

# Home, Sweet Home

## Dispatches from the Manchurian Candidate Factory: #19

Κύριε, ἐλέησον. (Lord, have mercy.)

My own opinion (borrowing from Richard Wolin) regarding the stuff I write: "Anecdotally rich but analytically impoverished."

Date: 07/19/23

Distribution: Book group, Adams Blvd./Cochran Ave. and Environs, *Selected* (wouldn't want to get me face bashed in) Tenants of my Apartment Complex, Others.

Purpose: To Ridicule Few. To Amuse Many. To Inform All.

A reminder: because of frequent computer malfunctions, when I notice an egregious "printer's devil," I'll **bold** it and add (sic). That'll bitch it.

Copyleft notice: You're free to redistribute so long as all contents, including my name, remain intact. This is in the public domain. Bergendahl/Berg (as in Nuremberg)/*Bergie* Hawkins, Los Angeles, 2023

"... You ask yourself how it is that a people of such abilities could be governed by such a grotesque regime and that's saying the least... In fact, you're right. Without a doubt one finds more wisdom in a family of Albanian mountain people than within the assembly which supposedly represents the nation." My (somewhat unsatisfactory) translation.

— *Le Dossier H*, Ismail Kadare

One can't well argue the honor and beauty of an act by referring to its usefulness.

— Montaigne

"History: A conspiracy, not always among gentlemen, to defraud." (I can now freely attest to that.)

— Ambrose Bierce (possibly paraphrased)

"She also told me, in great detail – and I could see this childhood memory meant a lot to her – ... It was very unpleasant, Judit recalled, in a faraway voice but without complaint... But Judit continued talking, as matter-of-fact as ever... She never blamed anything or anyone; she simply remembered and observed."

— *Portraits of a Marriage*, Sándor Márai

"*Seul dans une société détraquée.*" (Alone in a malfunctioning society)

— *57 boulevard Staline*, p. 118, E. et J-P. Champseix (adapted from)

### A Brief Summary of Contents:

1) Bus system at times unusable 2) Historically unusual frequency of contact with: City, police, businesses, landlord and their associates 3) Unusual number of infestations 4) Often unable to conduct simple transactions with various concerns 5) Frequent computer and electronic malfunctions 6) Much noise, day and night 7) Often distracted and forgetful 8) Occasional debilitating pain caused by prolonged, strenuous physical activity 9) Occasional, obvious physical harassment by strangers 10) Some repeatedly shoddy work done on bungalow 11) Increasingly odd behavior of landlord 12) Lastly, Gentle Reader™, it gives me no pleasure, no pleasure at all, to caution you about the usual malarkey sprinkled throughout this dispatch.

### The Cat Walks (Backward, Natch!):

I remember *Elmira Izmailova*, a woman I met in a Manhattan loony bin in the late eighties; while she stayed with me in Westwood, once crying wordlessly, spontaneously (shades of both Irene and Colette). If I'd been callous and had had the presence of mind, I might have said "Moscow does not believe in tears" or should I, more appropriately, have substituted Langley for Moscow?

Asking myself: even if everyone falls into line, sooner or later, does the performance of the "automata" sometimes leave something to be desired. Colette, I remember, once brought me some used office supplies I'd asked for, saying "here are some not-so-good folders." A curious way of expressing herself.

Proudly wearing my kaffiyeh, at Malaysia Airlines where, for about two years, I occasionally worked as a sub-sub-contractor for *Himanshu Pathak*, I remember braving the elements there one day in, almost literally, a "war of the two directions," with some advising me to be careful with my "web surfing habits" while others seemed to congratulate me on my "principled stance" regarding Jews. My friend, *Katsumasa Kozono*, once judged me to be "easily tricked." Well, yes, but then, anyone without a shred of privacy is easily manipulated. At times I felt, and still feel, like "... a blind weapon in the hands of a ... hypnotist." (Credit: Beevor, quoting someone on the Russian masses circa 1917)

(1-26-23) As I sit at home in the early evening, music playing, reading a novel, the day's *Malicious Gibberish*™ echoing through my head, I think: "I'm completely at sea, aren't I?" I've been looking for explanations for this circus, the circus writ large, that is, not the minor circus (clowns dancing in attendance on my person day after day). Explanations from "authoritative" sources. Could this need of mine have the same source as the commonplace wish for Kings or Gods? A wish for (and expectation of) definitive explanations. As though there were any such things as either complete explanations for complex problems or authoritative sources without an ax to grind. Moreover, those "in the know" are likely to be part of the very same lot that led us to this impasse, leaving this here body politic on life support and in dire need of rescue; conceivably by a foreign interest (among others), yet. Lewis Lapham once concluded that this place could be better run by *any* group of a few dozen well-educated people. I give you the Republic of *Kaputt*™: a *kaputt* republic.

In the eighties, *Subhash Sharma*, a friend from college, told me of going to court on charges of failing to file income taxes. At the end of the hearing the judge did not require him to surrender his passport, saying he trusted *Subhash*, as a Caltech man, to appear for his next hearing. And him a federal judge.

At a cafe, showing J.F. a picture of a 8749 microprocessor die, I joked: "This was my first love," before correcting myself: "or maybe my second." At which point I thought I detected a knowing look on her face. Fairly illustrates a previous remark of mine on my social prospects; a remark both harsh and accurate.

Sometime before my arrest at Santa Monica library on charges of attempted grand theft and attempted robbery (charges later changed), Jerry Sanders, founder of Advanced Micro Devices (AMD), a publicly traded manufacturer of semiconductors, once quietly sat down next(?) to me at the counter in Cafe Beverly Hills on Wilshire, a place I frequented in the eighties. He wore a white(?) suit and I recognized him almost immediately. During the brief half hour he was there, I noticed him casually glancing at the schematic I was toying with, saying nothing. He quietly ate his meal before leaving. At this point, I find it opportune to ask, though not without a certain trepidation, the question famously posed by Lenin: Who, whom?

*La Rubrique des Gueules Cassées* (A Section on War-wounded):

(4-22-23) Went to Urgent Care in the morning for foot pains which make it hard to sleep. Only partly related to the amount of walking I've been doing recently, I summarized the visit in the following email:

Hi Folks,

Have had trouble sleeping due to foot so betook myself to Kaiser:

X-ray of left foot  
Bandage put on by nurse  
3 prescribed meds for pain: - additional Diclofenac gel (which I already had) - Naproxen 500mg - Acetaminophen  
Referral to podiatrist for detached big toe nail (ugly)  
Told to get insoles (got them later elsewhere)  
Referral for later interpretation of X-ray  
(Weak?) suggestion I rest  
Offered a note excusing me from manual work (which note I refused)

The nurse also carried out a thorough local physical exam which, I believe, included checking for track marks on my lower legs and between toes as well as delicately probing the liveliness of my level of interest in pills. *On ne sais jamais...*

I'm happy to report I passed wiv' flying colors.

Later, there was also, not unexpected, a spot of bother at the pharmacy where I was hard-pressed to explain I wanted the 3 prescriptions, no more, no less, listed on the sheet handed me at Urgent Care. Not unexpected as the count (3) was a prime numbers, always a source of potential confusion in my experience.

(signed)  
Confused (but still) in LA

I forgot to mention a further moment. The PA, Balayan, looking at my crippled feet suggested the scars were the result of a previous operation. I, on guard nowadays whenever I hear a leading question, quickly corrected him, mentioning my botched suicide attempt in the late nineties. Days later, during a visit with podiatrist Dr. Kahen, he said he'd seen me before, to which I replied with some surprise. Kahen also asked if I'd ever fractured my feet; I mentioned an incident in my early teens before telling him of the suicide attempt in 1998-99.

(5-30-23) We regret to inform you that we've lost our mind. To wit:

1. Some months ago, as previously reported, I missed my stop on two consecutive buses.
2. Going to another room to look for something, I routinely forget what I went there for, a-and my bungalow is just not that big.
3. I often forget where I put my glasses, occasionally finding them on the tip of my nose. Not an occurrence to surprise anyone familiar with my saga...
4. Yesterday, at the Superior Market, as I was about to walk out, I asked the clerk for my receipt. Turns out I was holding it, as she kindly pointed out.
5. Today, getting on a #16 just below Santa Monica Blvd, asked the driver if he stopped on Santa Monica (instead of what I meant, Wilshire).
6. I sometimes find my technical thinking to be muddled. Things like arithmetic problems can take me an astonishing amount of time to work out.
7. Yesterday, 7-8-23, thinking it was Friday, I went to the Robertson branch of the Los Angeles library to pickup a book; unfortunately it was Saturday.
8. Day before yesterday, writing this on 6-6-23, as I left voicemail for a Los Angeles City council member, I clean forgot my own phone number and had to call back.
9. (6-18-23) Stupidly missed an appointment with an OfferUp seller at 8PM. I took the E Line to Vermont but, blindly following internet map directions, went east instead of west. Ended up missing seller though he waited until past 8:30PM. Rigid I am, a-and a bit stiff necked, too.

Driving me (literally, with this bus "system" run along *bashi-bazouk* lines) to distraction, they are.

The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, a definition:

#### **Article 7**

##### **Crimes Against Humanity**

1. For the purpose of this Statute, 'crime against humanity' means any of the following acts when committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population, with knowledge of the attack:
  - a. Murder;
  - b. Extermination;
  - c. Enslavement;
  - d. Deportation or forcible transfer of population;
  - e. Imprisonment or other severe deprivation of physical liberty in violation of fundamental rules of international law;
  - f. Torture;
  - g. Rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity;
  - h. Persecution against any identifiable group or collectivity on political, racial, national, ethnic, cultural, religious, gender as defined in paragraph 3, or other grounds that are universally recognized as impermissible under international law, in connection with any act referred to in this paragraph or any crime within the jurisdiction of the Court;
  - i. Enforced disappearance of persons;
  - j. The crime of apartheid;
  - k. Other inhumane acts of a similar character intentionally causing great suffering, or serious injury to body or to mental or physical health.
2. For the purpose of paragraph 1:

- a. 'Attack directed against any civilian population' means a course of conduct involving the multiple commission of acts referred to in paragraph 1 against any civilian population, pursuant to or in furtherance of a State or organizational policy to commit such attack;

### **Elements of the crime**

According to Article 7 (1) of the [Rome Statute](#), crimes against humanity do not need to be linked to an armed conflict and can also occur in peacetime, similar to the crime of genocide. That same Article provides a definition of the crime that contains the following main elements:

1. A physical element, which includes the commission of "any of the following acts":
  - a. Murder;
  - b. Extermination;
  - c. Enslavement;
  - d. Deportation or forcible transfer of population;
  - e. Imprisonment;
  - f. Torture;
  - g. Grave forms of sexual violence;
  - h. Persecution;
  - i. Enforced disappearance of persons;
  - j. The crime of apartheid;
  - k. Other inhumane acts.
2. A contextual element: "when committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population"; and
3. A mental element: "with knowledge of the attack"

The contextual element determines that crimes against humanity involve either large-scale violence in relation to the number of victims or its extension over a broad geographic area (widespread), or a methodical type of violence (systematic). This excludes random, accidental or isolated acts of violence. In addition, Article 7(2)(a) of the [Rome Statute](#) determines that crimes against humanity must be committed in furtherance of a State or organizational policy to commit an attack. The plan or policy does not need to be explicitly stipulated or formally adopted and can, therefore, be inferred from the totality of the circumstances.

In contrast with genocide, crimes against humanity do not need to target a specific group. Instead, the victim of the attack can be any civilian population, regardless of its affiliation or identity. Another important distinction is that in the case of crimes against humanity, it is not necessary to prove that there is an overall specific intent. It suffices for there to be a simple intent to commit any of the acts listed, with the exception of the act of persecution, which requires additional discriminatory intent. The perpetrator must also act with knowledge of the attack against the civilian population and that his/her action is part of that attack.

Bear in mind this place refuses to recognize the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court. Question: does a pattern of targeting, destabilizing and/or using mentally ill people by a Government, through "talent scouts" in the mental health profession as well as by other means, constitute a crime against humanity?

### The Quotable Other, i.e., *L'Enfer, c'est les Autres* (Hell is Other People) — Sartre:

In 1998-9, recovering from a botched suicide attempt at a Torrance convalescent center, I was once seen by a young doctor at Harbor-UCLA. Noticing from her accent she was French, we began speaking. When she asked how I had come by my injuries, I replied: "In a suicide attempt, I jumped off a freeway overpass." Her response (in English): "How weird." Could she have been caught off-balance, thus the unprofessional, unfeeling response?

Years ago, I remember telling Beth Wolfson and others present how, when I was a kid, to avoid a spanking, I had lied and betrayed a cousin, Vincent Llorca. Astonished is how I would describe the muted reaction. Quite right they were, too.

Why, do you know, a previous neighbor in this complex once went so far as to imitate my African war-cry? The one that goes: "Aiyéééééééééééé!" Damn cheek.

My one remaining sister Irene, someone who, in the words of her boyfriend, has been more of a mother than a sister to me; over the last months has: 1) Encouraged me to read books 2) Discouraged me from putting a solar panel on City property (at the curb, daily) as it might "change the character of the neighborhood," in her words. Really? 3) Discouraged me from keeping wood destined for my sauna build, due to termites. Something's not right here. One sensible suggestion out of three (at best). What's next, a timely hint I decamp (temporarily, of course) to Italy to "veg out"? I'm thinking of dedicating a new section of HSH dispatches to such pronouncements of hers as seem of a dubious provenance; mebbe I'll call it: Do do that voodoo that you do so well. Vu?

### Sassenach™ and His Yankee Damyanke Tricks:

A definition with synonyms: "**Algo**" (Spanish for "something") **rhythms**, n., "Talk therapy" <=> Einstein's "Spooky action at a distance" <=> *Schräge Musik* <=> **Malicious Gibberish™**. With, at times, multiple simultaneous (in stereo!) coordinated musical/verbal/audio assaults occasionally rising to the level of veritable sound montages. As with Brother *Cantinflas'* "trick radio," I've also experienced the same phenomenon in a Spanish-language sports broadcast coming from the Gomez family apartment in our complex and, from across the street, occasional Mariachi music with the same curious quality of synchronization. Hip-hop also lends itself nicely to such (mis)uses. Science as subservient pimp (Credit: Forster). Hey, "I'm alright with it," so long as it doesn't violate the laws of physics, that is.

(5-21-23) As I sit listening to Donald Byrd's musical group, Blackbyrds, followed by the strains of Elgar's *Pomp and Circumstance*, a word comes to mind: "blackbirding." Even more accurate and to the point than "to Shanghai," a phrase I had previously used to describe what happened to *Subhash Sharma*, Irene Hawkins, Colette Walczak and me (almost). "Blackbirding is the coercion of people through deception or kidnapping to work as slaves or poorly paid labourers (sic) in countries distant from their native land." (Credit: Wikipedia)

My little sister "*aux petit pieds d'azure*," (hard to translate) as I once referred to her when we were children, turned career criminal; same as with my other sister.

Since yr. Friend and Humble Narrator™ recently dodged a bullet with the name “pack rat” on it, the mood has suddenly turned to what, without giving the show away, I call “Scottish Rite”-type showers. You might have to know French to get it and then again, maybe not even then. Mwahahahahaha!

### Juegos de Manos, Juegos de Villanos:

(4-10-23) While running errands today, an incident. I fear the villain here was (in great part) me. What say?

1. @11:42AM: #37 westbound, drives by, does not stop, at Adams & Dunsmuir.
2. @12:16PM: #37 drives by, does not stop.
3. @12:17PM: #37 drives by, I waive, driver waves back, was sitting on bench eight feet from sign.
4. @12:46PM: #217, ID5808, at Fairfax & Adams, driver did not stop but waived back as I waived, was leaning against bus sign.
5. @12:50PM: #38, ID5645, same location, driver did not stop but waived back as I waived.
6. @1:01PM: #105, same location, driver stops and picks me up.
7. @1:05PM: As I exit the above bus at Venice and Fairfax, a young woman, Asian, of slight built, perhaps even vulnerable-**looknig** (sic), rushes aboard before I can exit. Refusing to give way, I bump into her fairly hard. She says: “Oh.” I reply: “Very sorry” and am forced to squeeze by her to exit. Driver says and does nothing throughout. I notice another Asian woman, equally expressionless, standing outside, behind her, also waiting to board. This paragraph is known in the trade as “evidence against interest,” fairly strong stuff, apparently.
8. @3:11PM: #33, eastbound at National, did not stop.

Miss, whoever you are, I apologize for my cowardly act; an act noted and perhaps, later, acted on as, on the return leg on the #105, a Hispanic man, standing in the front, near me, droning on into a cell phone in Spanish, says, in clear English, “You think you’re bad?” Moments later, as I attempted to exit, a young black man with the usual blank expression of the *Securitate Zombies*™, rushed past me in a near reprise of the above lamentable incident. This time, I proved to be somewhat more forbearing... Cowardly, cowardly custard. *Zero de conduite!*

(4-30-23) This afternoon, after depositing another cartload at my U-Haul storage, while resting at the Obama stop of the northbound #212 on the way home, I was hit in the neck and/or side of head by one or more small objects, with the source possibly a car driving by. Second time in the last months. You’ll recall the event on 3-16-23, reported in a previous email, in which a cup near the open kitchen door, I later found with a tiny hole outside and a larger one inside. Then there was the incident, many months ago, in which, walking back on La Brea from some shopping at CVS, I felt two unknown objects lightly strike both my shoulders, one after the other in quick succession.

(4-18-23) AFJ’s termite man came by, no sooner had he parked and begun his work that a meter reader ticketed him, something I had not seen in many months.

Returning from my first load to U-Haul, at 4PM, I sat with my empty cart at the #212 stop on Jefferson, resting and facing away from the street when a deranged old man sat down, saying things in my general direction. I ignored him when suddenly I felt something tugging at my waistband, I turned toward him and the tugging, whatever it was, stopped. As he continued talking incoherently and I ignored him, he began eating a sandwich. Later, a bus pulled up, he made to board but the driver pulled away. He immediately threw a metal file at it which broke a window, before returning to his seat near me. He calmly retrieving the half-sandwich he had dropped on the sidewalk and resuming his munching (how’s that for “verisimilitude,” Eh?). A torrent of invective pouring forth all the while. Another madman of the brummagem variety? Another of the Mimic Men™? I noticed the driver of the bus he had hit, stopped her bus after the intersection, exited and waited some time, looking in our direction.

(6-25-23) *Gadiel Velázquez*, prominently featured in my *Open Letter to a Cannibal*, no longer speaks to me. He who 1) Offered to pay me and lend a car to drive his daughters 2) Had me sign for the release of his impounded car, saying he did not have his driver’s license 3) Repeatedly loaned me a battery to jump start my disabled car 4) Had me print from his cell phone, as did his wife later that day.

### Speed Bumps on the Road to Ragnarök:

(3-21-23) Was visited by City inspector Thomas Reichmann after I had complained about the state of my bungalow. Initially there was some confusion on his part about the unit number, he was adamant that there had to be one, becoming increasingly insistent until I showed him what he began asking for: a bill or note with my address on it.

His points, as I understand them:

1. He immediately said: “Too much stuff,” and offered to inspect only the outside as he would otherwise be forced to cite me for the violations he noticed as he came in. I refused, saying I wanted him to be thorough and that I wanted nothing hanging over my head.
2. The walk space must be the width of a door throughout bungalow.
3. Ceiling needs repairs in living and bedroom. He warned I would be required to remove much/all stuff so work could proceed.
4. Found structural damages by termites, outside bungalow only, adding he was not allowed to look elsewhere as the private inspector I hired had.
5. Found a front screen door lock needing replacement.
6. Agreed back door lock I showed him needs replacing.
7. Agreed area under sink needed work. Said a coat of paint would satisfy City’s requirements (same as the Health Dept. inspector over a year ago)
8. Said storage of items in bathroom (two bookshelves) is not allowed.
9. Said kitchen storage (a shelf with electronics, two Ikea CD shelves, lateral file cabinet) is not allowed. Kitchen meant to store utensils and plates only.
10. Broken cupboard door under sink must be fixed by landlord.
11. He added there would be a re-inspection after 30 days (+7 days?).

Questions which, at the time, with the exception of #2 below, were never answered:

1. When do I get a list of repairs to be made?
2. When do I get list of violations to be fixed?
3. Do I depend on landlord for this list or City?
4. How extensive will disruption be for fixing ceiling stucco?
5. What does City require landlord to do about termites?

Mr. Reichmann told me that the kitchen was for storage of kitchen-related items *only*. Could this be what the woman from the LAHD complaint department meant when she said: “this time we’ll take it seriously”? If, as I’ve said before, I’m willing to camp out in the ashes of this apartment, you can bet that, should I have to remove every stick of furniture, every bit of the impedimenta of the hoarder that I am, from this ever-shrinking bungalow (my *peau de chagrin*), when requested to do so as a result of findings of this or the next Reichmann, I. Will. Comply. For I know which side of the Atlantic my butter is on.

During Reichmann’s inspection, especially in the first fifteen minutes, as he energetically and repeatedly requested and looked for a bungalow unit number, I quietly had to repeat that there was none. And, since no mention had ever been made of a unit number in my complaint, only of a house address, I think it puzzling. To my mind, this all is ample justification for my current habit of avoiding *anyone* associated with AFJ Investment; whether owner, employees, contractors, (some) tenants, City employees, even. Lastly when, toward the end of the inspection, I said I was concerned about the long-standing termite problem as I intended to live here a long time yet and that I did not want the bungalow to eventually collapse around my ears, Mr. Reichmann earnestly assured me that as this was a single-story, single family dwelling I was in no physical danger... I replied I was being facetious and, with that, we bid each other good day.

(4-26-23) Today José Nava, from AFJ came by for repairs requested by the City. When I asked how much I might have to move for him to fix the ceiling, he replied I wouldn’t have to. Reason I asked was that inspector Reichmann had said I’d have to move most everything in order for ceiling repairs to be made.

(6-1-23) Further work (the City’s needs seem insatiable, never have I had so many inspections and needed repairs) drove me to flee. And so I headed for Kaiser Vision Essentials to have my glasses checked. First though, I had to weather a variant of the now-frequent “bus scheduling conflict.” This bus, #37, ID5867, while letting off two passengers did so at some distance from the stop sign, requiring me to walk several feet and, as I was about to reach the doors, the driver chose to speed off, leaving me to try my luck with the next one. Later, exiting a #105 at Adams, after excusing my way past 3-4 passengers, I found, in this particular stampede, an old woman had already boarded. As I motioned for her to retreat (though she was not blocking the way completely), she loudly and repeatedly, said: “Go!” with the driver chiming in equally loudly. Before I made good my escape “got off,” I turned to the rear and, addressing passengers, said: “Did you see that?” before exiting without another word.

#### The Aftermath of the Repairs, Told in Pictures:

(5-3-23) Yesterday, on City Inspector Reichmann’s whirlwind re-inspection, I made myself scarce and so, was unable to learn what he had concluded. What I can do, though, is show the nature of some of the mess and repairs made by José Nava and a couple I’ve seen before, two AFJ contractors.



Figure 1: The rug, same place as the next 2 pictures.



Figure 2: My stereo amplifier, also nearby.



Figure 3: My Yamaha piano unfortunately located directly under a spot on the ceiling to be patched.



Figure 4: Termite damage, before “repairs.”



Figure 5: Voila! “Repairs” made. White goop spread over rotten wood. Very much SOP around these parts. (Update: 6-8-23. Further repairs made since then).



Figure 6: Closeup of Figure 5.



Figure 7: Another (minor) casualty of the day's effort.



Figure 8: And on a Christmas card, too.

I guess good Mr. Nava is not in the habit of using a drop cloth or cleaning up after himself. Additionally, in a non-reply to my third request for clarification on the extra rent I am being charged (see a previous HSH and emails below), Tiffany Anderson chose to bill me for the work of a termite exterminator; an amount she did not see fit to include in her reply of yesterday; neither did she address my initial question.

Email to Tiffany Anderson:

Date: 5/2/23

Distribution: LAHD, Health Department, Irene Hawkins, Beth Wolfson, Others, Tiffany Anderson, owner – AFJ Investment

Subject: A further requests for clarification

Hi Tiffany Anderson,

A question about the following list of repairs and problems outstanding, in the form of a multiple choice. Items fixed are crossed out:

1. ~~Leaking faucet in kitchen~~
2. ~~Leaking kitchen sink~~
3. ~~Rat infestation~~
4. Mold
5. Termite infestation with structural damage
6. No reply to City's Health Department requests about complaints: CO0359602, CO0362878, CO0364020 and CO0362511 (some complaint numbers may be redundant or even incorrect as communication audio quality with the Health Dept. has been poor lately), regarding my complaint(s) about infestations and mold
7. No response to request by LAPD Southwest Division's Detective Hargrove for information on one of your long-time tenants in this complex, a man I only know as Tyson, in connection with one of two assaults last year
8. Replacement kitchen faucet now showing symptoms: - A low, loud rumbling sound accompanied by shaking of the faucet. Water flow stopping abruptly before sometimes resuming at a reduced flow rate. This began after I turned the valve under sink to reduce faucet flow to a manageable rate. (Audio, pics and video available)
9. ~~No reply to emails contesting amount(s) of rent due~~
10. The vexing, ticklish question of whether I'm liable for a prepayment penalty if I'm right regarding #9 (disputed rent payments) and am found by City to have overpaid
11. No reply to my complaint about the replaced faucet in kitchen which is now almost unusable
12. ~~No replies to my repeated requests for discussion of disputed \$53.64 rent past due, forcing me to pay to avoid a possible further cascade of problems~~
13. ~~No explanation provided for additional charge of \$31.29 found at your payment portal yesterday~~
14. About #5, nothing has been done to repair the obvious structural damage due to termites. Neither have you told me what else you intend to do about the private termite inspector's report. I sent you a copy in January, surely enough time to have decided on a course of action
15. The puzzle of your latest 3-day notice to pay rent in arrears with the disputed sum in the amount of \$0.00. Surely there must be some mistake here. Surely
16. The question of a refund of the contested \$53.29, a payment I made to forestall any unpleasant consequences. This murky situation is not helped by your steadfast silence. And, as I am a poor man and you, Tiffany Anderson, are part of the "owning classes," I'm afraid I'll have to eventually insist on a refund
17. Regarding #8, the kitchen faucet's condition has reached the point where, maybe as a result of the shaking, the whole faucet assembly has come loose. Also, the faucet noise is at a level where I'm afraid I'm causing a disturbance in the complex whenever I turn it on. How embarrassing for me
18. Uneven flow of water from the bathroom faucet, sometimes slowing to a trickle

I say again: which answer best fits your and your (upper?) management's thinking at this point?

- a) Will attend to or fix all of the above
- b) Will attend to or fix some of the above
- c) Will attend to or fix none of the above
- d) Management prefers not to answer at this time (the default)

Thanks,

(signed)

Bergendahl/Berg (as in Nuremberg)/Bergie Hawkins, yr. tenant at 2626 S Cochran Ave, LA 90016

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P.S. Tiffany Anderson, may I remind you: I firmly believe that, though we may not be on the same team, we are certainly on the same side.

P.P.S. Bleak Lives Matter™ .

P.P.P.S. To my sisters Irene and Colette (the latter dead of cancer in 2018): May our wordless tears, both yours and mine, eventually prove invincible.

And her (non-reply) reply:

Good Morning Berg,

Hope all is well. Do you remember we sent the exterminator to treat for termites. We have the invoice. If you need a copy I can send it to you.

Also our workman have been in and out of your unit to make all repairs. I have confirmed with my workman that everything is completed and an inspection is scheduled for this morning. I personally put a 24 hour notice on your door per your request. If you would like to talk or schedule an in Unit appointment please contact the office.

Best regards

323-735-1315  
Tiffany Answeron (sic)

(5-23-23) Email to Tiffany Anderson in reply to her note of 5-2-23:

Date: 5/23/23

Distribution: LAHD – attn: Inspector Maria Estrada, Health Department – attn Inspector Harminder(?), Irene Hawkins, Beth Wolfson, Others, Tiffany Anderson, owner – AFJ Investment

Subject: A further requests for clarification

Hi Tiffany Anderson,

A question about the following list of repairs and problems outstanding, in the form of a multiple choice. Items ~~fixed~~ attended to are crossed out:

1. ~~Leaking faucet in kitchen~~
2. ~~Leaking kitchen sink~~
3. ~~Rat infestation~~
4. ~~Mold~~
5. ~~Termite infestation with structural damage~~
6. No reply to City's Health Department requests about complaints: CO0359602, CO0362878, CO0364020 and CO0362511 (some complaint numbers may be redundant or even incorrect as communication audio quality with the Health Dept. has been poor lately), regarding my complaint(s) about infestations and mold
7. No response to request by LAPD Southwest Division's Detective Hargrove for information on one of your long-time tenants in this complex, a man I only know as Tyson, in connection with one of two assaults last year
8. Replacement kitchen faucet now showing symptoms: - A low, loud rumbling sound accompanied by shaking of the faucet. Water flow stopping abruptly before sometimes resuming at a reduced flow rate. This began after I turned the valve under sink to reduce faucet flow to a manageable rate. (Audio, pics and video available)
9. ~~No reply to emails contesting amount(s) of rent due~~
10. The vexing, ticklish question of whether I'm liable for a prepayment penalty if I'm right regarding #9 (disputed rent payments) and am found by City to have overpaid
11. No reply to my complaint about the replaced faucet in kitchen which is now almost unusable
12. ~~No replies to my repeated requests for discussion of disputed \$53.64 rent past due, forcing me to pay to avoid a possible further cascade of problems~~
13. ~~No explanation provided for additional charge of \$31.29 found at your payment portal yesterday~~
14. ~~About #5, nothing has been done to repair the obvious structural damage due to termites. Neither have you told me what else you intend to do about the private termite inspector's report. I sent you a copy in January, surely enough time to have decided on a course of action~~
15. About #4, I didn't know painting over mold spots constituted effective treatment. And me prone to infections as a result of being a diabetic. An instance of a cosmetic fix?
16. About #5, I was not aware that applying a substance to cover rotting wood constitutes "generally accepted" practice for treating structural damage caused by termites. Another instance of a cosmetic fix? Maybe you could enlighten me on this score
17. The puzzle of your latest 3-day notice to pay rent in arrears with the disputed sum in the amount of \$0.00. Surely there must be some mistake here. Surely
18. The question of a refund of the contested \$53.29, a payment I made to forestall any unpleasant consequences. This murky situation is not helped by your steadfast silence. And, as I am a poor man and you, Tiffany Anderson, are part of the "owning classes," I'm afraid I'll have to eventually insist on a refund
19. Regarding #8, the kitchen faucet's condition has reached the point where, maybe as a result of the shaking, the whole faucet assembly has come loose. Also, the faucet noise is at a level where I'm afraid I'm causing a disturbance in the complex whenever I turn it on. How embarrassing for me
20. Uneven flow of water from the bathroom faucet, sometimes slowing to a trickle
21. The kitchen faucet problem has progressed to the point where, without provocation of any kind on my part - I assure you - flow sometimes stops as I try to run the water
22. I'll have to insist *again* on a proper bill for the half hour visit by your termite guy though, as suggested in your email, you seem to prefer barter. I don't want any potential nasty surprises hanging over my head as happened with your bill for the window I broke last year. If I understand, you want to substitute what you owe me for the excess rent for what I owe(?) on the termite man's bill; a bit murky for me. The City, too, may eventually (as complaint # SO279496 for illegal rent increase, makes it's way through the bureaucracy) take a dim view of these practices. How about a little of that *glasnost*? Please
23. While patching the bungalow ceiling, ordered by the City, your employee, José Nava, left spots on my piano, carpet, stereo, a USB stick, speakers and so on. Could you perhaps remind him there are still areas of my bungalow which remain unspotted?

I say again: which answer best fits your and your (upper?) management's thinking at this point?

- a) Will attend to or fix all of the above
- b) Will attend to or fix some of the above
- c) Will attend to or fix none of the above
- d) Management prefers not to answer at this time (the default)

I see that our list of items has grown from 18 to 23 with a further 3 crossed off since my last note of 5/2/23. Progress of a sort.

Thanks.

(signed)

Bergendahl/Berg (as in Nuremberg)/*Bergie* Hawkins, yr. tenant at 2626 S Cochran Ave, LA 90016 This note is placed in the Public Domain. So long as my name and contents are unchanged, anyone may reproduce it at will.

P.S. Tiffany Anderson, may I remind you: I firmly believe that, though we may not be on the same team, we are certainly on the same side.

P.P.S. Bleak Lives Matter™.

P.P.P.S. To my sisters Irene and Colette (the latter dead of cancer in 2018): May our wordless tears, both yours and mine, eventually prove invincible.

With Ms. Anderson's reply of June 7 quoted below.

Good Morning Berg,

Why don't we meet on Friday between 11am and 1pm, and you can point out any remaining issues you feel still exist, because we've sent numerous vendors to address all the above mentioned issues in your unit. Can you reply to this email if that works for you.

Also you did not receive a rent increase. If you remember correctly you received a rent deduction when the additional area near the back door was removed. If you log on to your account, you can see that the deduction is being applied.

I am not clear on the other issues you mentioned, but hope you can better explain it on Friday.

Thank you,

Management

323-735-1315

The Rat Business, as Told to my Diary, a Direct Transcription with Minimal Attempts at Clarification or Editing:

(3-7-23) *Slept badly last night, got up at about 4:30AM. Much noise, rodents.*

(3-8-23) @ 12:53PM. *Slept well, no noise from rodents... 1gallon jar [in which I ferment milk] had rodent droppings inside, muslin top mostly off, rubber band still there. Tightly around neck of jar. Other droppings on counter... Threw out gallon [of milk] w. [kefir] grains.*

(3-9-23) @3:39AM. *Went to bed at ~2AM, by 3AM, got up, could not sleep because of rodent noises in living room... Just saw a rodent on my plants. 3 feet away.*

(3-9-23) @10:09AM *Brother C. outside talking on cell phone(?), in exaggeratedly loud voice, on lawn(?). Woke me up.*

1. *Jose Nava, here for repairs says: "Where is the light?" "Are you going/leaving?"*
2. *I left immed[iately]*
3. *#210 bus did not announce set of stops*
4. *I got off bus late, at 80<sup>th</sup> St.*
5. *On bus ID5737, #108(?) a woman screaming*
6. *Got on Slauson bus at Crenshaw, overshot my Home Depot stop by a couple of blocks...*
7. *Some difficulty at Home Depot ordering vapor barrier*

Once aboard, several people began screaming at the same time. There was a woman, possibly of Nigerian descent, shrieking. The word witchcraft was used. Much *Schräge Musik* in evidence throughout, by which I mean something resembling Einstein's "spooky action at a distance" thing. And, amid the racket (so to speak), I managed, in my confusion to miss my bus stop on two consecutive buses. If I may mix metaphors, a sad example of "rats in the belfry"?

(3-9-23) @ 1:24PM. *Bus 210, ID4155, more than 1 passenger screaming. One shrieking. Since I boarded southbound 210, Crenshaw*

1. *Did not sleep last night*
2. *Elliott [Derzaph] picked me up after 7:30PM First said no, when I suggested tonight (last night), then said he'd be over at 7:30PM. We could not find coffee place & Vee's Cafe, he declined as no parking was nearby. Finally got coffee from McD. Talked in his car about solar. I gave him the NAS. Although I proposed twice, we go to my bungalow he declined or did not answer.*
3. *Got home late. Sent him emails about what we'd talked about. Watched YouTube. Had more coffee. Went to bed at 2AM*
4. *Could not sleep as rodent noises started. I became restless & got up at 3AM. Ate had coffee. Worked a bit.*
5. *Went back to bed at daybreak. With rodent sightings a few times in my plants*
6. *Was able to rest until Brother C. (mentioned above)*
7. *Also began hearing chimes from car just outside*
8. *Chimes continued as J. Nava began knocking on door. I let him in to do plumbing and left*

(3-9-23) @23:14 ... *Tonight, I think I counted 3 separate rodents. Maybe 1 small, & 2 larger ones. I tried a mouse trap with cheese as bait, trap spring minutes later w. nothing caught & no cheese anywhere. Then I tried peanut butter, No spring trap but all PB was gone. This last in kitchen, first, first near a plant, plant almost stripped bare. Took pics of one rodent in living room, on top of bookcase.*

(3-10-23) @1:31AM *Caught 1 rodent w. mouse trap in kitchen though 2 sets of bait PB, were taken w.o. triggering the trap. Minutes ago.*

(3-10-23) @ 5:21AM *Rodents were quiet tonight, but some, one in particular, the largest, measuring 5-6 inches, gray, with a long tail, kept going up & down my bookcase with the plants on top. One plant is almost bare. This one must have made the trip a dozen times. I could not trap it, though I got another one, in the kitchen.*

(3-10-23) @ 8:32AM 310-410-3447 *Main office for inspection, in Culver City.*

(3-10-23) @ ? 00:07AM *Exterminator sent by AFJ came today. At same time as delivery of rodent traps... 4 large traps... 2 traps caught rats... Otherwise, all quiet now.*

(3-11-23) @ 21:19 *Slept well, up at 9-10AM, to bed at 11PM. No noise, no rats. Only 2 traps filled. Exterminator did not come as he said... I disposed of the 2.*

I can account for an initial cluster of five rats: My trap caught one, exterminator's traps caught two more, two others, the smallest and largest, got away. I have pics of the largest one, of the dead one my trap caught and of another, caught over a week later, not part of this cluster.

A catalog of recent infestations I've weathered: 1) Roaches 2) Termites 3) Head lice 4) Mice 5) Lizard 6) Bedbugs 7) Rats. In the Navy, I believe they bloodlessly refer to these as biologicals. What's next folks, a plague of locust perhaps? Mayhap the Marburg Virus?

(4-11-23 @ 1:09PM) At the U-Haul storage, as I struggle to prepare some large items for transfer upstairs, a customer begins complaining about my blocking the way and, strangely, asks: "Are you displaying?" adding: "You shouldn't be here." He continues in this way for a bit. I mostly ignore him, thinking to give the minimum of offense, wot wiv' 'im a potential Male Negro Suspect™. After threatening to report me to the U-Haul office for blocking the way, before he entered



the elevator, he continued his ~~jeremiad~~ zombie's lament with: "I'd better not find you here when I come back." *Mba-kayere!* (I am passed over! My occasional expression of relief. Credit: The *Herero* people and Pynchon). And, after a few more words, including "Jesus" and "Israel," he left in the elevator.

(4-12-23) Having, as they say in Poland, "eaten the frog long enough," I'm now carrying out another Scorched Earth *Aktion*, my third. Everything must go, that I might stay; or as it was put in *The Leopard*: "Everything will have to change, in order for everything to remain the same." And so, starting Monday, I began moving nearly every stick of furniture, nearly every book, nearly every piece of equipment and much inventory into semi-permanent storage at a U-Haul (unit #2726, 10x10x10, 5051 Obama Blvd, Los Angeles, 90016) nearby, with a mover scheduled for tomorrow (*Inch'Allah!*), Thursday, to help with the heavier items. I fervently hope that whatever happened with my father's stuff, put in storage when, in his early nineties, he went on his last cruise, does not recur.

(4-13-23, 4-14-23) The adventures of with *GPSmann*, my mover. The first day. He called to confirm only minutes before appearing, I was thus not ready and had to make do with moving only some of the items I'd contracted for. On our way back from the U-Haul, he insisted on following his GPS directions though it was plain to see they were wrong; attempt on my part to correct him were fruitless. The second day. We managed to make it to Palms, where I had some panels stored as I did not have the address and he was forced to rely on my directions instead of his !@#%& GPS. Coming back, I was not so lucky. He insisted, in spite of repeated entreaties, on following that darn GPS, saying the app took into account traffic conditions. This resulted in a roundabout path taking us on the 10 freeway. At rush hour. Once back at the bungalow, he insisted in packing stuff in a far from optimal way, refusing to arrange my items differently when I pointed this out to him. Running out of patience, I finally offered him two options: either he worked as I suggested in which case we would do the two trips we had previously agreed to or, if he refused, there would only be one trip at half the agreed price. He chose the second option... On our way to the storage, he again took a wrong turn, heading in the opposite direction. At least *GPSmann* was careful not to damage anything, unlike what once happened with a friend, Matt Horns. The mover's name was Dan (DJ) *Egeonigwe*(?), a quite friendly (at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> day, anyway) young man of Nigerian descent. I had found him through dolly.com. Dan *Egeonigwe*: mover, saboteur and occasional provocateur. Or was he merely another practitioner of the dark arts of *ca'canny*?

(4-15-23) Again at the U-Haul place. Appearing out of nowhere, another customer stood there, legs apart, arms on hips as I loaded solar panels into the elevator. After some minutes, he finally asked if he could use the elevator a moment. I, having had Italy much on my mind lately, replied in my bozo Italian: "*scuzzi*" (pronounced scuzzy, I believe), repeating myself at least once. At least this one did not threaten me, not verbally anyway.

(4-21-23) Spent the morning moving a last load by cart to U-Haul then waited on front lawn for the scheduled City inspection; and waited, and waited. Until 4:30PM, fifteen minutes after his last announced possible time, after which I took two dolly loads to storage, having given up on him.

(4-??-23) ... "Is anyone getting off? I say again: is anyone getting off?" Having heard this slightly off-color remark often enough, I thought I'd borrow it – just the once, though, as I have a reputation to think of. I believe my modest attempt at a jest did not go entirely unnoticed, judging from the two comments which immediately followed. Bus driver: "We don't need your mouth," a remark echoed by a passenger moments later.

(4-24-23) I can report the following events today as I rode, or tried to ride, the Los Angeles Metro bus system:

1. At about 11:44AM, a #37 bus, westbound on Adams at Dunsmuir, neglected to stop as I sat on the bus bench a few feet away.
2. At 11:46-7AM, a #37 bus ID6033, also neglected to stop.
3. At 12 noon, #37, bus ID5969 neglected to stop.
4. At 12:13PM, #37, bus ID5640, neglected to stop.
5. At 12:34PM, #37, ID5650, neglected to stop.
6. At 12:51PM, #37, ID5641 " "
7. At 1:06PM, #37, ID6004 " "
8. At 1:16PM, #37, ID5619 " "
9. Then I walked to the #33 stop on Venice at La Cienega
10. At 1:15PM, #33, stopped 10 yards west of bus sign, letting off passenger ....I said thank you and walked back to the bus bench.
11. At 2:02PM, #33, ID8631 did not pull over though I sat in beach chair at foot of bus sign.
12. At 2:04PM, #33, ID8640. I was facing away from oncoming bus, still in beach chair.
13. At 2:07PM, #33, ID8408, did not pull over,
14. Passenger with child in stroller came to bus stop, some time later, bus did stop, we all boarded.

Based on this and other cruel disappointments, I can now confidently summarize the proper protocols for boarding and riding Los Angeles Metro buses:

#### Bus Riding Free from Tears: A Guide for the Perplexed

1. Resist the temptation to wait at a bus bench though it be only feet away from the bus sign. This can hopelessly confuse the driver and will not do.
2. Do not lean against the bus stop sign, facing away from the direction the bus will eventually be coming from, feigning nonchalance by crossing one leg over the other while reading a book, in the expectation of service. This behavior is (rightly) considered cheeky and will not be countenanced.
3. Do not presume to sit on curb, immediately under bus sign and expect service (though you be a cripple). Furthermore, in the event the bus does stop, once you board, you may be greeted cautioned by a (mildly) racist threat: "We don't want to hit you, boy!"
4. Do not sit on a beach chair, facing away from bus (see #2 above), immediately under bus sign, expecting service. This is (properly) construed as passive-aggressive behavior to be dealt with peremptorily, i.e., driver may simply not stop.
5. Should you (for personal reasons) ignore a driver's loud and earnest entreaties to board; this, too, may be dealt with harshly with the driver repeatedly shouting at your back from several feet away: "You can board, sir! Get in, sir!" as you return to a seat at the bus stop shelter.
6. On no account are you to merrily waive goodbye (while possibly muttering dark imprecations under your breath – Hey, it's not an "arrestable offense.") to bus drivers as they speed by, leaving you in the dust. This attempt at irony may be misunderstood and could result in the driver flipping you off. You are, however, allowed to frantically waive them down, showing the proper one-down attitude, this behavior being considered acceptable.
7. Neither expect to be allowed to board (actual occurrences) nor expect to exit at the stop of your choice (ditto) (4-20-23 @~3PM, #37, ID6047, westbound, did not stop at Dunsmuir but at Hauser). You. Ride. On. Sufferance. Consider yourself lucky to even have been allowed to board, peasant!
8. The oft-heard and confusing line: "Are you getting off?" or (puzzling) "Did you get off?" should it be used by you: "Is anyone getting off? I say again, is anyone getting off?" a remark incautiously made by me aboard a crowded bus during my last trip to U-Haul with a loaded dolly, a day prior to a City inspection, was quickly met by a comment on my effrontery: "We don't need your mouth." This said by the driver of the southbound #212 last Friday, a remark immediately echoed by a passenger... Best to lie low 'ere.
9. Should a driver stop yards away from the bus sign under which you're standing, take it as a subtle reminder of your status. Avoid pride, make the best of it and go to him; making 磕頭 (*kou-tou*) as you board wouldn't hurt either.

10. A definition: **Meanderthal**, n. Quoting Bierce: “He zedjagged so uncomen wyde/Thet non coude pas on eyder syde...”. One who blocks the way, whether on sidewalk, in a store or bus. Should a fellow bus passenger do so, do not expect, Gentle Reader™ Rider, the driver to so much as lift a finger to urge the offender to make room for your heavily loaded dolly. You’re on your own, your best course of action may be to relinquish the contested field, exit the bus and hope for a more favorable conjuncture (actual occurrence).
11. A-and just because driver pronounces a bus to be full, doesn’t mean it necessarily is as your own definition of “full” might differ. At least he hasn’t thumbed his nose at you, cackling madly as he drives off. Should count for something, surely.
12. Understand it is the driver’s prerogative to close doors when and as he sees fit; up to you to be sufficiently nimble to avoid being trapped as they close. A predicament I’ve so far managed to avoid, though the doors have closed on me on at least two occasions, hitting me on the arms or shoulders. May I give my imagination free rein for a moment? Your dread bus driver could conceivably elect to drive off with you partly in, partly out, dragging you along like in the movie *Ben-Hur* where, somewhat to his discomfort, a fallen charioteer is dragged the length of the racetrack by his runaway horses. The potential seriousness of your (so far only imagined, thank god) predicament should give wings to your efforts to free yourself in time. *Bande de bachi-bouzouks des Carpathes!* (Credit: *Capitaine Haddock*. Sorry, no translation available at this time). NB, no inconsistency in the spelling here, merely a difference according to whether I’m using the language of Voltaire or that of Bugs Bunny (for me, the preferred mode nowadays) to spell these Turkish words, OK?

(5-2-23) A farce in a prelude and three acts:

1. #37, eastbound at Dunsmuir, allowed me to board with my heavily-laden dolly, though he asked that I not block the way.
2. @3:55PM, #212, ID5888, southbound on La Brea. I waited as a man with luggage on wheels took a long time paying his fare as I stood immediately outside, two feet from the doors with my loaded dolly. Driver, without a word, closed the doors with the man still there, paying his fare. I waived goodbye as he drove off.
3. @4:11PM, #212, ID5702, southbound at La Brea & Adams, she refused, saying my load was too large.
4. @4:14PM, #212, ID5803, southbound at Adams. She would not let me board, saying I’d have to board through back door as there were people in front. She then hesitated, conferring with supervisor, was told to let me board, lowered the ramp and, as I approached, the supervisor changed her mind. I walked back to the shelter, sat down and took notes.

In the last two instances, I gave my trademarked brisk “Thank you” before walking away to note particulars and ended up walking from Adams to the U-Haul place with my dolly. On the return leg, the dolly having essentially the same footprint as on the way out, I was allowed to board two successive buses without trouble. But never mind, this is trivial. A bit of advice to you, Gentlemen of the Organs of State Security™, either you *don’t* do what you’ve done to *mine* in the past or, the contrary being the case, you *must* be prepared to do a *hell* of a lot more in the present; come what may. Anything else is just dumb. About as dumb as thinking that if *n* brummagem car accidents don’t do the trick, then the *n+1<sup>th</sup>* surely must (Credit: A.R., personal communication). *Ö Sassenach!*

(5-5-23 @5:39PM) Bus #37, ID8421, eastbound on Adams at Dunsmuir. Sitting at curb with a heavily loaded dolly I saw two passengers board but as I moved my dolly after getting up, driver closed doors before I could react. I did not think it worthwhile to give pursuit and so, book in hand, facing away, I leaned against the light pole to await the next, presumably more cooperative, bus.

(5-27-23) eBay does not seem to be in a position to follow its own rules. In last two days I was refused a refund on an item I’d returned, reason unclear. Try as I might, I’m unable to get eBay customer service to address the question of why a refund for rat traps was refused when the deadline for a return had not expired. Neither was the person willing to put me through to someone else. The user “Deerway\_0” refused to refund and eBay upheld his side of the story; see attached pics. Secondly my book, listed for perhaps two years, was removed today with reason given that I haven’t have obtained preliminary permission for a downloadable item. See pics below.

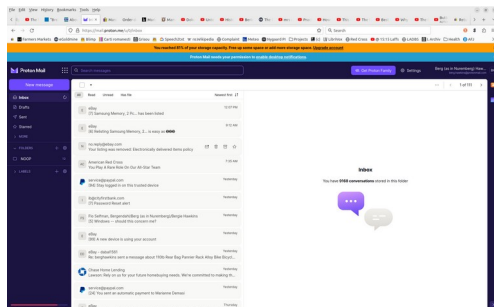


Figure 9: Notice from eBay of my book listing: “Schizophrenia Weaponized” being removed. It had been there since first publication and has an ISBN number clearly identifying it as a physical item.

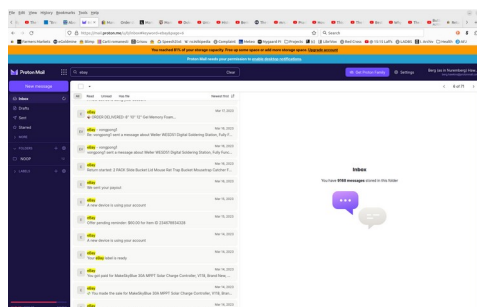


Figure 10: Rat trap return initiated on March 16, 2023

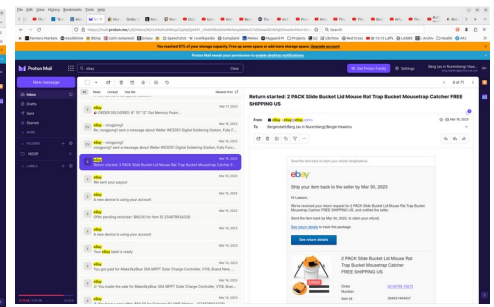


Figure 11: Second, unexplained, deadline.

(6-10-23) After a visit by AFJ ~~miracle worker~~ handyman, José Nava, I note the following: 1) He said he fixed a bathroom sewage smell by closing a valve under the house. I'd be grateful if the next time Mr. Nava drops by he could point out its location 2) He didn't fix the loose faucet fixture 3) Neither did he fix the rumbling sound, only appearing to do so by reducing the water flow, telling me it was the plumber's job when I pointed this out to him 4) We are also back to where we started months ago, with a constantly dripping faucet though, admittedly, the drip rate has improved — it has increased 5) The faucet now turns and turns without ever coming to a stop; a neat trick, that 6) Lastly, finding absence to be the better part of valor, I did not reply to Ms. Anderson's kind offer to meet in person to work out outstanding problems. (Update: 6-21-23, in a chance meeting in front of my bungalow today, Ms. Anderson repeated her offer several times, ending with: "I want to help you." I poured cold water, but was it sufficient to cool Ms. Anderson's obvious ardor? Later, thinking again about her phrasing, I find it a little weird, no? Also, I thought I detected in her eyes what I call "the objectifying gaze," you could also call it a detachment, similar to what I at one time, also saw in Colette when, coming back from a family visit, she led me on quite a merry-go-round until I asked her to leave my Garth Ave. apartment.

As an aside, Mr. Nava, during his latest visit, surprised me by entered through the "Tradesman's Entrance" (so labeled by me), i.e., the back door thoughtfully provided by the City through the good offices of AFJ Investment as part of the demolition (derby?) of my pantry — work just now completed(?). 'e needn't 'ave done that, Mr. Nava didn't; we don't stand on ceremony.

Benelux: A Kushi, it's True, but a Nice One:

(5-4-23) Riding a crowded southbound #212 around 9PM tonight, transporting a dolly stacked with milk crates to storage. I stood facing the front, the dolly ahead of me, when I began feeling something probing between my legs. Something was lightly striking the inside of the one then the other, this repeated a few times. I, without looking around, figured it to be a man who had just sat down, using his umbrella. This back and forth between my legs going on long enough, I decided a provocation was under way and thought a little 無為 (*wu wei* or action through inaction) was in order, leaving it to bus cameras possibly recording this minor outrage to eventually(?) prove decisive. But, feeling this double show, double because, just as these minions of the *Securitate*<sup>TM</sup> pretend there is no provocation happening, I pretended to not notice. And, as I exited the bus, I briefly turned around, paused, and facing the couple dozen or so passengers (some of whom *had* to have seen *something*), took a deep bow in acknowledgment of a fine performance (my own). This poor unfortunate fellow, compelled to degrade himself thus, along with Lady Lurk, Brother *Cantinflas*, the Banshee, Tub-thumper, Our Lady of the Perpetual Inspections<sup>TM</sup>, etc, etc, etc: automata all.

(5-11-23) About to board a bus on La Brea at Adams, with a dolly and boxes to take to U-Haul, the driver refused to lower the ramp, telling me it was reserved for wheelchairs. Saying "Thank you!" I walked away to note the particulars (4:09PM, #212, southbound, ID5727) and wait for another bus.

(5-11-23) A *nudnik* of the Negro Persuasion<sup>TM</sup> getting off the bus (4:23PM, #212, ID 5720) after an extended conference with the driver, persistently offered his help in getting my dolly aboard, actually grabbing hold of it as he spoke. Which offers I firmly refused. Meanwhile, the driver repeatedly confessed to being stymied as she was too close to the curb and unable to lower the ramp. A conundrum! My gentle insistence on having the ramp lowered finally did the trick. She moved the bus forward a few feet before lowering it and allowing me to board.

(5-11-23 @ 5:16PM) #37, ID8423, westbound on Adams at La Brea, did not stop. I was four feet from the bus sign and waived goodbye.

NB Though the two above incidents did occur, I wrote down particulars of the events almost as they happened; I may have the sequence, dates and/or times wrong; bus IDs are correct, though.

Of an intelligence to leave me in the dust, and (usually) kind enough not to make me aware of it, he once told me of going up to a North Vietnamese delegation at an airport to congratulate them on their victory over the US. I dimly remember, at that moment, being impressed and proud of him. *Subhash Sharma*.

*Il est vrai qu'il m'est arrivé de saluer de la main ; mais uniquement quand je travaillais du chapeau.* Don't get the joke? Good! I'm tired of having y'all in my business. Tired of it. *Pétain!*

The eightfold way, my own peculiarly Western take:

1. A vow of poverty, not that difficult for the likes of me.
2. A vow of abstinence, ditto.
3. A vow of silence (would that I had done so sooner, might have saved me from saying some dumb things) on topics of which I know nothing.
4. A vow to get my hands on my father's files and publish everything I can scrape together about him without redaction or delay.
5. For myself, a vow of transparency as regards my entire past, present and future. I am putting my complete life in the public domain, no exceptions. To whatever extent my life is not now an open book, I. Will. Make. It. So.
6. To this end, my book, *Schizophrenia Weaponized*, ISBN 978-1-7371788-1-1, is now in the public domain. I also commit to putting in the public domain every book I may yet publish about my life. They will be made available electronically and at a nominal charge on CDs, Google Drive, Proton Drive, on eBay and elsewhere, both in physical format and as a downloadable (electronically delivered) item, as soon as I have sorted out some minor problem which resulted in the physical(!) book listing being taken off eBay for my not having obtained their prior permission to list a downloadable item. See Figure 9 showing eBay's cancellation message on May 27 of this year. I'll continue selling hard copies at the usual prices.
7. I'd like to be studied, both in person and through my (likely) voluminous files, by people both competent and wholly above board. To establish what happens to a person, already mentally ill, when subjected to an environment like mine over the long term; with nothing whatever out of bounds. Sort of like donating my body to science only in this case it's my mind and the dissection happens while living.
8. And if not now, when?

(6-2-23) This morning, I inaugurated a new sort of skit, I call it a Muzak *Aktion*. I'd been inching toward it for some time but it took a conversation with a Red Cross employee who, in a determined fashion, if this is the right word for someone afflicted with diarrhea of the mouth, confused me no end as I tried to find the location of a blood donation center. She got off lightly this time, treated as she was to an extended excerpt of the Brandenburg Concertos after I quietly set the phone down and walked away. I'm prepared to go much, much further. How about, say, the theme song of the Addams Family TV show, over and over, Eh? Or maybe some choice numbers from the pair what sing in a mix of *Afrikaans* and ersatz(?) *plaasjaapie* English, *Die Antwoord*.

(6-11-23) Yesterday, an interaction with a seller from OfferUp prompted me to send the following note to the person in question:

Hi,

About the insulated flexible duct, 6"x25' for sale on OfferUp by username Ramona that we agreed on a price of \$15 for. ([https://offerup.com/inbox/message/\[redacted\]6960?alertId=\[redacted\]0588](https://offerup.com/inbox/message/[redacted]6960?alertId=[redacted]0588)). I plan on using it as part of a system to heat a DIY sauna with solar energy.

When I called [redacted]-0773 today, asking for your address and a time to meet tomorrow, Sunday 6/11/23, saying I needed to plan since I use the bus, you kindly pointed out (repeatedly) with evident worry: "It is too big for you. It is too heavy for you." Thanks for the concern but, in the heat of the moment, I forgot to mention that I believe I have a dolly for support. It slipped my mind and I forgot to mention it before you said you'd have to ask someone called Ramona and hung up. *È colpa mia, scuzzi.*

Should the dolly be, in your opinion, sufficient for the load, I'd be grateful.

Thanks.

(signed)  
Bergendahl/Berg (as in Nuremberg)/Bergie Hawkins

This note is in the Public Domain. So long as my name and contents are unchanged, anyone may reproduce it at will.

(4-22-23) My MO as I go about (in) my peculiar (daze)/days: 1) I ignore it (or pretend to) 2) I write it down 3) I write it up 4) later, I tart it up. With no expectations of accomplishing anything, except in my small, humdrum(?) personal life; just not on any wider stage, mind. For me this is a) An alibi of sorts, should anything "untoward" happen b) Occupational therapy. I'm crazy, you know c) Fun, fun, fun. I'm in this for my health one might say.

(6-25-23) Judging from the broad grin of the policeman who drove in as I left the Mitsuwa Market parking lot, it seems I bid fair to be the LAPD's fair-haired boy, as it were. With my gesture that is; a gesture to which "Brundage took umbrage," so to speak, at the 1968 Olympics.

#### Wink-wink. Nudge-nudge:

(4-5-23) Lately, as I go about my day, schlepping, I often see U-Haul trucks drive by and, with my trademark fevered imagination, I think it a compliment (as in "You haul!"). But, not being into the Kabbalah, i.e., "It's a sign!" I now confess to merely being puzzled, choosing therefore to emit no opinion whatsoever. There is, though, the matter of another message. Unless once again I'm entirely mistaken, I believe I've lately been seeing more DWP utility trucks drive by than would be normally warranted. DWP as in (Department of) "Water & Power." I dunno...

(4-6-23) After a day in which I attempted, not entirely unsuccessfully, to swim in molasses, on making it home, I relaxed on the lawn with a well deserved bottle. Later, spotting a neighbor across the street, I wandered over. He and I had a short conversation in which I explained the goings-on of late. On leaving, I shook his hand perhaps rather more firmly than was warranted. And, as he left, he commented: "you've got a good grip."

For me to *ever* leave this place, the following preconditions *must* be met: 1) I'd have to be a bigger fool than I *think* I am 2) I'd have to have more courage than I *know* I have. And so, to summarize my position at this time: "And always keep a-hold of Nurse/For fear of finding something worse." (Credit: Belloc)

#### The Provocation Will Not Be Televised or *Mine de Rien* (While Pretending Nothing is Going on):

(3-23-23) As, over the last three days, I've been unable to successfully order stuff online from Home Depot, today, Mohamed was forced to go to the mountain (Calvary, more like). Sigh.

Contacted the Los Angeles Health Department, Culver City office, about my rats; I'd been trying to schedule a visit for some time. I had a painfully drawn out conversation with the person who answered (why, even she remarked that we'd been on the phone twenty minutes) as I tried to find out what had happened to my complaint. Evelyn Yee, the employee, expressed surprise that inspector Harminder, had not yet contacted me, I finally said: "This is farcical." To which she hotly replied: "No, it's not!" I believe I'm getting the range. On 5-12-23, I spoke again with Ms. Yee about my infestation. She kindly offered to open another case (the more, the merrier?). Which offer I politely declined. (Update: 7-19-23 Some weeks ago, got an email from Mr. Harminder, giving me the number of someone in his office; I twice asking him for an email address, first getting a call (which I ignored) before finally receiving an email some days later. At this point, having other fires to put out, I replied I'd be in touch soon).

Elliott Derzaph, a sad coda of multiple fiascoes:

(4-13-23) Meetup with Elliott Derzaph to return some items and drop off donations at the Salvation Army. The unfortunate sequence of events:

1. We'd agreed to meet at the terminus of the E Line in Santa Monica on 4<sup>th</sup> Street at 5PM. Getting there well ahead of time, I waited with a book.
2. When at 5:30PM he had not shown up, I began, with my cart, the twenty minute walk to the donation center.
3. As I walked by the Salvation Army storefront on 11<sup>th</sup> Street, I overheard a man standing outside say to another: "We'll burn you out, bro."
4. Getting to the back just as the center was closing, or so I thought, as the only person there was making preparations to lock up, I handed over my items and, after asking, was told by the employee they closed at 6PM, this as he brought in a sign from the street. I left without asking for or being given a receipt. Days later, on my next trip, I again did not ask for a receipt but was given one anyway.
5. Going back to the Metro rail station, fuming, I heard Elliott call out to me repeatedly as I walked to the platform. I did not look back, neither did I say anything and had paid my fare, passed the turnstile and reached the platform when I felt my cart come to a stop. Elliott had just caught up to me, I silently gave him his items saying: "Will this be it?" He did not reply. We then each went our own way. My paranoia had let me suspect he had, by being late, tried to delay me until after the Salvation Army office had closed, though the closing time was actually 7PM, as indicated at the web site, something I had checked before leaving home. (Update 7/19/23. As of some days ago, the Santa Monica site no longer shows hours of operation.)

My apology to you, Elliott Derzaph and, considering what I imagine has happened to you and your family, I'm embarrassed by my behavior.

(5-8-23) I notice the people I "run into" in many places and especially in our complex, range in appearance anywhere from apprehensive to downright scared; some of them even look to be in need of psychiatric help and no, I don't mean Lady Lurk, the neighbor in the bungalow across from mine who moved recently (*para luchar en otros frentes?*).

(5-10-23) Coming home from my last delivery to the U-Haul storage (deliverance, at last), waiting at the Obama stop for the #212, I chanced to espy a young woman of the Hispanic persuasion headed in my general direction. Comely she was, the very model of feminine pulchritude she was, a-and wiv'out a bra. At least she didn't have a mild case of St. Vitus' as do so many I run into these days.

Shooting Fish in a Barrel I am, A-and Getting Pretty Good at it, Too (e.g., Bus Driver's Words: "We Don't Need Your Mouth." Did I Hit a Nerve?):

Lady Lurk: A fantastic caricature of a madwoman. Brother *Cantinflas*: A fantastic caricature of a black man. The Banshee: A fantastic caricature of a hysteric. And as for me: A fantastic caricature of a Knight in Shining Armor?

The barometers of my personal fortunes (and those of this here Republic(?)): The level of Tyson's, bus drivers' and Tiffany Anderson's cheekiness, to only mention a few.

At last, a suitable nickname for my dread, though long-suffering, landlady, Tiffany Anderson: Our Lady of the Perpetual Inspections™. *Ô sublime trouvaille!* Poor Ms. Anderson: erratic, tricky and a liar; and that, at best. At best, I say, because it may not be possible to characterize her at all as she seems one of *Custine's* "automata inconvenienced by a soul."

(5-7-23) Today, before 7PM, at the U-Haul place to dump (yet) another cart-full (my last, I swear it); I began hearing voices (I know, I know, not unexpected) issuing from somewhere nearby, droning on and on. Amid the usual Malicious Gibberish™, I was able to make out: "... your back hurts, your feet hurt..." Was this woman, with her mini-jeremiad, encouraging someone (me?) to take the waters at *Bad Karma*? Fer me back and feet, you unnerstand.

An old Soviet-era joke "They pretend to pay us and we pretend to work," updated. Regarding my neighbor Tyson and another, neither as yet *al fresco* almost a year after attacking me though I got police reports in both cases: "The criminals pretend to commit crimes and the police pretend to look for them." I believe we've gone the Soviets one better here.

Watching Mozart's Mass in C minor K.427, Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra on YouTube, John Eliot Gardiner conducting; I think: "I just love classical." Of course, there's also *Miah Persson* and her gown. Berg, you fraud.

As the man, someone who'd evidently made his peace with *Sassenach*™, said (in a memorable though off-putting statement): "Have fun with it!" What I'm confused about is the **meanig** (sic) of "it." Does "it" refer to a particular activity or the target of this activity?

(5-30-23) To-day, I don't mind telling you, they drove me to distraction a-and drink. "Running the gauntlet" by bus, a sample:

1. Boarding with me was an older woman; another passenger, an ersatz(?) crazy, either was already aboard or got on a few stops later. He begins shouting incomprehensibly, saying things like: "You old bitch! You old bitch!," etc., etc., etc, it went on for so long the woman, who had been sitting not far from him, moved a few seats to the front, closer to where I was, minding me own business (or at least with eyes closed, pretending to). The poor devil eventually quieted down with the rest of this leg of the trip uneventful.
2. Next bus was a case of "a stop too near, a stop too far." With two successive drivers, the one undershooting the stop by some distance, the other overshooting it. I don't remember getting on either.
3. On the following ride, there was the, by now almost routine, "mad dash for the entrance." Traffic not having been regulated by the driver, he resorted to almost shouting: "I can't move, I can't move" as I negotiated a peaceful exit with boarding passenger(s).
4. Became a bit confused on the #16, I asked the driver if he crossed Santa Monica when what I meant was Wilshire. To the puzzlement of both driver and a "Good Samaritan" of the persistent variety. They tried to alert me to the fact the bus had already crossed Santa Monica when I boarded. The latter, after futile and loud attempts at getting my attention, waiving his hand inches in front of my face (really), concluded: "Maybe he can't hear."

(6-14-23) A bit of a *fracas* to report, two roommates in my complex arguing at length, apparently unable to come to an agreement (though they couldn't possibly have been arguing from different premises, seeing as how they're roommates), last night and today. The windshield, taillight, back, top and other windows of a car I think belongs to one of them, demolished. A night's work, mostly, including crude insults, deranged trains of thought and occasional laughter. All of it happening directly across from my living room window at high volume. I could sometimes hear loud, dull thumps as some heavy object did its work on the glass. To do justice to the general atmosphere of late; what with the robo-cops (I believe I'm in a position to be specific here: namely officers "Flynn," "Evans" and now, Goetting), robo-kids a-and another(?) robo-banshee fairly strains my command of English, forcing me to invent. And so, here's my latest bit of obscure (Oh! So Sorry) malarkey: "*Les Folies (Nurem)Berg-ères*." Another tidbit of portmanteau nonsense what bears explaining.

1. First, the root: *Les Folies Bergères* (with a soft 'g'): the Paris tourist trap with women on exhibition...
2. Next, an elaboration: *Les Folies Berg-ères* (a hard 'g' here), to underline the intended villain(?) of the piece.
3. The theme is further developed from my well-known (because repeated *ad nauseam*) call sign, Berg (as in Nuremberg): *Les Folies (Nurem)Berg*.
4. From here, a last step to a finished (if not exactly polished, subtlety not being my strong suit) though obscure phrase: *Les Folies (Nurem)Berg-ères*.

The general situation 'round these parts has a distinctly "Clockwork Orange" (in every sense of the phrase) flavor. Get it?

Lately, I've taken to greeting people a-and (I'll freely confess) bus passengers with the upside down greeting: "Hi (folks), how'm I doing?" *Y'en a qui y perdent leur latin et même leur anglais*. Tooting my own horn here. Tyt! Tyt! With this last bit of multilingual malarkey to buttress my contention, I say: "I'm a poet but y'all don't know it."

Conclusions or (In the Immortal Words of Soul Brother #1 former president Obama) "The View from the Cheap Seats":

Colette during a trip to Texas, years ago, spoke of someone freeing the slaves.

Sure, my tears are a sign of weakness and emotional instability; they are also the surest proof of my sincerity and earnest of intent.

Another thumbnail self-portrait of the Intemperate Negro™ that I am: occasional (private) insensate rage tempered by (public) timidity. Although, to defend myself against charges of racial insensitivity (with possible attendant cancel threat — whatever that is), I'll plead undue influence. The influence of a biography I just finished whose subject shall forever remain unnamed, so ~~awful~~ controversial was this person. A man who, in Bolívar's phrase: "plow(ed) the sea." Rather energetically, too, he did.

My side: Shifty, Shabby, Shady or worse. Isn't it odd when, at a police station to report a crime, one officer asks you to sign in but another immediately countermands the request, making you incognito, so to speak? The other side: Criminal *and* worse, e.g., guilty of Crimes against Humanity.

McNeil's classic book: *Plagues and Peoples*. On microparasites, macroparasites and their influence on history; I call the former, *The Invisible Empire*. With the macroparasites, e.g., lions, eventually successfully engaged by man, because seen. The former not, because unseen. My job, as I see it is to make (some of) the unseen visible. The rest being left to you, Ô Gentle Reader™, as an exercise...

(signed)

(semi)*Conducător* Why (semi)*Conducător*, you ask? Because of a Romanian dissident I admire and because I'm a brother who made in electronics. That's why.

P.S. To my beloved sisters, Irene and Colette (the latter dead of breast cancer in 2018): May our wordless tears, yours and mine, eventually prove invincible.

P.P.S. Soon as the smoke of the current engagement(s) clears, I'll transcribe, using voice-to-text software, all my diaries. Once reduced to a manageable size, they'll be included as attachments in upcoming HSHs, hoping to thus preserve the viewpoint of the slave; the slave of the *damnatio ad metallum* variety. The picture below is of a sculpture of one such creature, a child of four named *Quintus Archulus*(?), a miner in Spain in the days of the Roman empire (Credit: Mary Beard/BBC/YouTube). May you know it. May you know it.



*Will there ever be a morning?*

“... and the only attitudes for men and women would be those of horror and despair.”

— Virginia Woolf on sympathy