

THE JOURNAL

JULY/AUGUST 2024 VOL. 9, NO. 4



One Does Not Simply Call a Liar a Liar – "The Media Club"
by professionalleft.blogspot.com's Driftglass p. 37

Categories – "Do as I tell you, for I am a Sign"
by J. Dan Vignau p. 56

"One Thinks About a Lot of Crazy Stuff At 80"
by Bert Mautz p. 84

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.9, No.4

July / August 2024

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

awareonesofthetreasurecoast.com

INTRODUCTION



By Virgil Thorp

It may just be me, but after any kind of Aware Ones gathering, I always feel that the anxiety level has ramped up several degrees. Of course, it may just be that the November election is that many days closer. With no certainty about such an outcome, why wouldn't people be nervous, or *discommoded**.

Meanwhile, other things are being done to exacerbate that anxiety. These range from minor (*PornHub* closing off several states' from accessing the site's carnal delights) to major (Red-state governor, Florida's Ron DeSantis, creating his own, uniformed gestapo). Noises about restricting women from traveling when they are pregnant and book banning also *discommodes** me.

The governor of Louisiana, Jeff Landry, just signed into law a declaration that all schools will be required to display a copy of the biblical 10 commandments that Moses allegedly brought down from Mt. Sinai in the book of Genesis. That is, ALL schools. Not simply religious schools, but *all* schools, even the public, secular ones. How fucking arrogant can these Christians be! To establish a state religion that is prohibited by the first amendment of the constitution!

I start to wonder if we may, indeed, have our own version of Oliver Cromwell waiting in the shadows. A republican win in the November election would simply grease the rails for Christian Nationalism to overthrow the land of the free and the home of the brave.

Should I take the perilous step and say that such laws are a part of a conspiracy to make the United States a theocracy? I would have to be terminally naïve to say, “why no, of course not. Christians are good people. They wouldn’t do something despicable like instituting a nefarious thing like a holy inquisition ... would they?” (Feeling *discommoded**, yet?)

Is there anyone so foolish or delusional so as to believe that unless their fictional supreme being is happy with the United States, that “he” (see the delusional hypocrisy?) will no longer smile upon our nation – to use their “god-speak”, to turn away his countenance from us – and “will allow” the godless (usually communists) to conquer and plunder? Such imagery is beyond “now I lay me down to sleep” nursery rhyme.

Yet, cannot we all see the creeping theocrats challenging our secular government and constitution to not only accept intrusions of their particular mythical hallucinations. To make Christian Nationalism the law of the land? In a simpler term; *discommode** by driving it down our throats?!?

I believe what we are seeing is desperation. The theocrats see the brass ring they have coveted and think, with just a little more

of a push, they will succeed. The nation will no longer be secular, god will be happy and all will be well.

Really, how can you not blame them. Who would've thought that even as *Roe v. Wade* was whittled away, that it would finally be dashed to bits? Are we not so close to having mandatory prayer in school that the Christians can almost taste it?

This is what we know. The supreme court has a preponderance of *Opus Dei* ("work of god" in Latin) Catholicism in its ranks. Sam Alito lives in a medieval fantasyland. His wife displays Old Glory upside down. The houses of congress are awash with born-again Christians who wish to return us to those patronymic Dark Ages when slavery was allowed, and women were counted as property.



There is no doubt that these holier-than-thou's wish to drag us all, kicking and screaming, into their backwards world.

I say that resignedly. But do not despair. If they do win, it will be bad. It is just a precept of evolution. We, being progressive protagonists, will have to adjust. I will have to do something I am loathe to do, but when it comes to my hide, I can do it. I can build my own closet. I will reside there in perpetual state of apprehension and dread.

In every bedtime story, in every book, in every movie I have seen, the outnumbered protagonists were able to survive by becoming hypocrites. They are heretics of course, but not so stiff-necked that they break in the strong wind. Like so many Spanish

Jews did during Queen Isabella's Spanish Inquisition; if they did not want to die, they would profess fealty, pledge allegiance, act as if they fully believe all the mythology that has been instituted to deflect suspicion of the fact that there is no buying the bullshit the powers-that-be have established.

Here's what an individual will also have to do (if they know what is good for them). First, start crying and fall to your knees. The tears are important. Look for old videos of Jimmy Swaggert on YouTube. Make sure they are streaming down your face. Admit that you have sinned. Beg for forgiveness. Vow never to fall from grace again. Pledge your everlasting soul to resist the temptations of the flesh.

It is pretty easy, actually. It is hiding in plain sight; it is going with the flow. It is insurance. It is the old Pascal's Wager. It is embracing piety when the church bell is rung. It is standing and reciting pledges. It is hand over the heart. It is removing a hat. It is making the ritual of the liturgy more important than reality. You don't even have to enunciate the words or sing the notes correctly. It is acting. Brando did it and anyone can do it ... As long as they can keep from throwing up.

Once upon a time, I ached for that feeling of righteousness just like a junkie ached for his heroin. Karl Marx was right; religion is the opiate of the masses, and the masses watch closely for those who do not bend the knee when the ritual calls for it. The masses wish to punish the non-believer.

With that sentiment, it would not discommode* me to see the Bill of Rights displayed upon the classroom wall.

Shall We Pray?

Virgil

* dis·com·mode

[diskə'mōd]

verb

formal

discommode (verb) · **discommodes** (third person present) · **discommoded** (past tense)

· **discommoded** (past participle) · **discommoding** (present participle)

1. cause (someone) trouble or inconvenience:

"I am sorry to have discommoded you"

Origin

mid 17th century: from dis- + commode 'supply or provide, suit' (from Latin commodare, from commodus 'suitable, convenient': see commode), after obsolete French discommoder. Compare with incommode. Which is to disturb someone whilst they are sitting on the commode. (see "constipation").



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 at 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

Dan Vignau	Ed Zillioux
Marsha Banks	Bob Haskins
Ernie Breud	Barbara (Lange) Longo
Eddie Buitrago	Jim Longo
Ray Duryea	Jerry Shaw
Rick Burkhart	Sandra Burkhart
Roberta Synal	David Dorenzo
Paul Carlos	Lucy Thorp
Gloria Cosgrove	Virgil Thorp
Gale Baker	Linda Webb
Bert Mautz	Betty Tewksbury
Betty Kasoff	Mark 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. **May or may not be transferred to Sandsprit Park at time of publishment. Check with Dan.*

Sunday Zoom – 11 am Zoom meeting. Contact Dan Vignau <vignaujdand@aol.com> 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.

Events

July 2024 National Grilling Month

July 1 – National Postal Worker Day



July 2 – 1980: AIRPLANE! - A satirical, slapstick comedy film written and directed by Jim Abrahams, David Zucker and Jerry Zucker, premiered in the U.S. The film was produced for \$3.5 million and earned more than \$80 million, making it the highest grossing film of 1980.



July 4 – Independence Day (U.S.)

U.S.A. Bicentennial Celebration, New York City - July 4, 1976. Photo: NBC





July 5 – Aware Ones at Flagler Park, 11 am.
International Bikini Day

1946: French designer Louis Reard unveils the "bikini", a daring two-piece swimsuit at the Piscine Molitor, a popular swimming pool in Paris. Reard named his design after the U.S. atomic test that took place off the Bikini Atoll in the Pacific Ocean earlier that week.

Photo: Micheline Bernardini posing in the "bikini" and holding a small box into which the entire costume can be packed. Paris 7/5/46 (Keystone/Getty)

July 7 – Aware Ones Zoom 11 am. National Strawberry Sundae Day

So, if God's speaking to you is not Audible, but rather in your head, how do you know for sure that you're not out of your mind? 😊



July 8 – Week 2 – Nude Recreation Week

Body Painting Day

July 11 –  Writer's Group @ Jensen House of Brews, 6:30 pm.

E.B. White born, 1899

July 12 – Aware Ones at Sandspruit Park 11 am.

The paper bag manufacturing machine was patented. National Motorcycle Day

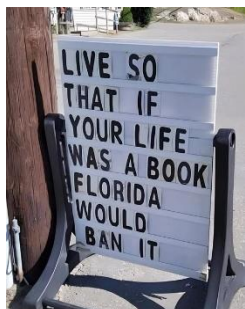


July 13 – 1923: The Hollywood Sign is officially dedicated in the hills above Los Angeles, California. The last four letters would be dropped after a renovation in 1949. Photo: Hollywood Sign Trust



July 14 – Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.

Bastille Day




July 19 – **Aware Ones at Sandsprit Park 11 am.**

National Daiquiri Day

July 21 – **Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.**

National Ice Cream Day

July 23 – Robert F. Kennedy Jr. holding a puff adder. Kenya, July 23, 1974 Photo: Keystone/Getty

July 25 –  **Writer's Group @ Jensen House of Brews, 6:30 pm.**



July 26 – **Aware Ones at Sandsprit Park 11 am.**



Summer Olympics 2024 – Let the games begin!

Take Your Houseplants for a Walk

July 28 – **Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.** Buffalo Soldiers Day

July 31 – National Watermelon Day



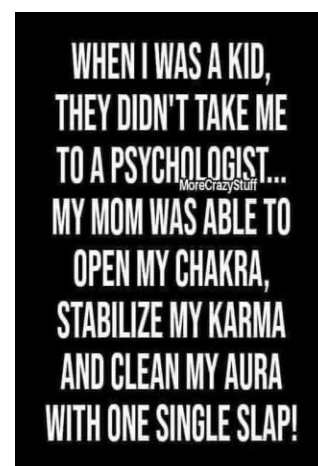
August 2024 International Pirate Month

August 2 – **Aware Ones at Flagler Park, 11 am.**

International Beer Day – the first Friday in August

August 4 – **Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.** – U.S. Coast Guard Day

Barack Obama born, 1961 (44th U.S. President)



August 6 – Hiroshima, Japan - August 6, 1945

Photo: atomic cloud over Hiroshima, taken from "Enola Gay" flying over Matsuyama, Shikoku (509th Operations Group)



August 8 – ✂ **Writer's Group @ Jensen House of Brews, 6:30 pm.**

International Cat Day

August 9 – **Aware Ones at Sandsprit Park 11 am.**

August 10 – NY Daily News front page - August 10, 1969

August 11 – **Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.**



1973: *American Graffiti*, a coming-of-age comedy-drama film directed by

George Lucas, is released in the U.S.

Photo: Co-stars of *American Graffiti*, Ron Howard, Candy Clarke, and Charles Martin Smith. (Lucasfilm LTD/Universal Pictures)

Summer Olympics Closing Ceremony

August 14 – 1935: U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt signs the Social Security Act, creating a government pension system for the retired. Photo: Standing with Roosevelt are Rep. Robert Doughton (D-NC); unknown person in shadow; Sen. Robert



Wagner (D-NY); Rep. John Dingell (D-MI); Rep. Joshua Twing Brooks (D-PA); the Secretary of Labor, Frances Perkins; Sen. Pat Harrison (D-MS); and Rep. David Lewis (D-MD)



14/15 **V-J Day** – which date do you celebrate as the end of WWII?

August 16 – **Aware Ones at Sandsprit Park 11 am.**

August 18 – **Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.**

Bad Poetry Day

**The 3 stages of life: Wanting stuff. Accumulating stuff.
Getting rid of stuff. 🤔😂😂**

August 21 – 1911: The *Mona Lisa* is stolen from the Louvre Museum in Paris by former employee Vincenzo Peruggia. It was later recovered in Florence, Italy in 1913.



National Poets Day

August 22 – **Writer's Group
@ Jensen
House of
Brews, 6:30
pm.**

Ann Franklin's Birthday (1762) First female newspaper editor

**I have licked the
fire and danced in
the ashes of every
bridge I ever
burned. I fear no
hell from you.**

August 23 – **Aware Ones at Sandsprit Park 11 am.**

First National Women's Rights Convention, 1850. **Ride the Wind Day**



Kiss and Make-Up Day

August 25 – **Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.**

1944: Paris is liberated by the Allies. Photo: Young French women celebrate the liberation of Paris with American soldiers (RDA/Getty)



August 26 – Police officers at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago, August 26-29, 1968. Photo: Maury Englander

Women's Equality Day



Park 11 am.

August 28 –

Dream Day Martin Luther King Jr. gave the 'I Have a Dream' speech in 1963.

August 30 – Aware
Ones at Sandspr



Thurgood Marshall took a seat on the Supreme Court, 1967.

Upcoming:

March 2025 –



March 14-16, 2025



LIVES LIVED – LIVES LOST

May 2024

2



Peter Oosterhuis, 75, English golfer and broadcaster (CBS Sports), complications from Alzheimer's disease.

3

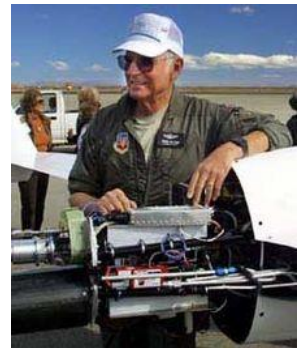
Roger Fortson, 23, American Air Force serviceman, shot. United States Air Force serviceman Roger Fortson

was fatally shot in his home in Fort Walton Beach, Florida, by Deputy Eddie Duran of the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office.

Duran lied about why he shot Fortson to investigators by claiming: "I'm standing there thinking I'm about to get shot, I'm about to die ... It is him or me at this point and I need to, I need to act as opposed to react".

- **Moorhead C. Kennedy Jr.**, 93, American Foreign Service officer and hostage survivor (Iran hostage crisis). Kennedy was a Foreign Service officer during the 1970s. He was one among 52 Americans held hostage for 444 days during the Iran hostage crisis.

- **Dick Rutan**, 85, American aviator, complications from COVID-19. record-breaking test pilot who in 1986 piloted the Voyager aircraft on the first non-stop, non-refueled around-the-world flight with co-pilot Jeana Yeager.



6

Kristin Hallenga, 38, English breast cancer awareness activist (CoppaFeel!), breast cancer. "I was diagnosed in 2009, and I was diagnosed eight months after first going to the doctors. I was told three times that I was too young to get breast cancer. I decided that my story needs to be told and we need to get young people thinking about breast cancer and their boobs from a younger age and start checking from a younger age because I never did. I thought it was never going to happen to me." — *Kristin Hallenga*,



- **Wayland Holyfield**, 82, American songwriter ("Arkansas (You Run Deep in Me)", "Rednecks, White Socks and Blue Ribbon Beer", "You're My Best Friend").

8

John Barbata, 79, American rock drummer (The Turtles, Jefferson Airplane, Jefferson Starship). Reflecting on his career, Barbata later said "I was very fortunate ... Most drummers only go around once. I went around three times and played with the best musicians in the world."





- **Pete McCloskey**, 96, American politician and activist, member of the U.S. House of Representatives (1967–1983), heart and kidney failure. He unsuccessfully challenged President Richard Nixon in the 1972 Republican primaries on an anti-Vietnam War platform and was the first member of Congress to publicly call for President Nixon's resignation after the Saturday Night Massacre.

9

Roger Corman, 98, American film director (*The Little Shop of Horrors*, *The St. Valentine's Day Massacre*) and producer (*Death Race 2000*). Known under various monikers such as "The Pope of Pop Cinema", "The Spiritual Godfather of the New Hollywood", and "The King of Cult", he was known as a trailblazer in the world of independent film.



- **Dennis Thompson**, 75, American Hall of Fame drummer (MC5), complications from a heart attack.

11

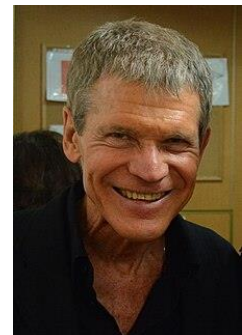
Susan Backlinie, 77, American actress (*Jaws*, *Day of the Animals*, *1941*), heart attack. an American actress and stuntwoman. She was known for playing Chrissie Watkins, the shark attack victim in the opening scene of Steven Spielberg's 1975 film *Jaws*.



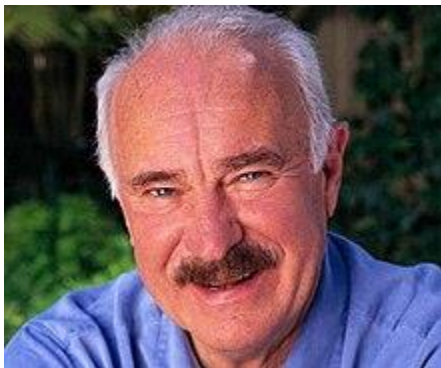
- **Jasper White**, 69, American chef, restaurateur and cookbook author, brain aneurysm.

12

David Sanborn, 78, American alto saxophonist (*Young Americans*) and television host (*Night Music*), six-time Grammy winner, prostate cancer He contracted polio at the age of three: While confined to bed, he was inspired by the "raw rock 'n' roll energy" of music he heard on the radio, particularly saxophone breaks in songs such as Fats Domino's "Ain't That a Shame" and Little Richard's "Tutti Frutti".



16



Dabney Coleman, 92, American actor (*9 to 5*, *Tootsie*, *The Guardian*), Emmy winner (1987), cardiac arrest.

17

Bud Anderson, 102, American Air Force colonel and flying ace. an officer in the United States Air Force and a triple ace of World War II. During the war he was the highest scoring flying ace in his P-51 Mustang squadron.





- **Bette Nash**, 88, American flight attendant and Guinness World Record holder, breast cancer. an American flight attendant who was recognized as the world's longest-serving flight attendant in 2022 by Guinness World Records. She worked for various airlines in a career spanning over 65 years.

19



Peggi Blu, 77, American singer and vocal coach. She is best known as an American Idol vocal coach.

23

Morgan Spurlock, 53, American film director (Super Size Me, Where in the World Is Osama bin Laden?, Comic-Con Episode IV: A Fan's Hope), cancer.

24



Doug Ingle, 78, American musician (Iron Butterfly) and songwriter ("In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida").

27

Bill Walton, 71, American Hall of Fame basketball player (UCLA Bruins, Portland Trail Blazers, Boston Celtics), and sportscaster, colorectal cancer. Walton was a fan of the Grateful Dead, whose concerts he started attending in 1967, while he was still in high school. He attended more than 850 Grateful Dead concerts in his lifetime.

30

Tom Bower, 86, American actor (Die Hard 2, Bad Lieutenant: Port of Call New Orleans, Undoing).

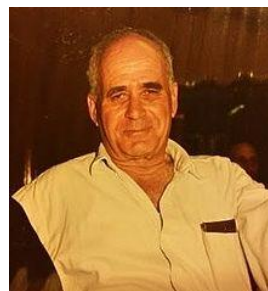
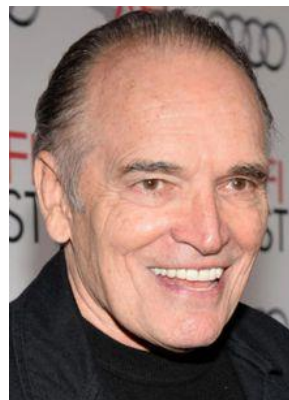
31

Ed Mann, 69, American drummer and keyboardist (Frank Zappa)

June

2

Uzi Geller, 93, Israeli chess master.





Steve Miller, for over 30 years.

7

Paul Pressler, 94, American politician, member of the Texas House of Representatives (1957–1959) and judge. Pressler was a key figure in the conservative resurgence of the Southern Baptist Convention, which he initiated in 1978. He was accused of sexual misconduct or assault by at least seven men, some of whom were underage at the time of the alleged activity.

- **David Boaz**, 70, American libertarian philosopher, cancer. Boaz, who was openly gay, was with his partner,



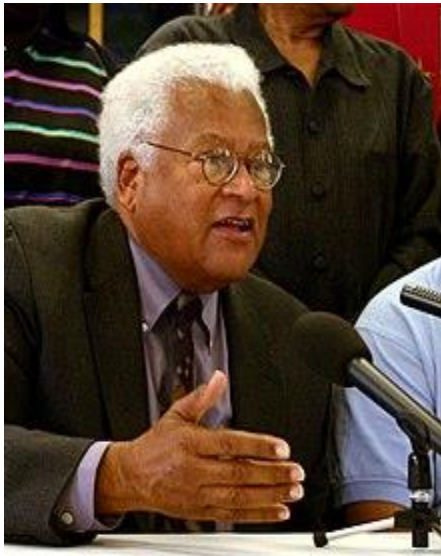
8

Mark James, 83, American songwriter ("Hooked on a Feeling", "Suspicious Minds", "Always on My Mind"). He wrote hits for B.J. Thomas, Brenda Lee and Elvis Presley, including Presley's hit single "Suspicious Minds".



9

James Lawson, 95, American civil rights activist. In 1961, Lawson helped develop strategy for the Freedom Riders. Lawson encouraged the students to plan a second wave of Freedom Rides from Alabama to continue the work and Lawson joined the group. They arrived in Jackson safe, but when they filed into a "whites only" waiting room they were arrested. Lawson was among the first who was arrested during the Jackson Freedom Ride arrests. The NAACP offered to pay for bail, but Lawson and others refused bail and waited for trial. The judge found all 27 guilty and they remained in jail. Lawson and the Freedom Riders met with Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, and, in September 1961, President John F. Kennedy ordered that passengers be able to sit anywhere.



- **Sheila Mary O'Toole** CNZM QSO, also known as **Sister Mary Laurence**, was a New Zealand Catholic nun who worked in Western Samoa and Vietnam. She is the most decorated New Zealander in relation to Vietnam. Sister Sheila O'Toole was a member of the order Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions. She worked with indigenous Montagnard refugees at Phuoc Binh



in Phuoc Long province from March 1969 to April 1975. She was in Saigon during the Vietnam War, was held in a prisoner of war camp, and was one of the last people to depart from the United States Embassy in April 1975. She also helped Vietnamese orphans leave Saigon in Operation Babylift.

Tony Lo Bianco, 87, American actor (*The Honeymoon Killers*, *The French Connection*, *The Seven-Ups*), prostate cancer



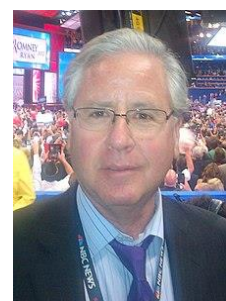
- **Françoise Hardy**, 80, French singer-songwriter ("*Tous les garçons et les filles*", "*All Over the World*") and actress (*Grand Prix*), laryngeal cancer.



- **Howard Fineman**, 75, American journalist and television commentator (*NBC News*), pancreatic cancer. For 30 years, he drove *Newsweek* magazine's political coverage. He appeared regularly on *Hardball with Chris Matthews*, *Countdown with Keith Olbermann*, *The Last Word with Lawrence O'Donnell*, and *The Rachel Maddow Show*.

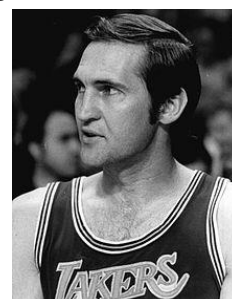


- **Channing Nicole Larry** (October 9, 1997 – June 11, 2024), known professionally as **Enchanting**, was an American rapper from Fort Worth, Texas. complications from an overdose.



12

Jerry West, 86, American Hall of Fame basketball player, coach, and executive (Los Angeles Lakers), NBA (1972) and Olympic champion (1960). His nicknames included "**the Logo**", in reference to his silhouette being the basis for the NBA logo; "**Mr. Clutch**", for his ability to make a big play in a key situation such as his famous buzzer-beating 60-foot shot that tied Game 3 of the 1970 NBA Finals against the New York Knicks; "**Mr. Outside**", in reference to his perimeter play with the Lakers and "**Zeke from Cabin Creek**" for the creek near his birthplace of Chelyan, West Virginia.



14

Johnny Boone, 80, American marijuana farmer, leader of the Cornbread Mafia. an American farmer who was a leader of the Cornbread Mafia in the 1980s, one of the largest domestic marijuana syndicates in American history. He has been referred to as the "Godfather of Grass". Boone was born in Washington County, Kentucky on September 22, 1943.^[1] He was raised by his grandfather who was a farmer and bootlegger during

the Prohibition era. By the 1970s, he was cultivating what was said to be the best breed of pot in Kentucky, labeled "Kentucky Bluegrass" by *High Times*. Boone admitted to his wrongdoings: "We're from a poor place ... I don't think anybody here is into any kind of thievery. I can only say that ... in our area, marijuana is one of the things that helps put bread on the table for people." He was also known as being humble and taking care of his community in Marion and Washington Counties, Kentucky. During an eight-year period when he was on the run, U.S. Marshals were unable to get information from people on his whereabouts, being told by residents they wouldn't tell his location even if they knew. In the 1980s, Boone was a leader in



the Cornbread Mafia, a drug organization in Kentucky dubbed the "largest domestic marijuana syndicate in American history". During his time in the organization, he helped set up marijuana farms in his home state of Kentucky as well as surrounding states in the Midwest including Indiana, Illinois, and Kansas.

15



James Kent, 45, American chef, Bocuse d'Or USA winner (2010). Kent operated the restaurants Crown Shy and Saga, which are both located at 70 Pine St. in New York City. As of 2023, Crown Shy holds one star from the Michelin Guide, while Saga holds two stars.



18

Anouk Aimée, 92, French actress (*La dolce vita*, *A Man and a Woman*, *A Leap in the Dark*) Aimée was known for her "striking features" and beauty, and



considered "one of the hundred sexiest stars in film history," according to a 1995 poll conducted by Empire magazine. She often portrayed a femme fatale with a melancholy aura. In the 1960s, Life magazine commented: "after each picture her enigmatic beauty lingered" in the memories of her audience, and called her "the Left Bank's most beautiful resident."

- **Willie Mays**, 93, American Hall of Fame baseball player (New York / San Francisco Giants, New York Mets), World Series champion (1954), heart failure. Widely regarded as one of the greatest players of all-time, Mays was a five-tool player who began his career in the Negro leagues, playing for the Birmingham Black Barons, and spent the rest of his career in the National League (NL), playing for the New York / San Francisco Giants and New York Mets.

20



Donald Sutherland, 88, Canadian actor (*M*A*S*H*, *Ordinary People*, *The Hunger Games*), Emmy winner (1995). Sutherland received numerous accolades, including a Primetime Emmy Award, and two Golden Globe Awards. He is cited as one of the best actors never to have received an Academy Award nomination, but received an Academy

Honorary Award in 2017. His son, Kiefer Sutherland, announced his death on X/Twitter adding, "He loved what he did and did what he loved, and one can never ask for more than that. A life well lived".



Heroes



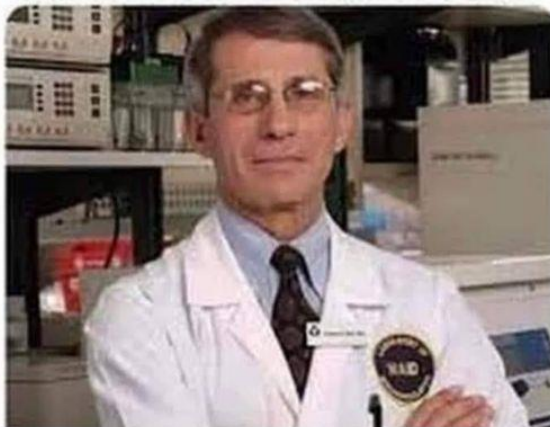
Transgender activists flood Utah tip line with hoax reports to block bathroom law enforcement

SALT LAKE CITY (AP)— Transgender activists have flooded a Utah tip line created to alert state officials to possible violations of a new bathroom law with thousands of hoax reports in an effort to shield trans residents and their allies from any legitimate complaints that could lead to an investigation.



In the last four years, Chiefs DT Derrick Nnadi has paid for the adoptions for as many as 500 area dogs.

SURE, I SPENT 50 YEARS OF MY LIFE STUDYING VIRUSES. JUST SO I COULD "TRICK" REDNECKS INTO WEARING PAPER MASKS. THAT WAS MY CAREER GOAL.



[...] In the week since it launched, the online tip line already has received more than 10,000 submissions, none of which seem legitimate, he said. The form asks people to report public school employees who knowingly allow someone to use a restroom that does not match the sex on their birth certificate.



Freddie Oversteegen died today in 2018. As a girl she used to seduce SS men in Holland, take them into the woods and shoot them.



Seriously, how the f* do we have 5 thousand Batman movies and 7 million Spider-Man reboots but zero movies about this chick?**



REGGIE JACKSON DISCUSSES RACIST TREATMENT RECEIVED DURING PLAYING DAYS IN ALABAMA

by Cedric 'BIG CED' Thornton

Major League Baseball celebrated Juneteenth by having a game on June 19 at Rickwood Field in Birmingham, Alabama. During an interview with former baseball player Alex Rodriguez on the Fox Network, Yankee great Reggie Jackson was asked about his playing days at the ballpark and gave an emotional recollection about dealing with racism during that time.

The famed baseball field was home to the Negro League where many players, including Hall of Famers, Willie Mays, who was born in Birmingham, and Mobile's own Hank Aaron starred before making it to the Major Leagues. Jackson stated that being back at Rickwood Field brought back memories of the type of racism that plagued the country back in the 1960s.

"Coming back here is not easy. The racism that I (faced) here when I played here, the difficulty of going through different places that we traveled," Jackson said. "Fortunately, I had a manager, and I had players on the team that helped me get through it. But I wouldn't wish it on anybody. People said to me today and I spoke on it 'Do you think you're a better person, do you think you won,

when you played here...’ And I said, you know, I would never want to do it again.”

He goes on to speak on some of the issues he had to deal with regarding racists targeting him whenever he was out in public—being called the N-word and having people refusing him service just because he was Black. He expressed some of the things he experienced during that time.

He also stated that if it wasn’t for his white friends, he would not have made it. He felt if he had succumbed to his emotions, he would have been killed.

“I wouldn’t wish it on anyone. At the same time, had it not been for my white friends, had it not been for a white manager and Rudi, Fingers and Duncan, and Lee Meyers, I would never have made it. I was too physically violent. I was ready to physically fight some — I would have got killed here because I would have beat someone’s ass, and you would have saw me in an oak tree somewhere.”



Asshole(s) of the Month

Editor's note: due to the impending national election, the amount of Assholishness is approaching record levels. Assholes who would previously be featured, no longer make the cut and will be placed on a "space available" waiting list.

**Missouri bill to ban
all child marriages
runs into resistance
from House
Republicans**

Drumpf University
FUCK DONALD TRUMP



**Rep. Dean Van Schoiack of
Missouri: (MO-Pedo). "I love them
child marriages."**



Thorn Hill, TN. It's real.

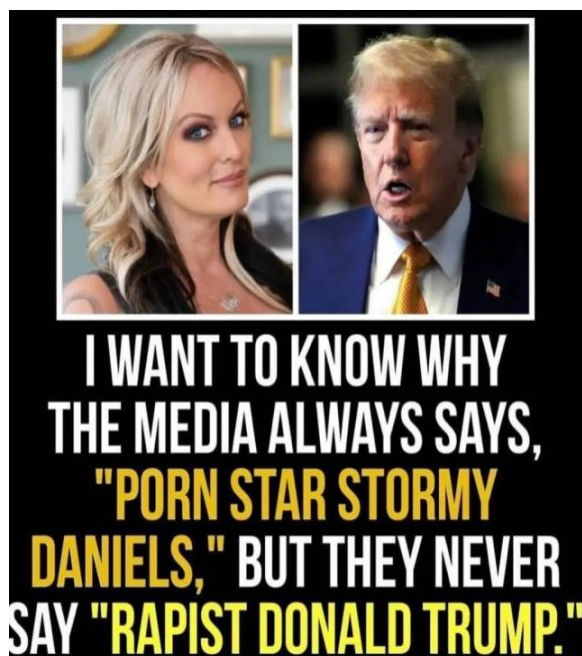


Ron DeSantis Makes "Climate Change Isn't Real" Official Florida Law

Ron DeSantis thinks that if the words "climate change" are removed from Florida state law, nobody has to worry about it.

The Florida governor signed legislation Wednesday that would eliminate climate change as a priority in the state's energy policies set to go into effect July 1.

The [legislation](#) also takes out most of the references to climate change in Florida law, bans offshore wind, and weakens regulations on natural gas pipelines.



sure to show accelerating growth in the final six months of the campaign. These billionaire clans donated the \$600 million mostly to political parties, political action committees (PACs) and outside spending groups (Super PACs) as of May 9, offering further proof that the nation's richest families consider democracy just another commodity they can buy.

The Billionaire Family Business: 50 Billionaire Clans Have Already Spent Over \$600 Million on the 2024 Elections, Mostly to Preserve Their Fortunes

Just 50 billionaire families have already injected more than \$600 million collectively into the crucial 2024 elections, with that number



Robert Reich ✓
@RBReich

All nine Republican senators running for reelection this year just voted against the right to contraception:

John Barrasso
Marsha Blackburn
Kevin Cramer
Ted Cruz
Deb Fischer
Josh Hawley
Pete Ricketts
Rick Scott
Roger Wicker

So much for the party of "freedom."

Republican Opposes Free Pads & Tampons Because It Leads To Communism

Rep. Stephanie Borowicz (R-Clinton) objected to free menstrual products in schools.

By Ed Scarce — June 5, 2024

Rep. Stephanie Borowicz (R-Clinton) objected, "just another step by the governor and Democrats to have the government provide everything for you, which leads to communism." Borowicz has a litany of stupidity attached to her, including recently trying to decertify the election results in Pennsylvania, introducing a resolution calling COVID God's "punishment inflicted upon us for our presumptuous sins," and introducing a bill modeled after Florida's "Don't Say Gay" law. During the COVID-19 Pandemic,

Borowicz introduced a resolution that suggested the virus was a "punishment inflicted upon us for our presumptuous sins" and sought to proclaim March 30, 2020, a day of humiliation, fasting, and prayer.

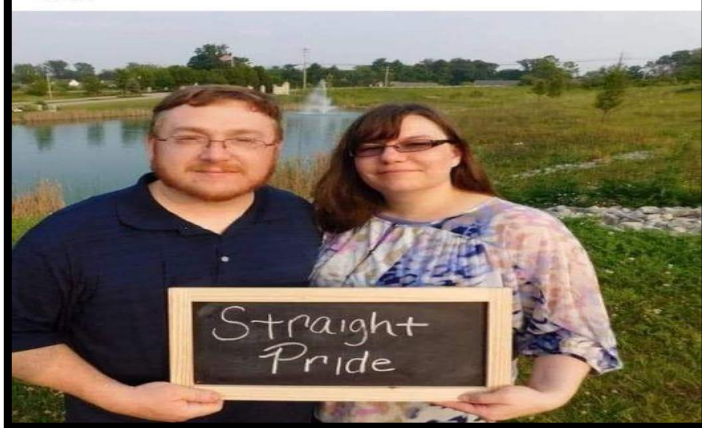


White Supremacy is alive and well and being nurtured by maga Republicans.



Pierre, SD Capitol building June 8 2024

Oh, snap. I guess they showed us!



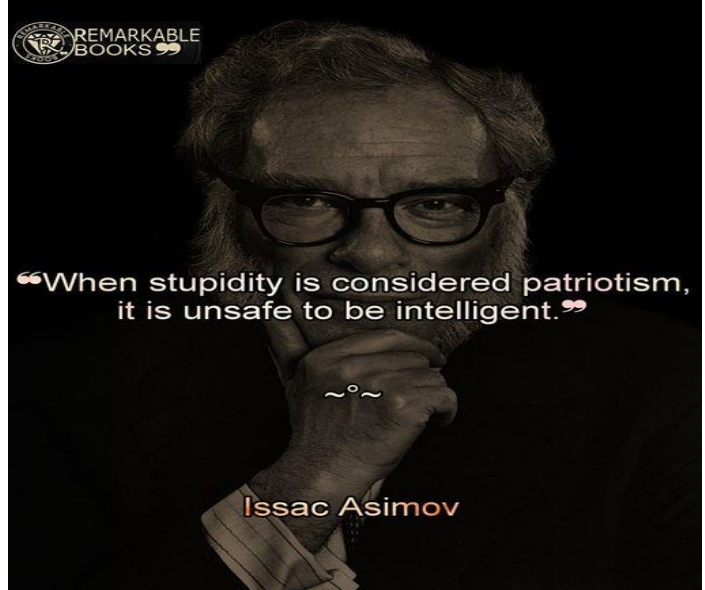
You can almost smell the phony superiority

Atheist Quotes

"The method of science is tried and true. It is not perfect, it's just the best we have. And to abandon it, with its skeptical protocols, is a pathway to the dark ages."

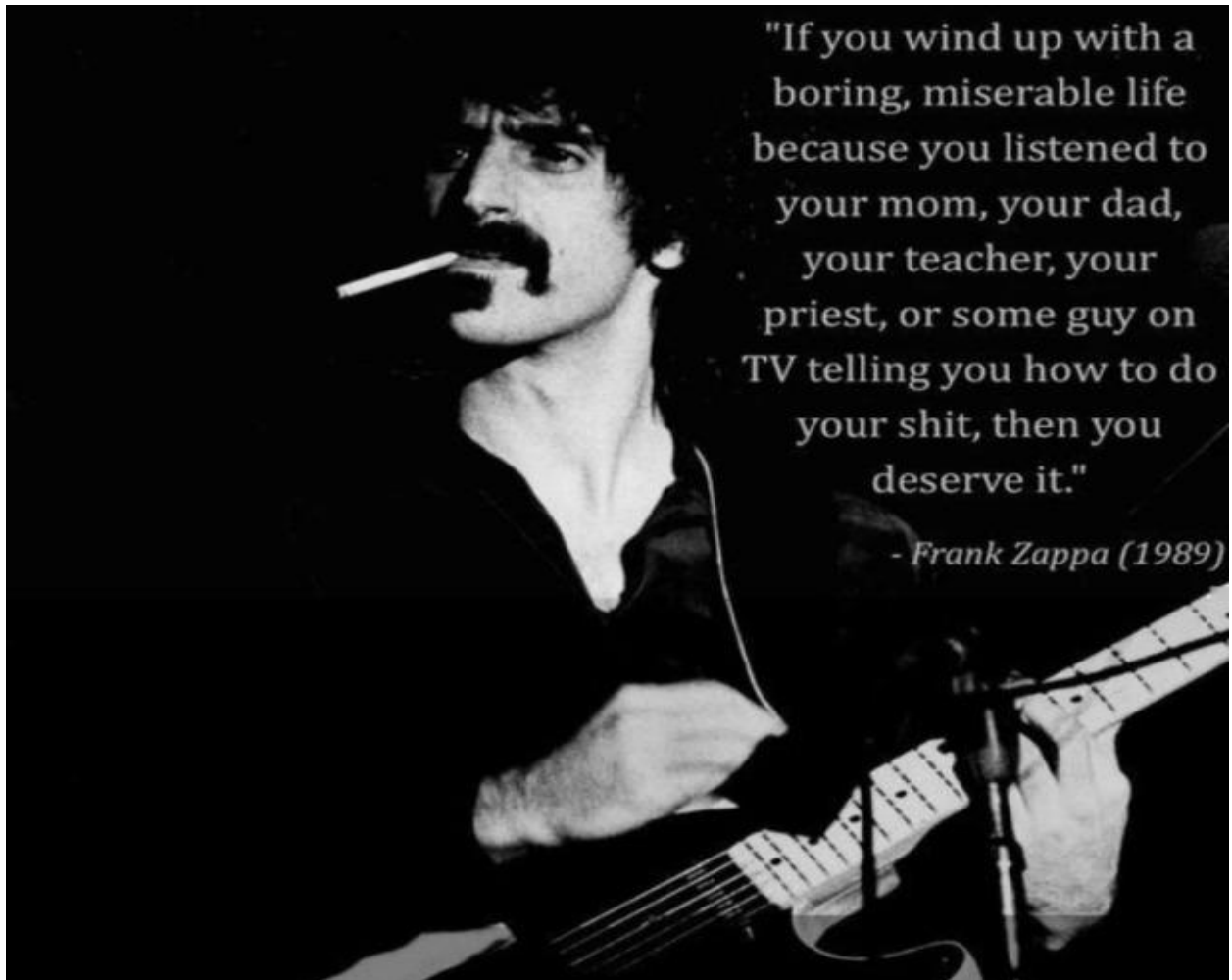


Carl Sagan



"When stupidity is considered patriotism, it is unsafe to be intelligent."

Issac Asimov

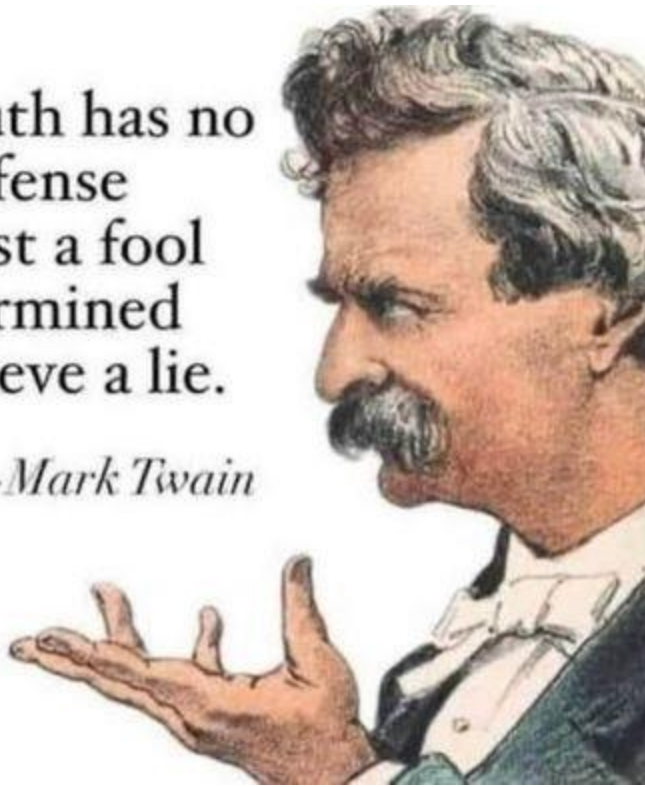


"If you wind up with a boring, miserable life because you listened to your mom, your dad, your teacher, your priest, or some guy on TV telling you how to do your shit, then you deserve it."

- Frank Zappa (1989)

The truth has no
defense
against a fool
determined
to believe a lie.

-Mark Twain



"I'll tell you what you did with atheists for about 1500 years. You outlawed them from universities or any teaching careers, besmirched their reputations, banned or burned their books or their writings of any kind, humiliated them, seized their properties, arrested them for blasphemy. You dehumanized them with beatings and exquisite torture, gouged out their eyes, slit their tongues, stretched, crushed or broke their limbs, tore off their breasts if they were women, crushed their scrotums if they were men, imprisoned them, stabbed them, disemboweled them, hung them, burnt them alive.

And you have the nerve
to complain to me that
I laugh at you?"

~Dr. Madalyn
Murray O'Hair



COMMENTARY



The following is a synopsis of the terms of Project 2025 – editor



PLAN FOR TRUMP'S 2ND TERM

PROJECT 2025

ABORTION

- Reverse the FDA's approval of abortion medication
- Invoke a 150 year-old defunct law called the Comstock Act to ban the shipment of abortion pills, enacting a de-facto national abortion ban
- Compel states to report the "reason" for every abortion performed within their borders
- Allow states to ban employers from providing health benefits that cover abortion care

PLAN FOR TRUMP'S 2ND TERM

CLIMATE CHANGE

- Withdraw from the U.N. Framework Convention on climate change and the Paris Climate Agreement
- Repeal the Inflation Reduction Act, President Biden's landmark climate law
- Shred greenhouse gas regulations and gut clean energy programs
- Replace the White House climate advisor with someone focused on boosting the fossil fuel industry
- Give Trump the power to reject all climate science research directed by the Biden administration

EDUCATION

- Reverse the Biden administration's student debt relief efforts

HEALTH CARE

- Put Medicare on the path to privatization
- Repeal President Biden's Medicare drug price negotiation program
- Threaten Medicaid coverage for hundreds of thousands of Americans

PROJECT 2025

PLAN FOR TRUMP'S 2ND TERM

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

- Gut the federal workforce and install loyalists by making tens of thousands of civil servants fireable at Trump's will
- Allow Trump to deploy the military against American citizens

TAXES

- Further lower taxes on big corporations

FOREIGN AID

- Cease support for international organizations that promote LGBTQ+ equality
- Remove all references to "abortion," "reproductive health," and "sexual and reproductive rights" from U.S. Agency For International Development's materials

★★★★★
PROJECT 2025

PLAN FOR TRUMP'S 2ND TERM

LGBTQ+ RIGHTS

- Make federal government establish marriage between a man and a woman as the “ideal, natural family structure”
- Withdraw federal anti-discrimination protections for transgender students
- Reimplement Trump’s transgender military ban and expel transgender service members

IMMIGRATION

- Allow ICE to conduct raids at schools, churches, hospitals, playgrounds, and other sensitive areas

INFRASTRUCTURE

- Repeal President Biden’s Bipartisan Infrastructure Law

★★★★★
**FUCK
TRUMP**
#MakeAmericaSmartAgain
★★★★★



The Causative **Factor**

by Ed Zillioux

I am a lifelong Democrat. My parents were lifelong Democrats. Thus, it is with some trepidation that I embark on a political essay. My concern is that I do not want my personal biases to color my inferences or conclusions. But they probably will – so, what the hell.

Today's political politics seems to be infused with an inordinate number of bad actors. Assuming that I am correct, I have been wondering how this happened. Who are the instigators? Who are the enablers? I begin my analysis with republican presidential president Richard "I am not a crook" Nixon. The Watergate burglaries scandal that dominated the news of 1973-74 caused the end of, or damage to, several careers including White House chief of staff Bob Haldeman, White House Counsel and assistant to the president for Domestic Affairs, John Ehrlichman, Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Alexander Haig, and White House attorney John Dean. But Nixon, the primary perpetrator of the scandal, got off scot-free. Following his resignation, his successor, republican

president Gerald Ford made the most disastrous decision of his presidency in granting Nixon a full pardon. That's right, in one stroke of his pen, Ford set the precedent for a former president to be unaccountable for his crimes!



In the late 70s I was appointed senior scientist for environmental effects in the Office of Toxic Substances at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Over the following four years or so, the science programmers at EPA as well as most of its sister agencies, the Department of the Interior (DOI) performed very well. However, in 1981, the new republican president Ronald Reagan, appointed new heads of both agencies, Anne Gorsuch at EPA and James Watt at DOI, with their joint dictums to dismantle the ongoing science programs of both agencies. I was most familiar with Gorsuch's "natural teams" that she assembled at our



headquarters, but she worked very closely with James Watt. I mean very closely. She was known among our staff scientists as "*Watt's-Twat*" a sign of the disdain felt towards her. For my part I resigned in protest in 1983.

Anne Gorsuch left a lasting legacy in the person of her

son, Neil Gorsuch who, along with Amy Coney Barrett and Brett Kavanaugh, were appointed to the Supreme Court by republican

president Donald Trump, thus assuring a conservative tilt to the court for the duration of their collective lives.

I can't end this list of atrocities bequeathed to us by republican presidents without mentioning the appointments to the Supreme Court of Clarence Thomas by George H.W. Bush in 1991 and Samuel Alito by George W. Bush in 2006.

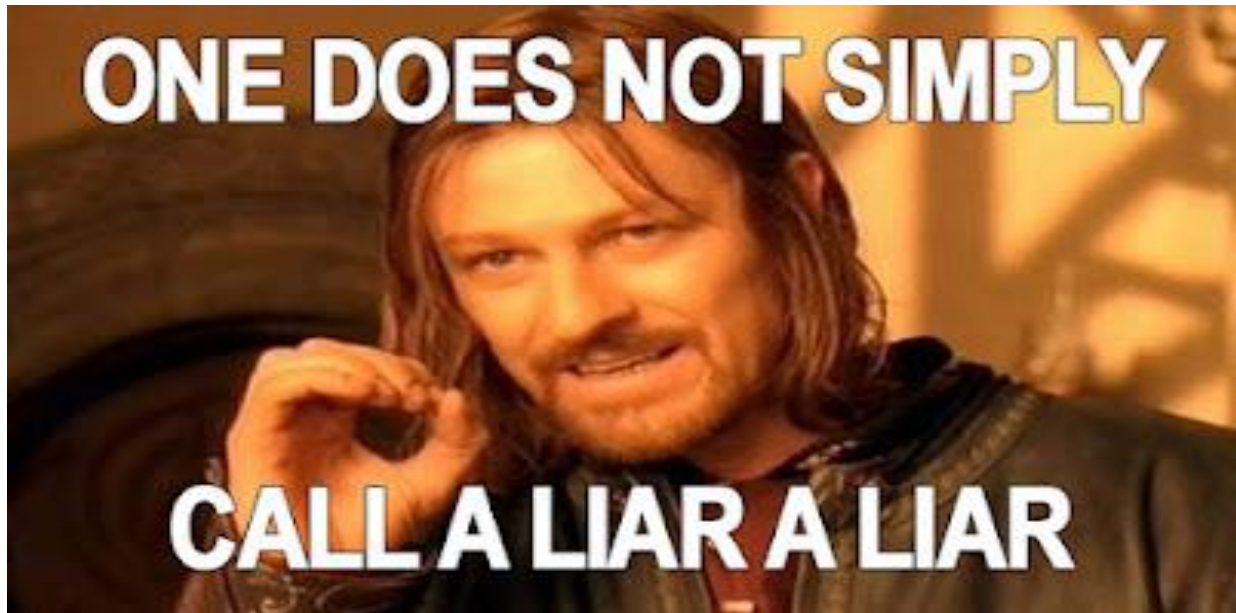


my bias, but it can't all be thus explained away.

I'm kind of thinking, if we get more republican presidents, *life in Costa Rica might not be all that bad!*

Why is this happening? When it comes to negative actions appointments or decisions, why are the agents of causation almost invariably republican? Or, why does it seem that way? OK, I admit, as I did up front, that it might partly be due to





On the Transgression of the Unwritten Law

By Driftglass

professionalleft.blogspot.com

You all know about The Club, right? The media club? That self-protecting elite coterie of media creatures who dress up and play journalism in the nation's leading news organs and on high-end teevee programs?

You can't miss 'em. They're everywhere, and they can be easily identified by their cocksureness, by the fact that they're almost always wrong, and that their wrongness is never held against them. This is most important: being horribly wrong all the time never threatens their membership in The Club

Also the contrarians members of The Club – the "Yeah, but whatabaout..." Conservatives – can always be counted on to serve up their contrarian garbage with a big 'ol smirk. They play the part of the Heel in this performance, and they go about their business secure in the knowledge that, inside The Club, everyone

knows the rules. Everyone is aware of the Unwritten Law. that no Club member shall ever ask why another Club member ***is being paid*** to sit in a Club chair and lie into the camera.

After all, it's just a show. Everyone has their role to play, and as with any other staged performance, the continued success of the show depends on the audience's willing suspension of disbelief. Consider that we can be moved by *MacBeth* or *The Iceman Cometh* even though we've already seen them a dozen times and know, in the end, no one really dies. And we can get sucked in by *The Hunt for Red October* or *Beverly Hills Cop* because they're just so damn rewatchable.

So just imagine the audience's disorientation if, when the ghost of Hamlet's father shows up to tell his son to avenge his murder, the Ghostbusters show up to capture it (note to self: write up a story treatment of cinematic and stage ghosts suddenly becoming real.) Or if real-life cops stormed the stage to arrest Hamlet after [Spoiler] he kills Polonius thinking him to be Claudius.

Just so with the media Club. The illusion must be maintained, and therefore anything that threatens that illusion – threatens to jog the audience awake – must be shut down hard and fast. Yes, you can now freely bandy the word "liar" around, which, you will remember, was absolute taboo just a few years ago. Back when grown men and women would contort themselves into all kinds of bizarre linguistic shapes to avoid saying the "L" word. You could call someone a serial fabulist. A known exaggerator. A prevaricator. Even a naughty-bad fibber. But never, ever flat-out call them a liar.

Well, that has changed. The graphic at the top of this post is no longer true, which has its good points and bad. It was exhausting and ridiculous watching adults trying to avoid speaking an obvious truth that was right in front of them. OTOH, calling Republican liars "liars" doesn't faze them in the slightest, because Republicans no longer have a conscience. They've long

since taken Jiminy Cricket out behind the chemical toilet and put a bullet in his head.

Instead, being called a liar is a badge of honor. It proves they can go into the belly of the Liberal Media beast and Trigger the Libs, and do so with a big ol' smirk on their face! Yay!

But one thing you still absolutely cannot do is **question the corporate policy** of paying the liar sitting next to you on teevee. That will get you spanked. Like so...

But don't worry, the Club has survived much worse than this. The Club will shrug this off and move on

The Club beareth all things and endureth all things.

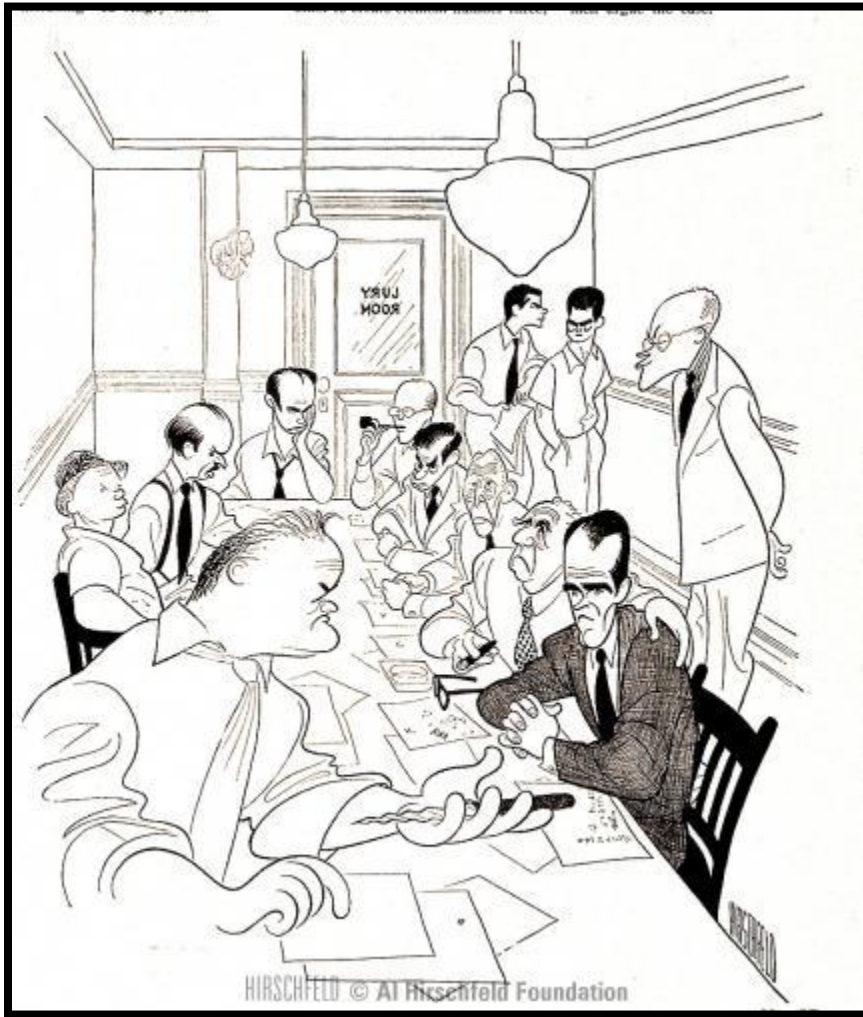
The Club abides.

That's why it's The Club.



“A hideous ecstasy of fear and vindictiveness ...seemed to flow through the whole group of people like an electric current, turning one... into a grimacing, screaming lunatic.”

– George Orwell



A Mirror of Bigotry

*By Virgil
Thorp*

As we proceed
through our
lives, we

experience clarifying phenomena, referred to as "epiphanies", often defined as *"an illuminating discovery, [a] realization, or, a disclosure"*. Sometimes such revelation is overt, like what happens to you around the ages of 6 to 9 and it is 3 am and you discover you *had* done something repulsive. You had wet the bed.

Embarrassing, humiliating, and stinky. Bad enough being all soggy in damp pajamas and facing your mother in the morning. For the rest of the night a bedwetter has to balance on the dry edge inhaling the aroma of his or her own urine. That took some talent – I kid you not – but I confess, I had plenty of practice. But that was nothing, nothing compared to the time I realized that I was something much worse than a

bedwetter. Something more repulsive than a practitioner of nocturnal enuresis, involuntary as that the unfortunate habit can be. I was a bigot. A person who voluntarily lets their intolerance overcome their better judgement.

That epiphany happened while I watched a movie. A great movie. I do not recall how old I was the first time I watched the Sidney Lumet directed, Reginald Rose's 1957 jury room masterpiece, an aptly titled movie, *12 Angry Men*. There was one particular scene I will never forget.



Picture if you will, a jury room. The principals have been hashing out the verdict of guilty or not guilty of a young Puerto Rican boy, accused of the murder of his abusive father. The men in the room are uncomfortable, it is hot. Nerves are frayed. The gruff actor, Ed Begley, as juror #10, is enraged because the vote to acquit this marginalized boy has become 9-3. The tension in the room is palpable.



It is a scene so accurate, so true, so powerful that I still get goosebumps. It was a vision so skillfully written, so expertly timed, so adroitly emoted that I could not ignore the truth. I became juror #10. I just did not know it. The scene went like this:

- [Juror #10](#): I don't understand you people! I mean all these picky little points you keep bringing up. They don't mean nothing! You saw this kid just like I did. You're not gonna tell me you believe that phony story about losing the knife, and that business about being at the movies. Look, you know how these people *lie!* It's *born* in them! I mean, what the heck? I don't have to tell you! They don't know

what the truth *is!* And lemme tell ya: they don't need any real big reason to kill someone, either! No *sir!*

[Juror #5 slams a paper down, gets up from his seat]

- [Juror #10](#): They get drunk! Oh, they're real big drinkers, all of 'em – you know that – and bang: someone's lyin' in the gutter! Oh, nobody's blaming them for it. That's the way they are, by nature! You know what I mean? *Violent!*

[Juror #9 rises and crosses to the window]



- [Juror #10](#): Where're you going? Human life don't mean as much to them as it does to us!

[Juror #11 gets up and walks to the other window]

- [Juror #10](#): Look, they're lushing it up and fighting all the time and if somebody gets killed, so somebody gets killed! They don't care! Oh, sure, there are some good things about 'em, too! Look, I'm the first one to say that!

[Juror #8 gets up and walks to the nearest wall]

- [Juror #10](#): I've known a couple who were OK, but that's the exception, y'know what I mean? Most of 'em, it's like they have no feelings! They can do anything!

[Jurors #2 and #6 get up from the table. Everyone's back is to #10]

- [Juror #10](#): [*looking around, starting to decline in volume*] What's goin' on here? I'm trying to tell ya... You're makin' a big mistake, you people! This kid is a liar! I know it, I know all about them! Listen to me... They're no good! There's not a one of 'em who is any good! I mean, what's happening in here? I'm speaking my piece, and you...

[the Jury Foreman gets up and walks away. So does Juror #12]

- [Juror #10](#): Listen to me. We're... This kid on trial here... his type, well, don't you know about them? There's a, there's a danger here. These people are dangerous. They're wild. Listen to me. Listen.
- [Juror #4](#): [*quietly and firmly*] I have. Now sit down and don't open your mouth again.

[a beat, like a breath of silence]

- [Juror #10](#): [*the shock of being ignored and silenced sinking in*] I'm jus' tryin'-a... tell ya...[he sits, shaken by the rejection of his peers]

How could anyone be so stupid? How could anyone be so dumb? And, at that sterlingly precise moment, I saw and heard myself in Begley's ignorant bigotry. My breath was stricken from me. Like a kick to my solar plexus. I had at various times spoken those exact words. Almost in that exact order. I had to fight to inhale. That famous line, "oh, what have I done." Was an echo in my empty head. That shameful realization exploded in my consciousness like a 45-caliber bullet. It said, "guess what. You are a fucking bigot."

The image in the mirror reflected back at me. I could hardly recognize the scrunched up, ugly face. The face of an angry bigot! Hardly the righteous image I had imagined for myself. I was instantly ashamed. I wondered if anyone else could hear me. If they could, they would know. All I could think about was a phrase, "please, please don't detest me."

It took months for me to recover from the shock of my perfidity. I had to admit, I am nobody special. I am just like everyone else.

Oh, I have tried to improve. I often catch myself regressing with that onerous thinking. I admonish myself. I speak out loud, not caring who might hear. "Hey asshole, you know better."

Of course, I vow not to fall into the bigotry trap again. And just when I think I will overcome my intolerance ... I again realize, I only thought my bedwetting days were over. That redeeming, blessed thought that I am indeed, woke, is nothing at all. We all have to start over, every morning.

12 Angry Men is a great movie. It has much to say, and it says it well. Thankfully, it spoke directly to me. It gave me one of my greatest epiphanies. Despite my own racism and the prejudice of others, I have great faith that in the world in small, the jury room, that – even in repulsive, bedwetting hypocrites like me – it is possible that one can discover, a twinkle of the innate goodness of humanity.





Most Atheists Choose Atheism

By Atheist Revolution

believe that it is a choice, including some atheists. This has long puzzled me. I've never experienced it as a choice.

The question of whether atheism is a choice comes up often. Many people



Not only that, but I did everything in my power to resist when the doubts first surfaced. I sought help from family, friends, and even clergy. I prayed. I re-read the Bible. I was desperate. I wanted to keep believing. I wanted to remain a Christian. None of that mattered. It all slipped away.

When I've had this discussion with others, this is what I've focused on. I've explained how I fought against it and how that didn't help. I've explained that I never chose to be an atheist but ended up one anyway. But that's only half the story. It might not

even be the best illustration of why I'm not sure that atheism is a choice.

Choosing to Believe Today



Forget about the past. Set aside what it was like to struggle with doubts and lose the battle, becoming what I had learned to fear and hate. Focus on the present instead. If atheism is a choice, I should be able to undo it any time I want, right? I should be able to decide that I don't want to be an atheist anymore and go back to believing in gods. But is that how belief works?

Could you identify something you don't believe and begin believing in it? I can't. At least, I've never been able to do so.

Gods used to make sense to me. They haven't for over 30 years. That's a long time. Atheism is part of who I am now, like it or not.

Letting Myself Be Myself

What would it be like to resume my god-belief? I used to compare it to forgetting how to read. That may not be the best comparison, but it feels like it would be as difficult. It also

reminds me of getting out of bed one morning, declaring "I'm no longer me. I'm someone else," and pulling that off.

I could pretend to believe in gods. I've done it before. I didn't enjoy it, but I'm capable. I could go through the motions, attending religious services. I had to do that for a time after I no longer believed, and I hated every minute of it. I could do it now, but I'm not sure why I'd torture myself like that.

The best course of action seems to be to let myself be myself. I'm many things today. Atheist is one of them. There doesn't seem to be much point in fighting that. It didn't seem like a choice back then, and it doesn't seem like any more of a choice today.

Why Does It Matter?



Why does it matter whether atheism is a choice? Some religious believers still point to it as justification for hassling us. Bigotry against someone for something they can't control is hard to justify. But if it is a choice we are making, their mistreatment of us seems less bad.

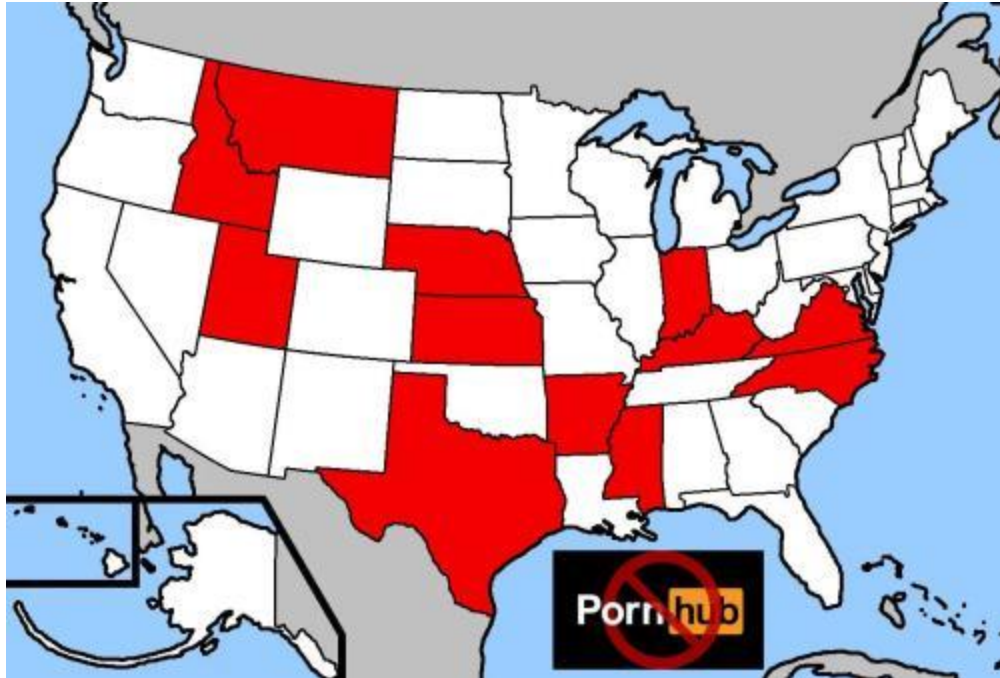
I know some young atheists spend too much time beating themselves up for their loss of faith. I was one of them. It is easy to see it as a failure. If others can maintain their faith, why can't we? But what if we recognized that atheism might not be something we choose for ourselves? Could that reduce some of the self-blame?

It also matters because it goes both ways. If atheism is not a choice, theism might not be a choice either. That could have implications for how atheists treat religious believers. If we can't will ourselves to believe in gods, we shouldn't expect them to be able to will themselves not to.



www.atheistrev.com

ARTICLES



US states where a popular adult website will be blocked as of July 1, 2024



You poor bastards.

PICKUP TRUCKS



By Bert Mautz

American males love them. We see them everywhere. Video of the roadways in Europe show virtually no such vehicles. In America they are bestsellers. What is the attraction?

Full size pickups by the major manufacturers are physically big; commanding view of the road for the driver, barely fit in conventional parking spaces; wide and too long. Plentiful power to tow the boat to the launching ramp. Not only do the major American builders have extensive truck lines, but also Toyota, Nissan, and Honda build trucks. Just as big, just as muscular. By comparison BMW, Mercedes, Fiat, and Renault have no such vehicles in their extensive lineups. New electric models are coming into being.

Seemingly irresistible as a symbol of masculinity, the truck he purchases is but a start. Jack'er up, mount huge knobby tires, menacing bent pipe bumpers, and lots of extra lights. Wives and girlfriends climb virtual ladders to get into their elevated cabins. The four-door cab sealed the deal – pickups can now be family haulers.

The truck commercials we see daily feature, roaring across sand dunes, splashing creek forges, tip toeing up rocky mountain trails, fulfilling your own fantasy/self-appraisal. Most likely to never leave paved roads, but you could if you wanted to. It is here, with the all-conquering image, that the manhood building originates. Your 4x4 truck with its noisy deep lug tires can do all these things, in trucks intended for real men doing real work, in spite of challenging/extenuating circumstances, here in Florida it might rain.



Visit the online truck shopping web sites to be flabbergasted by the extent of options and customizing possibilities. Is this where the attractions lies? An awful lot of trucks are being sold to folks not hauling bags of Read-Mix, lumber from Home Depot, trash headed for the dump. And many of these options fall in the category of comfort, even luxury additions. Lots of chrome, gaudy chrome wheels, and leather interiors being driven by senior couples.

Ford F150 4x4 4069 – 6010 lbs.
Chevrolet Silverado 4x4 4410 – 5710 lbs,
Dodge Ram 1500 4x4 4779 – 6443 lbs

These monsters of misplaced utility are being purchased by folks who don't care about driving dynamics. Steering dynamics, road holding in the turns, braking, over all responsiveness are to be found in vehicles like the Honda Civic R, 3188 lbs., with 300hp and sticky tires. Essentially at the opposite end of the driving spectrum from too tall, too heavy, option loaded pickup truck.



Our roads are wide and extensive. The interstate highway system built in 1956 during the Eisenhower administration created a network of limited access, virtually nonstop except to refuel. Wide enough for the long haulers and the ubiquitous pickups. Germany has its own speed limitless road system, but no pickups. Too clumsy for ancient and narrow roads. Consuming expensive gasoline and diesel in wasteful quantities. Belching air polluting exhaust. Counter to resource consuming concerns, a squandering self-indulgence.



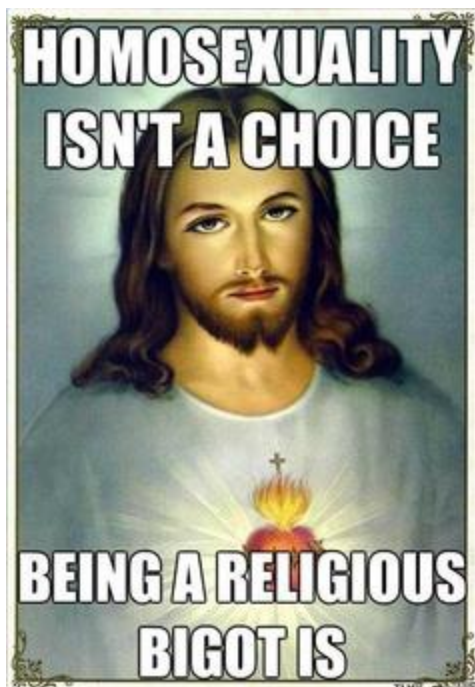


This week in Misogyny by Lucinda Lugeons

Alright, so to be clear, I know that the guys talked about the whole Harrison Butker thing last week, but that doesn't mean I don't still have some shit to say about it. Because here you got this lucky motherfucker who gets to have a pretend job that makes him millions. He's a fucking kicker. 60 minutes of football, he's doing literally anything for, what, two minutes? Two and a half. And for that, he's fortunate enough to make millions of dollars and afford a lifestyle where his wife doesn't have to work if she doesn't want to.

And let me just say, when you've got it that good, I feel like the play is just to hold as still as you can and hope nobody notices that and makes you get a real job. But instead, this asshole gives a commencement address at Benedictine College where he rails against abortion, Pride month, COVID restrictions, and working women. And who the fuck even knows why, right? Maybe he's just sick of people who find out he plays for the Chiefs asking if he can get them an autograph from Taylor Swift.

Of course, there was plenty to hate in his speech, but the part that really went viral was the misogyny. And for good reasons —



not the least of which was the fact that he was addressing a crowd that included a bunch of women who just got their fucking degrees. The beginning of their career as working women was some asshole who's never worked a day in his life telling them to take off their shoes and get back in the kitchen.

So there's obviously backlash, and then there's backlash to the backlash by a bunch of thin-skinned white boys who scream "cancel culture" every time the world rejects their beliefs. Never mind that the news articles when this broke weren't quoting offended voices on Twitter or Facebook, but rather offended women who were *in that audience* being told they were uterus first and person second.

There was also more dismissal than I'd have liked to see. A lot of "well they went to a Catholic college, what did they expect?" type shit. And that has no place in the discussion. First of all, you decide what college you're gonna go to when you're a kid, generally. I'm not about to condemn somebody for not having it all figured out at 17 or 18. Secondly, not every kid has autonomy to go to whatever school they want. If mom and dad are paying for it, you're going to the school they're



willing to pay for. If not, things like tuition costs, acceptance standards, scholarships, and proximity to home are gonna be the deciding factor for most people.

But even if they picked this school off a menu with all the schools in the world and did so with a wisdom far beyond their years, that's still no excuse for this asshole to come into their school and tell them all about the joys of motherhood after they just got their fucking business degrees. Let alone to be told as much by a



guy who's probably never done a job and definitely never had a baby.

And look — I'm not saying that being a kicker is easy, I'm just saying it's easier than all the other positions in football ... or, indeed, all of professional sports for that matter. And if you're thinking "well Lucinda, it's not like you can kick a ball sixty yards downfield," I say let's put Harrison's testicles on a tee and find out.

scathingatheist.com



These days everyone seems to want to categorize everything. Them or us. No in-between. No common courtesy. Yes, we do need a way to keep up with what to do to whom and with whatever. No one denies that it can be helpful to be able to quickly recall how we think about something.

But these days it seems as if our categories are still based on ancient religious dichotomies, rather than on any truly meaningful ways of understanding the world, that is, science.

To me, it all began with Joseph McCarthy's witch hunt for commies and queers, which of course was continued with Ronald Reagan's ominous question, "Are you with us or against us?"

It actually all began much earlier, perhaps with a rustle in the bushes that led us to wonder, "Is that thing in the bush going to

kill me and perhaps eat me? Or, can I kill and maybe eat it?" One or the other!

And who can forget all the different religions' inquisitions around the world?

Religion gave hordes of people an excuse to kill. "My gods are real; yours are not": *Ergo, I get to kill you. I get to enslave you. I get to displace you from your lands, because my god says it is my destiny.*

Being photographed with a misogynist and convicted rapist is something that these no self respecting, no morals women are doing to all women who DO have self respect, it's very disgusting that they accept his behavior, all for what, notoriety for being seen at MAR A LARDO?



Are you good or evil?
Those women who live without men; they must be witches. A man lies with another man; kill him! Kill them before they infect us. There is no in-between.

Eventually, human group consciousnesses evolved to allow in-between states of labeling. In WWII single women were needed to rivet war planes together, and at half the wages of a man, too. *ERGO: Women can work away from home.*

Maybe there is another sexuality besides *cis* man and *cis* woman. Maybe we can allow weird, immoral people

to live their own lives? Who are you to decide?

Wow! What a thought! Still, a simplified, only third category of gender queer people seems out of date. Yet, we still want just one third category. It keeps our thoughts simply organized. Too simply!

But oops! What about our friends, the Gratoms, Stretch and Marilyn, and their daughter, Erica? Her lesbian partner, Quinn, has transitioned, and our simplistic minds have trouble sorting this out. Is she now a man with the boy parts added? Was she always mentally a man, but with girl parts? She now states that she identifies as a gay man. How can s/He now call herself a gay man? Can't we just have a simple category for all people who have transitioned? Can't these people just decide one way or another which of our dichotomous names, male and female to

be? We crave simplicity.

Do you know who really needs simplicity? The evangelical, god-fearing simpletons of the world: The jihadists. The bigots. The Hasidic Jews. The Muslims. The Christers. The Mormons. All of these people created their religions from the same fairytales, fairytales that are based on a primitive dichotomy of good



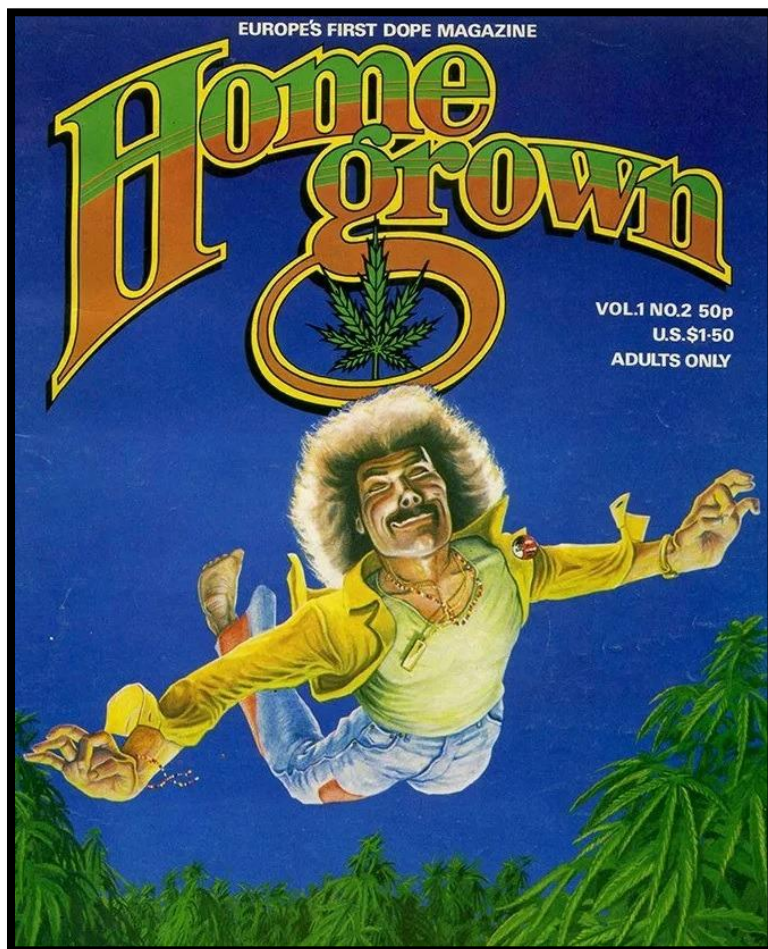
VERSUS evil.

Once again, are you with us or against us?

Since the beginning of mass media, especially our pervasive, nearly instantaneous media, our moneyed interests have sought to separate us from our ability to reason. Why would we try to make people learn to think, when they can simply be programmed to recite anything they hear, over and over?

Why teach people to think, when it is much easier to program them to follow orders? As Goebbels said, "If you repeat a lie often enough, people will believe it, and you will come to believe it yourself."

Why can't you understand that, Trumpsters?



Donald Trump certainly fits into this paradigm. I seriously doubt that the conspiracy purveyors at *Fox News*, *Newsmax*, or *The Heritage Foundation* believe anywhere near all of their lies, at least at first. These propaganda machines were founded to brainwash our terribly uneducated populace. Where did these propaganda mills start? Well, actually, this predecessor to Madison Avenue was created for the First World War, in order to get our peace-

loving citizens to want fight whomever our rulers touted as evil. Japs, Gooks, Slant Eyes, and Chinks are just a few, along with Krauts, Commies, Witches, and Queers. And least we might worry that slavery is bad, Jungle Bunnies.

Whoops, we needed black people to fight on our side, didn't we? Had to mitigate that last one, at least as long as these people remained useful.

Simpletons commonly use those terms, at least if no outsiders are watching. Trump certainly has. And recently, at that.

With whom to begin, the predecessors to Madison Avenue must have pondered? How about with the ones who already believed in the stone Age fairytales of the main three Abrahamic religions. Yeah! These fables have already given permission to denigrate any people who are not a part of their in-group (and just about any in-group will suffice, at least within reason). Goodness, I implied that these people reason. Sorry!



What about Family Research Council? I would bet that they believe the fables that have been perpetrated for the four thousand years of the written Old Testament of their Book of Fables. After all, as House Speaker Mike John recently noted: We need to make more good little workers (To grovel for near-subsistence level wages.).

How would describe yourselves in a few words? Are you a 100 percent heterosexual, libertarian leaning, conservative cis-gender, person? I know that all of you are not, and there are more than you think there are, or maybe have been in the group. Are you truly liberal? As If?

Am I truly a gay person? Hell no! I am a nerdly, punk ass, relatively smart, jazz and progressive rock aficionado, who identifies as a Freudian Psychologist, a Marxist Sociologist, Homophile and Racial rights movement loving, uh, Gearhead, for starters. I slam-danced with the punk kids, talked with the smart ones, went to concerts with the cool ones, and had private fun with the cuties I met who liked to do such things. Nearly all of them were sexually straight, much of the time. Of course that was decades ago, and I was much younger, too.

You can't simply claim that a guy who has sex with another guy is either gay or bisexual. Hell, I have been with multiple women, but I am certainly not bi-sexual, much less cis-gender. I am a straight man, in most ways, albeit one who liked to have secret fun, cavorting around with others like me. Gender identity is much more complicated than LGBTQ+ABCDEF++, etc. The phrase, "Born this way" is not an explanation, as much as it is a political belief. It is also a phrase that shuts up people who don't get it, including most users of the term.



We are not simply gay, straight or other. Neither are we simply *Repugnantcans*, or *Demoncrats*. Or *In-Dependents*. Each of us has a plethora of assorted beliefs. The category gay is seen by the majority as

someone who prefers sex with the same gender. What would you call a man who is an otherwise totally normal acting family man, who routinely pays to blow a transitioning female prostitute, as does the Armenian cab driver in the movie, *"Tangerine"*?

Gay exists, but not for me. As I have mentioned, I never got into real deviance, or drag shows, or divas, or discos, or dick sucking, or DeSantis, to just mention the D's. Well, at least that is true of five of these six d's. I wholeheartedly agree that there is this subculture, and I support it, but that is for someone else, not me. I am a totally straight man, with the exception of the queer quirk of being attracted to other straight guys who have similar interests, especially mostly younger ones who are just beginning to support themselves. They are just setting off on their journey of self-discovery, and I am a philanthropist to them, abetting them in order to learn to lead the lives they wish.

Interestingly, they are still learning what that is, and as the little girl in the *Shake and Bake* commercials said, *"And AiH Hialped!"*

I am neither a Democrat nor a Republican. I may only be offered those institutional choices in the voting booth, but unlike Magaheads and the delusional, overly woke acting, supposed liberals, I am Aware! Michael Shermer's *Skeptic Magazine*, Noam Chomsky's insight, and Chris Hedges' *Socialism* provide my mantra.



Bernie is my politician.

Screw our two-party system. Poor old Biden and his war mongering cohorts don't have a choice but to suckle on the

corporate breasts that dispense the means to keep them in power. Biden can't do anything about this situation, and neither could our great president, the unfortunately war-mongering Obama.

(In case you missed it, there is an interesting book titled, "Obama's Wars".)

Obama and Biden deserve our votes, because they are less evil than the opposition. At least between wars, they offer social justice, which we certainly need. They want to give our offspring a decent planet to live on, the right to bargain for wages and benefits, and the right to be our true selves. Unfortunately, they cannot get elected without suckling on the corporate teat. They

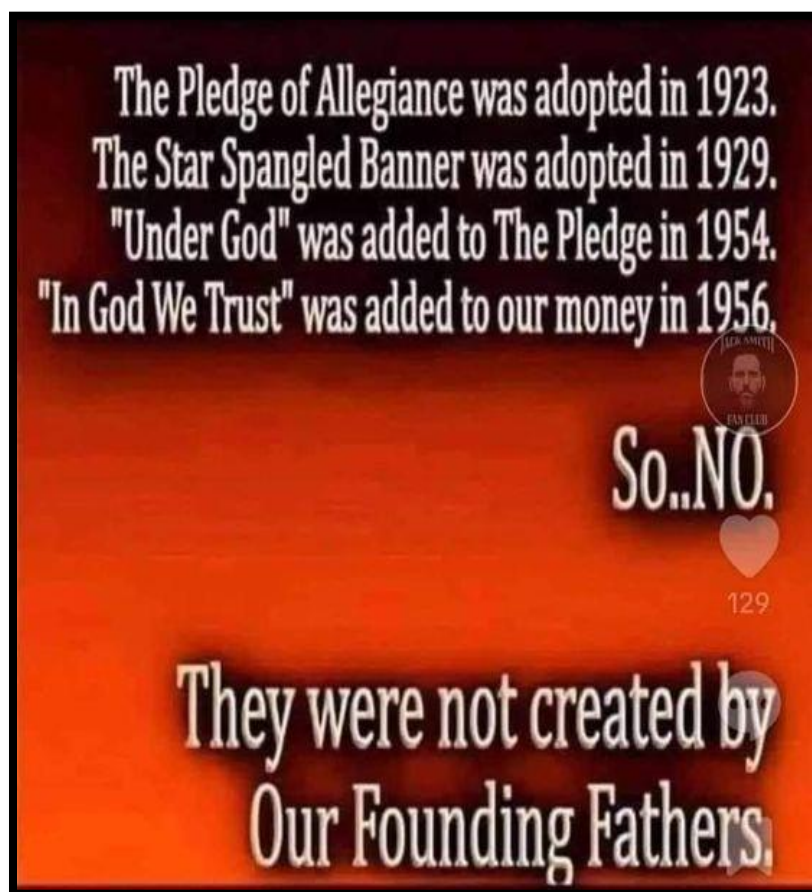
feel that they must support wars that decimate other societies, especially brown ones, whenever such mayhem helps our corporate masters gain wealth.

At least we do have Biden, but our two-party system is rigged to allow the Investment controlled Military Industrial and Medical Complex usurp



the wealth that we need to realize the America we have imagined for centuries. There are many trillions of dollars, yen, Euros, Pesos, and even Rubles and Rupees that will never be spent. The elite hoard this wealth and use a pittance of it to pay the rule makers. Wealth funds inequality. Money from the powerful funds' politicians. Period. Their mantra is "Screw the Earth and count your money. We will all be dead, so what does it matter?"

Creating categories of people to hate creates ignorant voters. Ignorant voters are inundated with derogatory names of such categories, both real and imagined. Good things like trade unions and rights for all people are demonized. Most of our voters, especially the self-proclaimed religious ones, have many categories of people to hate. After all, how can a group have an identity without identifying an opposition?



Hate trumps reason, especially for the simple-minded, and I do include the simpletons who worship wealth, one-upmanship, and possessions.

Americans, please keep your binary and tertiary labels to yourselves. Let other people who have no dogs in your fight. We only wish to live decent lives, although they differ greatly from yours. It is not your job to be

jihadist/evangelicals to make everyone act and think alike. Quit

categorizing everything into small divisions based on your ignorance and media installed biases. Drop your labeled categories and have a good life. Please let others do the same!

One last note:

Psychologists have their own set of categories. Their Diagnostic and Statistical Manual is a prime example of over-categorization. They, like us have overly simplified constructs to make sense of their world.

Do you know the main purpose of this manual? It is quite simple. Medical providers, insurance companies, and Medicare need categories to disburse payment. No category; No money!

Why have so many named mental illnesses proliferated the last few decades? I repeat: No Category; No Money! Simple, huh?

The *Pshrinck* explains, *"Well, sir, your child is bullied for being different. Why is he different?"*

Blame the victim!

"How is he different", you might ask?"

"Well, let me find a category that your insurance covers. Oh, here it is, Rapid Onset Gender Dysphoria (ROGD). You might need give the kid some hormones here!"

"What the hell are you talking about. He just likes to experiment and horse around a bit with his sister, sharing their clothes."

"Hmmm. Sorry sir, your insurance doesn't cover that. We are required to select a category."

Just as the old rock group, *The 5 Man Electrical Band*, sang way back when:

"Sign, Sign

Everywhere a sign

Blockin' out the scenery

Breakin' my mind

Do this, don't do that

Can't you read the sign?

If God was here, he'd tell you to your face

"Man, you're some kind of sinner."

Ah, sinner. My favorite category. The sin is in the eyes of the beholder. Projecting one's own sins alleviates cognitive dissonance, the dissonance that is created by the self-righteous assholes afraid to be themselves.

Be aware friends, be very aware. Or risk being categorized by the unaware!



Hairy GQ Butthead

By Mary McCarthy



That's Taylor Swift's boyfriend's teammate. You know, the one who went all *Handmaid's Tale* in a commencement speech at some ultra conservative Catholic college in the Midwest? Oh wait, I remember his name now — Harrison Butker. **What?!** Close enough.

First off—what's most important is that we are each free to decide for ourselves how we live our very own lives. You wanna be a stay-at-home mom? Do it up. A lot of us working class Joes and Jeans don't have the luxury of **not** working a job. If **I** had? I've never been a Suzy Homemaker type, nor did I want children. Nope, I would've been in the studio painting, sculpting and marketing my creations. Sure, I could've/would've cleaned house and ordered in fine dinners for spouse and I to enjoy but kids? Nope, cats are better.

In front of the crowd of about 485 male and female graduates, Butker suggested that a woman's accomplishments in the home are more valuable than any academic or professional goals.

"I want to speak directly to you briefly because I think it is you, the women, who have had the most diabolical lies told to you," He said.

*"How many of you are sitting here now about to cross this stage and are thinking about all the promotions and titles you are going to get in your career? **Some of you may go on to lead successful careers in the world, but I would venture to guess that the majority of you are most excited about your marriage and the children you will bring into this world.**"*

Wait a minute, women can be more than broodmares and bangmaids? *Yeah, that's one hell of a "diabolical lie," you ridiculously tiny-brained intellectual failure.*

I have to remember that this man is 28 years old with astoundingly little to no life experience outside of his exceedingly comfortable, well-to-do, football hero childhood. When you grow up white, male, healthy and wealthy, life looks pretty easy, clear cut and simple. I guess.



Seems pretty clear to me that Mister Football Kicker is deeply insecure in his ***ROAR*** big man manliness. Also, he seems to have woefully unresolved mommy issues. Is he pissed off that she's a medical physicist at Emory University in Atlanta? Was she not home coddling him enough? Did she not serve him enough hot outta the oven chocolate chip cookies? Was he embarrassed when his friends asked about her? *Yeah, *kicks dirt with*

toe of his tennis shoe my mom's a stupid radiation oncologist. She should be home baking ME cakes and knitting ME sweaters.*

Is this possible resentment the spark that lights his women-

belong-at-home-making-babies-and-sammiches fire? He's said that "**growing up my mom was my biggest supporter, guiding me to be the man I needed to become...**" Is this just his bogus sportsball cliché interview spiel?

Butt Boy has also:

...rebuked U.S. President Joe Biden for being a Catholic who supports abortion rights, critiqued "degenerative cultural values and media," called on women to focus on marriage, and told graduating men to fight against the "cultural emasculation of men."

"Cultural emasculation of men?" *Oh honey, show us on the doll where the big bad Culture took away your steel hard, rock solid manliness.*

Jesus, what an insecure child. Is this why he chooses to play a sport that's no more than a thinly disguised war game FOR A LIVING?

Through her work, his mother is saving lives—what does *his* job add to the world around us? Nothing. He makes vast truckloads of dosh for kicking a ball.



The most exhausting thing in life is being insecure.

~ **Anne Morrow Lindbergh**

It's great that his little football job pays **so** obscenely well that his wife doesn't need to work outside the home. They probably have nannies and maids too. She has the choice to do whatever she wants (or does she?).

The vast majority of us Vagina Americans don't have the same wealth infused options.

Buttker, who gives off serious I'm-afraid-everyone's-laughing-

about-my-microscopic-dick-and-low-intelligence vibes, says "As men, we set the tone of the culture."

Sure Hairy, in your dreams.

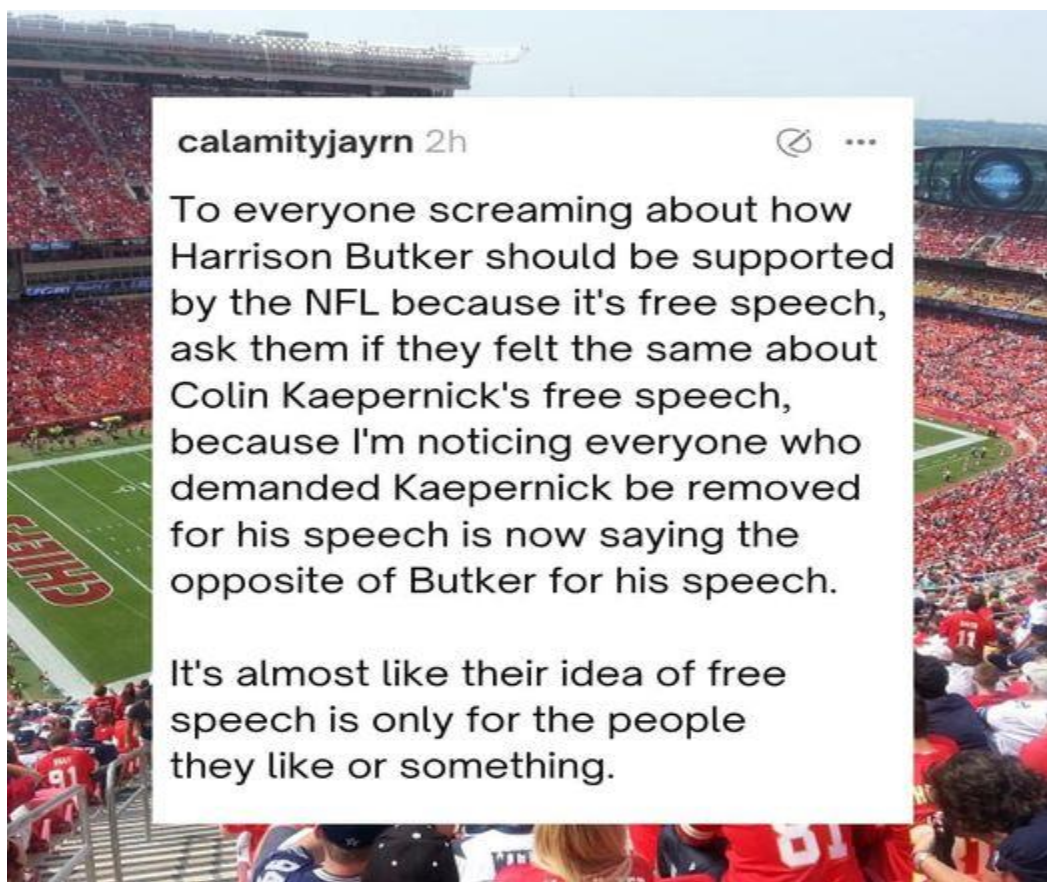
"This wasn't a case of foot-in-mouth. It was a well-prepared speech," wrote columnist Sam McDowell in the Kansas City Star. "Women listening in the audience, rather than being rewarded with a diploma on graduation day, were made to listen as he promoted the role of homemaker — not as an acceptable choice, but as their duty as a husband's servant."

What a colossal, if well-tailored, douche.

We are the hero of our own story.

~ **Mary McCarthy**

donna-tellmeastory.blogspot.com



Perspectives

By James Longo



"What are you writing about this week?" Jill asked as Jack sat in front of his computer and stared.

"Haven't a clue," Jack said turning with a glare.

"Really with all the things happening in the world, you can't think of anything."

"It is almost the reverse of that, there is so much I can write about that I don't think I can do any of it justice."



"Like what?"

"The many perspectives I hold of Donald Trump."

"Really isn't there already too much written about him now," Jill said sounding exasperated.

"There is one of the perspectives right there."

"He is a giant incubus."

"What in the world is an incubus?"

"A male demon that sucks the life force out of you, in this case the country."

"Isn't there a sexual component to that?" Jill asked.

"Classically yes, but how much time in this country is wasted talking and thinking about this man, and how he is fucking our system to death."

Jill giggled, "Okay what else do you have?"

"I have more perspectives on Trump."

Jill gave a great sigh, "Okay."

"Trump has become Voldemort in certain conversations."

"Harry Potter's Voldemort?"

"Yeah, he who cannot be named. We all know people, who are the nicest in the world, but bring up Trump and they turn into screaming banshees."



Jill giggled, "If conversations about him are a waste of time, maybe they are right?"

"They probably are," Jack said sounding downcast.

"Is that all you got?"

"Trump, as a metaphor of a Molotov cocktail in a burning building."

"More Donald Trump really."

"Well, you got me started down this road."

"Okay let's hear it," Jill said with another sigh.

"Fifty percent of the population believe Donald Trump can be the only agent of change in this country because he is the only honest broker because he is a billionaire," Jack said raising his hands like a holy roller minister.



"Yeah I've heard that," Jill said.

"The system is broken, the politicians are beholden to the money class, and the working class has gotten screwed. The working class basically has said screw it. The system doesn't work for me. Let's throw Donald the Molotov Cocktail. What is the worst thing he can do, burn the rest of the system down."

"They do have a point," Jill said with a nod and grimace.

"Yeah, but he is part of the money class he'll make it even better for the rich. Look at the 2018 tax bill, it set up a huge deficit, and with that, plus the pandemic, set up record inflation."

"The Democrats came in after that and spent even more money we didn't have."

"They aren't any better, I know."

"So what else are you thinking about? Jill asked.

"Donald Trump as a car accident."

"How is Donald Trump a car accident?"

"I can't help but rubber neck at a car accident, and I can't help clicking on the click bait concerning this train wreck that could destroy our country."

"Are you a rubbernecker, or are we a deer in headlights? Jill asked.

"Probably the deer in headlights analogy is more appropriate, but I still can't look away even as this train is about to run this country over.



"Since we are stuck on Donald Trump, do you have any other perspectives?

"Something I eluded to earlier."

"What's that?"

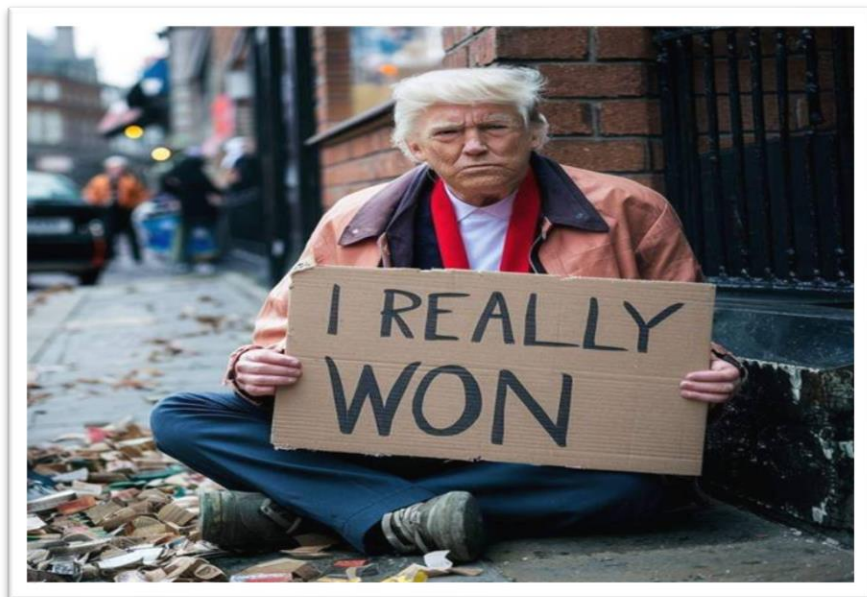
"Trump as the system manipulator."

"What do you mean?"

"He has the innate ability to show any weakness in every system and use it to his advantage, and the amazing thing is the system lets him. If you ever doubted how large corporations fend off legal action against them. You are watching it happen with Donald Trump on every count. Stall-stall-stall, appeal-appeal-appeal, anything to keep from getting a verdict."

"Yeah, that's just the courts."

"Fake electors, the electoral college, tax evasion, manipulating values, not returning secret documents. He can get away with anything. He owns the Supreme Court can't you see it? Three owe their tenure there and three have been bought and paid for, Thomas, Alito, and Roberts."



"You sound really frustrated."

"I am. This guy is going to be your next president." Jack said with a wince.

"Why do you say that?"

"Joe Biden has said he will institute a wealth tax. The rich will never let that happen. They'll make sure Trump is elected, and all they have to do is raise prices."

"Sounds like a conspiracy theory to me," Jill said using air quotes.

"He with the biggest conspiracy wins," Jack said getting up.

"How about his desire to be a dictator? He said he wants to make the country over into a police state using local police, the National Guard, and even the military."

"When did this come out?"

"This week in a Time interview. Where are you going? Jill asked.

"For a walk,"

"I thought you had to write?"

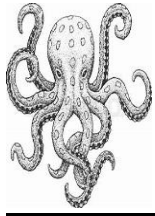
"I do, but I need to calm down first," and with that, Jack went out the door, slamming it.

Jill rushed over, opened the door, and yelled out, *"Don't you think you should put some pants on ..."*



THE WAY WE WERE





a fish tale



by Ed Zillioux

When my kids were young, I always kept a fish tank tucked in a corner of my carport. This was not a big tank – only about 10 gallons, but the concept of its operation was huge. It served as a teaching tool for my three young daughters. They were all good swimmers (their mother was a swimming instructor) and I had introduced them to the joys of snorkeling and later, to more serious free diving.

The rule of the fish tank was that all residents would be captured by us, studied for a period of time and then released to the general or specific area where they were captured.



Over time, the part time residents included a cornucopia of all manner of sea life; reef fish, crabs, shrimp, snails and even the occasional octopus! The latter however, turned out to be a problem. Octopuses are great escape artists, and they did not like being

held in the tight confines of a fish tank. If an octopus can find a single opening that it could squeeze through with the tip of one of its arms, its whole body can quickly conform and follow through. After picking up several of their unfortunately dehydrated bodies off the floor with a kitchen spatula, I no longer included octopuses in my catch list.

Another interesting specimen that gave us great pleasure was the seahorse. The sea horse is the only fish that looks like the knight in a chess game (and yes, it is a fish). Unique to this species is that the male carries a breed pouch into which the female deposits her fertilized ova. The male acts as a midwife, nurturing the brood of 100 or more tiny seahorses through a period of maturation until they're released as tiny but fully formed individuals capable of swimming on their own. Their release was fascinating for my kids to watch (including myself) but what do you do with a tank suddenly having a population explosion of over 100 seahorses? I took the entire tank to a place where the seagrass grew prolifically among the rocks near the shoreline and gently



release the baby sea horses where they could attach to seagrass with their prehensile tails and wait for tiny organisms to drift by for food.

My favorite collection area for keeping my little 10-gallon tank supplied was a pretty beach occupying the causeway between



Riviera Beach and Singer Island called Phil Foster Park. Sunbathing was the most common activity at Phil Foster – I met my first wife there. It was idyllic – that is until you put your head with mask on under the water. Then

it was a dump. Years of careless bathers had filled the area of the bottom with rusting beer cans and other such debris. This was when all the cans were “tin”, before the advent of aluminum. And, all the creatures I've been describing, loved it – it was a beer can community of significant ecological value. Once I saw a milk white jar of Ponds Cold Cream stealthily walking between the cans – obviously a new home for a proud hermit crab.

There were round buoys that once held the corner of a net to keep out predators. The netting had long ago disappeared,



but the buoys still guarded the corner of the swimming “area”. Around these buoys, there were a variety of small reef fish, one

of which I captured. It was a striped Killifish, a male with transverse black bars. We were not in the habit of assigning names to our fish, but this guy hung around for a longer period. And, since I refer to him repeatedly, let's call him Killie.

The first thing that made him special is that he seemed to beg for his food. I easily taught him to jump out of the water to take food from my fingers. This became his normal way of eating until my daughter came home with several of her friends and wanted to show how she could make Killie jump. She held her finger above the tank surface but did not have any food. So, when Killie jumped he bit her finger and caused Jeannie to jump back and Killie was sent flying, landing on the concrete floor of our carport. Jeannie was quick to return Killie to the tank, but it took weeks before I could coax him to jump again for his food.



We traveled down the Florida Keys from where we lived in Homestead. During these trips we'd emptied most of the tank but would keep Killie in a gallon jar with us with an air

aerator plugged into the cigarette lighter. From time to time, we would need to transfer Killie to another jar holding fresh seawater. Being a fast learner, I was soon able to simply hold my hand in a cupped position in the first jar and Killie would swim over and lie in my cupped hand to allow me to lift him out and put him over to the jar containing fresh seawater.

We went to the Keys often during that time, always taking Killie along with us. But the time came when I told my girls that we

had to return Killie to where we first captured him so he could find a female to breed with. The breeding male killifish became one of the most colorful of all the reef fishes.

So, the day finally came when I took Killie back to Phil Foster Park. I waded out in the water with Killie. When I got nearer the buoy where I had first picked him up from, I gently tipped his jar and let him swim out. It was only about four feet to the buoy and he swam directly towards it. But, seconds before reaching his goal, the water broke with a splash when a needlefish about two foot long grabbed poor Killie in its toothed jaws and swam away. I was destroyed. I screamed at the needlefish who was already gone from the water I was beating with my hands. And then I realized, I had simply released Killie to nature and sometimes nature ain't pretty.

Bye-bye Killie.



One Thinks About a lot of Crazy Stuff at 80

By Bert Mautz

*"Let them think what they liked,
but I didn't mean to drown
myself. I meant to swim till I sank*

— but that's not the same thing."

— Joseph Conrad



The following is puzzling to think about and more difficult to explain. For the reader it's troubling and maybe impossible to understand or accept.

We shared a great party at Sailors' Bar & Restaurant. It just happened to be half price bottle night and we drank a dozen. There's something about turning eighty that seventy did not prepare me for. This is old, really old, and the end is near.



Father, a health and exercise fanatic passed at eighty-seven. Not meant in a self-pitying way but admitting it's been an ongoing effort to achieve and maintain my lifelong goal of self-sufficiency.

The house I found in Stuart Florida combined my objectives of affordable, malleable in an architectural manner, and on the water with ocean access. The sad, overgrown little house on Channel Avenue, fronting Frazier creek, and part of the historic cottage neighborhood of downtown showed potential. My

redesign of every room with custom cabinetry accommodates wheelchair access. I was thinking ahead. That was 2002.

Now for the physical/medical realities; Post Polio's degradation had begun a decade before, in my fifties. Walked O'Hare with a cane and briefcase. By '01 could hobble into Publix and lean on a shopping cart. But soon was dependent on fore-arm crutches. The crutches carried me for quite a while. Could get from my handicapped parking to my favorite stool at the end of the bar at Bonefish. Met Betty on that stool. Her grief counselor urged her to get out more, meet people following the death of her husband, Harold.

Above, referred to thinking ahead, anticipating my continuing deterioration, and because of it, a diminishing in my self-sufficiency and ultimately my independence.



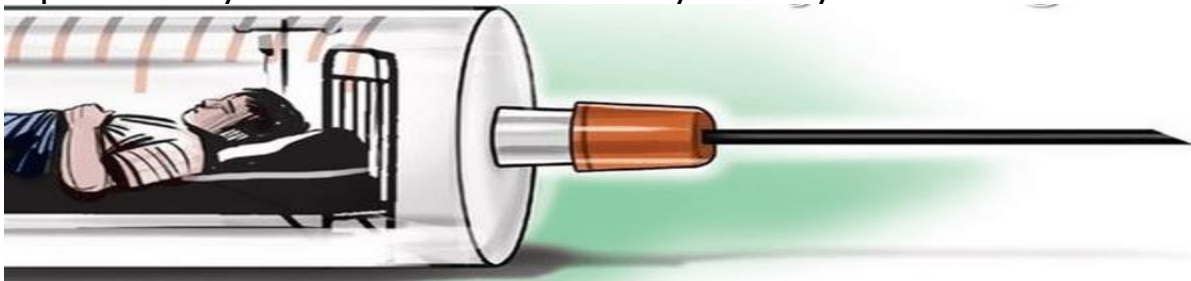


The final ... blow followed nine days in a hospital bed being misdiagnosed after which I simply could no more stand and walk. Betty was in my life. She bought a carbon fiber framed wheelchair, weighing a mere 21

pounds, which she deftly heaved into the back of her SUV. Remarkably life went on, and not too bad at that.

Questionnaires we complete before exam by a new doctor predictably inquire about alcohol; How much? How often? What type? I've a hundred bottles of wine and a basic selection of whiskey, rum, bourbon, gin, and vodka. Happy hour comes around 365 days a year at around 4:30 pm. Alcohol is bad for one's general health, but good for one's attitude. When one is eighty, life has been good, enjoying these last years is now the focus. Coaxing a few more months by abstinence is counter to prioritizing enjoying those last months.

When designing and improving my house, I simultaneously thought about no longer being able to live in it. Nursing home, retirement/assisted living situation is my unavoidable future? Live in care providers? Sharing the television with a stranger? Getting a, "*Should you be doing that?*" when I mix a second Manhattan to enjoy with a Cubs game. I would end my life first. That is where this ends. This is not meant as a threat. Not a woe is me. Life has been good ... and drawing to an end. Don't be surprised. Try to understand. Thank you very much.



Dedicated to my dear friend and associate, J. Dan Vignau who challenged me to dig deep into sordid recollections of my past.

1966

*The Year I Went to the Indy 500 and
Learned Street-side Capitalism, the
Physics of Sound and How Bodies Tended
to Stay in Motion Unless Acted Upon by
Some Outside Force*



By Virgil Thorp

Between the years 1966 and 1968 I was lucky to attend three Indianapolis 500 races. I think the first time, 1966, you might say, was a graduation present. The next in 1967, I took a bus from my college in Valparaiso, Indiana to meet my father and stepmother, who had driven my car to Indianapolis so I could drive myself back home to Raytown, Missouri after the semester ended. The third trip I took, in 68, was in a brand new 1968, 427 cubic-inch, Corvette, the *baddest-ass* car I had ever driven. Even today, I still yearn for the thrill to have driven that car at full throttle for a lap around that famous track. I fantasized that Roger Penske might see me and would be sure to say, "get that young man a racecar!"



My string of attendance was broken in 1969 as my situation as "carefree student" had radically changed and I found myself off the coast of Vietnam, aboard the U.S.S. Oriskany, loading bombs and missiles onto A-4 Skyhawk aircraft. Even though I was handling deadly explosives and dodging taxiing jet engines, I missed the drama and excitement of that 500-mile race in Indiana.

I know, these first few paragraphs make me sound irretrievably privileged, and yes, I agree. However, I lost my mother to cancer when I was just sixteen. Consequently, my old man was very indulgent with me – some said, too indulgent. I know I took

advantage as he would respond favorably to just about any suggestion I would make those next couple of years.



It was 1966, the year I graduated high school when I said, "Hey boss, let's catch the Indy 500 this year."

"Well," he replied, hemming and hawing for a bit, but his new lady friend's brother-in-law never missed the Indy 500 and

happily acquired two additional tickets for us. I know why my old man hemmed and hawed, he did not want to leave the warmth of his new girlfriend. The last few years of life had been tough for him too and I could understand his reticence. We had both lost a lot. So, it was inevitable that he chose the soft and intimate companionship of his girlfriend (and my soon-to-be stepmother) and told me that I "could take a buddy to the race." Oh boy, two 18-year-old boys on their own, at the Indy 500!

Johnny L., my buddy and I set out the day before the race to drive to Terre Haute, in western Indiana – the closest motel room available. The journey itself, was uneventful. I had my old man's Phillips' 66 credit card and we both had enough cash that we wouldn't starve.

We woke early on race day, grabbed a quick Terre Haute truck stop breakfast and headed East, east into Indianapolis. We weren't sure where to find the speedway but were positive that if we followed the traffic, we would get to the right place. And we did. We didn't need no stinkin' GPS's back then.

The closer we got, the heavier the traffic got as race fans funneled into the town everyone called "Indy". 300,000 they said would attend. At the city limits we started seeing roadside vendors of all types. T-shirts, towels, bikinis and knickknacks abounded. Almost like a bad movie, "Souvenirs, novelties, party

tricks!" was the echo from the side of the highway. It was true competition, true seat-of-the-pants capitalism.

"Get your official Indy 500 seat cushions right here. Only 2 bucks a cushion!"



"Get your officially sanctioned – Indy 500 – ballcaps here! Only 2 and a half bucks!"

"Real – official – TRADEMARK – Indy 500 seat cushions! Only 3 bucks a cushion."

Johnny called out to the nearest vendor as we inched past, "The guy a block back was selling them for only 2 bucks."

"Good luck trying to turn around and get one," we heard in response. At least, the vendor (who looked like his second job was operating a carnival ride) didn't say "rookie" or, "asshole". We proceeded forward at a creep.

We learned that the closer we got to the speedway, the higher the price was for everything. I am not certain, but I thought I heard another vendor yell, "Official – authorized and endorsed – Indy 500 – *phony dog poop!*" There were signs indicating parking lots, but we wanted to get closer.



And there it was. Looming ahead on our left. The Indianapolis 500 Motor Speedway. The racetrack of the Hulman family, once owned by WWI ace, Eddie Rickenbacker. The world famous

'Brickyard'. It was surrounded by residential houses and since we were in the left lane and there was no traffic heading westward out of town, I made a quick left turn and looked for a place to park.

The grandstand was only two blocks away and was dwarfing the



cracker box style, single-family homes. The speedway racetrack was a two-and-a-half-mile rectangular oval. I have to say, the place looked huge. John and I gawked left and right as I drove up the street. I saw an empty parking spot and grabbed it.

Somehow, we had parked closest to the nearest gate to where our seats were. How lucky. Johnny and I turned to each other and simultaneously shouted, "*INDY!*" We had arrived.

There must have been several parties going on in that block – which we had missed – that apparently had been going on all night and all morning. Fraternities could not have done a more thorough job. There was party litter everywhere. Empty beer cases were piled by the curbing. A clothesline strung from the front door of one house to the front gate, bristled with empty beer cans that had been kinked over it. Partiers had adorned long, garland-like chains of pop tops around trees and on fences like they were Christmas ornaments. I couldn't be sure, but I thought I caught more than a slight whiff of urine. Johnny and I made a point of avoiding the occasional puddle.

The closer we got, the tackier the old track appeared, after all it had been built in 1909. But, it reminded me of our aging hometown ballpark, Kansas City's Municipal Stadium; a little worse for wear, weathered, paint chipping from the walls with cracked sidewalks. Once inside, however, the urinal troughs also

looked remarkably similar, if not older. At least the speedway's troughs didn't leak.

We could tell we probably should have purchased the 2 buck cushions as the seats were hard, wooden bleachers. But they were new, our butts were young, and the spectacle of the Indy 500 had us in its trance. There were marching bands. There were floats. There were corn-fed beauty queens in low-cut gowns, perched securely on the back decks of shiny, new convertibles (provided by local car dealerships) and waving to the cheering throngs who also wept as Jim Nabors sang "Back Home Again in Indiana". So much to see, so much to absorb.

I was three hotdogs in before the track was finally cleared of the preliminaries and the cars were rolled out to the starting grid. The Speedway's president, 65-year-old Tony Hulman's quavering voice spoke the words all were waiting to hear, "Gentlemen, start your engines."



Heeding those venerable words was *cool* but wasn't nearly as *cool* to a young man as hearing the roar of 33 – unmuffled – internal combustion engines sparking to life. That was visceral! Johnny and I could feel the gutty excitement surrounding us as first the pace car drove past, followed by the growling, exotically painted supercars covered in sponsors' decals.

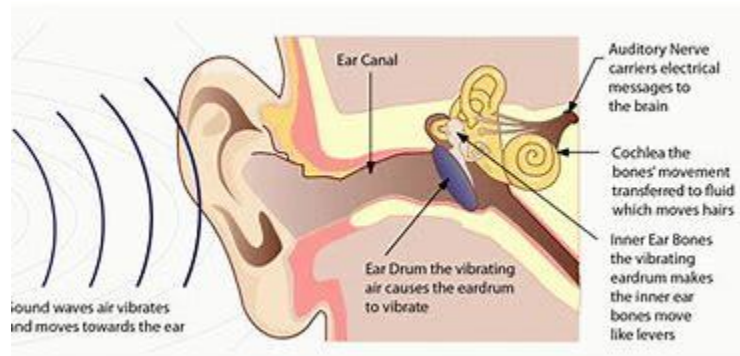


We didn't realize we were experiencing the phenomenon of sound that our high school physics teacher had futilely attempted to drill into us. Perhaps he failed because in the quiet of the classroom, he couldn't match the decibel level that was marvelous to experience. You could actually feel the particle velocity of the

sound. Historical scholars, Isaac Newton, Pierre-Simon de La Place and Albert Einstein became relevant. Concepts like “pitch”, “timbre” and “duration” were embraceable.

Like an approaching freight train, we heard the sound texture from the tightly grouped machines grow louder as it advanced, felt the vibrations of combustion pulse through the ground as they passed, shaking the foundation of the grandstand we stood on and then marveled as the pitch harmonically faded as they turned down the backstretch. Some of the drivers waved to the crowd on the preliminary parade laps and we in the crowd enthusiastically waved and roared back.

The pace lap was when things turned serious. No more nonsense, no more extraneous diversions. No more weaving back and forth



to heat up the tires. No more waving to the fans. Drivers kept both hands on their steering wheels. The cars were lining up in a balanced, geometrically satisfying formation of perfect rows, eleven deep, three abreast, all evenly spaced and all heading for the famous (and danger-filled) flying start at 110 mph. It would be the last time we would see the cars in such cautionary moderation. They began picking up more speed through the third and fourth turns. The pace car, satisfied that the field was aligned, sheared away and headed to the orderly comfort of pit lane.

The green flag dropped; the race was on! 33 accelerators were stomped on. All pretense of uniform restraint disappeared as the 33 fastest cars in the world broke their alignment and sprinted to be first. We could hear the shrieking engines as the cars flew past the start/finish line racing to where we were on the first turn.



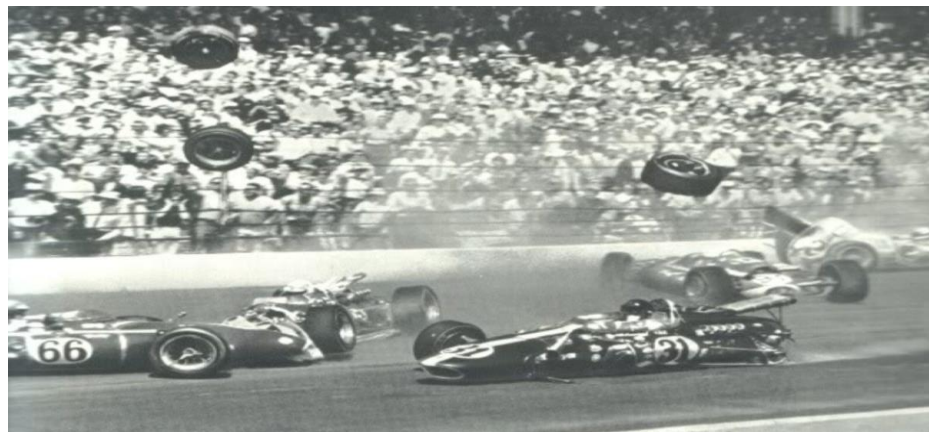
Everybody was standing and cheering. Fireworks were booming. A huge batch of helium-filled balloons surged upwards. The first two rows of cars

were just a flash as they rushed by.

I barely heard Johnny yell, *"Oh my god Thorp, they've started already!"*

I turned to see millions of dollars of racecars smashing together, right in front of us. Indy became a demolition derby only brief moments after the start. Cars spun through the turn, controlled only by the dynamics of inertia. The harmonic balance had been displaced,

producing a cacophonic lesson in chaotic entropy. The drivers were helpless as they could



only hold on as their rides caromed off and crunched into each other or vaulted over other skidding cars as gravity and momentum attempted to produce order again. Tires were

sheared off and bounced like tennis balls down the track or were caught in the safety nets. Exotically painted and decaled debris scattered everywhere! It was scary. It was kinetic. It had a strange, tumultuous beauty to it, like an explosion. How could human soft tissue survive such frenzied violence?

Previous race winner A.J. Foyt leapt from his puckered, number 2 wreck and climbed the safety fence to keep from becoming a



casualty. Another driver would later show off the tire track, stylishly embossed in an artistic diagonal pattern across his helmet. Fortunately, there were no fatalities among the luckless drivers or we, the awed spectators.

One thing about Indy, they knew what to do when there had been a collision. Safety vehicles from firetrucks to ambulances to tow trucks swooped to the crash from out of nowhere, spreading clouds of flame retardant like Tinkerbelle sprinkling pixie dust. The track was covered in confusion, like a heaving, smoking parking lot. Almost half the field was involved. Eleven cars were definitely out, crumpled beyond repair by the crash and only five others were able to make it back on the track after the wreckage was hauled away.

By necessity, the race was stopped. I wondered, is this what everyone came to see? Is this what *I* wanted to see? Would they be able to still have a race?



Oh, hell yes, they did! To the consternation of the United States Automobile Club (USAC) the mustachioed limey driver, Graham Hill, won the 1966 Indy 500 race, making a trifecta that has never been matched since, with his other

wins at Monaco and Le Mans that year.

Epilogue: It was a happy yet weary twosome who drove all night to get back home. Indiana, Illinois, across Missouri to Raytown. We were tired, but we had seen the greatest spectacle of racing, the Indianapolis 500.

And, we had plenty to brag about to our pals, Thom, Robin and Groovy-Duvy, while hanging out at Zesto's drive-in for the next week or two. Such was the life of an 18-year-old boy from Missouri, in the summer of 1966.



FICTION & POETRY

**Led Zeppelin-
1975:** If the sun refused to shine, I would still be loving you. When mountains crumble to the sea, there will still be you and me. Kind woman, I give you my all, Kind woman, nothing more.

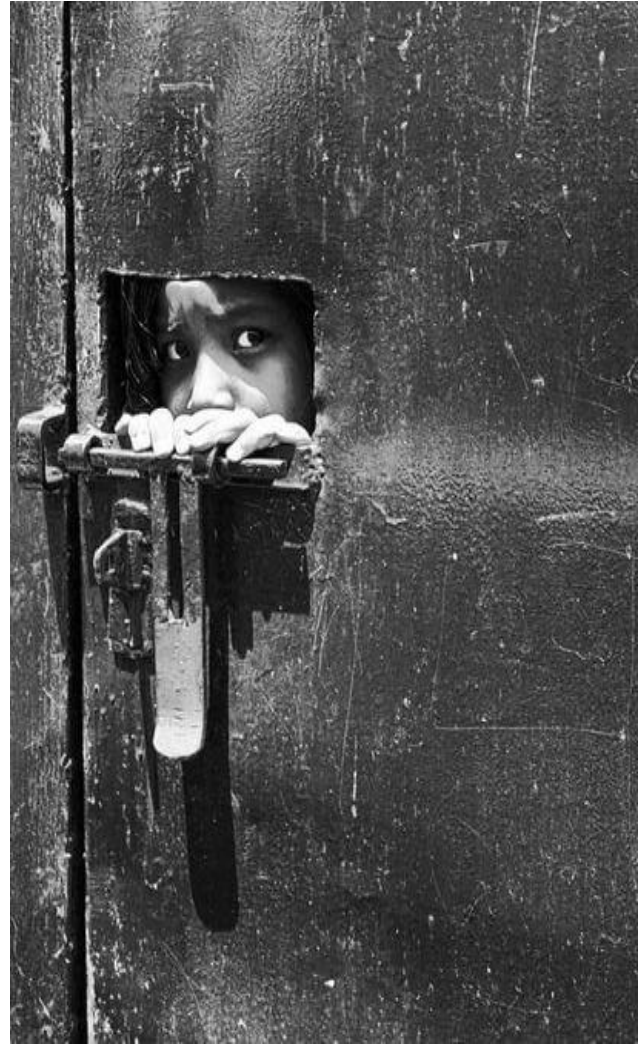
**Nicki Minaj-
2012:** You a stupid hoe, you a, you a stupid hoe, you a stupid hoe, you a stupid hoe, you a stupid hoe, (yeah) you a, you a stupid hoe, you a stupid hoe, you a, you a stupid hoe (stupid, stupid), you a stupid hoe, you a, you a stupid hoe (stupid, stupid), you a stupid hoe, you a, you a stupid hoe (stupid, stupid) (stupid, stupid)

**I am not old
Your music just sucks**

The Neighbor

~Bertolt Brecht

I am the neighbor. The one who
turned him in.
We don't want an agitator
here in our building.
When we hung out the swastika,
He didn't hang one out.
When we asked him why he didn't,
He asked us if we had any room in our
little apartment
Where we live with four children, for a
flag pole.
When we told him that we believed in
the future,
He laughed.
We didn't like that they beat him up
In the stairwell. And tore up his jacket,
too.
They shouldn't have done that.
None of us have a lot of jackets.
At least he is gone now, and the
building is quiet.
We have enough worries, so
It's important to at least have peace and quiet.
Of course we see how some folks
Look the other way, when they meet us.
But those who took him away, say
That we did the right thing.



Note: During the 1930's and '40's, Brecht wrote poems and other writings against Fascism, Nazism, and Hitler. These poems were never published as a volume or a collection, but were widely distributed in the publications of emigre Germans who fought the Nazi regime. Some of these poems were intended for radio broadcast into Germany. There is much information about their efficacy in terms of keeping up the spirits of those who opposed fascism. These poems found their way to print and to a readership under the difficult conditions of the day.

be the reason
she giggles
laughs breathlessly
be the reason she
dances in her room
sings in the mirror
be the reason she
unlaces her heart
incites her soul
be evry reason she
loves madly

-vodkaisthatyou



Undressing U W/My iii's

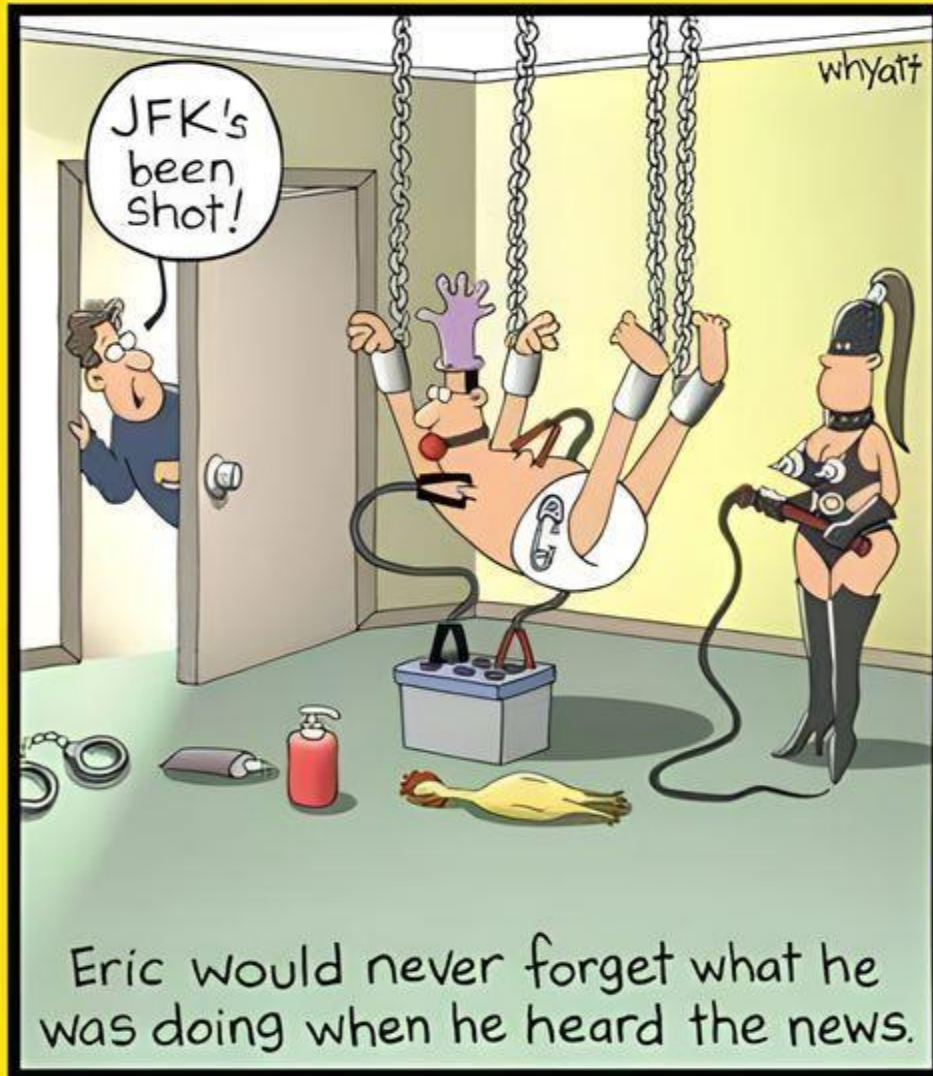
By Virgil Thorp

When I see you in that tiny bathing suit
The wisps of cloth
The patches that embrace your kissable
spots
free imagination of breasts and bums
The rise of stomach and pubis

Absolutely objectifying the female form
The faultless form of female pulchritude
So soft, so smooth, so fine, wearing only a scent
A feast to be chewed on, Sucked on, Devoured
Can you feel being undressed with my eyes?
A picture of longing
can you sense the stare?
A decision, A choice, A taste
You leave me with no other option
Why not eat it, fornicate it, consume it
Nevermind, I'll just pull it aside.
While I undress you with my eyes



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THE TACTFUL ASSESSMENT OF MACARONI SALAD

By Bert Mautz

"Honey, did you taste this? It's flavorless, awful."

"She brings it to every potluck. Everyone tells her it's delicious."

"It needs something for flavor; onions, garlic, hell, salt and pepper would help, a better mayonnaise, maybe sprinkle on parmigiana cheese."

"No one says anything critical. We don't want to hurt her fragile feelings. We're afraid to try to help her?"

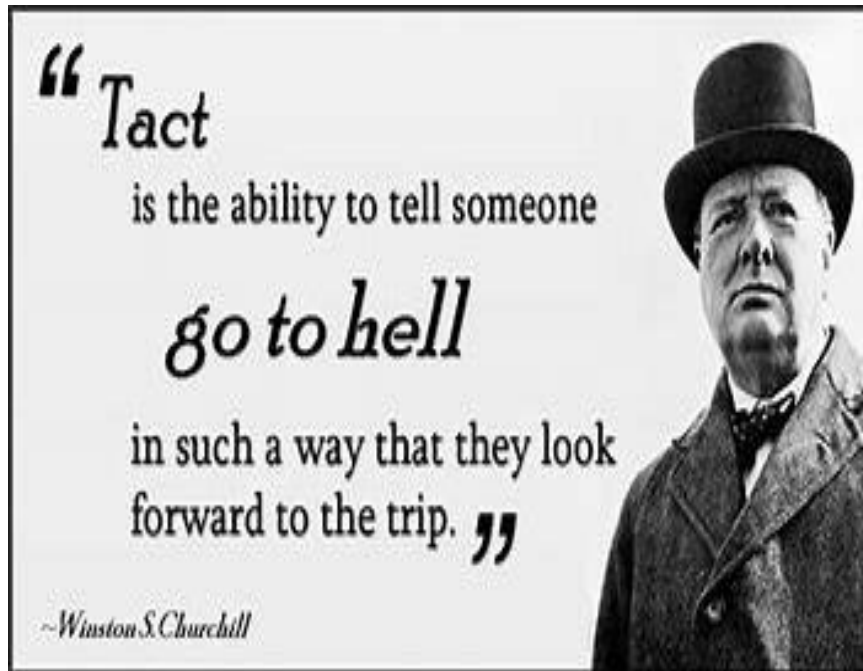
"This shit is so slimy; the macaroni noodles won't stay on my fork. She thinks it's wonderful, when actually it's the opposite."

"Don't you dare say anything!"

"Fuck! Sorry, this is all about her delicate feelings? Believe me I sure as hell want to."

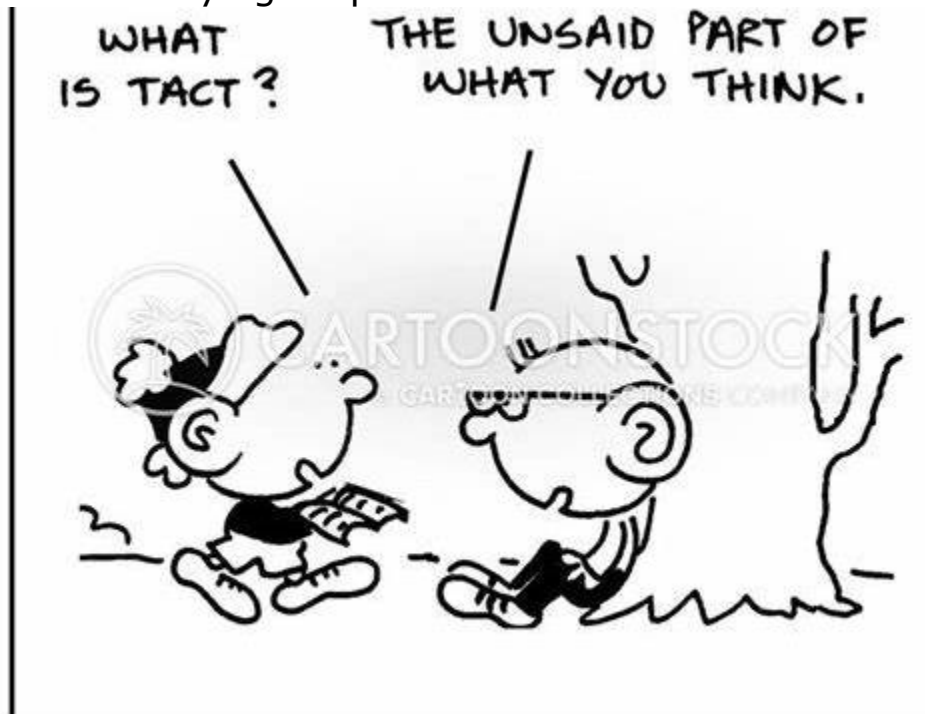
When in our development, likely as children, were we taught about another's feelings and our consciously avoiding hurting them, was so important? What can we say about her new hair

style that we think is too short? We were taught to say something complimentary, whether we mean it or not. Are we supposed to compliment when we want to just be honest/criticize, to lie? Is this what sensitivity means? We're programmed to approach every



comment on another is to lie. At least in those situations where a critical appraisal might possibly be heard as being negative?

Generalizing further one wonders, is all polite social behavior predicated upon the lie? Those horizontal stripes of the new dress surrounding her ample back side. See, even there I avoided saying stripes around her fat ass. We're happy to be



here. We enjoy the espoused politics of the guy across the dinner table. We mustn't tell the son-of-a-bitch to "shut the fuck up," but politely wait our turn to comment? Is this what being polite –

avoiding hurt feelings – means?

Where does the sensitivity originate? Why don't we raise our kids to talk frankly and accept the tone of the comment?

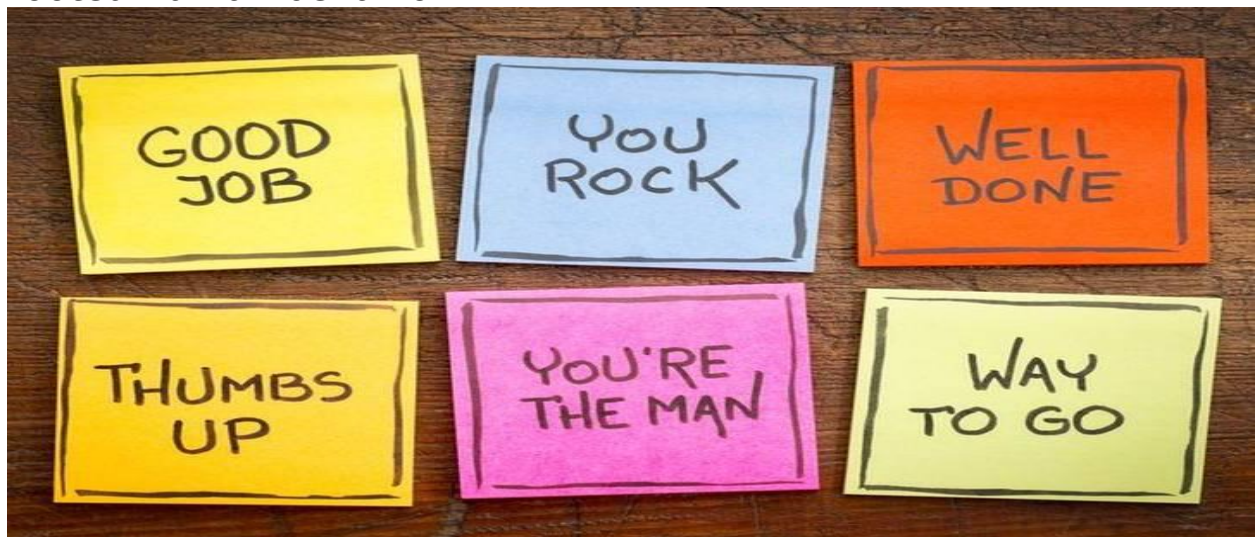
Some of these comments are genuinely positive, complimentary, good to hear.

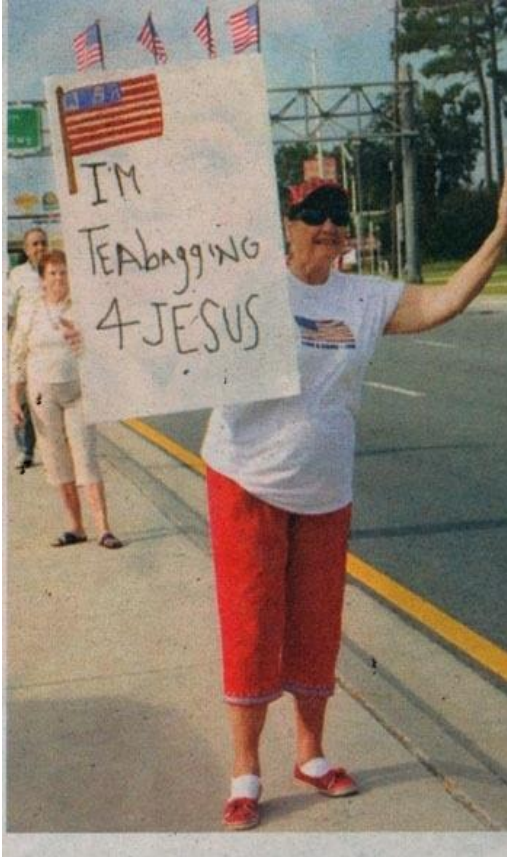
Maybe polite social conversation could be a balance of honest commentary

positive and negative and questions evidencing your interest in the other.



We are social animals. We live together. Our family socializes with your family, the folks next door. Why can't we be candid with one another and enjoy the familiarity, the intimacy? Hurt feelings are a big deal. Honesty, being direct ought to be possible, be a goal. How do we make such changes in deeply rooted human behavior?





The List

By Gale Baker

Can we start a list of campaign suggestions to send to the DNC? Perhaps in the form of questions.

1. Do you want a president who lowered taxes for the rich and left you hanging?
2. Do you want a president who said the pandemic was like a flu and would be gone by April, then suggested you drink bleach?
3. Do you want a president who promised to appoint judges who would end Roe V Wade...and kept his promise.?
4. Do you want a president who was caught in over 35,000 lies of misleading claims?
5. Do you want a president who cheated to get elected?



6. Do you want a president who has been convicted of a felony?



7. Do you want a president who is under indictment for a covert plot to overthrow the 2020 election?

8. Do you want a president who is under indictment for secreting classified documents and obstruction of justice?

9. Do you want a dictator?

Maybe you can ask the Aware Ones to add to the list and we can send in bold letters to the campaign.





Real Men Wear Diapers

By: Nick Carraway

A commenter to a previous piece on my Facebook page made an observation. I write way too much about the ex-president. That's a fair criticism. I'll gladly take that on, acknowledge it, and own it. I do write too much about that man and wish I didn't have to at all. As much as he might be a subject of this piece, he is not the subject of this piece. This piece is not so much about him, but about you.

Of course, the you in this case is what I lovingly call the pejorative you. That means it's not about everyone, but just those that still choose to follow him. It has gone well beyond ideology at this point. It has moved beyond ideology and into idolatry. They say the self-own is the cruelest own of all.

Millions of people wear adult diapers. I don't wear them myself, but I have had occasional bouts with digestive issues. Various medications have had any number of side effects and those were some of the more serious ones. Some people have other health problems that require their use. So, I am not going to judge anyone that has a medical need to wear them.

So, I try really hard not to poke fun. The key point here is that every time someone points out a flaw or human weakness in the dear leader they adopt that as a sign of strength. Trump passes gas and some have suggested (people are saying) that he stinks

because he has likely soiled himself. Instead of admitting that maybe he is not the best person for the job we just kind of assimilate this knowledge into our new schema. To translate that into plain English we can simply say “real men wear diapers.”

Thus, the continuing spiraling nature of our politics and our culture proceeds without abatement. Therefore, if you have control of your bodily functions, have basic knowledge of science, history, and current events then you aren’t really a man. If you have basic empathy for others and compassion for people that might be struggling, then you aren’t a real man.

My cringe meter doesn't go this high. This is off the charts.

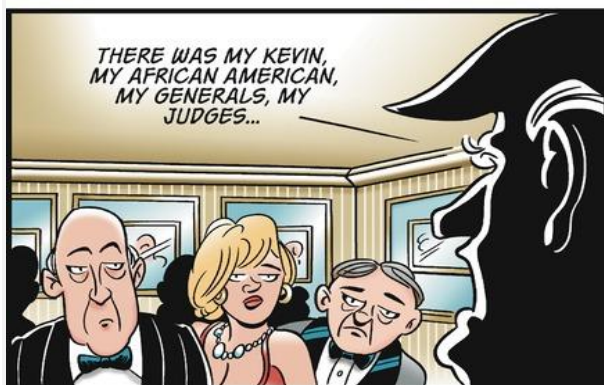
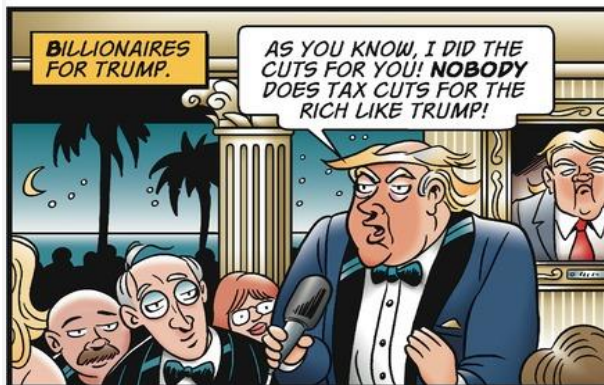


Let me be very frank. Normal people don’t do this. You will not see liberals. progressives, and leftists doing this. We don’t have bumper stickers on our cars. We don’t have signs for the yard. We don’t own any tee-shirts, hats, or flags that we fly from the home or on the back of our pickup truck. We actually don’t have a pickup truck, but that’s not the point.

People in cults do this. So, this isn’t about him. It’s about you. It’s about your desperate need to support everything and anything that comes out of his mouth (or any other portion of his body). I am trying as hard as I can to be respectful here. This is not a good look for you. You aren’t owning the libs. You are owning yourself. The self-own is the cruelest own of all.

Tags: [cults](#), [diapers](#), [Donald Trump](#)

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Doonesbury by Garry Trudeau for June 23, 2024

**(you remind me
of my daughter)**





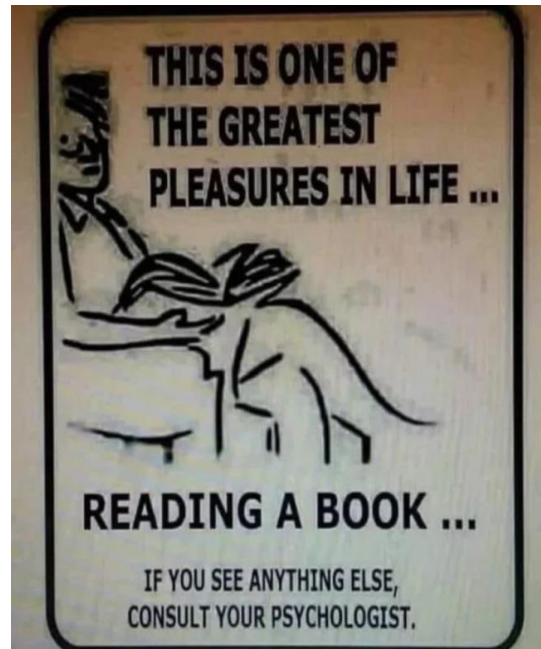
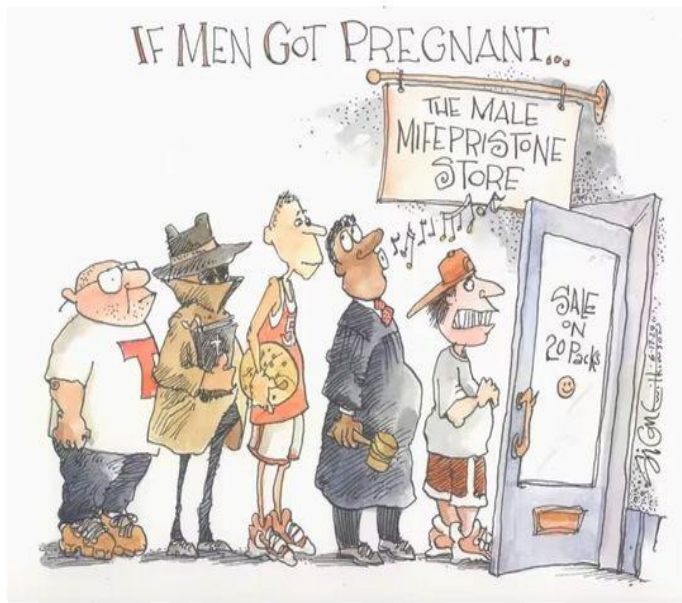
**VLAD
THE IMPALER
DISCOVERS
MARSHMALLOWS**



WELL THESE ARE
FUCKING
GREAT



"I have two mommies. I know where the apostrophe goes."



HERE YOU GO, DONALD.
DRY YOUR TEARS.



SINCERELY, PUERTO RICO

