

# The Termite Squad: My Official and Authentic Report

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## It's Me

*Who is Joan Galt?*

If you're reading this, I'm assuming "who's joan galt" has been the #1 search term in the past 24 hours. Maybe for a whole week. Lots of interest. Lots of theories. *Who is Joan Galt?* I'm assuming everyone is going to want to know.

My light is ebbing, you could say. [By now it's probably snuffed out. But you never know...] Before it's extinguished completely, while I'm still able to influence what's said about me in the Twittosphere and the annals of history – which is sort of the same thing, right? -- I need to answer the "who is she?" question. Definitely.

Because I'm the only one who can.

Yes, people, this is me. **The real Joan Galt**. Not an avatar. I exist. I'm not a character the government concocted to scare you, like Pervez "Gas Man" Shah or Mindy the White Scorpion.

I'm real.

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*Who is Joan Galt?* They'll say I was a "terrorist."

A criminal.

They'll say I was a menace to society, the toxic tumor of a diseased civilization. The news commentators and Twitlords® will offer smart-seeming theories. They'll say I was a symbol of the national mood, a receptacle for our worst fears and impulses -- or whatever sounds good at the time. They'll hashtag me #evil.

The truth is not what they're going to try to tell you when I'm dead. The truth is not the multimedia events they'll concoct or the Wiki entry repeatedly edited to their satisfaction.

The truth is I'm just a girl who wanted the world to be a better place.

## My Great Idea

Before I came along, the ongoing success of the Termite Squad was built on one key assumption: Old ladies can get away with more than the average person.

Ladies in general, of course. But, especially, *old* ladies. One-hundred years or more. Centenarians. *Centurions*, as the kids say.

Have you ever met a woman born in 2000, or earlier? They like to complain. Even though life expectancy is around, like, what, 104 these days? Her lost looks, her reduced pension, her ruinous healthcare costs. And she'll remind you repeatedly about how she didn't have to

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desalinate everything back in the day, how water used to be free and you didn't need a wind-gathering license.

Not hating on them. Old ladies are permitted to deliver soliloquies, because they're totally entitled to. Just like they're entitled to cut in line.

They do what they want. Very few of us complain. Of course we don't! They're *old*. They're adorable. The rudeness is sort of cute in a way, like a puppy. We understand.

No one likes to say "no" to the elderly, to a frail and wizened woman who looks like your mother. No one wants to disappoint her mother.

When an old lady asks for help, she usually gets help. When an old lady asks for a little favor, some special treatment, she usually gets special treatment. Even when she's wearing an Endvest™.

My great idea was a simple idea: Keep the ladies, add the sexy.

Those were my exact words. That's exactly what I said to the Director of Operations, when they brought me in to make my pitch. I had cashed in all my banked favors and got the meeting, the face2face kind, right there in Langley. I knew I had only a few minutes to get their attention and hold it.

"Keep the ladies, add the sexy," I said, smiling my best "*I'm just a sassy little girl with a lot of moxie*" smile. It worked.

There were perfectly good reasons at first to restrict the Termite Squad to Centurions, to women 100 or more years-old. The most obvious being that they really could die any day.

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Plus, everyone involved in national security knew that the Elders strategy would be detected and defeated eventually. Argentina had already started denying entry visas to foreign senior citizens with mobility issues, and chatter in the diplomatic community suggested that Malaysia and Turkey were considering similar “anti-cripple” legislation. So now Termite Squad recruiters were looking for high-mobility Centurions – ladies who didn’t need a chair. But, still, the bad guys were starting to put their guard up. They were on the lookout for shriveled Super Seniors.

It occurred to me the day I got my diagnosis: Why do you have to be old to be a hero? Why can’t you be a hero when you’re young and vivacious and you still have your figure?

Keep the ladies, add the sexy. I’m 28, OK? I don’t look like the usual Termite.

I have above-average Liker stats. Above-average WorthScore©. Not bragging, but thanks to a fairly extensive network of personal feeds, my profile has been shared on the Home Page of some very important sites. #justbeingreal

I dated Ladante Mook (briefly) and Garreth Sparks (slightly longer), and that’s not to mention some of my fleeting hook-ups, which I’m sure you’re already checking. Search away. I’m not one to kiss and post. But at this point... I guess I can reveal that I had one (dreamy) night with Harry Spenser – and no, I’m not kidding. Check your arm. Put in our two names + Mumbai. You’ll see. And yes, it was everything you would imagine it would be. Like one of his virtual movies, but real. #delicious.

Eventually, I connected with the man of my dreams, my JJ, and those boys became nothing to me but fond memories. I wouldn’t trade them.

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The point is looks matter. Right? Youth matters. I didn't make the rules. I just play by them.

So I impressed upon the Director that a potential Termite's ability to *gain access* was what made her valuable. The more access to powerful people the better. I told him, "Not many people can say 'no' to a sweet old lady. Even fewer can say 'no' to a sweet young one."

The Termite Squad's Director of Operations, who was officially separated from his wife when I met him, totally got my message. Or got me. Or both. But he got it.

I hope you do, too. I hope you understand.

We're all going to die. Some of us are just meant to be an attractive corpse.

I'm kidding but I'm not. You know what I mean?

I didn't plan my life out wanting to die young. I didn't want to be a martyr. No matter how expertly you've calibrated your algo-chip, sometimes life decides certain things for you. It's out of your hands. When that happens, you just have to make the best of it.

For me, it was an easy decision. When I got the diagnosis, it was a very easy decision. I wanted to be a member of the Termite Squad.

### Where I Came From

Don't accept whatever "standard bio" they're going to foist on you, with all the embarrassing parts taken out. *This* is my real story. My true bio.

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**[Please someone take the time to run an independent review of this post's digital footprint and post the results! Now! Before they figure out how to de-authenticate me.]**

Although my birth parents were never joined in holy matrimony, I consider myself quite legitimate. *Bastard* – it's such an ugly word, one of those terms that says more about the person using it than the person it's supposed to describe.

I was conceived with love, in love, as an expression of love. To some people that's not enough. To me, that's all that matters.

My birth mother Elaine adored my birth father Theo. My father adored my mother. Had they not been married to other people when they made me, their romance (and the child it produced) could have been one of those amusing old-fashioned screwball comedies of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, a heartwarming story of opposites attracting, of ardor and passion overcoming the stifling conventions of polite society.

Somehow shame got involved and the whole cuteness factor evaporated.

My birth mother Elaine came from high society; my birth father Theo didn't. She was petite, fair, and stylish (think Trudy Wexler, especially in her Web Events of the 70s and early-80s); he was tall, dark, and famously unconcerned with fashion (think Dirk Fredericks, an incorrigible bad boy with a tremble-producing smile). Despite their dramatic difference in cumulative WorthScore©, they had an attraction to each other, a chemistry that was so obvious, so palpable, that it set off Connection Alerts® on the arms of innocent bystanders! We're talking major radiation.

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I come from passionate people.

On my mom's side I've done the research, and I can trace various ancestral veins back nearly 300 years, to around 1800. Like, original white American settler people who systematically replaced the people who were there before them. The genocidal type.

They're not very interesting, my ancestors, in terms of buzz factor or heat. They were just Regulars, average non-celebs who probably wouldn't even be five-figures popular. (A few hundred Likers maybe, if that? Normal.) If you really want to know about my forebears, you can always check your Armscreen®, of course. Archival photos and everything. Even some low-definition video. Please do. You'll see that I'm not making this up.

**ALERT: I'm not making *anything* up. I'd like to emphasize that again. I'm real. This is real. You'll choose to believe me or not, but I seriously hope you do. #notspoofing**

These days they seem to be able to re-edit history with impressive results, but they can only go back so far before tech incompatibility makes it impossible. No matter how many Super Wipers™ you unleash on the Web, you can't modify something called the "Oral Tradition."<sup>1</sup> I just hope you'll believe me and not them. They're all-powerful and they've got their ways, their persuasion techniques, but I've got TRUTH on my side, and that's supposed to count for something.

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<sup>1</sup> An ancient practice which involved people sharing information by talking to each other, like face2face.

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More truth: my grandparents – now, they were sort of interesting! Sure, they were born last century and had some of that charming antique adorableness about them (the “hand-held” devices, the manual inputting of TexThoughts®). But they were also somehow modern and cool.

My grandparents on my mother’s side supposedly met on Election Night, 2012 – the second term for a man named Barack Obama, whose Wiki indicates he wasn’t a particularly good President (one in a long line of corporate stooges) but who has a place in history as the first non-White to hold the office.<sup>2</sup> His daughter Malia -- Malia Obama Bieber, the inventor of Safe Kill™ -- is probably the best known of that family.

According to my mother, Elaine, *her* mother, my Grammy Belle, was a national student volunteer coordinator on the Presidential campaign – for the other guy! A rich handsome fellow with impeccably combed hair. Grammy Belle’s father (my great-grandfather) worked for the rich guy’s consulting company, specializing in firing redundant employees.

I never met Grammy Belle, or any of my grandparents. My family on that side, from what I can gather, has always been aligned with the spirit of free enterprise and entrepreneurial success. They were winners. Achievers. *Doers*. Always where the action was, where the power concentrated. I definitely inherited this trait... even though my story has turned out different.

According to my mother Elaine, Grammy Belle, who had postponed her last year at The Harvard™ to fight for American values, was so terribly upset and shocked that her righteous Republican<sup>3</sup> candidate lost to some “colored Socialist” (her words!) that she had a kind of

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<sup>2</sup> Quick history reminder: At one point a long, long time ago, Americans weren’t required to warehouse their slaves offshore. These onshore slaves produced millions of offspring, and eventually one of them became President. At the time, this was a cause for national celebration, for reasons that aren’t entirely clear. They seemed to judge people by irrelevant things like their skin color, not essential content like their WorthScore©.

<sup>3</sup> Remember, this was 2012, back when they still had two parties, way before they all merged.



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nervous breakdown, complete with uncontrollable tears and weird hand spasms, right there in a fancy hotel ballroom, at what was supposed to be the victory party. A rich handsome fellow named Larry Barclay, also a student, also a national coordinator, who would go on to be a fabulously successful banker (the family business) – well, he comforted Belle so nicely and with such obvious interest in her well-being that she eventually married him.

Corny, icky, and totally for-realzies. They gave me the romantic gene.

Within a decade Larry and Belle Barclay had three children, twin boys Jason and George, both of whom went on to legendary careers at the New York office of China Bank™, and four years later, in 2025, a baby girl, Elaine. My mother.

Let me tell you about Elaine. She was a kind of genius, with a gift for math and foreign languages and music, and by the time she had graduated from The Harvard™ she had already amassed a fortune, thanks to proprietary currency-trading software she'd created, which recognized arbitrage opportunities in the Asian and European markets – and executed the trades while she slept (or partied). She was rich and beautiful and, you can imagine, rather intimidating to the average man.

Senator Daniel Huxley was not the average man.

He was also rich (textiles) and beautiful (his mother has been a well-known actress in the days of free TV), and famously suave around the ladies. That he was nearly 25 years older than Elaine when he began courting her didn't seem to bother anyone. Senator Huxley whisked her away on his private jet to Paris to shop for silk scarves, and to London for a proper afternoon tea, and to the Huxley family retreat in Idaho to ride expensive horses and “herd” the family's collection of rare bison. Elaine was swept off her feet, as every girl ought to be at least once in

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her life, and she decided that being a Senator's wife – and, it was understood, a potential First Lady of the United States of America – was a role she could get used to.

“He was a dazzling man,” I remember Elaine telling me, with genuine admiration. “He made me feel like a princess.”

Unfortunately, Senator Huxley was also one of those rich and powerful men who occasionally enjoyed feeling like a princess himself. With young men of dubious morals.

Elaine and the Senator seemed to have had an arrangement. He could keep his playthings, who tended to be muscular and tan, and she could indulge her youthful distractions, who tended to be artsy and poor. She liked tall gaunt boys who could talk smart and last long into the night. Boys like my father.

From what Elaine has told me, little or nothing about the Barclays' private lives got discussed; the Senator and his young wife prided themselves on discretion, as though their ability to pretend that nothing was wrong with their marriage guaranteed that there would never be anything wrong with their marriage.

I don't know how many affairs my mother had, and I don't want to know. That's her business. I just know that one night in New York City she met a married painter-sculptor-collagist named Theo Galt at a gallery opening, and after a few glasses of Chardonnay and an impromptu Midnight dinner in North Chinatown, near Citi™ Washington Square Park she had what she described as “the greatest night” of her life.

The night I was created.

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“He made me feel like a woman, Joanie,” Elaine told me, many years later, at one of our lunches. We always met over lunch. When I had finally mustered the courage to track her down, introduce myself, and make her tell me *everything*, Elaine eventually suggested we meet for lunch, face2face in her neighborhood, in Georgetown. An actual Outdoors In-Person encounter. #OIP!

That quickly became our tradition. We had lunch with a pot of green tea at a Japanese restaurant, and she talked about the past.

Elaine enjoyed reminiscing about Theo. I liked learning about my birth father. “I can’t say he was a particularly *good* man. I mean, the drinking, the promiscuity, the infidelity,” she said, scrunching her nose. “But he was a *great* man. He made me feel invincibly strong and helplessly weak at the same time. Plus, I think I was in love with him – or with his art, at least.”

What Theo Galt made were these smallish transparent glass boxes, like the size of an old-fashioned printed book, the kind with hard covers. Inside were strange collage-sculpture-assemblages, which he called *accumulations*. They often included highly personal effects, like faded photographs (the antique kind, on paper) or bits of his own black hair. They give off a remarkable vibrational energy, a presence.

I know this because at our very first lunch, the first time I ever looked my real mother in the eye and saw myself reflected back, Elaine gave me one of Theo’s boxes. “Joan, I’m certain your father would have wanted you to have this,” she had said. Throughout her adult life she’d

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quietly collected most of Theo Galt's major *accumulations* that weren't already in small European museums.<sup>4</sup>

"I think it's one of his best," she said. When I looked inside at the peculiar world my father had created, with random items (antique pen, dried butterfly, broken water glass) that seemed to tell a story somehow, I felt as though I knew him.

"That's his hair," Elaine whispered, her voice breaking. Just a few strands, a dull black, bordering bits of an illegible poem.

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*happie ws.*

I could tell by the way Elaine sighed nearly 30 years after the fact that my birth father was still in her heart. He seemed like a cool guy – other than the cheating on his wife and not using birth-control part.

I never met him. When I was an infant, Theo Galt died near his Brooklyn apartment in a vehicle explosion. The car he was in blew up spontaneously, or may have struck an incendiary device. He was thought to have been killed instantly.

The few pictures I've seen – and you can see for yourself, if you want to check your arm – the pictures indicate that he was quite beautiful, with blue-green eyes and a crooked smile. People say I inherited his lips, his kissable puffy pillow lips. And his artistic temperament, supposedly. That's what people always say.

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<sup>4</sup> The Lynghoss outside Copenhagen has the most: 4. There's not that many out there. He died young. Runs in the family, I guess.

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After falling for Elaine, Theo wanted to divorce his wife, about whom I know nothing other than she supposedly was “mentally unstable,” which is what people say about anyone they don’t really understand or trust. They didn’t have any kids (supposedly) and almost no community property. Theo the Artist wanted Elaine to divorce the Senator, move out of the mansion on the Potomac, and live the Bohemian life with him in an unsanitary place near the Brooklyn Bridge, with a mattress on the floor and candles in empty Hungarian wine bottles everywhere.

For about six months, that was the working plan. Elaine was ready for a radical change. She was going to do it!

After announcing to Senator Huxley that she had met the man of her dreams, etc., and that it would be best for all involved if things were handled discreetly, she began to formulate an outline of her new life. Her better life. My mother was quite the romantic.

Money wasn’t an issue; she had plenty, and, besides, she was the kind of brainiac who could always figure out some new way to get rich. Elaine imagined that in her free time she would form nonprofit organizations to advocate for abused women; and she would learn how to play the violin; and she would raise her naturally creative daughter with the same love and kindness and maternal devotion she showed to her “legitimate” son Daniel, Jr., about to turn five.

“I convinced myself that I was going to keep the baby, walk away from all the Washington nonsense, and feel glad to be alive for all the right reasons,” she told me. “I really was going to. That was my intention.”

That would have been nice.

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But eventually Elaine changed her mind. Or came to her senses, depending on how you look at it. She left Theo the Artist and returned to the Senator, all the while sporting an advanced case of pregnancy. Seeing as she was so far along, she (they?) decided to keep “it.”

It being me.

Every human life is a blessing, they say.

Some more than others, apparently. Allegedly over the furious objections of Theo, my birth mother Elaine Barclay Huxley and my step-father Senator Daniel Huxley put me up for adoption.

Immediately.

They never took me home. They never named me.

Until I tracked Elaine Huxley down seven years ago, when I turned 21, I didn't know that part. Probably for the best.

No one is sure who first called me “Joan.” I've heard stories about being named after Joan of Arc, and stories about some 20<sup>th</sup> Century female rock singer, or a kind Filipina nurse who looked after me in my infancy. Maybe they're *all* true.

I spent the first three years of my life in three different foster family environments around the D.C.-area, none of which I remember. All part of the public record.

In 2065, when I was three-going-on-four, I was legally adopted by Michael Demmler (Justice Department) and Peter Rollins (National Offense Department), my two dads. I officially became Joan Demmler-Rollins.

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If they knew any juicy details about my past, they never told me. My dads were (and are) total sweethearts, and they're both proudly queer – meaning, they both enjoy playing dolls and dress-up way more than their little girl. Also, in our home it was opera and Broadway show-tunes 24/7. That musical *Infinite Jest*, with all the drugs and tennis? I had it memorized by, like, six years-old.

They were lovely with me. Loving. Perfect. Two amazingly great dads.

But neither of them was my father.

I was an introverted kid, which I guess was easy to misinterpret as embittered and sad, but, really, I was just sort of shy and meditative, and I didn't ask a lot of questions. I figured out most things on my own. Like most of my adoption story. No one had to tell me.

When I was 17 going on 18, Daddy Michael and Daddy Peter had “the big talk” with me, sharing everything they knew about my past, which, trust me, wasn't much. It was weird, because nobody had ever pretended I *wasn't* adopted, but then again we never really dwelled on it or discussed it with anyone outside our immediate family. A big deal was never made.

My Dads told me what they knew – which was mostly searchable, anyway – and then they got all silent and uncomfortable and Daddy Michael said, “So, on the subject of birth origins...Joan, we think now might be a good time to have a little chat about sexual intercourse. How to be responsible during...you know.”

“Dad. I'm 17! What century are you living in?”

“You know, Joanie, we always felt, your dad and I, that we should have lived in the Victorian Period,” Daddy Michael said.

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“With petticoats,” said Daddy Peter. “When no one ever really talks about anything, but it’s all *so* wonderfully suggestive, just under the surface.”

I must have rolled my eyes. “Up-to-the-second *update*,” I chirped, sounding just like the one you get on your arm. “Newsflash!” I assured them that whenever I had sex – and I’d been doing it since I was 15, 13 if you count girls – I was a lot more responsible than my birth mother had been.

I think that embarrassed them a little, although I could tell by the mischievous look in his eye that Daddy Michael had the urge to cackle theatrically and use the word *slut* ironically. He’s fun. They both are.

I didn’t mind being Joan Demmler-Rollins in any way. I was cool with it. But once I turned 21 and tracked down Elaine and found out where I *really* came from, I felt that taking my birth father’s name – just as any “regular” daughter would – was the best way to honor his role in making me before he perished.

I believe what I’ve been told about him. I feel my birth father wanted to keep me.

I feel he would have been a great dad. I feel like he never truly wanted to give me up. He wanted me.

Daddy Michael and Daddy Peter understood. They knew I’d always be their little girl. But they also knew I was a woman now. I was my father’s daughter.

I was Joan Galt. And that’s who I’ll be until the final moment.



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## There's Always a Boy

I understand. You want to know if someone put me up to this. If I'm a victim.

Answer: The only thing I'm a victim of is loving too much. Loving too deeply.

That's the truth. But I know it's not going to satisfy most of you. You want the whole story. The *dirt*.

OK. Fine. Let me ask you, though: can love, *real* love, ever be dirty? If you think it can, we're going to have a hard time connecting with each other. Because I still believe that pure love is too strong to be contaminated.

I told you I was a romantic. The hopeless kind.

Let me ask you another question. Have you ever been in love? Not "really liked a lot." Not "totally in lust with." *Loved*. Like, the one true love of your life? The person who completes you?

Then you know how I felt when I met the love of my life. I knew.

When that happened the question was not "would I do anything for him?" The question was what *wouldn't* I do for him.

But for the record, as clearly as I can state this for all posterity: **Jonah Jones did not and does not and never will support my decision.** He's probably against it.

The decision is mine. And I'm so sorry if he doesn't agree with it.

But I still love him. I always will. [I LOVE YOU, Jonah!]

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And I hope he'll still love me forever, even when I'm not there.

### Have You Been Tested?

Before you judge me, please get tested.

The results will almost surely be negative. The important thing is that you'll know. You won't have to live with a lingering annoying irritating doubt. You'll be clear on who you are, and what you are. And where you're heading.

If your diagnosis comes back like mine – well, I hope you'll do the right thing.