

AOTCJournal

Welcome to the **Journal of the Aware Ones of the Treasure Coast**, a secular humanist gathering, providing companionship, conversation, support, and good times, within honest and objective atheist, agnostic and freethinking values.

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November/December 2019

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-- Produced by the TC Secular Writers --

INTRODUCTION

ITM/F! *

It's on! The fight of the 21st Century (so far), and it is the United States House of Representatives fighting for the soul of America against the Orange Marmalade Avenger who wants to trash everything because he is having a tantrum. It is a year before the election, and nobody needs what is about to happen, but we have no choice in my opinion. It



may seem implausible, but I think we are still fighting the Civil War with a New York yankee (not of The Yankees) who was booed at the recent World Series game and now rouses the rabble who wouldn't mind if we go back to the days when women knew their place was in the kitchen and negroes were kept in their own little ghettos if they knew what was good for them. What is really depressing is that the support for the Trump crime family is same kind of



people Jefferson Davis and the plantation aristocracy enlisted as their cannon fodder, the Confederate rebels who the MAGA minions bare eerie resemblances to. I think they like it, too. The Orange Avenger is certainly not a Southern gentleman like Robert E. Lee, though. 2020 is going to be an interesting year.

Approaching the holiday season, when will we hear the first



gripe of “keeping Christ in Christmas?” As a former Christian now turned atheist, I remain fond of the community and “the peace on earth, good will toward men (and women and all races and creeds)”, the best part of what Christianity espouses. It is just that I feel the “keeping Christ in Christmas” crowd should direct their complaint to the capitalists who were the ones that substituted their Christ for a greenback dollar. I’m innocent.

This issue of the AOTC Journal is chock full of critical commentary, astonishing articles, fascinating fiction and raucous comedy. You never know when you’ll stumble across a hidden gem, too.

Happy Holidays Aware Ones. – Virgil

We continue the process of increasing the distribution of this Journal in the hopes of attracting new members. If you are new to the Aware Ones and would like to know more about us please visit our website at <http://www.AwareOnesOfTheTreasureCoast.com>. You are also welcome to join our table at Importico's Bakery, 555 S. Colorado Ave., Stuart, where we gather every Sunday around the hours of 10 to noon to share ideas and challenge your mind.

If you do not want the journal and wish to have your address removed, please email vmthorp@outlook.com for confirmation.

*ITM/F = Impeach The Mother/Fucker!

AOTC MEMBERS

Joan Auerbach	Stretch Graton
Marsha Banks	Bob Haskins
Ernie Breud	Barbara Lange
Eddie Buitrago	Jim Longo
Rick Burkhart	Yashi Nozawa
Sandra Burkhart	Roberta Synal
Paul Carlos	Lucy Thorp
Gloria Cosgrove	Virgil Thorp
Ray Duryea	Dan Vignau
Marilyn Graton	Ed Zillioux

MEETINGS & EVENTS

Meetings

Sunday Coffee – Every Sunday, Importico's Bakery, 555 S. Colorado Ave., Stuart, 10 a.m.ish, outside when weather's agreeable.

TC Secular Writers – Every other Thursday, Jensen's House of Brews, 6:30 pm; November 7 & 21; December 5, 19; January 2.

Events

Nov. 11 Veterans' Day

Nov. 19, 1863 President Abraham Lincoln delivers Gettysburg Address.

Nov. 24 National Evolution Day; 1859, Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species by means of Natural Selection* published.

Nov. 28 Thanksgiving Day

Nov. 30 Aware Ones Thanksgiving Potluck at Rick & Sandra's

You are all invited to our house, 1549 SW Albatross Way, Palm City, on Saturday Nov 30 at 4:00pm for drinks, then dinner at 5:00 pm. 772-919-1642, outrageous314@yahoo.

Park in our driveway or on the street, but it may be tight. If all else fails, park at the north end of Beachway in our park and walk back south two blocks. We will provide turkey, stuffing, and gravy. We need volunteers to provide vegetables, salad, rolls, and desserts. If you have other ideas, they might go better at our next potluck. Let's have a traditional Thanksgiving meal, OK?

Please let me know what you will bring so I am sure we have everything covered. Please bring your own preferred tippie, wine or whatever. Looking forward to hearing from you all! – Sandra

So far (Nov. 11) food contributions:

Ed – Cranberry sauce

Sara – Pumpkin Pie, whipped cream & Champagne!

Virgil & Lucy – Hamburger/bake bean casserole, 24-Hour Salad

Betty - Two green veggies.

Ernie - Cookies.

Ray & Eddie - Mac and Cheese.

My friend Judy - Mashed potatoes.

Dec. 1 – 1955 Rosa Parks arrested in Montgomery, Alabama for not giving up her bus seat to a white man.

Dec. 5 – 1932 Richard Wayne Penniman born ("Little Richard"). Less than a month ago, the singer had been reported deceased in an internet hoax.

Dec. 8 – 1943 Jim Morrison, The Lizard King, was born in Melbourne, Florida. Listen to The Doors 1967 album, *Strange Days*.

Dec. 14 – Nostradamus, astrologer, physician and reputed seer born 1503 in Provence, France. Make a prediction today.



Dec. 15 – AOTC Journal 5-1 contribution deadline ... and I mean it!

Dec. 25 – Christmas Day.

Dec. 28 – December Potluck? (Volunteers?)

Jan. 8 – Theoretical Physicist Steven Hawking born in Oxford, England 1942.
"Genetically engineered viruses are dangerous!" Ponder gravitational physics.

Thoughts From Daily Ingersoll



Christianity did not come with tidings of great joy, but with a message of eternal grief. It came with the threat of everlasting torture on its lips. It meant war on earth and perdition hereafter. – Robert Green Ingersoll

In Remembrance

Jan 18, 1951 - Oct 17, 2019



INDUSTRY NEWS

"The People Who Helped Me the Most
Were the Librarians" — Rep. Elijah
Cummings

COMMENTARY

*Hey sports fans, Bert the Mautz here with
my morning-after, stream of consciousness sports report –*



WORLD SERIES 2019, NATIONALS DEFEAT
ASTROS IN SEVEN 10.31.19

Baseball is an everyday, six months sport,
and then the Post Season, with it all
climaxing with cold weather at the end of
October. Divisional and League series leading
up to the best of seven World Series can be terrific sports'
entertainment/watching for the entire month of October.

Baseball, unique among the professional sports, is known for
its disappointments; beginning with walking back to the
dugout after striking out, which a hitter will do between
3/4's and 2/3's of the time. Hitting a 90-mph pitch curving
away and down is hugely difficult, and everybody will know
your batting average.



The Houston Astros won the
most games (107-55!). Had the
best home field winning record.
With (Justin) Verlander and
(Gerrit) Cole, two twenty-five
mil-a-year pitchers and World
Series winners just two years
ago. They were the odds-on
favored team. And what
happens? The Houston Astros
lose both of their opening
games at home! Incredible

performances against the odds. Verlander lost both of his Houston starts, 'cause they were in Houston, just crazy, who would-a guessed it?

The Washington Nationals (97-65 overall, only 24-33 through May) take the Astros back to the District of Columbia and surrender three straight to dominating scoring – a most disheartening performance for the long-suffering hometown fans.

The *Washington Post* sports writers have been explaining away their baseball team's futility for many years. Those two victories in Houston, after all the Nationals had played through just to get there, had the writers going crazy with glee. And then it all changed; couldn't get a hit, not a run, lost all three at home. Astros dominate and those same writers had to explain it all. Make sense of the crushing disappointment. Console us if that is possible. Remind that it ain't over yet.

But it's really worse than that. In winning their games, the Nationals invariably have to come from behind. Do it in late innings against the odds. As a spectator, pulling for the D.C. Ballers, simply because it is so easy to root against all things Texas, the emotional ups and downs find us cursing the umps. Yelling at bad strike zone calls. Beseeching our boys to just get a couple damn hits.



With every at bat Jose Altuve, 5'6" gave us a cramp in the stomach. So energetic, having way too much fun. Every at bat doing something, even if only advancing George Springer, who invariably as lead-off hitter, gets on and Jose moves him over, or worse yet bats him in. Seemingly an indomitable team for the poor little Nationals to overcome. Just kidding.

The Nationals had to win their only one chance, Wild Card Game just to get an invitation to the Post Season. Go to the MLB.com site and look at the amazing elimination diagram. There is that "curly 'W'" beginning in the far right in a one chance Wild Card game against the Brewers of Milwaukee, and then against the Dodgers of L.A. Crushing the Cardinals of St. Louis and whoa, can it be true? Playing the awesome Astros starting in Houston. This can't be good, but wrongo. Won um both. Won it all!



Against the steepest of odds in returning to Houston for games six and seven, found the Nationals in consecutive do or die games. Down three games to two in game six, Verlander pitching, and holy shit they beat him. One hero is an old guy, Howie Kendrick, age 36, a designated hitter who produced heroic home runs in two elimination games. Remarkable clutch performances.

"Kendrick is the only player in MLB history with more than one go-ahead home run in the seventh inning or later in elimination games of the same postseason."

Wash.Post.10.31.19

At the opposite end of the spectrum is Juan Soto celebrating his 21st birthday Sunday also hits home runs, beyond his youthful experience and first ever World Series.

“With five home runs, Juan Soto set the record for most home runs in one postseason by a player age 21 or younger. Soto also is the youngest player to hit three home runs in a single World Series.”

Wash.Post.10.31.19

Steven Strasburg and Max Scherzer. Yes, the Nationals have their own twenty million-dollar pitchers and this year they earned their salaries, if that is ever really possible in the insane prices of pitchers and quarterbacks. The Nationals won 12 games this postseason. Strasburg and Scherzer started 10 of them. With five each, that’s tied for the most all-time.



Way back in 2016 we watched the Chicago Cubs guided by, now gone Joe Maddon, work their unlikely magic after a century of futility. Those “lovable losers,” beating Cleveland in seven, another suspenseful series in which the underdog rises up to reign supreme.

Gotta love baseball!

.....

Carl Hiaasen of the [Miami Herald](#): “By his own actions, Giuliani has made himself the most visible stooge in the Donald Trump impeachment comedy. Rudy’s worse than a loose cannon. He’s a meandering cluster bomb.”



Cats Vs. Humans

By Ed Zillioux

11/1/19



Walking my dog Jacques this morning, I saw something furry that was moving erratically in the early dawn light ahead of us. When we got close, I saw that it was a young - and mortally wounded - rabbit. I've always enjoyed greeting my rabbit population typically prevalent during the hours of dawn and dusk. This bunny, could only manage to raise its head to look at me as if to say, "et tu, Brute?"

Although I had never seen her kill anything before, I knew immediately that the culprit must be my cat, Oh-Cee. Thus, it fell upon me to put this poor little bunny out of its misery. I only carried a small garden trowel that might well inflict more suffering, so I went to my shed and came back with a machete. One swing with the machete-cum-guillotine and the job was done. I carried the corpse to the parameter of my property and committed the dead bunny to the scavengers of the jungle.

Coming back to where I had left Jacques, I passed the ramp-entrance to my front porch where there sat Oh-Cee. "What did you do, you bad cat?" I asked her.

She only looked at me and waited to be petted. "No! I'm mad at you."



She just looked at me and seemed to say, "Meowhy? I'm only a cat doing what cats occasionally do. You want to blame cats, how about your own kind? What's that book you're reading now?"

M'God she's right. The name of my current read is, *A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide*. How can I separate myself from all that I

have been witness to? All that I have read about, all that I know has happened just in the short span of my own lifetime. Starting in 1939 through 1945, in my lifetime though not yet in my mind since I was still too young, the mostly genocidal killing of 17 million of our own species took place. We call this the holocaust, a derivation of the Greek word *holokauston*, which, in turn, is a translation of the Hebrew *olah*, meaning a burnt sacrifice offered to God. Really? An offering to God? Is it not strange, or perhaps appropriate, that in searching for a name to suitably describe this most heinous of crimes, perpetrated by a regime that officially denied the existence of a god, the surviving victims settled on a word that describes an undeniably religious act: *an offering to God?!!*





And the holocaust is only the beginning. The 80-plus years of just my lifetime has witnessed numerous genocidal events from extended sieges (Leningrad; Srebrenica; Sarajevo) to full-scale genocides (Armenia; Rwanda; Bosnia; Darfur; the Central African Republic; the Rohingya; and more), as well as significant ethnic-cleansing

operations, such as that one now being allowed by President Trump's abandonment of the Kurds in the face of Turkish aggression. This action, due to the broad bipartisan condemnation of the overt ethnic-cleansing of the Kurds by the Turks, accomplished a long-overdue official recognition by the U.S. Congress that the 1915 slaughter of 1.5 million Armenians by the Ottoman Turks was indeed genocide.

This simple affirmation of the obvious took 104 years to accomplish only because all intervening administrations were fearful of offending Turkey on purely political grounds. The House resolution, which was passed by an overwhelming majority just three days ago, rejects the "...denial of the Armenian genocide *or any other genocide* (emphasis added)." Sadly, oaths of "never again" by scores of politicians and elected officials of all stripes, initiated in response to the horrors of the holocaust, rings hollow as one genocide after another has marched across the pallet of history. More recently, we witnessed a level of ruthlessness that only humans are capable of. This was the response by Syrian president Bashar al-Assad to the jubilant uprising among Syrians who hoped to join in the Arab Spring movement to quell the oppressive and corrupt government of the Assad family. Not content with the use of "normal" inhumane tactics including anti-aircraft guns and incendiary devices on schools and apartment buildings, and the

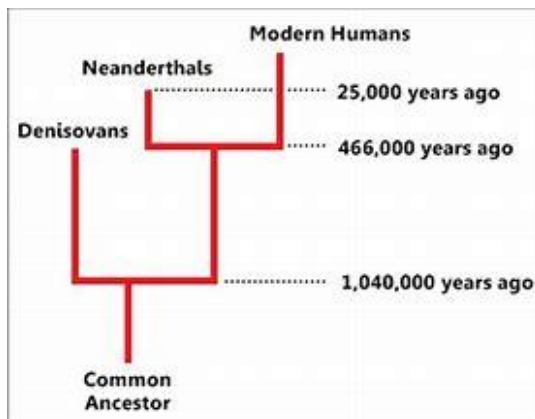
dropping by low-flying aircraft of large containers packed with explosives and chunks of metal, known as "barrel bombs," on civilian neighborhoods that killed "only" hundreds each week, the government soon escalated the slaughter with the use of the odorless



and extremely deadly nerve gas, sarin. In a single gas attack on 21 August 2013, over 1400 people including at least 400 children were killed in the suburbs of Damascus.

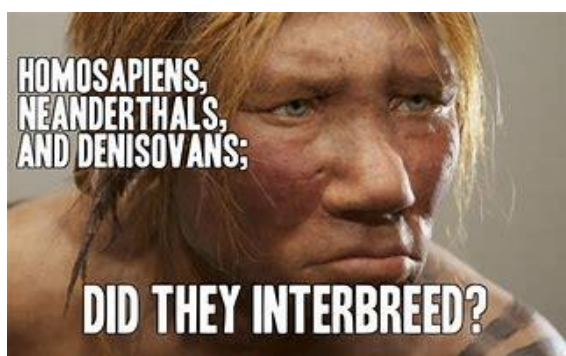
And this doesn't even begin to consider the other species that through greed and profit we humans have driven into or to the brink of extinction.

Throughout our early development, humans evolved as hunter-gatherers, killers, not unlike cats, killing primarily to eat, to survive. Modern humans, however, have relegated these essential tasks to specialists we call farmers. Farming is, of



course, a much more efficient form of killing, that frees the majority of our kind to delve into more purely intellectual pursuits from inventing to poetry, from medicine to science, while shielding the majority of us from any necessity to contemplate the killing of other species for food.

But, apparently, we have retained the need to kill. The majority of our killing can be channeled into two categories: killing as sport and killing to preserve or elevate our societal status. The latter can be further subdivided into two categories: nationalism or nativism, and hatred of the other, including ethnicity, class distinctions, religions - both theists and atheists, and social or political affiliations.



Going back a bit further, when modern humans (i.e., *Homo sapiens*) came out of Africa some 100,000 years ago, give or take a few eons, we found that earlier *Homo* subspecies preceded us. There were two

principal enclaves of Neanderthals, one in the area of Croatia and another in the Altai Mountains of Siberia, and the Denisovans, who also lived in the Altai Mountains and spread out from there over China into Indonesia and Papua New Guinea, as well as the *Homo heidelbergensis* tribes that settled principally in the mountains of the Iberian peninsula. Although the moderns, that is, us, happily interbred with all of them to the extent that genetic markers of both Neanderthals and Denisovans can be found today in the DNA of most living humans with the single major exception of sub-Saharan Africans, we also recognized them as "Others." Consequently, evidence exists that we modern humans, who, after a few tens of thousands of years, came to outnumber the archaic humans that preceded us out of Africa, began killing the "Others" to the extent that we, at least, contributed to driving them into extinction. This was the first documentable case, by bludgeoned skulls and other fossilized evidence, of what we would now call genocide. So, killing is in our genes, we evolved this way. This is not an

excuse, it's just the realization that we are not done evolving. Or is that wishful thinking?

Oh-Cee was right. I know the impact that free-ranging outside cats have on their prey species, but these statistics are mostly attributed to un-owned feral cats for which humans also must bear responsibility, both for their status and wide-spread distribution. But when it comes to killing, we are far more culpable than cats.



More efficient; more technologically adept at mass killing; and more guilty.

"Okay, so feed me and I won't eat your precious birds."

"I'm on it, Oh-Cee, I'm on it."



DEFLECTION

...as a weapon of knowledge avoidance.

By Dan Vignau

About five centuries ago, the religious reformer, Martin Luther, said that faith is the enemy of reason. Very few nonreligious scholars stress this adage as well as the current far right Republican Party, which uses a political strategy of deflection to make certain that their faithful minions do not ever get a chance to develop and use any semblance of facts or reason. The goal is to *deflect* any questions that could expose their *goal* of hatemongering for votes.

Consisting mostly of evangelical Christians, i.e. *Jihadists for Jesus*, these voters are an easy mark for avoiding facts to keep from thinking. Whenever questioned about their racist, sexist, homophobic, and xenophobic diatribes, they play games such as, "*but what about the opponents?*" This is only one of their main deflective techniques, but there are many.

Recently, several of our congressmen were followed toward their elevators and questioned about Trump' racist rants. Mitch McConnell deflected the best, with his claim to not have time to worry about what other people are saying, because he is too busy trying to lower health care costs. Both problem and potential solutions are ignored through a sound bite.



Interestingly, he was able to appeal to his voters – after all, who doesn't want to lower health care costs – by actually telling a truth. Killing all healthcare services for working Americans will certainly lower costs. However, he still cannot out-do his wannabe puppet master, Donald Trump, who deflects questions with sound bites of, "*Lock her up*". "*What about Benghazi*". "*What about Hillary's missing emails*", and his latest, "*Send them back*".



By changing the subject, he keeps his faithful worshipers from ever being confronted with data, thought, or reason. Fact based ignorance is truly a blissful state of mind.

When the latest shootings occurred, at least for a few days, the motives of the shooter were questioned with both deflection by *What About's*, and then of course, with possible causes unrelated to the actual terrorist act. Trump's concerted effort halted any discussion with nearly nonsensical potential cause. As the right-wing media ignored the El Paso shooter's white nationalist manifesto... Yes, Fox News did not mention it... Any cause other than too many crazies with guns was presented as "what we should worry about?" Any criticism of our fascist-in-Chief or of gun laws is not allowed, despite the fact that 97 percent of Americans at least favor better psychological screenings prior to a gun

purchase. America has 4 percent of the Earth's population, but nearly half of the guns, but that fact is avoided.

To keep the voters who have been scared shitless by religion and xenophobia, and who worry that their children might be influenced by non-straight, non-white, non-Christian sinners, several hypotheses are being used: The end-up-in-hell crowd blames the lack of universal religious teachings and beliefs, with the outspoken Mike Huckabee saying exactly that. This "blame the non-believers" mantra continues to the absurdist Christian writer Eric Metaxas stating, "God allows shootings so we will return to prayer and redemption."

*Fact based ignorance
is truly a blissful
state of mind*

Blame is also put on mental illness. Legally, someone who decides and plans to buy guns and ammo, plots his course of action, chooses his victims, writes a manifesto, and carries out his terrorist act is not insane. Legally. Do we try to help the mentally ill? Of course not! Our lawmakers do not actually think that is the problem, but that does not keep them from using it as an excuse or deflection

Interestingly, many of these deflectors from thought are the same people who cut off funding for helping the mentally ill, but what the fuck, we are not discussing our racist president or gun control, so it does work. Hide the truth through deflection. Get votes. Still accept millions from the NRA.

My favorite use of deflection is to blame video games, which, along with a comprehensive comparison of cross cultural with gun law statistics, has actual data to counter the brainwashing techniques of our alt-right representatives. Yahoo! Let's spend a lot of time blaming video games. That will shut up the thinkers with data crowd for a while. Yahoo! Keep them gun dollars coming. Yes Siree, Moscow Mitch, the recipient of nearly 2 million dollars from gun manufacturer and the NRA, screams, "Damn, our voters are dumbasses! Wheee!"

Of course, the facts belie the distraction. The USA spends considerably less, per capita, on video games than the Chinese or Japan, yet they have relatively no mass shootings. In fact, there have been only six around the industrialized world during our last few hundred terrorist shootings. America is certainly *Numero Uno* here! Whoops, I meant Number One.



When the alt-right brain-washers run low on deflections, they go to their other strategy; pure unadulterated hate mongering, because eventually, between cutesy stories about cats and dogs, with a shark or alligator thrown in for good

measure, the conversation attempts to turn into a debate of the real problems, hate and guns, of which neither is ever corroborated by facts.

For example, those video gaming Chinese – who are certainly not predominately Christian – don't shoot up those with whom they disagree. The Northern European Countries don't do mass shootings, despite their lack of religion, but I deflect. The shootings do give the far right, Nazi-loving, gun

nuts something else to ponder other than the fact that their perceived lot in our changing world is directly caused by the very people they vote for, but who has time to worry about that? There are queers to deal with, myriads of dark-skinned people with broken English, as if these brainwashed faithful voters could describe their own deficiencies.

Ohio Representative Candice Burns reminds them that rather than worry about their own economic interests, they need to do worry about, and I quote, "Gay Marriage, Obama (he always riles them up), drag queen advocates, and recreational marijuana."

Let's not forget to remind the *Illiterati* about abortion, fake news, prayer in school, confederate monuments, and fake science. Who pays those climate alarmists, away?

"Yes, being a hate monger is a tough job, but someone has to do it. Elect me and I will take care of your problems."

This month, Mike Pence has done just that, by meeting with three groups that have been named hate groups by The Anti-Defamation League.

When the alt-right brainwashers run low on deflections...

First, *The Resultant Gathering*, led by ex-Fox News hate monger and Christ pundit, Erick Erickson, who says that Pete Buttigieg needs to repent for his active homosexuality. Presumably, at least to me, *active* means he is a top, when contrasted to *passive*, or just lying there on your belly during sex.

Second, VP Pence met with Trump appointee, *The Ambassador For Religious Freedom*, Sam Brownback. I wonder how he got his name? By just lying there I suppose. Previously, as governor of Kansas for seven years, Brown Ass, whoops, Brownback, spouted homophobic hatred throughout his reign.

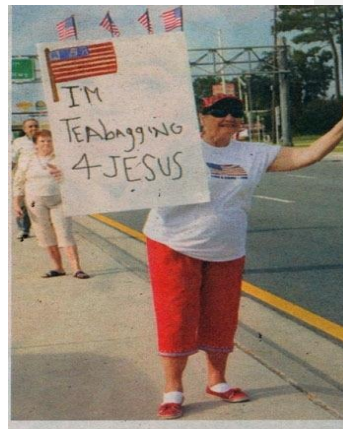
Third, Pence did a fireside shat (sic) with Mike Ferris, the CEO of the antiabortion *Christian Lawyers Alliance Defending Freedom*, which has several pending lawsuits against transgender rights.

But, being *Numero Uno* in the US for hate speech is not enough for them. Whoops. Number One. Presidential advisor, Steve Bannon, since the shootings, met with the French hate group, *The National Front*, to tell them to wear their label of racism like a badge of honor.

*...they go to their other strategy,
pure un-adulterated
hate mongering.*

Other acts of hate speech and action have been pointed out by the cousin of the Southern Poverty Law Center, The Anti-Defamation League, specifically that the last four dozen or so domestic terrorist shooters have had links with extremist hate groups.

Of course, what everyone should realize is that we must discuss our antiquated gun laws, our single shot, muzzle load gun laws. Our four percent of the Earth's population does not need half of the guns. What we need is to allow the public to understand the problem and work toward solutions, but there is another problem that philosophers have debated for thousands of years: How



can we find answers when we are not able to ask the correct questions?

We must all band together to begin the debate now. It is time now!

But first, check out this so, so cute little bulldog riding the waves on his very own surfboard.





CLASS DIFFERENCES ARE UNAVOIDABLE



By Bert Mautz

Reading Charles Fussell's *CLASS; a guide through the American status system* – it is no exaggeration – changed my life. (It) was early in an architecture career, exposed to vast variations in clients and ultimate occupants and understanding their unique requirements; for instance, the hospital's administrative team with whom we worked and the intensive care nurses caring for seriously damaged patients in the nursing units being designed and built for their life saving work environment.,

Fussell's treatise took the reader past the low, middle class, and upper-class economic oversimplifications to a nine-tier status system; describing observable/visible characteristics as well as behavioral characteristics, how the classes furnished their homes, entertainment preferences, education, reading choices if readers at all, etc.

Owning up to personal biases; (I) subscribe to the NYTimes.com, and WashingtonPost.com, New Yorker and New York Magazines, and listen to MSNBC beginning my mornings irritated by Joe Scarborough constantly interrupting his guests, frustrating Mika Brzezinski and hitting every tough event in Washington in the previous twenty-four hours with insightful brevity. The other folks at the table are largely reporters and columnists themselves, or Ivy Leaguers in business and the arts. The intellectual level, when Joe isn't being ridiculous to make a point against Donny Deutsch, is challenging to keep up with, or it's my hearing.



Complaining, how after their first twenty minutes or so opening segment, can be depressed for the rest of the morning. Have been advised, "If you can't stand all the Trump stuff, watch CNN, try

Fox and Friends in the early morning."

This was a dare. Could he take it? Three attractive people on a white sectional, fresh flowers on the glass table, chatting amiably about inconsequential, avoiding all things Trump. Newt Gingrich calling in live. Must have a camera hook up in his house. Responding live regularly/frequently. This morning doing a long piece on Hunter Biden, playing ABC interview tape, assiduously avoiding the hot outcome of yesterday's nine hour hearing behind closed doors by Fiona Hill, President Trump's former adviser on Russia and Europe revealing the motivations behind the Ukraine maneuverings to compel the new prime minister to investigate Joe Biden.

Switch to one of those needless segments about kids on bicycles being hit by a driver who sped away, but the kids could talk about the incident on camera. Who cares? This is a national early morning news broadcast, but not on FOX. We're all hard news avoidance. And then it's country music bridging to a commercial break. Got nothing against country stylings, but never heard the genre at this hour on national news broadcast. We're back to considerations of class.

Trump's last personal legal expeditors are in jail; Manafort, Cohen. Had lunch with Rudy Saturday. Says Rudy is his guy. We'll see how much longer that lasts, as Giuliani is now under criminal investigation originating from his back door foreign affairs consultation without a license. Trump and Giuliani contradicting each other, daily, lying constantly in the visible panic of the Ukraine arm twisting impeachment investigation hearings. FOX assiduously avoids all the content. Joe Scarborough can't catch his breath he has so much to say and say it now.

We all expose our background and class status when we compose an expository sentence and say it out loud. Those folks sitting behind the nice flowers talk differently from the folks over at MSNBC. Quickly apparent, competent and at ease in front of the cameras, but talking at a junior high school level of sophistication. Rush Limbaugh's conservative bias was in your face, confrontationally within moments of tuning in his daily diatribe denouncing democrats. First, within seconds the incessant negativism to all things liberal, democratic, or critical of Trump.

Adds to the anti-*NYTimes* bias.

The Trump base obviously doesn't know the difference



SNL parody of Fox & Friends

between a paper's news reportage and editorial commentary offered in their respective sections, and so dismiss the total is biased, even "fake news."



The "Real" Fox & Friends. Can you spot the difference?

Have been aware that FOX is virtually the White House house-organ but had failed to appreciate how additionally it is a low class/low brow media outlet. Critical thinking, objective listening, the follow up question for detail and clarity are all there on MSNBC

and utterly absent in the simple minded, confrontation avoiding FOX. Won't have to listen to these folks again, any time soon.

We all expose our background and class status ...

Rupert Murdoch, Roger Ailes, and to a lesser degree Bill O'Reilly conceived, nurtured, and expanded their national news and commentary television network. In so doing they visualized the combination of class orientation; interests, style, advertisers, political orientation – conservative and evangelical to seize an audience, a market previously underserved and who felt ignored.

...when we compose an expository sentence and say it out loud

The fit of class and content with a rural audience hungry for respect has proven to be a financial success and cultural phenomena the television medium propagated perfectly.



Occasionally channel jump to compare coverage of a particularly immediate issue. MSNBC has reporters on the hill, outside the Whitehouse, and on the news desk. FOX is chattering about sunburn cases in California.



ARTICLES

Such A Fine Parcel of Pharisees

By Virgil Thorp

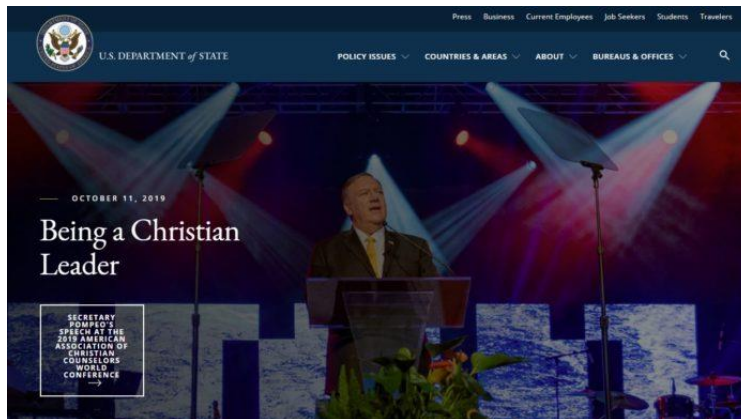


I open with what is alleged to be Jesus of Nazareth's own words: *"Two men went up into the temple to pray, one was a **Pharisee**, and the other was a **Publican**. **The Pharisee** stood up and **prayed** thus within himself: 'oh God, I thank you that I am not like other men are; robbers, extortioners, unjust, evil-doers, adulterers – or even as this **Publican**!'"*

The concept known as "Tabula Rasa", or "blank slate", was the ultimate catalyst of my departure from my parents' Christianity which they had dutifully indoctrinated me with, like the preceding parable. However, there had been plenty of exposure to the inherent Achilles Heel of all practitioners of that Hebrew carpenter's creed that laid the foundation of my apostasy. The "Do what I say, not as I do," kind of hypocrisy which comes from the very people who petitioned the Romans for his crucifixion; the most righteous and sanctimonious of their day, those damned pharisees. Considering how Jesus talked about them, can anyone be surprised that they wanted him dead?



During the biblical era that allegedly contains the truth of a savior of all mankind there was a caste of holier-than-thou's – that means anyone who wasn't them – who took great pride in announcing to anyone who would listen that they were better than anyone else and nearly as holy as their God.



They were the chosen, the first people God made after He created this tiny planet on the outside edge of the universe. No Philistines, no Moabites, no Hittites, and no fucking Samaritans were allowed in their pious version of paradise. It is also noted that many pharisees despised the followers of the "false messiah". This attitude perfectly fitted the guy whose name was Saul of Tarsus but who subsequently changed his name to Paul after a Damascus road concussion when he fell off his ... ass while chasing those damned Christians who just wouldn't renounce "treat your neighbor as yourself."

(S)paul suddenly found the light of his errors and took his newly discovered righteousness and forged ahead with a twisted version of humanity. And, like all converts, he took it to the extreme although he no longer hunted Christians, he condemned everyone else. And without any shame (S)paul

turned the forgiving Christians back into the hateful judgmental practices of the pharisees.

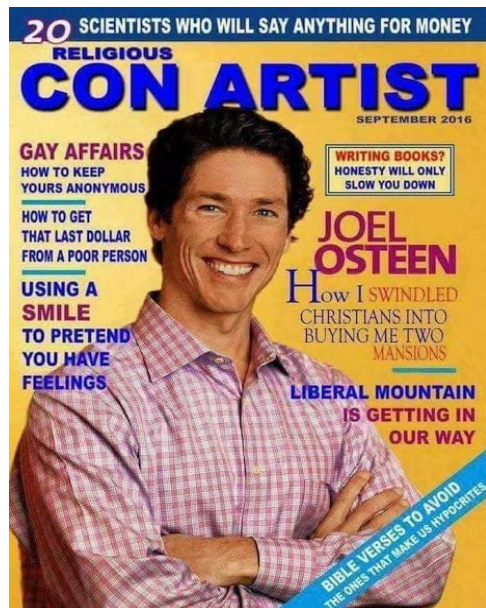
Lenny Bruce had a bit where he described the apostle and his posse sitting around a campfire one night comparing how good each other was. "I'm so good I'm going to give a tenth of my fortune to the poor," a wealthy merchant boasted and all applauded thinking, that he was the best man for his remarkable generosity. "What about you Judah," the merchant asked, "what will you do to show your piety?"

Judah scratched at his chin and considered what he could do to one-up the merchant. After a little thought he retorted, "I'm going to sacrifice my herd of oxen for the lord!" The others marveled at his largess and decided that Judah was now in the lead for the title of *best man*. Each acolyte around the fire took their turn and all were a little better than the last. Finally, it was (S)paul's turn and that apostle simply spurned monetary sacrifices. (S)paul made the ultimate sacrifice. "I'm not going to do *it* anymore," he said with valiant finality.

Not do *IT* anymore? *I could not live if I swore I would not have sex with my wife or her luscious handmaidens* the rest of them thought! And by decree all agreed that (S)paul was the totally *best man* because he no longer would be subject to mankind's greatest God-given failing – boners.

While I read about (S)paul and his followers bragging that they had been created in the image of God, a vague notion took root in my mind that perhaps it was God who had been created in their image.

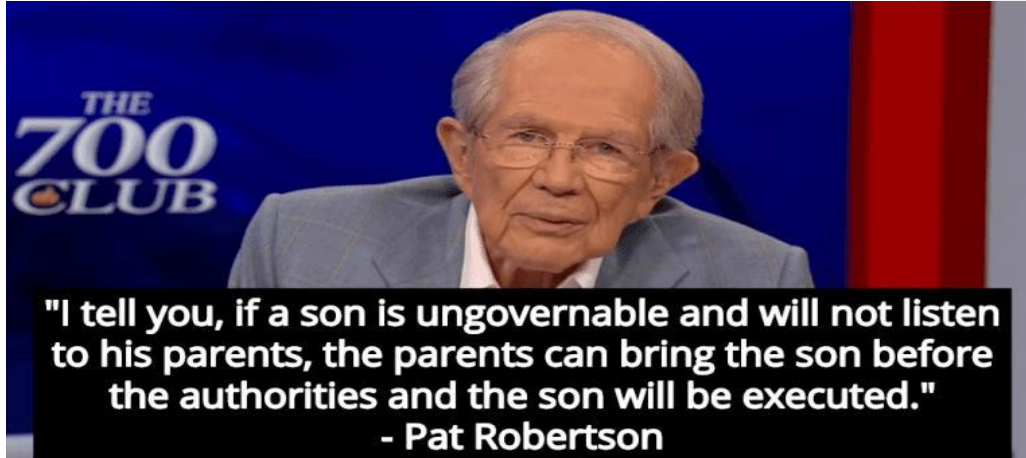
At the time I began to see all their petty foibles being manifested in their perception of their God. And their God was surely not my God. My God was noble, brave and



cleansing. My God had all the good qualities mankind should aspire to and looked a lot like my father. If I felt that I had done a good thing I would feel warm from his celestial smile that I had indeed listened to the stories and learned from the parables. Even the ten general orders held my respect although many were simply redundant and eventually was part of the evidence that convinced me that their (and especially my) God was

really a strutting narcissist more concerned with how he was worshiped and indulged than in providing healing blessings for his children. For evidence, I present children's cancer hospitals, iron lungs, prosthesis and braille.

My disdain for the pharisees has been further endorsed by the woeful response to noble, brave and clean ideals that hid the reality of baser desires and abject sin. "I have cleansed my sins and been born again," they declare like they could restore a lost virginity with a little alum on the wedding night. "How tight was she?" Ham asked Shemp in the third verse of the second chapter of Onan the masturbator. "Snapper twisting tight," the limping Shemp declared and now all his children would be his heirs because his wife had convinced him she brought her virginity to the marriage bed.



**"I tell you, if a son is ungovernable and will not listen to his parents, the parents can bring the son before the authorities and the son will be executed."
- Pat Robertson**

Instead of sharing communion, there is prosperity Christianity that has enveloped them like a shroud providing the necessary drapery to obscure that which they long to possess but instead abuse and abase. They have embraced the rotten doctrines of loathing, hate and murder selfishly hoarding their empathy not realizing if not used, empathy atrophies like the appendix sometimes does or – ironically – when it becomes infected, is just waiting to burst and poison the body politic. Just like the pharisee in Jesus' parable.

I wonder, how is my metaphor doing? Am I reaching for an impossible comparison or am I merely looking into the mirror of the soul of kleptocracy? "Mine, mine, mine," drools the covetous baby who knows no desire other than his own. "I will share no teat because they are both mine and I shall murder my evil twin if that conniving asshole demands suck. I'm the only true heir and *that* twin is a bastard!"

Is it a true observation that only a desert religion could be so barbaric, so petty, so disingenuous? Burn to save, kill to pacify? I heard those words in Southeast Asian jungles. They were uttered in the American West at Sand Creek, Colorado. Are they also an echo from the 1492 Spanish lust for gold, slaves and other riches; an introduction for

Southern plantations and the loathsome practice of human slavery preceded by the Trail of Tears? Should we be surprised at what we are finding in Seattle-Tacoma, Washington; Yuma, Arizona; Clint, Texas; Fort Sill, Oklahoma and Homestead, Florida? These new pharisees are not children of a righteous, loving god. These are vipers who have no empathy, no charity and no defense of their cruelty.

While Tabula Rasa saved me, I wondered why the others did not follow. Could it be that they liked being pharisees? My anger, even as I write this, remains smoldering like it is waiting for another example of pharisees smugly strutting their hypocrisies before the rest of the masses. Damn them, damn them all. Perhaps they will be damned in a hell of their own making.



That would be righteously poetic, wouldn't it?

THE WAY WE WERE



ANESTHETIZED

By Betty Tewksbury

I like to think that most of my life was spent in a state of quasi-blank, semi-awareness, almost like being under anesthesia. The result of my mind and body's reaction to save my sanity and my soul. You may ask, is it possible to live one's life mostly in a state of senseless, comatose and apathetic state of mind and still function in an aware society? If one manages to survive in that vegetative state, can it be possible to do so for more than sixty plus years, and in so doing, be relatively successful? Most betting men would put a bundle on the "no" side of the line, as that is how fortunes are won and lost; in the story I am about to relate, would they have lost a fortune?

How deep is the desire to break out of supreme misery? Can

an individual tolerate years of being demeaned and degraded while enduring almost constant attacks on their self-esteem and still survive; much less win? I think I found out and yep, it only took sixty-nine years to achieve my goal!

The earliest recollections started before kindergarten where the abuse began with a mother's furious loss of self-control and her temper tantrums flailing with firm hand and most cruel, her sharp, cutting tongue. Even at that early age, the pain was indelibly etched on the brain's hard drive (and remain vivid today). The lessons that were literally pounded in the flesh, sixty-nine years ago left marks on the mind that



dictate today's actions. The often brutal beatings, applied with whatever the sick demon found handy or improvised – paddles, bare-hands, yardsticks, dowels and freshly cut poplar branches that whipped up stinging welts resulted in a hardening of the pain receptors of the body and the mind as the threshold of agony was reached to where it just didn't hurt anymore. Or I wouldn't let it. The volume of the hurt became so intense that I simply

stopped crying.

For my first sixteen years I withdrew into a deadened state; inwardly rebellious with most of my thoughts set to a survival mode – very much like a slave – subconsciously always trying to please. "For goodness sake, don't do

anything that will make mama mad," said my equally whipped father. I hated him for divorcing her when I was ten. He left me behind, and I never forgave him. She actually was diagnosed with schizophrenic paranoia seven years later, but the other adults were afraid of her and never questioned her actions to me.

After nearly every beating Mother would evilly threaten me with more pain, "if you tell anyone, you'll be sorry!" I believed her and shut up. It has always pained me she was able to hide the evil part of her personality from the outside world, fooling most of the neighborhood and our family's acquaintances into believing she was the epitome of motherhood. It was a most diabolical disguise.

There was a toll, however. I sat through the first ten years of school in a hypnotic daze. Like an abused puppy I withdrew further into a little corner to the point that my grades suffered terribly, I had few friends and no social life not quite cowering but certainly hiding my light under a bushel basket metaphorically.

*"if you tell anyone, you'll be
sorry!" I believed her and
shut up*

Outside of school my time was delegated to cleaning and cooking at home. I longed to escape and grabbing the constant complaint of a money shortage as an excuse, I got a full-time summer job at Woolworth's 5 and 10 cent store that became part-time during the school year. Throughout high school I found this employment not only a great escape from the dreary home environment but somehow was a great teaching experience that I savored and learned many

skills which I was able to use in the future. I was beginning to get rewards for my efforts and little by little I began to like some things about myself.

Maybe it was that experience that gave me the courage at sixteen to rebel when my mother last struck me. With bloody nose, I grabbed her raised hand and shouted, "don't you ever hit me again!" She never physically harmed me after that incident, but her venomous tongue would continue to berate me. At least I had made a stand no matter how small it appeared. I longed to be free as much as a servant does.

My grade average improved from merely passing to honor roll but too late to make a difference to be eligible for any scholarships or higher steps in my formal education.



I left home forever the day after I graduated from high school. My math teacher, Mr. Stevens, spoke up for me to the Curator of Art at Colby College. He was Chris Huntington who regularly went to Shin Pond, in Penobscot County, Maine, to paint where the

impressionist, Marsden Hartley produced many of his famous works. It was arranged that I would have a summer job as a chambermaid and waitress at the Shin Pond House, a renowned resort in the backwoods of Maine. I had enjoyed

art class and painting so in my off-hours, I would grab up my easel and oil paints and paint in some of the same areas as Hartley had.

Time moved forward and I had met the man I would marry, a college classmate of Chris Huntington. We discovered each other in August, got engaged in September, married in November and by December I was pregnant. I didn't realize I had fallen into another pit of despair and control.

I had married a well-educated artist and found myself surrounded by his intellectual and haughty friends. I was an outsider and didn't quite fit in. My husband seemed ashamed of my lack of education and often lectured me to "don't say anything, just sit and listen." My mother's words exploded in my brain, "children are to be seen, not heard." His words, his attitude towards me doomed our marriage from that point and the love and respect I thought and hoped I had for him vanished.

I wonder why I didn't divorce him then? The divorce always seemed imminent but with a child the need to preserve the union took precedent and with another need for money – there is always some kind of pattern in nature – I began an eight year career learning the restaurant business from the ground up and my work ethic skills learned at the five and dime paid off royally!

The owner of a five-star eatery in the Jefferson Hotel took me under his wing and taught me how to manage his establishment. With his encouragement and tutelage, I found myself in charge of a ninety-five person wait staff, with



six chefs, five bartenders, and various dishwashers, cleaning and office personnel in a restaurant that seated over five hundred diners. It was superb training and without much formal education I was successful enough to pretty much support my starving artist husband and our household. I began to know self-esteem with my success although my husband always let me know he was still in charge.

But that also brought tragedy. Who knows who is to blame for the resentments that broke the marriage apart? Unfortunately, the long hours and the lack of respect at home over those years made me vulnerable to a *personal involvement* with a patron of the restaurant. When it was discovered and the divorce became finalized and I lost everything; my home and most importantly, custody of my beloved daughter. Thankfully, even though the long hours of working caused her to spend more time with her father than me, my relationship with my daughter remained strong and even today we remain close and there for each other.

I had to overcome the narcosis and face the hurt ...

The “personal involvement” was twenty-six years my senior but we soon married in a relationship that would last forty more years. I took over all our personal business and after a little time, joined him in his business. I became the Human Resource Officer with nearly 450 employees to administer. I threw myself into the job, studying all the Worker Compensation, OSHA and EPA rules and regulations. My efforts again paid off saving our company almost one and a half million dollars annually in Worker’s Comp premiums. I was still following but felt much better about myself and my accomplishments in contributing to our mutual success.

... of loss and the pain and be in control

We decided to retire as the millennium dawned in Y2K and sold the company for a goodly amount. We liquidated our Maine home and moved to sunny Florida as year-round residents. For the next sixteen years we were together, "joined at the hip" so to speak.

I realized my whole life, until January 6th, 2016 – the very day I turned sixty-nine – had been controlled in some way or another by someone else. I had endured the physical abuse and emotional mayhem of my schizoid mother, followed by even more emotional havoc of my first husband and the consuming control by my second husband. Who was I? Who had I become?

Life took another sudden change for me that January 6th. It was the day I found I would have no one ever again to answer to. For on that very day at 2:07 p.m. my husband's breath turned to air and he left this earth and me in another emotional turmoil. What was I to do?

The weight of anesthesia descended on my shoulders and I had to face the scary future as an individual. I had to overcome the narcosis and face the hurt of loss and the pain and be in control. Right or wrong, all decisions and the consequences would have to be my own. Could I do it?

At first the task seemed more than daunting. I had to realize my sixty-nine-year journey to full independence. I had help of course, all the education from life that I had gathered, plus the grateful counseling from a Hospice Angel.



I want to report, the gambler who bet against me lost. His "no" is my "yes". I feel I am wide awake; the heavy veils of pain and oppression have been lifted. I am living my life in such a way that had, in the past, only seemed like an unattainable dream. I am now secure in my sanity and my soul. I no longer feel any anesthetic and am ready for the rest of my life.

Let's go find it!



Growing Up Without God

Part 3:

*The Awkward Adolescent or,
On to High School*

By Lucy Thorp

After all the trouble I had encountered with religious people so far in my life, I found that going silent on religion wasn't too difficult in 7th grade.

My girlfriends and I had more important and earth-shaking issues to tackle such as: Who was cuter, Paul McCartney of the Beatles or Davy Jones of the Monkees (I crushed bigly on Davy Jones)? Who was the best family band, The Partridge Family or The Cowsills (I'll always love the Cowsills and highly suggest that you Google them)? Which rock and roll band was best, The Stones or The Animals (my vote is for the Animals)? However, I also really loved classical music and Mikhail Glinka, the father of Russian classical music, remains my favorite composer even today. So yes, at that awkward age I was an official nerd.

One of the best things that ever happened to me was the summer I turned 14. I had the opportunity to go to the Midwest Music and Art Camp held at the University of Kansas in Lawrence. Young adults from 14 to 18 years old were able to immerse themselves in their art of choice: music, ballet and language.

For six weeks I spent playing my cello for 8 hours-a-day.



Every
week
we got
a new
set of
music
and a
new

conductor. Since I was only 14, I was in the B Orchestra and our concerts were performed on Saturday. Sundays were our only day off with nothing to do (except, of course, going to see the A Orchestra perform). At that time of blue laws, nothing in Lawrence was open, even if we could have gotten downtown. I was still curious if there could be a religion I could embrace (doubtful) so I decided to spend each Sunday in a different church to experience it and see if anything spoke to me.

The Catholic Church was tough. All that kneeling and getting up and down and stupid ceremony and rigmarole. The Baptists seemed rather nasty or maybe just scared of their God. I found the Lutherans, the Presbyterians and other Protestants bland and pretty much the same. I liked the Methodists, though. They had a cool guitar player who could carry a tune. It was also the first time I heard hearty applause in a church! Still, after 6 weeks and all those churches my mind was not changed, and I heard no voices telling me this was the way. Nothing had spoken to me.

I suppose the turbulent 60's had shaped my skepticism. I had been 7 when I helped my Mother campaign for JFK and

turned 8 when he became president. I was 10 when he was murdered. I was 15 when Martin Luther King and Bobby Kennedy were assassinated. I wasn't so sure right then that our country was the greatest.

Per chance also in 1968 my Russian language class welcomed a Polish boy and a Czechoslovakian girl in to learn English. Both of their families were forced to flee their homes. The Polish boy's parents had been part of the student uprising. The girl's parents were teachers and had to flee the communist takeover. They hoped America could offer them what they had lost. Freedom.

I was still sheltered in a rural white community with a highly rated school system. We saw the civil rights riots on television but that was all in the South, wasn't it? My best friend, Lorel, was of Japanese heritage. Her grandparents came from Japan after World War I. Her dad was born in Chicago, her mother, Jessica, in Hawaii. Her mother was interned with her family in camps in California during World War 2. Lorel's dad, Hiroshi, used to joke that he was the designated minority for Coors Brewery.

Although we were the same age and lived next door to one another our lives were different.

Lorel had a warm personality and was very popular in school, I was not. She was a cheerleader and I was not. The other cheerleaders told her she couldn't be my

friend because I was "not". She said up yours, she's my best friend. I was so grateful. Funny, years later, as young



upwardly mobile professionals, she acknowledged to me that she never had a date in high school. I hadn't known. I was surprised; she was not. The reason; she wasn't white. I had lots of dates; I was white.

I found a common denominator,

At the end of my sophomore year my parents yanked us out of our comfort zone and dropped us into Denver schools for the last six weeks of the year where there were all sorts of diversions and distractions. I was going to miss Lorel terribly; we'd write to each other, but after the move we were in each other's company too few times. This was a cultural shift for me. We had no drugs in the country school. There were no black or Hispanic students and except for Lorel and her family, the rural community was blazingly white and middle class.

But in Denver things were different. When I enrolled in Thomas Jefferson High School (TJ) I discovered two tiers of students; west of Hampton Avenue (rich) and east (less than rich). I was the east. The curriculum was sophomoric compared what I was used to. I felt like I was a year ahead of everyone and except for a couple of classes I sensed like I was in remedial school and my mind would often wander. It was still very white, but it was the middle sixties and we had marijuana. (Yeah!)

intelligence was despised and not wanted in authoritarian regimes

My junior year was an adventure. That was the year that introduced volunteered busing. I elected to be bussed to East High School, an inner-city school where I found out what it was to be a minority. The school was 85 percent Black, 10 percent Hispanic and 5 percent us. The principal

was a very savvy man who held it all together by becoming involved with all the students, every one. Because of him there was very little racial confrontation. It was a rewarding experience. The rich school had advantages, but it didn't have the community. My friends of other colors and backgrounds had something in common; we found that we could believe in each other, we could really like each other. We found our humanity. The assholes were few and far between. Also, that year I met Gus from Greece. His story was similar to my other friends from eastern Europe. His parents were teachers and fled an authoritarian regime. I thought I found a common denominator, *intelligence was despised and not wanted in authoritarian regimes.*



My senior year found me back at Thomas Jefferson. I had to work after school and couldn't do the commute. That same year forced bussing was introduced. Some of my East High classmates were now (forced) bussed to Jefferson. I was ashamed when I heard a

white teacher tell a black friend he should go back to wherever he came from.

The East High kids didn't want to be at TJ. One day in the parking lot there were a line of white students and a line of black students facing each other with hardened hearts. I knew classmates on both sides. People on the white side and people on the black side called for me to join them. If they were true friends, they wouldn't have asked. "F-you both... You deserve each other." I left. The crowd disbanded. That was the moment when I realized I had to find my voice again.

My Contemporary History teacher was a devout Catholic and

a remarkable man. He liked the fact that I was somewhat opinionated (what, who, me?) and informed and would often ask me to take a contrary argument (whether it was my position or not) so the class would have a real discussion. Our assignments were based on current newspaper articles and television news stories.

*"I can't believe you don't believe
in God."*

One day he asked us to explain our religious beliefs. I opened my paper with the explanation that though I was an atheist, the few times I did go to a church it was at the Unitarian Universalist church (my Dad said it was the church for former believers that don't want to give up going somewhere on Sunday morning church). My teacher had not heard of the Unitarians and didn't believe that they had a valid Church! I asked the Unitarian minister to come to school and meet with my teacher. He agreed. My history teacher thanked me for having the minister educate him. Before the class convened to discuss the differences in the religions my teacher asked that I play devil's advocate and not shy from my atheist position.

"I can't believe you do!"

There was a defining moment that day. A religious classmate was quite exasperated and said to me, "I can't believe you don't believe in God."

My reply – equally exasperated – was "I can't believe you do!"

I was not struck down by any gods or teachers. A few classmates gave me an "amen".

And so, it began. The quest to save my soul. Religious friends would tell me about their “really cool” pastor that ran a youth group and if I would just join the meeting, they were sure I would find my way. Great, take me along.

Three things happened every time. The first night I would challenge the cool pastor. Often it would be an interesting discussion; after all, these were the “cool” ones. The second visit I would convince my friends at the break to leave and go play miniature golf “cuz this was pretty boring.” The third time I was politely told that it would be appreciated if I didn’t return. Victory!

In my senior year I felt compelled to get arrested protesting the Vietnam war along with my mother and older brother. It was a very organized and peaceful protest and to my happy surprise, my arresting officer was way too cute.



When it was time to go to court and be sworn in for my testimony, I had mixed feelings. I had never been in front of a Judge before and I was terrified to request a secular oath (could the Judge put me away?!) But I would not swear on a bible to god to tell the truth. Recently I heard Sarah Silverman proclaim how I felt about it. She said, “If I swear to tell the truth it’s because I tell the truth. Not because I put my hand on a book and make a wish.” I was relieved to find out that there was an oath for that. And the Judge didn’t put me away because I would not swear to a god I did not believe in.

But it is funny how things change when you must make a living. *One final chapter next issue, I promise.*



NEN-MATSU

(Translation: End of the Year)

By Yashi Nozawa

December is the most active time of the year in the Japanese economy, even in pre-war Japan. It was not because of Christmas sales. Christmas was still an exotic foreign celebration at that time and had nothing to do with Japanese society. Instead of Christmas sales, we had traditional *nem-matsu* (end of the year) sales through the country.

It was shopping time for everybody. Every store displayed "Big Bargain Sales" signs. Streets were filled with noise and shouts of callers advertising their wares from stores. Shoppers crowded many stores every day. During the day, most customers were homemakers and their helpers. After work hours, many men joined the bargain hunters. Children tagged along with their parents or older sisters whenever possible.

There are two main reasons for the end of year sale; abundant cash and shopping for essential items to observe

the end of the year and the oncoming New Year holiday. The most important contributor to the abundance of cash is the



traditional “end of year” bonus. Normally, working people received an annual bonus at the end of the year, a leftover custom of the traditional compensation system from the feudal period.

In the old days many young workers were apprentices or live-in servants. They worked without pay except board and meals. However, these people received bonus payments twice a year; at *O-bon* (The Buddhist’s All Souls day) in the middle of the year and *nen-matsu* to celebrate the two biggest holidays along with an extended day off. At that time, even regularly paid workmen and women, too, received a generous bonus in addition to normal periodic pay. How generous was the bonus? The standard bonus in pre-war Japan was equivalent to five to six months’ worth of normal pay. The twice-a-year bonus custom continues even today. However, the amount is much reduced.

*The (Oseibo) gift must not be
too expensive,*

Besides the *nen-matsu* bonus, there are several other factors to stimulate the Japanese economy in December. One of them is another left-over custom; the end of year debt reconciliation system. Since almost every working person received extra cash in December, they were able to



pay off outstanding debts. Tradition required that all outstanding debt must be paid off by December 31st of the year. After that is accomplished, everybody can start the New Year with a clean slate. So, moneylenders, bill collectors, madams of every bar and pub, landlords, store owners were running around to visit customers, clients, and anyone who owed money to collect outstanding debts.

...as it can be misinterpreted as a bribe

Another factor is obligatory gift-giving, called *Oseibo*, and the end of the year party (*Bonen-kai*). Daily life in pre-war Japan was tightly bounded by well established, numerous social obligations. One of such traditions was *Oseibo*, a small token gift from one person to another person as appreciation for help or guidance received during the past twelve months. For instance, an employed man had to bring a gift to his immediate superior, his mentor, or any other person who helped him to perform his work.

The gift must not be too expensive, as it can be misinterpreted as a bribe. It is often food, drinks or a small household items, which are carefully selected by the wife of the giver. However, the gift must be delivered in person to

the recipient's home within the first three weeks of December.

Many mothers of school children also bring *Oseibo* to the teachers of their children as a symbol of thanks for help during that year. The value of the gift is not important, but missing gifts is considered to be a serious breach of the long-established social obligation. Most working persons had to bring gifts to a half dozen different homes during three Sundays,



which were the only available off-days. Another important social obligation for a man is participation in a year-end drinking party called *bonen-kai* (Forget Your Age Party). The name is based on the traditional way to count ages of people. In the old days, Japanese did not recognize a birthdate as the age adding date. Everybody becomes one year older on January First. So, they have an age-forgetting party before the New Year. It is just like a Christmas party in the United States, often held in a rented room at a restaurant or a bar during the night. Almost every conceivable group held the parties in December. An average adult usually had to attend half a dozen parties during December. I hope you can imagine how busy Japanese employed men were in December.

While men were busy with gift distribution and partying, most of the shopping had to be done by women who received extra funds from their husbands or patrons. The main reason for the December shopping is preparation for the New Year's holiday, which lasts three days. New Year's



holidays are religious with many well-established traditions. One of the traditions is a decoration of

kadomatsu. During late November to early December, you can find a temporary shop of *kadomatsu*, in a vacant lot of every town, just like Christmas tree shops or pumpkin sellers at Halloween.

Kadomatsu, of which the literal meaning is "pine at entrance," is a pine tree-based decoration attached at the main entrance of a house. The most common one is a pair of



small pine trees nailed down to both sides of an entrance. However, many organizations and businesses, especially hospitality businesses decorate much more elaborate *kadomatsu*, which always include diagonally cut fat bamboo as a centerpiece in addition to pine branches. These elaborate ones are usually prepared by a professional artist.

According to legend, a new guardian deity (*Toshi-gami*) of the house will be looking for a *kadomatsu* to find the right house. So, if there is no *kadomatsu*, the guardian deity will never arrive. When *kadomatsu* appears at many houses, Japanese people feel the New Year is around the corner and coming soon.

Another strange tradition is that during the New Year's holidays, all housewives and maids are relieved from the duty of food preparation and other household chores. It means that the man of the house has to prepare three meals a day for the three-day period, even though he can skip all other household chores.

Simplifying the meal preparation, most of the food eaten during the three-day period is preserved food, called *osechi*, and special holiday food called *ozoni* which is



roasted *mochi* rice cakes in a soup. It is one of the simplest meals, even a child can prepare it.

PROSE, POETRY & FICTION

A PARTICLE IN TIME, SAVES NINE



By James Longo

"I am Rashmay Singh and we are here interviewing Dr. Wa Pu Dun Nobel Prize winning physicist via Skype from the celestial particle accelerator Fermi-Hawking orbiting around our planet, Welcome Dr. Dun."

"Thank you for having me."

"According to a recent article in the publication Nature, you have made a rather intriguing discovery."

"Yes, Rashmay we have. We have smashed a particle and it altered local time on the space station by a very small amount."

"Wow where to begin, for starters how much time are you talking about?"

"Approximately about a thousandth of a second," Dr. Dun

said.

"Did you gain the thousandth of a second or lose it?"

"The first time we lost a thousandth of a second, when we repeated the collision, we gained a thousandth of a second. The third time we lost, fourth time we lost then we gained and gained."

"How did you realize you lost the time?" Rashmay asked.

"We keep track of time. We have atomic clocks out to the sixth decimal. Besides it was slightly disorientating for me and my staff, which was a big hint."

"Being in micro-gravity isn't that disorienting enough. Can you explain what you mean by disorienting?"

"It was almost like a shimmer or a wave seemed to dance in front of our eyes."



"Any idea why certain smashed particles made you lose time, and others made you gain time?"

"We don't know for certain, but we have hypothesized that it might have to do with spin of the particle."

"Where did you get the substance that when you smashed caused a time change?"

"We picked it out of our space net. We are basically fishing for new substances as we fly around the earth."

"Do you know what the substance is?"

"We have never seen anything like it?"

"Could it be the illusive dark matter?"

"It could be. It has yet to be determined?"

"But let me get this straight, an unknown substance when smashed alters time. Could dark matter and dark energy just be time and that is why we can't see it or understand it?"

"It is yet to be determined but believe me we are looking into it."

"Can you see a time when if we smash enough of these time particles with the appropriate spin, we could actually time travel?"

"In theory anything is possible. I can't imagine the amount of energy to collect and smash the time particles, all with the same spin. Not to mention what we don't know about these particles, including if we smash more than one is the time change cumulative. Never mind the logistics of being in the right place to see human history."

"Please explain?" Rashmay said sounding slightly befuddled.

"The earth spins around the sun. The sun spins around the center of the Milky Way. The Milky Way spins around the center of the universe. The universe is expanding, and that doesn't include the earth just spinning. So, you want to go back in time. If you go back in time the earth might not even be anywhere near you if you don't figure out where the earth was or going to be. You might be going back in time to a void in space."

"There you go, welcome to science where every answer leads to more and more questions. Thank you, Dr. Dun for taking time out of your busy schedule to allow us to interview you."



"Thank you for having me."

And the screen clicked off.

Lenox Avenue Mural

By
Langston Hughes



What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up

Like a raisin in the sun?

Or fester like a sore –

And then run?

Does it stink like rotten meat?

Or crust and sugar over –

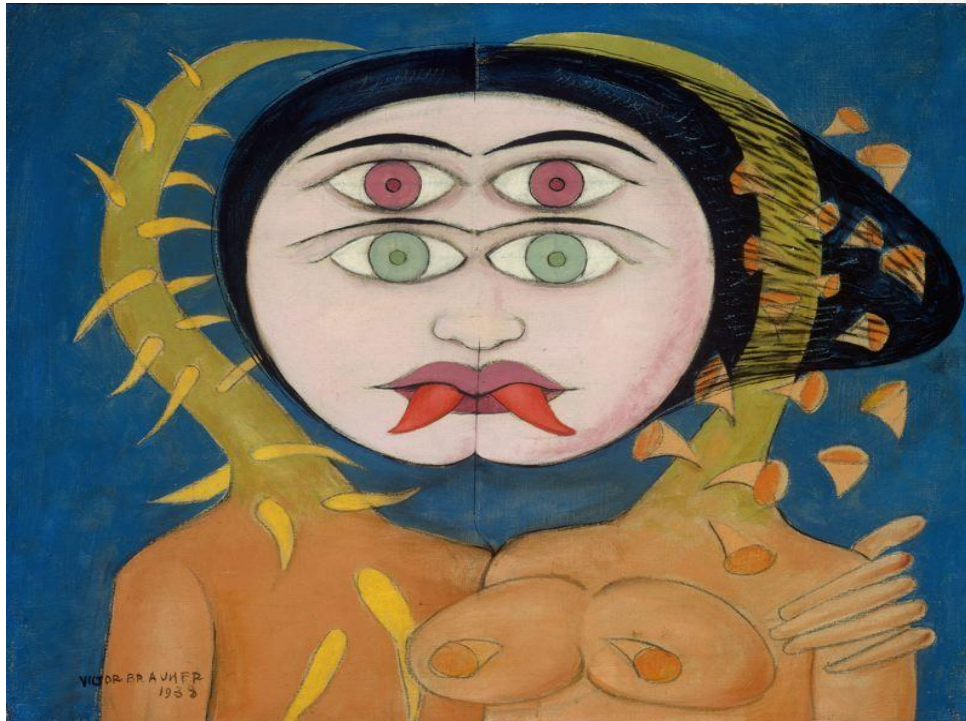
Like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags like a heavy load

Or does it explode!

Doesn't get any worse than this

By James Longo



"Do you know how you know you didn't have a bad day?" Jack said, sitting on the couch with his feet up, drinking his post work cocktail, a glass of Chardonnay in his hand in a long stem glass.

"How?" Jill asked, sitting in the oversized living room chair with a glass of Merlot. They were watching the evening news, waiting for the casserole to cook.

"We're not on the evening news," Jack said with a smirk and leaned out to clink their glasses.

Jill clinked his glass and said, "I thought you were going to tell me we aren't paying any attention to the pharmaceutical advertisements as if our life depended on it.

"That too," he said.

The pharmaceutical ads ended, and the news continued with the daily dose of the Clown and Chief's buffoonery, followed by decreased regulations, an environmental crisis, and another mass shooting. Life goes on as they sipped their wine. "And we will be right back after a word from our sponsors" and another four more pharmaceutical advertisements started.

"You know we could have easily ended up on national news, if Dorian didn't take that right turn."

"Yeah, no shit," Jill said.

"By the grace of God go us."

"Look who is talking about God, next thing you'll tell me you prayed the hurricane away."

"I won't go that far but I did pray."

"To whom? Give me a break," Jill said.

"I don't know, to fate, the weather god, to that high-pressure system moving across the Southern United States, to the hurricane itself."

"And what was your prayer, 'Please Mr. Hurricane could you go and destroy somebody else's life I'd really appreciate it,'" Jill said in a taunt.

"More like, push it North, push it North, way North," Jack said pushing his hands out wine glass in one hand.

"Sounds more like a football cheer."

"It worked didn't it?"

"You do realize correlation doesn't equal causality."

"Yeah no shit Sherlock," Jack said.

"But you did pray anyways?"

"Yeah, when things are beyond your control, all that you really have left is hope and prayers."

"You can take the superstitious monkey out of the savannah, but when push comes to shove, he will revert as soon as he is under stress."

"Ut, Ut, Ut," Jack said, messaging his head with his left hand in a monkey like fashion.

"Next thing you'll tell me you prayed the hurricane away"

At that moment the news came back with the feel-good story of the day about an eleven-year-old brown girl who found a way to recycle toilet paper and took the profits from her burgeoning business to send supplies to our overseas troops.

The beeper went off on the stove telling them dinner was ready. They went in the kitchen, he took the pan out of the stove, she refilled the wine glasses. They sat down for dinner.

"Do you know how you know Hurricane Dorian was a total slut?"

"How?" She asked.

"She refused to leave the Bahamas until every person was blown."

"You do realize Dorian is a boy's name."

"So," He said with a shrug, a sip of wine and bite of food.

"There is something wrong with you. You know that."

"Nothing a little loving can't fix," Jack said.

"In your hopes and dreams," Jill said.

"I'll just have to get my fertility idol out and pray on it."

"Oh, is that what it's called, don't rub it too hard," Jill said with a sly grin and put her head down to take a bite of food.

"Maybe once you see it you will change your mind."

"You have a better chance with hurricane," Jill said.

"At least with a hurricane I'm sure to get blown."

"And end up on the evening news."

They finished their dinner silence.

He leaned back with a satisfied stretch, "Life's a snooze as long as you are not on the news. I'll do the dishes."

"Maybe after dishes we'll do something else," she said.

"What, watch the idiot box and fall asleep on the couch?"

"Why would you say that?"

*"Life's a snooze as long as
you are not on the news"*

"Because it's true, shall we finish this bottle of wine?" Jack said pouring the dregs in each of their glasses.

Jill picked up the glass and took a sip. Jack turned on the faucet and started to rinse the dishes placing them in the rack.

"You sound awfully passive aggressive," Jill said, looking

puzzled.

"The word menopause probably comes from the word men pause sexually."

"Well you have a hand, why don't you use it?"

"Oh, I have something better than a hand," He said still rinsing dishes.

"Are you cheating on me?" Jill said raising her voice.

"No."

"Are you lying to me?"

"Not really."

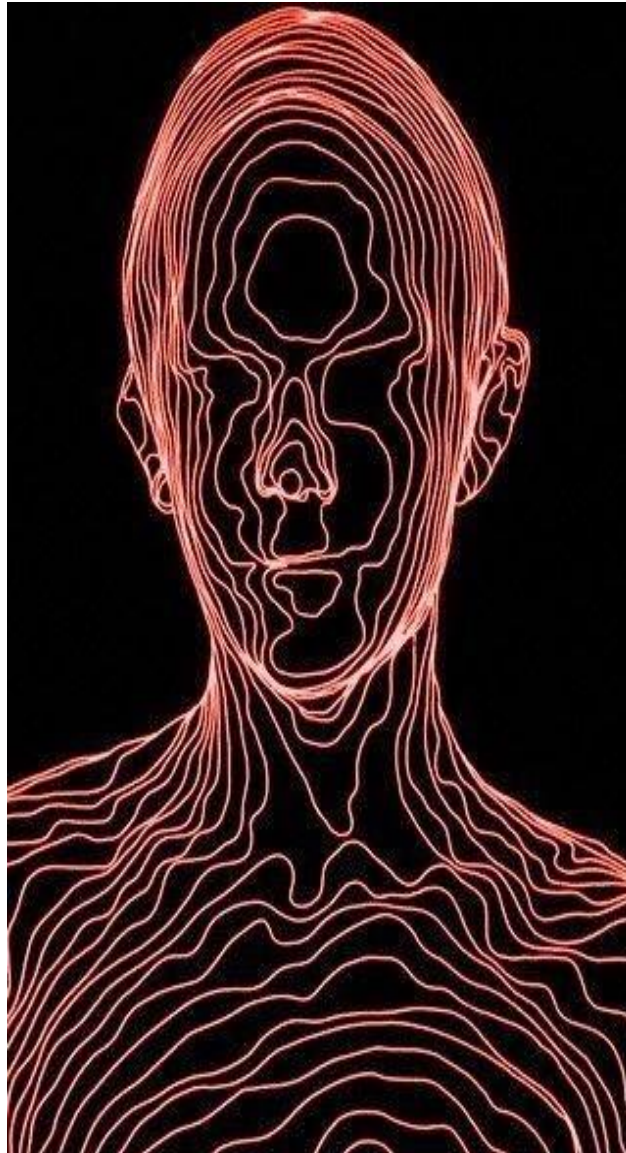
"What the hell does that mean?"

"Well me and you aren't exactly intimate these days so is it really cheating?"

"And who are you cheating on me with?"

"I'm not going to tell you."

"Yes, you are."



"No, I'm not."

"Yes, you are."

"No, I'm not,"

At that she went to the foyer to get the gun out of the drawer. Jill came back to the kitchen pointing it at Jack's crotch. Jack stood there the gas stove behind him.

"Okay its Dawn next door, after all she makes the sun rise, why not me?" Jack said with a little smirk of satisfaction.

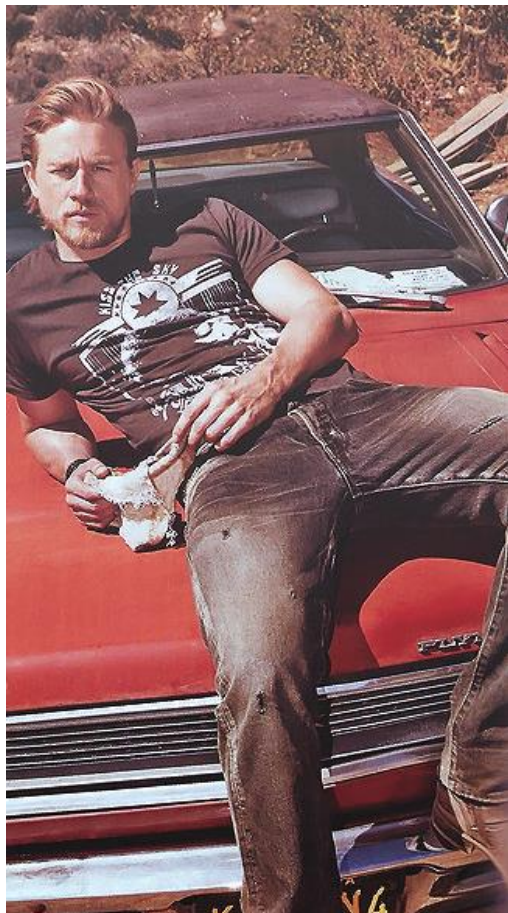
"That skank slut," Jill said pulling the trigger. The bullet grazed Jack on the inner thigh and somehow hit the gas pipe feeding the stove which ignited the tank behind the house which immediately exploded taking half the house with it.

Jack and Jill were burned and bruised in the explosion, and eventually pulled to safety and transported to the hospital. There Jack lay on a gurney in an examining room with a television turned to the eleven o'clock evening news, and there the lead story was his house.

The last words Jack moaned as the morphine brought him close to unconsciousness, "Oh shit, I'm the evening news, doesn't get any worse than this, teach me to open my mouth," and he passed out.

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COMEDY CORNER



Kay-Babies'

A LONG NIGHT'S JOURNEY INTO FIRSTS

By Virgil Thorp

Nature happens, and for a young stripling lad of seventeen it was happening quickly. Voices that were once soprano now were creaking into tenor and baritone. The necessity of deodorant sprouted as much as the pubic adornment and facial stubble we discovered every morning, every gym class shower. It could not be denied, nature had taken over our bodies and we found strange longings and lustful desires crowding

out any idea of altruism and higher ideals. Nature is just that way and it was a constant struggle to cling to an outmoded idea like personal purity. That is, being a virgin and saving such a silly notion for a prospective spouse.

For me it was a no-brainer as I had been ardently masturbating and screwing inanimate objects since my hormone fueled active imagination provided me with all sorts of visual vaginas and puffy vulvae. I just needed to graduate to a real warm person rather than a cold hard object or, in some cases, a cold squishy one.

I was just seventeen and if you know what I mean, I had to find something, someone to screw. Ooo-ooo-ooo. That opportunity presented itself one late spring evening at the local drive-in, Zesto's, a hang-out for the underage but constantly horny. Maybe a guy could get lucky and meet some female also eager to indulge in the old in-out, in-out, nasty. Or, at least give it a try.

I was there in my 1963 red Fury Hemi, trying to look as cool as my ride along with Thom and Robin (my Mormon buddy who always seemed to be the first in line when an opportunity to defile himself occurred) smoking cigarettes and looking for something excitingly dangerous and new in the dusky evening. We'd had a couple of beers each and were eager for anything as long as it carnally appealed to our sense of adventure.

Two other pals, Doug and Jon, drove up looking very excited and deservedly so. Doug had just lost his virginity the night before at a place called Kay-Babies. He and Jon wanted to share Doug's recent discovery of an ancient practice with us, their fine feathered and horny virginal friends. Hell, we wanted to go too.

All we needed was a twenty-dollar bill and we could get laid, Doug asserted. Jon was giggling at the fortunate occasion of him having kipped twenty dollars in change from his mother's purse. Okay, we all agreed and since my car was biggest, I got the honor of driving us to this new enterprise. There was a momentary reluctance when Doug told me where I'd be driving to – the ghetto!

What! These are black chicks?



"Wait till you see Candy," Doug blurted, his hands cupping full, throbbing, imaginary breasts.

I licked my lips as image of tittie overcame

my reluctance and fear of having my body mutilated and my car stolen for invading the alien territory where most white people feared to toddle to. It better be a remarkable set of tits for me to gamble so but – as she does so often – nature caressed my mind with fantasies and my better judgment got kicked off the bus. I put the car in gear and away we went to "Kay-Babies", a bona fide whorehouse.

Race be damned, why not? Pussy was pussy and we'd all been slapped at least once by our vanilla dates for trying to stretch a single into a triple at the local drive-in movie. What could it hurt? I wouldn't tell, Thom wouldn't tell but then again, we all knew that we all would tell if we were successful in the ultimate male challenge. We were going to score!

Kay-Babies was located on the outskirts of the negro ghetto. Actually, this wasn't the only ghetto in town. There were ghettos for nearly every racial and ethnic archetype at that time. The northeast was primarily Italian, the west bottoms was Polish, of course the suburbs were a mix of religious neighborhoods with most being middle class catholic and/or mainstream protestant. But Kay-Babies was a place that

every cab driver knew – I think they got a bonus for every “john” they delivered to the establishment.

I was driving but Doug was navigating, and I was more than a little surprised that the neighborhood was not shabby looking. Maybe this will be alright after all. We came over a slight rise and there it was, a modest split-level home and except for the red-light in one of the front windows, looked like all the other homes on the street except of the number of vehicles parked in front along the curb.



I turned off the headlights and found a parking space that also had enough room for me to pull straight out should the whole safari come to an unfortunate ending by encountering a band of hostile natives. Oh yes, that was my woefully bigoted particular indoctrination revealing itself.

We decided to leave our wallets in the car (like that would have saved them if we did run into problems) put a twenty-dollar bill in a pocket, do our best to quell our nervous lower abdomens and march to the front door.

As we were preparing to leave the car, I glanced into the rear-view mirror and silhouetted by the streetlight was the outline of a police prowler with its lights off slowly coming over the rise in the street.

"Is that a cop car?" I whispered.

"Oh shit," Doug said.

Thom, thinking all the time, said, "get out of here, Thorp, get the hell out of here!"



Fuck I thought to myself as I started the car. *How can I explain this* and carefully pulled away from the curb while turning the lights on and obeying every traffic law I could think of. The cop car continued as before, lights off, merely coasting over the rise towards us. Maybe we'll get out of this I hoped, just obey all traffic laws I commanded myself and signaled a right turn. Oh no, the cop's headlights just came on.

Act like nothing is happening. You've done nothing wrong, just parked in a strange neighborhood. Easy does it, no false moves. Sharks only devour the disabled and jerky. Make it smooth. One block away, two blocks, maybe we'll be okay. And then the red lights came on and my heart sank as I realized this would not end well. Who knew how long my grounding would be?

I was so nervous I consciously ignored the jabbering around me as my pals experienced their own nervous

apprehensions. Were we fucked? Were we going to be in so much trouble? Were we going to have to call our parents to bail us out for going to a ... whorehouse? Woe and woe again. The future looked bleak as the officers parked behind us and another squad car pulled in front of us and sandwiched us in. *Trapped, oh God, I'm trapped.*

I rolled down the window and tried my best to smile as the officers shone their flashlights into the car. Now, as I write, I think they were probably doing their best not to laugh as they approached the car, which had to be shaking with five sets of jangled nerves.



"May I see your driver's license," the stern-faced officer asked.

It was difficult, downright impossible I thought, my hands were shaking so violently that when I thought I had the edge of my license, I grasped it tightly succeeded in only

but giving the officer the clear plastic insert that had been in front of the license. *Fucked, really fucked. He'll think I'm drunk!*

"I need your license sir, not this," he said as he handed the plastic square back to me.

Was that a snark or a sneeze I wondered as I fished out the government issued permit and handed it to him. *I am so screwed* I thought.

"What were you doing at "Big Momma's"?

Big Momma's? I thought the place was called Kay-Babies.

"Big momma who," my voice cracked as I tried to control my shaking.

"They're drunk. Okay boys, everybody get out on the right side of the car," the officer demanded.

And we all did, except for Robin who, because he had been sitting behind the driver and it was his very nature, got out on the left side.

A side arm was pulled. *Oh shit, we're in for it now!*

"Get over there with the rest of them," the heat commanded Robin. We had been officially apprehended.

"Big momma who?"

The constables wanted to know about our parentage. "What does your father do?" was asked.

I started to list all the things my dad did hoping against hope that perhaps one the cops knew him and would let us go. Mention every judge, every politician you know. But it was no deal, the cops didn't go for it.

"That's enough," he said as though he had heard more than he wanted to hear. They asked the same question of Thom

and Doug ("my dad's a deputy sheriff." but no reprieve), and then they got to Robin.

"Which one," Robin replied in his laconic way as he described his mother's serial marriages. This was not going well.

Finally, they asked Jon.

"Well sir, my father is a federal inspector." When it came to cool appraisal, Jon had a gift.

"Inspector of what?"

"He doesn't say, sir. It is kind of a secret." *Oh please, please work* we prayed to any god who might be listening.

"Boys we know you were at Big Momma's."

Don't say "*I thought it was Kay-Babies*" my mind rebelled.

"We're not gonna raid it tonight."

And I knew we had just been redeemed. Of course, they couldn't help but hassle us a little bit and they did give us a scare. And maybe they thought they could give us a lesson, unwanted that it was, but probably deserved.

"I thought it was Kay-Babies"

"There's this one gal there," the other cop began and cupped his hands like Doug had done, "named Candy. She's really nice for fellows like you."

"Have a good time, we'll be around the area." And with that my concerns about leaving my car parked vanished. I thought the stern cop had winked.

Being young and horny, our jitters were no less controlled as we knocked and were invited into the home. For that was what it doubled as. We walked through the living room and passed a den with a bunch of kids watching a television and were escorted through a spotless kitchen to stairs leading to the basement. I was surprised by how clean and tidy everything was, almost like my own home.

We could hear music and laughter and a cheery voice saying, "Well what have we here?" It was Kay-Baby herself. A large black woman who recognized Doug right off and gave him an equally big hug.

"What's your name, Honey?"

Commented [VT1]:

"What have you brought me darlin'?" She asked as she evaluated the line of blushingly shy white boys. "My oh my. I bet you boys need some lovin'. Candy, come over here. You boys want a beer?"

And there she was. Candy. There had been no exaggeration of her bounty. I gaped open mouth as Candy stepped towards us, her bosom quivering with each step. Even clothed they were magnificent! In fact, Candy was one of the best-looking women I had ever seen outside of Playboy magazine and then the best part happened. She smiled. Yeah, she had a gold incisor capping off a perfect set of ivories but that just set off her deeply rich brown skin, every inch smoother than velvet. Her smile was warm and welcoming. Just what my virgin soul needed at that moment.

Candy reached out and touched my cheek. "Aren't you cute." I could feel something happening to me, inside of me. "I'd like to date you."

All I could summon was an incoherent stammer. "Yeah." *How could I be so lucky to be first?*

"You want a beer sweetie?"

I shook my head affirmatively and she led me to a couch and let me calm down.

"What's your name, honey?"

From there life became a blur of emotions and images, feelings and discoveries. I think Candy liked virgins. I think she enjoyed placing their shaking fingers on her gorgeously ripe breasts and telling how they liked to be touched. "Feel that," she asked at each new female location. "That's how a woman is meant to feel when you treat her right."

She didn't seem to mind that my powers of speech were impeded and allowed me to grunt and mumble.

"You're beautiful." I managed to mutter with my eyes locked with hers. All was sugar.

"Oh, I bet you say that to all the girls. What do I have here?" she said softly caressing my penis which, to my fear, suddenly began to shrink. "Don't worry honey, I won't bite. You just relax. It'll get hard again. I'll teach you. We're going to have a good time."

I was so grateful, and I marveled at how warm and soft her body was as she placed my hands on her hips, then cupped my face in her hands and directed me where and how to kiss her.

"That's it, that's it. A little harder, Yeah, baby. Easy, feel it



grow?" Her nipple hardened against my palm. "Kiss it."

She guided my hand between her thighs. "Use your fingers." As I caressed her outer lips. "Lightly now. Feel it get wet? That's how a lady likes it. Oh, yeah honey, you're getting' it. Now use your mouth." I guess I was a quick learner and

my tongue grazed the inside of her lip. "Oh, you devil!"

Sometime later, I'm sure I got all twenty dollars' worth and more, Candy gave me a wonderful compliment as she dressed. "You keep practicin', honey. You gonna be good. Now you get dressed and come back outside." There was that wonderful gold toothed smile again. I was in love.

I found my buddies sitting on a couch, each satiated, sipping beers and waiting for me.

"Did I lie to you?" Doug asked with pride.

"No, no you didn't." At the moment I didn't care if he did or didn't. I was in love with Candy. All was chocolate and sugar.

"the biggest lesson was the realization the no matter how different we were ...

We left Kay-Babies then, the car was safe, we were safe. We had been to a whorehouse and survived and I'm sure I wasn't the first to fall in love with Candy.

It's without irony that I say the experience and money was an investment in my education and the lessons Candy taught me have remained forever. It wasn't only physical, and the biggest lesson was the realization the no matter how different we were, no matter where we come from, no matter what our societal positions are; we are all the same with the same hopes, fears and desires.

... we are all the same"

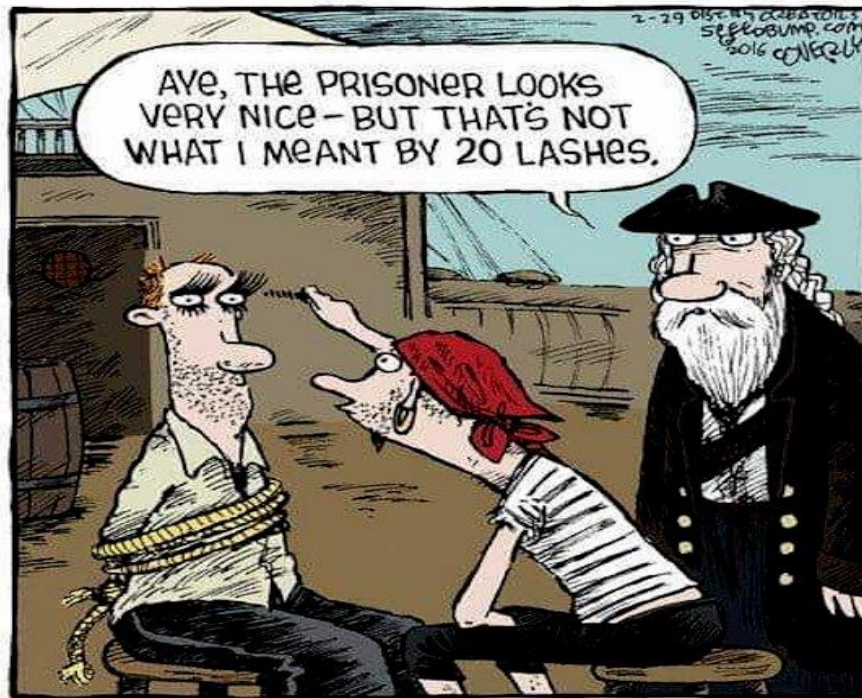
I never thought of myself as superior to anyone again. I knew I was lucky to be white and middle class. I knew it was only circumstantial that I had deceived myself into thinking there were differences. And only through the humanity we exchanged did I learn the truth. Thanks to Candy and Kay-Babies. Yeah, I scored big time!

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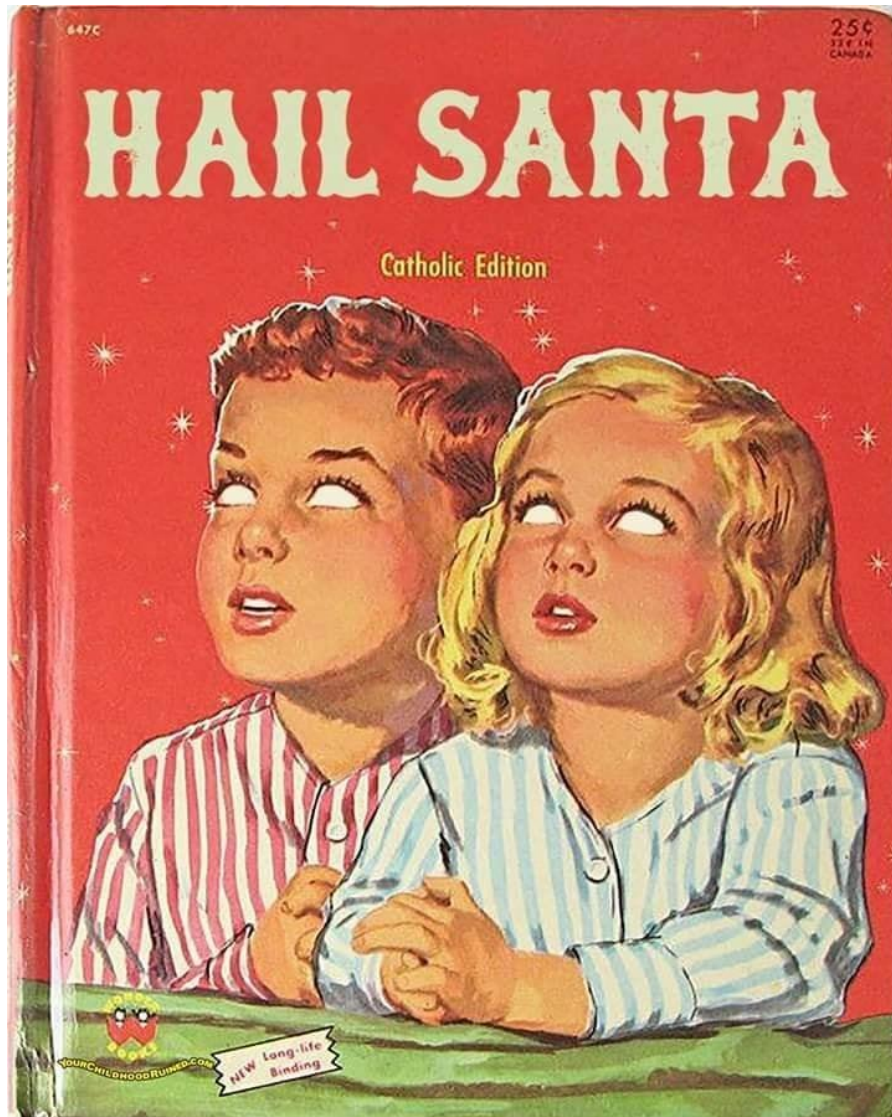
This photo was taken just before Bob was given the nickname One Eyed Bob, the Banjo player













"As democracy is perfected, the office of the President represents, more and more closely, the inner soul of the people. On some great and glorious day, the plain folks of the land will reach their heart's desire at last, and the White House will be occupied by a downright fool and complete narcissistic moron."

—H. L. Mencken,
The Baltimore Evening Sun,
July 26, 1920

God's To-Do List

1. Make man.
2. Give them free will.
3. Slaughter 99.9% of them for using it.
4. Randomly favor one group.
5. Never speak or write a single word.
6. Legalize slavery and ban shrimp.
7. Kill myself for a weekend.
8. Hide.



BE SEEING YOU