

# THE JOURNAL

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2025 VOL. 10, NO. 1



*"The Definition of Genocide" – Child separations are coming. By Ed Zillioux p. 31*

*"Deny, Defend, Depose" – The new American Awakening (we dread) By Infidel 753 p.58*

*"A Future ruled by Fear" – Just Like In East Berlin by James Longo p.83*

# 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.10, No.1

January/February 2025

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

[awareonesofthetreasurecoast.com](http://awareonesofthetreasurecoast.com)

# INTRODUCTION

**The greatest trick the Devil ever did was convincing politically passionate Christians that the only way to be a true & faithful Christian is to be a bigoted, hate-mongering, lying sinner, who lives the opposite of all of Jesus' teachings.**



## How Does It Feel to Be Fucked?

It is traditional that the first issue of the year of a magazine has an uplifting message. One that is associated with a new start, a new birth, a new beginning. And usually, that message is upbeat and filled with hope. Not this time, not this issue and that makes me sad.

I'm thinking like Job, you know, the one in the Bible that God and the Devil (two sides of the same coin?) fuck with. The twin psychopaths that have a bet over Job, the true MAGA follower. In his heart, Job knows there is a God and that God loves him. That

God has shown his grace upon Job and Job was well blessed with goods and flocks and wives and wealth. And Job knows that God had given him all his material possessions.

"No one," God had boasted that, "no one loved him as much as Job did."

The Devil grinned and asked God, "how much?"

God said, "a lot." (You would have thought that an omniscient God would elaborate more).

The Devil asked, "care to make a little wager?"

I think the Devil tricked God because the so-called Supreme Being, allowed the Devil to do any and everything he could to torture Job. And God, being the most stubborn entity in the universe didn't stop the Devil from punishing Job.

It is possible that the Devil taunted God into requesting much more painful and agonizing torments.

Kind of like the Devil telling God, "I gave old Job a dozen boils on his butt. Do you think that's enough?"

God, not wishing to appear nonimpotent, would say, "not enough! Job is true to me. You'll see. Give him two dozen boils. On his butt and on his genitals ... and make them infected."

Many of us would respond to such an unfeeling entity with disgust and loathing. "What a beastly being. No wonder the Old Testament Yahweh condoned human slavery."

Believers, on the other hand, would shout with great self-righteous glee, "that's my creator of the universe!" They would giggle. "Make Job sit on a cactus."

In the notion that healing medicine must taste bad or burn like the dickens. "If he doesn't bleed and writhe in pain, the punishment won't cure the sin," the peanut gallery would shout. "Make it hurt, the suffering wouldn't be righteous enough. There

must be hurt to expunge the demons. Make it bleed! Leave scars!  
All hail!"

The MAGAs are unfortunate. They do not realize that what has happened to Job can happen to them just as easily as a God or the Devil himself decides to torment them with the very same tortures they wished on someone else. It has happened all the time and I fear it will happen in 2025. All the elements are there.

I am not looking forward to 2025. I am not having a dreamy nightmare that will dissolve when I wake up. On January 20<sup>th</sup>, our current president-elect will be our current nightmarish condition. Unfettered, unchained, hate unshackled, prejudices unleashed, animosities liberated. A true devil, a true demon.

So no, I cannot be upbeat about 2025. It hurts too much, and I am not a masochist like Job. I just want to go back to bed.

*Virgil*

We continue the process of increasing the distribution of this Journal in the hopes of attracting new members. If you are new to the Aware Ones and would like to know more about us, please visit our website at <http://www.AwareOnesOfTheTreasureCoast.com>.

You are also welcome to join our tables and the fresh air at either Stuart's *Sandsprit Park* 3443 SE Saint Lucie Blvd, or *Flagler Park* (under the Roosevelt Bridge on the 1<sup>st</sup> 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](mailto: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** (next to *Hudson's on the River* restaurant across the tracks from the Roosevelt Bridge). All other Fridays, *Summits at Sandsprit* – 11 am gathering in the sun and fresh air of Stuart's Sandsprit Park. BYOB.

Sunday Zoom – 11 am Zoom meeting. Contact Dan Vignau <[vignaujd@comcast.net](mailto:vignaujd@comcast.net)> to be included with the connection codes.



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



## Events

# *ADTC Thanksgiving Feast @ the Burkhardt's*

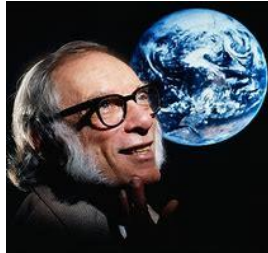
Friday November 29, we AO's gathered in Palm City at Rick & Sandra's house for an afternoon of eating and drinking and fellowship. The Aware Ones of the Treasure Coast thank you, Rick & Sandra, for your delicious cooking and warm hospitality!



## Upcoming:

### January 2025 National Soup Month

January 1



New Year's Day

January 2 – Writer's Group @ Jensen House of Brews, 6:30 pm.

Isaac Asimov born 1920 (Astronomer)



January 3 – Aware Ones at Flagler Park, 11 am.

J.R.R. Tolkien born, 1892



January 5 – Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.

January 5, 1914: The Ford Motor Company announces an eight-hour workday and that it would pay a living wage of at least \$5 for a day's labor. Photo: Employees of Highland Park Plant Standing Outside, circa 1913.  
First Woman Governor Inaugurated 1925. (Nellie Ross, Wyoming's Governor)



January 10 – Aware Ones at Sandspruit Park 11 am.

January 12 – Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.

Author Jack London born, 1876

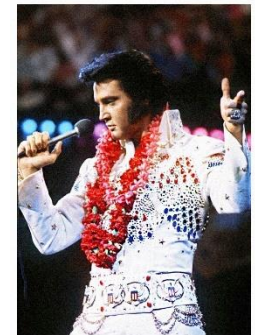
January 13 International Skeptics Day

January 14 1973: Elvis Presley's concert Aloha from Hawaii is broadcast live via satellite, and sets the record as the most watched broadcast in television history.



Photo: (NBC)

The Revolutionary War ended (1784)





January 16 – **Writer's Group @ Jensen House of Brews, 6:30 pm.**



Prohibition began in 1920



January 17 – **Aware Ones at Sandspruit Park 11 am.**

Ditch New Years Resolutions Day

Muhammad Ali (Cassius Clay) born, 1942



January 18

Thesaurus Day

Winnie the Pooh Day – the Birthday of Winnie's author A.A. Milne

January 19 – **Aware Ones**



**Zoom 11 am.**

January 20

Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday .

January 22

1968: *Rowan and Martin's Laugh-In* premieres on NBC Television. Goldie Hawn having makeup applied behind set of *Rowan and Martin's Laugh-In*, Los Angeles, 1968. Photo: NBC



January 24 – **Aware Ones at Sandspruit Park 11 am.**



Eskimo Pie Patented by Christian Nelson in 1922.

January 26 – **Aware Ones Zoom**

**11 am.**

January 27 Chocolate Cake Day

National Geographic Society Founded (1888)



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



Franklin D. Roosevelt born, 1882 (23rd President)

January 31 – **Aware Ones at Sandspruit Park 11 am.**

Jackie Robinson born, 1919 (Baseball Great)



## February 2025 American Heart Month

February 2– **Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.**  
Ground Hog Day



February 3

The Day the Music Died – Buddy Holly, Richie Valens, and the Big Bopper died in a plane crash in 1959.



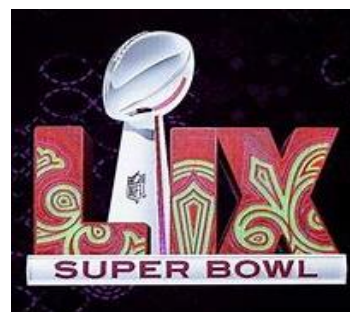
**February 4** 1974: 19-year-old newspaper heiress Patricia Hearst is kidnapped from her Berkeley, California apartment by a left-wing urban guerrilla group called the Symbionese Liberation Army. Photo: (FBI)



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

February 7 – **Aware Ones at Flagler Park, 11 am.**

Laura Ingalls Wilder born, 1867



February 8 Boy Scout Day

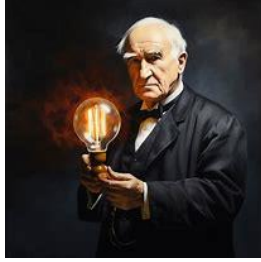
February 9 – **Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.**

Superbowl Sunday .

Hershey's Chocolate Founded in 1894





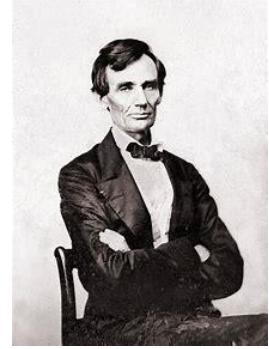


**February 11** National Inventors Day

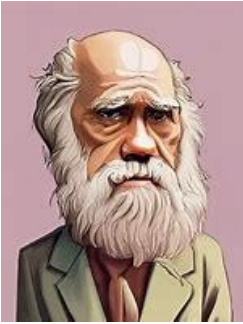
Thomas Edison born, 1847

**February 12** Abraham Lincoln born, 1809 (16th President)

International Darwin Day, Charles Darwin born, 1809



**February 14** – **Aware Ones at Sandspruit Park 11 am.** Valentine's Day



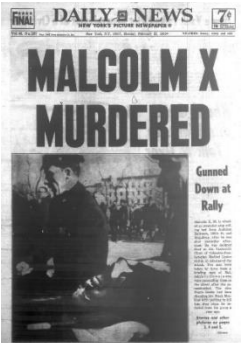
**February 16** – **Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.**

**February 20** – **Writer's Group @ Jensen House of Brews, 6:30 pm.**



1962: Mercury-Atlas 6 (aka *Friendship 7*) Astronaut John Glenn becomes the first American to orbit the earth and the fifth person in space. Photo: NASA

**February 21** – **Aware Ones at Sandspruit Park 11 am.**



1965: African-American Muslim minister and human rights activist Malcolm X (born Malcolm Little, later also known as el-Hajj Malik el-Shabazz) is assassinated by three members of the Nation of Islam in New York City. Photo: NY Daily Photo: Burt Shavitz



**February 22**

George Washington born, 1732.

**February 23** – **Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.**

**February 27** John Steinbeck born, 1902



**February 28** – **Aware Ones at Sandspruit Park 11 am.**

**March 2025** –



# March 14-16, 2025

Orlando, Florida [www.freeflo.org](http://www.freeflo.org)

The Pope says Atheists  
pick & choose their  
morals. This is correct.  
Today I will be frowning  
on child abuse,  
supporting a woman's  
right to choose &  
not having a problem  
with homosexuality.



## LIVES LIVED – LIVES LOST

### November 2024

**1** Peanut, American Eastern grey squirrel, whose death was used as a cause célèbre by the MAGA movement, blaming it on Democrats. Found and rescued as a kit by Mark Longo in 2017, he was the subject of a popular Instagram account. On October 30, 2024, Peanut was seized from Longo's home by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and euthanized soon after for rabies testing. .



**2** Mirta Acuña de Baravalle, 99, Argentine human rights activist, co-founder of Mothers of Plaza de Mayo and Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayoan Argentine human rights activist who was one of the twelve founders of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo and the Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo associations.

- Cassius, Australian saltwater crocodile, largest crocodile in captivity. Crocodile researcher Graeme Webb said that Cassius was "a big old gnarly crocodile" aged between 30 and 80 years old when he was captured in 1984, and was "maybe 120 years" in 2023.



**6** Madeleine Riffaud, 100, French Resistance member, poet, and war correspondent (L'Humanité). a French poet, journalist and war correspondent. She fought in the French Resistance during World War II. After World War II she reported on the Algerian War for the Communist newspaper L'Humanité, and then worked in Vietnam for the Viet Cong resistance for seven years. On 23 July 1944, she shot a German officer dead in broad daylight on a bridge overlooking the river Seine

- Pavel Yuryevich Klimenko a Russian major general who commanded the 5th Motor Rifle Brigade based in Donetsk Oblast, Ukraine. During the war in Ukraine, Klimenko's unit was accused of torturing Russian soldiers who refused to fight. Klimenko was killed in Ukraine on 6 Nov. by a Kamikaze drone.



**9** Judith Jamison, 81, American dancer and choreographer. She danced with the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater from 1965 to 1980. She was the company's artistic director and then its artistic director emerita. She received the Kennedy Center Honors in 1999, the National Medal of Arts in 2001, and the Handel Medallion, New York City's highest cultural honor, in 2010.

**10** Dallas Long, 84, American shot putter, Olympic champion (1964), complications from Parkinson's disease.

Between 1959 and 1964 he set six official and five unofficial world records.

**12** Thomas E. Kurtz, 96, American mathematician and computer scientist, co-developer of the BASIC programming language, sepsis



**13** Theodore Olson, 84, American lawyer, U.S. solicitor general (2001–2004), stroke. In 2010, Olson and Floyd Abrams argued in favor of the Citizens United vs FEC case before the Supreme Court, which granted corporations the same free speech rights as individuals, and allowed unlimited corporate spending in elections.



**14** Peter Sinfield, 80, English lyricist ("21st Century Schizoid Man", "I Believe in Father Christmas"), musician (King Crimson), and record producer. He was best known as a co-founder and lyricist of King Crimson. Their debut album In the Court of the Crimson King is considered one of the first and most influential progressive rock albums ever released.



**15** Béla Károlyi, 82, Hungarian-American Hall of Fame gymnastics coach. One of his earliest protégés was Nadia Comăneci, the first Olympic Games gymnast to be awarded a perfect score. Living under the dictatorship of Nicolae Ceaușescu, Károlyi frequently clashed with Romanian officials. He and his wife defected to the United States in 1981. Béla and his wife Márta Károlyi were credited with transforming the coaching of gymnastics in the U.S. and bringing major international success. They claim to have been unaware that Larry Nassar, the national gymnastics team doctor who was convicted of sexual assault of minors, was assaulting young female gymnasts in their care at their Károlyi Ranch training facility in the Sam Houston National Forest in Texas.



- Yuriko, Princess Mikasa, 101, Japanese royal, stroke and pneumonia. Princess Mikasa was the honorary president of various charitable organizations, especially those concerned with the preservation of traditional Japanese culture. She also played an active role in the Japanese Red Cross Society.



**20** Mike Pinera, 76, American guitarist (Blues Image, Iron Butterfly) and songwriter ("Ride Captain Ride"), liver failure. Mike Pinera and his group Blues Image were co-founders and house band at Thee Image, a Miami Beach concert venue they opened and co-headlined on weekends, playing with such groups as Cream, Grateful Dead, the Yardbirds, The Animals, Frank Zappa and many more.



**21** Alice Brock, 83, American artist and restaurateur, inspiration for "Alice's Restaurant", chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. the subject of Arlo Guthrie's 1967 song "Alice's Restaurant", which in turn inspired the 1969 film.

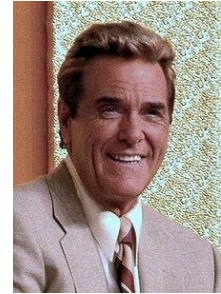
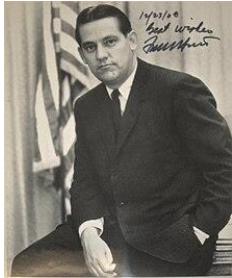


- Peggy Caserta, 84, American businesswoman and memoirist. She owned Mnasidika, a boutique in San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury district that became a hub for the counterculture of the 1960s, and published two memoirs, including one detailing her relationship with singer Janis Joplin. Caserta became embedded in the Haight-Ashbury community, selling concert tickets for Bill Graham's Fillmore shows and LSD for Owsley Stanley



**23** Chuck Woolery, 83, American game show host (Wheel of Fortune, Love Connection) and musician (The Avant-Garde).

- Fred R. Harris, 94, American politician, member of the U.S. Senate (1964–1973). Harris strongly supported the Great Society programs and criticized President Lyndon B. Johnson's handling of the Vietnam War. In a 2023 interview, he expressed support for President Joe Biden, saying concerns about Biden's age were unfounded

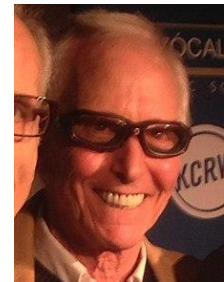


**25** Earl Holliman, 96, American actor (Police Woman, The Rainmaker, The Twilight Zone). Holliman, who never disclosed any marriages at the time, was outed by The Advocate in 2015. Holliman was confirmed to have had a male spouse at the time of his death. His husband, Craig Curtis, confirm his death to the The Hollywood Reporter.



- Hal Lindsey, 95, American evangelist and Christian writer (The Late Great Planet Earth). – asserting that the Apocalypse or end time (including the rapture) was imminent because current events were fulfilling Bible prophecy. He was a Christian Zionist and dispensationalist.

**26** Jim Abrahams, 80, American film director and screenwriter (Airplane!, The Naked Gun, Hot Shots!), leukemia

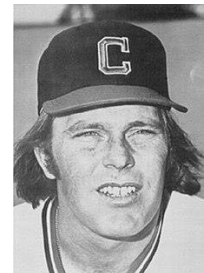


## December



**2**, Debbie Mathers, 69, American author (My Son Marshall, My Son Eminem), complications from lung cancer.

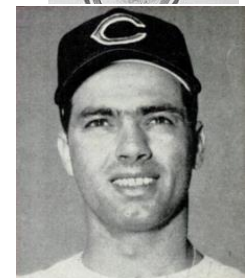
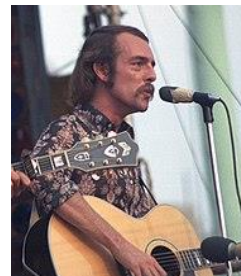
**4** Al Fitzmorris, 78, American baseball player (Kansas City Royals) After retiring from baseball, he remained involved in the Kansas City community, supporting numerous charitable organizations. He died after a long battle with cancer in Kansas City



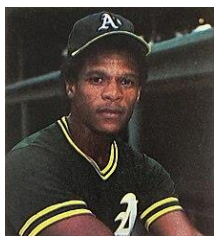
**10** Michael Cole, 84, American actor (The Mod Squad, Nickel

Mountain, It) an American actor best known for his role as Pete Cochran on the television crime drama The Mod Squad (1968–1973). He was the last surviving member of the original cast.

- Rocky Colavito, 91, American baseball player (Cleveland Indians), complications from diabetes.



**17** Mike Brewer, 80, American musician (Brewer & Shipley) and songwriter ("One Toke Over the Line")



**18** Fred Lorenzen, 89, American Hall of Fame racing driver, Daytona 500 winner (1965), complications from dementia.



**20** Rickey Henderson, 65, American Hall of Fame baseball player (Oakland Athletics, New York Yankees, San Diego Padres), World Series champion (1989, 1993), pneumonia



**24** Richard Perry, 82, American record producer ("You're So Vain", "Photograph", "Slow Hand").

**25** Osamu Suzuki, 94, Japanese automotive industry

executive, president (1978–2000) and chairman (2000–2021) of Suzuki, lymphoma



**27** Olivia Hussey, 73, British-Argentine actress (Romeo and Juliet, Black Christmas, Jesus of Nazareth), cancer

- Greg Gumbel, 78, American sportscaster (CBS Sports, NFL), cancer.



**29** Linda Lavin, 87, American actress (Alice, B Positive, Broadway

Bound), Tony winner (1987), complications from lung cancer



- Jimmy Carter, 100, American politician, president (1977–1981), governor of Georgia (1971–1975), Nobel Prize laureate (2002)





Heroes (See "Jimmy Carter" above)

### Asshole(s) of the Month

*Editor's note: due to the impending presidential inauguration, the amount of Assholishness is approaching record levels from the radical right MAGA Assholes who would previously be featured, but no longer make the cut and will be placed on a "space available" waiting list.*



## Pay to Pray

December 26, 2024 By: Fenway Fran Category: [Holy Crap](#), [Uncategorized](#)

Everything TFG has a price. Whether it's one of Melania's fancy \$90 ornaments (I thought she didn't care about Christmas?) or T Flag wrapping paper at \$28 for 4 sheets, or any of the myriad of goodies on Trumpstore.com, everything about him is monetized.

From [Religion News](#) this Christmas week, we have this headline:

***At Trump's Inauguration, Reports of a Pay to Pray***



(RNS) — President-elect Donald Trump's transition team is reportedly planning an interfaith prayer service the day before his inauguration, where participants can worship alongside the businessman and his wife, Melania.

But those who want to join need to weigh the price of prayer: Tickets to the service will be awarded only to those who donate at least \$100,000 to Trump's inaugural ceremonies, or who raise \$200,000. Jesus continues to weep, as TFG faithful open their wallets.



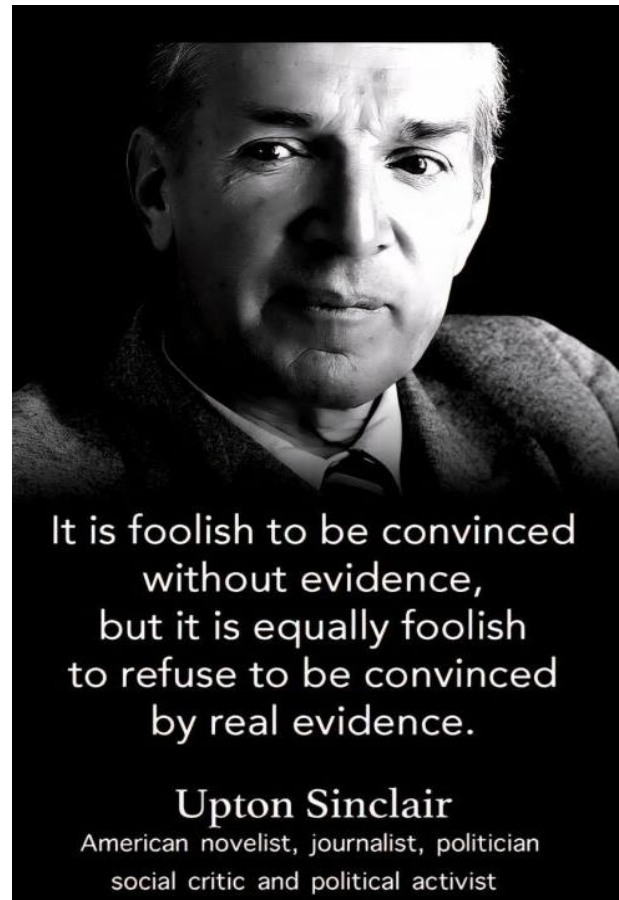
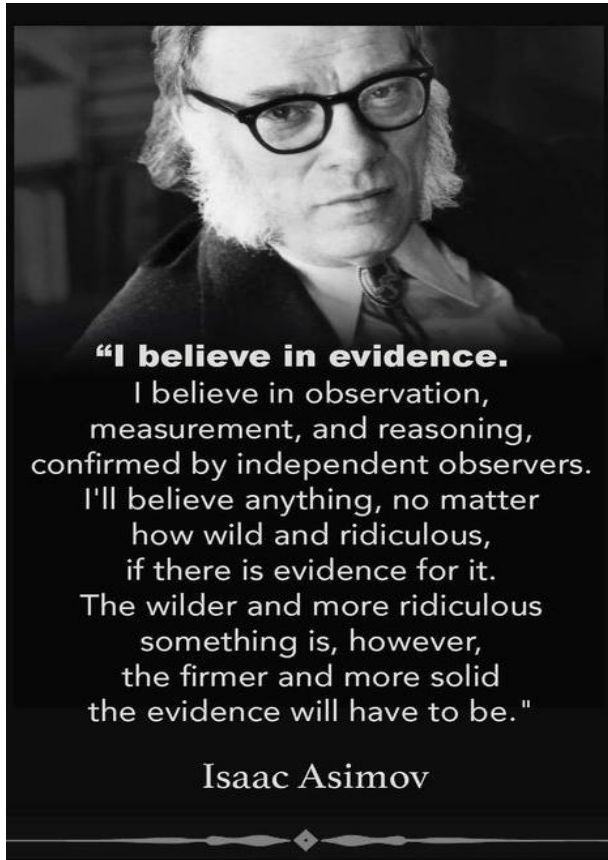
## Trump-loving evangelical leader busted with hard drive full of appalling images

By Travis Gettys



Jason C. Yates, former CEO of My Faith Votes, has been charged in Minnesota with eight felony counts of possession of child pornography after a relative came forward with a hard drive containing more than 100 sexually explicit images and videos involving children under 14 years old, including eight involving children between 5 and 7 years old

## Atheist Quotes



Someone told me I can't  
celebrate Christmas because  
I'm an atheist. So I said, "Why  
not? I see you're celebrating  
Valentine's Day even though  
nobody loves you."



# COMMENTARY

**Ella Fitzgerald in a Houston jail cell for singing to an integrated audience, 1955.**





# How do you feel?

By Jim Longo

Photo by Carlito Van Dango



"How do you feel? Jill asked.

Shouldn't it be, '*how does that make you feel?*'" Jack said.

"Okay, how does it *make* you feel?"

"About what?"

"I don't know, how about the world?"

"The world is fucked."

"But tell me how you *really* feel, and how is the world fucked?"



Jack paused, "To quote the Leonard Cohen song, 'The war is over, and the good guys lost.'"

"Are there really any good guys?"

"No there aren't any good guys, but there are at least people who won't tear the whole thing down."

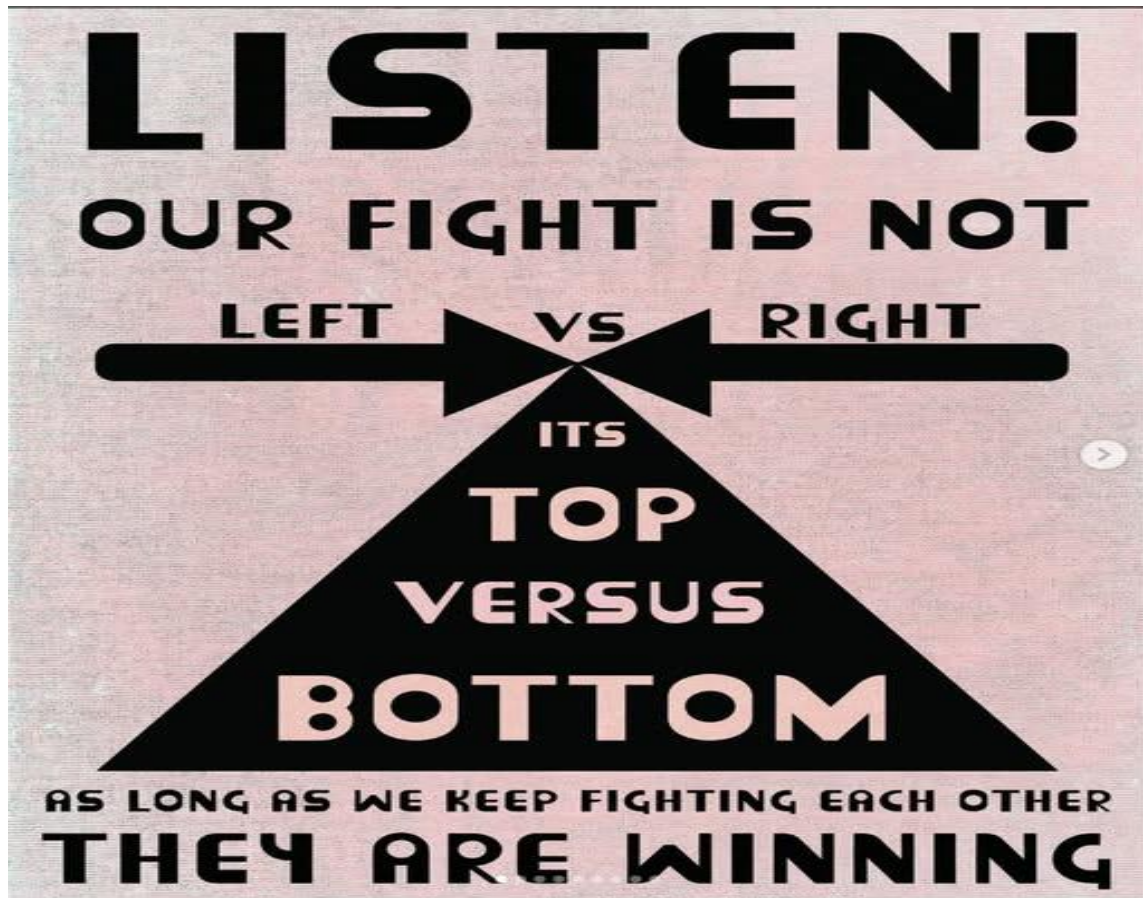
"Maybe the whole thing needs to be torn down?"

"The system is corrupt as hell, so let's put a regime in power that is more corrupt than the status quo. It makes perfect sense."

"Why are you paying attention to what's happening here? There is nothing you can do about it. All you can do is survive it."

"I can't help myself. I am paying less attention than I ever had, but I can't help but pay attention to the world around me."

"Why?" Jill asked.



"If the new regime does what it says it will be heading into stagflation at best and a depression at worst. We need to do something."

"What?"

"I don't fucking know. I am a deer in the headlights. All our friends believe the tariffs and the mass deportations are giant

head fakes. They'll release ultimatums and then claim victory, and we won't be any worse than wear."

"So why worry? You know, 'Don't worry be happy'." Jill said.

"But if these stupid mother fuckers do what they say they will, I don't want to be one of the stupid assholes who talked himself out of seeing the handwriting on the wall, and sat there with a thumb up my ass."

"But tell me how you *really* feel?" Jill said with a gleam in her eye.

"I am constipated with fear."

"You mean you are scared shitless,"

"When you say it that way. I am more reading the water, but I am hoping the water is lying to me, and everybody else is correct.

"So why pay attention to this shit? It will just drive you crazy,"

"You are right. I shouldn't. So what if foodstuffs go up twenty-five percent? We either won't buy it, or we will pay up. So what if the stock market drops twenty-five percent? We'll sit through it or sell at the bottom like every other retail investor. So what if they put anyone who has a different narrative than the administration in jail? At least we will only have one news source for the whole country."

"So what if they lay off fifty percent of the federal workforce, we can always make them pick crops due to all the deportations of farm workers." Jill chimed in.

"All that is probably not going to happen, they are too smart to allow that, right?"



"I don't mean to quote George Carlin, 'You know how stupid the average American is, then you have to remember fifty percent are stupider than that.' Could it happen? Yes."

"I guess the only thing we can do is hope for the best, expect the worst, and be happy with what you get."

"But tell me how you really feel?"

On a scale of Elizabeth Taylor, how are you feeling today?



# A Farewell to Norms



**By Driftglass**

[professionalleft.blogspot.com](http://professionalleft.blogspot.com)

*“This maybe the year when we finally come face to face with ourselves; finally just lay back and say it—that we are really just a nation of 220 million used car salesmen with all the money we need to buy guns, and no qualms at all about killing anybody else in the world who tries to make us uncomfortable.”*

— Hunter S.

Thompson, *The Great Shark Hunt: Strange Tales from a Strange Time*

Remember how, after the Nazis used tanks, bombers and submarines in their war of global conquest, the Allies decided not to use tanks or bombers or submarines or any of that stuff because using the weapons of the enemy to defeat the enemy was, y'know, rude and uncivilized?

Yeah.

Me neither.

Remember how, after Eisenhower and friends stomped the shit out of the Nazis, and Naziism was outlawed in Germany and we put the judges who enabled the Nazis on trial and we rewrote the

German constitution to put unions on an equal footing with management, Americans were so appalled at his behavior that they sent Eisenhower packing the minute he retired from the military?

Yeah.

Me neither.

So, here's my one suggestion for Democrats running for office, past present and future.

Ready?

***For fuck's sake stop promising to "unite" the country.***

Not only is this is completely impossible, but you look like an idiot when you try because it gives other people — ***people who hate you and want to destroy you*** — the power force you to fail.

It's like ... promising you won't let me shoot my own dick off. Then — haha! — I shoot my own dick off just to fucking spite you. Sure, now I'm dickless and bleeding, but no matter. The question the media *won't* be asking is, "*Jesus, man, why did you shoot your own dick off?*"

Oh my no.

The only questions the media will be asking over and over again is why ***you*** didn't stop me. And if I do get any legacy media play at all, I'll just stand there, dickless, bleeding, pretending to look forlorn, looking into the camera, saying tearfully, "*But he promised he wouldn't let this happen! He promised!!!*"

Once the trap is sprung you are free to bitch and complain all you want about how this was all a setup, and how they did it deliberately. And guess what? The media will laugh at you as a trifling amateur, because ***of course it was all a setup***. Of course it was deliberate. They wanted to destroy you. They made

it very, very clear that this was their goal, loud and in public many times. And by giving your enemies the power to make you break your promise, you hand them the means to do it, while you're forced stand by. Impotent. Powerless to stop it.

Who's dickless now?

So you succumb. Maybe you can salvage this situation and still Unite The People if you just offer compromise after compromise, all in good faith of course. Breaking off bigger and bigger pieces of the promises you made to the people who actually support you, and feeding those pieces to the ghouls who hate you. You try to appeal to their innate sense of decadency. Remind them that we're all here to solve our common problems and serve the American people.



This is madness.

They have no sense of decency, and neither do the bigots and imbeciles who elected them. Their only "common problem" is you, ya' baby-killing commie bastard. And the only thing they want to "serve" is your ass up on a silver platter with a side order of Liberal tears to the shrieking, capering mob of meatheads who voted them into office in the first place.

And the icing on the cake? The more you talk of all the noble plans you have to make their lives better, the louder they'll mock and condemn you as a condescending college soy-boy Death Paneler talking down to the regular folk. Just who the hell do you think you are?



Hey dum-dum, you don't win elections running on hope and joy and a bright shared future. If you're very lucky, that might keep you the voters you've already got. And you also don't win elections by paying the Lincoln Project tens of millions of dollars to cut ads which are nothing but political Pornhub for credulous progressives because — Hell Ya! — it's **finally** telling "the people" what a monster Trump is! Duh! **Of course, he's a monster.** Republican voters **know** he's a monster. That's why they love him. That's why they vote for them.

Because do you know what you never hear Republicans talking about? Our bright, shared future. You don't hear them running their mouths about hope and joy. Fuck no. They talk exclusively about fear and paranoia and enemies. Foreign enemies and the enemies within. About how you and your hordes of foreigner rapists and trannies and smug, sinister college-educated bureaucrats have stolen the future of all right-thinking Murricans, and how they're going to kick some ass, break some heads and take Murrica's future back for all right-thinking Murricans.

If Democrats want to win, they're going to have learn how to scare the living shit out of the millions of stupids who are forever meandering around in the political "center" waiting for someone to tell them what to think. I have some thoughts of the subject for anyone who'd like to pay me an unholy amount of money for my insights, but for now I'd recommend watching *Moneyball* 10 or 12 times and taking to heart the lessons it teaches.







# Child Separation as Cited in the Definition of Genocide

By Ed Zillioux

I listened to a TV program today where the narrator, Nicole Wallace, introduced the new documentary film entitled "separated" by Aaron Morris. The film depicts the now infamous act of separating children from their parents by force and interning them in cages with no regard to maintaining their identity or connection to their parents or families. The interview with Morris revealed that more than 1300 of these children are yet to be reunited with their families and perhaps never will. This, of course, is the consequence that no priority to maintain such connections was ever given.

What bothers me beyond the sheer inhumanity of the forced separation of children from their parents is that the crime committed by





these separations was never clearly specified. There is no need for this. The crime has a name. It is, simply, genocide.



Genocide is a relatively new word. It was proposed in the 1940s by Raphael Lemkin, a man that had been consumed since childhood by atrocities targeted against individual culture or ethnic groups. The word was a hybrid that combined the Greek derivative genos (Ancient Greek: γένος, 'family, clan, tribe, race, stock, kin') and -cide (Latin: -cidium, 'killing') The word was accepted by lexicographers beginning with its inclusion in Webster's new international dictionary. But Lemkin's goal was to see the newly named genocide banned by international law. Realizing that this would be a lengthy endeavor, Lemkin, who was at this time teaching law at Yale law school, convinced the Dean to grant him leave on the grounds that it was better he

developed international law than to teach it.

On December 11th, 1946, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution that condemned genocide as "the denial of the right of existence of entire human groups."

The resolution tasked a



united nation committee with drafting a full-fledged UN treaty banning the crime of genocide with the General Assembly unanimously passing the resolution on December 9, 1948.

It is stated In Article 2 of the convention on the prevention and punishment of the crime of genocide, "in the present convention, *genocide* means any of the following eight articles are committed with intent to destroy in whole or in part a national, ethnical, racial or religious group such as: as further stated in Article 2 item E, "possibly transferring children of one group to another group."

Thus, Donald J trump is guilty of the international law of – genocide.



*A complete description, development, and inclusivity can be found in the following book: A Problem from Hell, America and the Age of Genocide by Samantha Power copyright 2013*



**Diatrobe Scathing Atheist 615**  
**By Noah Lugeons**

When I was a kid, they used to say, "no religion or politics at the table," and then they'd start the meal by saying grace. So what they really meant was "no *discussion* of religion." Imposition, on the other hand...

And I was reminded of that once again last Thursday, as I sat down with my extended family for turkey et al. We all heap our plates high, some of us have even taken our inaugural forkfuls, when one of my nieces says "Who's gonna say grace?" And honestly, I think she said it as a joke. But my brother took it like a request and brings the dinner we've all been eagerly anticipating for an entire Lions game to a grinding halt so we can spend two minutes acknowledging his carpenter god.



Now, I should be clear that the room's evenly split as far as religion goes. Fully half of the people in the room don't ascribe to his religion, some of us famously so. And he knows this. But that doesn't stir in him even the briefest second of pause about it. It's the beginning of dinner, dammit, and that's the time where Jesus gets thanked.

Of course, a lot of people — even a lot of atheists — see this as too small an imposition to complain about. It's a harmless tradition, they'll say, and even the most sectarian of grace-saying usually makes room for an acknowledgement of friends and family and all the stuff we're actually there to celebrate. To begrudge them a hundred seconds to slather praise on their savior would be petty.

But I disagree. I should be clear here that among the non-

**I can't wait to watch  
the Catholics, Mormons,  
JWs, and 7th Day Advents  
realize they are not  
included in the new  
protestant theocracy.**

religious half of the people present was, significantly, the person whose house we were at. We were at my sister's place and if she's got any religion at all, it's some kind of semi-defined neo-pagan Earth religion. And I think we can all agree that my Catholic brother and his Catholic wife would freak the fuck out if she'd

asked everyone to bow their head in silence while she thanked the All Mother for her bounty, or if I'd demanded a reverent minute and a half while I emphasized the damning implications of the Problem of Evil. I mean, I'm sure that if my brother had asked, my sister would have given his blessing her blessing — she's not the type to risk family unity over something so small — but the point here is that even to ask is an imposition that nobody but a Christian would even think of. And, significantly, he didn't ask.

And far from being a triviality, this is the whole goddamn problem. You take any issue that secularists have with Christians and you trace it back to its source, you're going to find this same goddamn thing; this entitled belief that their impositions aren't impositions. They put their religion on public property at Christmas; they force their Bibles into our classrooms and their prayers into our locker rooms; they display their doctrines on our courthouse walls and shove their religious beliefs into the laws

**If you want me to believe that teaching about God in schools would improve people's morality, you'll first need to explain why it doesn't seem to work in church.**

themselves. And all the while, they do it with the same privileged air of an outnumbered Christian demanding that everyone stare at their food a bit longer while Christ gets his due. It all comes from this paradoxical belief that we can forbid discussions of religion at a table where we're saying grace.

Of course, as emblematic of the singular issue that I've devoted my life to opposing as this presumption was, I didn't

protest it at the moment. I didn't speak up and say "Hey, half of us don't share your religion, and that's assuming that neither of your kids are lying about their beliefs to keep you happy. We might even be the majority at this table. God can hear your fucking thoughts, he knows you're thankful. And I'm hungry." At least not on the outside. Because, much like you, I don't think it's worth risking those brief moments of family harmony just to remind my brother he's an asshole. I have plenty of other opportunities to do that.

But, at the same time, every time we roll over to these intrusions, we embolden them. And all around us we're seeing

what happens when those particular instincts are emboldened. I mean, if it's okay to impose your religion on your siblings' non-Christian kids, why isn't it okay to impose them on the Hindu kid at the public school? If an opening prayer is okay at a non-religious person's home for a meal with non-religious people, why isn't it okay at the beginning of a city council meeting? And if it's okay to demand that your non-religious family members revere Jesus, why isn't it okay to demand that of everyone?

Just consider what they're asking when they say grace. We're not asked to say it too or anything. We're just asked to close our eyes and stay quiet. We're asked to look down, adopt a posture of supplication, blind ourselves to our surroundings, and keep our thoughts to ourselves. That's what they're asking. And the more often we give it to them, the more often they'll ask for it.

<http://www.patreon.com/ScathingAtheist>

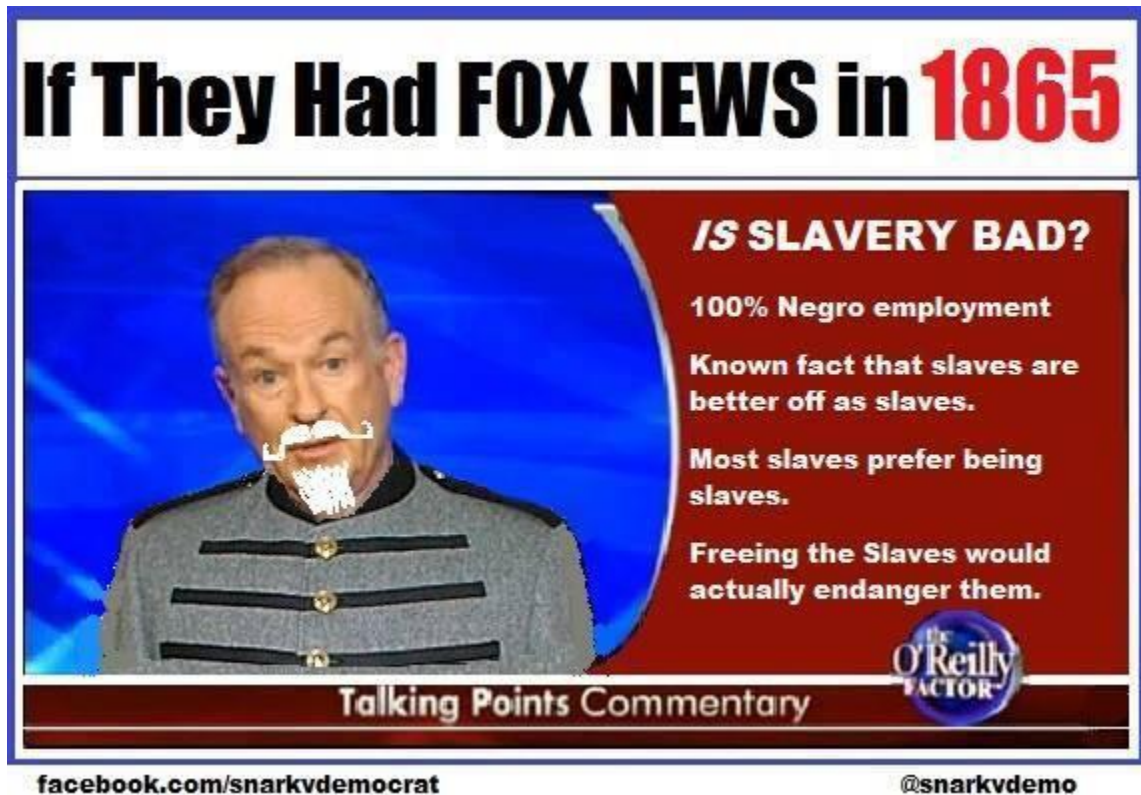
## **Religion is like circumcision**



**If you wait until someone is 21 to tell them about it, they will probably say "No, thank you!"**



# Then as Now, or Now as Then



By Virgil Thorp

The 1976 Kansas City Chamber of Commerce "Man of the Year" Dinner Banquet and why I felt so out of place that I thought I was dreaming. Maybe it was the hashish. I had one of those dreams last night. One of those weird, Deja Vu dreams where the past is visited as if it were yesterday. A dream where most of the people in it were alive when, by now, they are dead.

The circumstances of the dream were remarkably similar to the actual circumstances of the actual event. The biggest difference

to this dream and my usual dreams is that I was fully clothed in this dream. In fact, as I was that night, I was dressed in a spiffy three-piece suit. And I looked good. Tailored inseams, sharply creased cuffs. Vest and Windsor knotted tie. Polished wingtips. Almost a solid citizen, like a member of the Chamber of Commerce should.

Even if my Rolex had been bargained for in a Hong Kong strip club, you couldn't tell the difference from the encrusted diamond ones dripping from the other corporate executives and bank managers sharing jokes and small talk and the latest gossip just outside the men's room in the hotel lobby.

However, I wasn't supposed to be there. My old man was supposed to be there. He was going to be honored as the Chamber of Commerce's "1976 Man of the Year". An honor I truly believe he earned. But he couldn't go. He was laid up in Research Hospital, room 432 with an attack of kidney stones. He had not had an attack like he had in 32 years – the previous attack was brutal, it was the one that got him off the allied front lines in Belgium just prior to the last ditch Nazi offensive known as the Battle of the Bulge which, by a strange accident of nature probably insured that I was able to, or at least, the ability to take his place due to the whims of nature that fateful evening. (The pain of the stone was so intense that the army doctors wanted to take out every organ possibly responsible for his discomfort starting with his appendix.)

Convinced he was going to be rotated back stateside, between kidney stone attacks, he had written my mother a letter stating he was coming home for Christmas which arrived about the same time there was a story published in the hometown news about his heroics with the 12<sup>th</sup> Armored Division post Bulge's mop-up. (As soon as he passed the stone on Christmas day, the army did rotate him back, but back to the front lines where he remained until the unconditional surrender in May).

So, Pop was laid up and he asked me to represent him for the presentation. I don't believe he had any ulterior motives other than for me to dress up in a suit and tie.

"You won't have to make a speech or say anything other than 'thank you'." Pop told me adding, "and Please, for my sake, dress sharp ... haircut ..."

I promised I would, but I didn't say anything about being sober.

The event arrived and I must say, seldom have I been at a more 'Republican' outing,

although there were a few people I recognized and had a nodding acquaintance with. State senator Henry Wiggins shook my hand and asked about my father. I had not seen the senator since the evening I had held his head out of the toilet as he threw up at least a pound of partly digested shrimp and an unaccounted number of bourbon highballs.

"Good to see you again, senator," I said.

The senator replied. "I haven't seen you since that night I got sick." His eyes were as red-rimmed as they had been that night

this sign is freaking me the fuck out



three years earlier. At least he seemed grateful for my wiping the vomit off his chin and nose. Judging by the amount of bloodshot capillaries in his eyes, I figured he had kept his usual habits. Booze, cigarettes. Maybe marijuana as the weed was making inroads amongst the *hoi polloi* of society into the upper crust so well represented that evening. At the very least, we were fortunate that he was not experiencing any gloopy discharge. "Where have you been?" he asked as any sincere politician would.

"Vietnam." I replied with a snakey-eyed smile. I had smoked a bowl of high-quality hashish and was very, very stoned, myself.

I spotted a member of the county legislature, a former pro football player I played tackle softball with. "Hey Fred."

"Hi guy," he recognized me, but he couldn't recollect my first name other than me being my dad's kid. "How's your dad?"

I told him there was some kind of experimental procedure they were attempting to reduce the size of the kidney stones so he could pass them with minimal sensation, i.e. pain.

Lucy and I took the two empty chairs next to Fred in dreadful anticipation of "big fish in a small pond" mendacity. We would not be disappointed.

Like we had discovered at any family gathering when we had smoked a joint, we realized that nodding and grunting served us well enough to get along – as long as we didn't bust out laughing at some inappropriate moment. That is what happened through



the basic protocols of such an event as the master of ceremonies gave an obsequious introduction to the speaker of the evening, his boss. "Cros" – as in "a man of the people" – he likes to be called "Cros", Crosby Kemper Jr.

The praise for this affluent oligarch



was as obscene as the sleazy porn I loved to watch ... but much more grossly dirty. This guy stole from the poor and gave to the rich. And then, there he was, standing like the legendary film director, John Huston as Jack Nicholson's nemesis in Chinatown, Noah Cross.

'Cros'. Crosby Kemper, Jr. with his chiseled face was the venerable Kansas City personality. A banker, a railroad magnet and a landowner – almost a monarch – the head of the family the Kemper Arena was named for. Crosby Kemper Jr. Larger than life. Probably the biggest fish for the small pond, the cowtown that was midwestern Kansas City, Missouri.

Cros looked over the audience and smiled with jaws full of perfect teeth. He could have said, "I like what I see here ..." but I don't really remember that well. When stoned I tend to focus on one or no more than two things.

I do recall him using platitudes, generalizations, and extremely bigoted language to describe a utopian vision of white supremacy. That if you are on the "correct" side, you can get away with whatever you can afford to do – elevated equivocation or despicable duplicity. The privileges of "being born on the right side of the tracks".



I referred to Kemper's uncanny resemblance to John Huston that I had a feeling of being transported to the scene in the recent movie, Chinatown. A scene between Jack Nicholson as the private investigator, J.J. Gittes and Huston as the multi-millionaire, Noah Cross, when Gittes confronts Cross with being an incestuous rapist and murderer.

[Cross](#): Exactly what do you know about me?

[Gittes](#): Mainly that you're rich, too respectable to want your name in the newspapers.

[Cross](#): Of course I'm respectable. I'm old! Politicians, ugly buildings and whores all get respectable if they last long enough.



[Gittes](#): How much are you worth?

[Cross](#): I have no idea. How much do you want?

[Gittes](#): I just wanna know what you're worth. More than 10 million?

[Cross](#): Oh my, yes!

[Gittes](#): Why are you doing it? How much better can you eat? What could you buy that you can't already afford?

[Cross](#): The future, Mr. Gittes! The future. Now, where's the girl? I want the only daughter I've got left. As you found out, Evelyn was lost to me a long time ago.

[Gittes](#): Who do you blame for that? Her?

[Cross](#): I don't blame myself. You see, Mr. Gittes, most people never have to face the fact that at the right time and the right place, they're capable of ... ANYTHING.

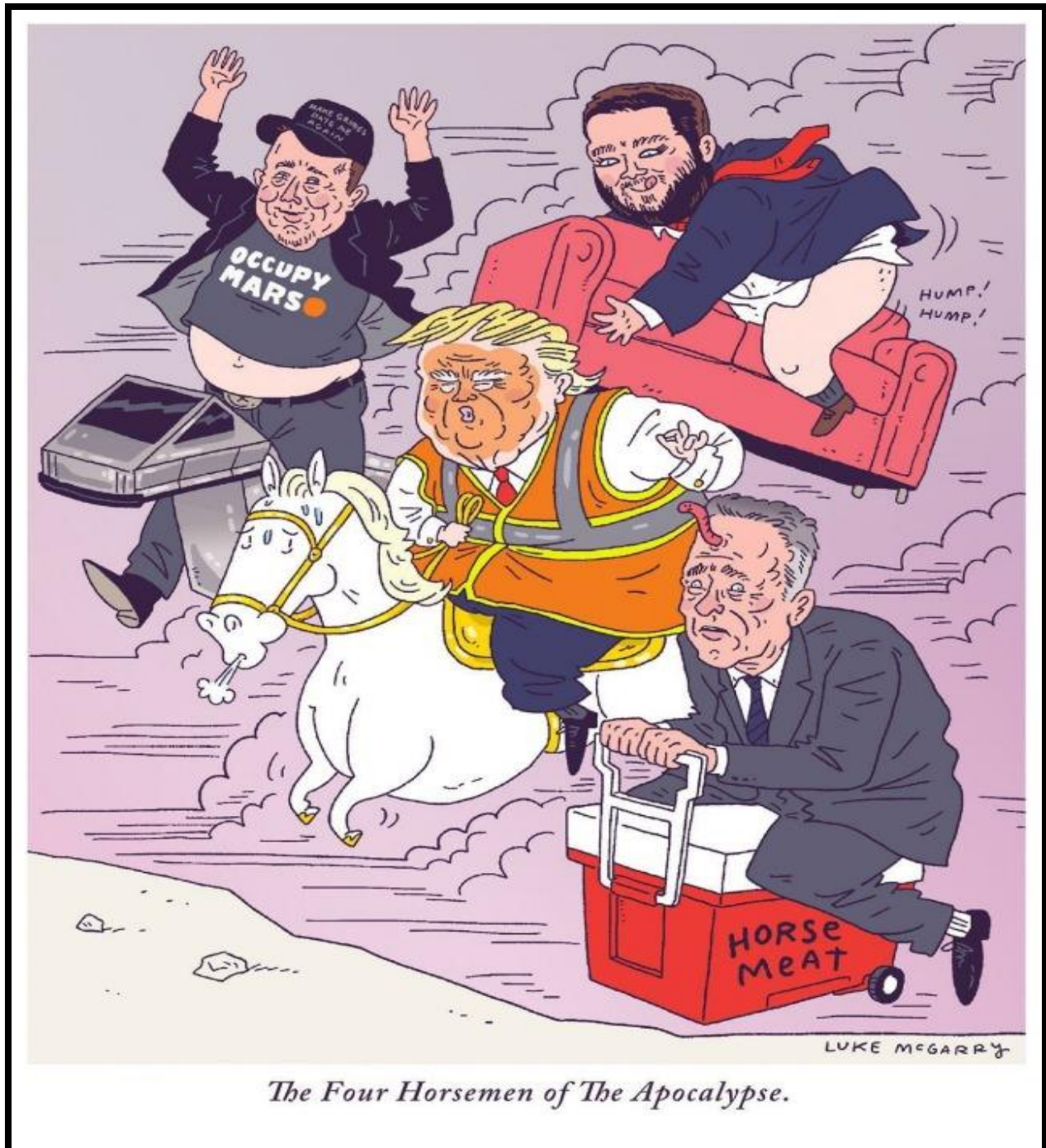
I nudged Fred and whispered, "did he just say you could do anything you want as long as it is okay with him?"

Fred snorted, "yep."

What a weird dream! Total depravity. Later, I took my old man the handsome teak-wood plaque embossed with his name as "Chamber of Commerce 1976 Man of the Year." But it did not feel so special to me after that night. In fact, I felt more than a little dirty accepting it from the hands of such a greasy mover and shaker like Crosby Kemper Jr.

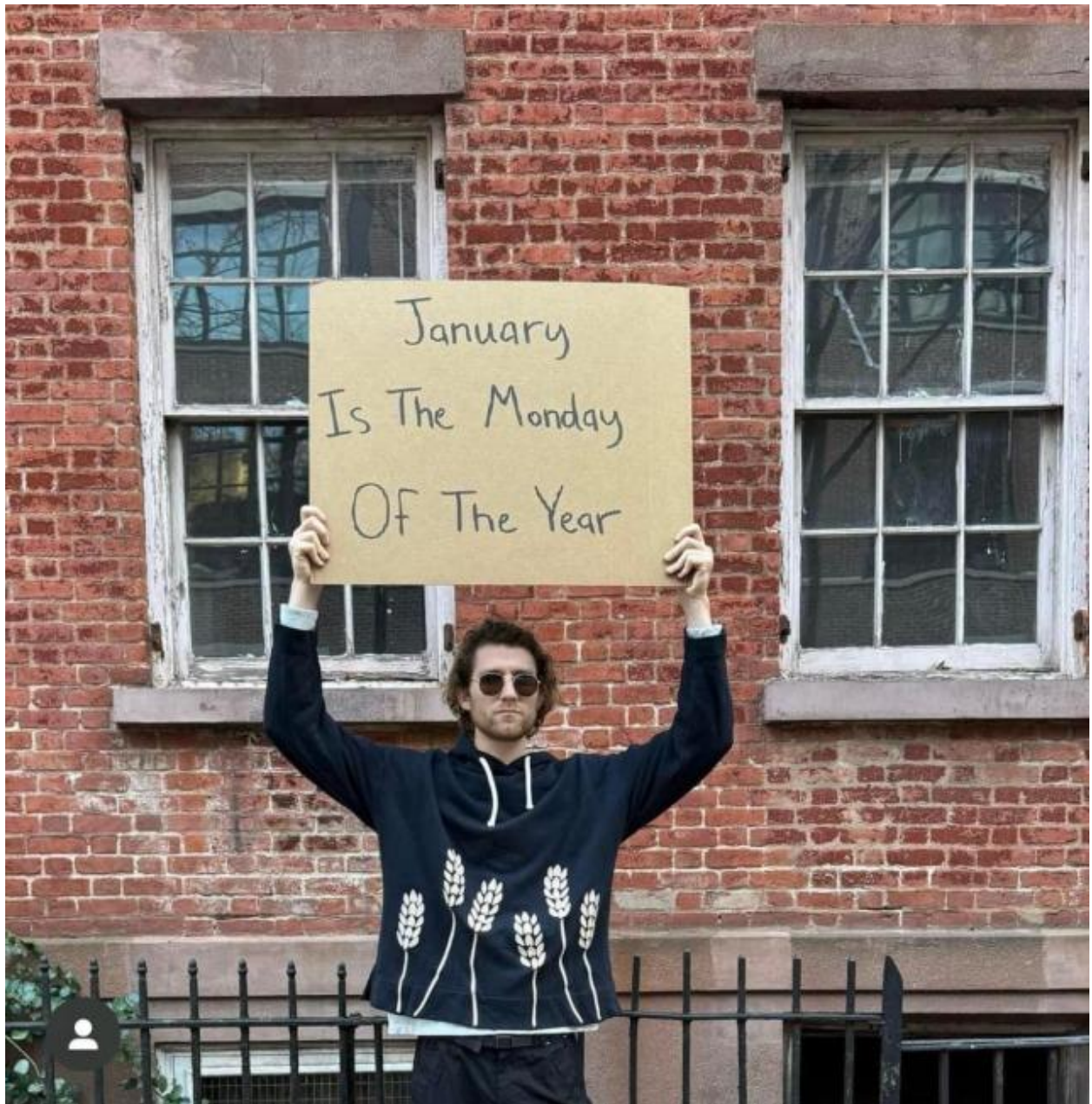


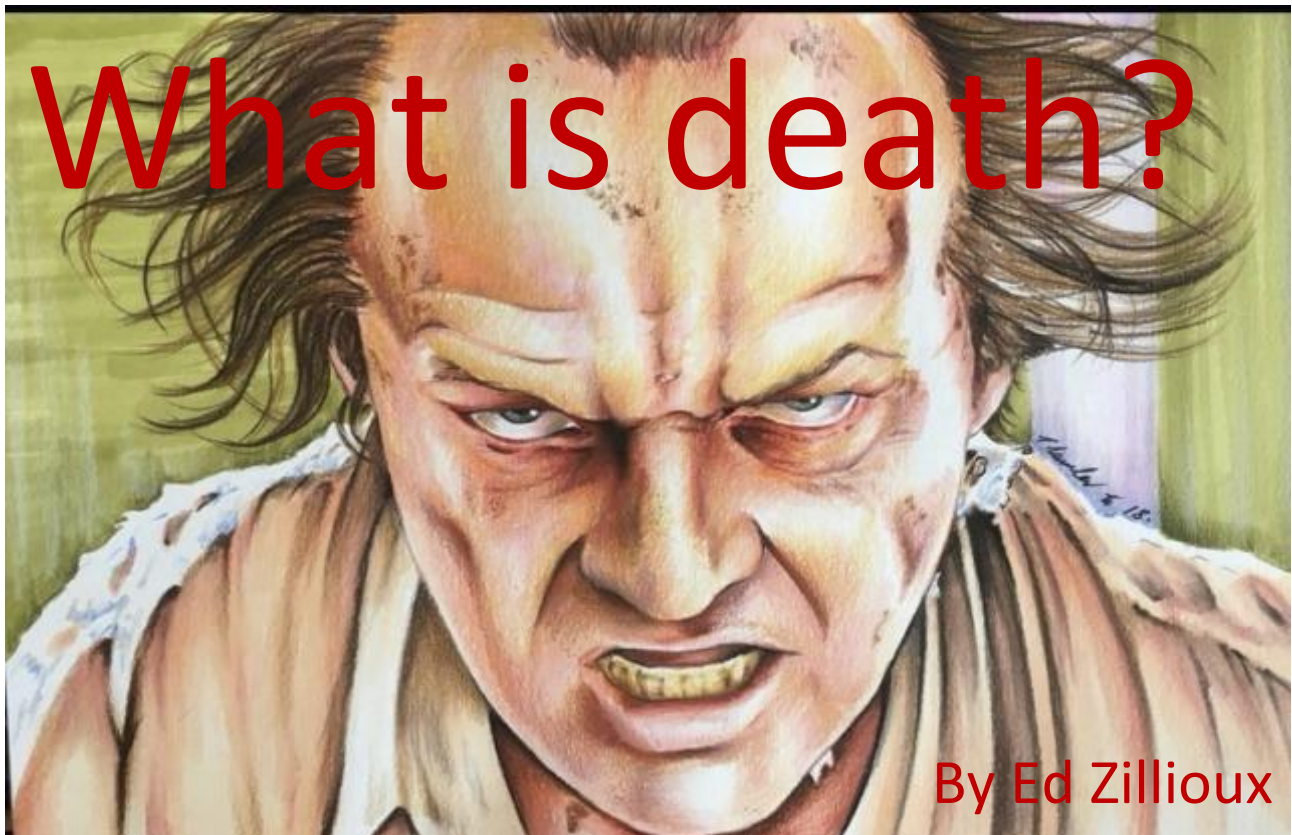
I mean, it had to be a dream ... right? And that's when I woke up, the television remote clutched tightly in one hand and Hannibal, my black kitty laying across my face. Oh yeah, the television was playing a speech with president-elect Donald Trump lying his ass off. I guess that's why I had the feeling I was covered in leeches.





# ARTICLES





When does death actually occur? In a normal (i.e. non catastrophic) death, we know that different organs lose their functionality at different times in the process. Perhaps the best indicator of whether death has occurred is the electroencephalogram application (EEG) that is used to confirm death of a person in a coma. The EEG measures brain waves. If no brain waves are detected, if the EEG flat lines, that's it. The ultimate confirmation of death ... or, is it?

A few days ago, I listened to an NPR news report. Two scientists from the New York University medical school showed up, by prior arrangement, at a slaughterhouse where two pig heads had just been severed from their bodies and lay in a galvanized tub. The heads were immediately taken to the Medical Center where waiting tubes were attached to the cranial blood system, appropriate fluids were injected, and electrical stimulation was applied. EEG units were attached to both heads, and in short order, brain waves were detected. Had the scientists brought the



pigs back to life? Of course not, unless you have a pretty weird definition of what life is.

Several of their colleagues had been invited to witness the event and soon the obvious question was voiced, quote “could this be done with a human brain?” The immediate reply was, “of course.” In other words, one could easily recognize that if the brain could be maintained in a stasis condition until the immediate cause of death could be analyzed and repaired, a life might be saved. One



could argue that there are lives of such great value to society that if there could be a successful intervention, then it should be done.

Thus far, I have talked only about the physical aspects of the brain. There is another story that I find much more intriguing but that I do not have access to. It involves the

mysteries about how the physical brain could interact with the non-physical conscious mind. And what happens to this interaction (which surely exists) at the point of physical death?

This takes us to the concept of dualism, a principle that goes back at least as far as the writings of Descartes in the 17th century, that the relationships of mind and body are separate. And this takes us to the so-called “hard problem” of consciousness, that is, why and how do physical processes in the brain give rise to conscious experience? Is this a violation of the dualist principle?



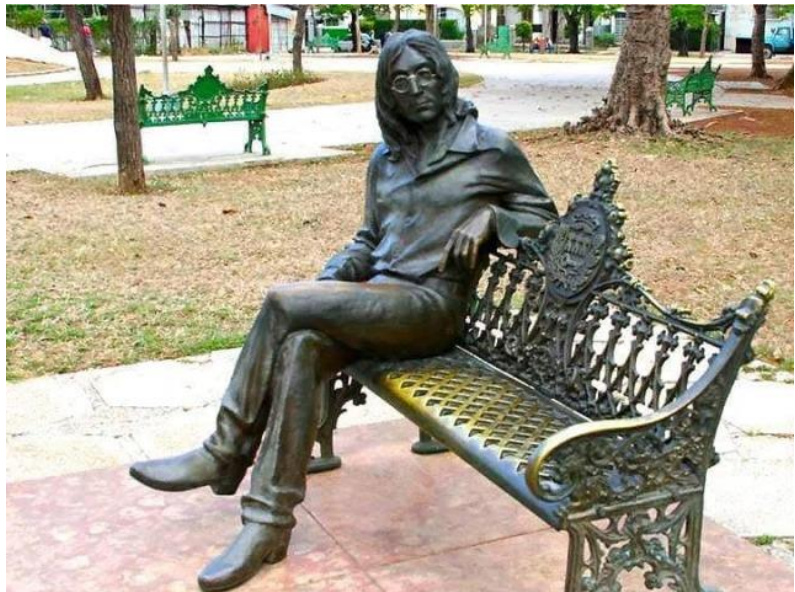
Nevertheless, most neuroscientists conceive of consciousness as a phenomenon that emerges somewhere in the brain. But what does this mean? If this is so, does emergence mean that consciousness is no longer in the brain?

In a recent paper neuroscientist Antonio Damasio said, "it is both." According to him, the conscious mind exists in every neuron in our body; in our heart, our liver, our gut, etc. But he rejects, in fact

ridicules, the notion that consciousness pervades the cosmos. Such as those who claim the universe and all the stones in it are conscious. And yet there are those who do believe so.

Then there are numerous scientists

who have tried to explain consciousness through its altered states. Notable among these is anthropologist Margaret Mead. She first observed in the 1930s altered states of consciousness induced by aboriginals through their use of peyote. Peyote is a small spineless cactus which contains psychedelic alkaloids, particularly mescaline. She was soon a participant in the use of these drugs in order to study consciousness through its altered states. In this way, Mead opened the door to study to the study of psychedelic science. For Mead, drugs were seen as a part of her utopian mission as a power for good. Nevertheless, she became involved in psychedelic warfare during the Second World War in secret work with the use of drugs by the CIA against the Nazis. to this day, scientists are using psychedelic science as a means to understand consciousness.



Yet many questions still exist which is why there are centers around the world devoted to the study of consciousness that, in turn, have generated several existing theories. The Integrated



Information Theory (or IIT) was first proposed in 2004 and published its latest version in 2014. As its name suggests the IIT endeavors to bring together all we think we know about the problem. But it seems that the plurality of existing theories serves to emphasize the complexity of the problem or, perhaps more correctly, served to emphasize the depth of our ignorance. Nevertheless, several leading scientific scientists in this field have studied that the IIT theory is only existing theory that has any chance at success.

Still there are many who think that consciousness is fundamental. That is, it is central to existence itself. Perhaps we are born into



it. I confess I am leaning this way ... but I'm not sure.

I would like, for the moment, to return to my original question what is death? I believe that true death occurs when consciousness dies.



# This Week In Misogyny By Lucinda Lugeons

<http://www.patreon.com/ScathingAtheist>

So, as of this recording, the official death toll from Texas's abortion ban is at three. The real number is doubtless much higher, but the body count that can be directly, inarguably linked to their draconian ban is at three as of November 25th. And the latest death, that of Porsha Ngumezi, is *exactly* the kind of death that reproductive rights activists have been warning about. Because, look, I'll spare you the gruesome details, but Porsha showed up at the hospital *after a miscarriage*. Any pre-baby she might have had was already dead. But doctors were still afraid to provide what would have been the routine response a couple of years ago. And the end result was that she bled to death in a hospital, waiting for timid physicians to get off their fucking hands.

This is going to keep happening. This and stuff like it are gonna get more widespread as more and more states pass these draconian laws. Because the thing is that they're not really based in anything medical; they're based in something *religious*. But they're trying to couch them in medical language to make them sound more reasonable, and what ends up happening is that a bunch of legislators start wielding terminology they're not



qualified to wield. The end result is doctors who have no way of really knowing the law and knowing when they can and can't administer lifesaving care.

Of course, I shouldn't imply that there are no risks on our side. Because, based on some of the conversations that I've had with listeners in the past, I know I've changed the minds of some people on the issue of reproductive rights and its importance in the liberal platform. But I don't want to do that without making sure you understand the risks that might entail. Which is why I feel compelled to tell you about a recent warning from Kenneth Copeland that those of us who support abortion and criticize Donald Trump will, upon our arrival in Hell, be condemned to spend eternity listening to the names of aborted babies.



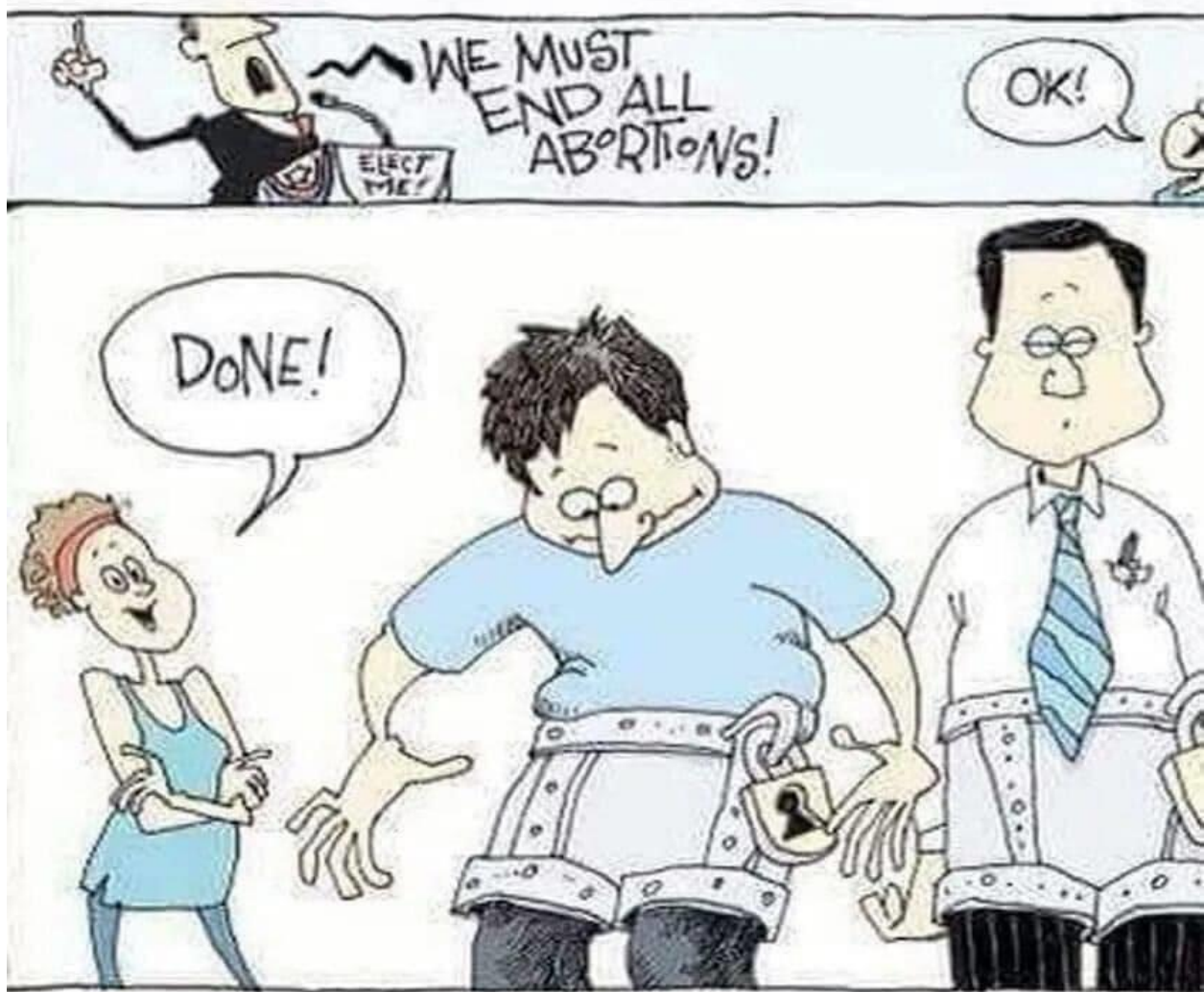
He recounted this revelation during a post-election service last month: "I saw this in the spirit. Literally. It was Judgement Day and Jesus stood there and he said 'Those of you that didn't vote, [...] or didn't

pray and vote like I told you, you will listen to the names of all the babies that are here and never got any life. And it'll be a while because there's over 65 million of them. But you are gonna listen to everyone and you are gonna be held responsible for their death."

Now, this brings up a bunch of thoughts all at once. For example, do people name their abortions? If not, who's deciding the names? Or are they saying that names are innate; like I have some kind of inherent Lucinda-ness that my parents discovered rather than decided on. But setting that aside for a second, it's also worth noting that we're talking about a pretty mild

punishment as far as hell goes. I mean, as Noah proves in the outro every week, a list of names can be entertaining if you do it right. But even if you're going out of your way to make it annoying, it's nothing like the mouth asses that Dante promised.

Of course, it could be that you're gonna hear these while some other torture is going on, I guess. But even then, it sounds like a more relaxing soundtrack than the screams of the damned around you. But the way he says it, it kind of sounds like they're gonna have to read the whole list before they can start punishing you. In which case aborting more babies is a great way to delay the damnation when we get there, folks. Not sure what message Kenny was trying to send, but that was my takeaway.



# HATS AND PHRASES



-- *Try this on for size*

By J. Dan Vignaur



Pronunciation is a strange bedfellow. For instance, it has been said that the British are either too lazy, or more probably, too conceited to make an effort to pronounce foreign words correctly. Of course, what else could we expect from a nation that says, “Aluminium”?

Artificial Intelligence is even worse. I predict that in the near future, our progenies of computer-addled fake info gatherers will pronounce words the way AI does now. Currently, commonly available AI voices do not recognize that some words are spelled the same but are pronounced differently.

Two words that bother me about the British (who should know better) as well as our poorly educated Americans, are the names of current Formula 1 drivers, Charles LeClerc, and Sebastian Vettel. The proper pronunciation is “Le Cler” with the “C” silent, and “Fettel” where the “V” is pronounced like an “F”, for Christs sake ... or, so to speak. The British announcers hear

these words pronounced correctly over and over but are too damned set in their ways to change.



Another phrase for which I dislike the mispronunciation is the recent White Nationalist phrase "*Deus Vult*", the marching motto of organized terrorists from the era of the crusades, through the Manifest Destiny era, the Puritan jihad, the Klan era, and still today by the present day Proud Trumptards and other morons.

I repeat, "V" is pronounced as an English "F". The German word for the letter "V" is "Fow". "W" is "Doppel Fow", (not that this really matters).

Besides, who am I to claim that the phrase should not be said in actual Latin, i.e. "Deus Volk? As far as we know, these so-called "Christian" nationalists are educated enough to speak proper Latin. *AS IF!?*



I don't actually remember any recordings from my two years of Latin class.

*Deus Vult*. What an idea! The first noted use of the ancestral phrases leading to the simplified "Deus Volt", all are meant to justify whatever the Hell I want it to justify, because the phrase means, "The Will Of God". God wills that it is *our* right to kill off pretty much all of





the inhabitants of entire continents, entire religious groups, or anybody we wish, in the pursuit of extracting the resources



deemed necessary is our quest for world domination.

Deus Vult, motherfuckers!

Well, I guess it could be an English “V”, and not an “F”, but that is not the real point. The point is that I want a phrase for *we the people* whose brainwashing toward religious bias either did not take or, has worn off.

We realists, who seek knowledge rather than relying on stock propaganda phrases, need our own phrases, goddammit. Hell, we don’t even have a hat, much less a yell able slogan!



Religions need hats! So do Sceptics. How about, “Think Freely or die?”

No that might conjure a rock band member, “Ace Frehley”. “Think Free or die” is incorrect English, besides, we are predominantly pacifists. So, we really can’t use, “Die”. Can we?

“How about Reason or remain stupid!” Nah.



I have a tee shirt that proudly announces, “Make people think again”. Unfortunately, the Proudards like it, because they think they know everything. In the years of college, I dragged on for too long, I did learn one very important thing: The more knowledge you gain, the more you realize how little you know.

Proudards and other such cult leader followers know so little that they have nary an inkling that they are absolute dumbasses! Dumkopfs who vote against each and every one of the their own interests. Challenge me on this, my not-quite-so-dumbkophish-anymore, fellow Aware Ones!



Now, back to religious hats: There are scarves, tichels, yarmulkes, headbands, mantilla veils, miters, kamilavkas, epanokamelavkios, burkas,



niqab, sheitels, kippahs, simple white Amish lady's hats, as well as those tall, pointy and elaborate hats that Vatican residents wear. Kings and queens have crowns. Pastafarians have colanders for Christ's sake, so to speak.

Can't we have our own hats and phrases. Heh, I have a novel idea. We could call it a thinking cap. How about that?

Oh!

DOH!

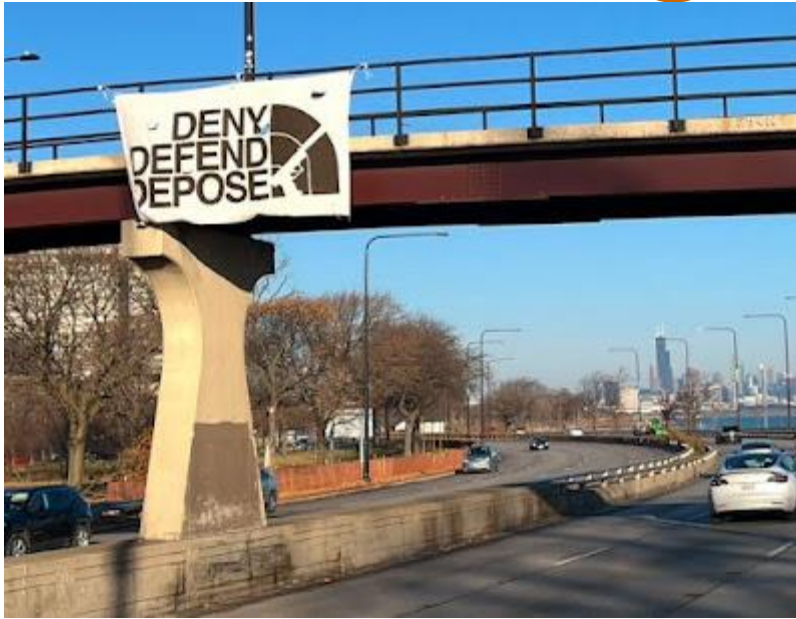
How can we recruit people to think and reason without a simple slogan and our own hat? Christers, Jews, Muslims, Sikhs, Sports fans, farmers... Hell, so to speak, just about every group has a distinguishing hat.

We don't even have a way to recognize each other. We trod around complaining that no one thinks, everyone if brainwashed, people are ignorant of facts and truth, and we don't even know when we are in the presence of other Aware people.

We need a phrase and a hat. Maybe we could have a writing project to try to come up with some ideas. ANYONE?



# The new American awakening



By Infidel 753

[Disclaimer: This post is not condoning violence. It is a discussion of a social phenomenon that needs to be understood clearly.]

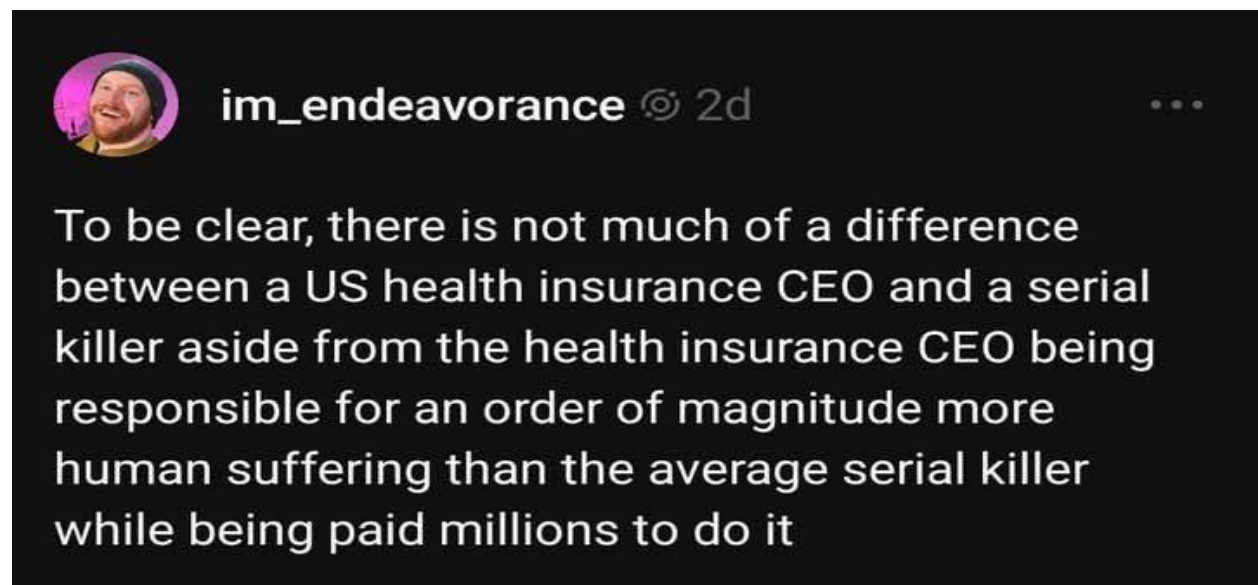
On December 4, in New York, a gunman shot and killed the CEO of United Healthcare. This week, a suspect was arrested and charged. But even before the arrest, the attack provoked a response across the internet and society unlike anything I remember ever seeing before.

Given the number of deaths routinely caused by America's for-profit health insurance companies denying vital coverage on one pretext or another, their body count dwarfs that of any serial killer. Many Americans have a friend or relative who was killed in this way, and a great many more have heard the horror stories. We don't usually refer to such killings as "murder", and I'm sure



that someone can cite legal technicalities to justify that, but the fact remains that these denials of coverage are deliberate acts, taken in full knowledge that they are likely or certain to result in human deaths, *and motivated purely by profit*. The obvious assumption was that the gunman was acting to avenge such a case of denial.

The news of the attack unleashed an explosion of pent-up feeling (seriously, do look at that – I've seen far, far more that's just like it). The unknown shooter inspired fan art and even erotic fan fiction. Sober commentators, and even recent Senate candidate Lucas Kunc, while quick to assure us that they were not condoning violence, pointed out that the rage against the system was easy to understand. Beyond online reactions, wanted posters have appeared in New York – and the banner depicted above, representing a non-trivial investment of work and risk, was put up near Chicago.

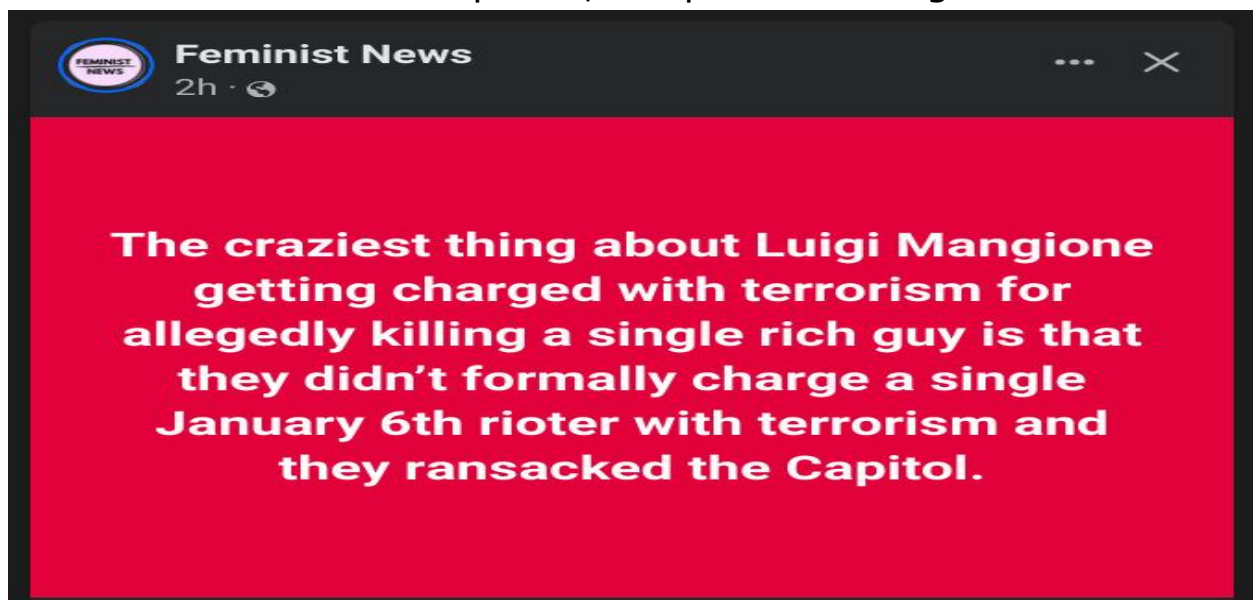


Such an outpouring of feeling doesn't happen from a standing start. There is a vast sea of anger and hatred out there, and it's not only about health insurance. People know well that more and more of the wealth produced by American workers is going not to those producers but to a tiny class of oligarchs – the big investors, corporate executives, and other parasites who now

constitute the ruling class of what may be the most unequal society in history. The worst among them have heaped up obscene fortunes in the tens or even hundreds of billions of dollars. Wealth in the US today is even more concentrated at the top than it was in France just before the Revolution.

Seeing this eruption of mass public feeling in response to the shooting, the American parasite class suddenly realized what they had somehow failed to notice all along – that the masses literally *hate* them – and they and their media proxies and toadies swung into action with a furious campaign of scolding and condescension. People are having none of it. Right-wing media figure Ben Shapiro fumed online that "the EVIL revolutionary left condones murder", only to have his own comments flooded by his own right-wing audience declaring "we feel the same!" This phenomenon extends across the political spectrum. It doesn't belong to the left or the right.

Indeed, it's not really political at all – certainly not on the level of our dreary, sclerotic, polarized, left-vs-right surface political scene. It's a visceral response, the primordial rage of a nation



backed almost as hard against the wall as the French more than two centuries ago. No politician or party can possibly stop this, or control it, or speak for it.

The message may be getting through. Earlier this month, Blue Cross in several states announced that it would no longer pay for anesthesia for surgical operations that exceed specified time limits – a shocking but typical enough example of the heartless cruelty of the system. Almost immediately after the shooting, they reversed that decision. And at the same time, companies began purging or hiding information identifying their executives from their websites. They're getting scared.

This could be called a mass movement, but it's really deeper than that. The man behind the curtain is clearly seen. Millions are now looking past the tired old paradigm of party politics, left vs right, Trump, racial and ethnic prejudice, and all the rest of the distractions, to the struggle that really matters – class.



[infidel753.blogspot.com](http://infidel753.blogspot.com)

# What is the role of BIG Pharma vs PBMs in



**pushing  
prices  
higher?**

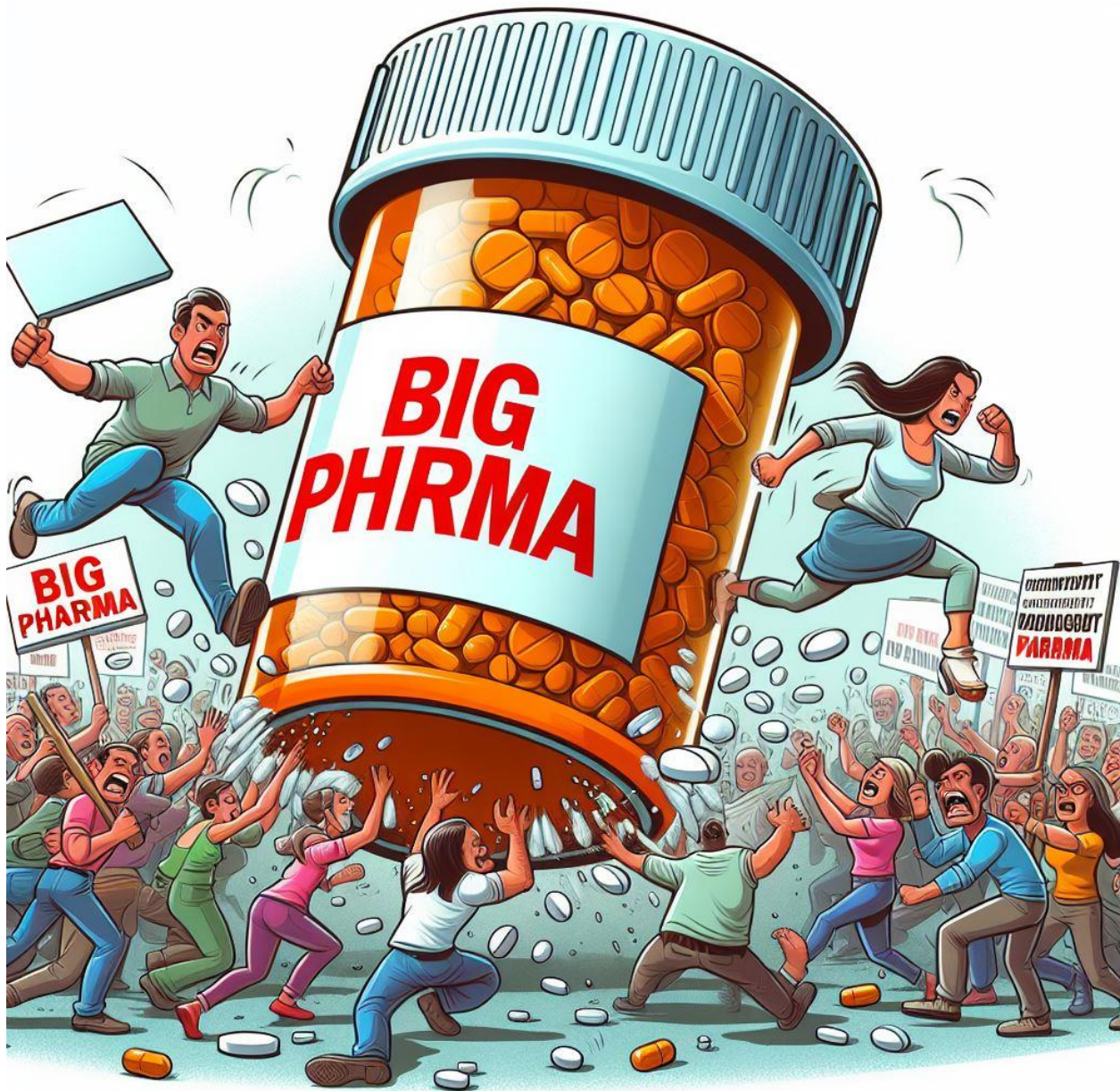
**By James Longo**

Big Pharma has merged itself from about twenty-five companies in the 1980s to about 10 today. They make their money by developing drugs under patent which gives them exclusivity and marketing them heavily to demand incredible prices. Example Ozempic at a thousand dollars a box. A brand-name drug has about ten years on the market before it comes off patent.

Once off-patent, the generic houses can manufacture the medication but, like in Big Pharma mergers and acquisitions, have left us with few players. Competition in generic drug pricing isn't what it used to be. The two biggest generic houses are owned by Big Pharma. Novartis owns Sandoz and Pfizer owns Mylan. Two other big players are owned by Indian families, Sun and Aurobindo. *(FYI almost all generics are made overseas coming mostly from China, India, and Israel.)*

You buy prescription insurance, once again there are few players each own their own Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBM). Aetna has CVS Caremark with 33% of the PBM market. Cigna owns Express Scripts (24%) United Healthcare/Optimum (22%) Humana/Humana (8%) Prime Therapeutics/Magellan(5%) and Medimpact(5%)





The PBMs make their money by 1. Premiums you pay. 2. Rebates from drug manufacturers to get on the PBMs formularies. This is a way for a drug manufacturer to assure market share. If it's not the formulary prescription needs Prior Authorization which means the prescriber must explain to the PBMs why he is prescribing it.

What is a *Clawback*?

All prescriptions are priced by a formula contracted with the PBMs. It usually is a cost plus a fee. When that cost plus a fee is less than the prescription copayment which the pharmacies are contracted to collect. The PBMs electronically instruct the pharmacy to collect. When that copayment is greater than the price formula price in audits they can "clawback" the difference. Example: Price formula says we should be paid \$8 and the copayment is \$10 the PBM can "clawback" \$2 months after they paid for that prescription. Who gets the \$2? The patient sure doesn't. The PBM does. My understanding is this sets up an accounting nightmare.

Insurance increases the price of goods and services. As soon as you allow a third party to be the payor the patient isn't shopping by price and will tend to overuse services. *I already paid. I might as well get my money's worth.* If you want \$100 dollar diapers develop diaper insurance.

A few players in the pharmaceutical industry along with a few players in the prescription insurance business, along with the business practices of the PBMs, including taking manufacturer rebates, the removal of competition, added to human nature when not having to pay for products directly, definitely increases the price of prescriptions.





# Low Income Trump Voters About To Enter The 'Find Out' Part Of FAFO

*Low-income voters, who largely broke for Trump in November, are about to find out how little he cares about them.*



Credit: @bluegal (Composite) via Bing AI

By Red Painter — December 27, 2024,

In today's edition of FAFO (F\*ck Around and Find Out) we are starting to hear more from low-income voters who are learning the hard way that Donald Trump doesn't give a sh\*t about them.

See, MAGA loyalty only goes one way. They want your vote but won't do anything to make your life better. Once you give that vote and support, you are no longer useful.



The Washington Post did a deep dive into the lower income Trump supporters from one of the lowest income towns in Pennsylvania – New Castle. Over half of the voters in this town with a FAMILY income of less than \$50,000 voted for Trump in November. Compare this with the previous 3 elections, where they broke in favor of the Democratic candidate (Biden by 11 in 2020, Hillary by 12 in 2016 and Obama by 22 in 2012). To have them swing so far to Trump was shocking.

Here are some of the comments made by Trump voters (please, contain your laughter until the article has ended):



Lori Mosura is a single mother of a 17-year-old who rides a bike to buy groceries because her truck is broken. She sleeps in the dining room of their tiny apartment and the \$1200 they get in food stamps and social security is not enough to cover the bills. Because she is so poor, she decided to support Trump, saying:

“[Trump] is more attuned to the needs of everyone instead of just the rich. I think he knows it’s the poor people that got him elected, so I think Trump is going to do more to help us.”

Yes, Trump is absolutely going to help you ... starve and become homeless, Lori. That is what you voted for. The nongovernmental advisory group the “Department of Government Efficiency” (also known as DOGE) plan to cut about \$2 trillion dollars from the annual budget. How will they accomplish that, exactly? Well, a

good chunk will involve cutting the social safety net - such as food stamps, Medicaid, etc.

Lori did admit that Democrats were "the most likely to help the poor" and she "disagreed with Republicans on issues like abortion," but she was convinced that Trump would put Americans "like her" first and improve her financial situation. She has been unable to find work in her field. Lori, I bet that won't change under Trump. She implored of Trump:

"We helped get you in office; please take care of us. Please don't cut the things that help the most vulnerable."



So, what about the needs of the county itself? Well, over half of the Lawrence County Community Action Partnership's \$32 million budget comes directly from federal aid. That money is used to "shuttle low-income residents to medical appointments and offer rental assistance" as

well as feed the children of the county. Approximately 90% of the children in the county rely on free school lunches. The superintendent of the school district said:

"It's a very depressed area, so if our funding were to go away, and I have not heard it will, but if it were to go, we would be some in serious, serious trouble."

Oh. Sure, the Republicans are known for wanting to feed children through school lunch programs, right. Oh, not right.

Lynne Ryan, the chair of the Lawrence County Republican Party, is positive that Trump won't cut programs that help people, saying:

"Trump won't cut necessary programs, and nowhere has he said he is cutting any of that. He is cutting bloated government. He is not cutting programs that work for the American people."

Ok, Lynne. I mean, the it's the Republicans who have said for years and years that they want to cut the social safety net, but ok. Sure.

City Administrator Chris Frye, the former mayor of New Castle, expects cuts, but urged his party to show "EMPATHY" when deciding what to cut. Yes, when I think of empathy I think of the Republican Party. Frye added:



"I think it would be stupid to just take something away. We would have mass chaos. Mass homelessness ... so nationally, I don't think it is going to be a situation where they are taking away from people."

Another New Castle resident, Steve Tillia, 59, is on social security disability payments and food stamps because he is unable to work. He is a full-throated Trump supporter. He is "confident that Trump and GOP leaders will reduce spending by "cutting the fat" out of government – and not slashing benefits." He actually said:

"It's not cutting government programs; it's cutting the amount of people needed to run a program. They are cutting staff, which could actually increase the amount of the programs that we get."

The mental gymnastics necessary to understand his thinking ... Olympic level.

Tillia's neighbor feels similarly. She is ALSO on social security benefits and food stamps, and she thinks Trump will ENHANCE benefits because he plans to "put Americans first."



Retired artist, Kathy Davis, who ALSO relies on social security and food stamps, is convinced that Trump's agenda won't hurt her one bit, saying that he is "too smart for that."

She added: "You can't wipe out half of the population. We are old and tired and just want to be taken care of, and Trump has too much common sense, so I don't think he is going to do anything to hurt us."

Ma'am, he doesn't need your vote anymore. He doesn't give a shit if you are wiped out, if you starve, if you are homeless, if you lose medical coverage or if you die.

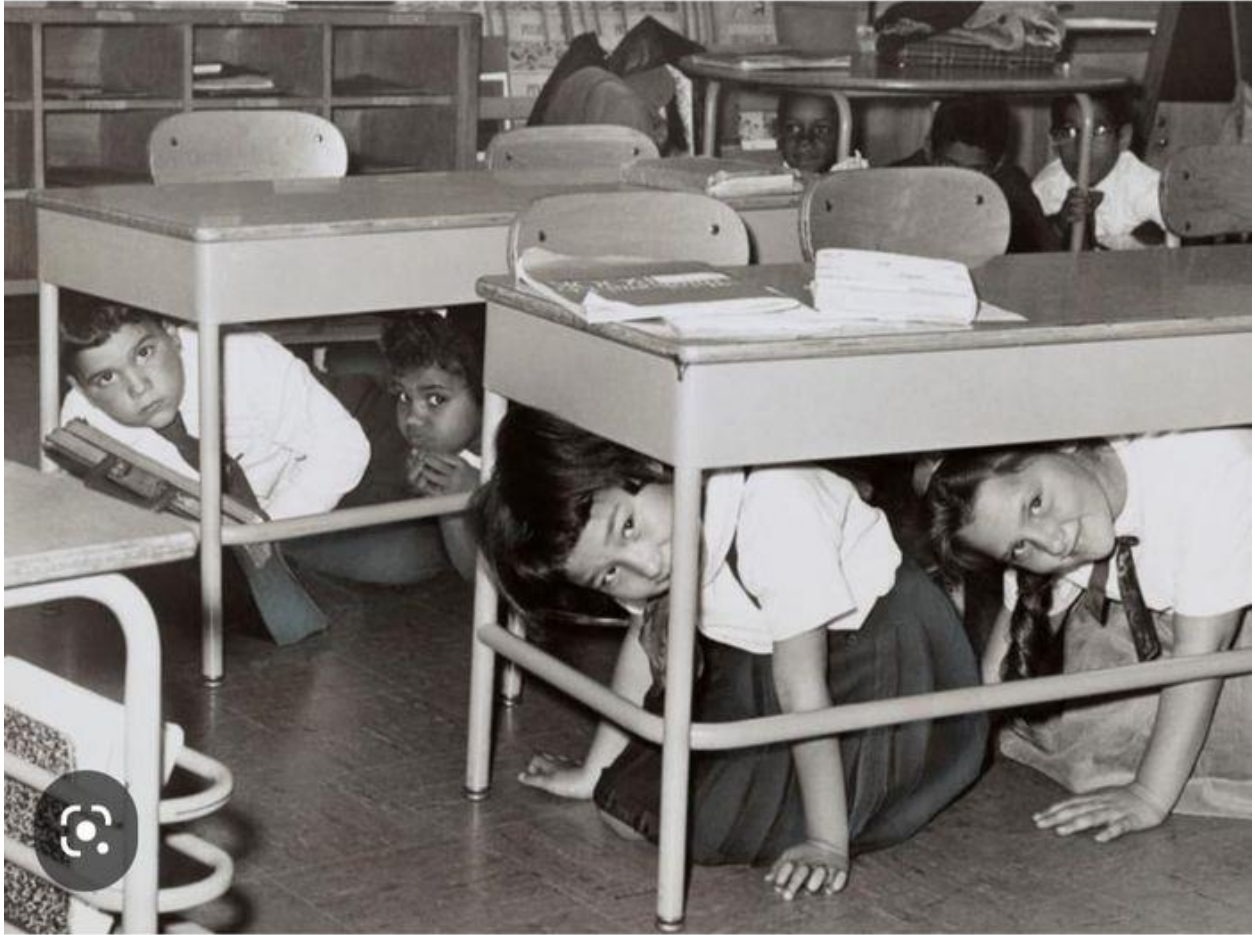
I hope the reporter who wrote this article goes back in a year or two to revisit the folks interviewed. I genuinely hope they are right and that nothing horrible befalls them, but my suspicion is that many of them will regret their vote, to their own peril.

"Fucketh around and ye shall findeth out" – A Twitter User in 2024



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# THE WAY WE WERE



# THE SOCIALLY STUNTING “WORD OF WISDOM”



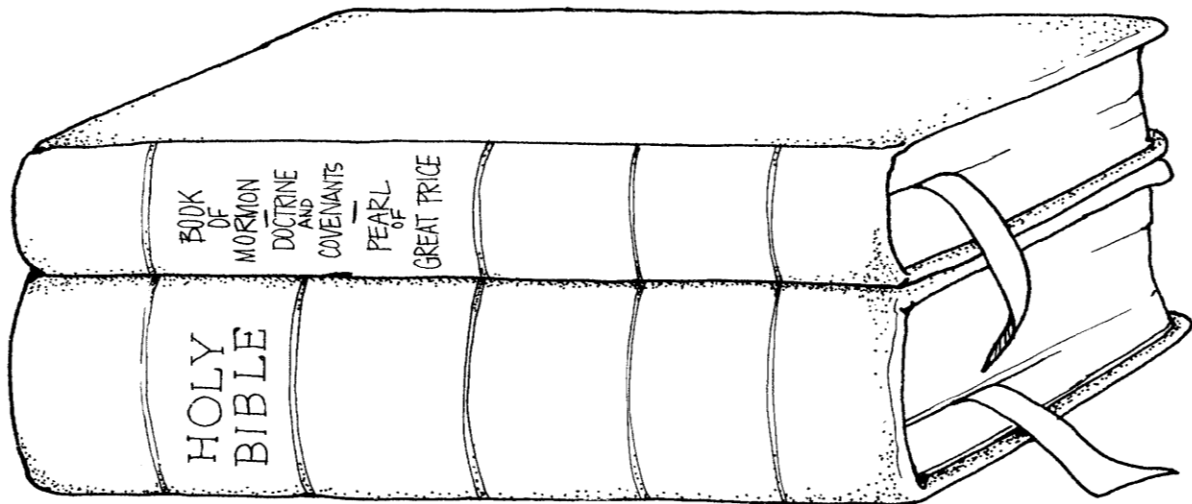
By Bert Mautz

The eldest of three, did kindergarten through high school in Champaign, Illinois. Our father taught at the Business School of the University of Illinois (U of I). Mother was a homemaker. Our parents converted to Mormonism in the late fifties. This affiliation would have vast affects upon our family. Mormons referred to communities like ours as being in the “mission field.” Implying there were few of us to be found when compared to “Zion” of the western states and Salt Lake City, church headquarters.

Mormons were adamantly encouraged to seek their own and mocked for their self-righteous abstinence from alcohol and tobacco. Combining the numerous weekly meetings and Sunday dinners at each other’s homes and the socializing opportunities were constrained. Further I limited my own evolution by living at



home to take advantage of the fine Architecture School at the U of I.



Many “mission field” Mormons dispatched their children to Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah so as to provide a field of eligible mates for marriage. My sister did not thrive in this culture, attending for a year only. My brother and I both got our bachelor degrees living at home. The limitation on spousal candidates within the faith was significant. I taught a Sunday School class for newcomers, or “investigators”. She was lovely, came from an academic family, her father taught chemistry at Florida State. I asked her to marry me. My brother and sister also found spouses from this very limited field, as did I. Married at twenty-five, both virgins, three sons, lasted ten years. Did we really know each other? Did we really know ourselves? We still treasure our children.



Experienced my first cocktail in the Salamander Bar of the Pontchartrain Hotel in downtown Detroit. Taken there by an office mate; vivacious, blonde, two kids, married to an alcoholic. She ordered my first ever Vodka and Tonic with lime. Tuxedoed, large



black pianist, socially relaxed atmosphere, conversation comes easy, so this is what a bar is like. I felt great. I felt as though I had found my home. As I sat there with the music, the drink, the company ... I began to have other feelings that were certainly "non-Mormon."



Business travel would put me in many bars across the country. After a day in the client hospital, the consultant team would gather in the hotel bar to rehash what we learned and plans for tomorrow. Decades later, a sailing acquaintance here in Florida took me to "Bonefish Bar and Grill." Patrons were mostly retirees,

tanned in golfing clothes. The social atmosphere was unmistakably obvious. Couples stayed close, but the majority of us, the singles, were amenable to getting better acquainted. Bonefish had a regular clientele. Four o'clock on Tuesday, awaiting the door opening, a line, often ten people, thirty in high season would dash to the highly desirable bar stools.



In prior lives had not experienced the social dynamic of a bar. Attending to have a drink and very likely strike up a conversation. Add to the bar fundamentals, the impact of being a repeat customer, becoming acquainted with other repeaters, and the possibilities are endless. Recall on exiting, slipping off my stool and squeezing along behind the other patrons to kiss four women on their bare shoulders consecutively, to squeals of laughter. We are social animals. Bars serve this need, enjoyably.

Where would I wish to spend eternity? Here, in the Bonefish bar, in warm sociability or lost in dour, not exactly self-loathing, guilt?





# Mister/Ms. TransGender



*– I knew ye when ye were not  
so scary!*

By Virgil Thorp

It was 35 years ago, October of 1993 when I got my deepest immersion into the lifestyle known as “Transgender”. I had begun working for a publishing company that printed and circulated alternative lifestyle magazines – I suppose you could call them, deviant lifestyles that covered every persuasion from hetero to kinky to every letter in LGBTQ but I must add, they were very, very popular – and the publisher wished to include a new title to his repertoire. A designation with a less than exciting title of; *TV/TS Chronicle*, essentially a meet and greet rag for mostly guys who liked to ‘tart it up a bit’ on weekends. You know, guys who just enjoyed being a girl once in a while.

Like the truck driver who, after a long day driving around, delivering goods, would go home, close the door, take off his work clothes and boots and change into a dress, a wig and fluffy "mule" footwear. Maybe even a little mascara and lipstick, too. He'd kiss his wife (she'd kiss him back and call him by his "femme" name), turn on the television (I hesitated about using the abbreviation, TV out of confusion and clarity). It was the only way he could relax, he declared. (BTW, to his misfortune, there was no chance he could pass for a woman – he had very hairy shoulders and that spaghetti strap dress was a dead giveaway.)

By accident, we also discovered that there were girls who wanted to be guys. *"Girls will be boys and boys will be girls. It's a mixed up muddled up, shook up world, except for Lola, Lo-lo-lo-lo Lola,"* Ray Davies of the Kinks sang in a song about a seductive transvestite that had once been banned from the radio in the USA.

At that time, I had little to no experience with the people the evangelical right considered sinners, "denizens of this most repulsive of gender bending desires." Of course, in high school, there circulated stories of athletic jocks who picked-up or were picked-up by "cuter-than-a-bug's-ear" sweetie who would take them to a secluded area, usually an apartment, ply the big dummies with beer and promises to suck their cocks, but when it came time for penetration, would pull some stunt where they would only allow anal coitus. Their panties had a "rear back-drop". When the horny lads would reach around to test a finger and tickle a clitoris, they found more clitoris than they bargained for. Yuck-yuck-yuckidy-yuck. In other words, "watch out! That cute chick might just have a large throbbing dick!"

I had heard similar stories when I was in the service and when our boat would pull into a port for shore leave in Subic Bay, Philippines, there were warnings. The Navy had movies cautioning sailors about so-called really cute Filipino "teddy-boys"



who passed for women but whored themselves out to the drunken sailors who, more often than not, had no idea that the lips they were kissing contained the same xy chromosomes that their own did.

I found it ironic, at the risk of over-generalizing, that the sailors who were most agitated by the reality were also the sailors most confused about their own sexualities. The idea of kissing another boy was abhorrent. "If you kiss one, you become one" was the misplaced logic. Kind of like having intimate relations with a person of another race and the melanin in their skin would rub off and despoil your lily-white skin. Such nonsense.

Often, the reactions were violent. Many a crossdresser was left beaten and bloody. Sometimes, dead. There were some mean boys who would psychopathically go out looking to beat up and "roll some queers". They became quite adept at hammering feminized men and seldom were prosecuted for their assaults. Let's just call them "Gay Bashers".

Of course, there were the few times that a sassy crossdresser would confess that, "there are two things I truly love to do. One is suck dicks ... and the other is fight. What do you boys feel like doing first tonight?" And yes, the TV was almost always ganged up on.





TV/TS Chronicle was my education. The largest TV/TS convention, Southern Comfort, was meeting in Atlanta, GA that fall and the magazine had made such a positive hit that Lucy and I were invited to cover it. That weekend was quite an eye-



opening tutorial into a subject that seemed so far away from any of my interests. The convention itself was very edifying into the Trans lifestyle with sessions with distinguished speakers, often scientists (who, for some odd reason, did not want to be named – hypocritically of not – in our articles about the convention). Lots of positive

image tutorials. There were how-to, hands-on seminars in basic “how to be a woman”, make-up, color selections, “how to walk in heels.”

I spent an afternoon listening to the sad, sad story of a FTM, (a female transitioning to male) person. She hated her vagina. She wanted to be a boy so urgently. She also hated the fact that Southern Comfort was orientated mostly to MTF’s (male to female). I wanted so badly to take her out to the hotel’s courtyard and show her how to throw a baseball but sadly the hotel had no ball gloves (as if she/he would have used one).



I as I learned about Trans, it turned out that I did know some deeply closeted Trans people amongst my acquaintances, just as much as there were hidden swingers, sadomasochists and people who enjoyed hours of being tied up and suspended by their testicles in the various parts of my life.



There was a bustling community in Kansas City I knew nothing about but by accident we discovered a Trans Ball called Moonshadows, a special masquerade frolic at a local hotel. The party we had come for in the penthouse bar that evening was irritatingly dull and Lucy and I were curious with what was happening in the Ballroom.

What a flamboyant affair! (With the emphasis on "Flame"!) As we stood there enjoying the best DJ we had ever heard in KC, an attractive lady stepped towards us, smiling. Very cute. Tight slinky dress. Her hair was decorated artistically with a showering of delightful little nosegays. She stopped right in front of us.

"You probably don't remember me, but I remember you," she said pointing at me with a coy wink. I looked at Lucy with a perplexed glance. The lady continued, "Since you are here at Moonshadows, you must be alright to share this with." Then, she whispered into my ear. "I am Arnold X, we went to high school together. I sat behind you in the next row in Mr. Carter's (Baby Huey for those who know) English

Comp class." I guess my jaw dropping on the floor, scared her away.

But here's what we found. We found people. Very good people. People who – for as many people who were attending – had their very personal reasons for their situations. We found fun people. We also found hurt people. We found tragedy.

But that seems so long ago yet totally non-intimidating. Why would anyone hate them? Why would anyone make them into frightening monsters? It makes me feel so sad!



The demonization of this infinitesimal part of society reached its zenith this last election. It became a prime scare tactic for division. A culture war issue. Transgender became one of the Radical Right's most contentious issues. Transgender joined other social equality abbreviated terms like CRT (Critical Race Theory) and DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) plus the religiously inspired book banners, Moms for Liberty

attempting to keep their children from learning anything about sexuality other than hetero (and very little of that!). A deviance of their own, Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy (MSP) run amok!


The last couple of weeks prior to November 5th it got worse – beyond belief for normal people but – not for the right wing. The rabble was roused with this image: "Your child goes to school as a little boy ... but comes home after gender reassignment surgery ... as a little girl." "Oh, it is Happening all the time!" "Don't let them in the girls' bathroom." "You won't be safe there!" "Don't you know what they'll do?" (besides go into a stall, shut the door and privately take a pee.)

I did not think that bullshit could be stacked that deep. I did not think that even evangelicals would fall for it. But, they did. By huge numbers. Fear-mongering worked. Women voted for perceived bathroom safety and against their daughter's and granddaughter's most private rights. Immigrants voted against other immigrants ("They won't deport me! Dang it, honey, you cook the best cat and dog casserole I have ever eaten!"). Fear mongering nonsense, *Ad nauseum*.

I know, I know. We, the Aware Ones, sincerely hoped that society had progressed. Had moved forward from superstitious bigotry. Embraced knowledge, logic, and dealing with unfounded fears. But we must face the truth. Bigotry doesn't sleep. Especially when money and politics are on the line. And it worked this year. The most odious candidate in the history of the United States has been awarded the most powerful position in the world. The Gay Bashers won, and we are moving backwards in time. That doesn't even take in cis women's rights, or immigrants, or anyone who suggested that the odious candidate might not be the right person for the job.

Just wait until Trump finds out how many Trans, immigrant and women people are in Canada. He may think twice about his promise to Justin Trudeau to annex his sovereign nation to our north.

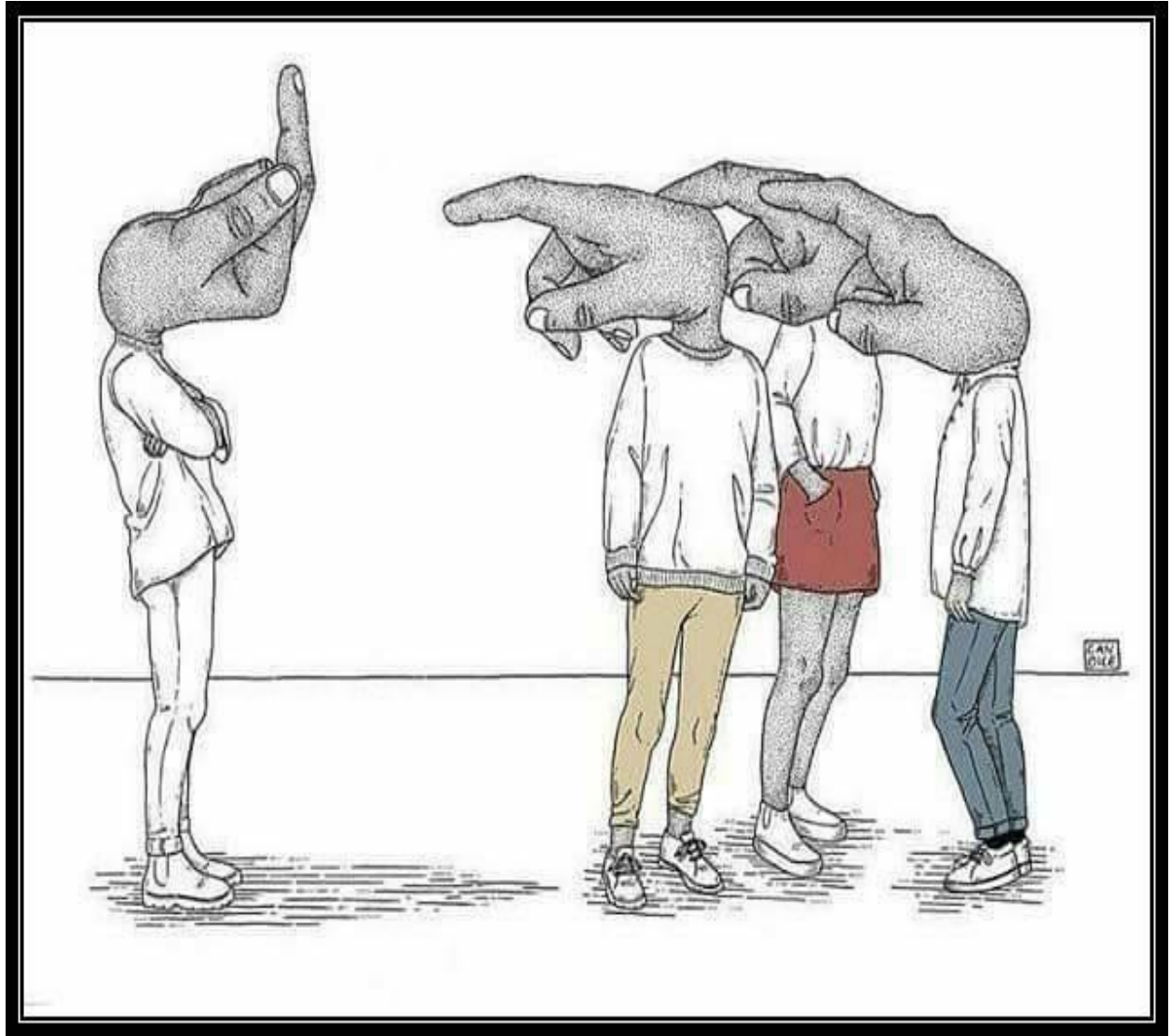
When you think very hard, it is not a challenge to determine who is more fucked up.



If you're more upset about a transgender woman using your bathroom than you are about a rapist felon running your country, congratulations, you are an idiot, an asshole, and you're in a fucking cult.



# PROSE





# JUST LIKE IN EAST BERLIN

By James Longo

There was a knock on the door. Jill answered it. Two soldiers, one young and one older, stood there dressed in green uniforms, one with a bar on his shoulders.

"Honey, there are two soldiers here," Jill said loudly, questioning, still facing the soldiers, "Honey," she repeated louder.

The sound of the toilet flushing, and Jack came around the corner into the foyer. He raised his eyebrows. Under his breath, he said, "What the fuck." Louder he said, "Welcome Gentleman please come in."

Jill moved out of the way. The soldiers entered. Jack waved them into the living room. The soldier sat opposite Jack. Jill didn't sit and asked, "Can I get you some coffee?"

"The soldier with the one bar said, "Yes please," and Jill scampered to the kitchen. In the kitchen, she banged around, getting angrier and angrier under her breath, she muttered, "What did my God Damn idiot husband do now?" She placed the coffee in the filter and poured the water into the holder but was



so nervous she forgot to turn the coffee maker on. She brought a plate of Danish sugar cookies placed them on the coffee table between the three men. She sat very close, next to her husband.

The younger soldier recognized the brand of imported cookies, raised his eyebrows. "Danish cookies, they must have cost a bundle."

"I bought them before the tariff went into effect," Jill said proudly.

The young soldier crinkled his nose.

The older soldier broke in, "Our monitors of social media know you broke the Sedition Act of 1798."



The younger soldier pulled a pair of handcuffs and a hood out of the backpack he was holding and dropped them on the coffee table with a clang.

"Hang on a moment," Jack stammered. "What happened to the First Amendment? Don't I have a right to say what I want?"

"Yes, you do have a right to speak, just not malicious speech," The older soldier warned.

"I never said anything malicious," Jack said raising his voice.

The older soldier opened the folder, pulled out a paper and read, "On January 21st You said, 'It is the end of my country as I know it and I don't feel fine.'"

"That's not malicious. I've said a lot worse than that," Jack protested.



Jill spoke to her husband through gritted teeth, "Shut the fuck up."

The older soldier said, "We know," and dropped a thick folder on the coffee table next to the hood and the handcuffs.

"I guess the jig is up. I didn't realize America

had changed that much. I didn't realize it would come after someone like me. Someone who worked hard, paid his taxes, and merely spoke his mind. What happens to me now?" Jack said in a hoarse voice, a tear ran down his face.

Jill was sobbing, and said in the most pitiful voice, "Please don't arrest him. He didn't mean anything by it. He'll never do it again, and if he does, I'll kill him myself. He's a good patriotic man. You know we'll do anything to keep this from happening."

The old soldier stared at Jill for a hard moment then a smirk crossed his face, "I guess we can let you off with a warning this time. But there is one condition. You need to report to us about these people every week." He picked up his folder, reached for the back page and handed it to Jill.



Jill stared incredulously then realized her position. These names were people they worked with. Their friends. She gulped out, "Okay."

Jack just nodded up and down.

The younger soldier, "How about that coffee, lady?"

Jill got up to get it and realized when she got to the coffee pot it was not brewed. She went back to the living room and said, "It will be another couple of minutes. I must have forgotten to turn the pot on."

The congenial older soldier got up. The younger soldier picked up his hood and handcuffs and put them away. Jack noticed the hole in the hood with a powder burn around the hole. His eyes went big.

"That's okay. We have had too much coffee already today," The older soldier said, grunting.

The soldiers left the house and walked down the walkway. The younger soldier asked, "Why do we have to make everyone into informants? It would be so much easier the other way."



"If we kill too many people who is going to do the work and pay the taxes," the old soldier said.

"But, if we make too many informants we'll be reading reports until we die."

"And that's such a bad thing?"

Inside Jack said looking out the window, "We got to get out of here?"

"How, if we are watching them who's watching us? It's Fucking East Germany," Jill said.

"It could be worse, it could be Saddam Hussein's Iraq. Did you see the bullet hole in the hood?" Jack said

"I thought they built the wall to keep people out," Jill said.

"Yeah, just like in East Berlin," Jack's nervous laughter devolved into a choking sob.



# POETRY



# Happy Holidays

*By Bert & Betty*

Sailors' wine manager, Shaunee, had mentioned previously

a very nice Napa Valley Merlot,  
newly stocked. \$150 a bottle.

it's "Wine Wednesday".

embarrassed to even suggest to Betty ...

Shaunee allowed as how the entire bar staff was betting I would succumb.

what's another \$75 (half priced bottles Wednesday, recall?)

we carry an aerator in Betty's purse.

pulled the cork and poured unbubbled tastes all around

... superb, black raspberry.

poured second round bubbled, oh so smooth, fantastic.

likely best i've ever sipped.

shared with Shaunee and Christine.

my corner of the bar. went a little crazy.

for the lucky guy with everything

this was special indeed.





## "PITY THE NATION"(After Khalil Gibran)

By Lawrence Ferlinghetti

Pity the nation whose people are sheep  
And whose shepherds mislead them  
Pity the nation whose leaders are liars  
Whose sages are silenced  
And whose bigots haunt the airwaves  
Pity the nation that raises not its voice  
Except to praise conquerors  
And acclaim the bully as hero  
And aims to rule the world  
By force and by torture  
Pity the nation that knows  
No other language but its own  
And no other culture but its own  
Pity the nation whose breath is money  
And sleeps the sleep of the too well fed  
Pity the nation oh pity the people  
who allow their rights to erode  
and their freedoms to be washed away  
My country, tears of thee  
Sweet land of liberty!



# Trump's "Genius" Speeches (3-Verse Limerick)

By Madeleine Begun Kane

So..., you know all those oddball rally rants about wind and bacon, sharks and electrocution, "Alphonse" Capone, and the "late, great Hannibal Lecter?" According to Trump, he's doing the "weave," which makes him an oratorical genius: <http://www.madkane.com/>

Trump's meandering salad linguistic  
Is (to Donald) a "weave" — his euphuistic,  
Novel term for confusing  
And logic-abusing  
Addresses. (Turns out they're artistic!)

Trump's digressions, he says, all make sense;  
They are woven with brilliance intense.  
He defies expectations  
With dazzling orations.  
Seems the Donald's a "genius" immense.

So the next time you hear Donald speak,  
Do not call him off-script or oblique.  
With his language command,  
He's the best in the land;  
A true maestro of flapping his beak.

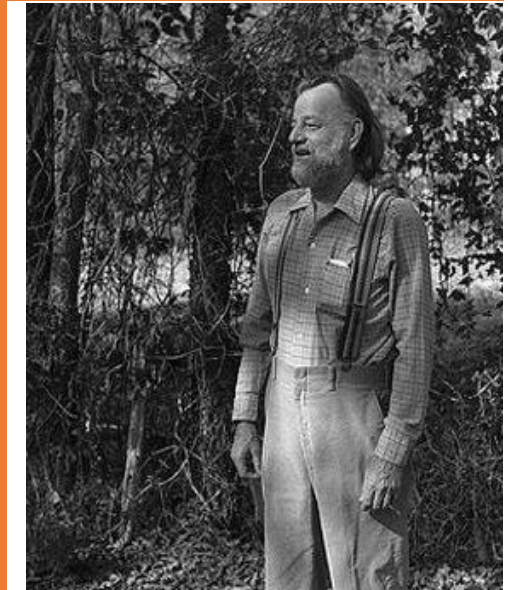


# The Lost Poem

By: Albert Huffstickler

My father carried a poem with him all through his internment in Cabanatuan prison camp in the Philippines, carried it with him for four years, showed it to me one day folded and refolded, print blurred, coming apart.

I, in my teens, not thinking, nodded and went on and forgot. Years later, I tried to recall what poem it was, even a single line of it but it was gone. The years go by, my mother's dead this long time. There's no one to ask.



So I ponder it. And ponder motivations, what drives us, ponder what drives me still to write with the same intensity after all these years. And ponder the lost poem.

Perhaps that's part of it: I'm driven to create that poem I can't recall, the poem that carried him through four years of Hell and home again.

Or perhaps I'm driven to write a poem that will serve someone else as well.

It's a nice thought anyway: my poem in someone's pocket, bent and faded, nourishing him, healing him through his own private Hell.

A man could do worse with his life. I evoke my father's image, our eyes meet, he nods in agreement, starts to speak then turns and walks off into the distance, bearing the lost poem with him.



# Dear Brother

By Virgil Thorp

I thought of you again

I saw a sail catching the wind that guided  
it into the inlet

And I thought,

That's how Sensei Dave would have navigated  
his boat.

Did I ever thank you  
for teaching me how to fly the wind?

I want you to know that every time

I do something we used to do;

Wii golf, feast, sail ....

Navigating nubile women

My thoughts are always about our  
goodtimes

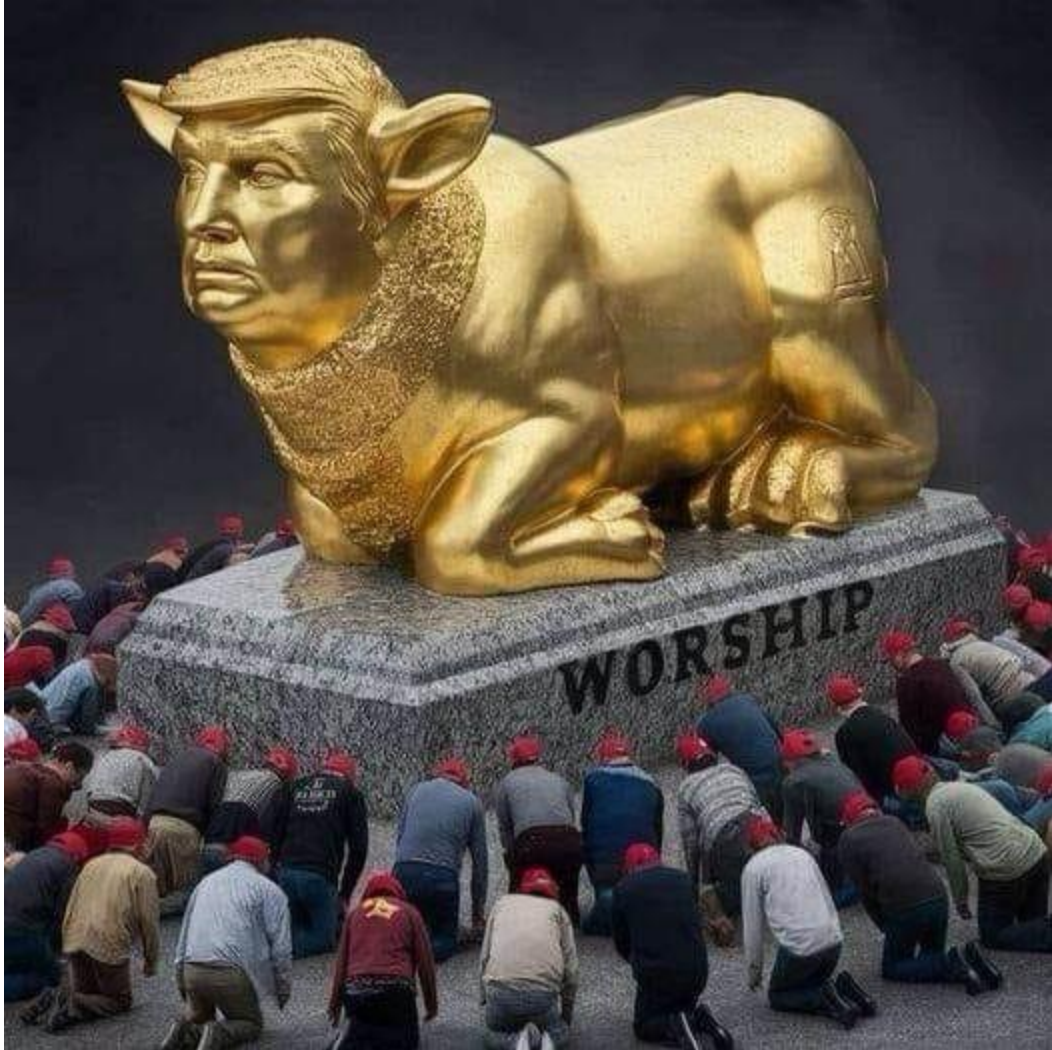
They are so many  
and so dear to me.

Thank you,  
my friend,  
my brother.





# COMEDY CORNER



# National Brotherhood Week

*"National Brotherhood Week" – race relations in the U.S.; specifically, a week-long program sponsored by the National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ) held generally during the **third week of February** from the 1940s through the 1980s.*

By Tom Lehrer

Oh, the white folks hate the  
black folks  
And the black folks hate the  
white folks  
To hate all but the right folks  
Is an old established rule  
But during National Brotherhood Week  
National Brotherhood Week  
Lena Home and Sheriff Clarke  
are dancing cheek to cheek



It's fun to eulogize  
The people you despise  
As long as you don't let 'em in your school  
Oh, the poor folks hate the rich folks  
And the rich folks hate the poor folks  
All of my folks hate all of your folks  
It's American as apple pie

But during National Brotherhood Week  
National Brotherhood Week  
New Yorkers love the Puerto Ricans 'cause it's very chic  
Step up and shake the hand  
Of someone you can't stand

You can tolerate him if you try  
Oh, the Protestants hate the Catholics  
And the Catholics hate the Protestants  
And the Hindus hate the Moslems  
And everybody hates the Jews

But during National Brotherhood Week  
National Brotherhood Week  
It's National Everyone-smile-at-one-another-hood Week  
Be nice to people who Are inferior to you  
It's only for a week, so have no fear  
Be grateful that it doesn't last all year





Don't worry, Nick. It's all according to God's plan.



**Surprise sex is  
the best thing  
to wake up to.**

**Unless you're  
in prison.**



## **MAMA'S BIBLE**

Four brothers left home for college, and they became successful doctors and lawyers.

One evening, they chatted after having dinner together. They discussed the 95th birthday gifts they were able to give their elderly mother who moved to Florida

The first said, "You know I had a big house built for Mama."

The second said, "And I had a large theater built in the house."

The third said, "And I had my Mercedes dealer deliver an SL600 to her."

The fourth said, "You know how Mama loved reading the Bible and you know she can't read anymore because she can't see very well. I met this preacher who told me about a parrot who could recite the entire Bible. It took ten preachers almost 8 years to teach him. I had to pledge to contribute \$50,000 a year for five years to the church, but it was worth it. Mama only has to name the chapter and verse, and the parrot will recite it."

The other brothers were impressed. After the celebration Mama sent out her "Thank You" notes.

She wrote: Milton, the house you built is so huge that I live in only one room, but I have to clean the whole house. Thanks anyway."

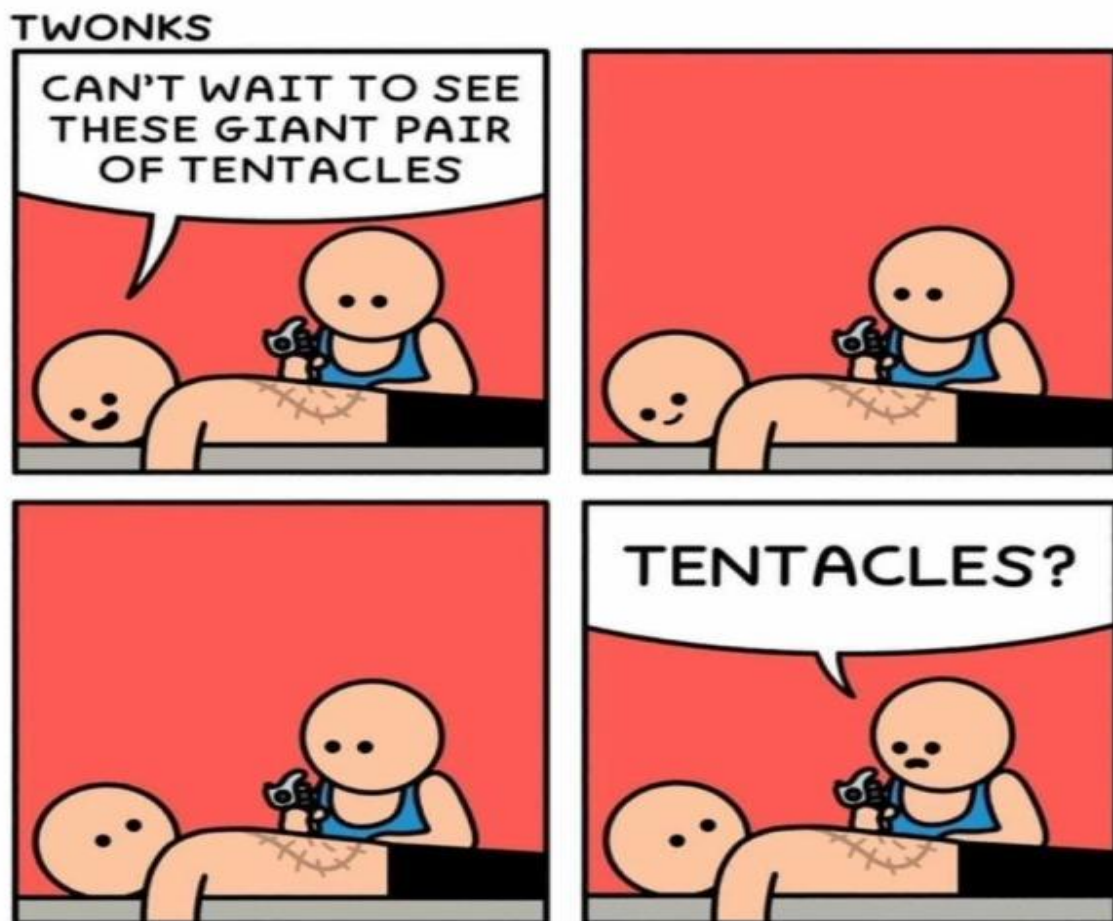
"Marvin, I am too old to travel. I stay home; I have my groceries delivered, so I never use the Mercedes. The thought was good.

Thanks."

"Michael, you gave me an expensive theater with Dolby sound and it can hold 50 people, but all of my friends are dead, I've lost my hearing, and I'm nearly blind. I'll never use it. Thank you for the gesture just the same."

"Dearest Melvin, you were the only son to have the good sense to give a little thought to your gift. The chicken was delicious Thank you so much."

Love, Mama





The Editorial Board  
@johnastoehr

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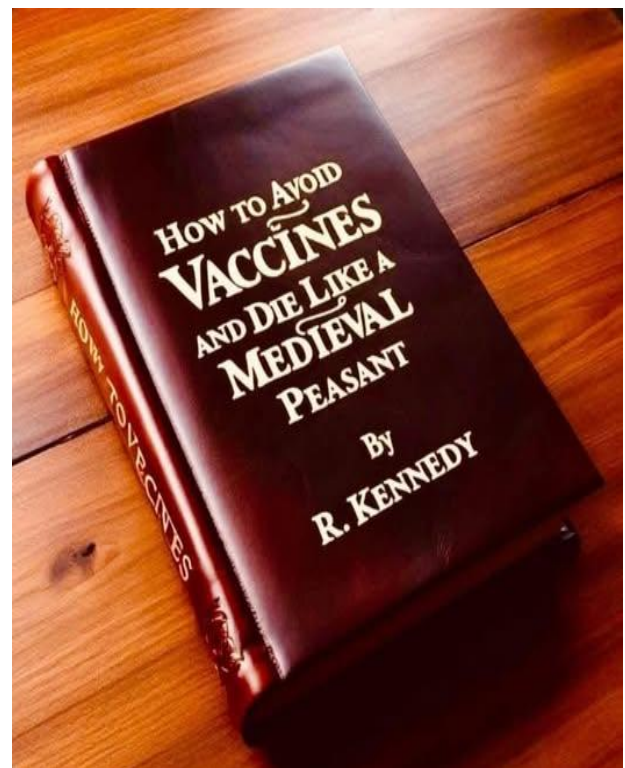
A rapist for AG.  
A spy for DNI.  
A zealot for Defense.  
An antivaxer for Health.  
A criminal for president.

This is what Orwellian means.

4:49 am · 15 Nov 24 · 1.4M Views



Dad eventually pulled over at a frozen lake, which represented the sublime beauty of impermanence, but he was pretty annoyed about it.







Sorry, I *can't* sell you those condoms because I'm **Catholic**. You'll have to go to register 5. But she's **Muslim**, so she *can't* sell you that ham. You'll have to go to register 8 but he's **Mormon**, so he *can't* sell you that Coke. Try register 2, maybe, but she's a **Jehovah's Witness** so she *won't* sell you that birthday card. Maybe try register 4, he's an LGBT guy who believes in *equality*. He'll sell you *anything* because he's not a small-minded, bigoted a\*\*hole that *hides* his bigotry behind religion.







*"If you connect the measles it spells out 'My parents are idiots.'"*

## Senate GOP meeting this morning.



*"Before we discuss raising taxes on the poor & middle class, adding \$1 trillion to the deficit, taking health insurance away from 13 million, raising premiums by 10%, defending treason and swearing in a pedophile, let's begin with a prayer."*

