, the ... group of companies has no presence on the internet. I don't believe there is any such thing as theGroup of Companies. Do you have any proof that there is something (by that name)?

Devlin: Of course, I will have lawyers write to you.

Me: Never mind lawyers. What can you show in terms of documentation?

Devlin: I can show you the websites. It's just a name, okay.

Me: And what are the companies in the ... group of companies?

Devlin: There's 3,360.

Me: Okay. Can you name any of them?

Devlin: Of course, but I'm not going to name...

Me: Name one.

Devlin: I'm not gonna name one. It's private.

Me: You're not gonna name one?

Devlin: Not today, no.

Me: Why?

Devlin: 'cause they are secret. They're secret companies. Okay. I want no one knowing my business. I haven't been in a publication since May, 1990.

Me: How many companies now is it (in the group of companies)?

Devlin: 3,300... 3,306.

Me: When I spoke to you in 2021, it was 300.

Devlin: I was being honest. Okay.

Me: Alright. So, the ... group of companies has 3,300 companies. You won't name one. You won't provide any proof that there is (even one company).

Devlin: I'll provide you with okay. But not today.

Me: Alright. And it's headquartered in Luxembourg, correct?

Devlin: Okay

Me: And David Simkin is what?

Devlin: My CEO.

Me: Okay. Does he exist?

Devlin: Of course.

Me: Where does he live?

Devlin: Luxembourg. Okay. But he traveled.

Me: No one has ever been able to establish that there is anyone by that name.

Devlin: Because he's Mossad.

Me: Because he's Mossad?

Devlin: Correct. And that's not his real name.

Me: Oh, it's not his real name. Okay. Alright, let's go on.

I am sort of curious to know about your business career. I did read that you were in real estate and then you became the executive director of the Winnipeg Airport

Devlin: No, I first started Winnport. I founded Winnport.

Me: You founded Winnport?

Devlin; Yes. Yeah. Here, I'll show you.

Me: Okay. And what year was that?

Devlin: About 1992 to 1994.

Me: And you have some proof for that.

Devlin: Of course.

Me: Of course. (According to Wikipedia, Winnport was established in 1998 by Lynn Bishop. Here is what Wikipedia has to say about Winnport: "Winnport Logistics, a Winnipeg-based air cargo consortium, was established in 1998. The company launched Canada's first scheduled widebody cargo operations during that year, aiming to connect Winnipeg to Asian markets, before eventually ceasing operations in 2002".)

Me: And then you became executive director of the Airport Area Business Improvement Zone?

Devlin: No. Of the Winnipeg Development Corporation biz, not the Winnipeg.... Never with the Airport Area Business Improvement Zone. (I found that answer particularly strange because the 1998 article I referenced earlier specifically stated that Devlin had been the recently appointed executive director of the Airport Area Business Improvement Zone. Why he would he have chosen to talk about Winnport, with which he may have had some involvement, but certainly not in the years he said he was involved, and not the Airport Area Business Improvement Zone - raises new questions - both about Devlin's resumé - and his memory.)

Devlin: Yes, I was. And I had it (Winnport) spun off. I'll tell you the story, but easy for you to look at. (And at that point he pulled out what I immediately recognized as his album of photos that he had first shown me in 2021.)

Me: Are you gonna show me more pictures?

Devlin: Yep. I'm show you.

Me: Okay. I don't care. I've seen your pictures Fred, and you know what? I don't care about your pictures.

Devlin: You know what, then don't be rude...

Me; Alright. When was that? You say that was 1992.

Devlin: It's '94 or so.

Me: Okay. Alright. Look, I don't doubt that you had some sort of business career. I wrote that (in my original story that I posted to the internet in February 2026), so the question is: 'What happened?' (At that point a waiter came over with our soups and the conversation paused.)

Me: Okay, let's go on. So how long were you with Winnport then?

Devlin: About a year, and then that was...there's a story behind that. There's a lot more to the story. Alright, so can I tell you the story?

Me: The Winnport story? Yeah. Tell me the story.

Devlin: When I was running my company, ... Investment Corporation, which I founded in 1987 and still operating, which owns all the ... Foundation worldwide. In a ... group of companies. It's in the Companies office. It's current and operating.

Me: Go on.

Devlin: In May of 1990 I was featured in Manitoba Business Magazine.

Me: Yes, I have that article.

(At this point the man I've been calling Devlin launched into a very descriptive, but often incoherent account of part of his earlier business career. As I've noted previously, I have no doubt that Devlin was very bright - and successful - until something happened. So, when he weaves names of real people into his stories, there might be more than a semblance of the truth in what he's saying. The problem is he seems to get key dates wrong - as when he talks about Winnport - and when he claims to have been the person to have started that company.)

Still, it's somewhat sad to think how much potential he had - as he explains in the following account. If only he had never veered completely off the rails and started insinuating himself into so many people's lives, causing so much damage along the way.)

Devlin: Yeah, (but) you don't have the full magazine, which has much more information. (It) talks about me becoming an up and coming... and Izzy Asper saw the article and summoned me...it was a billionaire summoning a millionaire and it was the only time in my life I was intimidated a little bit. We became partners, friends, mentor, and he financed me for the acquisition of land where Centerport is. I still control land at the airport and I started Winnport. I founded it. It was my business plan, my concept, although it was talked about by others. I mapped it out on a plane coming back from Amsterdam, Holland 'cause I mapped out a logistics plan that is now Centerport. So, I was sitting on a Saturday going through the career section at our place on Wellington. I saw a career commercial development officer wanted by the Winnipeg International Airport and Izzy Asper and I had already bought the land, so I figured I'd go as an insider. I got the job the next day 'cause I had a presentation, which included every element of what they were trying to do. I worked technically for someone named Warren Thompson, but I really worked with Lynn Bishop, who was the general manager of the airport and eventually president of the Bombers. I talked to Lynn yesterday, I believe so. I still keep in touch with a great guy. Okay. I realized that I had a conflict of interest owning land and being the insider in the airport. So I realized I had to spin off a company. So we spun off Winnport, which I named. I actually spelled it W-I-N-P-O-R-T. Lynn Bishop on a flight back from, I believe, Chattanooga, Tennessee. No, uh, Huntsville, Alabama, where we were looking at CargoX airplanes from Luxembourg, which I own now in control. Go look it up and you'll see nothing about me. Every company I own does not come back to me. My business is silent.

(A few days after meeting Fred Devlin, I did manage to get a hold of Lynn Bishop, who was the original founder of Winnport - in 1998, when Fred would have been around 32. Lynn told me that Fred Devlin did work for the company for a very brief time, but they had to let him go because his behaviour

was so erratic. That jives with my thinking that it was sometime when Fred was in his early thirties that he became quite delusional.)

Me: Why? Why is that?

Devlin: Two reasons. I don't want anyone knowing my business. If I'm to buy land or buy something, the price goes up if they comes from So we use shell companies to buy and make offers with legal. That's one. The other is reputation. God forbid Air Canada has a crash. And it connects to ..., then my reputation is real.

Me: So Air Canada is one of the companies you own?

Devlin: I'm not gonna say.

Me: you're not gonna say?

Devlin: I will tell you next meeting. I will give you a paper with some holdings. I know Michael Rousseau very well, who was vice president of Finance for Air Canada.(He was actually its CEO until recently. when he resigned over his not knowing how to speak French.) I deal with him. He's been fired. We're bringing in a new CEO and president. I own part of Boeing, okay.

Me: Let's move on. What did you do after Winnport?

Devlin: After I left Winnport, I was not happy. I sold it to Cargojet or behind the scenes, and we have shares in Cargo, which is the largest Canadian cargo companies, so Winnport became very successful domestically. I'm doing the project again to introduce runs by CargoX currently, which will be Winnport again and Cargojet. (As has been noted, Winnport ceased operations after 2002.) And I will make Winnport as I expected it to be. Then I left Winnport and I became executive director...(of what, Devlin didn't say). Didn't take a salary or I gave my salary to charity to stay involved with the airport area and Winnport.

Me. And what did you do then?

Devlin: I did nothing. I was executive director of the Airport Area Business Development Corporation. (The chronology is so confusing. Devlin just claimed he left Winnport and became executive director of the Airport Area Business Development Corporation, but Winnport wasn't established until 1998 and that 1998 magazine article said Devlin was the recently appointed executive director of the Airport Area Business Development Corporation, which would have preceded his becoming involved with Winnport but, In the final analysis, it doesn't really matter what the sequence of his various positions he held was - if he, in fact, actually held the positions he said he held. Still, it seems evident that Fred had an upward career trajectory until he developed his psychosis. I haven't been able to establish what he was doing when he apparently developed that psychosis when he must have been in his thirties.)

Me: And you didn't take a salary?

Devlin: I took a salary, but I gave it to charity.

Me: Is there a record - of your having been with Winnport?

Devlin: I can get that for you.

Me: Okay. So you were already in your thirties by then, I'm guessing?

Devlin: Yeah.

Me: Okay. Alright. I wanna move forward though because as you know, I've been writing about you. I wanna talk about your relationship....

Devlin: You are slandering me.

Me: I want to talk about your relationship with Jonathan Soloway.

Devlin: Alright.

Me: I have copies of written agreements between you and Jonathan Soloway.

Devlin: You don't have everything.

Me: I have signed agreements between you and Jonathan Soloway.

Devlin: No, I never signed an agreement with him.

Me: I have your signature on those documents.

Devlin: Never signed it.

Me: Are they forged?

Devlin: Were they forged? I don't know what Jonathan did with them.

Me: Okay, so you are saying that those agreements are invalid.

Devlin: They're invalid and I can tell you what I offered Jonathan and I helped save his life, and was the only person who reached out to him after I hadn't talked to him in 45 years. He flew to Winnipeg to meet with me at 529 (Wellington). I befriended him. I tried my best to help him. He had lost his life savings in a bitcoin scam or some type of scam on the internet. He had nothing. He had no car. He was living at his brother's place. He lost his marriage. And the custody of his daughter, I believe, and his life was in ruins and I was the only one to step up to offer to help him. I offered him, I'm setting up a real estate investment trust in the fall with Nikki Bello (who, I was able to learn, is a Winnipeg Chartered Professional Accountant), if she's interested still. And probably Lauren. (I have no idea who that is and I didn't ask Devlin who Lauren is.)

Me: Did you tell him to stop making payments on all his debts?

Devlin: No.

Me: You deny that?

Devlin: No, I said to him, "Don't pay if they're not gonna come after you."

Me: And you didn't offer him a salary of \$250,000 a year?

Devlin: I, no.... being paid on the first 50. (In talking to Jonathan, he explained that 50 would have meant 50% of the Real Estate Investment Trust he was supposed to be setting up with Devlin.) Would you like to know what it is?

Me: Sure.

Devlin: I offered him 49% of the company outta my goodwill of the shares. Jonathan was confused. He thought he was getting a job. I said, "No, you're getting a partnership."

Me: So if I were to show you the agreement (promising to pay Jonathan \$250,000 a year) with your signature on it, would you say that is a false document?

Devlin: I'd have to see it.

Me: Well, I can open it up for you if you want.

Devlin: Jonathan turned on me because I was in the hospital. I disappeared for five weeks with a brain injury and I couldn't help him pay off his debt. I talked to his creditors. I got his debt reduced. I did my very best for Jonathan.

Me: Alright, so you say that you didn't offer him a salary of \$250,000.

Devlin: Yes, I did.

Me: You did?

Devlin: But once we were operational and there was cash flow from the REIT. I wouldn't take a salary. Nikki wouldn't take a salary. She took shares and then I promised him a \$250,000 salary as long as we had cash flow.

Me: But these agreements are quite recently signed and don't say anything about having to wait for a cash flow before he would get paid.

Devlin: Nothing happened. There was no money there.

Me: It's all part of a pattern Fred of you stringing people along with promises of a big payday and then, when they start asking "Where's the money?", you say there is no money there – right?

Devlin: That's your belief. It's not true.

Me: Have you ever put up money for a project?

Devlin: Many times. All the time.

Me: And can you substantiate that?

Devlin: Yeah. I can show you an airline project where I'm doing in Nigeria.

Me: Did you not offer Rick financial help with his publication?

Devlin: Never. No. Okay. I offered him a million dollars potentially to buy him out from 420 magazine and to have him run as CEO or in some position once we started 420 was a deadline (again – totally

incoherent). I'm still willing to meet my commitments to him, but he slandered me and set up a group of people because he's mentally ill. Has Asperger's, I believe, or autism and rage management and A-D-H-D-I disappeared in the hospital the next day without being able to tell anyone. I was in for five weeks. I couldn't communicate. I had blinding brain injury, headaches, and vertigo. Couldn't use my phone.

Me: How many times have you been in the hospital... committed for psychiatric reasons?

Devlin: Never. Never.

Me: Did you send a cease and desist letter to a psychiatrist?

Devlin: No.

Me: You didn't'?

Devlin: Not that I recall.

Me: You didn't have Bob Anderson send a cease and desist letter?

Devlin: Yes, I did.

Me: To a psychiatrist?

Devlin: Yes, I did. Okay.

Me; Why was that?

Devlin: I'm not gonna talk about it right now. Okay. Next time.

Me: So you were in the hospital for psychiatric visits.

Devlin: No. Okay.

Me: Did you meet a fellow named Jack in a psychiatric wing of a hospital?

Devlin: I went in to be undercover and I met him and he was my roommate.

Me: Did you tell him that you owned the hospital?

Devlin: Yes.

Me: Why?

Devlin: Because I do.

Me: That would be the Health Sciences Center?

Devlin: No, the Victoria Hospital.

Me: You own Victoria Hospital?

Devlin: . Through Internet means I control the hospital.

Me: Okay. This is all very interesting. You are actually confirming everything that has been told to me. Okay. I wanna talk about Charlie.

Did you offer to finance a charitable foundation for him in the Democratic Republic of the Congo?

Devlin: No.

Me: You never did?

Devlin: No.

Me: Even though he's got letters, texts, and emails to show that you did.

Devlin: If he says so I've got the texts, I'll have to read 'em.

Me: Have you been threatening Charlie?

Devlin: No.

Me: Have you not been telling him that you're gonna ruin his life?

Devlin: Legally? Yes. For slandering me on Facebook, I'm gonna sue him to the grave.

Me: Did you tell him that you would take his farm? (I asked Charlie whether he ever had a farm. He said he didn't.)

Devlin: Yeah.

Me: His pharmacy? (Again, Charlie was bewildered over the suggestion he had either a farm or a pharmacy which, he says, he's never had. He said he did own a piece of land in his community - which he sold to finance the charitable foundation Devlin told him his ...group of companies would finance.)

Devlin: I paid for his books, his computers, everything and the value that he has. And I said I would take it all.

Me: Why?

Devlin: Because he slandered me on Facebook after I put him through school partially, and I was a mentor to him. I spent hundreds of hours, which are documented. You can see. I'll be happy to turn over all my emails and texts to you. Okay. He has not told you the truth.

Me; Alright, there are a whole slew of other people who I've talked to who told me that you would make promises to them. One of them was Dan Winthrop.

Devlin: I made no promises to Dan. I'm helping with a project with Israeli aircraft. Okay.

Me: And this has been going on for over 18 years?

Devlin: Correct.

Me: And you had a fellow in Las Vegas - Avi... I can't remember his last name - who was going to facilitate your bringing over jets from Israel and convert them to some sort of use? Did Avi not try and set up a meeting between you and various officials, including Prime Minister Netanyahu?

Devlin: Our deal was once I hired him and pay him a million dollars a year. Plus 3.33% of the funds he raises. He's earning about 120, I believe, as the director of...(Avi actually works in an area that is too sensitive to Israel's security to reveal.)

He was not happy. He expressed an interest in working for me, so I did my best to get him a position. I became ill and was unable to fulfill it. But I am planning on fulfilling it.

Me: Okay, one more story of promises unfulfilled.

Devlin: Not my fault. I was in the hospital, very ill.

Me: Alright. I wanna get back to Jonathan Solaway though, because since you deny that you have had any written agreements with him, I wanna show you the written agreements and then have you comment on them.

Devlin: I don't want to do this. Getting tired. I'm sick. I do next session.

Me: You're getting tired now?

Devlin: Yes. Very tired. But I will talk to you next interview about that.

At that point someone walked by our table and Devlin turned to him, saying: "Hi, how are you?... I'm good. How are you?... Good... Oh, you're the delivery boy today. You do everything. A jack of all trades. . Things are going well. Yeah. How about you? I haven't seen you in a while. Been away and it's been a while... I've been here. You been here? Was able to sneak in. You enjoy it? I am. Yeah. It's good. Yeah. Good. Brock Wright. Brock Wright. Can you get me his number? 'cause we're fixing the healthcare system." (From 2000 to 2017, Brock Wright served as Vice President and Chief Medical Officer for what was then the new Winnipeg Regional Health Authority and, for five years during that period, also served as the Chief Operating Officer at Health Sciences Centre.) The person Devlin was talking to said : "I will try to, yeah. . Next time I see him, I'll, I'll grab it for you." (I chose to include this little snippet to illustrate how good Fred could be at posing as someone important – and turning on the charm.)

I resumed my questioning: "Okay. Alright. If you don't want to see the material that I have...

Devlin: Not, not this time, I'm too tired to look it up.

Me: Okay. Well let's go back to asking some some more questions about other people who I've spoken to. One of them was a lawyer by the name of Bob Anderson.

Devlin: He's not a lawyer. He lost his license for, well he was a lawyer in Virginia. Go look him up on the internet. I hired him after he was slandered and I tried to take down the information on him. We've been friends for 20 years. They came to me and approached me in Bolivia to buy banks and he came to

the Forks area hotel. We became best friends and he did free work for me for many years for my foundation. And that's it.

Me: How did you get in touch with Rick? Was it through Jack?

Devlin: Okay.

Me: And you met Jack in a psychiatric ward?

Devlin: I met him in the hospital - okay.

Me: Well, he says it was a psychiatric ward.

Devlin: Whatever he says. I won't argue.

Me: So you deny that you were a patient in the psychiatric ward.

Devlin: No, I was not a patient.

Me: No, you were checking out the system 'cause you were the owner of the hospital. Do you know how ridiculous that sounds?

Devlin: You can do what you want with it. I'm telling you.

Me: You say you own Victoria Hospital?

Devlin: No, through options on the hospital with the Manitoba government.

Me: Oh really? Okay. You think that if I were to print this conversation now that this is going to make you look somehow as a bonafide, legitimate businessman?

Devlin: Not the way you are putting it. I'm just going to answer.

Me: I'm just asking you the questions and you're giving me the answers... and I'm doing it on the record.

Devlin: I'm giving you a courtesy before I sue your ass for a hundred million dollars.

Me: Is that right? On what grounds?

Devlin: Defamation. You didn't approach me to ever get my side of the story. You went with a group of people - Rick, who's a crazy man, and he stirred up all these people, dug up every single person I knew because I was too open with them and slandered me and made up stories and approached you. I don't know the total chain of events, but I will shortly.

Me: Okay, but you say that even though there are documents with your signature on them, especially the ones signed between you and Jonathan Soloway, they're not legitimate documents. Is that what you're saying?

Devlin: They're not. Jonathan knew very well that he was getting no salary till it was operational.

Me: Even though your signature's on your document and promises...

Devlin: We tried to put together a document. It was null and void. Jonathan knew that - when was it made null and void immediately, within 10 minutes of it being signed.

Me: Why was that?

Devlin: Because Jonathan put in fake clauses saying that I owe him \$250,000. But the other clause says he's not gonna get paid till there's generation of revenue. I have witnesses. Nikki Bello.

Me: Is that in the document?

Devlin: I believe so. I'd have to review it if.

Me: Jonathan is in big (financial) trouble and you deny that you told him to stop making payments on his debt?

Devlin: I said to him, these were my words: 'If they're not gonna come after you, it's better to conserve your cash and not pay creditors.' I've had much experience with people who have worked for me with creditors.

Me: Did you not tell him that you were gonna take care of his debts?

Devlin: I did.

Me: You did?

Devlin: Yeah.

Me: Did you?

Devlin: Not yet. I got ill and I was unable to work, and now I'm happy to take care of his debts, but after he slandered me, I'm no longer willing to do it.

Me: Isn't that a breach of contract then?

Devlin: There was no contract. It was friendly. It was a friendly promise to do my best to help him. Okay?

Me: But when I say there is a contract with your signature on it...

Devlin: I, I'd have to see it.

Me; Well, if I showed it to you, is it gonna make any difference?

Devlin: Could. It depends on what it says. I have to go through my documents and I'll tell you next interview. (At that point Devlin said something incomprehensible, but then suggested that Jonathan doesn't have a case that any lawyer would take on, saying "No one will take the case.")

Me: There was a lawyer who was quite willing to take the case, but the problem is - you're penniless – so there's no point in suing you.

Let's talk about your finances. How much money do you have?

Devlin: Look, that's not your business, but I have a lot of money.

Me: Okay, you don't think there's a lawyer who's quite willing to take the case (of a lawsuit against Devlin)?

Devlin: Go for it.

Me: But I asked the lawyer: Can Fred's parents and his wife be included in a lawsuit?

Devlin: Yeah. And what did they say?

Me: He said, "no," unless we can prove that somehow they were materially involved in all your affairs. By the way, how do you pay for all these meals at Hy's and at the Fairmont?

Devlin: With my Interac card. Why?

Me: I'm just wondering who is supporting you? Is it your parents?

Devlin: Nobody supports me. No, no.

Me: It's income from where? From the ... group of companies, right?

Devlin: Correct.

Me: The ...group of companies? And David Simkin is the CEO, right?

Devlin: Okay. I get my money from him.

Me: Would I ever be able to talk to David Simkin?

Devlin: No.

Me: Because he's Mossad, correct?

Devlin: Right. And that's not his real name. Ari Duran, my chief of Global Intelligence and Security based in Tel Aviv, who's worked for me for over 20 years - he's also Mossad. Everyone who works in my senior executives are Mossad or IDF.

Me: Are you accompanied by Mossad agents?

Devlin: Most of the time. I won't answer that.

Me: Are you ever accompanied by Mossad agents?

Devlin: Correct.

Me: What does that mean?

Devlin: They guard my family in Winnipeg, in Cleveland - for 20 years.

Me: Do you live at ...? (At that point I recited the address where Fred and his wife are presumed to live)?

Devlin: That's our safe house. We have 1909 Wellington Crescent, and we're moving to Number One Wellington in September.

Me: Did you live at 277 Wellington Crescent ever?

Devlin: Yes.

Me: All right. Who paid for the apartment?

Devlin: I did.

Me: You did? You paid how?

Devlin: My company paid for it.

Me: Okay. To be accurate, your house is owned by someone else entirely, with a mortgage on it, right?

Devlin: We have the option to buy it. His name is Michael (name omitted). Yeah. And his number is 3 3 3 3 3 3. (Of all the baffling things Devlin said during this conversation, that number was the weirdest. I have no idea what he meant by saying that.)

Me: We did a search for the title on that house. It's only valued at \$439,000. But you say that's a safe house?

Devlin: Correct.

Me: So, where is your primary residence?

Devlin: I won't answer that - for security reasons.

Me: Oh, for security reasons. Do you know how ludicrous this all sounds?

Devlin: I don't care. I'm sure it does, but it's true.

Me: And do you think that if you sued me for defamation and I were to have this played in court that you wouldn't be laughed out of court? Fred, are you under psychiatric care right now?

Devlin: No.

Me; Have you ever been under psychiatric care?

Devlin: I was once under psychiatric care, but for a fact that I have a sleep disorder and I couldn't sleep, and they had to give me medication through psychiatry to make me sleep. I don't sleep 24 hours a day. I have a rare sleep disorder. I never sleep and without the aid of medication, so that was the only time.

Me: Okay. So when I approached your mother years ago after I had met you and asked her: "What's the story with ...?" And she said, "... is not well, please go easy on him.," what do you think she meant, Fred?

Devlin: I wasn't well physically and she wanted you to leave me alone.

Me: Well, was it because you weren't well physically or weren't well psychologically?

Devlin: No, it was physically.

Me: Have you ever been hospitalized for a psychiatric disorder?

Devlin: I'm not gonna answer that. Alright. My health is out of court.

Me: Well, you just said that you don't have any psychiatric disorder.

Devlin: I have letters from the Cleveland Clinic. Each year for my corporation, I have to get a healthcare letter. I have no... besides pneumonia. Now I'm in perfect physical and mental health. Okay. And I have letters from doctors in Cleveland and in Winnipeg. Okay.

Me: Who do you have working for you in Winnipeg?

Devlin: I won't answer that...many people.

Me: Is (name omitted) one of the people?

Devlin: She did some free work for me, but I'm planning on hiring her as CEO of ... Foundation, Winnipeg office.

Me: Did you ever pay her anything?

Devlin: Not yet.

Me: Why not?

Devlin: 'cause we had no agreements in place for me to pay her. She was volunteering for the foundation.

Me: Or is it not the case that you have no money and it's all a delusion, Fred?

Devlin: Okay, Bernie, whatever you say, keep up with slander. You know what? This interview is over if you continue this line.

Me: Well, since you denied that you've had any agreement with Jonathan Soloway, that you had any agreement with Rick, that you had a plan to to bring jets from Israel over to Canada to convert them for some sort of...

Devlin: We are, uh, proceeding with that project.

Me: And this project has been ongoing for almost 18 or 20 years?

Devlin: No, no, three years. Just three years with Dan. Three or four years with Dan - who I offered a company. I offered him, I sent, he went to Israel on his own money. Yeah. And he didn't expect anything to be offered. I wasn't gonna go to Israel because I thought his ideas that he had for 20 years may not be solid. He went on his own way to meet Gli, who's a tremendous person, director of ... I believe I have her name.

Me: There's a whole slew of people you've contacted over the years. According to what I was told by (name omitted), you've recently contacted the head of the Winnipeg, Airport Authority and the head of Centerport.

Devlin: Not recently, although I phoned Carly (Edmundson, the President and CEO of CentrePort) yesterday.

Me: The CEO of CenterPort? Okay, what was the nature of your communication with her and the head of the Winnipeg Airport Authority (Nick Hays)? You have plans, right? You have projects. What kind of project is it you want to develop?

Devlin: Next interview. I'll be happy. Okay.

Me: They don't know about your past history. Because when I told Carly in an email that you're totally delusional, she responded that came as a surprise, but she said all that she did is introduce you to some other people.

That's your style, isn't it Fred? You network with people. You find people, you use them to contact other people.

Devlin: Correct.

Me: So, you admit that's what you do?

Devlin: Oh, that works. Yes. Yeah.

Me: Okay, so you network with people and then you find what their particular area of expertise is. You have some background in aviation, so that gives you...

Devlin: And real estate... and financial markets.

Me: Yeah. Okay. So that gives you the semblance of having some experience.

Devlin: I have deep experience.

Me: Then you lull people into thinking that you're actually credible - right?

Devlin: Oh my god, that's slander.

Me: But isn't that how you operate?

Devlin: No, I don't.

Me: No? What do you do?

Devlin: Not at all.

Me: What do you do then? How do you network with people?

Devlin: I try to find people I can help and do Tikkun Olam with, at every level. Tikkun Global. Yeah. And every person I touch, I try to help.

Me: Okay. What charitable foundations have you ever financed?

Devlin: In Africa, we financed USAID, Save the Children, World Vision... many.

Me: And you have proof for all that? That's what Charlie told me that you told him when you suckered him into believing you.

Devlin: I suckered him? Yes. What a joke.

Me: Do you know the guy is suicidal? Do you know that I sent him money?

Devlin: How much money did you send him?

Me: I sent him 600 Canadian dollars, but he still owes a lot more. (I later sent Charlie another \$800. I still keep in regular touch with him. Charlie still finds it difficult to believe that Fred Devlin was a total fraudster.)

Devlin: Good for you. I paid him more.

Me: You haven't paid him a cent.

Devlin: I put him through school for \$650.

Me: Oh you did, did you?

Devlin: Yes.

Me: And what kind of school was that?

Devlin: His certificate's in business. (After I had this conversation with Fred I contacted Charlie to ask him whether Fred had ever given him money for anything. He sent me a screenshot of a text from Fred that was sent in 2023 in which Fred asks the director of a school Charlie was attending to give him an extension on paying his tuition, saying that he will "receive the necessary funds to pay for his school after I return from Israel on my peace mission in early December. I need to be in Winnipeg to direct these funds to him." Of course, there never way any payment of any sort, according to Charlie.)

Me: But you've been sending him threatening messages.

Devlin: Because he threatened me on Facebook.

Me: What did he say on Facebook?

Devlin: He started writing all about me and saying I was a liar and I was... he slandered me. (I'm sure that Devlin was referring to the article I had posted on my website in February which contained that very detailed email outlining the litany of Fred's broken promises. Somehow he had it confused with Facebook.)

Me: But that wasn't Charlie who wrote that email.

Devlin: Who wrote it?

Me: You don't know?

Devlin: I'll find out.

Me: You think Charlie was capable of having written that email? (Charlie's native tongue is French, and although his English is quite good, it didn't take me long to realize that he couldn't have written that January 16 email. I quickly deduced that it was Rick, who is capable of writing very well.)

Devlin: No. Was it Rick?

Me: That's right. So why don't you sue Rick?

Devlin: I am.

Me: You are? Where?

Devlin: I have a lawyer in Florida. I have lawyers in Toronto who can operate in Florida.

(And then I asked him about a lawyer in Winnipeg who's his cousin - and is the lawyer who threatened to sue me for defamation. I asked Fred whether that person has ever acted for him? He said he has - for many of his over 3,300 companies.)

Me: Can you name one of those companies?

Devlin: Yes. Worldview Capital.

Me: Which is what?

Devlin: Which is what the airport is. Worldview Capital owns the world's only financial model that works, generates between 250003300000.0% for annum. Yeah. It's worth \$1.15 trillion. I'm going to be making a deal with their candidate. (Again, totally incoherent)

Me: And (Fred's cousin) acted for you in this, correct?

Devlin: Right.

Me: So if I ask (cousin's name - omitted here) that, do you think he'll substantiate that?

Devlin: He'll tell you what I asked him. He won't talk to you, he's not talking to you.

Me: Oh, is that right?

Devlin: I've done this on my own - against my lawyer's advice.

Me: Does (your cousin) know that you're here, that you're meeting with me?

Devlin: No.

Me: What would he say if he knew you were meeting with me?

Devline: He'd be pissed off.

Me: Yeah. What about your wife? Does she know? Pissed off, right? She knows that I've contacted you though - right?

Devlin: Yeah.

Me: Has she taken the phone away from you when various people have called you?

Devlin: No. No.

Me: Okay. What's your wife's role in all this?

Devlin: My wife has no role in all this. She facilitates, she works for another company.

Me: Has she sat in on meetings?

Devlin: No, she did not.

Me: Well, according to someone who asked me not to name them, she has.

Devlin: I'd have to look it up.

Me: Yeah, please do. I've spoken to...(and then, Devlin interrupted me.)

Devlin: I don't care who you've spoken to, you're not getting good information.

Me: Okay, do you want the real truth? I'd love for this to go to court. I'd want it to go to court because maybe that could put a stop to you. That's why, when people ask me why I got so involved in this story, I say to them it's because I'm trying to stop you from hurting other people - because you've hurt a lot of people, okay?

Devlin: If you say so and you're not aware of what you're doing...You make an excellent argument based on the fallacy of your assumptions, Bernie.

Me: I don't know where to take this. You're substantiating everything that's been told me about you so far.

Devlin: I need more interviews. I'll be happy to talk to you about everything but this, this should not go into an article.

Me: Would you be surprised to know that I'm writing a story about you?

Devlin: No, but we're gonna co-publish that story with the truth.

Me: Oh, really? Do you think I'm gonna give you final edit on the story?

Devlin: No, I don't expect it.

Me: I'm not even gonna let you see it. I'm gonna let the people who are mentioned in it see it before I try to publish it.

Devlin: Try it and see what happens to you.

Me: Well, I've already got one publisher who's quite interested.

Devlin: I'm sure It's a very interesting story.

Me: It's been fascinating trying to flesh it out.

Devlin: How about if it's true, Bernie? Did you ever contemplate everything I told you is true? Has that ever gone through your mind? And then think about what you've done.

Me: You mean the story that you're telling? Is the story true in whole or in part?

Devlin: No, it's true in whole.

Me: Every part of the story, every single part? Every part about you owning over 3,300 companies? Are you a trillionaire or a billionaire?

Devlin: I'm a trillionaire.

Me: You're a trillionaire.

Devlin: Over and over.

Me: Are you richer than Elon Musk?

Devlin: Much richer than Elon.

Me: Okay. Then why do you dress like this?

Devlin: Like what?

Me: I mean you're presentable, but it's not what I'd expect from a trillionaire.

Devlin: I care about my parents. I...

Me: If you're a trillionaire, where are the bodyguards? I can't imagine a trillionaire not being surrounded by bodyguards

Devlin: They're here. You don't see them, but they're here.

Me: I don't see them. Are they Mossad?

Devlin: Yeah, they're Mossad. We don't want to have (his wife), for instance worry about bodyguards for my family. So it's invisible. I don't even know where they are.

Me: You don't even know where they are?

Devlin: I can find out quickly by just tapping a button on my phone. That's the truth. Okay. Now if I tell you what I'm worth, would that be helpful?

Me: Yeah, sure. Go ahead.

Devlin: \$9.33 trillion.

Me: 9.33 trillion? How do you think that sounds?

Devlin: Do you think that when I have world...., but I know every up and down in stocks, commodities, currencies, commodities. I just trade. Automatically outta Luxembourg and I trade on my desk in my office and make millions of dollars.

Me: Fred, how do you think your parents would react if I were to send them a transcript of this conversation?

Devlin: They'd be very upset.

Me: Why?

Devlin: Because they don't know everything about my business.

Me: Do they know that you have \$9.33 trillion?

Devlin: No. You know, I'm very wealthy.

(I then asked Devlin about a cottage that he's told people he owns, but I don't want to get too specific about the name of the lake for the same reason I didn't give Devlin's actual address. Even though anyone who knows the real person I've been calling Fred Devlin in this story would recognize him from everything I've written about him, I highly doubt that anyone who doesn't know his family would know whom I've been writing about - but if I were to reveal his actual address and where the family cottage is, it would be much easier to establish what Devlin's real name is.)

Me: What kind of car do you drive?

Devlin: I drive a Porsche GT, three BMW convertibles. They're not in Winnipeg right now because of the potholes. I store them in Florida and Cleveland. I have 17 cars that I collect for investments.

Me: I see. And where did you tell me you're flying to this weekend?

Devlin: I expected I'm to fly to Toronto to meet with Irvin Shane, one of my lawyers. Then I'm flying to Cleveland to spend about a month with my family going over our legal strategy to undo everybody. And then, we're suing, unless you convince me that you're an honest reporter.

Me: Oh. Do you think I'm afraid of a threat of a lawsuit from you, Fred? If I were to play this in court...

Devlin: Um, you know what, Bernie...

Me: I'm surprised that you haven't been committed to an institution.

Devlin: Um, I don't know. I don't know exactly the legalities of that anymore. Bernie. Bernie, be careful. Why you, you're walking on thin ice...slandering me... try to go after my mental health.

Me: We'll see what happens. But you go after Rick's mental health.

Devlin: He's self-admittedly mentally ill.

Me: No, Rick admits that he's got some problems.

Devlin: Mm-hmm. how about anger?

Me: Yeah, he admits that.

Devlin: Why didn't he call me when I was in the hospital to see where I am instead of gathering up all these people against me?

Me: What were you doing in the hospital?

Devlin: I had a concussion from a brain injury.

Me: And when was this?

Devlin: Uh, seven weeks ago maybe. Yeah.

Me: You were just in the hospital? You had a concussion from a brain injury?

Devlin: Correct. Do you wanna see the picture of my head?

Me: Where did you fall?

Devlin: I was in the bathroom. It was dark. We normally have lights that light up. Motion detectors. I lost my orientation. Lost my balance and fell on my head. On the bed board. (But he had just stated that he fell in the bathroom.) Yeah. Cussed myself. Knocked myself out.

Me: Alright. But even while you were in a hospital - with a brain injury, you maintained contact with various people, right?

Devlin: No. No.

Me: You didn't phone people from the hospital?

Devlin: Not many. My phone was taken away.

Me: Who took it away?

Devlin: The doctor.

Me: Why?

Devlin: He didn't want me making calls. He wanted me to rest.

Me: Which hospital were you in most recently?

Devlin: Victoria.

Me: And which ward were you in?

Devlin: I'm not gonna talk to you about my hospitalization 'cause you're gonna twist it and write he's got psychiatric problems.

Me: Isn't it the case that were in the psychiatric ward of Victoria Hospital recently?

Devlin: I, I'm not gonna answer that. Do you have evidence that I was?

Me: I don't, I'm just asking.

Devlin: Okay. Do I sound crazy, Bernie?

Me: Oh, you want me to answer that? Sure. You sound totally crazy, Fred. And I feel sorry for you, I feel deeply sorry for you, but what happened is just that you harm so many people.

Devlin: I never harmed anybody. No.

Me: What about Charlie?

Devlin: Never harmed.

Me: He's suicidal.

Devlin: That's not my fault. No, no, no.

Me: So you didn't promise to fund his charitable foundation and he went out and spent money on his own?

Devlin: No. Never to start feeding (children). That's not true.

Me: Poor African children, based on your promises to him?

Devlin: No, no, no. He asked me if I would send some money. 'cause he wants to feed the hungry. He brings porridge to them. Okay. To the hungry people.

Me: So did you send him money?

Devlin: No. No. Okay.

Me: Why not?

Devlin: Because I wasn't involved at the time. I was planning on sending money...

Me: But you funded USAID and... which other charities? But you couldn't send him a couple of thousand dollars. Why not?

Devlin: Was planning on it, but I, I got sick

Me: Did you ever pay Bob Anderson for any of the work he did?

Devlin: He never - I don't owe him.

Me: Isn't it true that either your father or your wife paid him?

Devlin: No.

Me: Or maybe one of your brothers?

Devlin: No.

Me: Gave him a thousand dollars. That's what he says.

Devlin: Could be.

Me: Because he said you kept refusing to pay him.

Devlin: Bullshit. He's in the deepest of troubles.

Me: The confidentiality agreement that you had him prepare, you had loads of people sign confidentiality agreements that Bob Anderson prepared, didn't you?

Devlin: He didn't.

Me: He prepared almost 15 non-disclosure agreements for people to sign. Why would you have people sign non-disclosure agreements? '

Devlin: Cause I don't want to be gossiped about.

Me: Or is it the case you didn't want other people to know about what you were doing?

Devlin: No.

Me: Because if other people knew about the nonsense you were spouting, absolutely they would've cut you off at the knees.

Devlin: Absolutely not. No. That was not my motive. No.

Me: So, when you approached Jonathan Soloway because he was an old childhood friend and you told him that you could help him by setting up this real estate investment trust and you sent him contracts, what was your motivation?

Devlin: I didn't send Jonathan contracts. No, I believe he sent them to me. (On that point Devlin was correct. I checked with Jonathan and he did say that he had the contracts prepared and sent to Devlin, adding that Devlin was incapable of producing the type of sophisticated agreements that Jonathan sent to him, but which show Devlin's signature on them nonetheless.)

Me: Regardless, you signed the contract, but you say you didn't sign the contract.

Devlin: Bernie. I didn't say I didn't sign it. I said, Jeff's agreement that he sent me was bullshit.

Me: Okay, well, do I sound like I'm cross-examining you - because that's what would happen if you went into court, Fred.

Devlin: I have zero problem. I've been in court many times.

Me: Would you be surprised to hear that different people are trying to initiate a police investigation of you now?

Devlin: There's a police investigation of Rick...for threatening our lives, my mother's and my life.

Me: Is that right? Where is that police investigation?

Devlin: Rick twisted it to say I threatened him. What a joke.

Me: Would you be surprised to know that there was a file opened on you by York Regional Police in Ontario and it was sent to Winnipeg ?

Devlin: No. I don't care. No.

Me: Do you care that there might be a police investigation of you?

Devlin: Doesn't bother me.

Me: Doesn't bother you at all?

Devlin: No, I'll be happy to speak to the police... and give them evidence.

Me: I'm not sure where it's at. I just know that there was a file opened on you.

Devlin: I'm not going nowhere, but if it does go further, I'll be happy to talk to the police.

Me: Okay, I think this is enough, Fred.

Devlin: Um, are, are we gonna have another session? If you want,, I'd like the full truth to come out and then you can decide what to publish. I don't feel you've given me justice.

April 26, 2026 This concludes my writing about Fred Devlin and his delusional cons. I was still receiving phone calls from Fred, however, asking when we could meet again - until I blocked him. And then I received a phone call from the man I've called Jack, who met Fred in the psych ward at Victoria Hospital. He was also totally incoherent, so I've blocked him too. I expect though that this story will still be ongoing. The man I've called Fred Devlin will likely continue to make contact with many more unsuspecting people and try to persuade them that he has a huge amount of money which he is willing to use to invest in various projects.

Further, I rather doubt any police force will proceed with an investigation. I'm sure whatever file ended up at Winnipeg Police Service has long been buried. But, since I decided to post these stories to my website - and I can reopen the story at any time, there may be more chapters to write.

If you've been reading these stories - either in whole or in part, you might like to know that I will compile them into one large pdf and make it accessible on this website at some point.