

## **Grandpa Ben - Future Hunters Future Scenario Project**

I received a notification today that grandpa Ben has died, in fact he died yesterday, and we were not notified until earlier today. It was unexpected, but not in the “oh no, how strange that he died,” because, I mean, he was 97 years old, and while yes, most people these days live to 100 and some well past it, his death should have been predicted at least a month ago down to the hour. In fact, I can pull up when I’m supposed to die, barring any crazy black swan event or some drastic change in my life, accurate to about 2-3 years. Every year, that prediction gets more accurate. To better understand how weird grandpa Ben’s unexpected death was, compare it to grandma Ricci’s death. A decade before grandma Ricci’s death, the preparations began. The death prediction AI, which is a part of any health monitoring subscription, had her day of death predicted, give or take about a week. The health AI scheduled a series of review meetings with my mom, my uncles and the finance and legal AIs subscribed by our family. Since my grandma’s health was predicted to decline quite significantly around 5 years before her death, our family decided to have a close out decade with her, meaning we would all spend quality time with her until 5 years before her death when she would be moved to assisted care and then hospice care the last year of her life. I was in secondary school at the time, and had to switch to remote learning even though the education AI had determined that in person schooling was most beneficial to my learning. I actually ended up doing more of a hybrid schooling, since I kept missing my education milestones because I was too busy partying it up with grandma. She was the best, probably had more fun partying with her than most of my friends and she was so good at getting girls to talk to me, and I got to see the world paid for by her life insurance. It was sad seeing her go, but she seemed at peace and as far as I could tell, went with no regrets. The end of life phase for grandma Ricci was as normal as it gets, she was subscribed to all the usual

services: health, finance, legal, education, entertainment and leisure. The AIs in each of those services ensured she knew her optimal choices for each and she was able to make the best decisions concerning her life and her death. That didn't seem to be the case for grandpa Ben.

Grandpa Ben was a societal anomaly. Everyone that knew him better than I did claims he was the smartest man in the family, at least for his generation. He studied computer science and neurobiology at one of the best schools in the country, however he opted to go into agriculture rather than work for one of the big tech companies. He bought a license to farm in the country, and claimed he wanted to become self-sufficient, a somewhat misguided albeit interesting goal. He opted out of all the subscription services and their associated AI. I remember him saying "I don't need no effing machine to tell me what to do with my life!" when questioned about why he isn't subscribed to any services. This made life more difficult and more expensive for him. For example, anything grandpa Ben wanted to use or have required him to have full ownership, which is very expensive since it requires paying for exclusive and unlimited use rights. Luckily nobody wanted the land his farm is on, so he was able to get that relatively cheaply. However, there was a good reason nobody wanted that land. In the end, the family was constantly bailing him out of financial trouble as he struggled towards his so called self sufficiency, an irony that I'm sure was not lost on him.

My mom texted me earlier saying she arrived at Ben's farm. It is a difficult place to get to, because grandpa had opted out of navigation on his land as well. This meant that most autonomous vehicles (AVs) could not reach the farm, since all AVs require navigational and mapping data, and more importantly, permission to use it, which grandpa had naturally revoked. Emergency service AVs could still reach the farm, but it was still advised to go manual once you turned into the unimproved road off the main public road. Not many people knew how to

manually operate vehicles anymore, but luckily my mom had spent enough time with grandpa Ben to learn how to drive, which is why she had to go to the farm instead of uncle Jack or uncle Phil. Mainly she went there to verify his body and handle all the legal and financial implications of grandpa's death. This would normally be done by AIs, but grandpa was not subscribed to any service, so now it fell on the family to take care of it. If we lived in China, I'm pretty sure this situation would not happen, and it's times like this when I sometimes wish our state would just follow suit with the rest of the world and adopt the Chinese ways. They must be doing something right since they're the leading global power, although my sister believes their time may be done ever since their disastrous war in Afghanistan.

Looks like my mom just texted the details of grandpa's funeral, it's being held at the farm. I guess I don't mind that, the farm was always a fun place to go as a kid. I know I was lucky that someone in my family owned a farm. Most farms are owned by agro companies and they are just large fields and greenhouses tended by an army of robots. There's a 20th century nostalgia that the farm evokes, and honestly it's not that bad, a bit smelly, but not bad. It's sad that grandpa Ben died, and it's weird how different, difficult and inefficient his end of life was, but in some ways I admire what he did and how he decided to live his life. Maybe that's how all of us should live our lives, but then again, I wouldn't know what to do without my subscriptions. I look forward to visiting the farm again, and I hope grandpa Ben has gone to that better place he believed in. I better head out now, my assist AI is telling me the AV will arrive in 2 minutes.