

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.

Vol.8, No.5

September / October 2023

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**- Produced by the TC Secular Writers -*/*

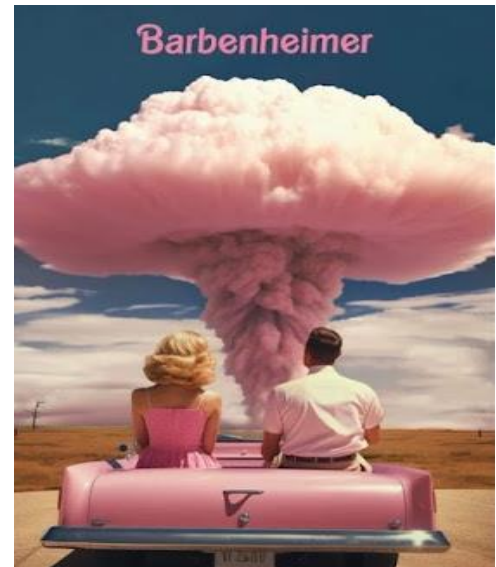
awareonesofthetreasurecoast.com

INTRODUCTION



Back to School Issue!

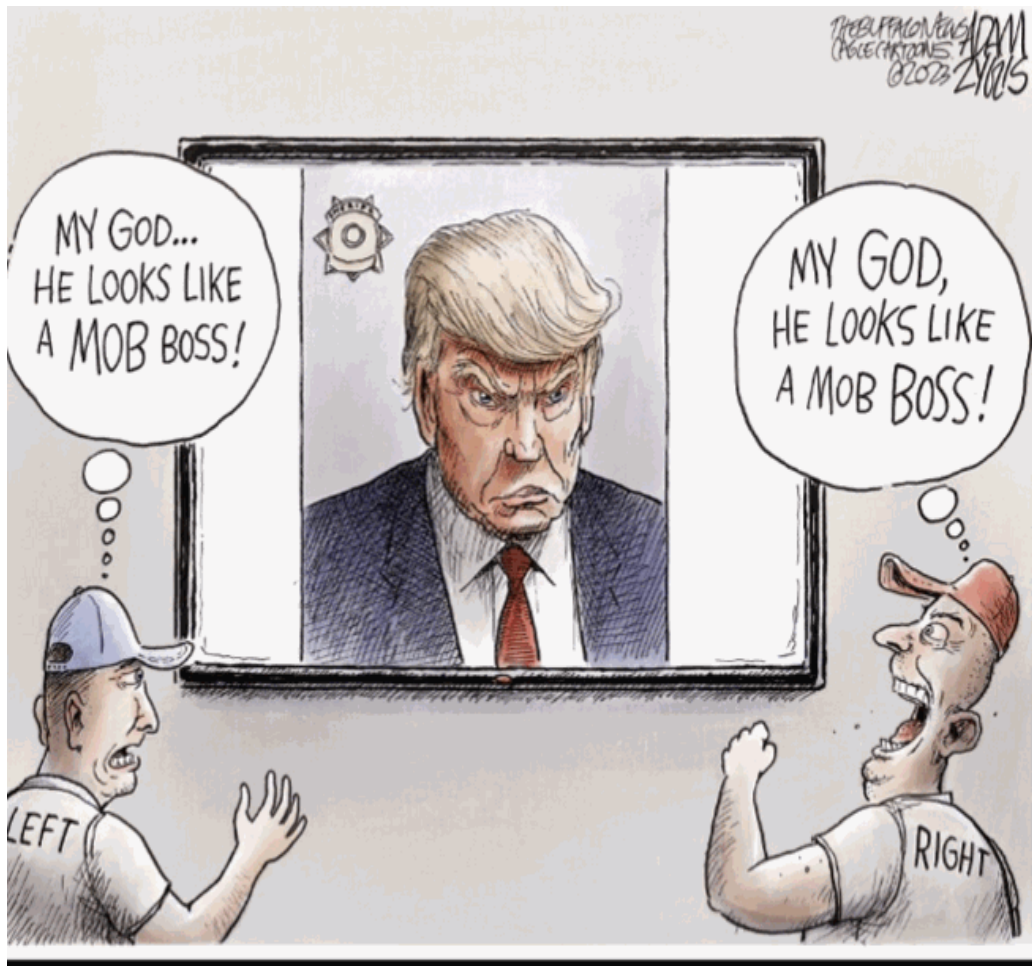
*(Can the snowbirds be far
behind?)*



I was feeling nostalgic as I worked on this issue, Vol. 8, No. 5, and tried to recall the pre-fall summer days when I was *not* looking forward to another school year. In my school we just worried about nuclear war, and we practiced ducking and covering by the hour. Some of us discovered that it was a great opportunity to cop a few z-z-z-z's as the teacher roamed around making sure we had assumed the proper position, and under the desk with our butts in the air was the best protection for fallout. A little bit of slobber on the floor was the only indication of surreptitious slumbering. I had not another care in the world; Other than mono, who would be playing in the World Series and acne flare-ups.

How much things have changed. I swear, I don't know how I can handle the daily distractions being presented to me 24/7. Debates, indictments, the price of gasoline. The slow whittling away of our civil rights. A fetus prince

ranks higher than the mother vessel. A disgraced ex-president wanting to be president again, and a governor who wants to become a disgraced ex-president. White is not white and black is not black. Slavery was good, freedom is bad. Did Fredo Corleone die for our sins? I feel I am going mad in little increments!



There is no tranquility. Rabble-rousing is the order of the day. Those on the right are shouting "how can I fuck things up more!" On the left they're screaming, "can you not see what the hell they are doing?" and those in the center look tired and just say, "duh, is that your best shot? Or, "May I have another cookie?"

Of course, this morning I'm watching the track of Hurricane Idalia heading for Florida's Big Bend before it decides to rip up Georgia and the Carolina's before precipitously heading out to sea and hovering – a quirky hesitation before it decides to go north or turn back south and wipe out the other side of the state. The side of the state I live on. It happened once before, 2004 with Hurricane Jeanne. Ahh, nostalgia!

Yes, it is a special time of the year, the autumn and that means the year is almost over! How about that? One more issue before we close Volume 8 up and start Volume 9 Aware Ones of the Treasure Coast Journal. Did I scare you? My, my, my, how time inexorably limps along.

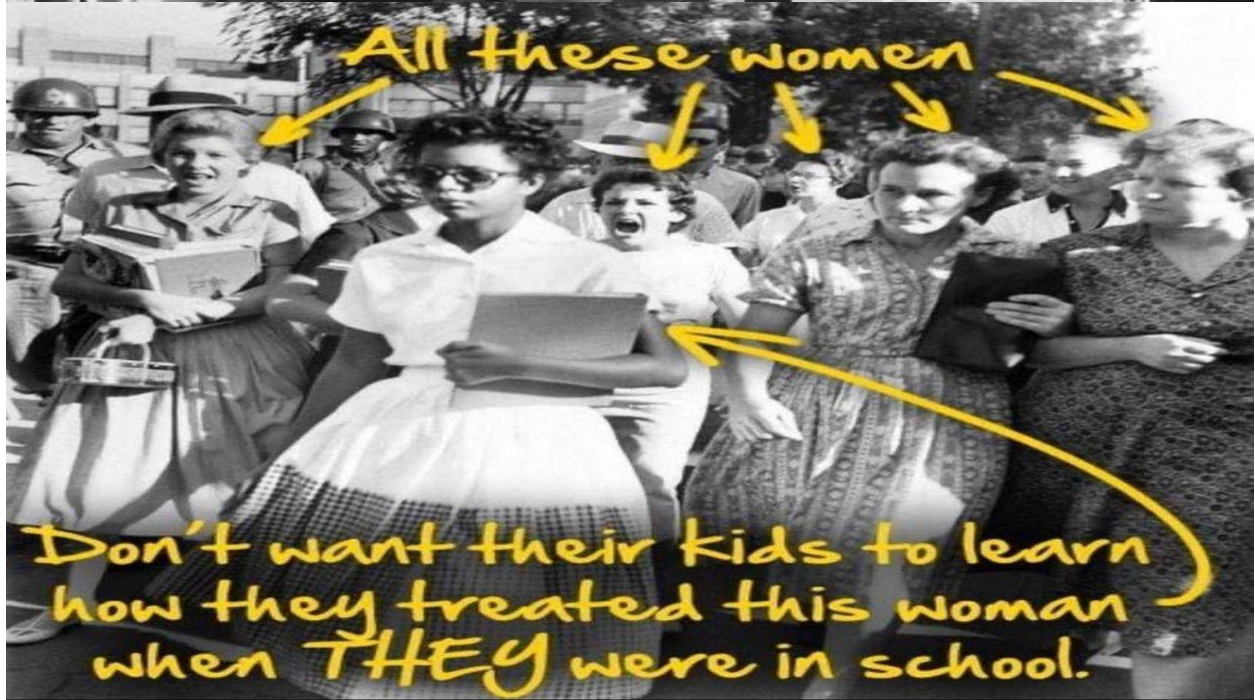
So let me wrap this intro up; putting this issue together was not easy. There is so much not going on. For one, the Aware Ones writers' group is not producing much for some reason – perhaps the result of lingering summer doldrums – and that is a shame and something I will be discussing at other writers' meetings. But do not despair, you readers will find articles by other atheist writers I admire and wish to share with you fine, intelligent wonders of humanity. Of course, our illustrious Aware Ones writers DO have marvelous contributions, too ... just not as much. I recommend them all.

I am including a few pictures that I find have a certain flavor that corresponds with my nostalgia and the current conditions we all share. The love and the hate. Cliches that turn into physical laws like; when push comes to shove or, for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. If only outer space would be so welcoming.

Is this the face of Christian love?



Are These the Faces of Christian Love?



Elizabeth Eckford of the Little Rock 9, receiving a heaping helping of Christian Love ala 1957 as she bravely resisted rancorous racial segregation.

Just How Bad is Christian Love?

Welcome to Florida Non-Christian Love 2023!?!



Remember this, Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida said Black people benefitted from some of the skills they learned in slavery – and students in the state will soon learn about that "personal benefit" in Florida's education curriculum. It makes going back to school so educationally rewarding. Sometimes nostalgia makes me sick. I could really use a cookie, about now. *Duck and Cover.*



Best back to school pic I've ever seen.



Thanks to Gale Baker for the photo!

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 tables and the fresh air at either Stuart's *Sandsprit Park* 3443 SE Saint Lucie Blvd, or *Flagler Park* (under the Roosevelt Bridge on the 1st Friday of the month), where we gather every Friday *around* 11:00 am to share ideas and challenge your mind – masks optional. Members are encouraged to share and spread what is becoming a very interesting magazine. Outside criticism and interesting contributions are welcomed. Everyone is welcome to join us on the Sunday 11 am Zoom meeting.

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

AOTC MEMBERS

Joan Auerbach	Ed Zillioux
Marsha Banks	Bob Haskins
Ernie Breud	Barbara Lange
Eddie Buitrago	Jim Longo
Ray Duryea	Jerry Shaw
Rick Burkhart	Yashi Nozawa
Sandra Burkhart	Roberta Synal
Paul Carlos	Lucy Thorp
Gloria Cosgrove	Virgil Thorp
Carol Gillooley	Dan Vignau
Gale Baker	Linda Webb
Bert Mautz	Betty Tewksbury
David Dorenzo	Mark Kasoff
Betty Kasoff	

MEETINGS & EVENTS

Meetings

Friday gatherings: First Friday of month at Flagler Park (under the Roosevelt Bridge). All other Fridays, *Summits at Sandsprit* – 11 am gathering in the sun and fresh air of Stuart's Sandsprit Park. BYOB



Sunday Zoom – 11 am Zoom meeting.
Contact Dan Vignau <vignaujd@comcast.net>
to be included with the connection codes.

TC Secular Writers – We have returned to Jensen Beach at the *House of Brews* (3311 NW Main Ave, Jensen Beach, FL 34957) on every other Thursday evening at 6:30 pm. *Check "Events" for exact dates.*

Events

September Monthly Celebrations – Classical Music Month

Sep 1 – Aware Ones at Flagler Park, 11 am.

Sep 2 – VJ Day, WWII

1946 - Billy Preston - ("Will It Go 'Round In Circles"), also 1957 - Steve Porcaro - keyboards for Toto ("Rosanna")

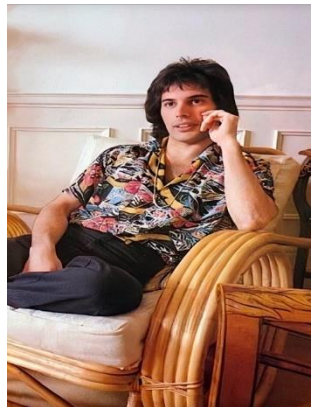
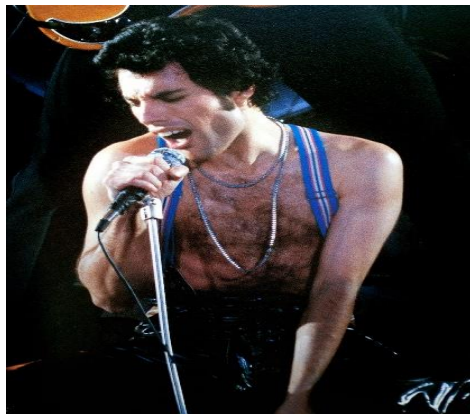
Sep 3 Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.

1947 - Eric Bell - guitarist for Thin Lizzy ("Whisky In The Jar"), also 1948 - Don Brewer - drummer for Grand Funk Railroad ("Some Kind Of Wonderful")

Sep 4 – Labor Day



Sep 5 – 1946 - Freddie Mercury - vocalist for Queen. *I think my love is dangerous. Who wants their love to be safe? Can you imagine writing a song, 'My Love Is Safe?' It would never sell!"*



Sep 8 – Aware Ones at Sandsprit Park 11 am.

International Literacy Day

1942 - Sal Valentino - vocalist for The Beau Brummels ("Laugh, Laugh"), also 1942 - Brian Cole - bassist for The Association ("Along Comes Mary"), also 1945 - Ron "Pigpen" McKernan - harmonica / vocals for the Grateful Dead ("Touch Of Grey")



Sep 10 – Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.

Sep 11 – 911 Remembrance

1946 - Dennis Tufano - guitar / vocals for the Buckingham's ("Mercy, Mercy, Mercy"), also 1953 - Tommy Shaw - guitarist for Styx ("Babe")

Sep 12 – Jesse Owens Olympian, born 1913 (see "Today's Frozen Moments" in The Way We Were section p.74)

1943 - Maria Muldaur ("Midnight At The Oasis"), also 1952 - Neil Peart - drummer for Rush ("New World Man")

Sep 13 –  Writer's Group @ Jensen House of Brews, 6:30 pm.

Defy Superstition Day, also Fortune Cookie Day, also Positive Thinking Day

1941 - David Clayton Thomas - vocalist for Blood, Sweat and Tears ("Spinning Wheel"), also 1944 - Peter Cetera - bass and vocals for Chicago ("Saturday In The Park"), also 1952 - Randy Jones - the cowboy in The Village People ("Y.M.C.A.")

Sep 15 – Aware Ones at Sandspruit Park 11 am.

Rosh Hashanah

1941 - Les Braid - bassist for The Swinging Blue Jeans ("Hippy Hippy Shake"), also 1942 - Lee Dorman - bassist for Iron Butterfly ("In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida")

Sep 16 – Oktoberfest begins in Germany

1943 - Joe Butler - drummer for The Lovin' Spoonful ("Summer In The City"), also 1944 - Betty Kelly - vocalist for Martha and the Vandellas ("Jimmy Mack")

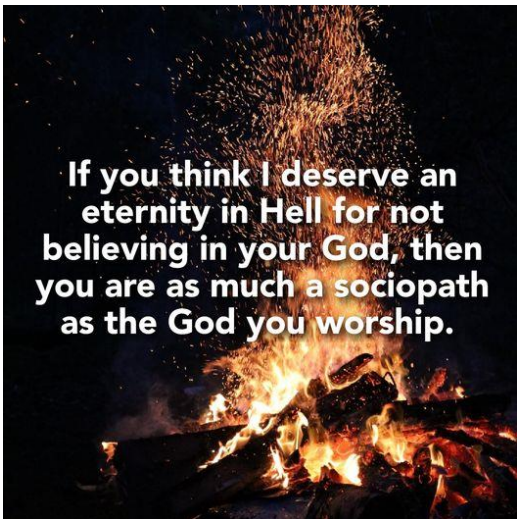
Sep 17 – Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.

Constitution Day, also National Women's Friendship Day

Sep 19 – International Talk Like A Pirate Day

New cake purchase policy:

every cake request begins with "I'm gay, and I need a marriage cake." Wait for response, and if they're accommodating, then you can say, "Actually, I need a birthday cake for my son, I just wanted to make sure you weren't a piece of shit."



If you think I deserve an eternity in Hell for not believing in your God, then you are as much a sociopath as the God you worship.

PLEASE
TAKE
A
COMPLIMENT

I LIKE YOUR HAIR
YOUR SMILE IS NICE
YOUR SHOES ARE GREAT
I LOVE YOUR EYES
YOU HAVE A GREAT BUM
YOU ARE WONDERFUL
HAVE YOU BEEN WORKING OUT?
I LIKE YOUR SHOES
YOU SHOULD BE A MODEL
YOU ARE GORGEOUS

Poet John Keats Wrote 'To Autumn' in 1819. (Poem on p. 78)

Sep 22 – **Aware Ones at Sandsprit Park 11 am.**

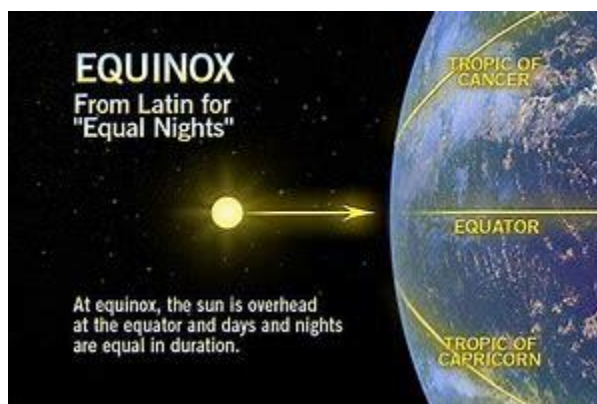
Elephant Appreciation Day, also Native American Day

1931 - George Chambers - bassist for The Chambers Brothers ("Time Has Come Today"), also 1958 - Joan Jett ("I Love Rock & Roll")



Sep 23 – Autumn Equinox – *Fall begins!*

1930 - Ray Charles ("Georgia On My Mind"), also 1947 - Jerry Corbetta - vocals / keyboards for Sugarloaf ("Green Eyed Lady"), also 1949 - Bruce Springsteen ("Born In The USA")



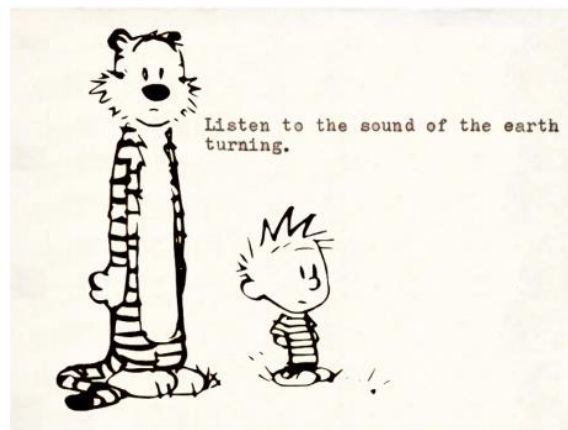
Sep 24 – **Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.**

National Cherries Jubilee Day

1940 - Barbara Allbut - vocalist for The Angels ("My Boyfriend's Back")(see Lives Lived p.106 for related comments)

Sep 28 – **Writer's Group @ Jensen House of Brews, 6:30 pm.**

Ask a Stupid Question Day (one of my favorite days)



Sep 29 – **Aware Ones at Sandsprit Park 11 am.**

Confucius Day

1939 - Tommy Boyce of Boyce and Hart ("I Wonder What She's Doing Tonight"), also 1943 - Manuel Fernandez - keyboards for Los Bravos ("Black Is Black"), also 1948 - Mark Farner - guitarist for Grand Funk ("Bad Time")

October Monthly Celebrations – Sarcastic Month,

U-Haul has the worst drivers of any company.

also Seafood Month

Oct 1 – Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.

Henry Ford Introduced the Model T (1908)

Oct 4 – Sputnik I Launched in 1957 (first space vehicle)

Oct 6 – Aware Ones at Flagler Park, 11 am.

American Library Association Founded (1876)

World Smile Day

1946 - Millie Small ("My Boy Lollipop"), also 1951 - Kevin Cronin - keyboards for REO Speedwagon ("Keep On Loving You")

Oct 8 – Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.

American Touch Tag Day

Oct 9 – Curious Events Day, also Columbus Day, also Indigenous People Day, also Fire Prevention Day

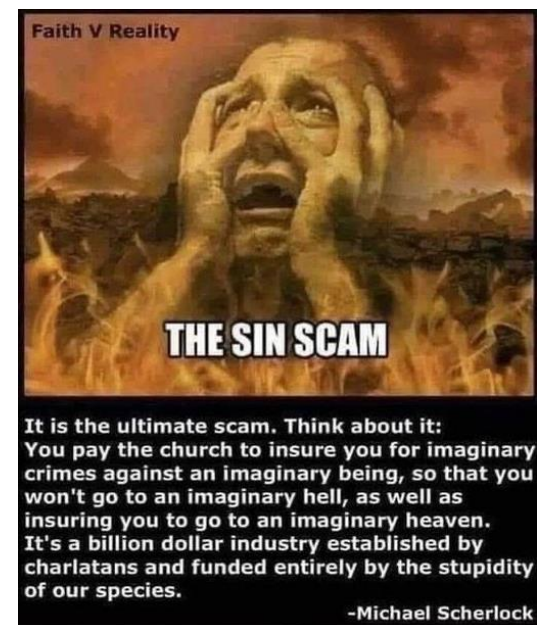
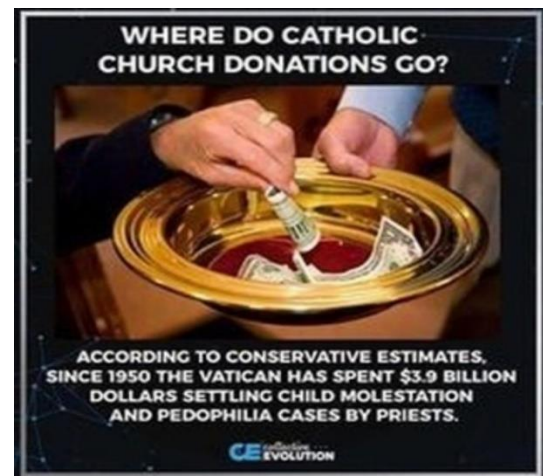
1940 - John Lennon - singer / guitarist for The Beatles ("All You Need Is Love"), also 1944 - John Entwistle - bassist for The Who ("I Can See For Miles"), also 1948 - Jackson Browne ("Runnin' On Empty")

Oct 12 –  Writer's Group @ Jensen House of Brews, 6:30 pm.

Moment of Frustration Day, also National Gumbo Day

1935 - Sam Moore of Sam and Dave ("Hold On, I'm Comin'"), also 1942 - Melvin Franklin of The Temptations ("My Girl"), also 1948 - Rick Parfitt - guitar and vocals for Status Quo ("Pictures Of Matchstick Men"), also 1948 - Steve Martin Caro - lead singer of The Left Banke ("Walk Away Renee")

Oct 13 – Aware Ones at Sandspruit Park 11 am.



Friday the 13th, also International Skeptics Day

Oct 15 – Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.

White Cane Safety Day

Oct 20 – Aware Ones at Sandsprit Park 11 am.

International Chefs Day

1951 - Al Greenwood - keyboardist for Foreigner ("Waiting For A Girl

Like You"), also 1953 - Tom Petty ("Don't Do Me Like That")

Oct 22 – Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.

Mother-In-Law Day

1945 - Leslie West - guitarist for Mountain ("Mississippi Queen")

Oct 24 – United Nations Day

1930 - J P Richardson – *the Big Bopper* ("Chantilly Lace"), also
1936 - Bill Wyman - bassist for The Rolling Stones ("Get Off Of My Cloud"), also 1937 - Santo Farina - steel guitar player for Santo and Johnny ("Sleep Walk")

Oct 26 –  Writer's Group @ Jensen House of Brews, 6:30 pm.

International Red Cross Organized In Geneva, Switzerland in 1863.

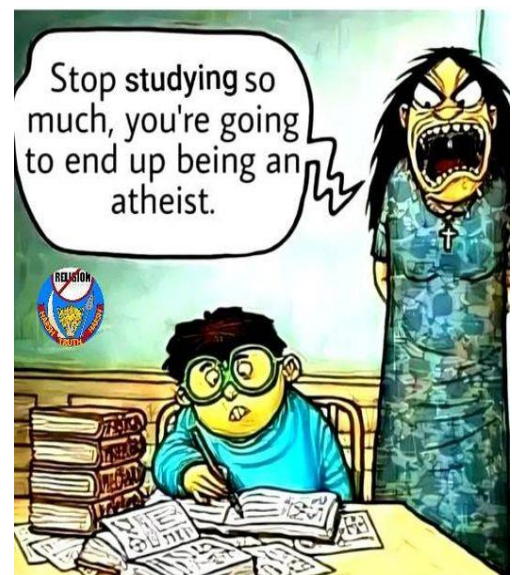
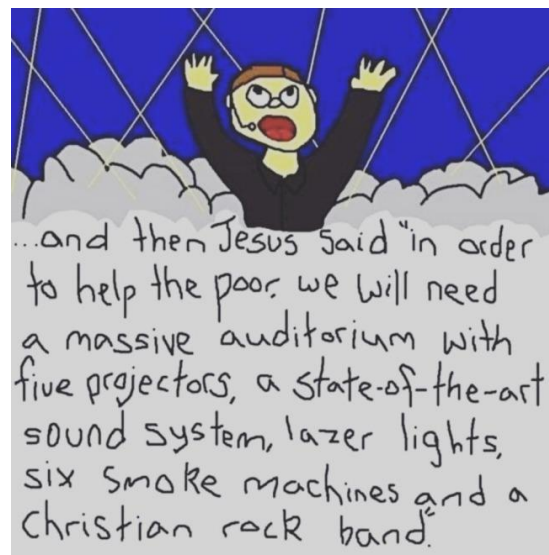
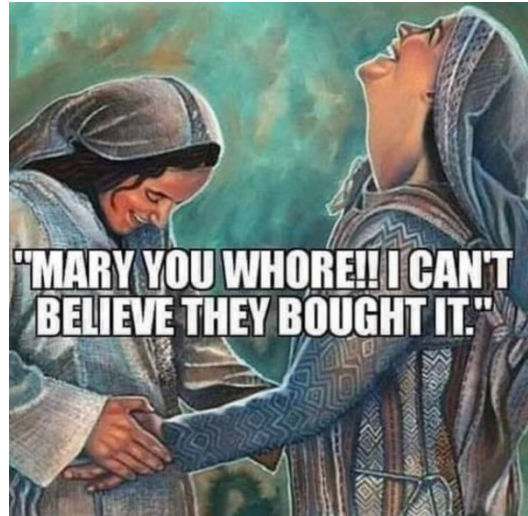
Oct 27 – Aware Ones at Sandsprit Park 11 am.

Emily Post (author) born, 1873

Black Cat Day

Oct 29 – Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.

Oct 31 – Halloween

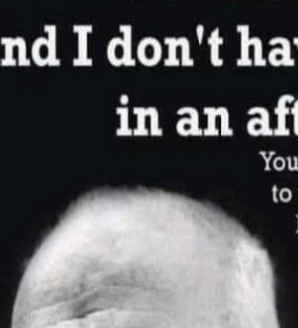


Atheist Quotes

"When you consider that God could have commanded anything he wanted – anything! – the Ten [Commandments] have got to rank as one of the great missed moral opportunities of all time. How different history would have been had he clearly & unmistakably forbidden war, tyranny, taking over other people's countries, slavery, exploitation of workers, cruelty to children, wife-beating, stoning, treating women – or anyone – as chattel or inferior beings."


- Katha Pollitt

From: <http://www.11ration.com/article/15-biked-decalogue/>



**"I'm an atheist,
and I don't have any belief
in an afterlife.**

You could say that I'm resigned
to the fact that this wonderful
life that we get here is it.
And having hit 60,
it's a good time
to get resigned
to these things
and not be too
nervous or upset -
and enjoy
what great times
one can have."

**David
Gilmour** 

A circular portrait of Ayaan Hirsi Ali, a woman with dark hair, smiling, wearing a pearl earring. The portrait is set against a black background with a yellow border.

“Free speech is the bedrock of liberty and a free society. And yes, it includes the right to blaspheme and offend.”

- AYAAN HIRSI ALI

LOVE EXPANDS

14

LIVES LIVED – LIVES LOST

July 2023

1



Victoria Amelina, 37, Ukrainian writer, injuries sustained in missile strike. author of two novels and a children's book, a winner of the Joseph Conrad Literary Award and a European Union Prize for Literature finalist.

- Frank Field, 100, American meteorologist (WNBC, WCBS, WWOR). Field was noted for his science reports on new technology and medicines. He was instrumental in publicizing the Heimlich Maneuver.



- Andrei Fomin, 57, Russian lawyer and state prosecutor, acting prosecutor of the Republic of Crimea (2016–2017), prosecutor of Chuvashia (since 2020), drowning.

- Serge Vieira, 46, French chef. was a French Michelin-starred chef of the restaurant bearing his name, Serge Vieira, located at Château de Couffour. He was winner of the 2005 Bocuse d'or.



2



Michel Charpentier, 95, French sculptor and medalist, he was chair of the sculpting department at the Beaux-Arts de Paris.

- Susan Love, 75, American surgeon, leukemia. Love is best known for pioneering work fueled by her criticism of the medical establishment's paternalistic treatment of women. She was an early advocate of cancer surgery that conserves as

much breast tissue as possible. She also was among the first to sound the alarm on the risks of routine hormone replacement therapy (HRT) for menopausal women. She later fought to expand the rights of same-sex couples as parents. In 1993, she and her partner Dr. Helen Cooksey made history by getting approval for the first joint adoption by a gay couple from the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court, a state that did not recognize same-sex marriage at the time.

- **Minnie Bruce Pratt** (September 12, 1946 – July 2, 2023^[6]) was an American poet, educator, activist, and essayist. She retired in 2015 from her position as Professor of Writing and Women's Studies at Syracuse University where she was invited to help develop the university's first LGBT studies program.



3



Catherine Burks-Brooks, 83, American civil rights activist. Burks participated in multiple Freedom Rides including a Freedom Ride from Nashville, Tennessee to Montgomery, Alabama from May 17–21, 1961. Burks heard about the Freedom Rides from a man named John Lewis. She began to participate in demonstrations he led. In an interview, she states "We had been demonstrating, we had been to jail several times as a matter of fact. I've also been in jail here in Birmingham before the Freedom Ride."

- **Michael Ralph "Mo" Foster**, 78, English multi-instrumentalist (Affinity, Fancy, RMS) and record producer, cancer. Foster was an English multi-instrumentalist, record producer, composer, solo artist, author, and public speaker. Toured, recorded, and performed with Jeff Beck, Gil Evans, Phil Collins, Ringo Starr, Joan Armatrading, Gerry Rafferty, Brian May, Scott Walker, Frida of ABBA, Cliff Richard, George Martin, Van Morrison, Dr John, Hank Marvin, Heaven 17 and the London Symphony Orchestra.



- Léon Gautier, 100, French soldier, France's last surviving D-Day veteran.
- Don Reinholdt, 78, American weightlifter, World's Strongest Man (1979), traffic collision.



5



Francis R. Dillon, 83, American Air Force general, commander of the OSI (1988–1993). He spent the majority of his career as a special agent of the AFOSI, where he conducted and supervised felony-level criminal, fraud, and counterintelligence investigations and operations.



- Coco Lee, 48, Hong Kong-American singer-songwriter, suicide.
- George Tickner, 76, American rock guitarist (Journey, Frumious Bandersnatch).

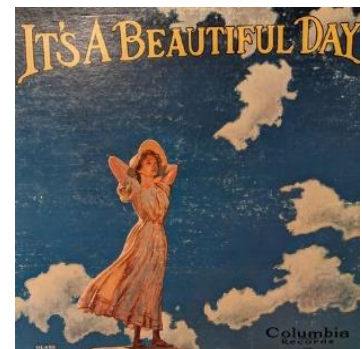


6

Peter Nero, 89, American pianist and conductor (Philly Pops), Grammy winner (1962, 1963)



- David LaFlamme, 82, American singer and violinist (It's a Beautiful Day). During the 1960s he performed with a wide variety of notable San Francisco acts, such as Jerry Garcia and Janis Joplin. He helped create the band Electric Chamber Orkustra, and later, an early version of Dan Hicks and His Hot Licks. Then in summer 1967 he and his wife Linda Rudman LaFlamme formed It's a Beautiful Day.



13

Josephine Chaplin, 74, American actress (The Canterbury Tales, Escape to the Sun, Nuits Rouges) American actress and the daughter of filmmaker Charlie Chaplin and his fourth wife, Oona O'Neill. She had a featured role in Pier Paolo Pasolini's The Canterbury Tales (1972) as May, the adulterous wife of the elderly Sir January.

14

Kazimierz Klimczak, 109, Polish soldier (Warsaw Uprising). At the time of his death, he was the oldest living Warsaw Uprising veteran and the oldest living man in Poland.



- Hettie Simmons Love (October 29, 1922 – July 14, 2023) was one of the first African-Americans to earn a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree from any Ivy League University. She graduated from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania in 1947.

16



Funny Cide, 23, American Thoroughbred racehorse (2003 Kentucky Derby and Preakness winner), colic.

21

Tony Bennett, 96, American singer ("I Left My Heart in San Francisco", "Rags to Riches", "Because of You"), 20-time Grammy winner.



23

James A. Haught 91, atheist writer and journalist. Editor emeritus of West Virginia's largest newspaper, The Charleston Gazette-Mail, and senior editor of Free Inquiry. Even at age 90, Haught shrugged off the frailties of age and kept on writing, including a weekly blog for FFRF's Freethought Now. (Haught's last story "Huge News, Barely Noticed" on p.56)

26

Patricia A. Goldman, 81, American public official and women's rights advocate, pneumonia.



- Randy Meisner, 77, American Hall of Fame musician (Eagles, Poco) and songwriter ("Take It to the Limit"), Grammy winner (1976, 1978), complications from COPD

- Sinéad O'Connor, 56, Irish singer ("Nothing Compares 2 U") and songwriter ("Mandinka", "The Emperor's New Clothes"), Grammy winner (1991).

27



Ruth Miriam Greenfield was an American concert pianist and teacher who, through music, broke racial barriers and brought together black and white students, taught by black and white teachers. This pioneering color-blind approach, considered scandalous at the time, was a breath of fresh air in the then-segregated society. She founded, in 1951, the Fine Arts Conservatory, one of the first fully integrated schools for music, art and dance in the South.



Lives Lived Continued on page 106

Heroes



In the landmark incident in 2004, India, a mob of 200 women killed a serial rapist inside the courtroom in front of the Judge



This was done as a reaction to the fact that Akku Yadav, serial rapist and murderer, was getting favoured by the police for a long time, got bail after several crimes, was about to get bail again and mocked one of the victims in the court.

She is Anna Muzychuk champion and queen of chess and she refused to play in Saudi Arabia. "I refuse to play with special rules, like wearing an Abaya, being accompanied by a man to leave the hotel. Will lose 2 world titles. It's unfortunate, but I can't feel like I'm a 2* class person".

We bow down to you dear Anna

"Moms for Liberty"

=

Klanned Karenhood

Republicans don't want you to know:

- US has the highest economic growth of all the leading world economies since the pandemic
- President Biden created 13 million jobs, more than any other 4-year term IN JUST TWO YEARS
- 750,000 of those jobs are manufacturing jobs, which President Biden is bringing back to the U.S.
- America has the lowest inflation in the G7, and it's down 40% from a year ago
- Over 16 months in a row of unemployment being under 4%, a record streak

They don't want you to know these things because President Biden's approach is working.

That's Bidenomics.
PASS IT ON.



Assholes of the Month

Today's face of Christian Fascism: Lorie Smith the amateur web designer who decided her rights were being trampled by the mere possibility of having to design a website for a same-sex couple--even though no one had ever asked her to do that.



Lorie Smith, owner and founder of 303 Creative, at the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington, D.C. | Credit: Alliance Defending Freedom

@se_ransdell

'That isn't true': Michele Bachmann says slavery was not 'sinful' at America's inception



In a July 4 appearance on the Christian program Flashpoint, Bachmann was asked how America's

youth viewed the country's inception.

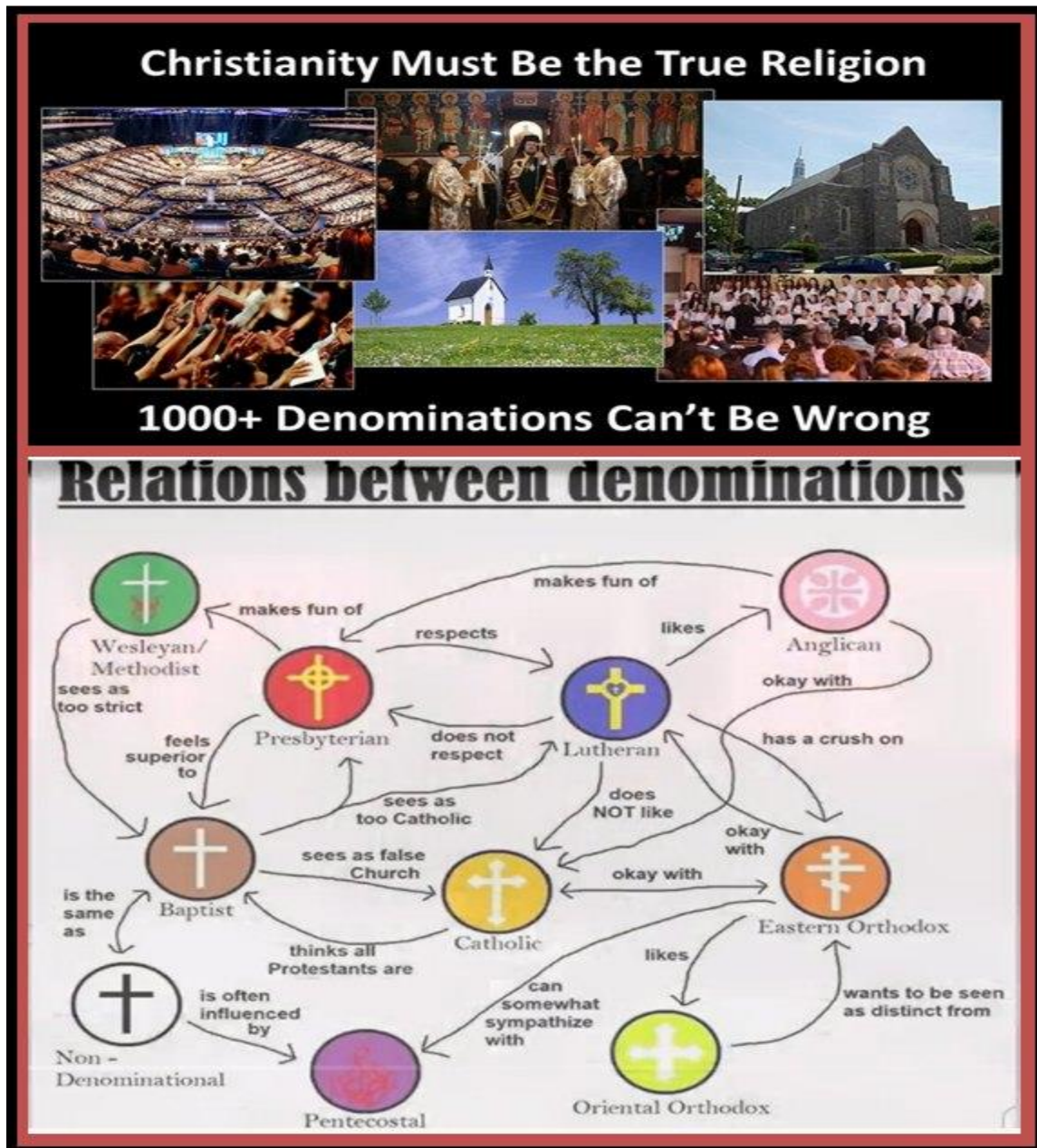
She responded by calling the 1619 Project's efforts to document the effects of slavery "evil."

"Well, I think sometimes when evil comes into the world and when falsehoods come into our nation, people react to that," Bachmann said. "There's the 1619 Project that came in, and that is a rewriting of American history, a false view of American history. And a lot of people were absolutely appalled by that."

The former lawmaker claimed that today's students are falsely being taught that America was "sinful from our inception" because slavery existed in the original 13 colonies when the war for independence broke out in 1775.

"They're taught things that aren't true, that America is a hateful country, that we were sinful from our inception," she asserted. "That isn't true. And so there's a whole 'nother group who are interested in knowing what the truth is." – **David Edwards**

COMMENTARY



Dear Trump.
Don't think of it as a federal prison. It's a place
to learn valuable life skills.



By J. Dan Vignau

Recently, our Aware Ones Sunday discussion centered on the question, "What is sin"? *Could we have chosen a wider topic?*

For most people, committing a sin would be no more than the violation of religious tenets in structured, predominant social and/or religious groups in any society. So-called sins are religious rules regarding the violation of group norms. As such, they evolved over long periods of time because of the need for socially cohesive interactions within a group, and between groups.

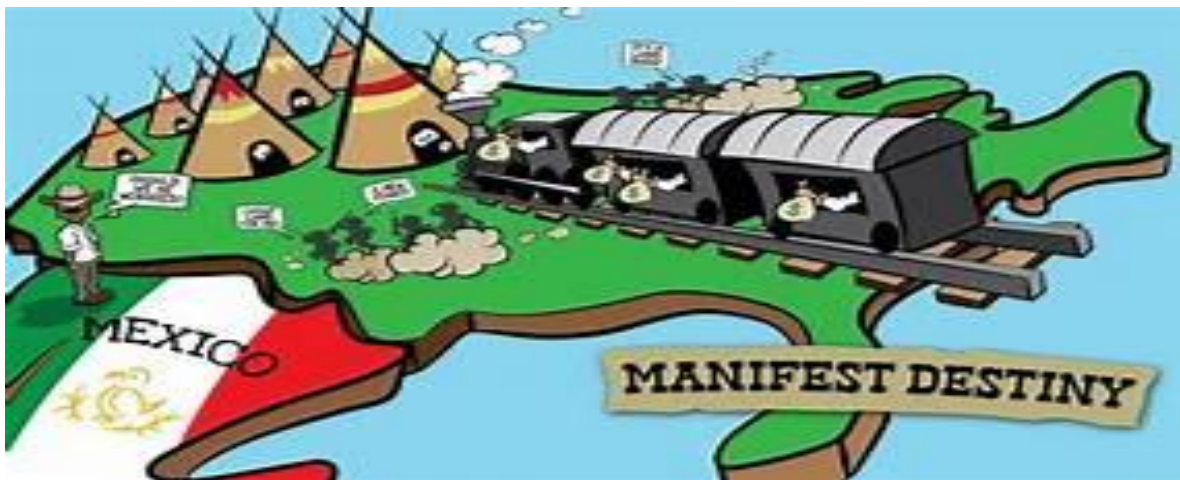
Sin can be independent of laws and morals except in maybe totalitarian, and definitely in religious societies. Laws are said to exist to keep social order and to keep the mechanisms of growing or stable societies together. Laws are not necessarily democratic in nature. Especially if they are based on the mythology of an ancient religion.

Of course, point of view relies on who is powerful enough to decide what is and is not, sin. From my point of view, when the sin of population destruction was being committed, Euro-Caucasian invaders used the theory of the white man's Manifest Destiny, claiming that the savages they encountered must be *perverted* to Christianity. (Well, they actually said,

"converted", but you get the picture). I believe the concept of Manifest Destiny has been the cause of the greatest sin(s) against humanity.

The most pernicious notion of the myth of Manifest Destiny is a divine right to subdue and exploit what was laid out before them – even a previously occupied continent. Wikipedia said:

The underlying concept of Manifest Destiny came from the belief in the 19th century that the United States had the God-given right to expand its territories across the entire continent. The population swelled from 5 million people in 1800 to more than 23 million just five decades later.



Manifest Destiny has always been used to take over the permanent settlements of Indigenous peoples. White men are chosen by a god to take over the world and save all of the savage souls. Even before desert dwelling goat herders traveled in their nomadic world, certain rules of behavior held these groups together. And, always, a religious figurehead, a priest or preacher depending on the sect, accompanied the invaders. To bless them and help subjugate the previous owners; deaths and rapes notwithstanding.

According to the French philosopher and sociologist Emile Durkheim, the traditions, rules, and rituals of religions provided the bond that held groups together far more than any other bond. Of course, he did live in the Victorian era, so saloons, workmen's guilds, and cities were not seen as much as an influence.

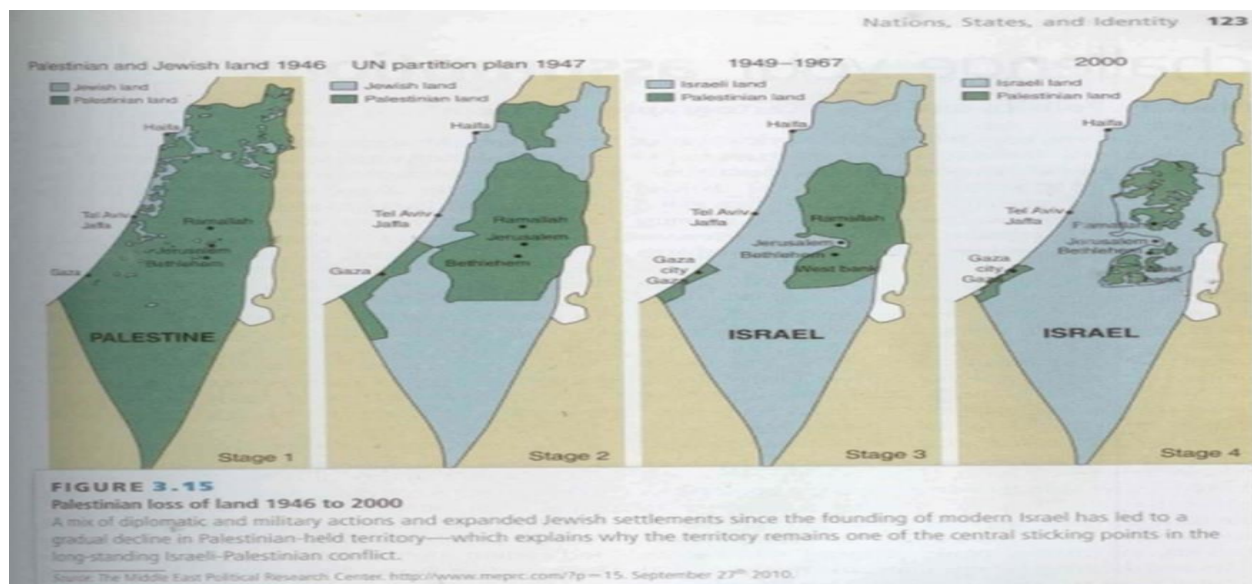
Once a foothold was established and settlers began to occupy land with the intention to stay, then other dynamics of religious order took over. Paleoanthropologist Louis Leaky, (of Olduvai Gorge fame) hypothesized that farming is a specialization of the human species, "We know from the study of evolution that, again and again, various branches of animal stock have become overly specialized ... leading to their extinction."

Leaky also noted, that as farming societies evolved, these rules of behavior began to include the provision for property ownership. Have we, as human beings, become slow to adapt to cultural and population changes because of “our own” over specialization? Are we committing the deadliest sin of destroying our planet because we can no longer adapt to these changes? He posited that Homo Sapiens is – in many physical respects – still very under-specialized, except in brain power, stating, “It well may be that this over-specialization will lead, just as surely, to his extinction.”

One thing man does very well is make up fairytales, including all god stories. We have already destroyed cultures, even entire populations, for our greed. How petty can we be to worry about people’s harmless foibles while destroying our planet? I ask; *Is religion the obstacle that must be overcome in order to save our species?*

The provisions of Manifest Destiny had been infinitely slow to be seen as detrimental the living peaceful, especially for Indigenous nomads and other groups, in both North and South America.

This is an example of *true sin*, as are murder, terrorist acts such as rape and bullying, and theft. Not only did American nomadic tribes suffer, Middle Eastern nomads and settlers have been systematically ousted because of their god’s will, with Israel being the main perpetrator of such warfare now.



Nearly a half century ago, an American sociologist, Richard Quinney wrote, “There’s a Lot of People Grateful for the Lone Ranger” (University of Oregon’s sociology journal, *The Insurgent Sociologist*).

In Quinney's epitome of extensive Criminology text, he meticulously discussed the data that shows unequivocally that the inequalities in our social structure lead to crime (i.e., sin?).

In the old West, as in the large cities, businesses had to hire thugs to protect their interests, thugs such as *Pinkertons*, a private detective/mercenary agency. Eventually, businessmen got the government to pay for this service, calling the protectors sheriffs and marshals, while creating heroes such as *The Lone Ranger*, whose fable portrays a man and his Indigenous accomplice as they ride around protecting "the little man" (i.e., "Joe, the plumber").

Quinney posited that *The Lone Ranger* actually protected the status quo; of businessmen, ranchers and etc. For example, John D. Rockefeller hired Pinkerton types from the *Baldin-Felts* agency to send thugs to machine gunned sleeping coal mine strikers in Matewan, West Virginia, because they were brazen enough to stand up and demand safer working conditions.

How dare they?!?! Rockefeller's thugs also quashed the ideas of a day off every week, and horrors, 9 cents per hour, instead of 7 ½ for the workers' 12-hour days. Boy, those were halcyon days of impending neo-liberalism, or so we thought. Dissing *The Lone Ranger*! What was he thinking?

But then, Along Came Ron ... Reagan, that is! An actor funded by big business to become president and spokesmodel to read the scripts for and of the American Industrial Complex, both military and otherwise.

A script that says, "All commie sociologists must be destroyed." "There are people born good and people born bad. Bad ones need to be locked away by the rapidly expanding Prison Industrial Complex."

And now folks, back to sin:

Sex, Drugs, and Rock and Roll are sins. Aren't they? A sin is anything that interferes with the social order of control by monopoly corporate power. Isn't it? Religious rules are all that matter. Hell, yes! Scare everyone with fables of eternal torture, and they will work longer and cheaper.

Let's use these fairytales to make laws! Laws against heresy. Sex laws. Curfew laws. Drug laws. Laws that increase the number of babies to spend their lives fighting way too many people for near-slave-wage jobs; Laws against membership in certain political parties, such as socialism, laws against sexual behaviors that do not lead to a cheaper work force through over-population (i.e., contraception and same-sex coitus).

Masses of people have gone to prison, not for sinning, but for violating unjust laws. Laws against the invented sins of holy ghost believers, (i.e., non-thinkers) who need to fear an eternal, and fiery inferno to pretend to lead an ethical life.

True socialism, which dares to get people to seek ownership in the companies they work for is demonized, as are guilds and unions. No, not Chinese or Russian fascist, so-called Communism, or even totally fascist National Socialist NAZI's, but people who want some of the vast amounts of money and resources that the robber barons hoard, resources that could make this world a truly great planet to inhabit for our quite short lives – just their fair share.



Sin to a Humanist is espousing rules that invoke the folklore of goat-herding, stone-aged cultures of prohibitions on behaviors that are totally non-related to harming other beings. These rules of what is a sin invoke fairytales, complete with supposedly supernatural beings who made these rules. These very special, supernatural deities give us derived sins, sins with special rituals and traditions as their form of brainwashing. They also teach us to whom its believers are superior. Kill the redskins, kill the blacks, kill the Jews, and kill the queers! It is necessary to abhor inferior beings. Why else would anyone need to obey these tenets if outsiders also gained the same benefits? God says it is the thing to do.

An even far greater sin is to use these people to further corporate interests and self-serving laws. The worst sin is having a corrupt political system of government that uses ignorance to enslave the populace.

Educators often say that the more a person learns, the more one discovers what the person does not know. It has been called; The Dunning-Kruger effect which is "*a type of cognitive bias that causes people to overestimate their knowledge or ability, particularly in areas with which they have little to no experience.*"

It is easy to see how this is manifested. We are living in an age of Dunning-Kruger ignorance today. I should say, "Ignorance Bonding". Our least educated populace has been brainwashed to hate outsiders, outsiders who are what they are told to hate. Trumpsters believe in each other. They bond. Without Trump, they are nothing. Trump was sent by god. Their religions, their lack of ever learning that they know very little, their bonding -- through membership in a group of idiots.

It is truly perverse. *Hate is godly, love is sin!*

1984 is here ... just a little late. The corporate controllers have convinced huge numbers of people that reasoning is bad. If they learned to think and ideate then they might vote for union wages, health care, own fewer guns, have fewer wars, and thereby live better lives. Unfortunately, they vote on whom they have been told to hate. They fear that, without this uniting of people based on the correct things to hate, they would lose their identity as a group, and fall back into obscurity as ignorant assholes, an identity that they finally agree with each other that they have been given by god and his, god-works-in-mysterious-ways, criminal sociopath, totally delusional, religiously mysterious, demi-god, Donald Trump.

It's a true sin to be such a believer, and to use idiots for personal gain.

But, But, BUT, The Bible says "to avoid eating from the tree of knowledge". Could that be a euphemism for remaining ignorant? Ignorant of worldly things by not eating from the tree of knowledge.

Last thoughts:

What is not a sin?

Simple. Any loving relationship. Any mutual sexual relationship. Saying Goddamn, Damn God, Jesus sucks, Mary was a whore and Fuck the Pope is not a sin. It is not a sin to Shit on Reagan's grave, Piss in Trump's hair, Eat Cunt, Fuck, Suck Cocks, Fuck Mothers, or caress tits. Just letters, just words.

Profane, irreverent, blasphemous, *DIRTY*? Hell yes! And with those statements I find I must thank the saint of all sacrilege, George Carlin with the seven words he found he could not say on television:

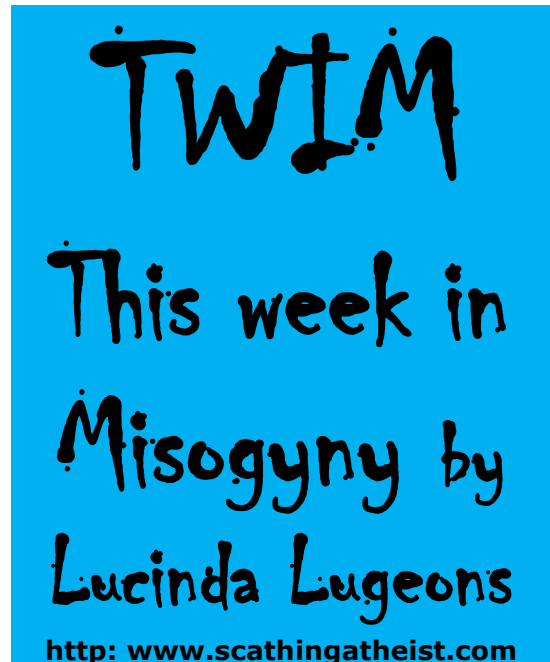
Shit, Piss, Cunt, Fuck, Cocksucker, Motherfucker, and Tits.

Bless you George!

Warning: In some regressive societies, some of the above is illegal, but not truly sinful.

When Jesus Christ came upon the Earth, you killed Him. The son of your own God. And only after He was dead did you worship Him and start killing those who would not. ~ Tecumseh



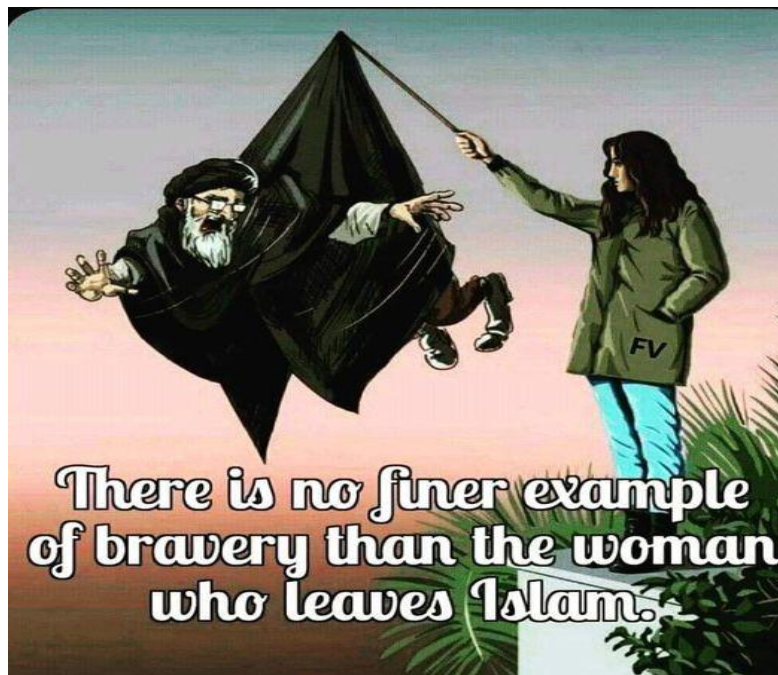


Sorry I've been away for so long, but I've been busy bathing in the salty and ever-so-slightly caffeinated tears of every douche-bro in the manosphere who ever said "go woke, go broke", as Greta Gerwig's testament to woke feminism skyrockets its way up the "all time highest grossing movies" list (it's in the top 25 as of this recording, and the 6th highest that wasn't part of a series.)



But alas, as much as feminism dominates the box office, misogyny still runs the fucking world, so we'll turn our attention to that. And we'll start in Israel, where Ultra-Orthodox lawmakers are trying to expand the power of all-male religious courts and bar women from many public spaces that might also contain men. Even without legal authority, sexist zealots emboldened by Netanyahu's rhetoric are just taking power and forcibly barring women from public transportation and shit. And every indication is that this kind of thing is set to get worse.

Now, to be clear, Israel's Supreme Court has ruled that it's illegal to force women to sit in separate sections on buses, trains and airplanes. But as you know if you've been listening long, this law is routinely ignored. On top of that, one of the biggest fights in Israeli politics is Netanyahu's effort to castrate their Supreme Court. And in order to rope in the support of these Ultra-Orthodox factions, he's had to make a *lot* of sexist concessions. These



There is no finer example
of bravery than the woman
who leaves Islam.

include agreements to segregate audiences by gender at some public events and expanding the power of the aforementioned all-male rabbinical courts. And I should point out that the very political parties that are pushing for this shit don't allow women to run for office, so you can see how this shit falls into a self-reinforcing feedback loop pretty quick.

I've also got a story out of India thanks to astute listener Nick, who sent this one to Scathing News at Gmail dot com. Apparently there's a staged video that's being shared around Indian social media meant to drum up prejudice against that country's Muslim minority and is specifically aimed at Muslim *women*. In the video, a Hindu guy supposedly thwarts a kidnapping by revealing that a woman in a burka is actually a man in disguise. The video specifically warns viewers that there's been a rash of be-burka-ed kidnappers and that they should be suspicious of anybody wearing one.

And look, I'm no fan of the fucking burka. There are all kinds of reasons you should kind of shudder when you see one. But putting this kind of bullshit message out into the tinderbox of religious tension in India right now is almost certainly gonna have *deadly* consequences. And, like in Israel, the

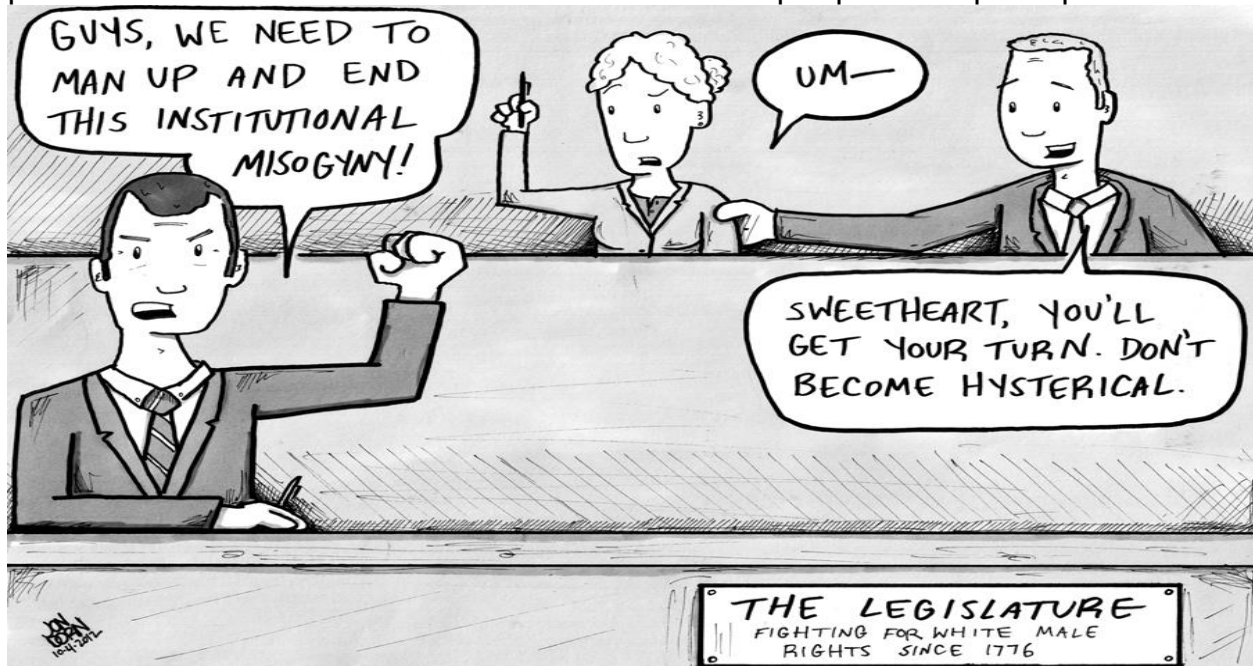
sexist religious zealots are bolstered by a leader that has no qualms at all about exploiting that tension to drum up support with his base.

But despite the international flavor of this segment, it's not like we need to go far from home to find sexism, so my final story comes out of the State of Texas. And like pretty much every story out of Texas, it's a sad one. It's about a prison guard named Salia Issa, who was seven months pregnant when she started having labor pains at work. She told her boss that she needed to go to the hospital, but he wouldn't let her leave. According to a lawsuit she filed against the state, he told her she was lying and just wanted to go home.

BIRTH CERTIFICATE		
It is certified that -----		
Child Description		
Sex: Male/Female	Mother: Given Name: Family Name: Father Name:	
Weight: -----		
Height: -----		
Date of Birth: -----		
Place of Birth: Area, City, State		
Doctor Signature: -----		N/S Signature: -----

Now, eventually — two and a half hours after she first alerted her boss — she was allowed to leave. She drove to the hospital as quickly as she could, where she was rushed into surgery. But it was too late. The fetus didn't make it. So she sued, arguing that her boss's negligent action led directly to her miscarriage. And in defending their actions — or, rather, their *inaction*, the state of Texas is now arguing that her fetus didn't have a right to life to begin with.

So yeah, arguably the most rabidly anti-abortion state in the union abandons that whole "fetal personhood" thing *the instant* it's gonna inconvenience them. Just one worth keeping in mind whenever you meet a person who mistakes anti-abortion activists for people with principles.



Roe V. Wade Was The Compromise

There's a reason the Roe V. Wade decision stood for 50 years.



Credit: [tedeytan](#) [The Professional Left Podcast](#)

By [Frances Langum](#) — August 14, 2023

Notice a trend in the age of Dobbs?

Fifteen-week abortion bans [from Lindsey Graham](#). Twelve-week abortion bans from RFK Jr, [or maybe not; who knows wtf RFK Jr wants](#). SIX-week abortion bans [from Ron DeSantis](#).

And the media reports on the "controversy" instead of on the lovely compromise that was Roe v. Wade. Yup, Roe v. Wade WAS the compromise.



In January of 1973, seven men on the Supreme Court of the United States decided (against two men on the Supreme Court, though) that American women in the earlier stage of pregnancy had a right to their own bodies.

And that at the end of the pregnancy, the state could restrict those rights within limits, like the mother's life. The Supreme Court [explainer at Oyez.com](https://www.oyez.com/explainer/roev-wade) puts it this way:

- In the first trimester of pregnancy, the state may not regulate the abortion decision; only the pregnant woman and her attending physician can make that decision.
- In the second trimester, the state may impose regulations on abortion that are reasonably related to maternal health.
- In the third trimester, once the fetus reaches the point of "viability," a state may regulate abortions or prohibit them entirely, so long as the laws contain exceptions for cases when abortion is necessary to save the life or health of the mother.

A trimester is about twelve weeks. All the malarkey about Roe legalizing late-term abortions is nonsense. It's just right-wing propaganda for fundraising.

We need Roe v. Wade codified into federal law, with additional protections for both women and clinics. States should be forbidden from regulating the width of hallways in clinics, and the whole "hospital admitting privileges" nonsense. Medication abortion (mifepristone) should be available at your local urgent care facility without question or interference.

And when it's "the life of the mother," and that includes [ALL ten-year-old rape victims](#), the state must be required, by federal law, to butt out.

Roe v. Wade was and is the compromise.

Enough.





Vic's Fentanyl Rub

By James Longo

Vic on the fishing boat asked, "Jack what do you think of the Fentanyl crisis? Since you are in the biz and all."

"You know I never thought about it. I guess it is what it is."

"But what is it?" Vic asked with

perplexed earnestness.

"Good question, man has been getting high before he was even man." Jack replied with sagely wisdom.

"What do you mean by that?"

"Even to this day, it isn't uncommon for a bunch of monkeys surrounding a tree with a bunch of rotten fruit to begin acting funny. Biologists believe it is from the alcohol in the fermented fruit."

"So, what if monkeys want to get high? What does that have to do with *the price* of Fentanyl in America?"

"It is in man's DNA to want to seek out a buzz, to alter his mood, change his perspective," Jack pronounced with philosophical finality.

"And what about that Fentanyl price?" Vic said, with a smirk, like he had discovered a hidden catch to a bargain, like when Mephistopheles had hoodwinked Dr. Faustus.

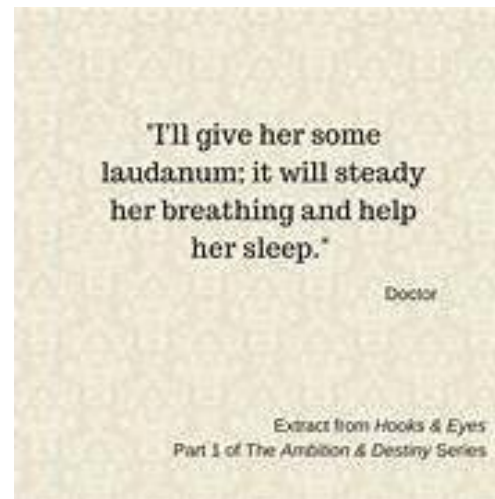
"In the nineteenth century who do you think were the biggest user of opioids in America?" Jack asked.

"I don't know, who?"

"Middle-age white women, mostly taken for menstrual cramps," Jack said sounding proud at his education of menstrual cramps.

"How's that?"

"Patent medicine. What do you think the active ingredient was? Take a wild guess.



"Opium?"

"Alcohol, and opium! Morphine and even heroin were found in many of these patent medicines. Yet no one had a problem with their wifey-poos sitting still in front of the fire with a stupid smirk on their faces for hours, or even buying bottles of the elixir when they weren't having their friend," Jack said with punctuated air quotes when he said the word "friend".

"No wonder they called it 'the friend'," Vic replied with



wonder at the discovery of female physiology. "They probably enjoyed their hours staring at the fire. But," he continued, "what does that have to do with the price of Fentanyl in America?"

"Do you mean: "how did opioid use go from a middle-class non-problem to the drug epidemic it is today." Jack wondered how serious Vic was.



"I think so," Vic hoping he wouldn't be tested afterwards.

"Do you want the long version or the short version?"

"We have time we are a long way to dropping lines," Vic said, convinced he could dish out as well as take in.



Jack inhaled a monstrously large breath. "Believe it or not it started with Upton Sinclair's expose on the meat packing industry in his novel, *The Jungle*, which eventually led to the 1906 Pure Food and Drug Act, forcing the labeling of patent medicines. People were upset wifey was a dooper I guess, then came the 1914 Harrison Narcotic Tax Act, which only allowed certain registrants to manufacturer, buy sell and administer certain chemicals."



"It sounds like it was a solution searching for a problem."

"People have made the case that the 1914 act was more about xenophobia than drug regulation?"

"How's that?" Vic asked.

"Immigration. Undesirables were coming to America. The Harrison Narcotic Tax Act did multiple things. It regulated Marijuana, which was the drug of choice of Hispanics. Cocaine because it caused Blacks to seduce and ravish white women ... supposedly. And opium, which was the drug of choice of Asians. When you add Prohibition which targeted the drug of choice of Europeans, i.e., Catholics, that is, booze (whiskey, beer and wine). It acted like a wall to separate the good people from the bad people. That pure, White, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant anti-woke majority were a pretty xenophobic lot."

"But what does this have to do with price of Fentanyl in America?"

"Those laws set up a black market, which birthed organized crime. You can't have an illicit market without illicit products and people willing to do illicit things to bring those products to market."



"You might want to move this along, eventually we will be fishing," Vic said.

"The late 1960's brought the Counterculture, Civil Rights and Richard Nixon. If human nature has a tendency to want to get high, it also has a tendency to push the edge of the societal envelope. The 1970 Control Substance Act was Nixon and the establishment's attempt to push back on permissiveness."



"So," Vic said tapping his foot. The explanation was much more complicated than he had wished.



"This developed a bigger, better organized criminal organization. By the 1980's they went from moving bales of Marijuana to concentrating on Cocaine, but Opioids were always there. There was a societal disinclination to heroin. The addictive properties, the potential for overdose. It was perceived as a 'hard' drug," Jack said. Again, using air quotes to punctuate around the word "hard".

"What happened was a few small studies in the early 1990's that showed Narcotics weren't as habit forming as they thought. Nothing conclusive. Add to that a perceived change in how the medical establishment's treatment of pain. Doctors were allowed to prescribe narcotics more liberally as they treated pain more aggressively. Enter the Purdue corporation (the Sackler family entrepreneurs) with its sustained release oxycodone (Oxycontin) and the marketing for chronic pain. Pain management was born and pretty quickly, addiction went through the roof."

"Yeah, and the price of Fentanyl," Vic said with a smirk he hoped would goad Jack.



"At one point, in one year, Broward County went from four pain

management clinics to 104. Over a ten-year period, narcotic prescriptions went up seven hundred percent. You know what else went up seven hundred percent?"

"What?" Vic asked. He had to suffer to keep from yawning.

"Overdoses. The government came in and went after all the people making money off its citizens' lives. The manufacturers, the wholesalers, the doctors, the pharmacies, and you know what else happened?"



"I don't know, what?" Vic felt like he was being lulled to sleep.

"Legal opioids in the legal logistical chain went from a river to a trickle. Where do you think all those people went when the candy man can't give them their candy

and they have a monkey on their back."

Vic just shook his head. He reached for his handkerchief because his nose was beginning to run.

"Some went to drug rehabs, business increased by multiple folds. I always loved the doctors who were pain management doctors and are now drug rehab doctors. In America those who can afford, get, and those who can't. They find another way."

"And the price of Fentanyl?" Vic asked, almost pleading.

"We are almost there."

"Good because we *are* almost there," Vic said, as he throttled down the fishing boat's motor to a troll.

"Every ounce of narcotics; heroin, oxycodone, morphine hydrocodone, start



out as opium, legal or illegal. Opium comes from the poppy plant, where are poppy plants grown? They are grown in war-torn countries like Afghanistan.

"Let's say you are an organized criminal. You just picked up thirty million clients. The price of opium has gone through the roof, and you are tired of paying through the nose to warlords. Add to that opium is bulky to move and it still needs to be processed.



RAYMOND ARTHUR MORTIMER

"Enter Fentanyl, a synthetic opioid. It doesn't require opium. It is easier to move. It gives you more bang per weight for your buck! All it requires is some chemicals and a half decent chemist. It is a no brainer. Of course, you change your product line. A few people die. so what? What are they going to do, take you to court?"

"The answer to your question, 'is Fentanyl cheap?' Yes, because opium is more expensive. The reason this all happened was because Big Pharma, the Federal government, and criminal entrepreneurs caused the problem. But only those entrepreneurs and organized crime were left to deal with it."

"Hey man, you want to buy some Fentanyl?" Vic asked as the engine cut out.

"Get out of here man," Jack said.

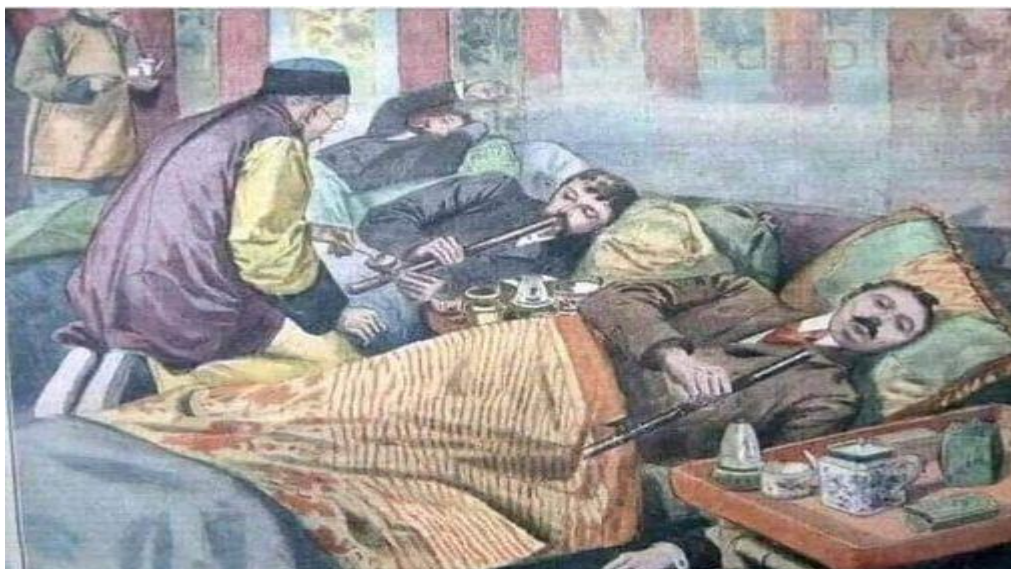
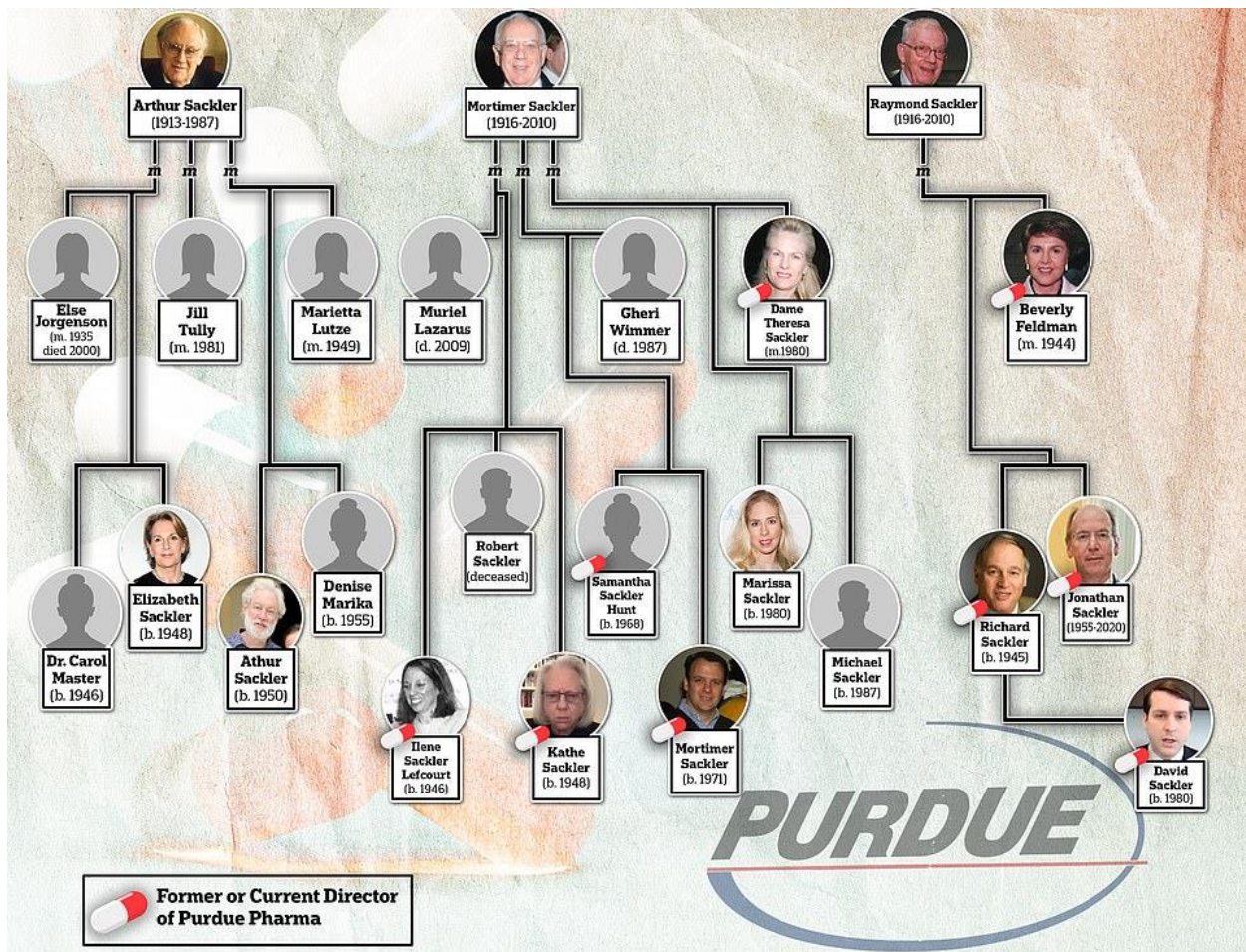
"Let's fish," Vic said and started walking to their place on the boat.

Jack couldn't help himself and caught up to him, "How much?"

"Get out of here, I was just busting your chops."

"I knew that," Jack said, rolling his eyes at his stupidity.





I dare say Humphrey, I'm starting to think that these aren't clarinets at all!

WATCHING THE WORLD WALK IN AND TAKE A TABLE

By Bert Mautz

All too often the people watching
is better than the food.



Decades ago the Palms Restaurant in New York City, which is before it went national and sprung up in many major cities, franchising the concept of upmarket steak house style dining, offered advice to its patrons. They urged their customers to take a few minutes, pause for a cocktail in their bar, wind down, leave the commotion of the street beyond the front door.

Our favorite restaurant overlooks a marina of white yachts with the sun setting beyond, boisterous clouds running across the western sky. We've adopted the Palms' advice to take our seats at the bar, chat up Christine and Justin, the seasoned bartenders.

"How ya been?"

"What's new?"

"What'll ya have?"

"The usual?"

"Sure, why not? A Jim Beam Manhattan
would be great."



"Jim Beam and ginger ale for you, Dear?"

Sailors' Return isn't an extravagant eatery, neither is it an Italian Garden. *Sailors'* draws a mature clientele, several of whom are also to be found at the bar. Conversation is cordial and spontaneous. Exactly why one takes a seat at any bar.

Enjoy fellowship, pull up a bar stool and ask about the other guy's day, or did she see the debates? Be assured he or she is at the bar with the same motivation.

It is an attractive dining room with interesting nautical and marine life collectibles on the walls, and there is that fabulous view. Must have been a long

time since lunch.

Back to the Palms reference, the eating is but one aspect of complete and satisfying dining. Relax, get comfortable, take in your setting, maybe open the wine list. Your waiter will be by soon enough and you can order the New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc to go with the sea bass you've been anticipating all day.



Want to be left alone? Go sit by yourself and play with your phone at a table.

The nonsocial types are obvious. Can't help but wonder if sixty years ago he was on the basketball team, and she was a cheerleader. Immediately after being seated by one of the sundressed hostesses, these couples focus on the oversized menu cards.



One or the other will immediately pull a phone from purse or pocket. Remarkably

we see couples with their own phones, and both using them.

Not to talk, make a call, but punching keys furiously, sending messages, or checking the closing markets. Who knows, but they are oblivious to the environs, or each other.

The adolescents accompanying the adults are guaranteed to be focused on their phones. No socializing here. It has been wondered about elsewhere what has become of the next generations' conversational skills.

Recently watched a table of four young women, early twenties likely, all on their phones at the same time. No conversation, no pleasure taken from the setting, the environment. The ladies were consumed/preoccupied by their connectivity to elsewhere.

The valet served parking lot is gridlocked during the winter season. More interesting are the diners arriving by boat at the dock right there in front of the overlooking dining room.

Boating folks seldom arrive wearing dining room fashion. Most often, they've been traveling in swimming suits. Fabulously brief swimming suits. scampering on and off their boats at the skippers' suggestion with dock lines to secure to the cleats. Once made fast these comely deck hands don their cover ups, shake out the ponytails and proceed up the stairs to the restaurant. Wouldn't miss the show.

Dining out may be best with friends. Conversation is guaranteed. Social connection over a meal is a very special pleasure. Leave the phones in your pocket.





106 dead and counting, over 2,200 structures destroyed, at least 222 families displaced, over five billion dollars in damage. But don't worry, a church is fine, so god's doing his part.

I'm talking, of course, about the wildfires that swept through Hawaii last week and are, to a much lesser extent, still smoldering as of this recording. And of course, in no instance is god's absence more glaring than in natural disasters — except maybe unnatural disasters. But somehow believers all across the country are simultaneously able to sympathize with the doomed victims that suddenly found themselves engulfed in a firestorm *and* believe that a loving deity is running the show. And in a spectacular display of the sheer magnitude of their cognitive dissonance, the fact that one of the many

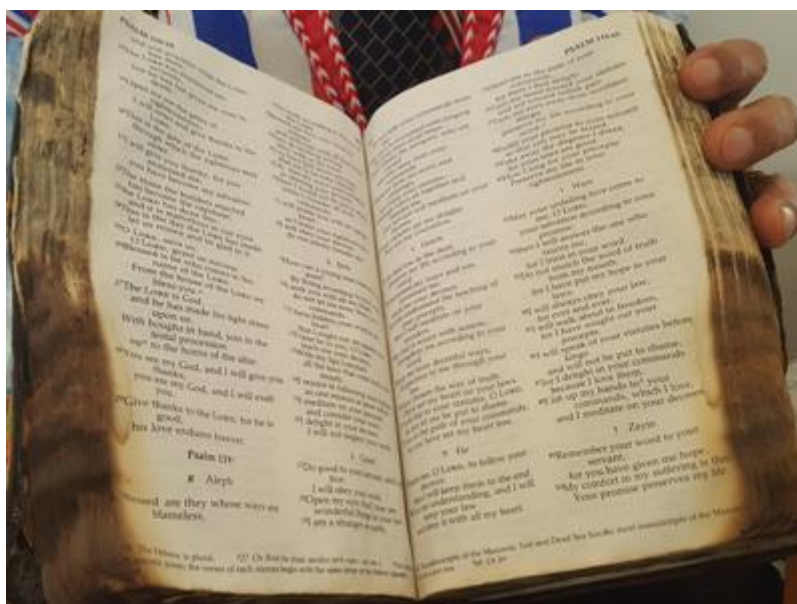


buildings that *didn't* burn down was a church is being offered up as evidence of divine providence.

Headlines like Newsweek's "Maui Church Miraculously Unscathed", NewsNation's "Incredible Miracle: Maui Church Unscathed by Fire", and the New York Post's "It's a Miracle: Catholic Church Untouched by Maui Wildfires" all attest to god's minimal



(but somehow still miraculous) intervention. And I should emphasize here that there weren't, like, hundreds of refugees huddled in the church, praying for deliverance as the fire bared down on them. The fucking thing was fucking empty. Homes were burning all around it, some *with families in them*, and these headlines would have you believe god nodded along to that until the fire started fucking with his property. And — some-fucking-how — they're selling it like he'd be the good guy in the story if that were the case.



Of course, this is always the way with religious people in the wake of a disaster. A house catches fire and kills everyone inside, and we get a feel-good story about the way the Bible was miraculously unburned. A natural disaster kills a dozen people, and Christians praise Jesus for all the nearby murders he *didn't* commit. Thousands of people die in a terrorist attack that collapses a skyscraper, and we lionize god's grand effort at offering up a sympathetic lower-case T in the wreckage.



I mean, imagine if we were all evaluated with as much leniency in our jobs as Christians give god, right? It would be like if the only standard you held us to on this podcast was “not technically a hate crime.” But somehow god — who, by their reckoning, has the highest possible potential for achievement — is graded by the lowest possible standard. Sure, he was asleep at the wheel when the wildfire came through. And sure, he invented wildfire, and it was his idea to make humans flammable. But dammit, an elderly woman was able to find her old wedding band among the wreckage that used to be her home, so god is good. 5/5. Would pray to again.

In fact, if you think about it, god’s such an underachiever that they never even bothered to conceptualize true miracles. Instead, they have these inherently selfish moments of random wish-granting. Like, even if that wasn’t just “how coincidences work”, it would still suggest a pretty shitty god. Because when he *does* a miracle, it’s pretty much always just for one person. And by definition, it’s *never* universal. It can’t be. God brings *this person* back to life. This one person in a hospital full of dying people. God solves one person’s financial problems in a neighborhood full of poverty. God finds one person’s lost keys without finding another person’s lost child.

Contrast that with science. I mean, it would be too much to say that we can all benefit equally from the advancements of science, but there aren’t even any scientists researching for a cure to *just Dave’s* cancer. To the greatest possible extent, science’s miracles are distributed to the world. Yes, we fall short of that. *Way* short of that. But at least it’s the ideal. In fact, one of the metrics we use to judge a scientific breakthrough is how universally applicable it is. How many people will benefit from that? That’s a basic question for science, but it’s too much to ask of god. Even in their own telling, he’s *never* actually eradicated a disease. And for an omnipotent god, that would be damning enough if he wasn’t the dude who invented those diseases in the first place.

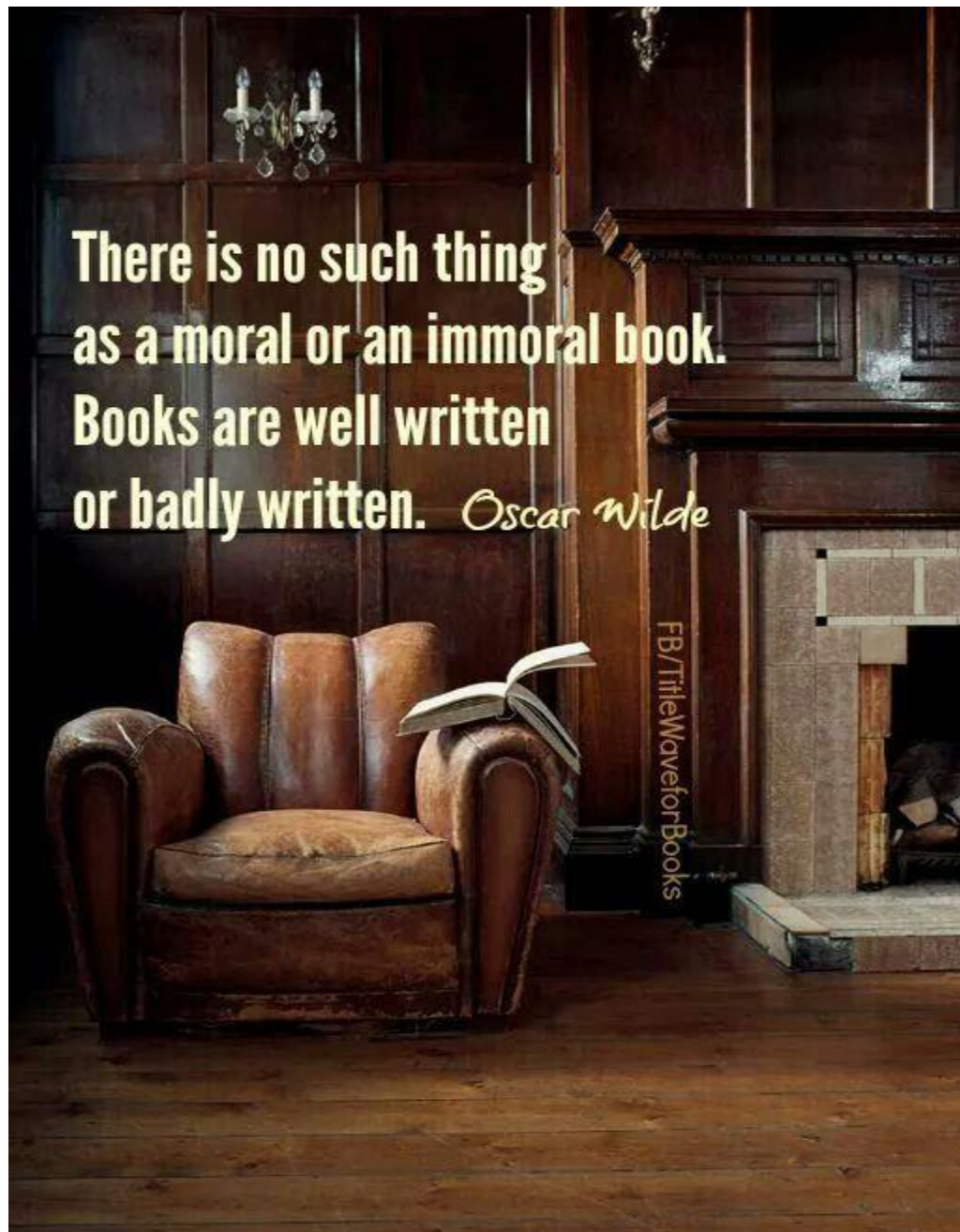
Of course, if we actually believed even the very worst of Christians, we'd have to accept that sometimes god *does* do repeat and widespread healing by granting healing powers to the greasiest of his disciples. But again, because of the criminally low standard that religious people hold their god to, the people who believe this shit don't even bother to question why the person with healing powers is at a megachurch instead of an emergency room. Their very concept of miracles is so self-centered that it doesn't even occur to them to ask.

Now, to be clear, god simply isn't. He doesn't do miracles and the claims for his miracles are as limited as they are because religious people are stuck with shit that would've just happened by chance. But *even if they were right*, the best efforts of humankind would be more omnibenevolent than the best efforts of their omnibenevolent god. Which is yet another reminder of how grievously they insult their god by believing he exists.

[http: www.scathingatheist.com](http://www.scathingatheist.com)



ARTICLES



I miss Anthony Bourdain. I miss Prince. I miss Carrie Fisher. I miss David Bowie. I'm so sick of Donald Trump and Mitch McConnell I could vomit. We really got a raw deal, world. – John Pavlovitz

The Whitewash of History, on DeSantis' Orders

by noticeatrend.blogspot.com



Update: Thank you Batocchio for including this article on *Crooks & Liars'* Mike's Blog Round-Up! Everyone visiting, please leave a comment below, or Tweet me at... at... oh, right. Twitter's dead.

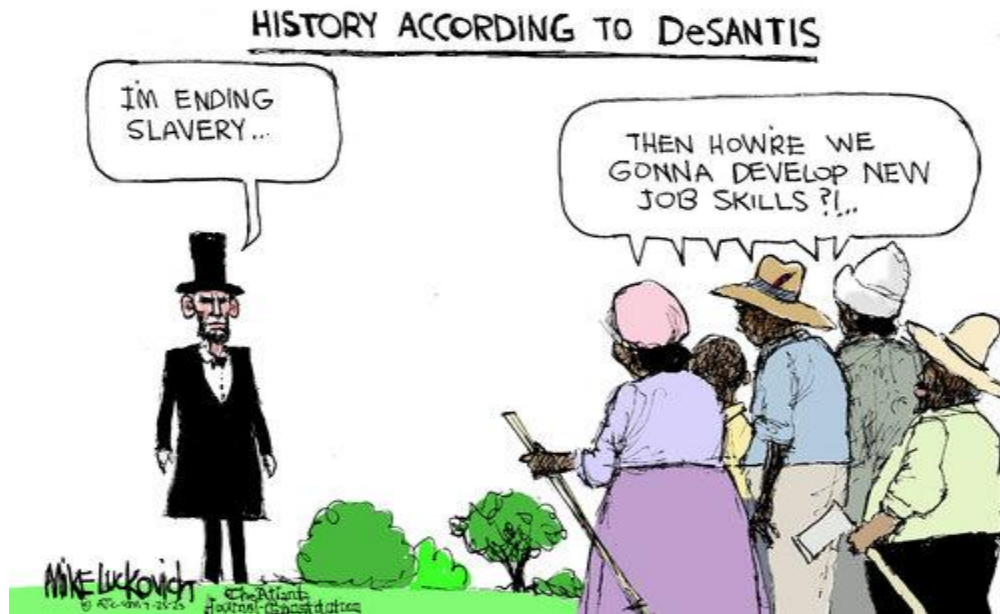
This past week bore witness to the next stage of Ron DeSantis' open war against Woke (or Critical Race Theory, or Thou Shalt Not Shame our White Boys): The utter disassembly of American/Florida History when it comes to talking about race-based slavery in our nation's development.

What DeSantis wants to impose – through his hand-picked Board of Education – grade school class studies teaching that "slavery helped the slaves develop work skills" as a "personal benefit" for gainful employment. You're not reading that wrong, that's how the regional and national media are reporting it (this link via CBS News):

Florida's 2023 Social Studies curriculum will include lessons on how "slaves developed skills" that could be used for "personal benefit," according to a copy of the state's academic standards reviewed by CBS News.

The lessons in question fall under the social studies curriculum's African-American studies section, and be taught to students in sixth through eighth grade, according to the state standards.

The lessons for that grade level will include teachings on understanding the "causes, courses and consequences of the slave trade in the colonies," and instruction on the differences and similarities between serfdom and slavery, the curriculum says. Students will also be asked to describe "the contact of European explorers with systematic slave trading in Africa" and look at the history and evolution of slave codes.



The line about **"personal benefit"** is included as a **"benchmark clarification"** to a lesson that asks students to **"examine the various duties and trades performed by slaves,"** such as agricultural work, domestic service, blacksmithing and household tasks like tailoring and painting.

My first reaction hearing the news: THIS IS DESANTIS' AND THE FAR-RIGHT REPUBLICANS IDEA OF PUTTING A POSITIVE SPIN ON HUMAN CHATTEL SLAVERY, WHAT THE ACTUAL FUCK. (Yes, it was all internal CAPS LOCK screaming)

My following reaction was a bit calmer and more of an earnest question: "Will these classes also detail the physical and emotional traumas that slavery inflicted on the men, women, and CHILDREN who were chained up, collared like animals, and whipped for the sadistic enjoyment of the masters?"

Will the study materials include the photographs of the scars on their backs?



Say hello to the BENEFITS of slavery.
"Whipped Peter" - photo from the National Gallery

Here is DeSantis - here is the WHOLE OF THE MODERN REPUBLICAN PARTY, finally proving themselves the Party of John C. Calhoun and not the Party of Lincoln - trying to make it sound like slavery were career opportunities for the tens of the thousands of captured Africans dragged to America's shores, that all those long sweating days in the cotton fields and in the smith shops and in the rape cages were "work skills" they could put on their resumes when they go job hunting down the road.

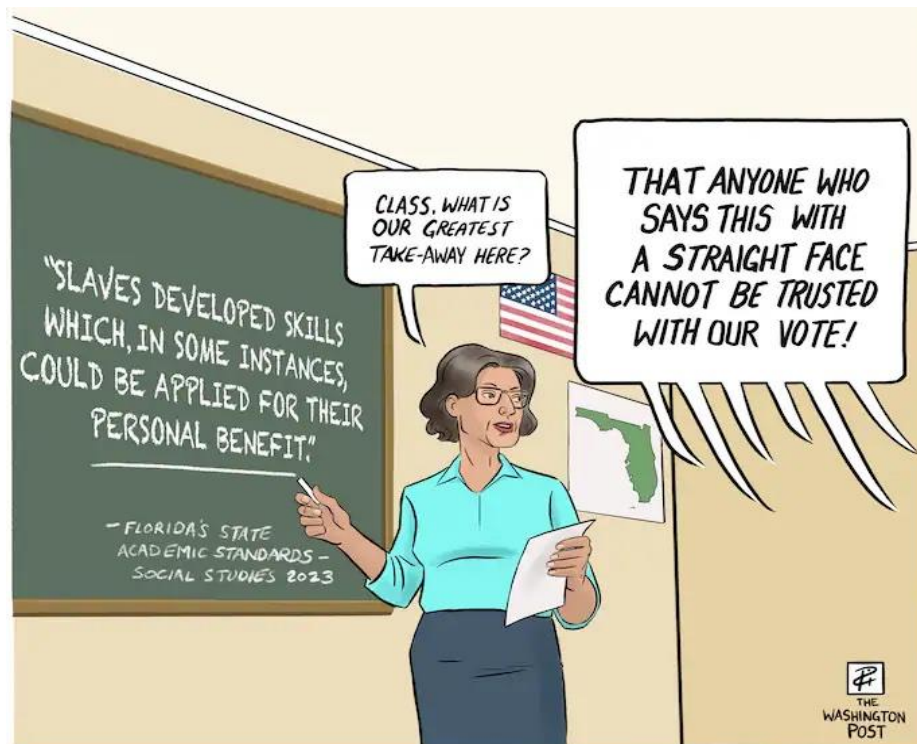
Except in slavery there WAS no "down the road," no freedom to go find your own work, you were either worked to death on the plantation where they bought you from the auction blocks, or you were traded off to another plantation - oft-times without your family and loved ones - to pay off the debts of your overseers / masters and worked to death there.

The nation is littered with gravesites of tens of thousands of slaves who died in chains. Claiming all that work was a "BENEFIT" is an obscenity that should never be taught.

But that's what DeSantis and the other Far Right Republicans want to teach. They WANT future generations of White kids to grow up to the "comforting myth" that slavery was a benefit to the slaves, they WANT to convince Black kids that there was no difference between the horrors of antebellum chattel

slavery and the current-day failures of fair treatment in education and workplaces.

This is the American Conservative gaslighting effort to set the stage, to twist the "debate" on slavery in their long-term goal to make it okay to bring back race-based slavery in some form. We've already seen – I have, as far back as 2010 – the Far Right push to undo their legacy of the 14th Amendment Citizenship clause so they can deny the rights of any class of people they want. How easy would it be for them to deny the constitutionality of the 13th Amendment and create the excuse of "slavery" as a "vocational skill program"?



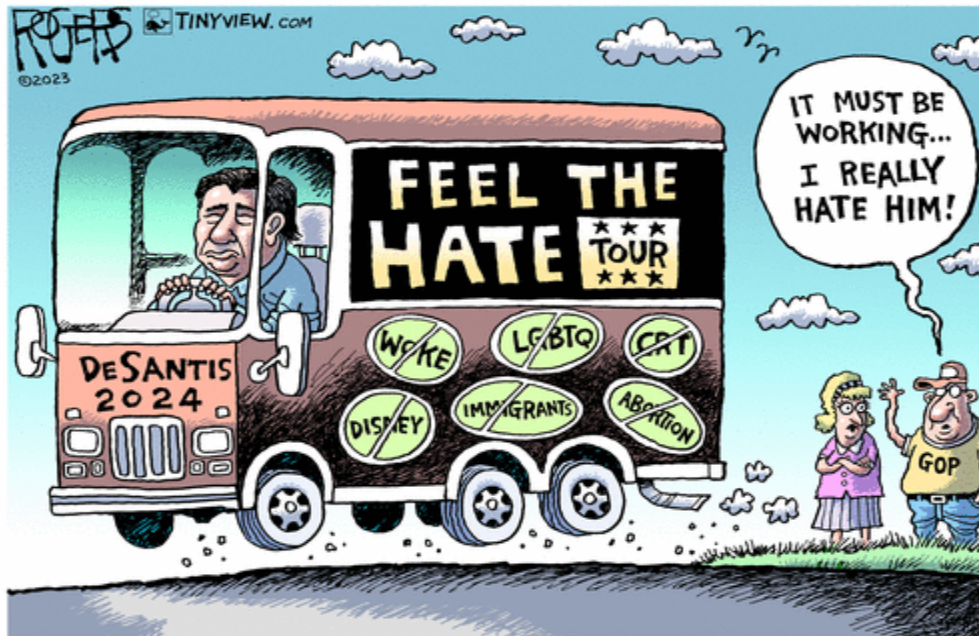
This is a nightmare.

Betty Cracker at *Balloon Juice* is a fellow Floridian, and she's as angry about this whitewash as I am. She's livid that DeSantis and his GOP lackeys are trying to rewrite the horrors of Rosewood and Ocoee Massacres as "both siderisms":

I think the Ocoee Massacre remains the most deadly election-related race massacre in U.S. history to this day. So how did black people perpetrate violence? At Ocoee, in self-defense, a black man named July Perry shot and killed two members of the KKK lynch mob that had surrounded his house because a friend was thought to have taken refuge there after attempting to vote in Florida while black (**Note**: this was in 1920, the friend was a WWI

veteran who had been told by a local judge he did qualify to vote even in that Jim Crow era).

The mob eventually lynched Perry anyway, killed more than 30 other black people, burned their houses and businesses to the ground, and established Ocoee as an all-white "sundown town." But it's important to know that both sides acted violently and had violence perpetrated upon them (**Note:** Betty is being sarcastic, by the by).



In this instance, DeSantis has layered on plausible deniability by enlisting crackpot people of color to do the dirty work, including Florida Education Commissioner Manny Diaz, Jr. and the department's African American history task force. Trump had to hand out "Blacks for Trump" shirts to white people. DeSantis is building a diverse coalition of right-wing cranks to whitewash black history and enact a far-right agenda...

DeSantis is doing all of this to win over Far Right Republicans on the national level as he campaigns for 2024, desperate to outdo the overt racism that trump spews by passing laws and breaking protocols that sinks to the deepest needs of the "deplorable" MAGA base. In the process, he's going against entire centuries' worth of facts, against the truth of how damaging human chattel slavery was – and still is – to all of humanity across the board.

Slavery has no benefit. None. **Slavery not only brutalized the Black Americans who suffered under the chain and whip, slavery also turned White Americans into brutes, broken monsters who got drunk**

and violent on the power they wielded over other lives. Even the non-owning Whites both North and South in the pre-Civil War era profited from the physical and emotional damage that slavery caused, and it still created the "White Privilege" class system that skews our legal system and social norms to this day.

For all the problems we have today, trying to forge a stronger system of justice and equality, the modern Republican Party is trying to revert our nation's long arc of history back to the 1850s. They WANT us to accept slavery, they WANT us to dehumanize the Black (and in the process the Latino and Asians who are "foreigners" to the eyes of the White Man, and then the Woman whose rights back in those days were just as non-existent) to where they have no rights at all.



Goddamn them, Goddamn DeSantis for shoving down our throats his political agenda of lies and deceit and race-driven fear.

Hey, Republicans: **If Slavery was so great at teaching "work skills," why didn't they offer those "work skills" to the poor Whites who wanted to get ahead in their career paths?** Hmm? Anyone of Anglo-Euro origins willing to put a collar on their neck and chains on their wrists to work 12 straight hours in the fields? Anyone?

For the LOVE OF GOD, Humanity, stop voting Republican.

The Moto

By Ed Zillioux



I am not a guy who normally flips through the fashion pages.

'Tis not a manly thing you know.

But perusing the latest copy of the New York Times magazine, I came upon "the jacket". An authentic Irving Schott Perfecto motorcycle jacket expertly photographed, disembodied and levitated in blackness.

Classic.

The much sought after and revered garb from serious biker to pimple faced adolescent; to slick, undernourished high fashion model who dubbed it "the Moto".

But now, over-the-top "perfect-o" rip offs with prices up to \$5000, wait in high-end shops "to seduce shoppers" already wearing motos, quote *"the hardware of which coordinated with the buckles on their booties, the change on their purses, the gleams in their eyes."* you get the idea.

The essay itself was notable mostly for its hyperbole, so steeped in

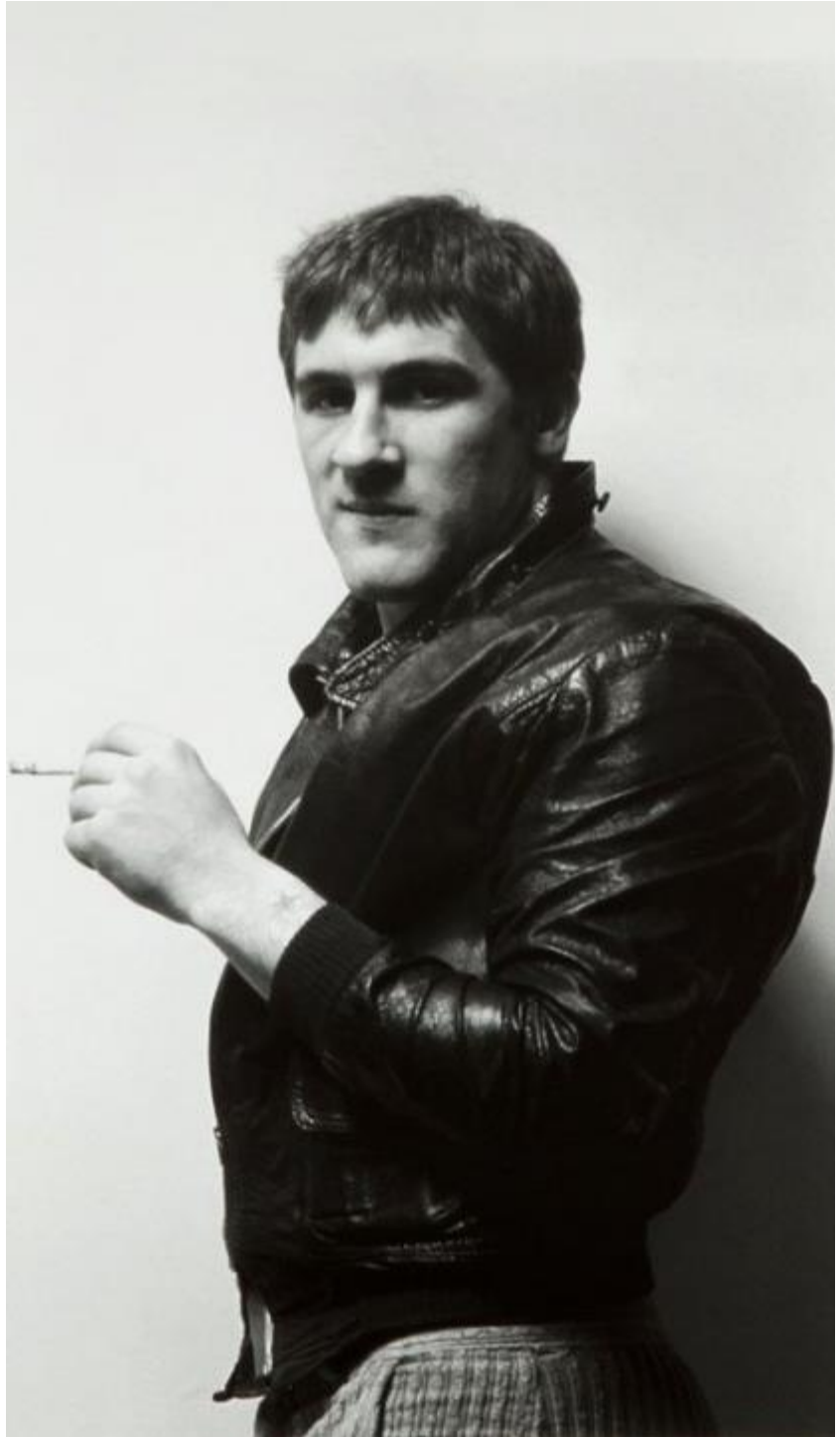


adjectives and other descriptors that to expunge them would render the account drab and meaningless.

So, I share a few, which, thus armed, could turn any hack into a high-priced fashion reporter:

- garish slick machismo
- a primal spirit

- genial daredevil
- diabolical marauder
- a jolt of euphoria
- male beauty
- classical beefcake
- Narcissus was tingling
- a style of spite
- a creed of cool
- masculinity is pliant material
- gender fluidity
- dykes on bikes
- urban armor
- a quilted red lining as rich as a juicy secret
- garish slick machismo
- armored, cosseted, insulated against the world and its mundanity
- hypermasculine and stereotypically feminine all at once
- a brute with the grace of an odalisque on a divan
- commanding adoration
- a garb for all tribes
- impervious to obsolescence
- rock idol clothing
- completing the protective bubble of earbuds and sunglasses



Whew! Exhausting! And all this in just five columns of type!

It sells, but is it good writing?


A huge news story, barely noticed

By James A. Haught



Philosopher-historian Will Durant called it "the basic event of modern times." He didn't mean the world wars, or the end of colonialism, or the rise of electronics. He was talking about the decline of religion in Western democracies. The great mentor saw subsiding faith as the most profound occurrence of the past century – a shift of Western civilization, rather like former transitions away from the age of kings, the era of slavery and such epochs.

Since World War II, worship has dwindled starkly in Europe, Canada, Australia, Japan and other advanced democracies. In those busy places, only 5 or 10 percent of adults now attend church. Secular society scurries along heedlessly.



FREETHOUGHT OF THE DAY

"[I reject Christianity's anthropomorphic God,] made in our image, silly and malicious, vain and puerile, irritable or tender, after our fashion."

George Sand
Cited in "2000 Years of Disbelief"
by James A. Haught

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Pope Benedict XVI protested: "Europe has developed a culture that, in a manner unknown before now to humanity, excludes God from the public conscience." Columnist George Will called the Vatican "109 acres of faith in a European sea of unbelief." America seems an exception. This country has 350,000 churches whose members donate \$100 billion per year.

The United States teems with booming megachurches, gigantic sales of "Rapture" books, fundamentalist attacks on evolution, hundred-million-dollar TV ministries, talking-in-tongues Pentecostals, the white evangelical "religious right" attached to the Republican Party, and the like. But quietly, under the radar, much of America slowly is following the path previously



taken by Europe.

Little noticed, secularism keeps climbing in the United States. Here's the evidence:| Rising "nones." Various polls find a strong increase in the number of Americans – especially the young – who answer "none" when asked their religion.

In 1990, this group had climbed to 8 percent, and by 2008, it had doubled to 15 percent – plus another 5 percent who answer, "don't know." This implies that around 45 million U.S. adults today lack church affiliation. In Hawaii, more than half say they have no church connection.

Mainline losses. America's traditional Protestant churches – "tall steeple" denominations with seminary-trained clergy – once dominated U.S. culture. They were the essence of America. But their membership is collapsing. Over the past half-century, while the U.S. population doubled, United Methodists fell from 11 million to 7.9 million, Episcopalians dropped from 3.4 million to 2 million, the Presbyterian Church USA sank from 4.1 million to 2.2 million, etc. The religious journal *First Things* – noting that mainline faiths dwindled from 50 percent of the adult U.S. population to a mere 8 percent – lamented that "the Great Church of America has come to an end." A researcher at the Ashbrook think-tank dubbed it "Flatline Protestantism."

Catholic losses. Although Hispanic immigration resupplies U.S. Catholicism with replacements, many former adherents have drifted from the giant church. The 2008 American Religious Identification Survey found that 20 million Americans have quit Catholicism – thus one-tenth of U.S. adults now are ex-Catholics.



Fading taboos. A half-century ago, church-backed laws had power in America. In the 1950s, it was a crime to look at the equivalent of a *Playboy* magazine or R-rated movie – or for stores to open on the Sabbath – or to buy a cocktail or lottery ticket – or to sell birth-control devices in some states – or to be homosexual – or to terminate a pregnancy – or to read a sexy novel – or for an unwed couple to share a bedroom. Now all those morality laws have fallen, one after another. Currently, state after state is legalizing gay marriage, despite church outrage.

Sociologists are fascinated by America's secular shift. Dr. Robert Putnam of Harvard, author of *"Bowling Alone,"* found as many as 40 percent of young Americans answering "none" to faith surveys. "It's a huge change, a stunning development," he said. "That is the future of America." He joined

Dr. David Campbell of Notre Dame in writing a new book, "American Grace," that outlines the trend.

Putnam's Social Capital site sums up: "Young Americans are dropping out of religion at an alarming rate of five to six times the historic rate." Oddly, males outnumber females among the churchless. "The ratio of 60 males to 40 females is a remarkable result," the 2008 ARIS poll reported. "These gender patterns correspond with many earlier findings that show women to be more religious than men."

Growing secularism has political implications. The Republican Party may suffer as the white evangelical "religious right" shrinks. In contrast, burgeoning "nones" tend to vote Democratic. Sociologist Ruy Teixeira says the steady rise of the unaffiliated, plus swelling minorities, means that "by the 2016 election (or 2020 at the outside) the United States will have ceased to be a white Christian nation. Looking even farther down the road, white Christians will be only around 35 percent of the population by 2040, and conservative white Christians, who have been such a critical part of the Republican base, will be only about a third of that – a minority within a minority."

Gradually, decade by decade, religion is moving from the advanced First World to the less-developed Third World. Faith retains enormous power in Muslim lands. Pentecostalism is booming in Africa and South America. Yet the West steadily turns more secular. Arguably, it's one of the biggest news stories during our lives – although most of us are too busy to notice. Durant may have been correct when he wrote that it is the basic event of modern times.



Cafeteria Catholicism,

*In Name Only, Or Something Else (With Two
Endings ala Tarantino)*

By James Longo

"I am a 'Cafeteria Catholic'," Teresa, in her flowered dress said, turning to the man next to her at the hotel bar.

"Strange way to start a conversation, but okay. I personally am a 'runaway Catholic'. I ran away from those people years ago," Peter said, in his polo shirt and Khaki pants.

"I am pro-choice."

"Me also," Pete said with a raised eyebrow trying to figure out where this was going.

"I say a rosary every night," she said sounding frantic.

"And I drink the blood of Christ after work in the form of a glass of red wine. What is your point?" Peter asked, taking a long sip of his red wine.

"You're making fun of me, never mind," and she turned away from him.

This irked him. He leaned in and whispered in her ear, "Are you sure you are a 'Cafeteria Catholic' and not a CINO, *Catholic-in-name-only*?"

Theresa turned to him and gave him a glare, "How dare you suggest a think, I know what I am, and I am 'Cafeteria Catholic'."





He put his hands up in surrender, but decided to push his point, "Do you go to Mass?"

"Rarely," she said.

"Do you go to confession?"

She scoffed, "And tell those deviants about my sins, what do you think I

am, crazy?"

"I guess you don't receive communion?"

"Haven't in years," She said looking to the heaven.

"Do you support the church financially?"

"A little bit when I go to Mass,"

"But you don't go to Mass regularly?"

She said, "Yes," with a you-got-me smirk.

"Do you believe what the Church believes?"

"Like what?"

"Do you believe in practicing birth control other than by natural means?"

"Of course I believe in birth control, what do you think I am, crazy? Like I'd let some dottering old celibate men tell me how to keep from having children and how many to have?"

"Do you think women should be ordained priests?"

"I am a woman; we should be able to do everything men can do."

"Should Gays be allowed to marry?"

"What business is it of mine?"

"How about divorce?" He asked.

"It's fine for other people, but I don't want one," She sounded angry.

"And abortion?" He was staring intensely at her.

"It's fine for other people, but I don't want one," A tear appeared on her cheek.

"What's a matter dear? What is really going on?"

She started to bawl. He left his bar stool and hugged her. "There, there, you can tell me?"

She welcomed the hug. She stood up. He put his arm around her. He signaled to the bartender at the two drinks and mouthed his room number. They headed for the lobby.

In the lobby she started to wail, really wail.



He decided to take her up to his room. Along the way, she blurted out that she was married with three children, and she was pregnant again, and they really couldn't afford another mouth to feed, and her husband told her that if she had this child he wanted a divorce.

They went to the room. He started kissing her tears away. She started kissing him back. Passion percolated, and bed spring sprang.

The next morning, she woke before him and took a shower. Coming out of the shower she noticed in the closet an open hang up bag with black suits and a roman collar in the breast pocket.

He woke up putting his hands behind his head with a smirk. Staring admiring her naked form front and back at the same time thanks to the mirror.

"You didn't tell me you were a priest?"

He sat up and started to rub the back of his neck. "You didn't ask, I guess this wouldn't be a good time to talk about deceit?"



"I really don't care, for last night's pleasure that will cost a thousand dollars."

"You didn't tell me you were a prostitute."

"You didn't ask," Theresa said.

"Why so steep?" *Father* Peter asked, sounding way too knowing of prostitute pricing.

"Do you think acting lessons are cheap?"

She smiled.

He shrugged his shoulders.



ALTERNATIVE ENDING ...

...The next morning, she woke up before he did and decided to take a shower. Coming out of the shower she noticed in the closet a hang-up bag, with black suits and a Roman Collar hanging out of one of suit's breast pocket.



Her eyes went wide. She whispered under her breath, "What the fuck did I do now?" She continued to dry herself in the mirror. Staring at herself questioning everything.

At that moment, Father Peter woke, stretched out, placed his hands behind his head, admiring the view of her front and back thanks to the mirror.

She turned on him, a tear in her eye and anger in her voice, "You didn't tell me you were a priest!"

"You didn't ask?" He said sitting up and was now rubbing the back of his neck, "I guess this wouldn't be a good time to talk about deceit?"

"You want to talk about deceit. I am talking about losing my religion," She screamed.

"How much religion did you have? A rosary every night to help you sleep. After that, what, a moral compass based on what you want?"

"What am I going to do?" She sobbed, putting her head in her hands.

"You are going to do what you always do, whatever you want, but now you can do it without the need for the mental gymnastics to satisfy the church."

All of a sudden she felt a wave of nausea hit her. She lurched for the toilet and vomited. She came out wiping her mouth on a towel.

"You are a devil, what I don't get is why would you do this?" As she started to get dressed.

He got up and made for the bathroom, when he came out, "Let's be honest we did what we wanted to do. I guess the question is, how do we feel about it, or



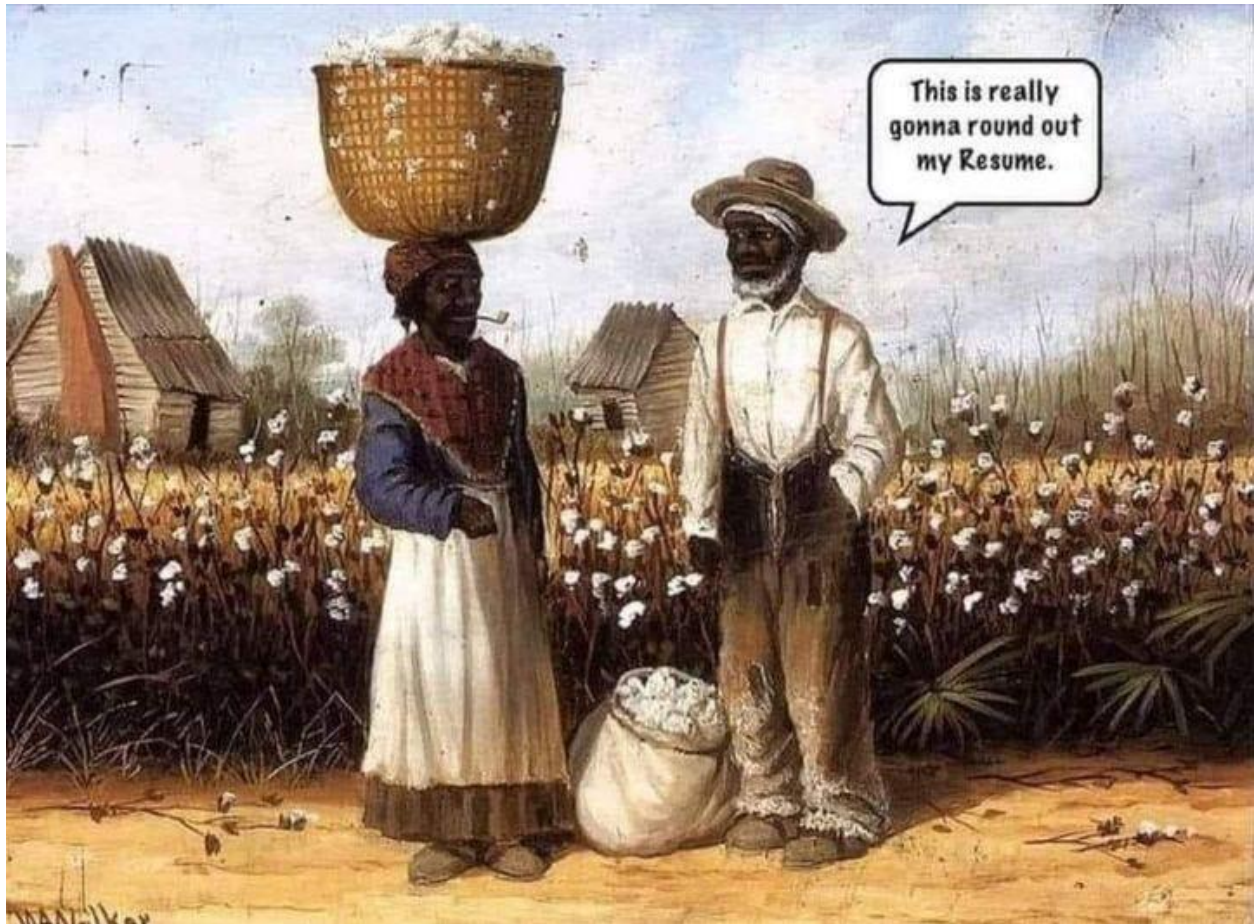
maybe a better question is how should we feel about it? You can let someone else determine your moral compass, or you can decide for yourself. I prefer to choose myself.

At this point she was fully dressed and headed for the door, "You are truly an evil man." She opened it, marched through it and was gone.

He smiled, a wicked little smile, gave a demonic laugh, flashed into his true form and disappeared without even a puff of smoke.



THE WAY WE WERE

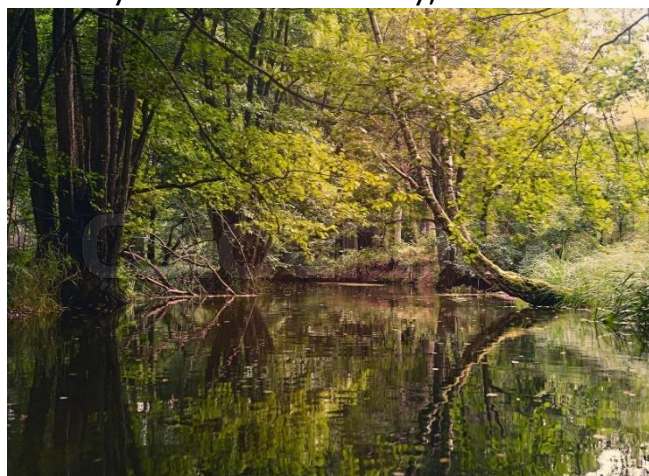


"The problem with people who have no vices is that generally you can be pretty sure they're going to have some pretty annoying virtues." — Elizabeth Taylor



Black water over blacker muck, stilled by the gentle push of midday tide, now balanced tenuously against the continuous drainage of the coastal watershed. Inch-long minnows swim freely among their detrital lunch, secure in their genetic knowledge that few predators venture this far up the tidal backwater. Danger will come later as the young fish grow and move downstream, but it is not of this moment or of this place. A young blue crab spreads its clawed arms in challenge to the swimming minnow cluster, which then divides an obedient response and only slightly less quickly reforms.

Far above and beyond the minnows' experience, overhanging branches fill briefly with nervous warblers that disappear with the *tap-tap-tap-tap* of a nearby pileated woodpecker. Suddenly the glass-smooth water shatters with the leap and splash of a 7-inch mullet. Miniature waves expand concentrically, lifting and dropping floating leaves, bits of bark and lichen and broken sticks, the constant rain of the bordering hammock trees. A floating mass of duckweed undulates under the disproportionate influence of the tiny waves. Eventually, the waves are spent, and the hammock flotsam



resumes its motionless suspension. Chief among this assemblage are the yellows, the browns, the golds, the mahoganies of dead oak leaves – the leaves that will yet spawn new life as, through the magic of inexorable degradation, they become the detrital food of new generations of the river's communities.

But now the leaves hold the attention of another of the area's inhabitants. The man-who-lives-by-the-river's-edge stands motionless with singular purpose. At last he smiles, satisfied that the leaves are still moving slowly upstream. It will be at least five hours before the turn of the tide will sufficiently drain the surrounding wetlands to where the man's boat will be at risk of stranding at low water. Two hours, perhaps three, are all that is needed – all that is needed to wash away the pressures of the week's activities. Those temporal urgencies of meetings and reviews, of planning and the unplanned, of decisions and deadlines – the river heals all, endowing a quiet perspective through the permanency of nature.

The man leans down to loosen the line that secures his boat to a shoreline oak. He pauses and looks with admiration at the little craft. A sturdy plywood boat riding high and level and motionless; oars of polished maple fitted snug in their oarlocks and resting at the ready along the graceful line of the gunnels. A boat built with the skill and pride of his father's hands, unaware of the enduring pleasure it was to bring to his son.

As he gazes, his eyes lose their focus and he sees again a boy with fishing pole and oars, with crumpled lunch sack and current paperback adventure, jumping down the bank of a creek – much further north – to his father's boat. It was a boat much like this boat, secreted among dense underbrush, waiting. He feels the heart and soul of that boy, bound with his years through two plywood boats built by the same hands so many years apart.

Another mullet jumps and the spell is broken. The man steps easily aboard in an unbroken motion that places him in rowing position on the center seat, remembering his father's admonition of almost a half century ago, "always step along the keel of the boat and keep your body low." He smiles as he curls his fingers around the smooth grips and hears the faint splash of the dipping oars. Involuntarily and inescapably, he murmurs, "thanks dad."



"I know you are, but what am I?"

Or, PEE-WEE'S BIG FUCK-UP

by Herman Nietzsche (aka Virgil Thorp)

The scene: Sarasota, Florida. July 1991, 10:15 am. A seedy, darkened adult movie theater, third row.

The players: William Walters, a Sarasota, Florida undercover vice detective, dressed incognito.



The Pervert in the Third Row, aka Paul Reubens, aka "Pee-wee Herman", a television celebrity also dressed incognito. (And no relation to the author of this piece.)

The lights dim and the players take their places respectively. The movie begins. Some time passes and at a certain point, perhaps between the first and second reels, probably the scene when the pizza delivery boy brings the pie and the household of cash-strapped, bank-overdrawn coeds negotiate a gratuity that evolved into a particularly salacious and soupy group sex encounter that was a tour de force of sexual manipulations which involved a spiral staircase and a miniature replica of Pope John the 23rd.

Imagine – if you can – between the tits and the asses, the dicks and the dildos, the sacrilegious replica statues and the slices of pizza pie ... what transpires? That was when Mr. Herman, aka Paul Reubens, aka The Pervert in the Third Row, does a singularly naughty and despicable thing! Breathing with a slight hyperventilation, he takes his "weenie" out of his pants and goes blind! (Did we think he'd keep it anywhere else?)

Was it too dark in the theater for him to see the undercover detective hunched stealthily in a third-row corner seat? Or was it the childish consensual game of "you-show-me-yours and I'll-show-you-mine?"

Perhaps Pee-wee was so enthralled by the naughty activity on the screen that he simply was oblivious of the voyeur in the sparsely attended theater, the dark providing a sense of privacy – "no-one will know I am being bad if I don't breathe too hard" – type of surreptitiousness. Not unlike the disobedient youngster who reads detective magazines late at night with a flashlight under his covers when he's supposed to be sleeping. And then, he does it again!!!

Poor Pee-wee. He was visiting his parents, and he was all alone and bored. His parents had left the house and didn't say where they were going. They called him Pee-wee like a child they didn't like. There he was, in the house and all by himself. Why not go down the street to that adult theater on the corner. *No one will know me in the dark, he reasons.* Maybe Pee-wee wasn't prepared for the raw sexuality of the movie and when the pizza boy pasted the dildo onto the statue of Pope John the 23rd with the sticky pizza cheese and performed an acrobatic double penetration of the bubbling vagina of the nubile head coed while balancing on the said staircase ... well, of course, that image was just too much! How could he not refrain from the sin of masturbation?

Here's what happened next: The detective in the far corner seat has witnessed those heinous and depraved acts in the movie. He sees movement down the row of seats. He squints his eyes at the pervert in the middle of the third row unzipping his pants. Hands are moving in jerky movements. The detective has seen enough and leaves for the theater lobby. He tells his superior what he has seen. "There's some perv in the third-row jerkin' off!" They wait in the lobby eating popcorn until Pee-wee emerges and they accost him. After a brief struggle, Pee-wee is arrested.



Pee-wee protests! He didn't think he was committing a crime. Everyone jacks off in adult theaters, don't they? Why do you think the floors are so sticky? Desperately, he offers restitution to no avail. The authorities are firm believers in Emmanuel Kant's categorical imperative – no exceptions, there will only be absolute and unconditional consequences – an adage not unlike the one favored by the pious, "if you play, you have to pay."

And pay Pee-wee undoubtedly will! He doesn't even have to be convicted to be punished. His parents will no doubt find out. "To bed without your supper young man! Wait till your father comes home and then you'll get thoroughly and properly thrashed!"

After this incident, do we think he will ever be able to find work in television again? Especially on a kid's show? His character was "campy" and always hinted at the pre-adolescent who precociously knows "something is going

on" in the adult world. He has slyly asked questions like: "What does 'a period' mean? Why is Auntie Mariam's tummy so big? How did it get that way? What, why, how and who?" Let's face it, I'd bet money Pee-wee was poorly instructed in the facts of life?

Poor Pee-wee is getting his education now.

Why should some of us be so elated at his trouble? "Well, he's a dirty little pervert and I never liked his show anyway, they should shoot the little SOB."



What is it that causes us to be so damned vindictive? Are we making life too narrow to exist? To paraphrase Spencer Tracy in the courtroom drama, *Inherit the Wind*: "Has our grid of moral values become so rigid and so inflexible that it must be laid out in latitudes of right and longitudes of wrong in exact degrees, minutes, and seconds?" So rigid and precise that only a select few can be assured of being within and protected by the law?

What about the rest of us who have our own eccentricities, our own little quirks? Are we going to post undercover detectives in a forest dressed as badgers to prevent a couple who might want to commune with nature and find fulfillment with an outdoor alfresco fornication? Where does public end and private start? Your nose or my penis?

Right now, it is possible we can be arrested in our backyard during a midnight hot tub skinny-dip party if the neighbors complain! And what about those ordinances they can only enforce by invading the privacy of our bedrooms? What if they come for your birth control? They have before! If such blue laws are on the books, rest assured someone will find a way to impose them on you!

It feels like laws have become fluid. There is no memory. Laws can be enforced or ignored. They can be changed. They can be repealed. What was



legal can be criminalized. What was liberty can now be prohibited. Laws can be used as a scourge on naughty boys and wayward girls.

And history is littered with individuals, patrician and plebeian, arrogant and stupid, Aristotle to Lawrence Krauss. Pee-wee and even political mega-donor and New England Patriots owner, Robert Kraft. (Although it is a pretty certain bet Kraft will get off) and every initial in between, FDR, JFK, MLK, etc. It appears that the most pious amongst us occupy a virtual wing of the *pantheon of shame*. Hypocrites like televangelists, Jimmy Swaggert and James Orsen Bakker, but also enumerable doctors, police chiefs, boy scout leaders and chaplains plus an entire brigade of popes, cardinals and priests and galleries of politicians and congressional aides.

Nearly two thousand years ago, allegedly, another famous man was scourged, beaten, and publicly humiliated. His taunters and accusers were called Pharisees and they were the moral guardians of their era, too. It was a tradition in Roman occupied Judea for the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, to free a condemned man during the feast of the Passover. Who do you want, Pilate offered; the gentle, righteous Jesus or the brutal, cutthroat, murderer Barabbas? The Pharisees chose Barabbas. Go figure.

So, a celebrity fucks-up and acts human. And what do we do? We applaud and hoot as he is chastised in the press because he had the misfortune to get caught choking his chicken in a porno theater. Because he didn't toe the hypocritical party line of "right acceptable behavior." Pee-wee did not conform.

Someone should have dumped a bucket of cold water on him.

When all is said and done, I think what happened to Mr. Reubens was a crime in itself. He never hurt anyone, he was merely reacting as a human being and he was lonely. And now, because he had celebrity status,

everyone in the world got to know that he likes to beat his meat to fuck movies in a darkened theater.

It was Pee-wee's big fuck-up. Such is the loneliness of fame and why not crucify him!

One European gentleman naively asked at the time, "The police in America have nothing better to do than go into adult movie houses to see who might be masturbating?"

Go ahead Pee-wee, say it, "Ha, that's so funny I forgot to laugh!"

Paul Reubens, aka Pee-wee Herman died last Sunday night. He fought cancer for 6 years and didn't want any friends or fans to grieve for him. He was 70 years old.



"Please accept my apology for not going public with what I've been facing the last six years. I have always felt a huge amount of love and respect from my friends, fans and supporters. I have loved you all so much and enjoyed making art for you."

- Paul Reubens

TODAY'S FROZEN MOMENTS



80 Years Ago Today - July 14th, 1943, German former athlete and then soldier Luz Long was killed in battle. But just before his death, knowing it would be his last gesture, he wrote a letter to his close friend asking a last favor of him. His friend was American track star Jesse Owens.

Luz Long had been the German long jump champion six times - in 1933, 1934, 1936, 1937, 1938, and 1939. He was arguably the

best long jumper in the world - that is until he went to the 1936 Summer Olympics in Berlin, and had to settle for the silver medal in his event, the gold going famously to American Jess Owens.

But, Luz Long's greater legacy might be his friendship with Owens, which happened during those Olympic Games in 1936, when Long befriending Owens was a dangerous brave act to do under the nose of Adolf Hitler. As Owens remembers, "It took a lot of courage for him to befriend me in front of Hitler.... You can melt down all the medals and cups I have and they wouldn't be a plating on the 24-karat friendship I felt for Luz Long at that moment. Hitler must have gone crazy watching us embrace..."

In this last letter Long wrote to his friend Jesse, he said, *"I am here, Jesse, where it seems there is only the dry sand and the wet blood. I do not fear so much for myself, my friend Jesse, I fear for my woman who is home, and my young son Karl, who has never really known his father. My heart tells me, if I be honest with you, that this is the last letter I shall ever write. If it is so, I ask you something. It is a something so very important to me. It is you go to Germany when this war done, someday find my Karl, and tell him about his father. Tell him, Jesse, what times were like when we [were] not separated by war. I am saying—tell him how things can be between men on this earth. Your brother, Luz"*

After writing and posting this letter, Long was killed in action, 80 years ago today.

Jesse Owens did indeed travel to Germany after the war and delivered this story and message and gratitude and admiration to Luz Long's son Karl., fulfilling his friend's dying request.

These two shots are of Owens with Luz, and then later with Karl.

[h/t and thank you to [Mary Elaine LeBey](#)]



POETRY

Henry Miller's advice to a young writer:

"Write honestly even if poorly.

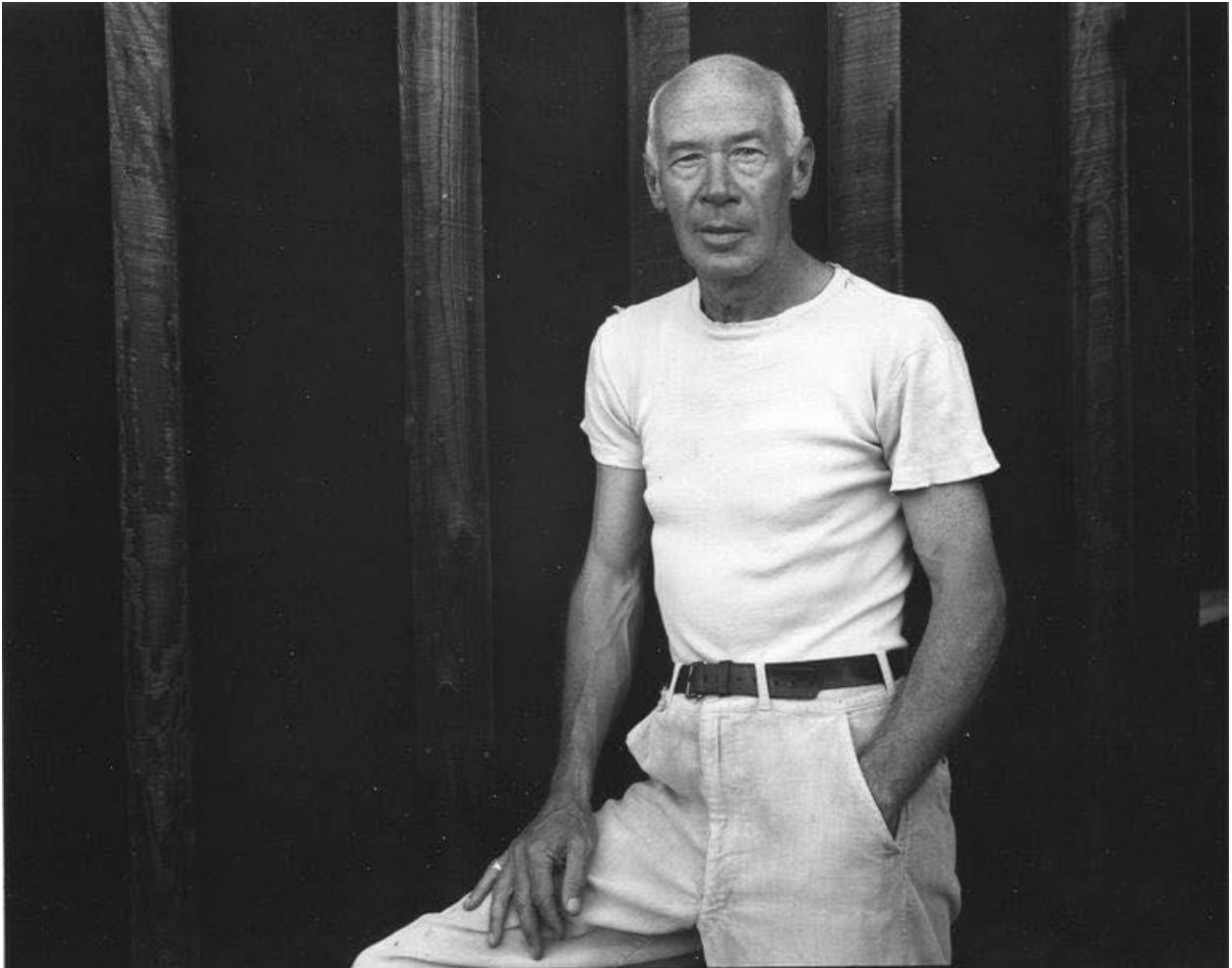
Throw your dictionary away.

If you can't make words fuck, don't masturbate them.

Try to forget everything you learned in college.

First ask yourself if you have anything to say.

Don't draw the pen unless you are ready for the kill."





BEFORE CHRIST

POSTED BY INFIDEL753

Before the true faith came, this world was black with pagan sin;
Each man believed as he saw fit, as conscience spoke within.
But then a new force rose to combat this foul right of choice;
The Cross decreed the race henceforth would worship with one voice.

The Christians spoke of love, of peace, of universal truth;
Small wonder that to spread this precious creed they made good use
Of fire and of the sword, for any pagan who'd deny
This pure and righteous loving faith – such scum *deserved* to die!

Indeed, there seemed no limit to the Christians' holiness;
The rack, the scourge, the iron maiden, nothing did they miss,
To bring the truth to erring souls, to write their boundless love
In lines of smoke from witches' pyres across the sky above.

But Satan wasn't beaten yet – his wiles remained yet strong;
The New World beckoned, where we once again did that great wrong
Of separating church and state, of letting all be free
To have one god or ten or none, with no truth by decree.

Two hundred years this sinful freedom reigned across our land.
But have no fear, the Christian Right is risen, sword in hand,
To turn the nation back toward the righteous way of truth!
For freedom's but a folly of our nation's wicked youth.

It will be so convenient! They know what's best for you!
They'll tell you what you can and cannot read, or think, or do!
The righteous life comes easy when to sin you are not free;
Will rack and stake return as well? We'll have to wait and see.....

The Second Coming

BY WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and
everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the
worst
Are full of passionate intensity.
Surely some revelation is at hand;
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.
The Second Coming! Hardly are those
words out
When a vast image out of Spiritus Mundi
Troubles my sight: somewhere in sands of
the desert
A shape with lion body and the head of a
man,
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about
it
Reel shadows of the indignant desert
birds.
The darkness drops again; but now I
know
That twenty centuries of stony sleep
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking
cradle,
And what rough beast, its hour come
round at last,
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?



To Autumn

BY JOHN KEATS

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run;
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core.
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease,
For summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;
Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
Drows'd with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers:
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook;
Or by a cyder-press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozings hours by hours.

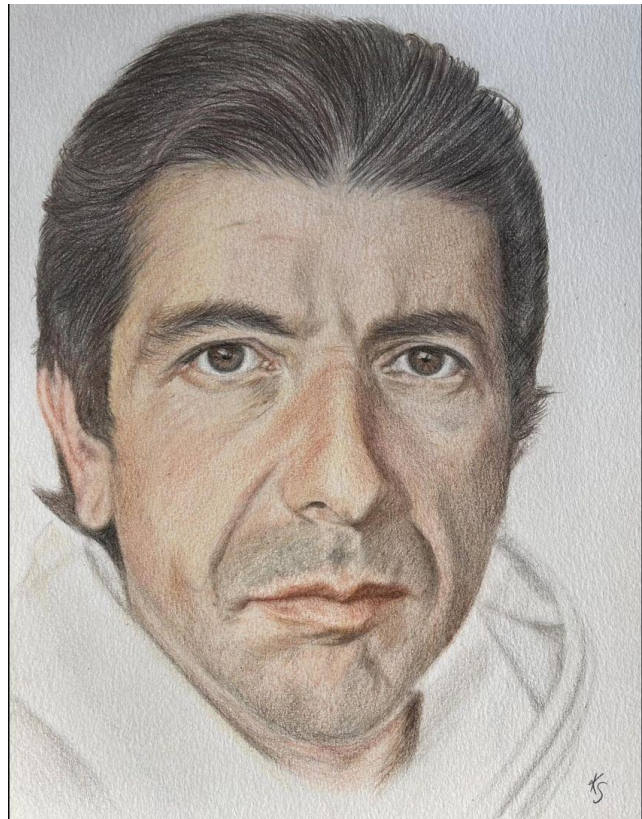
Where are the songs of spring? Ay, Where are they?
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,—
While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
Among the river shallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;
Hedge-cricket sing; and now with treble soft
The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft;
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

Alaine Nicole

The Future

By: Leonard Cohen

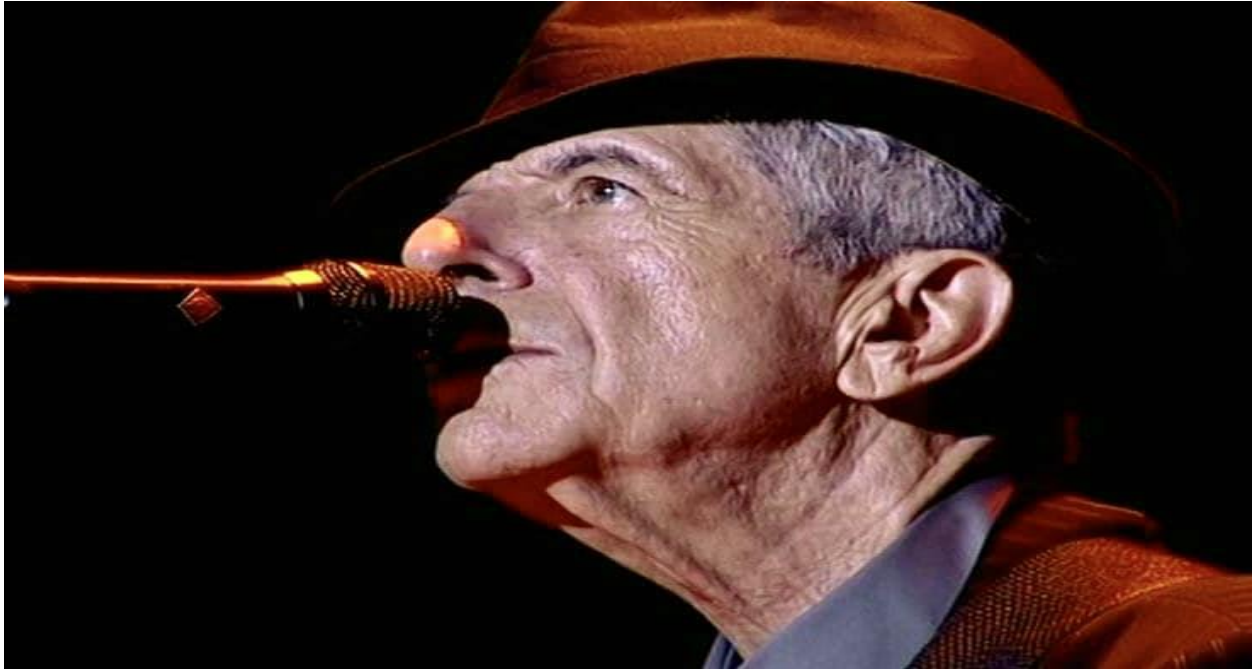
Give me back my broken night
my mirrored room, my secret life
it's lonely here,
there's no one left to torture
Give me absolute control
over every living soul
And lie beside me, baby,
that's an order!
Give me crack and anal sex
Take the only tree that's left
and stuff it up the hole
in your culture
Give me back the Berlin wall
give me Stalin and St Paul
I've seen the future, brother:
it is murder.
Things are going to slide, slide in all
directions
Won't be nothing
Nothing you can measure anymore
The blizzard, the blizzard of the
world
has crossed the threshold
and it has overturned
the order of the soul
When they said REPENT REPENT
I wonder what they meant
When they said REPENT REPENT
I wonder what they meant
When they said REPENT REPENT
I wonder what they meant



You don't know me from the wind
you never will, you never did
I'm the little jew
who wrote the Bible
I've seen the nations rise and fall
I've heard their stories, heard them all
but love's the only engine of survival
Your servant here, he has been told
to say it clear, to say it cold:
It's over, it ain't going
any further
And now the wheels of heaven
stop
you feel the devil's riding crop
Get ready for the future:
it is murder
Things are going to slide ...
There'll be the breaking of the
ancient
western code
Your private life will suddenly
explode
There'll be phantoms
There'll be fires on the road
and the white man dancing
You'll see a woman
hanging upside down
her features covered by her fallen gown
and all the lousy little poets
coming round
tryin' to sound like Charlie Manson
and the white man dancin'
Give me back the Berlin wall
Give me Stalin and St Paul
Give me Christ
or give me Hiroshima



Destroy another fetus now
We don't like children anyhow
I've seen the future, baby:
it is murder
Things are going to slide ...
When they said REPENT REPENT ...



For Pee-Wee and the Rest of Us

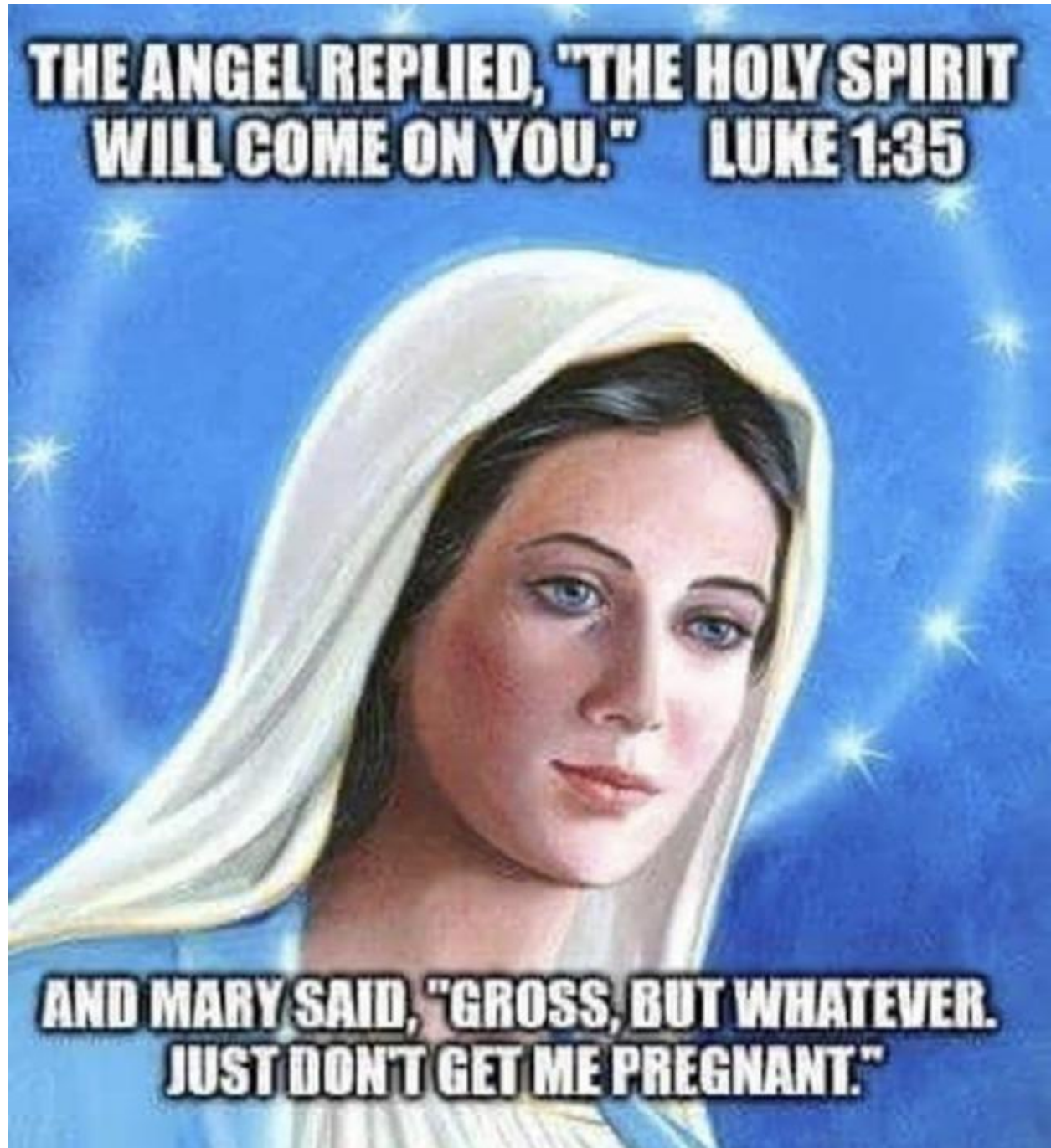
Let's ride our god damned bicycles
like lightning through our lives,
propelled by love and silliness
in hopeful overdrive.

Let's laugh and do the best we can
and sometimes honk our horns
and do a special dance to celebrate
our being born.



Thanks Judd Herrmann

COMEDY CORNER



Donald Trump stands alone

[Bocha Blue](#) | July 5, 2023
[Palmer Report](#)



Allow me to quote my favorite poet and song writer Jacques Brel. "When day is through Tick tock oh so slow. It says yes it says no. It says I wait for you." And I use this quote because there is a clock waiting for Donald Trump and he knows it and it is making him crazy. I will tell you about it.

It was a dark, quiet night. Most people were asleep. The next day was July Fourth, so many had the day off from work. Alas, one man was not asleep. Nor did this fellow seem well. He was caught up in yet another angry outburst, likely because he knew he was going to prison.

It was Donald Trump, *AKA Assolini*. And he was on the warpath. The object of his rage? Jack Smith. Who ELSE could it have possibly been?

As I wrote in another article, Trump covets Smith. Everything that shapes the special prosecutor are qualities Trump doesn't have and will never have. Let's look at some of them. Jack Smith is brave. Donald is a coward.

Smith is smart. Trump has no subjects of interest to talk about except how wronged he is by everyone Smith follows the law. Trump breaks laws regularly.

So yes, Smith is in Trump's head. He sleeps there. He has rented space in the orange head of Trump. And Smith works with languid abandon, doing his job quietly, overseeing the legal consequences that have come to Trump.

That might be why Trump — broke. He broke on Monday night. While many slept, a red-faced arrogant criminal was on truth social frantically calling Smith names, trying vainly to one-up him:

"Jack Smith is a major Sleezebag."

People slept.

"Put up by the corrupt DOJ."

Many people laughed as they made plans for the next day.

"HE IS ALL ABOUT ELECTION INTERFERENCE."

People made plans to honor our fallen heroes.

Very few people were taking notice of Donald John Trump. He has been, on some level, forgotten.

And the rant continued into Tuesday.

"The 2024 Election is our LAST GREAT CHANCE."

How sad. How pathetic. And how telling.

Look at this man! He is guilty. He is enraged. And most of all — he's alone. Very much alone.

And just waiting for the ticking of that clock to run out of time.



Burp!

An Ecclesiastical Showdown

At Sandsprit Park

... or, a tandem pair of Jehovah Witnesses step into a steamy pile of dogma when they confront four foolishly-brave Aware Ones.

By Virgil Thorp



Sandsprit Park. An idyllic setting in Stuart, Florida. A point of land of shady trees and lush grass reaching into the St. Lucie River, an inlet to the Atlantic Ocean. Visitors find it a marvelous place for families to gather, to picnic. For people to walk their dogs. For weary souls to just gaze out at the water at the myriad of passing boats, squadrons of pelicans and an occasional pod of dolphins. Some people like to poke through the oyster beds on the southside shallows looking for interesting mother of pearl shells. There is an exercise area with a variety of training implements that appeals to muscle-bound workout exhibitionists; and to children who are lucky if they do not bash their brains out by not knowing how to use the devices.

The Park has an unfortunate drawback, however. Stupid, ignorant people who feed the birds with leftovers and crumbs from their picnics, completely unaware of the befouled results their misplaced charity brings to the pristine nature of the park and the health of its visitors. Flocks of pigeons, grackles and other blackbirds follow the people and hope for handouts. They leave their excretions everywhere. It is disgusting in a perverse Hitchcockian-Mel Brooks sort of way! Swooping in, swooping out. They poop on the grass, on the sidewalks, under trees, on the concrete shelter bases and all over the picnic tables huddled underneath the shelters' peaked roofs.



It is also a place for the unscrupulous to prey upon the gullible. To sell worn out lies to the spiritually starving like rancid hotdog vendors to hungry waifs. And yes, the vendors and the hotdogs are no doubt, rancid. Probably, the hungry waifs are rancid too.

On Friday, August 11th, a group of four heathens sat together under a park shelter. A queer man, a former cop, a silver-haired biologist and a grungy pornographer. Dan, Ernie, Ed and Virgil. I do not know if these heathens were rancid, but they were all emeritus curmudgeons. They had traded regimentation of career for the freedom of retirement. All lounged comfortably in the shade, sitting in a semi-circle waiting for the others in their group to join them. Or, for someone – anyone – to give hell to.

It was the weekly gathering of The Aware Ones of the Treasure Coast. Like their name, they fancied themselves as smart, educated people. Scientifically literate people. Peer review skeptics. Most of them were also atheists – or, at least, agnostics – and all believed that organized religion was bullshit. Dangerous dogmatic bullshit.

It was warm that morning. The slight August breeze left them minorly damp. They expected the wind would pick up as the sun rose higher in the sky and heated the colloidal atmosphere into faster movement. They knew this because they were educated. They had studied things. They had experienced life in many ways from trivial to considerable. They remembered what

worked and what was a hopeful illusion. They liked to learn things and they refused to stop learning.

The collective IQ of their group was admirable in the depth of the subjects they discussed. And often, they cussed a lot. (Some attributed the degeneracy of their resident pornographer for their descent into ribald obscenities.) They enjoyed off-color and vulgar jokes. In their discussions they would often use profane language, always with gusto and regularity.



Believe it or not, the only thing they held sacred was irreverent humor.

Pretty soon other of their members would hopefully show up. But today they were approached by two believers in myth and superstition. Religious dogma adherents searching for prey. Perhaps it was the unrestrained laughter at the bawdy repartee the four men shared that drew the attention of a set of gentlemen who resembled religious vultures. Maybe it was just an opportunity to sell their religion like they would hawk an old, worn-out Buick. Their church could certainly use the tithes.

The pagan doubters had, of course, noticed the men; circling the park like two strange birds. They had noted the plumage of permanent-press dress shirts. One wore pink, the other blue, like the sky. Both shirts had long sleeves and their ensembles included color-coordinated knotted neckties and sharply creased slacks. Strange apparel for a hot August day. The tall one in the pink shirt had polished dress shoes, the older, skinnier one wore what looked like work boots and a makeshift safari hat. An elongated flap hung down in the back to keep the sun off his neck. The four affable pagans wondered if perhaps he was bald underneath the tropical chapeau. It was agreed that since he wore a hat in Florida in August, he was probably the smarter of the two.

Mother nature had no respect for their sartorial presentations. Even from a distance you could see that the heat was wilting the crisply pressed edges of their shirts and clammy sweat spots darkened the armpits and outlined their

pectorals. The pornographer assumed that they had been searching for a sucker – or a family of suckers – for a handout or a con.

What possessed the two was, ostensibly, a holy quest to save sinners. For atonement. For the souls of the four brave atheists. They were the good and the non-believers were the bad – the stumbling, lost souls hungry for their gift of redemption. Like rancid starving waifs. They felt an obligation to pass on the infection of their faith. What was, essentially, a conceit of spirit. That



they were bringing *their* superior enlightenment to benefit the poor ignorant heathens. Kind of like Oprah Winfrey believing that bringing her beneficent presence to the victims of burnt-out Lahaina City in Maui would ease their pain. The men turned sharply onto the sidewalk that led to the Aware Ones group. Their strides were purposely confident. They had souls to save!

"Approach at your own risk," the pornographer warned like a sentry on duty.

"Yeah," Dan, the queer guy said. "Be careful, there's bird poop everywhere."

"Hello. Mind if we ask you some questions?" the tall man genially asked.

"O-oooh, there is bird poop everywhere." The older, skinny man confirmed and had to spread his legs and twist his body to avoid sitting on a large white turd – still a little runny – probably deposited that very morning on the seat of the picnic table. It was funny because he had hardly any ass on him at all and he almost missed the turd all except for a small thread that had touched his crotch and clung to it like a ribbon of chalky snot.

The atheists were always looking for fun and smiled. "Sure, come ahead. We'll listen to anything." Came the fearless challenge. There would be a confrontation for sure. Believers against the sinners. It would be like Bowie's The Spiders from Mars vs. the houseflies – four vs. two. Hardly fair. Dan confessed later that he was concerned whether or not the acolytes may

attempt to lay hands on him to exorcise his homosexual demons. He was gleefully ready for the party to commence.

"What if I told you ..." the tall man began. "That God loves you!" It was a rote beginning, like from a script. From there the divine spiel degenerated into mythological nonsense and biblical prophecies.

"Claire, open the door, honey. Let's talk about this."

"I read your book. You never told me you were a genocidal, immoral, narcissistic maniac."

"That was the old testament me, baby. I've changed. Now I'm all about love and forgiveness, now let me in before I hurt you!"

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OF LOGIC

1. Thou shalt not attack the person's character, but the argument. (*ad hominem*)
2. Thou shalt not misrepresent or exaggerate a person's argument in order to make it easier to attack. (*straw man fallacy*)
3. Thou shalt not use small numbers to represent the all. (*hasty generalization*)
4. Thou shalt not argue the position by assuming one of its premises is true. (*begging the question*)
5. Thou shalt not claim that because something occurred before, it must be the cause. (*post hoc / false cause*)
6. Thou shalt not reduce the argument down to two possibilities. (*false dichotomy*)
7. Thou shalt not argue that because of your ignorance, a claim must be true or false. (*ad ignorantum*)
8. Thou shalt not lay the burden of proof onto him that is questioning the claim. (*burden of proof reversal*)
9. Thou shalt not assume "this" follows "that" when there is no logical connection. (*non sequitur*)
10. Thou shalt not argue because a premise is popular, therefore it must be true. (*bandwagon fallacy*)

"When Adam and Eve ate of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, it was actually a tree of death." He thoroughly believed in a counterfeit dreamland. "There are demons under the ground," he declared with solemn certainty.

"We don't believe in demons." It was the first clue of resistance.

"You don't believe in demons?"

"Hell no! And we don't believe in hell, either."

The sober pair was taken aback by a loud, long, derisive laugh that was their answer.

Someone said, "I like to sin."

"Sin is my bread and wine."

"Life is so much more interesting when a person is coveting a neighbor's attractive wife."

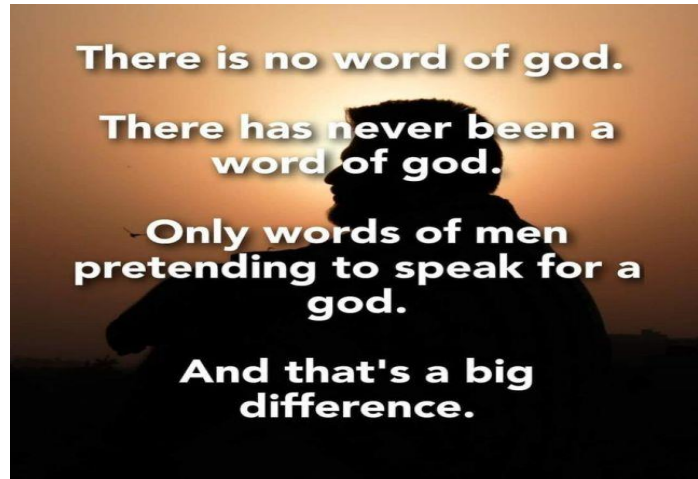
"Without coveting there wouldn't be any capitalism!"

"Hallee Berry. Mmmmmm. I'd love that brown berry." Sinning, coveting, miscegenation. They were smashing commandments left and right!

The missionaries discovered nothing but heresy. The absurdities in Genesis; Adam and Eve, the age of the earth, Noah's Ark were lampooned. Moses, The Ten Commandments and the virgin birth were ridiculed. The Trinity scoffed at as physically ludicrous. God's precious love was scorned as was his terrible wrath. The heathens were relishing making a burlesque of their pious witnessing.

Bert and Betty arrived in the middle of this and sat themselves down at the distant end of the picnic table. Bert ate his sandwich and looked at the verbal battlefield with askance. *Why are we putting up with this*, he wondered as religious bullshit was piled higher and higher. Betty often could not restrain laughing at some of her fellow Aware Ones' irreverent responses.

The older man's face was getting redder and redder for each blasphemy he heard. The contrast between the scarlet of his face and the sky-blue of his shirt was startling. He was very angry. He wanted to call out a curse. If only he could summon she-bears like Elisha had in 2nd Kings when the devilishly 42 disobedient children had mocked his bald head on the trek to Bethel. The bears had torn the disrespect from them along with arms, legs and heads. He knew there were undoubtedly sharks in the inlet. Briefly, he sincerely wished he could charm those predators to leave the water and punish the profane apostasy



that was – metaphorically – being rubbed into the faces of himself and his partner.

Indeed, the Aware Ones showed no respect for the scriptures. They embraced sin and degradation. They countered every argument with sound facts and rigid science. And, they did it with jeering laughter. He could stay silent no longer. His younger cohort was overmatched and losing badly.

“May I say something.” The older man calmly said, breaking into the figurative slaughter like a tag-team wrestling tandem. Mr. Pink shirt needed rescue.

“Please do.” Ernie invited. He was probably the most accommodating and polite individual of this batch of the Aware Ones.

For once the reply was respectful, the man breathed. Little did he know that the pornographer thought, *here it comes, here is when the old guy steps in the bird poop.*

The older man prepared to show the recalcitrant four the error of their ways. He had activated his cellphone and had accessed a bible application. The scripture he had highlighted was from the “New Testament”. He had always found that reading this particular verse would silence any impertinent skeptic or profane apostate like magic. “This is a prophecy from the bible, from the book of Matthew, chapter 24, verses 6-8,” he announced as if the ancient book deserved respect because it was old.

The atheists crudely interrupted his recitation:

“King James Version?”

“New American Bible version?”

“The Evangelical Heritage Version?”

“The Revised Standard Version?”

“The Phil Mickelson Clarified Translation – learn how to putt left-handed for the lord – version.”

“I know, I know.” Ed, the dignified-looking, silver-haired biologist interjected, grinning at Bert. “The ‘Joseph Smith Inspired Version’ of the Church of Latter Day Saints!”

THE OLDEST VERSION OF
THE BIBLE
IS THE SINAI BIBLE AND IS
HOUSED IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.
THERE ARE 14,800 DIFFERENCES
BETWEEN IT AND THE
KING JAMES VERSION.

The irreverent sacrilege accumulated like a steamy pile of dogma.

"If it isn't the Gutenberg bible, I'm not listening, goddamn it!"

Questions for Bible Believers

If an omniscient, omnipotent, perfect being is the mastermind behind the Bible, then why does the book reflect only the culture, science, history, literature, technology, morals, and values of the era in which it was written? And why are there so many versions of it? And why does it have so many inaccuracies and inconsistencies? And why is it open to so many different interpretations? And why does it include stoning, torture, murder, burning, slavery, homophobia, bigotry, and chauvinism? And why would anyone have to ask so many questions about the Bible if it's supposed to be the go-to source for truth and the ultimate instruction book for morality? Anyone?

The flushed, crimson-faced Witness shouted over the horrendous lack of decency. "The New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures is the version!" Of course, he now had to clear his throat in an attempt to restore a modicum of order and decorum. "Ah-hemmm, mmmmm." He drew out the last consonant before beginning.

"And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet." He took another breath and looked around to see if all were listening before he continued. "For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in diverse places. All these are the beginning of sorrows."

He looked every apostate in the eye. "Can we agree on that? Doesn't that sound like what is happening in our world today?" They would have to acknowledge his truth and his sincerity. He took their silence for consent. "Doesn't that bother you?"

"No. It doesn't." Virgil, the pornographer chuckled without blinking. "It's babbling – poetic babbling, of course – but still – dogmatic – bullshit – babbling!" He wanted the missionaries to understand every word.

It was also the same insidious kind of manipulation Charlie Manson had used to enthrall his willing followers into murdering Sharon Tate, Libby Folger and the La Blancas in the August heat of Southern Cal., in 1969, Virgil mused. Get them to agree to one thing and build from there. The German people in 1933 had fallen for that trap as well, to their shame. Blind them with absurd dogma and get them to consent to atrocities, Voltaire or someone like that, had said.

The disrespectful antagonism caused the pious man's righteous anger to rise up even more. He accepted their insults because he loved the lord, but he wanted to stomp his feet in rage. He found himself wishing to smite someone. It took all the restraint he had not to curse. These pagans would not listen to the voice of the lord.

"May – I – *FINISH!*" He had to repeat that phrase several times as each point he tried to make was derided and dismissed. He was glowing pink from nose to ears with exasperation.

"Cherubims with flaming swords at the gates of Eden." The younger man blurted out. He was so flabbergasted at the atheists' responses that he did not know what else to say.

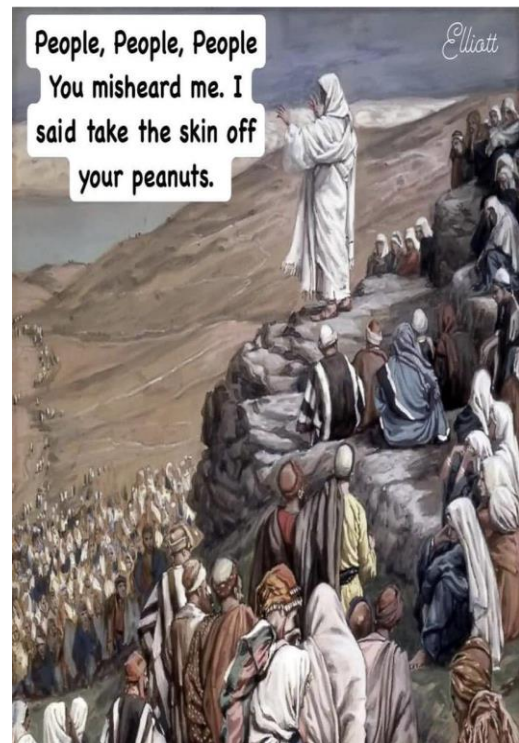
"Cherubims? My Sunday school teacher said it was handsome angels!"

"Angelic cherubims ... what's the difference! They had flaming swords."

"Like George R.R. Martin's Game of Thrones?"

"... and wouldn't let Adam and Eve back into the garden after their sin."

"Buddy, you have an overdeveloped sense of sin. I feel sorry for you."



It was a wretched showing for the pair of devout missionaries. There was no winning. Giggles were all that was answered. It was totally irreverent. It was insolent rejection of the holiness of their Compassionate Christian authoritarianism. The pagans simply weren't buying their pig in a poke.

The ecclesiastical battle raged back and forth for nearly half an hour. Evolution was now the topic.

"Are we still on that 6,000-year-old, Garden of Eden crap?"

"Hybrids cannot reproduce."

"Admit it, Adam and Eve were probably Neanderthals."

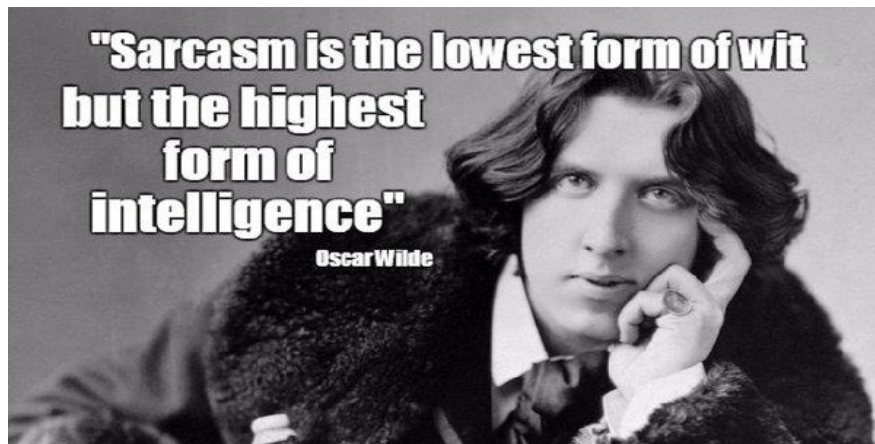
"Hybrids cannot reproduce!"

"Virgins rarely are virgins if they are knocked up!"

"HYBRIDS – CANNOT – REPRODUCE!!!!"

"And therefore?????"

The debate had – *magically?* – become just like a regular Aware Ones gathering with many conversations going on simultaneously. One similarity was that the notion of a God was being mocked mercilessly and it became painfully obvious that there would be no souls saved today. Not at all! No miracle. No victory for Jesus. No tithes collected. Simply a rejection of their miserable attempt at witnessing.



Would Jehovah weep? For the atheists or for the two missionaries? For that's what the two men were, Jehovah Witnesses and they had failed. They were now sweating profusely. The younger man loosened his tie, unbuttoned the top button and began rolling up his sleeves to the older man's displeasure. With a look between each other, they gathered their sheaves of preprinted material and prepared to leave.

There was grudging admiration as the younger man shook each offered apostatic hand. "It has been an instructive afternoon." He admitted. *Maybe a seed had been sown.*

The older man had a disgusted look on his flushed face and rejected a handshake. He would only touch the elbow of the pornographer with his own sleeve-covered elbow.

"I haven't had COVID." He snapped, like the touching of hands would infect him with idolatry. He never realized that his audience could see through his

façade of self-righteous, superior morality. He never realized that he had deserved each and every insult they had returned to his sanctimony.

"Good, neither have I." the pornographer replied with a satisfied smile.

Dan's parting comment hung in the air as he called after them, "We don't believe in fairytales."

And with that benediction, the jolly bunch of geriatric infidels watched the pair of Jehovah Witnesses, dripping sweat, their clothing in wrinkles; tiptoeing along the sidewalk where the flock of pigeons had just been, and disappearing into the hazy distance of the idyllic Sandspruit Park summer afternoon.

EPILOGUE

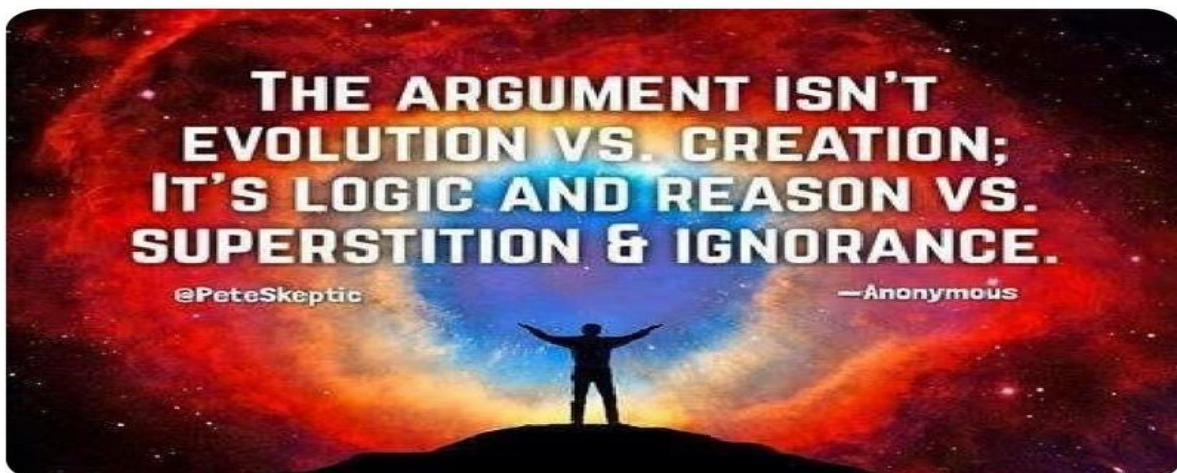
The quartet experienced a feeling of contentment. Like they had shared a comedy of traded insults. They were certain who had come out on top in the skirmish between metaphysics and empirical reality.

"Next time we get these missionaries like this," Dan suggested. "Maybe we should have responses written down."

"Naww, that's too much like rote. Like what those two were selling," Virgil retorted.

"However, maybe it wouldn't hurt if we learned how to sing 'Bullshit' in four-part harmony, though." Ed concluded. And they relaxed like a contented pride of lions – bellies full – after a savage feeding frenzy.

BUURRRPP.



How Religious Groups Performed on the U.S. Religious Knowledge Survey

	Average # correct out of 32	% with 17 or more correct
Total	16.0	47
Christian	15.7	45
Protestant	16.0	46
White evangelical	17.6	56
White mainline	15.8	45
Black Protestant	13.4	28
Catholic	14.7	40
White Catholic	16.0	48
Hispanic Catholic	11.6	20
Mormon	20.3	74
Jewish	20.5	73
Unaffiliated	16.6	52
Atheist/Agnostic	20.9	82
Nothing in particular	15.2	42

PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S
FORUM ON RELIGION & PUBLIC LIFE May 19-June 6, 2010

Pew study showed Atheists had more Bible knowledge than anyone else. Catholics had the least.

Rothko, the take out years.

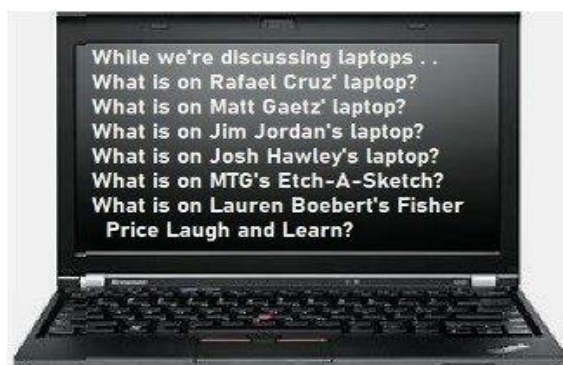
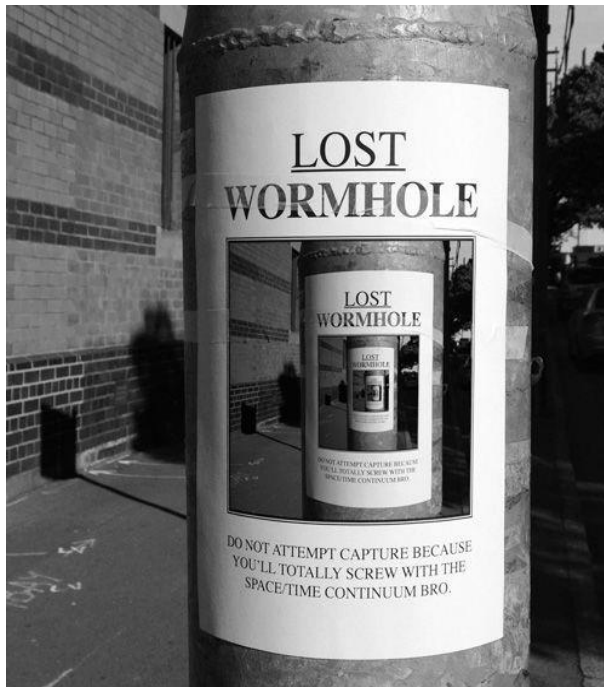


"I'll die before I let someone disrespect my flag"

Also the same people:

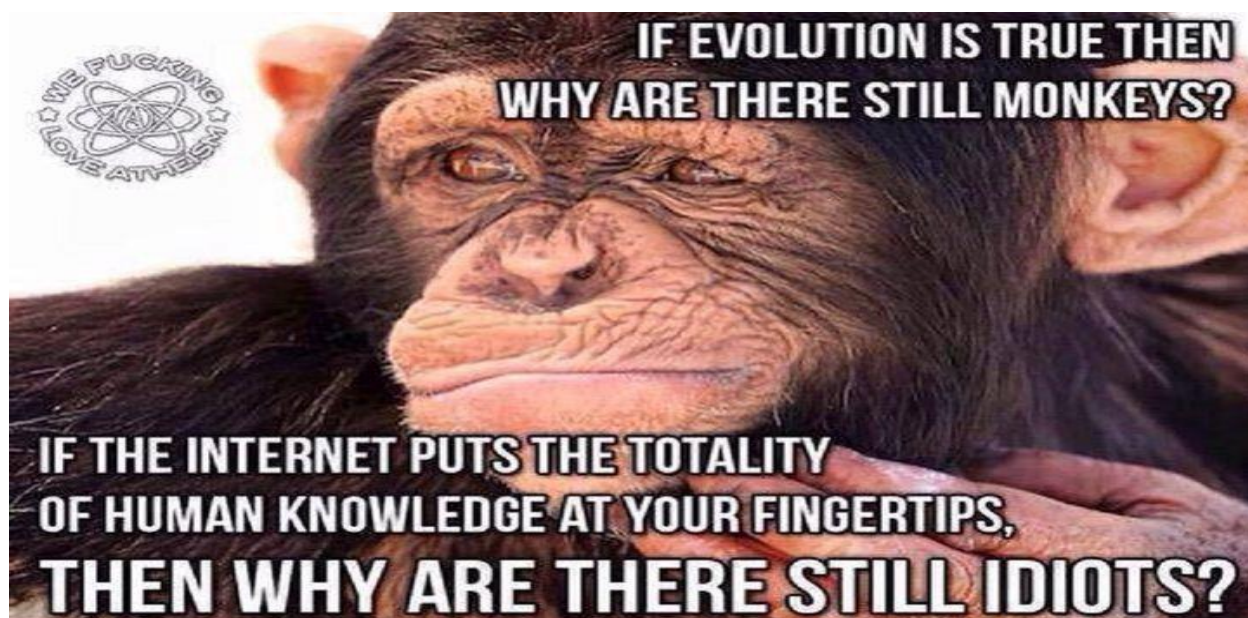


You can't fix stupid, but you can usually sell it a
Maga hat!



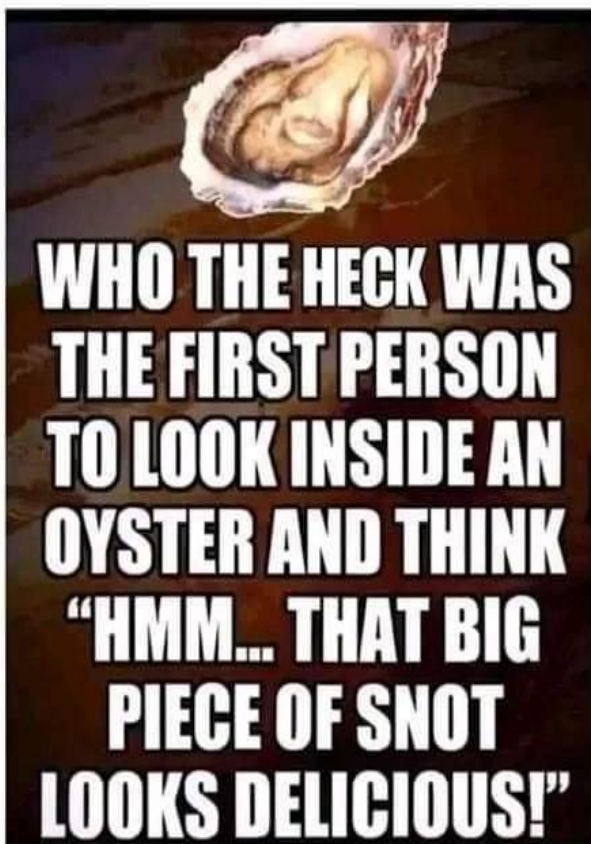
My husband suggested that we go to the pub separately to relive our first date. So he walked over to me at the bar and asked "Hi gorgeous, can I buy you a drink?" I replied "Get lost, I'm not falling for that again"

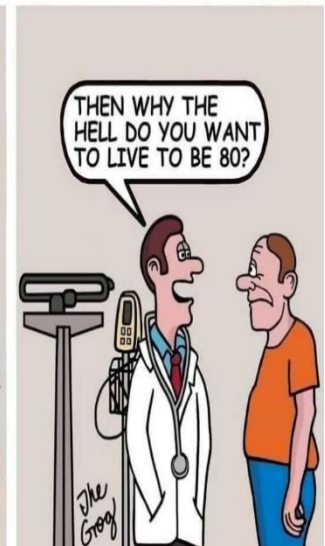
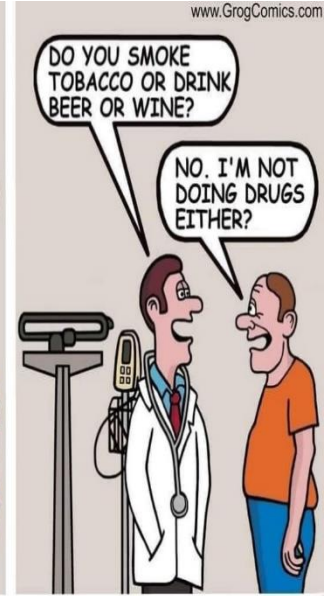
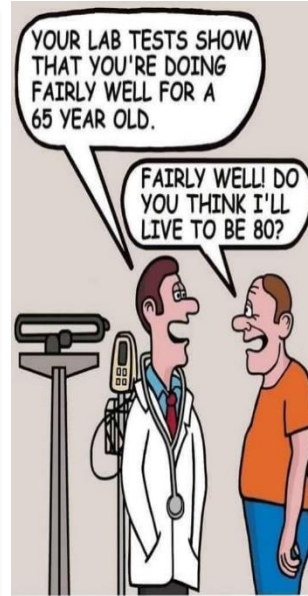
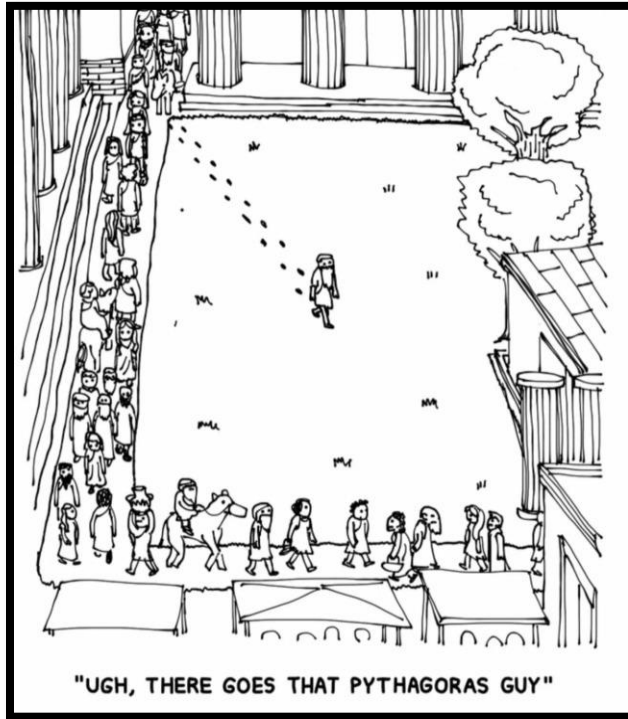


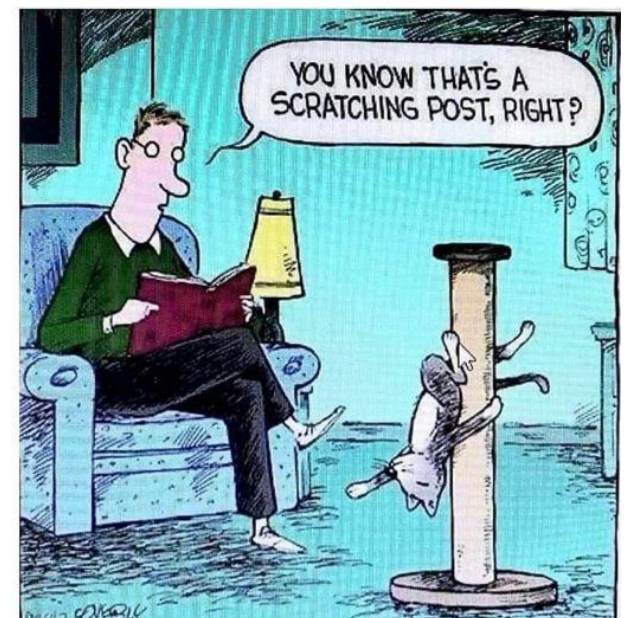
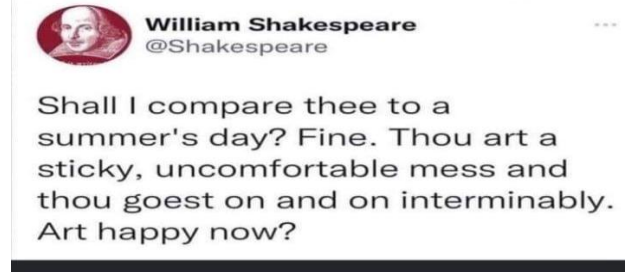




The Moms for Liberty Book Club

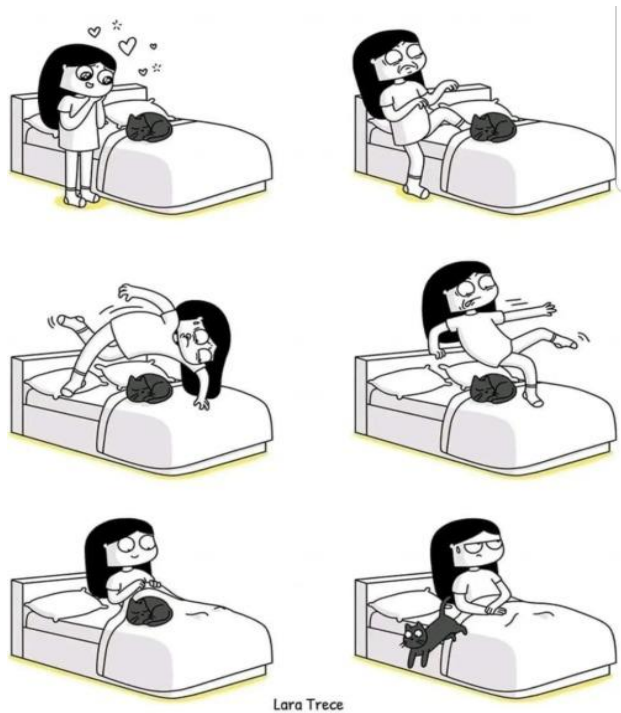
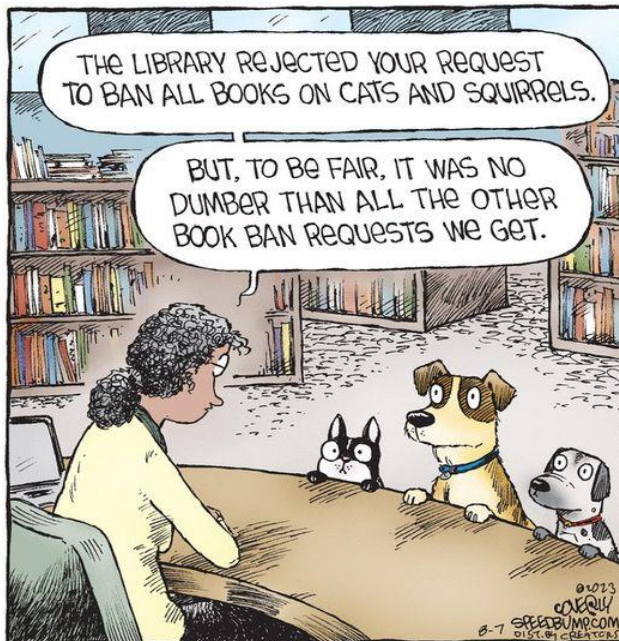


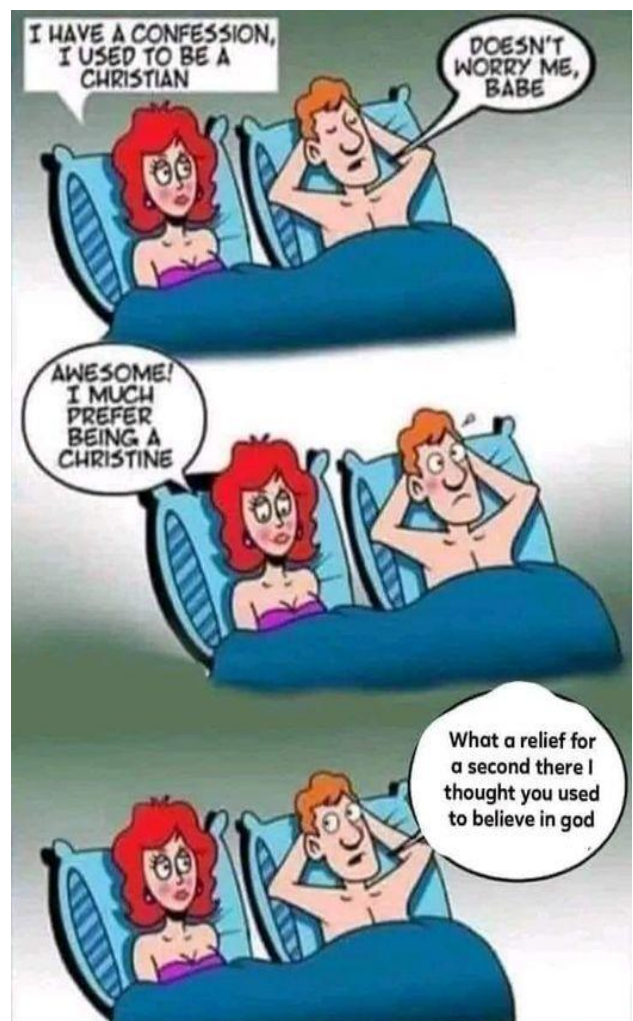






"Surprisingly, Mrs. Filner, 4 percent of all fatalities are caused by someone trying to get a cat to take a pill."





Actual Analogies Used By High School Students In English Essays

1. When she tried to sing, it sounded like a walrus giving birth to farm equipment.
2. Her eyes twinkled, like the moustache of a man with a cold.
3. She was like a magnet: Attractive from the back, repulsive from the front.
4. The ballerina rose gracefully en pointe and extended one slender leg behind her, like a dog at a fire hydrant.
5. She grew on him like she was a colony of E. coli and he was room temperature Canadian beef.
6. She had him like a toenail stuck in a shag carpet.
7. The lamp just sat there, like an inanimate object.



"Here's your problem: The cartoonist has no idea what the inside of a car looks like."

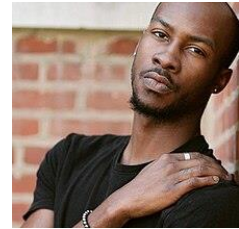


29

O'Shae Sibley, 28, American gay dancer and choreographer, stabbed. was stabbed and later died as a result of an incident outside of a Mobil gas station in Midwood, Brooklyn, New York, United States. He and his friends



were confronted by a group of individuals for playing Beyoncé music and vogueing. The suspect accused of the stabbing was identified as a 17-year-old, who turned himself in to police custody on August 4, 2023, and was later charged with second-degree murder as a hate crime.



30

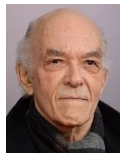
Paul Reubens, 70, American actor (Pee-wee's Playhouse, The Nightmare Before Christmas, Blow), cancer.

August

1

David Le Batard, 50, American graphic artist known for his murals, live painting, and sculpture. the younger brother of Miami sportswriter Dan Le Batard. David occasionally made appearances on his brother's show despite the fact that he had, by his own admission, never willingly

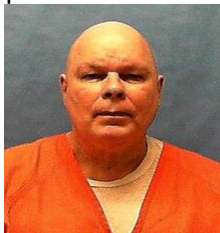
attended a sporting event. advanced stage cancer



3

Mark Margolis, 83, American actor (Breaking Bad, Better Call Saul, Pi) In 1976, Margolis made his first film appearance as an airplane passenger in The Opening of Misty Beethoven. His

performance in Breaking Bad was nominated for an Emmy Award in 2012.



- James Barnes, 61, American convicted murderer, execution by lethal injection. His older sister Beth Catron wanted the execution to proceed and said of her brother's impending execution, "Our family is glad the nightmare will soon be over, and maybe we'll be able to sleep in peace."

9



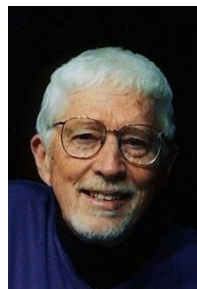
Robbie Robertson, 80, Canadian Hall of Fame musician (The Band), songwriter ("The Weight") and film composer (The Color of Money), prostate cancer.

Philip Lloyd Sherman was an American Orthodox Jewish cantor, *mohel*, and actor. Over a 45-year career, Sherman performed more than 26,000 *brit milot* (Jewish ritual circumcisions), for which he was called "America's Top Mohel" and "the busiest *mohel* in New York." As an



actor, he made appearances in television shows such as *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel* and *Orange Is the New Black*.

11



Tom Jones, 95, American lyricist (*The Fantasticks*, *110 in the Shade*, *I Do! I Do!*), cancer.

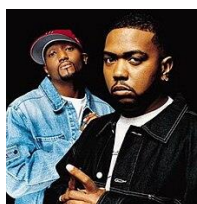
13

Clarence Avant, 92, American Hall of Fame music executive and film producer (*Save the Children*, *Jason's Lyric*), founder of Sussex Records.

- Magoo, 50, American rapper (Timbaland & Magoo) and songwriter ("Up Jumps da Boogie").

18

Ray Hildebrand, 82, American singer (Paul & Paula) and songwriter ("Hey Paula", "Young Lovers"). Shelby Singleton of Philips Records eventually signed the two, but not before changing their professional names;^[2] Singleton reasoned that a pair named Ray and Jill singing about "Hey, hey Paula" and "Hey, hey Paul" did not make sense.



19

Maxie Baughan, 85, American Hall of Fame football player (Philadelphia Eagles, Los Angeles Rams) and coach (Cornell Big Red)



20

William John Vukovich II^[1] (March 29, 1944 – August 20, 2023) was an American driver in the championship car division of USAC and the CART series. Vukovich was named the 1968 Indianapolis 500 Rookie of the Year, a result of his seventh-place finish.^[2] Vukovich raced in the 1965–1982 seasons, with 158 combined career starts, including the Indianapolis 500 in 1968–1977, 1979–1980. Bill Vukovich II was the son of two-time Indianapolis 500 winner Bill Vukovich and the father of Billy Vukovich III, both of whom were killed in racing accidents.



23

Bob Feldman, 83, American songwriter ("My Boyfriend's Back", "I Want Candy") and record producer ("Hang On Sloopy"). He graduated from Abraham Lincoln High School alongside Neil Sedaka, and was a

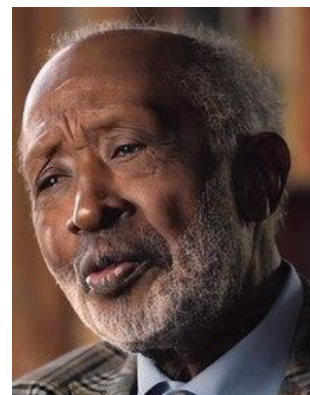
member of the All-City Choir alongside Neil Diamond and Barbra Streisand.

- Terry Funk, 79, American Hall of Fame professional wrestler (NWA, WWF) and actor (Road House)

•

Notable Russian people killed in the 2023 Tver plane crash:

- Valery Chekalov, 47, mercenary leader.





- Yevgeny Prigozhin, 62, mercenary leader, co-founder of Wagner Group.
- Dmitry Utkin, 53, intelligence officer and mercenary leader, co-founder of Wagner Group.



26

Bob Barker, 99, American game show host (The Price Is Right, Truth or Consequences) and animal rights activist.

How a normal person tells a story



How I tell a story

