

Consensus

Every world-spanning conspiracy has to start *somewhere*.

Meet Michael J. Brown. Mike is twenty-two years old, and about to graduate, top of his class, with a double major in engineering and history from a top-shelf school. Quietly rich, but not very vocal about it. Well-liked, friendly, athletic in an almost-professional level but not in any sport where he'd be expected to pursue a professional career. Engaged to be married, to a very nice girl. Mike is, in fact a marvelous specimen of man -- except for that one little personality quirk of his.

It's not megalomania, actually. Or, rather, Mike is a megalomaniac in the way that Bruce Wayne would be; it's hard to call the belief that you're better than everybody else a mental illness when you really **are** better than more or less everybody else. Not that anybody realizes this, mind you. Mike hides the full range of his (freakishly powerful) physical and mental abilities, mostly because showing them off attracts attention, and he doesn't want any attention quite yet. He's too busy making the tools that will make the tools that he can use to take over the world.

Yup, that's the plan. World domination. He probably won't have himself crowned king, because people from all over the various political spectrums would freak out about that; but Mike figures that if he still has all the power and status then having the title would just be ridiculous swank. And the power and status are the important things. After all, just **look** at the world. It requires a competent person to run it. And Mike Brown's never met anybody better for the job.

But that's in the future. Right now Mike's busy setting up Consensus, which will eventually become the corporation that will segue into becoming the framework for the first world government. That's later. Right now it's just a bunch of paperwork being processed by the state of Delaware. Once he graduates, Mike plans to use Consensus as cover for his own financial wizardry; a regular company making billions will be easier for normal people to accept than the idea that an individual could. Besides, this way it'll also look like Mike's just another flash in the pan dot-com bubblehead, which will be useful until that doesn't matter anymore.

Note, by the way, that Mike lacks many of the attributes of the typical monomaniacal supervillain. He is neither a sociopath nor a psychopath. He doesn't consider himself

above the law, doesn't feel contempt for normal people, has a full set of emotional responses (including remorse), and respects the lives and dignity of others. Mike simply knows that he's **better** than everybody else, which clearly means that he should be in charge at the earliest ethical possibility. The people currently collectively in charge would disagree, of course -- and that's why Mike's saving all of this as a bit of a surprise.

Also note: absent interference, Consensus **will** end up taking over the world. These are merely the early days of the conspiracy. So if Mike is to be thwarted, this is the time to do it -- what's that? Why thwart Mike? I dunno: doesn't it seem a little risky to put the fate of the world in one man's hands? I mean, what if he gets hit by a bus? Or poisoned by a rival? Or doesn't produce an heir? -- Or, worse: what if he produces three viable heirs, and none of them are willing to let one of the other two have the throne? Monarchies aren't stable, you know.

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