

From the Office of a Rogue Bureaucrat

To the Office of the City Clerk:

Hello, comrade! Between you and I, the person applying for this Board doesn't fully understand the procedure, nor does he truly understand the requirements or responsibilities. This is not to say that he does not *think* he understands, but only to say that he thinks he understands but is not sure—and between you and I, I do believe he is correct in being unsure. He is, nonetheless, an ideal candidate. More than ideal, he may be necessary.

The precise name of this Board seems to have vanished from my notes, but I understand it to be a Board to oversee the Seattle Art Museum, or perhaps a Board to oversee their Board—sometimes I see in duplicate and triplicate, metaphorically speaking—or perhaps it is a Board that oversees all art in the City of Seattle. Something like that. I regretfully must inform you that my client believes such a board may be at odds with the nature of what needs to be done. This is a vague belief; as such, it is malleable.

As a former employee of the Seattle Art Museum and an active member of the artistic and literary community, as a teacher and scholar and poet and revolutionary, he believes fundamentally different models should exist for our arts organization (and beyond). His thinking is unambiguously anticapitalist in nature; the nonprofit exists within the confines of capitalism. He believes such art organizations should aim to exist without capitalism. Insofar as an oppressive status quo forces us into confines unnatural and cruel, he recognizes the reality of the situation may require a certain amount of capitulation, though he puts asterisks next to the words “situation” “require” and “capitulation,” wishing in part to differentiate capitulation from complicity. Requirement is caveated with *to be continued*. The Situation is an epic poetic that I've eliminated from the application.

Sometimes Mr. Edenfield can be—on paper—a bit much. In person, he's delightful to work with, and very open minded. He is also a formidable force, intellectually. Depending on this organization's response to the application, it is not certain that Mr. Edenfield would accept the position of Board Member. In his mind, this is an invitation to conversation. Certainly, we all may decide that Mr. Edenfield would not be a good fit. But such a decision can only be made by Mr. Edenfield after a bit of conversation. Perhaps your organization can make more hasty decisions.

Art is important and strange and doesn't operate within our humdrum bureaucratic semantics. I know this is very frustrating to some non-rogue bureaucrats, but know too that all bureaucrats are rogue bureaucrats, given a good catalyst. This document is designed to be such catalyst. Look to the world and see rules not working as they're meant to, or rules imposed on us by cruel forces, doing exactly what they're meant to: suppression of thought and freedom.

Is this to say that if one is against the forces of authoritarianism, they have a moral obligation to begin a conversation with Mr. Edenfield? No, of course not! What an outlandish and tyrannical thing to say. I understand, as does my client, that this spycraft is delicate. If his application is lost or ignored, he will assume that it is for the best. If the City Clerk recommends excising certain passages before sending it on to so-called “superiors,” then so be it. This is, before anything else, an opening of dialogue with *you*, whoever you are, the first eyes to glance these words. The City Clerk is a mysterious position. You are like a sphinx to me. As a rogue bureaucrat, I admire this.

Mr. Edenfield is not a bureaucrat. He is an artist. He makes very little money though he works very intelligently and diligently. He seeks to become more engaged in the community through some means or another. He explores other avenues concurrently. He lives in a basement apartment with a street level view. Precisely speaking, he doesn't have goals. But, he would view himself, for better or for worse, as a representative of the working class, of the frontline staff, of the entry level employees, of the starving artists, starving not always from lack of food but lack of equality and freedom, etc. As a former employee of the Seattle Art Museum, and as someone who has been involved with other similar arts nonprofits to varying capacities, he has some inside knowledge. He is an unconventional candidate, but not *that* unconventional. It would not make sense for this Board to not have someone roughly like him, and though the Board may think there is someone fulfilling that role, it is likely the case that you could use another. This judgment is based on observation of the current operations of the Seattle Art Museum. It is, to put it bluntly, mismanaged. Mismanagement suggests disbalance amongst management. Edenfield believes he may be able to rectify that, somewhat, but this belief is unverified (see above), and further evidence must be gathered (see above). As I now repeat myself once again, I believe it time to bid farewell, for now.

Thank you for your patience. We live in strange times. I believe we must rise to this strangeness. I believe the solutions to strange problems are not going to be solutions we're generally familiar with. I believe we can find help, guidance, answers by looking to those who've been historically ignored. Mr. Edenfield is, I will say to close out, a white male, bureaucratically speaking. He knows such binaries and designations are historically conditioned and part of the problem. He comes from a counter-cultural tradition that is not well represented in contemporary American culture. Sometimes he calls himself a madman and a prophet, but he's only being melodramatic in his writing. He's actually quite down to earth, shy even. Reportedly, some find him funny and charming. I find him to be enigmatic, which does occasionally make me chuckle.

Sincerely, a Rogue Bureaucrat for Bryan Edenfield