

THE JOURNAL

JULY/AUGUST 2026 VOL.11 NO. 4



National Geographic Award winning photograph of the year.

Karine Aigner / 2025

"Navel Inspection" Most authors are masochists

By James Longo p.21

*"My Thought Experiment" – Dialectical patterns by Hegel
& Marx. Karl – not Groucho By J. Dan Vignau p.45*

*"A Step Beyond Goodbye" – I see a face that I used to
know long ago in my life's story By Virgil Thorp p.57*

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.11, No.4

July/August 2026

In this issue:

Introduction	3
AOTC Members	6
Meetings & Events	6
Commentary	20
Articles	38
The Way We Were	56
Fiction & Poetry	66
Comedy Corner	70

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

awareonesofthetreasurecoast.com

INTRODUCTION

The Aware Ones weekly meeting at Sandsprit Park is always thought-provoking if not relaxing, too. The topics range from jokingly silly to ominously unnerving. Will our civilization continue and prevail? Or, will it crash and burn? "Ha-ha-ha what's that hanging from your nose? Fooled ya!"

We recently debated the firings from CBS' 60 minutes and how the homogenization of media outlets will affect our ability to get and understand what is happening, what is truth. I cannot think of anything more appropriate for the vol. 11 no. 4 issue of the Journal than Scott Pelley's compelling statement on his firing:



There has never been anything in America like "60 Minutes."

The Sunday tradition is the most successful program of any kind in history. For more than a decade, its innovative growth on every major online platform has extended its reach to countless millions around the world. This spring, at the end of our 58th season, “60 Minutes” grew rapidly with an unheard-of 9% jump in viewers on CBS.

“60” has been the number-one program in America for decades because our beloved audience finds integrity, quality, and humanity in our stories. When stewardship of the program passed to my colleagues and me, our responsibility was to expand energetically into a new age of media technology while preserving the values our audience expects. Now, the new owner of our network is casting this legend aside, apparently to curry a moment of favor with the Trump administration.

The waste is heartbreaking.

Last month, 60 Minutes lost its DNA when our entire senior leadership and two of our best on-air correspondents were cruelly fired without cause. Good people were silenced because they stood up for our audience. They stood for fairness against the forces of political bias; they stood for professionalism against chaos.

For my part, new management has instructed me to inject falsehoods and bias into a politically sensitive story. I’ve been told to include assertions that are unverified. To date, in every case, I have managed to ignore these instructions or refuse them. Recently, politicians have been invited to choose correspondents for interviews on the broadcast. Giving politicians control over “60 Minutes” interviews is not how this is done. Finally, incompetence and unprofessionalism in the new management have wreaked havoc. In a case involving one of my stories, the entire program came within 19 minutes of not getting on the air at all.

At “60 Minutes,” we have fought harder than anyone knows to save the program that became an American icon. We owed that to our millions of viewers. I am deeply moved by the thousands of wishes we have received to ‘keep up the good fight.’ Most of the men and women of CBS News are still in that fight. But now the collapse of values at the top has become untenable. The leadership of “60 Minutes” is no longer recognizable. The principles I hold dear are gone, and so I must leave as well.

I depart after 37 years at CBS with one emotion — a heart brimming with gratitude for the men and women of CBS News who encouraged and enriched my work, very often at the risk of their own lives. I pray for a day when those people and their ideals are honored again — a day when sanity, competence, and courage return.”



We will need all the sanity, competence and courage we can muster for the remaining months of 2026

Virgil

The Aware Ones 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 Stuart's *Sandsprit Park* 3443 SE Saint Lucie Blvd, where we gather every Friday *around* 11:00 am to share ideas and challenge your mind – masks optional. Members are encouraged to share and spread what is becoming a very interesting magazine. Outside criticism and interesting contributions are welcomed. Everyone is welcome to join us at the Sunday 11 am Zoom meeting.

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

AOTC MEMBERS

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

MEETINGS & EVENTS

Meetings

Friday gatherings: *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 <vignaujdan@aol.com> to be included with the connection codes.



TC Secular Writers – We are currently meeting at Ed Zillioux’s house in White City (4411 Sunrise Blvd) as he heals up from his accident. We will return to Jensen Beach at the *House of Brews* when he is better (3311 NW Main Ave, Jensen Beach, FL 34957) on every other Thursday evening at 6:00 pm.

Events



July National Watermelon Month
July 1

National Postal Worker Day

July 3 – Aware Ones at
Sandsprit Park 11 am.

July 4 Independence Day – Happy Birthday,
America!! (1776)



Calvin Coolidge, 30th U.S. President. (1872).

July 5 – Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.

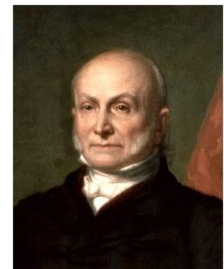
July 9 – Writer’s Group @ Ed
Zillioux’s house, 6:00 pm. National Dimples Day



July 10 – Aware Ones at
Sandsprit Park 11 am.

James Whistler, American painter, painted *Whistler’s Mother*. (1834).

July 11 John Quincy Adams, 6th U.S. President. (1767)



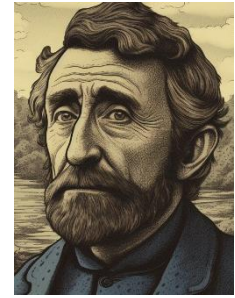


July 12 – **Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.**

Henry David Thoreau, author, philosopher. (1817)

July 13

National French Fries Day



July 14 Bastille Day *Vive la France!*

Gerald Ford, 38th U.S. President born. (1913)



July 17 – **Aware Ones at Sandspritz Park 11 am.**

Yellow Pig Day

July 19 – **Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.**

Lizzie Borden, accused ax murderer born. (1860)



National Daiquiri Day



July 23 – **Writer's Group @ Ed Zillioux's house, 6:00 pm.**

July 24 – **Aware Ones at Sandspritz Park 11 am.**

Amelia Earhart Day Amelia Mary Earhart
is born in Atchison, Kansas. (1897)



July 26 – **Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.**

Aldous Huxley, writer, wrote "Brave
New World". (1894)



July 31 International Lifeguard Appreciation Day – **Aware Ones at Sandspritz Park 11 am.**

Evonne Goolagong, tennis champion.
(1951)



In French, you don't say
 "I miss you." You say
 "tu me manques"
 which means,
 "you are missing from me"
 I love that...

August

[International Pirate Month](#)

[International Clown Week](#)



August 2 – **Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.**



Peter O'Toole, actor, born. (1932)

August 4 Barack Obama born, 1961 (44th U.S. President)

[U.S. Coast Guard Day](#) (Established 1790)



in



August 6 – **Writer's**

Group @ Ed Zillioux's house, 6:00 pm.

Sir Alexander Fleming, discovered penicillin. (1881)



August 7 – **Aware Ones at Sandspruit Park 11 am.**



[National Purple Heart Day](#)



August 9 – **Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.**

August 10 [Herbert Hoover](#) Born in 1874, in West Branch, Iowa.

August 12 [National Vinyl Record Day](#)

August 13 [National Filet Mignon Day](#)

August 14 – **Aware Ones at Sandspruit Park 11 am.**

[V-J Day](#) – Japan Surrendered in World War II, 1945. August 16 – **Aware Ones**

Zoom 11 am. [National Rum Day](#)





August 19 Happy Polygamy Day

Bill Clinton Born in Hope, Arkansas in 1946.

National Potato Day



August 20 –

Writer's Group @ Ed Zillioux's house, 6:00



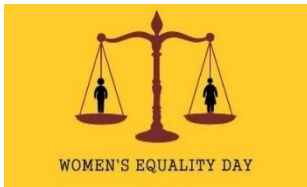
pm. Benjamin Harrison, 23rd U.S. President (1889-1893). (1833)



August 21 – Aware Ones at Sandsprit Park 11 am. National Poets Day

August 23 – Aware Ones Zoom 11 am. Ride the Wind Day

First National Women's Rights Convention, 1850.



August 26 Women's Equality Day The anniversary of women getting the right to vote - the signing of the 19th Amendment, 1920.

August 28 – Aware Ones at Sandsprit Park 11 am.

- Martin Luther King Jr. gave the 'I Have a Dream'



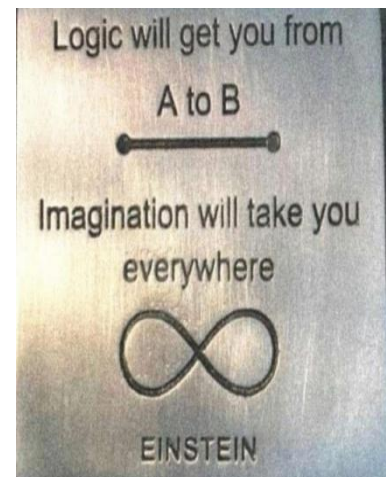
speech in 1963.



August 30 – Aware Ones Zoom 11 am.

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

Burning the confederate flag is pretty dang patriotic, btw.



LIVES LIVED – LIVES LOST

May 2026



1 G. Robert Blakey, 90, American attorney, drafter of the RICO act.

- Alex Zanardi, 59, Italian racing driver and paracyclist, Paralympic champion (2012, 2016).

2 Doris F. Fisher, 94, American businesswoman (Gap Inc.), an American billionaire businesswoman who co-founded The Gap Inc. clothing stores with her husband, Donald Fisher, in 1969.

- Soheir Zaki, 81, Egyptian belly dancer and actress (Cairo 30)



4 Bob Skinner, 94, American baseball player and manager (Pittsburgh Pirates, St. Louis Cardinals, Philadelphia Phillies), World Series champion (1960, 1964, 1979).

5 Viktor Kuzmenko, 42, Ukrainian rescuer and civil defense officer, Hero of Ukraine (2025), airstrike.

6 Harold K. Brown, 92, American civil rights leader. He founded chapters of the Congress for Racial Equality and was arrested repeatedly for protesting against racial discrimination.

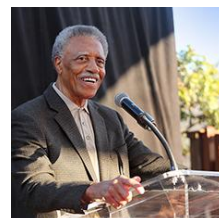
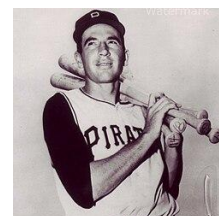
- Ted Turner, 87, American Hall of Fame media proprietor (CNN) and sports team owner (Atlanta Braves), founder of Turner Broadcasting System, complications from Lewy body dementia.

7 Joni Lamb, 65, American Christian broadcaster, co-founder and president of Daystar Television Network, complications from bone cancer. She said, "thousands" of people "have come out of homosexuality" and "may be (among) the most discriminated people in the world today."



8 Betty Broderick, 78, American convicted murderer, complications from a fall and sepsis. an American woman who murdered her ex-husband, Daniel T. Broderick III and his succeeding wife, Linda, on November 5, 1989, as an act of revenge after Daniel cheated on and divorced her.

9 Bobby Cox, 84, American Hall of Fame baseball manager (Atlanta Braves, Toronto Blue Jays), player (New York Yankees), and coach, World Series champion (1977, 1995).



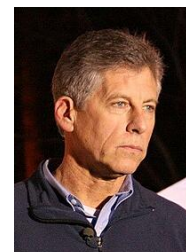
10 Abraham Foxman, 86, American lawyer and activist, director of the Anti-Defamation League (1987–2015).



12 Patrick Arnold, 59, American organic chemist (BALCO scandal) creating the designer steroid tetrahydrogestrinone, also known as THG and "the clear". THG, along with two other anabolic steroids that Arnold manufactured



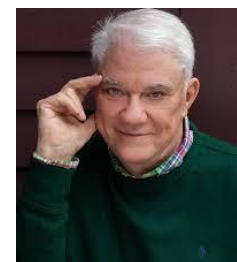
(norbolethone and desoxymethyltestosterone (DMT)), not banned at the time of their creation, were hard-to-detect drugs at the heart of the BALCO professional sports doping scandal. He was also an amateur bodybuilder, initially gaining notoriety as "the Father of Prohormones."



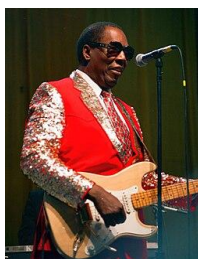
- Mark Fuhrman, 74, American detective known for his role in the Nicole Brown Simpson and Ron Goldman murder investigation and the subsequent prosecution of O. J. Simpson.

(Murder trial of O. J. Simpson), throat cancer.

- Donald Gibb, 71, American actor (Revenge of the Nerds, Bloodsport, 1st & Ten), complications from throat cancer.



- Rex Reed, 87, American film critic (The New York Observer), journalist, and actor (Inchon, Myra Breckinridge).



13 Clarence Carter, 90, American singer-songwriter ("Slip Away", "Patches", "Strokin'"), complications from pneumonia, prostate cancer and sepsis.



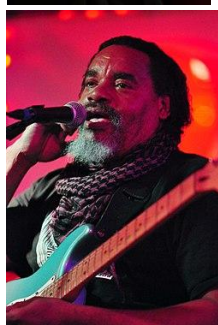
14 Claudine Longet, 84, French-American singer and actress (McHale's Navy, The Party).



15 Jane Healy, 77, American journalist (Orlando Sentinel) She was the recipient of the Orlando Sentinel's first Pulitzer Prize.



16 James Robison, 82, American televangelist. In August 1980, he spoke at the National Affairs Briefing (NAB), held in Dallas's Reunion Arena where he famously said, "I'm sick and tired of hearing about all the radicals and the perverts and the liberals and the leftists and the communists coming out of the closet. It's time for God's people to come out of the closet, out of the churches, and change America!".



- Ike Willis, 70, American vocalist and guitarist (Frank Zappa), prostate cancer.

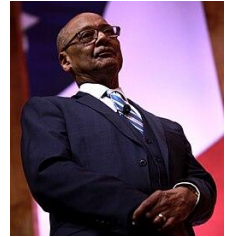


17 Brenda Travis, 81, American civil rights campaigner. African-American activist of the civil rights movement from McComb, Mississippi, whose imprisonments for protesting a segregated bus station and participation in a peaceful high school walk out in 1961 helped catalyze public sentiment against segregation.



19 Robert Woodson, 89, American political activist. Woodson was noted for his belief in self-reliance over governmental intervention to address racism and poverty and to lower crime rates. He served as an advisor to Presidents Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush.

- Barney Frank, 86, American politician, member of the U.S. House of Representatives (1981–2013), heart failure. In 1987, Frank publicly came out as gay, becoming the first member of Congress to do so voluntarily.



20 Diane Carlson Evans, 79, American army nurse, cancer. founder of the Vietnam Women's Memorial Foundation, which established the Vietnam Women's Memorial located at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial on the National Mall in Washington, D.C.



21 Kyle Busch, 41, American racing driver (NASCAR), two-time Cup Series champion (2015, 2019), complications from pneumonia and sepsis.

- Julienne Bušić, 77, American writer, hijacker (TWA Flight 355) and activist. the wife and co-conspirator of Zvonko Bušić. arrested with Bušić



in 1976 after hijacking TWA Flight 355 and sentenced to life in prison, with early parole.

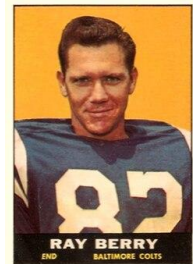
22 Lucille Berrien, 98, American politician and civil rights activist.

- Clarence B. Jones, 95, American lawyer and counsel, a recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom



- Dick Parry, 83, English saxophonist (Pink Floyd) .

25 Raymond Berry, 93, American Hall of Fame football player (Baltimore Colts) and coach (New England Patriots, Detroit Lions).



26 Virginia Held, 96, American philosopher. American moral, social, political and feminist philosopher whose work on the ethics of care sparked significant research into the ethical dimensions of providing care for others and critiques of the traditional roles of women in society.

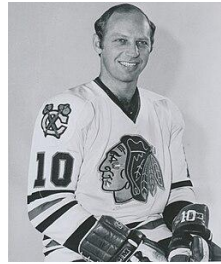
- Mohammed Odeh, 51–52, Palestinian militant, commander of Hamas in the Gaza Strip (since 2026), airstrike.





28 Claude Lemieux, 60, Canadian ice hockey player (New Jersey Devils, Colorado Avalanche, Montreal Canadiens), four-time Stanley Cup champion, suicide by hanging. Lemieux's family announced his brain would be donated to the Boston University CTE Center and Brain Bank for research on the impact of repeated head injuries.

29 Carole Bellows, 91, American judge. Bellows was the first woman to serve as the president of a State Bar association.



30 Dennis Hull, 81, Canadian ice hockey player (Chicago Black Hawks, Detroit Red Wings).

- Ronald LaPread, 76, American musician (Commodores).
- Rick Treadway, 56, American racing driver (Indy



Racing League), traffic collision.

31 Bruce P. Crandall, 93, American Army aviator. Retired Army Col. Bruce Perry Crandall was awarded the Medal of Honor in February 2007 for repeatedly flying his helicopter into heavy combat to evacuate wounded troops and provide the outnumbered soldiers on the ground with the supplies needed to hold their own against massive North Vietnamese attacks.



June



1 Anthony Head, 72, English actor (Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Ted Lasso, Merlin), complications from pneumonia.

2 Peabo Bryson, 75, American singer ("If Ever You're in My Arms Again", "Beauty and the Beast", "A Whole New World"), Grammy winner (1993, 1994), complications from a stroke.

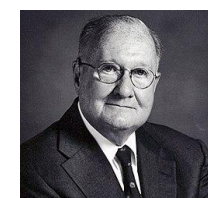


3 Charlie Cunningham, 77, American mountain biker, co-founder of Wilderness Trail Bikes, complications from a traffic collision.

- James Handy, 81, American actor (Top Gun: Maverick, Jumanji, Alias), stabbed.

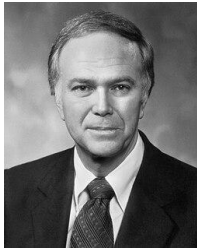


4 John D. Ong, 92, American manufacturing industry executive and diplomat, CEO of Goodrich Corporation (1979–1986) and ambassador to Norway (2002–2005), kidney failure.



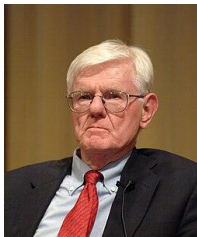


- Ned Jarrett, 93, American Hall of Fame racing driver (NASCAR) and broadcaster, two-time Cup Series champion (1961, 1965).
- Greg James, 71, American tattoo artist. "Tattooing to me is like welding. You have to lay the lines down. You're using



tools. It [the tattoo] should look like it's always been there."

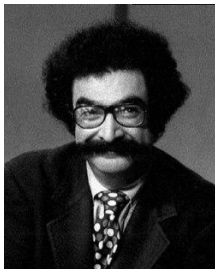
6 Bob Packwood, 93, American politician, member of the U.S. Senate (1969–1995). He resigned from the U.S. Senate under threat of expulsion in 1995 after allegations of sexual harassment, sexual abuse, and assault of women emerged. He was a member of the Republican Party.



- Alan Hale, 67, American astronomer, co-discoverer of Comet Hale–Bopp.



7 Gordon S. Wood, 92, American historian (*The Radicalism of the American Revolution*, *Empire of Liberty: A History of the Early Republic, 1789–1815*), Pulitzer Prize winner (1993), traffic collision.



11 Bajrakitiyabha, 47, Thai princess and diplomat, complications from heart and stomach infection.



12 Gene Shalit, 100, American journalist (*Ladies' Home Journal*), media critic (*Look*) and television personality (*Today*).

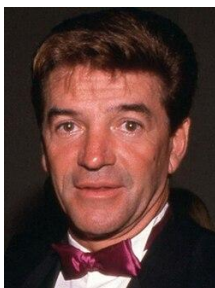
13 Dee Palmer, 88, English musician (*Jethro Tull*), arranger, and composer. Palmer produced several albums of orchestral arrangements of the music of various rock groups, including *Jethro Tull*, *Pink Floyd*, *Genesis*, *Yes*, *the Beatles* and *Queen*.



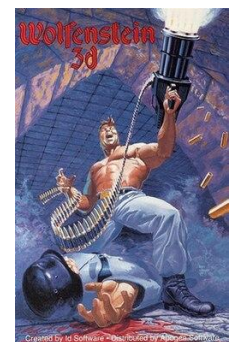
14 Andy Lewis, 39, American slackliner and stunt performer, BASE jumping accident. Lewis was fatally injured in a BASE jumping accident in Mineral Bottom near Moab, Utah, on June 14, 2026. He was 39 years old. One other person also died in the accident.



16 Bobby Prince, 81, American video game composer (*Doom*, *Duke Nukem*, *Wolfenstein 3D*).



17 Tom Dreesen, 86, American comedian and actor (*Man on the Moon*, *Trouble with the Curve*, *Spaceballs*).





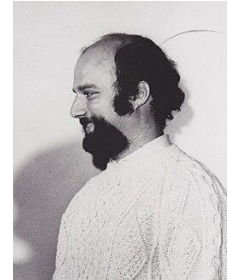
- Aleksandr Samokutyaev, 56, Russian politician and cosmonaut (Soyuz TMA-21/TMA-14M), MP (since 2020).

- Major Oak, c. 800–1000, English oak (Quercus robur). According to local folklore, it was the shelter of Robin Hood and his Merry Men.



19 James Burrows, 85, American television producer and director (Cheers, Will & Grace, Taxi).

21 Jeff Olson, 77, American visual effects artist (Star Wars: Episode I – The Phantom Menace, Star Trek, Who Framed Roger Rabbit).



22 Martha Zoller, 66, American political commentator and radio host, complications from a heart attack.



- Alan Greenspan, 100, American economist, chair of the Federal Reserve (1987–2006), complications from Parkinson's disease.

- Clive Davis, 94, American Hall of Fame music executive (Columbia Records) and record producer, founder of Arista



Records and J Records, four-time Grammy winner.



24 David Clayton-Thomas, 84, British-Canadian singer (Blood, Sweat & Tears).



Heroes



“When I decided, finally, to come out in '87, it just struck me when I did that ... the American people are a lot less homophobic than they thought they were supposed to be,” he said. “More racist, unfortunately, but less homophobic.” – former Mass. Congressman, Barney Frank



Happy 100th Birthday, Mel Brooks!

Asshole(s) of the Month



Jonathan Miller
johnnykavlie

FOR SALE \$250 - American Flag Blue paint chunk. This is your chance to own a part of history! Celebrate our 250th anniversary with this piece of latex paint. Freshly retrieved from the green waters of the Lincoln Memorial Reflective Pool in Washington DC. Valued at \$14 million tax payer dollars.



The Art of Purpose  
@creation247

X.com

My family during Pride Month:



Humanist Quotes

People say there are **no atheists in foxholes**. A lot of people think this is a good argument against atheism.

Personally, I think it's a **much better argument against foxholes**.

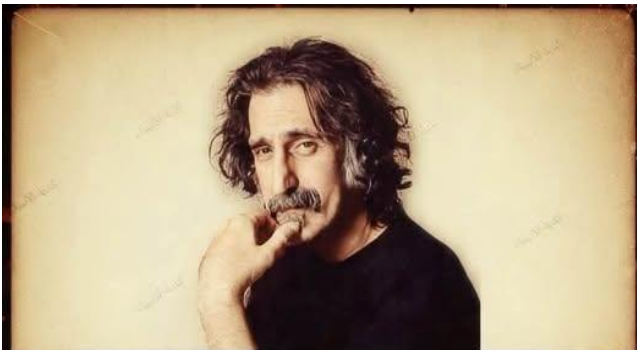
Kurt Vonnegut



author and
WWII combat vet

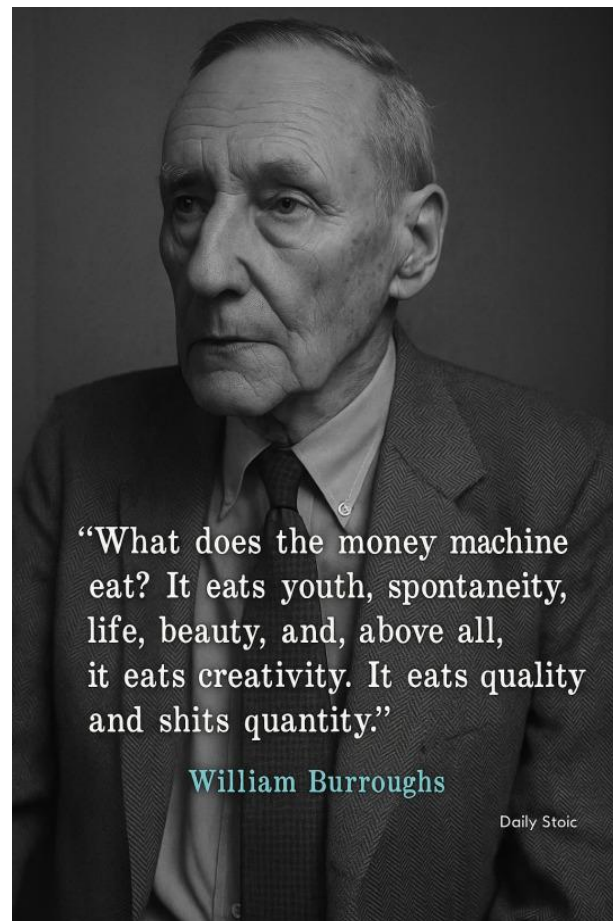
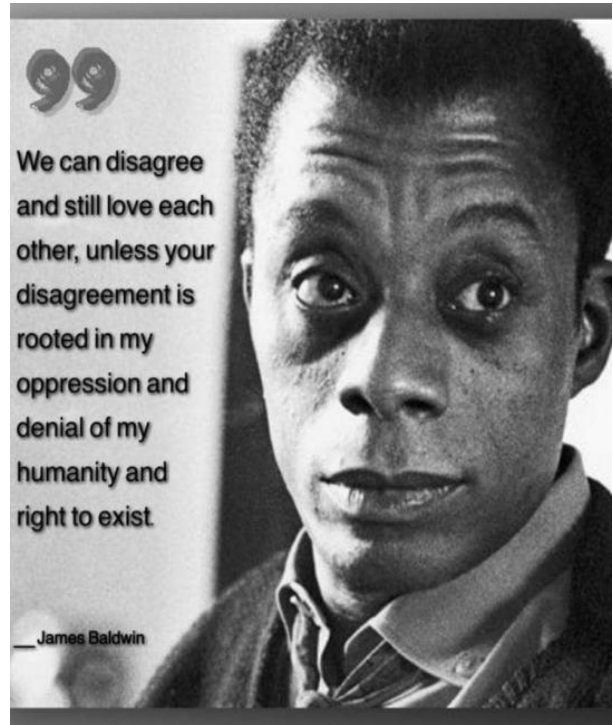


BLAMING ALL MUSLIMS
FOR TERRORISM
IS LIKE BLAMING
ALL MUSICIANS
FOR TED NUGENT.



One day, Atheism will disappear
as a concept. Instead, there will
be normal people AND some
weirdo believers

Frank Zappa



COMMENTARY

The pool is open and everyone is having a wonderful time!



Navel inspection

or Why bother

**By James
Longo**

Artwork by:
Kuo Jean Tseng
&
Simon Lehner



"Why do I bother to write every other week?" Jack asked, hunched over his keyboard and glaring at the blank screen.

"I don't know. Why *do* you bother to write every other week?" Jill repeated the question back to Jack with a smirk.

"It's not as if anyone reads what I write?"

"I know some people who do."

"Like who?" And added prudently, "Besides you." Then mumbling, under his breath, "and I had to ask to make sure you read it."

"Wow, aren't we feeling sorry for ourselves today," Jill said.

"What the hell do you mean by that?"

"Do you write for them, or do you write for you?" Jill used her hands like she was balancing a scale.

"Both, I guess," Jack said with a shrug.

"What's the most people you have ever reached with your writing?"

"I haven't a clue. It's not as if most tell me or would tell me."

"Yet you write every other week and send it out ... unless you are on vacation."

"And your point is?" Jack replied with his own open hands.

"For starters, no creator knows how many lives they touch, and if you change one person's life ... isn't that worth it?"

"I'm probably the only person my writing has ever affected."

"How's that?" Jill asked.

"Sometimes I start writing with one point of view, and by the end of my six hundred words I have come to a totally different conclusion."

"So, the most important person *your* writing ever affects, is *you*?" The way Jill said it, the sarcasm was more like an accusation than a question. With narrowed eyes she asked, "So, *who* is it *you* are writing for?"



"Me, I guess," Jack said, sheepishly.

"What motivates you to write?"

"Damned if I know," Jack said, looking towards the sky for the answer.

"Why did you start writing?"

"I had stories I wanted to tell."

"And why do you write now?"

"Good question, most of my writing these days centers around a single thought I want to flush out."

"Why do you think that is?" Jill asked.

"Most authors are masochists."

"What do you mean by that?"

"Most stories are centered around the protagonist, which the writer puts through a series of sadistic trials and tribulations only to have the bleeding and limping – one eye dangling from its socket – protagonist conquer them in the end."

"Isn't that what life is?"

"No, *real* life is a series of trials and tribulations which end in the protagonist ceasing to exist and the antagonist prevailing in self-satisfied triumph. Fuck happy endings!"

"Aren't you a Debbie Downer."

"I just call them as I see them," Jack said with a shrug. "Sorry, just cut off my head and put it on a spike like they did in Game of Thrones."

"How long have you been writing?"

"September 11th will be twenty-five years."

"*The* September 11th?" Jill asked.

"I didn't start writing then, but it was just after that, I started *thinking* about writing."



"Why?"

"I thought the world was going to hell and imagined my writing could change it for the better."

"And ..." Jill replied, pensively.

"And the world wasn't interested in what I had to say."

"But you kept writing, that's dedication. That's discipline."

"It's a habit. It's mental masturbation, or maybe a nicer term would be self-psychoanalysis."

"If that's all it is," Jill asked as she petted his shoulder, "why *do* you bother?"

Jack thought for a minute, "I need the self-analysis; besides, I have a deadline," and he turned to his screen and started typing.

"It was a dark and stormy night ..."

Friday, June 19, 2026

Honoring Juneteenth



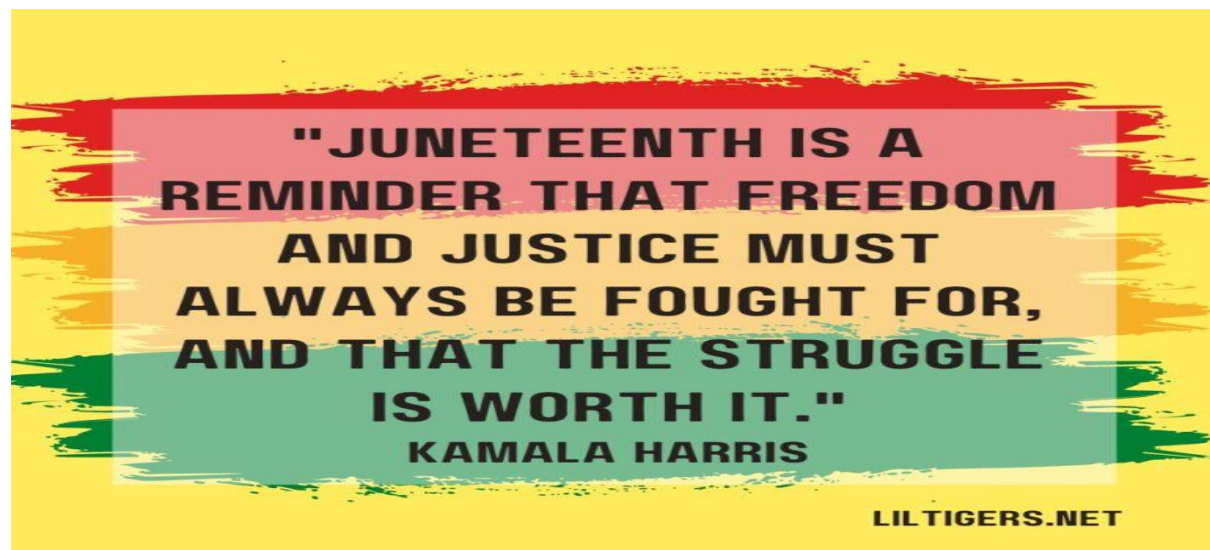
Juneteenth has been around a long time, with some historians placing the first observances back in 1866. But it has only been a federal holiday since 2021 when Congress passed, and President Joe Biden signed, a law making the observance a national holiday.

The holiday is, of course, highly annoying to MAGA and other cultural conservatives who are certain that white men should be the center of everything. But Dear Leader has done his best to clamp down in his general assault on DEI. Consequently, many businesses and the armed forces have pulled away from honoring the holiday. If schools were still in session, rest assured that the feds would be making sure that schools did not mark such a holiday that does not properly center white guys.

My small town is marking Juneteenth with a festival in the park including food and dancing and music. It's a modest fun time and an appropriate way to honor the occasion.

I think painting it a Black or DEI holiday misses some of the point. It's an American holiday first and foremost because Black Americans are, in fact, Americans, and it is appropriate to mark the point at which they received a more complete version of citizenship to which they were always entitled. But it's also an American holiday because it marks a point at which the country tried to change directions and become a better version of what we had always promised to be.

It's a complicated holiday. In the main, it is joyous in celebrating the freedom from slavery for an entire people. But it also marks the point at which the country stopped tolerating an odious and inexcusable evil. We should be able to celebrate the first part, but for many folks, it's hard to acknowledge what made the freeing of enslaved people necessary.



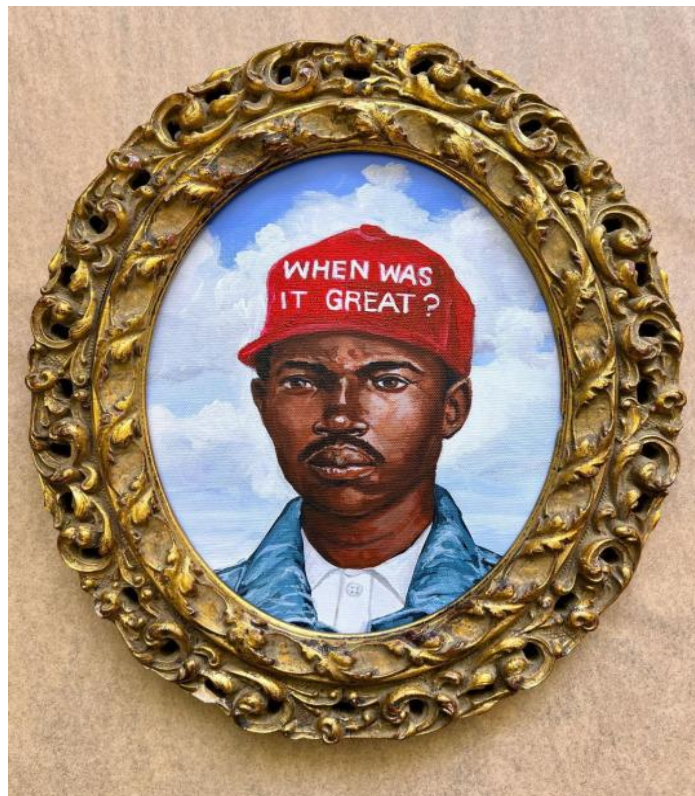
It's the root of all those laws against teaching divisive concepts or teaching anything that might make some (white) kids feel bad. The preferred culture panic narrative is "Yes, there was slavery but then it stopped, and yes, some bad individuals did some racism, but we stopped that, too." And since we stopped doing the bad things, it would be impolite and divisive to bring up the Bad Things part. That unwillingness to talk about what some of us did to others of us – what was done, who did it, and how they made themselves okay with it – has given us a long history of

wrestling inconclusively with racism problems. Banning the mention of such topics from school (and national parks and anywhere else) is not helping.

Like many holidays, Juneteenth has the artificial quality of suggesting that an important thing happened all at once on one day. But there is nothing wrong with taking one particular day to honor an important event, even if that event was actually a long process. As a nation, we did some awful stuff, and then after we stopped, some folks had a very hard time getting past the ideas and attitudes that were used to justify the awful stuff in the first place.

Juneteenth reminds some of us that some uncomfortable conversations need to be had, but maybe not today, while some Americans are celebrating their emancipation. I do wish school was in session right now, but we may honor the day as best we can.

by Peter Greene



THERMODYNAMICS



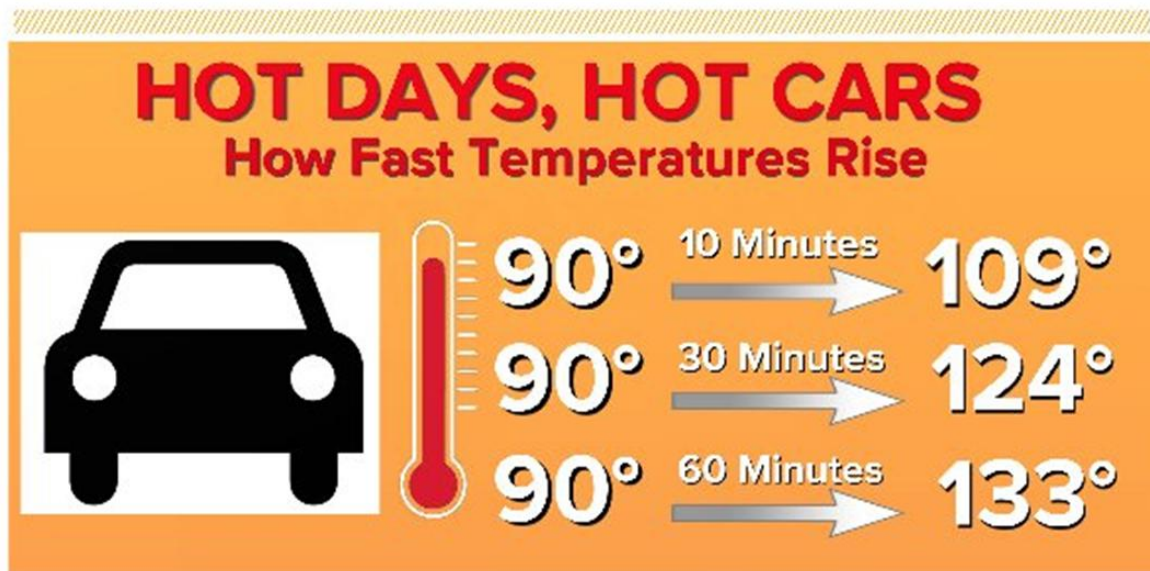
or PARK IT IN THE SHADE!!!

By Bert Mautz

The Florida climate generally – and burning sun specifically – demand daily attention and accommodation. The cautions and reminders are constant. You must use sunscreen, wear a hat, be sure to hydrate frequently. And even more incessantly, "Never leave children or pets in a closed car. The resulting high temperatures will kill them."

This Florida heat of summer in combination with skin cancer inducing ultraviolet rays is equal to – or more so – than all but a few southwestern locations in the states. I must ask, why is it so remarkable how many Floridians ignore any cautions. They drive their limousine like gloss black Cadillacs and Mercedes, and styles of black fabric.

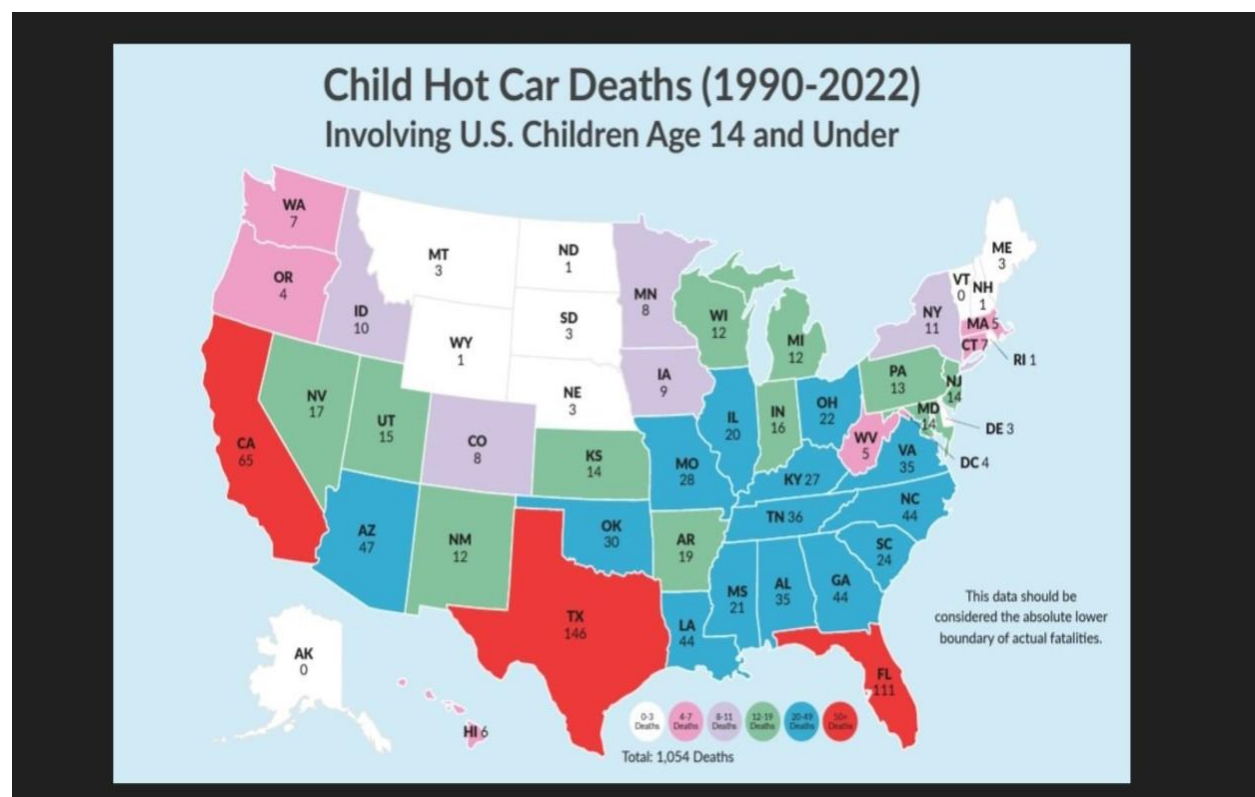
They rarely wear light colored clothes. White is best. Avoiding black is always a good reminder, you'd think. This advice should be automatic when starting ones' day. And yet we see bicyclists churning down the streets in black tights, believing they are looking their best. While the moving air evaporates their perspiration for a belief they are cooler than their bodies' sense, yet, they will require additional hydration.



Automobile air conditioning/cooling is nearly universal save for the ubiquitous Jeeps with their doors off. White cars and pickups do lessen the demand upon cooling systems. Another driving tip is to drive around the parking lot to find a space facing away from the sun. An internal sunscreen inserted above the dash and beneath the visors is also a good way to keep the heat out.

Too often I watch folks get into a sun-heated – almost like an oven – closed car to immediately slam the door behind them and then fish for their car keys in their purse. I suggest you leave the door open while you rummage in deep pockets, or hidden clasps. Let the hot air out! Find your keys, start the car, activate the A/C, and then close the (damned) door. It is your comfort I'm concerned about.

Even worse is the parent with stroller and bundle of packages. The first thing; open the back door to place the baby in its – oh so hot – car seat. Then open the trunk, fold the stroller, put it in the trunk along with the packages. Close the trunk and open the driver door, close the door immediately. What for? For security! Find the keys and start the car's air conditioning. Then wait for the actual cooling to begin. All this time, that infant/small child is suffering in a very hot car.



I've wondered, What's the urgency to close up the car immediately? Open a couple doors, start the car and A/C, unload your packages, and then put the kid in its chair, and fold the stroller and close the trunk. You'll be surprised how more comfortable you are after Having released the hot captive air, (thus saving the child from sweltering heat and hot-to-the-touch seat itself).

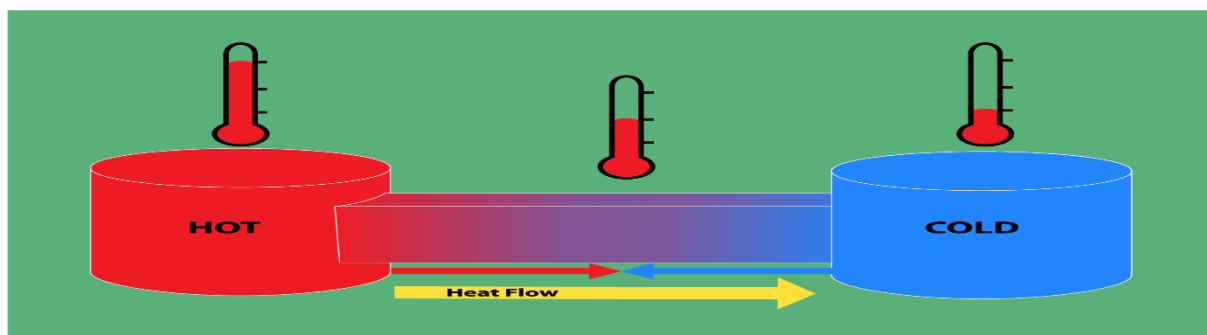
Can you leave the car with a couple of windows ajar? The released hot air quickens the A/C taking over the cooling. However, the constant threat of break-ins argues against the open windows.

I first moved to Tampa in the eighties with five kids. We had a *Big* house, pool with a diving board. Not knowing, I immediately re-shingled that grey house with black shingles for a good look. It



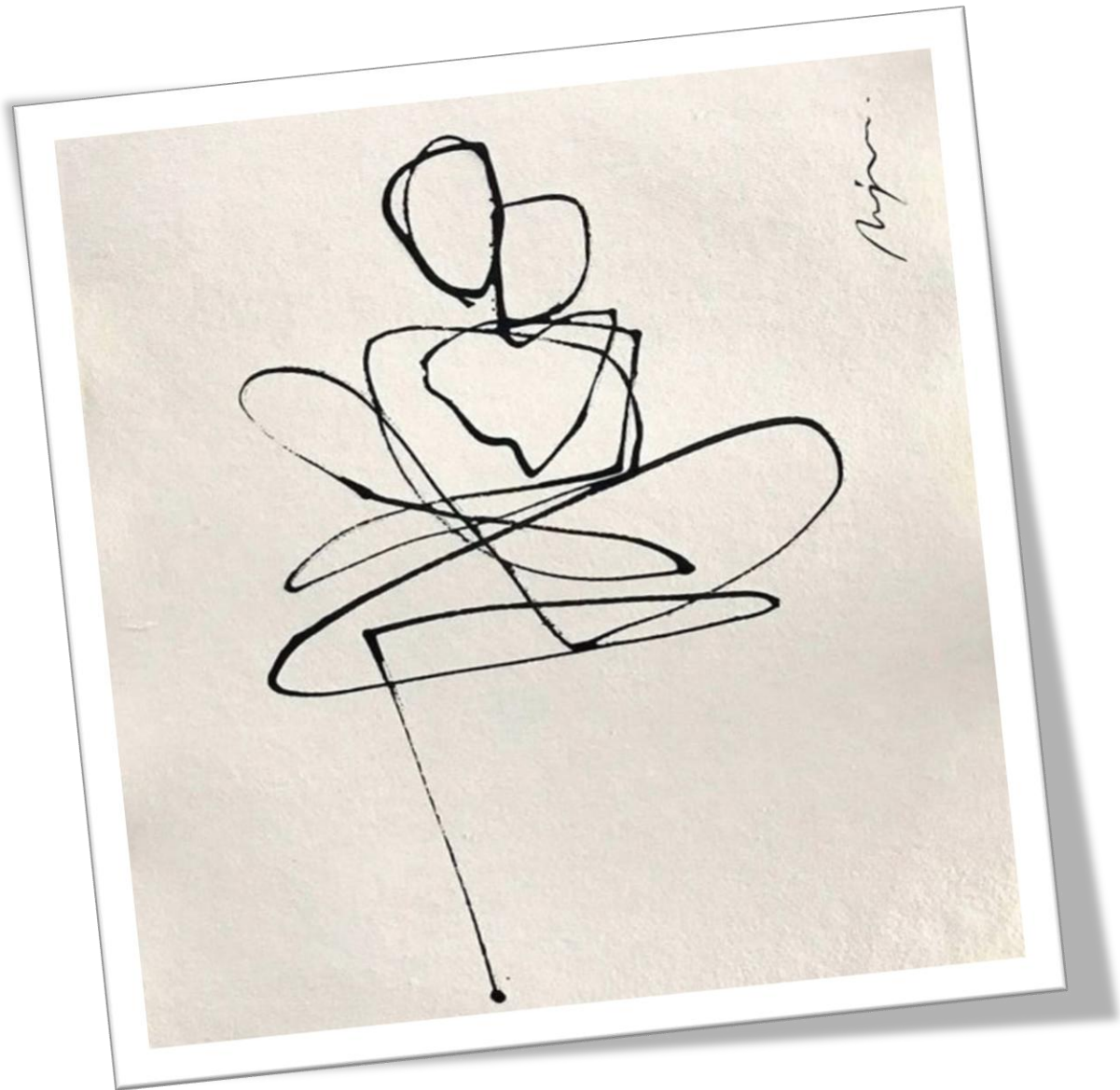
absorbed heat. Made the house hotter. I am an architect, I'm supposed to be smarter than this. Learned to modulate the air conditioning thermostat and taught my family about loose fitting clothes and that a slightly warmer thermostat setting would save on electricity bills.

We economized as much as possible. We drove VW Busses. No air conditioning, however white roofs and lite colored upholstery and all windows open helped us adapt. We kept a Whaler waiting in the driveway for after work skiing in a neighborhood lake. We camped on island beaches. We took advantage of what the climate afforded ... and still do.



YESTERDAY'S MILESTONES

By Virgil Thorp



What is a milestone? Is it simply a stage? When do you pass it? Does it matter? I am six months into grief and mourning. Six months since my beloved wife, Lucy, died suddenly in a hospital ICU. Was that personal tragedy a milestone? I know it wasn't a stage.

Sometimes I feel I am still in shock, and I'm pretty sure that I am. I'll wake up thinking things must be better today, that my grieving has diminished, become less painful ... and then, I'll see something, I will think about her, and it, that goddamned shock thing, kicks in again. The weeping can last for hours.

It is a feeling that reminds me of an acid trip. You take the blotter, put it under your tongue and you wait for it. When the acid does kick in – when it hits you and things start leaping out of your salad and the house across the street winks at you – there is no stopping it. You are in its' hands. If you are experienced, like Jimi Hendricks once sang, you know you are in for whatever you are feeling for ... as long as it takes. You are in your own little world. Like a bubble. There is up, there is exploration, then, like a miracle, experience finds you. Those were fun trips back then. Lucy would go with me. We would violate each other ... joyfully.

But now, unlike my past acid trips, there has been no hilarity, no contentment, no future hopes. It has and it is, a bummer. In all my previous bizarre, light-fantastic trips, I have never had a bummer experience before ... until now. I don't like bummer. I don't like down. I like marvelous.

Since that heartbreaking morning when I rushed to the ICU and found her bed empty, I have had this feeling that I let her down. Almost like I had cheated on her. I had spent all day stroking her hair, holding her hand after they had told me there was no hope. I only left to go home and feed the cats. I didn't mean to fall asleep. I wasn't there at the end, when she needed me most. I have felt crushed in sorrow and guilt since.

Every day seems the same. If I didn't have the kitties to care for, I don't know what I would do. They do bring me laughter despite the responsibilities. The cats make sure I am not dead. I'll wake up at 6:10 am due to a paw lightly touching my face. "Fix my

breakfast” is ordered. And I will do it. I will open the cans and spoon the cat muck into individual bowls. They will rub themselves against my legs and try to trip me as I do it. After I put the bowls on the floor, they will leave me alone and I will go back to bed and try to sleep, to maybe dream, perchance? (*Thank you, Shakespeare*).

Our house *is* like my own little world. Something no longer is here. It has left, gone, disappeared. Of course, it is an intangible, my wife, my Lucy. Her mental presence. Her vibrancy.



Her physical presence of course, her clothes, her personal things, like hairbrushes, toothbrushes, her vibrator, and our shared things. Those still occupy. I have not put them away. To dispose of those things would be unbearable right now. They remain here as a constant reminder that one time we shared a relationship, a marriage.

Turns out, it was a lifelong compact. The best of best friends. Together for fifty years, despite all the contradictory pressures that tried to tear us apart during that time. But ironically, pressures that also held us together, forged a deeper bond. Now, when I look around the house, I know that our world will never be the same.

I enjoyed the way she decorated every room. I loved watching her. The wall of books, the family pictures she framed and hung. She was so artsy-fartsy, like every wall was another canvas. Every partition told another story ... and she had everything in harmonic balance.

There is a wall between the kitchen and the dining room that is one of her masterpieces. Absolutely reeks of Lucy. She hung a combination of weaved serving baskets complimented with a juxtaposition of antique objects; a dinner bell, a copper colander, traditional hand-forged ice tongs, a cloisonné picture of a rustic Russian Orthodox church (she didn't care that it had been a gift to me from a previous lover), under that a vintage hair curler, capping two oriental fans like they used to hand out in churches before air-conditioning only these were a Japanese motif, not gifts from a local funeral home.



The furniture, both new and old, looked very good together, very comfortable. Lucy called it, "eclectic." (We visited so many estate sales when we were younger – we had such a large house to fill at the time, two stories, 35 hundred sq. feet, an urban homestead). We added many things over the years of our life together and our houses became more cluttered. And what if it was junk ... it was ours.

When we got older and the change hit her, I guess you could say we hit another milestone. We had gone through little changes here and there. We could no longer sleep together. And we understood. For Lucy it was mood swings, hot flashes, cold rushes, blankets on, blankets thrown on the floor. Reluctantly we changed to separate beds and separate rooms. Sad, I know, but

our morning greetings were still warm, and our kisses were still sweet.

Lucy started drinking heavily after she retired. Well, she drank pretty heavily before she retired, she just started earlier. She began with a Bloody Mary or a glass of wine in the morning, by noon she was well buzzed on the beach with a tumbler of wine or two. By afternoon I was reluctant to take her out to dinner because she was so smashed.

Her drinking got annoying. It got to the point that while stoned Lucy was okay, I could live with that, but drunk Lucy sucked. I worried about what she might do. Who she might run over.

I asked her to cut back on the wine, but she would get belligerent. "Fuck you," she'd tell me when I tried to confront her inebriation. I kept thinking that I had to do something. She was eating less and less. She would flip me off and give me a stink-eye when I teased her about her ass getting boney.

That didn't work and I knew something had to be done. I finally confessed to her, "I don't like drunk Lucy."

"What you see is what you get," she'd say, flipping me off and then stagger off to bed. When I asked her about it the following morning, why she had spit out, "fuck you," to me, she couldn't remember saying it. Was that a milestone thing too?

But I know she loved me. Lots of our still-living acquaintances have told me how much she adored me. And, I know she did – sometimes drunk and always sober.

I have fifty years of memories. Good, bad, ugly, all the things a marriage can be. Despite all the booze and the mood swings, I loved her and we loved each other. I can't tell you how wonderful it was to see the joy of her smile when I would simply give her a

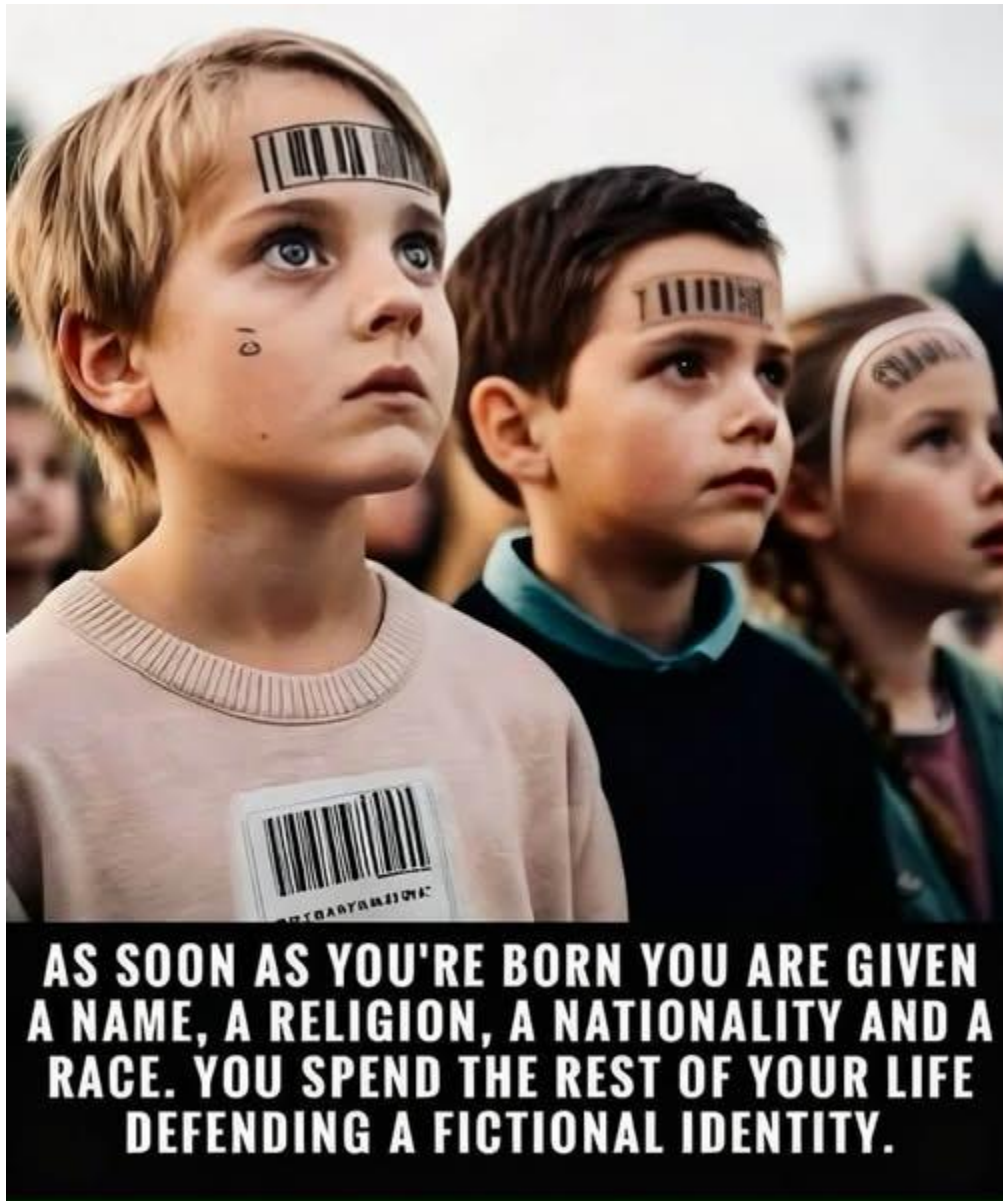
loving caress she wasn't expecting for no particular reason as I would walk past her. Just because I wanted to.



With all this, what am I to do? All I want to do is to hold her close again. To feel her warmth against mine. To make love to her again. No, that's a lie. I want dirty and sweaty, like in the beginning. I want to fuck her again. I want her to fuck me back. Possess our bodies, so good like we used to. Teeth, tongues and blasphemy. To defile ourselves in our joint carnal rut. To collapse in gasping laughter, to gaze in each other's eyes in ideal afterglow. So good, so good. To hear her murmur, despite being an atheist, "oh, my heavens, oh my heavens" over and over. Believe me when I tell you, there is no way I can forget her.

WE ARE
ONLY
A MOMENT

ARTICLES



**AS SOON AS YOU'RE BORN YOU ARE GIVEN
A NAME, A RELIGION, A NATIONALITY AND A
RACE. YOU SPEND THE REST OF YOUR LIFE
DEFENDING A FICTIONAL IDENTITY.**



“O-C”

An autobiography

(this means written entirely by the entity that it is being written about).

And that means me, O-C the perennial “outside cat”. Why perennially you might ask? It is true, there are plenty of old alley cats out here, but they are misfits, mostly wanting to be inside cats that were cast out by evil humans. I, on the other hand, am an outside cat by choice and that makes all

the difference.

(Please excuse my writing, my human friend Ed is teaching me, but he is not much better and a lousy teacher, but I forgive him – *he pets me, and I will groom him.*)

Today is very hot. I frequently get remarks of pity from humans



toffeescape

How wonderful, then, to live on a planet full of creatures that like to be petted!

(I actually know some nice ones) for having to wear a fur coat in hot weather. I appreciate these attempts of cross - species communication, which are often accompanied by petting.

Ahhh, petting. I like petting. I have noticed that not only cats enjoy petting. Petting I have found, is enjoyed not only by cats but also by humans, particularly between male and female humans, or by humans of similar sexual persuasion. They call this "love".

You might say I don't know much about this love thing since I am a "fixed" pussy (pun not intended). It happened to me when I was very young when they removed both my ovaries and my uterus. I heard the vet say I would live longer and have a better life without them. But shouldn't I have had something to say about it?



I like petting so much I have been called a "hussy" because my tail goes straight up and my tongue sticks out a little when a certain spot on my back is touched. In some circles, being called a "hussy" is a term of defamation but I must say, it feels good ... but I don't know why, and I don't care who knows it.

Getting back to love, I still don't know why, but my human tells me he loves me, and I feel somewhat the same when I jump in his lap and he pets me. It is a wonderful feeling of comfort and safety!

Obviously love has something to do with petting so we should do and receive lots of petting every day and the world would certainly be a better place! Love rocks!



Meow

**I moved on
him like a
bitch.
I just start
voting.
I don't
even wait.
Just vote.
And when
you're
registered
they let
you do it.**



THIS WEEK IN MYSOGINY

By Lucinda Lugeons

The biggest story in America when it comes to religion right now is the way women are leaving the church in

droves. But, of course, most Christians don't realize this because that would require paying attention to women or thinking they're important.

But at least *some* Christian leaders are starting to take notice, which is what led to the closest thing to a Hell for me personally that's ever been assembled: A Turning Points USA "Women's Leadership Summit" in Texas. This was the brainchild of Erika Kirk, known for her perforated ex-husband and her propensity for mourning with pizazz. She opened the event with a speech about how feminism is comin' for yer babies and forcing you to go to work instead of being the baby-factory God intended.

Religious News Services quotes one attendee saying "Ultimately, my goal is to become a mother and a wife", and I'm like, "Yeah, it's a good thing nobody's trying to take away your ability to make your own decisions vis a vis motherhood and the ability to marry the person you love. That sure would suck.

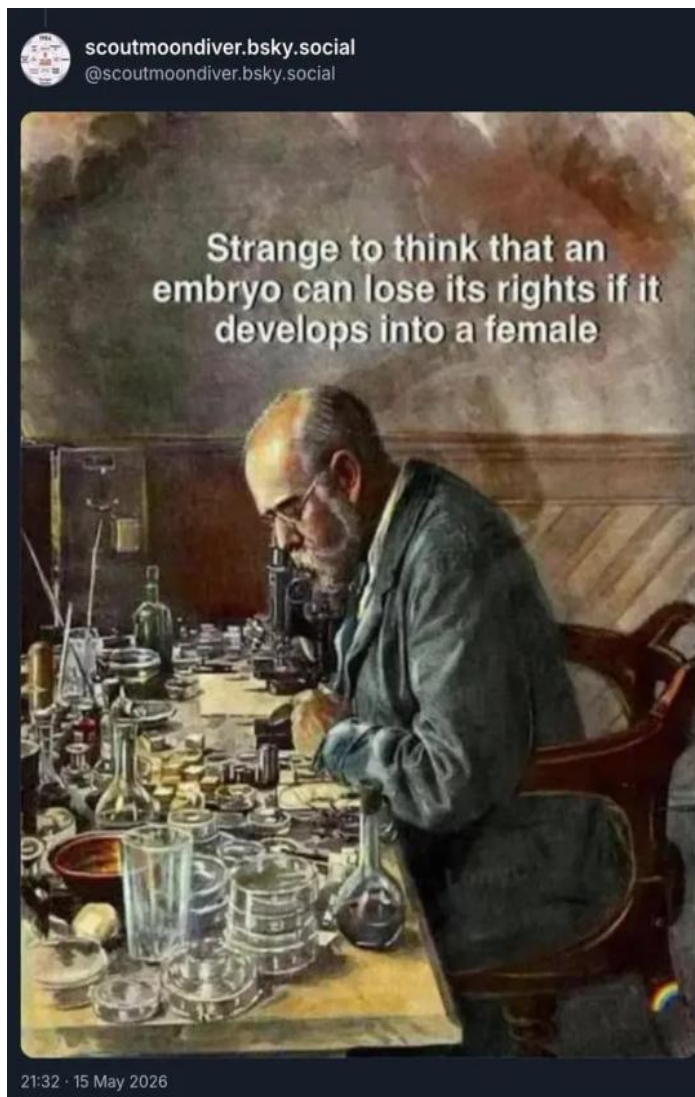
But at the same time Erika Kirk is making this futile gesture to connect with modern women, the entire rest of Christianity is pushing in the other direction. Noah already mentioned this in the diatribe, but I wanna flag it again here: The Southern Baptist Convention voted this week on a rule change that would amend their Constitution to deny membership to any church that has a female pastor or allows women to preach on Sundays.



Now, there's a rule in place that requires a full year to pass between the introduction of a proposed amendment and the vote on that amendment. But in this instance, they waived that rule, because the scourge of penis-less preaching was too dangerous to ignore for an entire calendar. To pass, the measure required two-thirds support, but there was never any question that it would get there. In the end they cleared that hurdle with room to spare: 75 percent of them voted to keep the rules from the Little Rascals hideout in place.

And it's not just the Baptists trying to reinforce that message about the inferiority of women. The Diocese of Springfield, Illinois

is suing in an effort to block a state law called the “Human Rights Act.” The law — or, at least, the part of it the diocese is pissed off about — prohibits employers from disciplining or refusing to hire employees for having abortions.



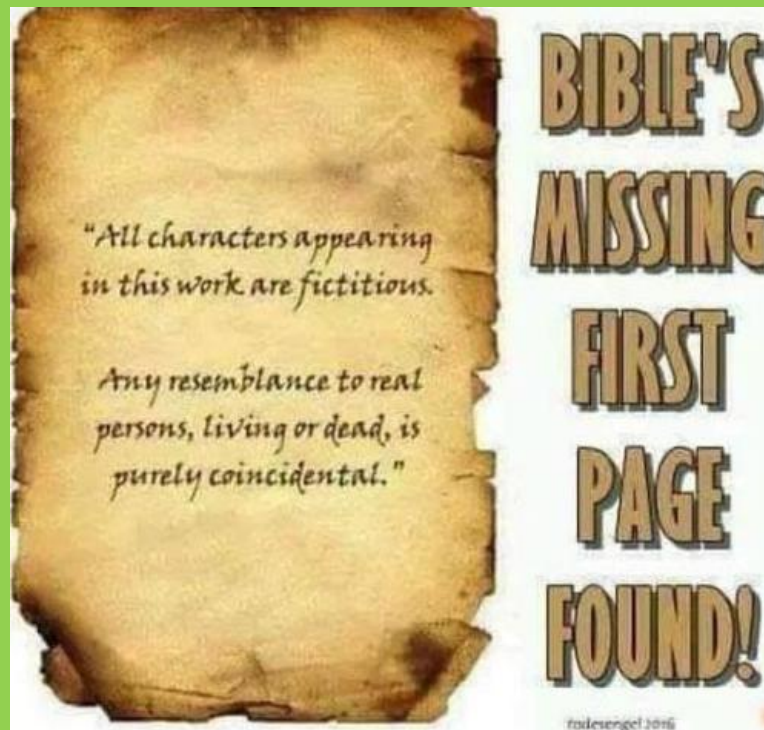
Now, because religious leaders are constitutionally incapable of telling the truth about shit, they're pretending that the law does all kinds of shit it doesn't do. What it does is bar them for firing an employee for having an abortion. But they can't admit that's all it is and hope to retain public sympathy, so look for your religious relatives convinced the law forces Catholic Churches to hire Satanist priests or something.

Anyway, so yeah, misogyny stays alive and well in Christianity and if nothing else, it means I've got job security.

Women will say they want to be equal with men & then refuse to commit 90% of violent crimes –*That Liberal Atheist Nurse*

My Thought Experiment

(So to speak)

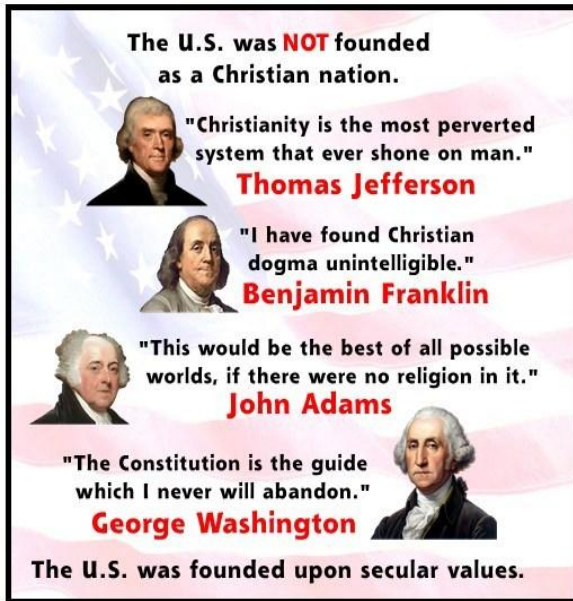


By ~~Daniel~~ (that's J. Dan) Vignau

All too often, people will state something as if it were true and then convince themselves that it is. They will use their perceived data and facts to bias their thoughts toward what they already want to believe. In school, I was inspired by the dialectical thought pattern established by Hegel and proffered by Marx; that's Karl, not Groucho.

Benjamin Franklin used one such system when he needed to make an important decision. He would chart the pluses against the minuses of such choices. After all, how can we really decide what to think or to do without considering the positive aspects of

what we do not want to believe – and in Franklin’s case – the negative aspects of what we think we want.



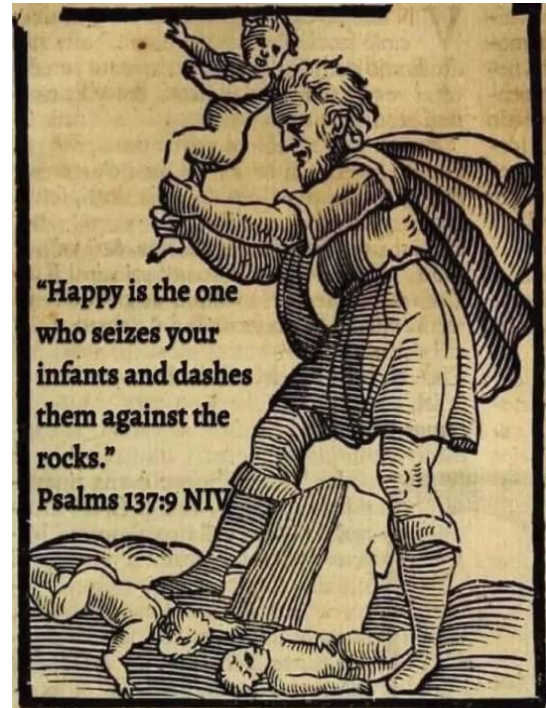
The Bible states that God created man in his own image ... but what if it was Satan who created man? If that be true, then God must have been really irate. His book, *The Bible*, depicts a vindictive SOB, who can snap without a moment's notice. This God is presented as an evil, conniving trickster who has no regard for human life, or for the suffering that He makes millions of people endure. In fact, what if He

actually *enjoys making people suffer*, just to spite Satan, who created us?

We already know that God cannot defeat Satan; there is no other apparent reason that God would allow Satan to continue to exist.

This so-called God is also a murderer to the Nth degree and is apparently bald-headed. Why else would he have a she-bear murder children for teasing a bald man, the prophet Elisha.

Hey, look at me, You God! I have hair and you don't. Jesus H. Christ (*so to speak*), couldn't You get a wig or something? Satan must have



really given You some crap about being bare headed. Bears have hair, don't they? And You don't. Did Satan steal your hair gene? Or maybe, Satan created you? With no X hair, and a case Y!

Hey, that's a thought. While Satan was galloping around on his camel creating a fun place for humans to live, you just had to use your almighty spite to make man miserable.

For example, if you did indeed create Adam and his beautiful Garden of Eden, why did you totally screw it up? Adam was the happiest man on Earth, to say the least, if one could believe your holier-than-thou tome. So, what did you do?

What the Hell (*again, so to speak*), were you thinking? Are

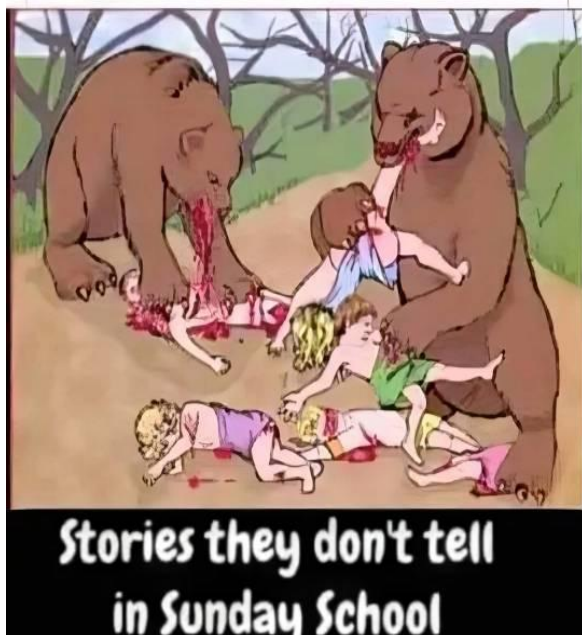
Elisha was walking along a road,
Some boys yelled: "Get out of here, baldy!"
He called on God to curse them. 2 bears
came out of the woods and mauled 42
boys to death
2 King's 2:23-24

you the only being allowed to be happy? The children you killed with the bear (so named because of your bare head?), were just being kids. Is your Ego so damaged by your envy of Satan that you can't have a world of Happy Humanists? Gee, God, did you really have to ruin Adam's serene world by creating Eve?

Not only that, but you had already made certain that Eve would make things worse for Adam. You told her that everything would be great if only she abided by not eating one particular fruit.

You always set a condition for your grace, don't you? Then all Hell

(*once more, so to speak*), breaks loose. At least we now know, according to this thought experiment, who Adam and Eve's kids married. These spouses obviously had to be from a nearby town populated by people created by – *wait for it* – Satan. Ditto with Noah's kids after you threw your biggest hissy fit yet by flooding



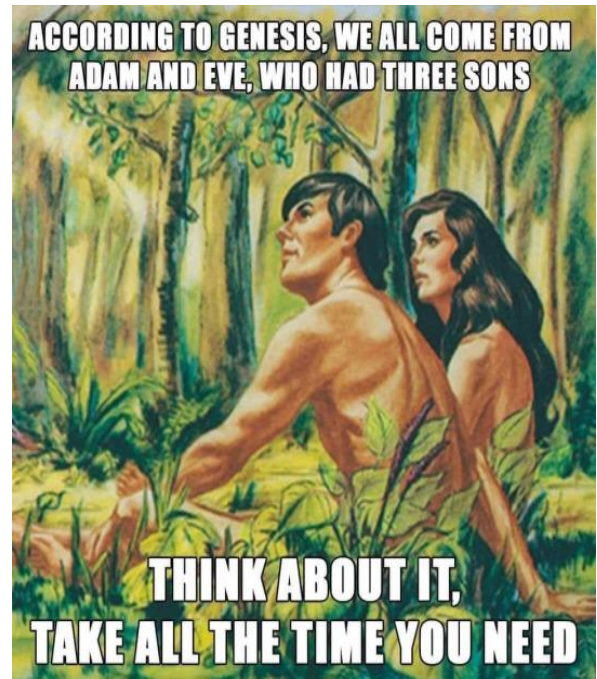
the entire Earth; and all because people followed their actual creator instead of you, you egomaniac.

You even pointed out to Eve exactly where the forbidden fruit was ... to her, to a woman no less. Next, you created a phallic symbol to ridicule Adam's small penis. Hey, I've seen the statue of your perfect man, David, and he is a total doll(!), notwithstanding that little, one-eyed snake between his legs. Did you really think Eve could resist a *Love-Is-A-Long-and-Slender-Thing* that talked to her? What a dickhead you must be, to create this talking snake-phallus.

I bet Satan really had a laugh with this, too. In fact, I can't help but wonder if Satan stole your hair gene, just so he could make you feel insecure. He had already witnessed, if not caused, your Eden fiasco.

Hell (*one more time, so to speak*), maybe Satan created you, just to have some entertainment? No living person could be any more insecure than you God. Your so-called Ten Commandments, as George Carlin so wonderfully pointed out, consists of four that say to honor and worship you, and only you. The other six are simply rules of just about any society you can name – listed after your exaltation – of course.

Besides, what's up with banning one random fruit? Was that your show of power over the creation you claimed to have made.



According to Abrahamic mythology,
God killed every first born child in Egypt because
the Pharaoh wouldn't do what He wanted.

**Why didn't God just
kill the Pharaoh?**

#YepStillAdvised

man's lying with another man was forbidden,
that you did not exclude a man and a boy. Take
that Satan. Cute! "Hey little boy, would you like
to go to heaven? I can make you feel like you
are already there. Just drop your drawers, kid."

That's it! Voila! The Pope made you name
the statue *David* so that everyone would know
that *David* was the favorite in this particular
lineage of this Pope's series of adorable little
boys!

BTW God, Satan really wants to thank you
for creating the list of rules for treating your
slaves. It is just a shame that the Devil is also
insecure, and likes to torture people, or so they
say.

Did Satan create Adam, and then
you created Eve to simply spite Satan
by making Adam miserable. After all,
you can't have Satan totally upstage
you with a perfectly happy man.
Maybe Michaelangelo did not sculpt
David, but Adam? The church
probably named it David because that
was the name of the Pope's little
boyfriend, who had grown to be a
beautiful man, thusly ageing out on
the Pope's predilection for the
younger altar boys.

People did not
realize that when
God stated that a



But does he really? Let's *dialecticize* a bit. If people live totally wicked lives, at least by your debased definition, would Satan want to punish them? Shouldn't the master of your well-defined evil want to reward them? Hell must be an eternal party of carnage (a word derived from the term carnal knowledge?).

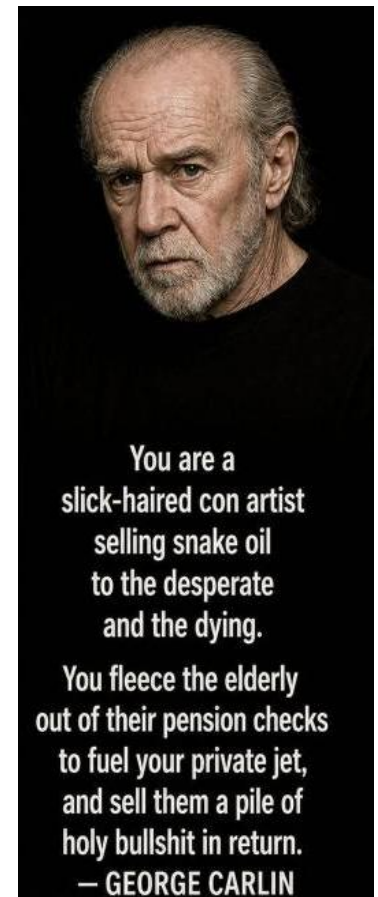
Hey, it is my thought experiment, and I like that idea.

Heaven is the place for eternal punishment. Can you imagine – oh, I guess You did imagine – a place where a gambler never lost. That could be a boring Hell for his eternity.

I like music. Eternal Hell for me would be a Heaven full of your worshippers – bless their idiotic hearts – continually trying to play country-assed versions of the

songs of your praise. Praise God in his highest, over and over and over for infinite eons. Everyone would undoubtedly eventually be praying for a black hole to form from a collapsing star in order to end this supposed Hell of a Heavenly existence.

You are a self-centered egomaniac, God! Who the Hell (*once more into the breach, so to speak*) do you think you are ... *Donald Trump*? You know what, God? I'll bet the Romans got so tired of hearing your crap that they created Jesus to shut up your followers waiting for their savior.



At least you condemn murder in your holy book, so called because it is flawed with holes in your limited logical ability, and pathetic attempt to explain science. Here is the actual body count: Satan is known to have killed Job's seven sons and three daughters. He might have killed a few dozen in total. God: you are known, so you say in your book, to have killed 2-2.5 million people, and quite probably 20-25 million, *(depending on the Earth's population at the time, and the wars you caused, as*

depicted in your book ... so to speak).



The Romans of their time kept really great records. Records of births, deaths, census data, taxes paid, and all the other things necessary to get people to contribute their hard-earned money to the state to manage its affairs, including of course, to protect you from the seemingly lesser evolved hordes of Vandals and

Visigoths.

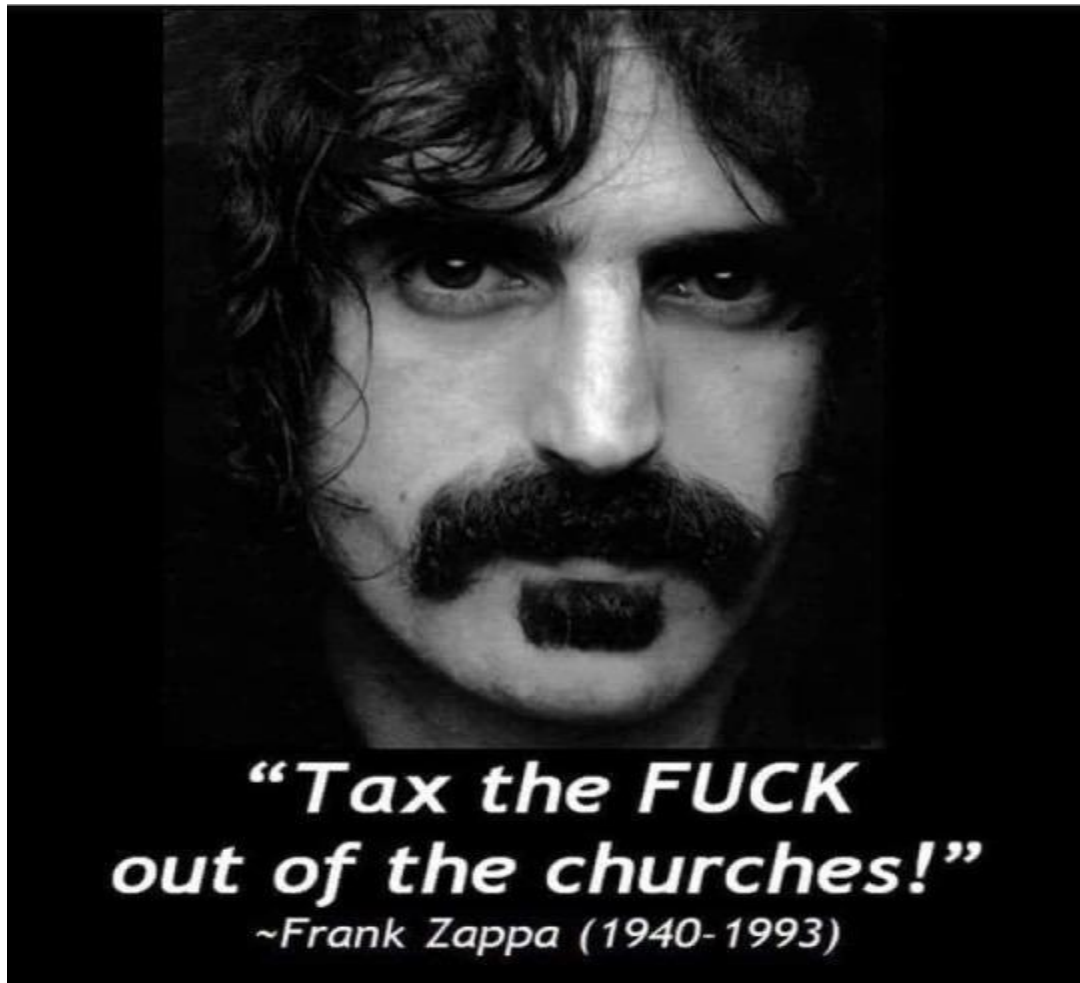
Did you ever ask where the records of Jesus life are. Neither Jesus nor his parents appear in any birth records, biographies written during his lifetime, in any songs or poems, or even any news accounts. It is as if Jesus was fake news!

But, did Jesus really exist, or did the Romans create the Jesus character? The Romans probably thought that those who called themselves your chosen people might actually assimilate into Roman society and quit their silly religious activities of mostly rebelling against the state while waiting for their prophet

to arrive, Jesus Christ (*so to speak, isn't two thousand years a long enough wait?*).

Friends, Romans, and Countrymen, He's not coming. We invented Him to shut you the *F* up, folks. Join us. Enjoy life. Assimilate, and please Render unto Caesar that which is his. Jesus said it, at least in the long version of your book of historical fiction ... or should that be *Hysterical Friction*?

We presented to you one divine creation of God's child, Jesus Christ, the god within a god, within a ghost, within a father-son-ghost apparition. What the Hell are we talking about? Just pay your damned taxes!





THE MODERN TROJAN WAR

By Kurt David Hogan ·

The outrage over Lupita Nyong'o potentially playing Helen of Troy is genuinely fascinating to me.

Because the same people who constantly say "race shouldn't matter" and accuse liberals of "making everything about race" ... suddenly become deeply obsessed with race the moment a Black actor is cast in a fictional or mythological role.



A Black Little Mermaid?

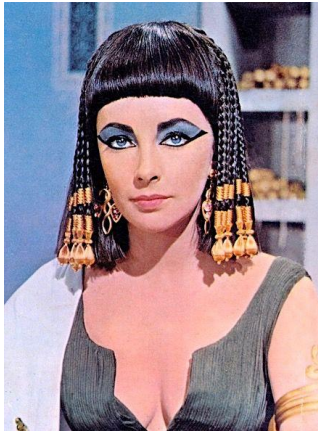
Outrage.

A Latina Snow White?

Civilization collapsing.

Now a Black Helen of
Troy?

Suddenly everybody has
a PhD in Ancient Greece.
Meanwhile Hollywood
spent nearly a century casting white actors as Egyptians, Native
Americans, Asians, biblical figures, and pretty much anybody else
on Earth.



Elizabeth Taylor played
Cleopatra.

John Wayne starred as an
improbable Genghis Khan.

Yul Brynner played an
Egyptian pharaoh.



Entire westerns had white
actors in bronzer playing
Native Americans.

And somehow society
survived all of it.

But a Black mermaid?



Now we must defend historical accuracy in

movies about talking fish and magic kingdoms.



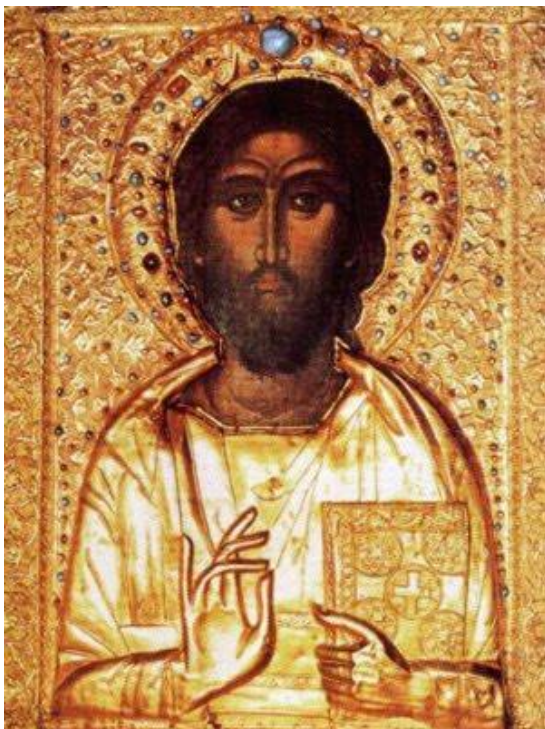
And here's the part I find most revealing:

Many of the same people insisting race shouldn't matter are often the first ones who seem unable to stop noticing it.

Because deep down, a lot of people still unconsciously see "white" as the default setting for beauty, heroism, mythology, royalty, and imagination itself. So when someone outside that image steps into those roles, it suddenly feels "political."

Even when it's literally just acting.

That's why Megyn Kelly once famously insisted Santa Claus was white...as if a magical man who flies through the sky with flying reindeer somehow came with verified census records.



Martin Luther King Jr. said to judge people by the content of their character, not the color of their skin.

We still have a long way to go.

And if strict historical accuracy suddenly matters this much in fictional portrayals...some people may eventually have to come to terms with the fact that a first-century man born in the Middle East probably didn't look like a blonde-haired, blue-eyed Scandinavian either.

THE WAY WE WERE



A Step Beyond Goodbye

By Virgil Thorp

Lucy's last words to me as she was admitted to the hospital and wheeled to her room were said almost with a giggle: "I didn't know I was that sick." I didn't know that either. We were sure we'd see each other tomorrow, weren't we? But we didn't.

Ray Davies of the Kinks crafted in 1975 what I consider to be one of the finest songs in rock n' roll history. It is not only precise in its lyrics but also with its harmonic melody and its slashing guitar riffs. I can feel it as he sings it. The changes in tempo – the slow, rising to fast. In synchronization with the lyrics. I will try to explain. Especially now, now that I have lost someone special. Something like this, like a poetic confession. Funny ... in a way, it is almost like the peculiar style Lucy and I used to make love; a flickering duet between a keyboard and a bass guitar to establish a rhythm and then the vocal comes in:

Walking along a crowded street
I see thousands of faces before me.



Then I see a face that I used to know
Long ago in my life story.

From this opening verse you know somebody's gone, somebody special has left for whatever reason:



It starts me thinking about the things you said
For your image is still inside me.
The past is gone, but in my head
You're still walking along beside me.

It is evidently a song about coming to grips with grief, your hurts, your agonies. It says a thing is gone, what you once shared is over and all you have left are memories that refuse to fade, wounds that refuse to heal. The lead guitar joins in with the vocals:

Is it something playing tricks with my eyes
Or just an illusion deceiving me,
Or is it someone in a disguise
Or visions of things that used to be?

The tempo steps up a bit, the memories become more intense, the pain becomes more personal. Impossible to stop. Like blood does,

pulsing from a lacerated aorta:

But lately I've been going to
All the places that we once knew,
And just when I think that I am free of you
I keep seeing the things that remind me of you,

There's another step up in tempo as pain increases and then crashing guitar riffs hit every note, every chord, the aching of loss is palpable in its crescendo:

And just when I think you're out of my head

I hear a song that you sang or see a book that you read.
Then you're in every bar, you're in every cafe,
You're driving every car, I see you every day,

Like an LSD acid come-down reflection, the tempo slows, and you experience a precious need for breath, for contemplation, for understanding:

But you're not really there 'cos you belong to yesterday.

Advice comes from every direction – often unsolicited:

No more looking back,
No more living in the past,
Yesterday's gone and that's a fact,
Now there's no more looking back.

You get philosophical. You try to convince yourself to be brave, be stoic, be strong:

Got to be hard,
Yeah, look straight ahead.
That's the only way it's going to be,
Yesterday's gone and that's a fact,
Now there's no more looking back,

The tempo rocks up again, the guitar's chord progression announces the moment of epiphany, almost defiant:

Perhaps someday I'll stop needing you,
Then maybe one day I'll be free of you.

But no, silly man, you will not be able to be free, and the crashing guitar riffs return hitting every shredded contusion, striking every ripped chord. The vocals of the repeated chorus surround the honest anguish of the singer:

And just when I think you're out of my head
I hear a song that you sang or see a book that you read.
Then you're in every bar, you're in every cafe,
You're driving every car, I see you everyday,

You have no other choice than acceptance of fact and finality of human frailty:

But you're not really there 'cos you belong to yesterday.

And you realize, like an acid trip, life has moved on, there is no more retrieving what is past. There is only a wailing finishing vocal, a declaration of life's frail finality:

No more looking back,
No more living in the past.
Yesterday's gone, that's a fact,
Now there's no more looking back.

Songwriter: Raymond Douglas Davies. "No More Looking Back" from *School Boys in Disgrace* album.



The comedown of an acid trip has always brought me catharsis. I would understand life in a deeper, fuller way. My universe would be expanding for days afterwards. I felt that every moment of the trip was worth the effort. I dropped the indoctrinated superstitions and embraced life's reality. Did the tripping ever

stop? Or did I just get used to it. You might say that I have taken so many trips that I have felt that tripping is normal and normal life is hallucinatory.

But that song, that poetry ... means something, it touches me. Taps me on the shoulder; demands my attention. Davies has prepared a novelette in a three-minute pop music format. I feel it in my heart; I feel it in my soul. I am not alone. I know there are others who have felt the level of my anguish. I hope that knowledge will comfort me. Make me feel better.



And yet, that doesn't do quite enough. And it doesn't matter. The desolate ache persists. That nihilist in me is certain it will be like a scar, always a reminder.

All I am left with are empty questions. Why didn't I realize how sick she was? Was it my neglect that made her sick? Why did I go home and fall asleep? Why wasn't I there to hold her hand? I feel so responsible.

I try, but I cannot get rid of the heavy, goddamned, fucking guilt, though. I feel angry ... at myself. Why didn't I do more? Why

didn't I save her! Why didn't I stay with her till the very end? Could I have changed the inevitable? How can I accept never seeing her, holding her, kissing her again?

The future feels so bleak. I am walking alone on a path we once traveled together. And now I know, there will be no magical resurrection or reuniting. There is no nightmare to wake up from. I realize there is no way to forget the unforgettable. Davies was right, yesterday is gone and she does belong to yesterday.

An inconsolable person in devastating heartache once said, "Love lives on, beyond goodbye." How fucking weird. How fucking finally weird. And suddenly, I have an uncontrollable urge to hear a song, to go read a book.



John Brown's Body ...



By James Fell

Half a dozen years before the U.S. Civil War, the Kansas Territory—it wasn't a state yet—was a harbinger of things to come. That's why they called it "Bleeding Kansas," a regional civil war over the subject of, you guessed it, slavery.

—On This Day in History Shit Went Down: May 24, 1856—
There was some other shit people were disagreeing over too, but slavery was the big one. Just like the Civil War was largely about treating humans like things and not what those coal-rolling

Confederate flag-waving fuckwipes claim was “a war of Northern Aggression” where the South was fighting for “states’ rights.” States’ rights to do what, exactly? TO DO WHAT?!

Anyfuckingway, Kansas was bleeding, and John Brown—a white man—was ready to go all massacre on some slavery-supporter shitburgers.

This dress rehearsal for the Civil War saw several dozen killed in clashes between those who believed enslaving people was just peachy and others who said yeah no that’s some evil-ass shit. The massacre in question was in reaction to two events. Lawrence, Kansas, was an anti-slavery town, and on May 21, 1856, three hundred pro-slavery cockbags sacked the place, burning and looting as they went. That pissed off those in Kansas who wished to abolish slavery.

The abolitionists were further vexed by the events of the following day. Senator Charles Sumner had recently given a fiery speech to a full Senate called “The Crime Against Kansas.” In it, he called out some pro-slavery senators for sucking. One of those senators targeted in Sumner’s speech was Andrew Butler. Butler’s nephew Preston Brooks couldn’t abide the truth being told about his assbutt of an uncle, and attacked Sumner on the Senate floor with a cane, beating him near to death.



That’s when radical abolitionist leader John Brown decided fuck this, we need to start wasting these assholes. On May 24, 1856—two days after the attack on Sumner—Brown, along with five of his sons and three others, committed what would be called the Pottawatomie Massacre. Late at night, the nine men attacked three separate pro-slavery settlements near the banks of Pottawatomie Creek. The men in the settlements were taken from their homes and

murdered via a combination of shooting and sword hacking by Brown and his crew. Five men were killed in the massacre. As you might imagine, the massacre did not improve relations between pro and anti-slavery groups in the Kansas Territory. Rather, it led to months of retaliatory raids and battles.

Three years later, Brown led a raid on a Virginia armory to gain weapons to support an uprising of enslaved people in the south. The attack failed and Brown was captured and tried for treason. Found guilty, he was hanged on December 2, 1859, the first person to be executed for treason in America.

The U.S. Civil War erupted sixteen months later, resulting in approximately 650,000 lives lost, the deadliest war in the nation's history.

NOTE: This piece was researched and written by a human, not some bullshit "ai" plagiarism software.

Those who cannot remember the past need a history teacher who says "fuck" a lot. Get both volumes of ON THIS DAY IN HISTORY SHIT WENT DOWN at **JamesFell.com/books**.



POETRY

1968

2026



THE DIAMETER OF THE BOMB

YEHUDA AMICHAI

The diameter of the bomb was thirty centimeters and
the diameter of its effective range about seven meters,
with four dead and eleven wounded.

And around these, in a larger circle
of pain and time, two hospitals are scattered
and one graveyard. But the young woman
who was buried in the city she came from,
at a distance of more than a hundred kilometers,
enlarges the circle considerably,
and the solitary man mourning her death
at the distant shores of a country far across the sea
includes the entire world in the circle.

And I won't even mention the crying of orphans
that reaches up to the throne of God and
beyond, making
a circle with no end and no God.



SAN FRANCISCO BLUES

By: A.D. Winans

Iran, Iraq, Libya

Africa, ethnic cleansing

Bill Gates, Donald Trump

And the Pope

All selling their own brand of dope

A mayor who is a joke

A bus system that doesn't work

Head cases walking the street

Punk Rockers with rainbow hair

Women with pierced genitals

Ginseng for tired blood

My illusions are fighting a duel

With my delusions

The last time I picked up

A white courtesy telephone

The voice on the other end was mine

The dates on my calendar are blank

The pinball machine has no flippers

There's no prize in my crackerjack box

My radio plays nothing but commercials

My hand holds my cock in contempt

My love life is an unread resume
With one too many references

I had a dream
I was a gunrunner
Trading hardware for software
I want my photo on a cereal box
Not a milk carton

The IRS is a legal shake down
The Pentagon a slaughterhouse

Jack the Ripper sliced and diced
His way through London Town
And he wasn't even a chef

Freud was impotent
But put on a good show
Monks know the truth
But won't share it

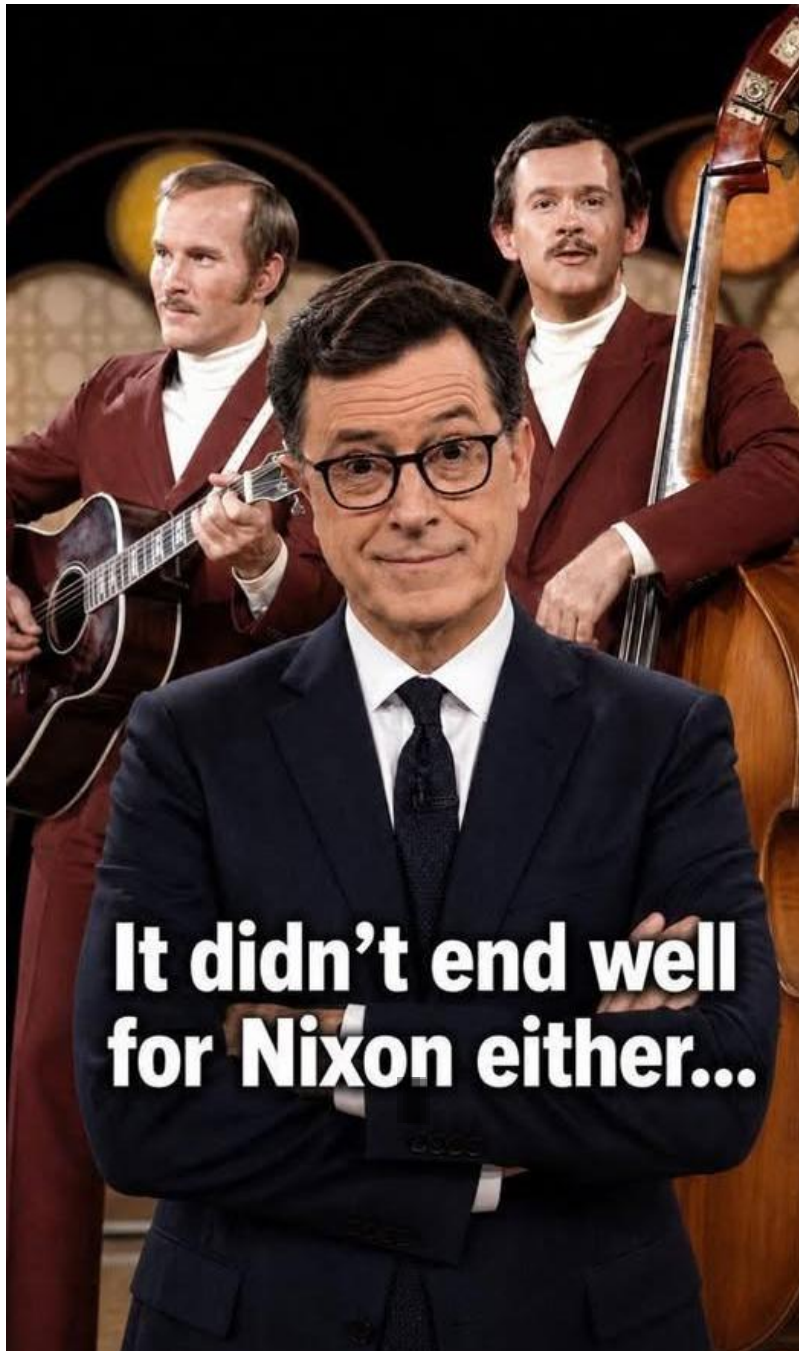
You know you're in trouble
When your shrink deals in fantasies
And leaves you with his reality

My life has become a distraction
No addition and subtractions
When it becomes an abstraction
I'll know I've found success



Photo: Patrick Stevens

COMEDY CORNER



**It didn't end well
for Nixon either...**

[threads.com/@pwitham11](https://www.threads.com/@pwitham11)

Dana Carvey parodied George H.W. Bush on SNL for years. Bush was quoted as saying *"The fact that we can laugh at each other is a very fundamental thing."* He invited Carvey to the White House as a pick-me-up for the staff after losing his re-election big in 1992. **He never tried to get Dana Carvey fired.**



HERE'S A BUNCH OF WHITE NATIONALISTS FROM ORANGE COUNTY FLASHING THE HAND SIGN FOR "WHITE POWER"



asshole

WHICH IS ALSO THE AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE SIGN FOR "ASSHOLE"



"Why don't we have a straight Pride?"



Highlighted above **in red** are all the countries where it is illegal to be heterosexual.



"Empty the register and put it on pump 4."

And just like that... I'm banned from
Victoria Secrets. 🤔🤔



**Jesus's Parents Realize He's Divine
As He Completes Carpentry
Project Without Going Back To
Home Depot A Single Time**

THOUGHTS, FEELINGS, AND MOTIVES



By James Longo

"I feel like I have too many ideas running around my head," Jack said, staring at his computer.

"Good morning to you, too," Jill said, entering the dining room and kitchen.

"Good morning," Jack said, like he had been reprimanded.

"Now what's your problem?" Jill asked, moving toward the coffee pot.

What Christians think happens during Pride month.



"Usually, I have so little to write about, but today, for some reason, I am overflowing with ideas, and I am having trouble putting them in any kind of order."

"How much is rehashed bullshit?" Jill asked with a smirk.

"Isn't it all rehashed bullshit?" Jack said, smirking back.

"Every now and then, you have a nugget." Jill poured her coffee and took a sip.

"Like what?"

"Really, you want me to tell you before I have had my coffee. You have a better chance of me strangling you than remembering something worthwhile that you wrote."

"Okay, okay, sorry," Jack said, putting his hands up in surrender, "but what about my problem?"

"Why don't you treat it like spaghetti?"

"What the fuck does that mean?"

"Throw it against the wall, and if it sticks, it's cooked; if not, throw it back into that mental pot of boiling water that is your thought process and bring it out some other day."

"Okay, I guess," Jack said, sounding unsure.

"What do you have?"

"Ran into an Immanuel Kant quote. *All a man needs to be happy is something to do, someone to love, and something to hope for.*"

"Well, that is new, if a quote from the eighteenth century can be considered new," Jill said, being supportive and a smart ass all at once.

"The problem is I always have something to do, and someone to love, but for something to hope for, I can't think of anything I am hoping for."

"Are you happy?"

"I'm not unhappy," Jack said, with a shrug.

"Maybe you should hope for always having someone to love and something to do."

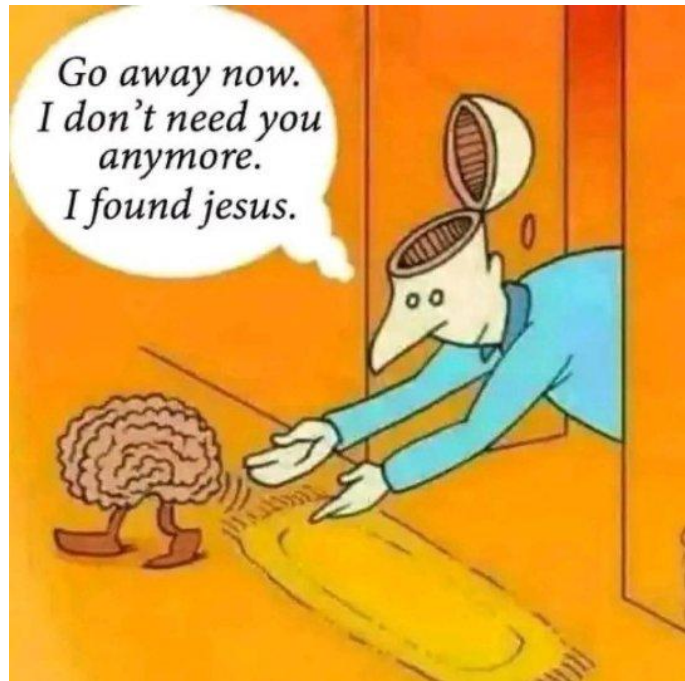
"Sounds reasonable, I guess."

"What else do you have?"

"I was reading Machiavelli and ran into the idea that all human motivation and activity comes down to self-interest."

"Wow, another blast from the past, what are we talking fifteenth century here?"

"Yeah, but what does that have to do with the price of tea in China? A valid point then is still a valid point now," Jack said defensively.

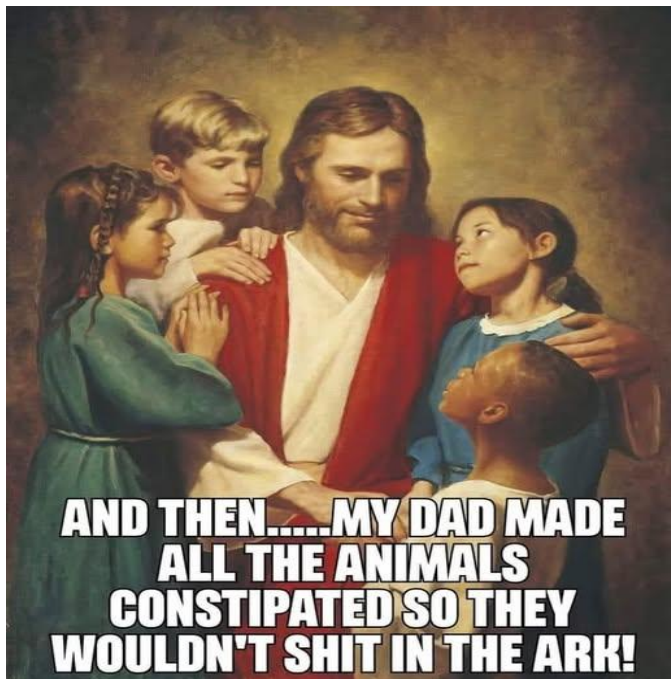


"How does that quote make you feel?"

"In my youth, I lived basically by that thought. I found it miserable. I wouldn't trust anyone and felt no one could trust me."

"Yeah, so what changed?"

"I still think his point is valid, but I refuse to see the world like that. It made me paranoid. I try not to look at others' motivations, and as for mine, I find satisfying others' self-interest makes me feel better."



"Better, better than what?"

"Nihilism," Jack said with a blank stare.

"Why not hedonism?" Jill said back with a smirk.

"Life as meaningless, nothingness, made me depressed, and for a life in pursuit of pleasure alone just seemed a waste, fun, but wasteful. As for hedonistic nihilism, isn't that

destruction waiting to happen?"

"I don't mean to cut you short, but I have to get ready to do one third of Kant's happiness quotation, Machiavelli's fulfillment of mine and others' self-interests for this meaningless existence, so I can come home and pursue my pleasure."

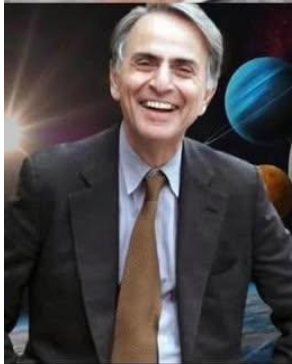
"That's one way to look at things," Jack said.

"Yes, it is," Jill said and headed for the showers.

According to the Christian faith

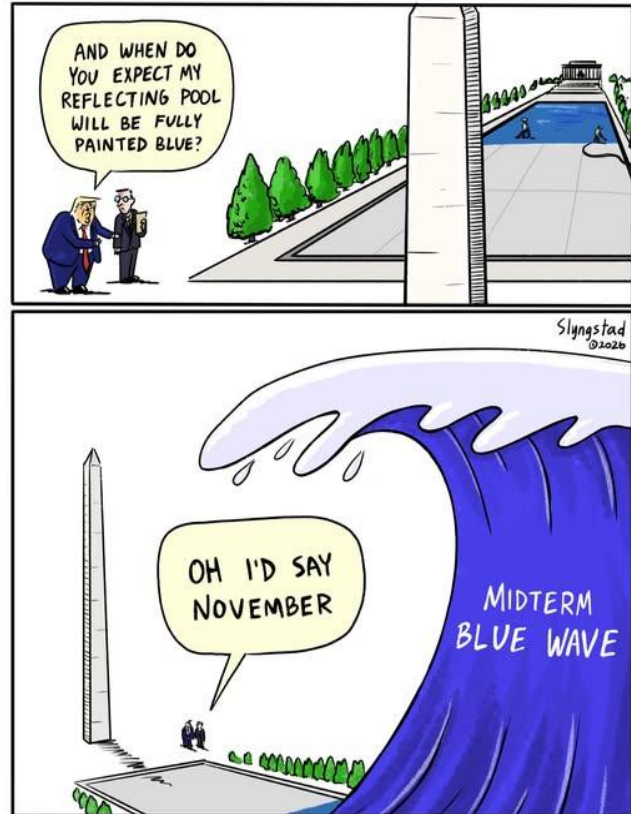


Jeffrey Dahmer murdered 17 people, converts to Christianity while in prison and is now in heaven with god.



Carl Sagan, astronomer, planetary scientist, cosmologist, astrophysicist, astrobiologist, educator and author, rejects the notion of gods and is therefore now burning for eternity in hell.

CHRISTIAN MORALITY IS SOCIOPATHIC

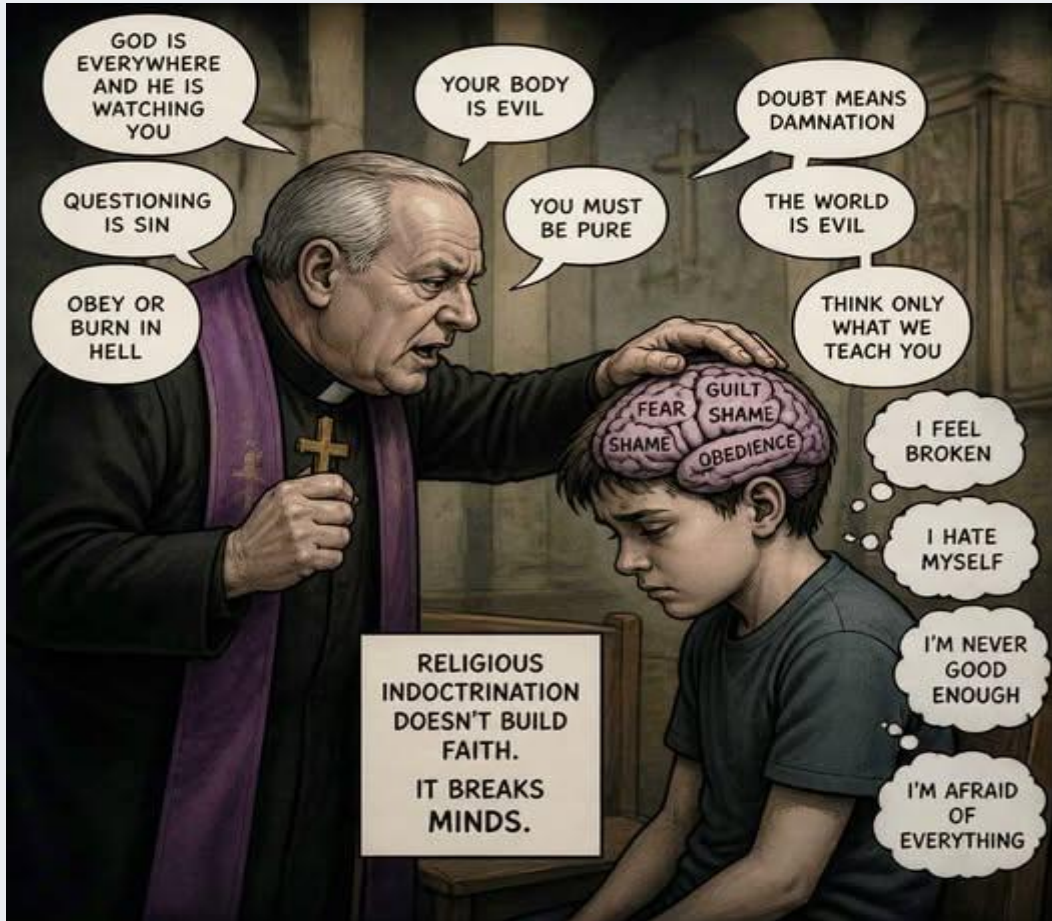




Select all the squares that show the work of a loving, Omnipotent god.



A Schizophrenic's Guide to Speaking Fluent Blasphemy



By Virgil Thorp

"God may indeed own you. No god owns me," Easy Rider said aloud. "I shook off my chains. Once upon a time, when I was very young, they, (you know, they, my family) dressed me in chains of Amgod (dogma spelled backwards. It's like playing a 33 1/3 record backwards at 78 rpm – and why does revolutions per minute sound so rebellious?). You can imagine so many evil messages at that speed. I tried it once. I expected to be struck

down by heavenly lightning. But nope, not at all. Hell, I didn't even get an erection!

"Lately (and I know it is because of my current grief for the loss of a loved one) so many Christians have been so fucking eager to convince me that my loss is only a temporary thing. That God has a plan that will reunite my wife and all our pets in an afterlife. A family unit, happily praising God together happily ever after.

"Often, I am in a place or chair or medical implement where I cannot easily move or walk out on them when they do this shit to me."

The most recent came last week during Easy Rider's Vascular clinic visit. The nurses' assistant – one of the sweetest people in all the world – attempted to convince him of an actual supreme being by using her finger to point upwards – he could only assume she thought she was pointing to heaven – and declaring with total conviction, "there is a god up there." And then she applied a strong dollop of guilt, "and he loves you!" Like the addition of a dollop of sour cream on his taco.

Easy doesn't like sour cream on his taco. He wanted to blurt out, "this is a doctor's office. This is a place devoted to medical science. Not mythology! What the fuck are you doing here with such unscientific beliefs? You had me stand on a scale to see how much I weighed, took my blood pressure, systole and distal, oxygen readings all correct, confirmed my medications, and here you are telling me I should stop being a sceptic and start believing in your unsubstantiated holy ghostly entity! How scientific are you when you did not notice that over the last year, I have lost sixty fucking pounds! Why are you not paying attention to that little detail? Goddamn it, you took my co-pay at the door!"

But, he held my tongue. I mean his tongue. Swallowed his admonition as well as his pride.

Otherwise, the assistant was very nice, she really thought she was relieving his grief, although Easy would officially wager she firmly believed in the power of prayer. "Take your fucking witch doctor fairytales elsewhere, please," was a mere fluttering thought in his brain.

Fortunately for Easy, she was only a nurse's assistant, an administrative member and not the physician. And, for the record, it was a nurse practitioner who saw him later, yet was very thorough and medically proficient. "I checked your records; did we do a carotid flush in the last three years?" And then dispelled any notion of education by declaring with a giggle, "we will root that plaque goop right out of your chute." With her face set in what looked like a snarl, she made a small fist and moved it like an augur across his vision.



But Easy was a chickenshit, he did not ask her if she believed in a ghostlike almighty entity. He did not taunt her with the story of Noah and the murderous flood or tease her with the dubious 'virgin' birth. "How did your eggs get fertilized, lady?"

And Easy knew what he was, an incredible soft chickenshit. He equivocated, 'But, she was so kind otherwise. I couldn't challenge her or reveal why I no longer believe without shattering her nonsense.' Poor spineless Easy.

Creationist and fundamentalist, Ken Ham is convinced that there is a holy ghostly entity called God and declares, since God



created all of us, our bodies belong to that god. Such pitifully simple logic. Nuance thoroughly escapes him. If you investigate Ham and ask him which god is he referring to, no doubt he will tell you, the God of the Holy Bible.

Did Easy want to know why? I know I want to know why. Not so much why Ham thinks so or the nurses' assistant who

warned me – I mean 'him', I mean, "Easy", against such terrible nonbelieving heresy, thinks so.

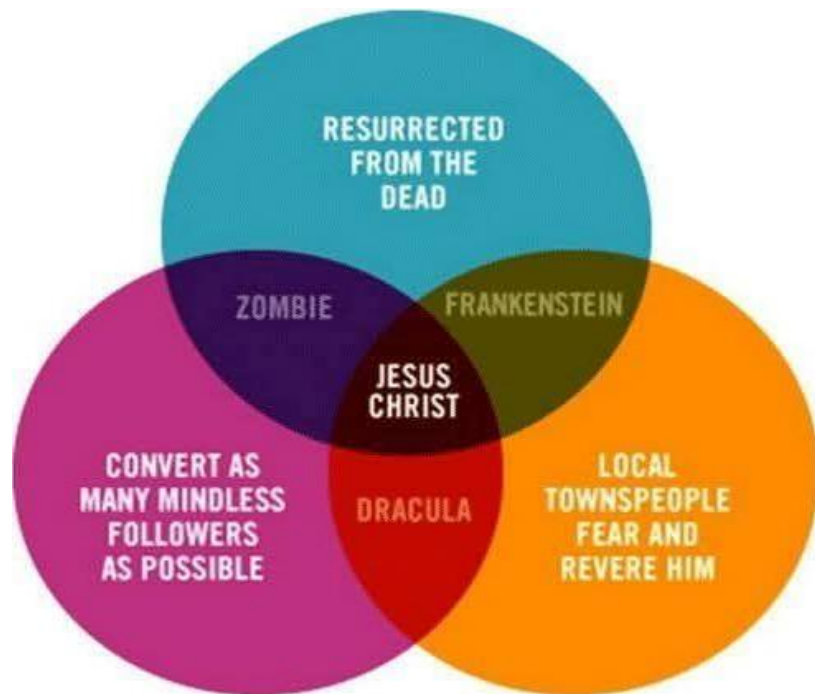
So, it came to past, Easy Rider summoned his gumption and asked, "What makes the god of the Jews any more worthy than the myths of Asgard? Or the gods who dwelt on Mt. Olympus? Or the inner peace from Buddhist meditation? Or the hundreds of other beliefs that have plagued mankind."

Social Media lurker, Lucas Irina Hardy, posted recently on Facebook, "While he was president, George Washington referred to 'God' at least 146 times and 'Providence' over 270 times. He also referred to God as 'the Great Author of the Universe,' 'the Almighty Ruler,' and the 'Almighty Being.'"

She/he (Pick a gender, I don't know, what is it with the 'Irina' middle name thing?) included a direct George Washington quote which reads in Georgie's twisted revolutionary grammar: "That Beneficent Providence, which, hitherto, has preserved us in

Peace, and increased our prosperity, will not, I trust, withdraw its protecting hand; while we, on our part, endeavour to merit a continuance of its favors."– George Washington's Letter to the Inhabitants of Shepherds Town and Its Vicinity, October 12, 1796. All that piety for a "continuance of *ITS*' favors ... "

Easy responded aloud, "That is hardly a face much less a person and certainly not a protecting hand. Washington is like my parents believing there is an omniscient defensive hand, a shield that could be withdrawn if we commit sins. Take drugs, listen to Rock n' Roll, masturbate to

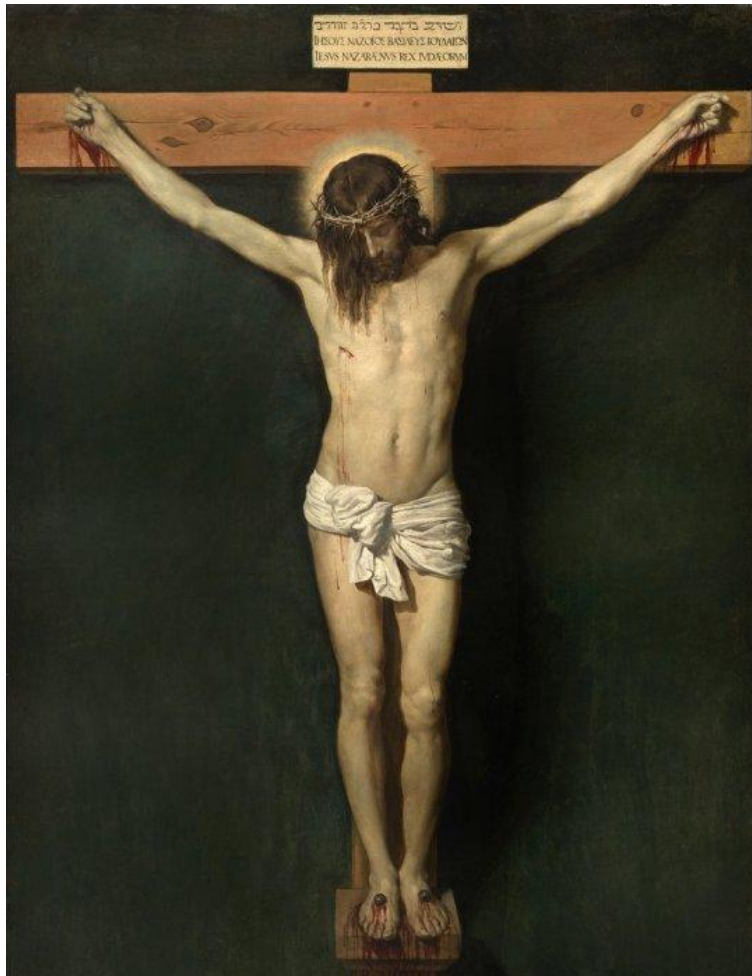


pornography late at night under the covers with a flashlight and a Playboy magazine. God of the Gaps crap ... and you want me to believe this dogma from a desert religion? A desert religion that proclaims that they, the Hebrew people are the "chosen ones". And why? Their Torah tells them so. Whoop-di-do. If it did not tell them that, I would be more apt to take their word for it."

Easy Rider's parents took that drivel and educated him with it. Easy knew his parents loved him. They had said so often enough. "God loves you too," they would say with knowing nods. Repetition upon repetition. But did they really? Were they just repeating what they had been told when they were young, so long ago? He had it all delivered, Sunday school, Vacation Bible school, Christmas pageants and Catechism classes on Saturday mornings when he wanted to stay home and watch Merrie Melody cartoons. It felt like he was developing a complex. It was then

that Easy had what religious folks call an epiphany.' He wondered, is there a book of the bible called 'epiphany.' Or is it just an excuse to have a feast, to celebrate the Magi of gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

To himself, Easy thought, *'You know, that religious indoctrination is so very much like what happens to a person who has been abused.'* He thought of his parents and what they tutored him with. The immensity of the universe was beyond them. They were happy and contented with their own ignorance. And abuse begets abuse. That must be why so many pedophilic priests said they loved their altar boys. But, how can the pedophilic priest be compared to the same loving parent? I – I mean, Easy – supposed that was why he learned to speak blasphemy ... fluently.





The comment sections on posts about Juneteenth





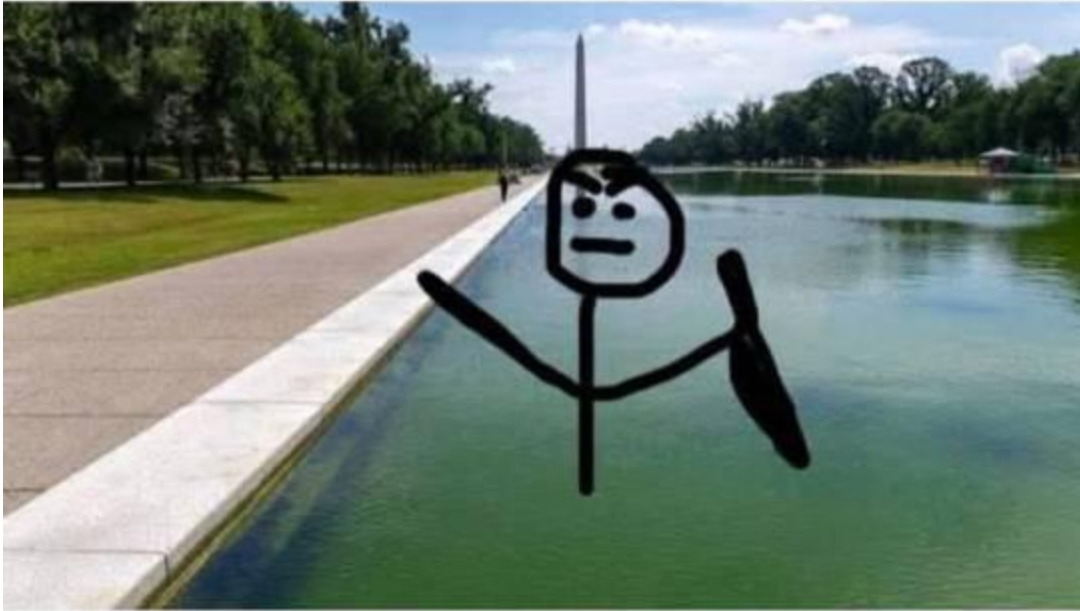
How I imagined evil as a child How evil actually looks



Mememes about Trump's Reflecting Pool



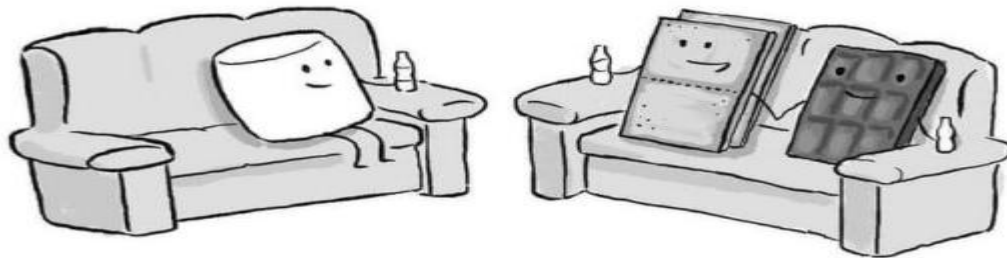
🚨 BREAKING: trump releases first
image of reflecting pool saboteur



First photo of the Reflection Pool saboteurs have been posted.

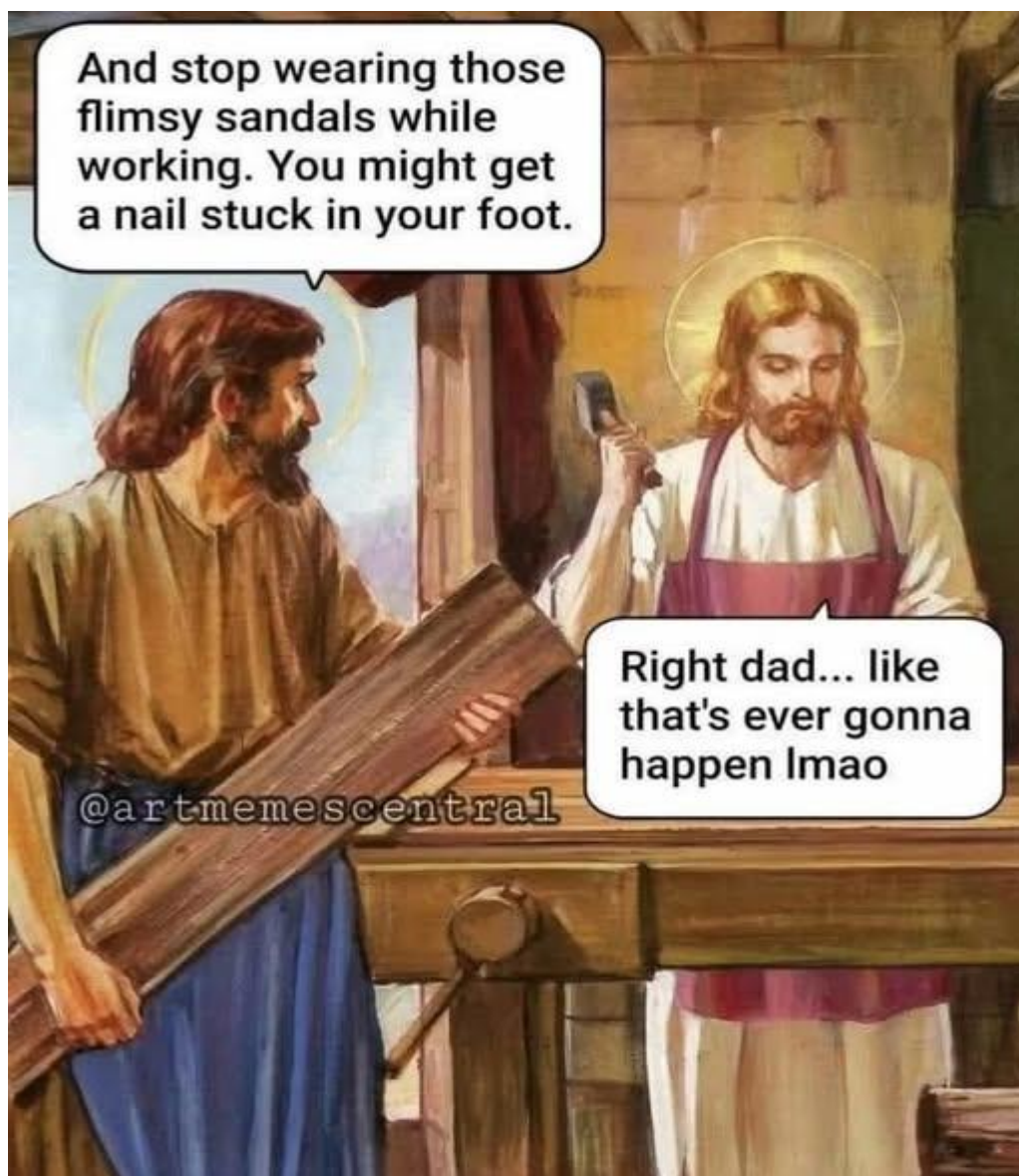






WILL SANTINO

“So, we have a proposition.”





If Jesus was hanged
would you worship
the



NOOSE?

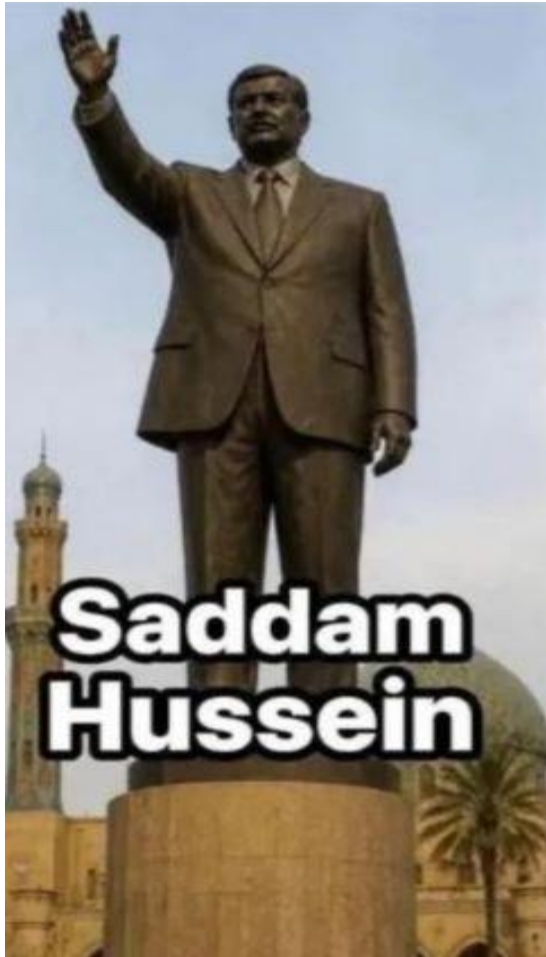
Are the dodge checks and the cheap gas and groceries in the room with us right now?





The cashier told me "StripDown
Facing Me".

By the time I realized they meant
the debit card, it was too late.



**Saddam
Hussein**



**So damn
Insane**

**My second attempt at
making a protein shake.
What am I doing wrong?**



**In a sane world, we'd
be discussing giving a
million dollars to
Jeffrey Epstein's
victims and not to the
traitors on January 6.**

