

Solitaire/Jeu de Patience

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Though, in the last fifty years of my peculiar life, there have been several instances of the type of events I will relate, the worst of all took place recently (I began writing this on 12-5-2021), it is listed first.

- (12-1-21) A child of about five, apparently the daughter of a man visiting Anna, a neighbor, walks by me for at least the second time in a day. Visibly frightened, this child leads a dog out of our complex while I am on the sidewalk, assembling a tricycle. Noticing, I immediately see the obvious fear in her face. Turning away, I say nothing and continue my work. To give proper, additional focus to this bit of horror, for horror it is, I must remind you that I am known to have/have had an interest in underage girls. Given the obvious emotions of this child as it approached, it seems plausible that her father not only knew about me but that, furthermore (I speculate here, there are other possibilities), perhaps in order to afford some measure of protection to the kid should I attempt anything untoward, he must have sternly told her to avoid me even as he sent her in my direction. Think of the *possible* emotional injury to this poor creature, think of the *actual* moral injury to her father. The proper term for the type of people, by which I mean these Gentlemen of the *Securitate*TM and *only* them, individuals who will force a father to make his child go through this: *Cannibals*.
- A boy less than ten, son of a neighbor named Tyson, is now behaving oddly around me, something he never did before. I first noticed his changed behavior when, once, he gave me the finger from the sidewalk as I sat in my car. If I am not mistaken, he is harassing me. As are his siblings. My day-to-day life and environment baffle description, so uncommon is it. I am being harassed by a kid under ten...
- Gadiel Velasquez, a neighbor for several years thus likely to be aware of my unsavory reputation, recently offered me money to (regularly ?) drive his young daughters from school, offering me the use of his car as I do not have one right now. The first time he asked, I said I would get back to him. I did not. Days later, Gadiel again asked me. This time, I refused outright.
- In the past I have, a witness was present, seen a girl of about twelve years, someone I had never seen before, literally drape herself suggestively on the steps to my door as I approach my bungalow before she gets up and walks away without a word. I believe she is somehow related to a nearby neighbor but, as I cannot be absolutely sure, I will not mention his name.
- I have told the following story in my book available on eBay, *Schizophrenia Weaponized*. It bears retelling. Colette Walczak was my friend for over thirty five years, more of a sister, really. During the last year of her fight with breast cancer she once phoned me to say her niece was in town along with her parents. During our conversation she mentioned that the girl was thirteen and had "big boobs." After which she repeated herself before our conversation ended.

These are not isolated instances, there is a pattern at work here. A pattern of behavior by these Gentlemen of the *Securitate*TM. Of these many encounters, with all concerned living a horror to varying degrees, I have only cited a few stark, egregious violations of the dignity of the parents and the innocence of the child and ask: is this common practice and from what fevered imaginations do such ideas emerge?

Point is, once one begins cooperating with these Gentlemen of the *Securitate*TM questions may arise:

- Where does it end?
- What lies at the endpoint of this “journey”?
- At what point does one say: “This far and no further”?
- And, perhaps having belatedly come to the above decision, just how, exactly, does one stop cooperating?

The above bears thinking about if one reflects on the dire predicament of these poor creatures. By which I mean the parents forced to exploit their children in this way. These questions especially bear thinking about when one is offered the poisoned apple of “working” for these Gentlemen of the *Securitate*TM, the security services, in exchange for their turning a blind eye to one’s vulnerabilities.

To sum up, instead of the usual arrangement by which any self-respecting cannibal kills his victim before cooking and eating him; these people seem not to trouble with this preliminary step; preferring instead to eat their victims alive, bit by bit, though it take a lifetime.

(12-2-21) David Nash, an acquaintance of Matt Horns I have done PC work for, calls. He leaves a message requesting help with his computer. Noteworthy are the two words at the end of the voicemail, a nearly incomprehensible (or was it merely garbled?) send-off: “Happy Holocaust” [sic]. Could I have misheard? This interlude comes complete with some plausible deniability inherently built-in as Mr. Nash is not always the most reliable of persons. In spite of this, I returned his call, perhaps not quite believing what I had just heard. A major weakness, really. There are times when I. Just. Don’t. Want. To. Know. Somewhat typical of me.

And so, as I wrote on the back cover of my book:

I don’t have to walk,
I won’t run,
I don’t need their money,
I want a scandal.

In the last month or so, I have sold (on eBay) and shipped stuff to:

- Australia (a-and what a chore that was. When I first went to mail, the post office informed me they had no option to ship first class to that country. The nice man behind the counter even offered to show me what was on his computer screen when I betrayed my incredulity).
- Hungary (went smoothly).
- New Zealand (ditto).
- Also sold a copy of my book (domestically) on eBay two days ago. Bought media mail postage online and scheduled a pickup at my mailbox. Regarding this particular transaction, I have good news and I have bad news. Good news is, tonight, 12-2-21, I got an email confirming that

pickup *did* happen, USPS confirmation number: WEC416148132. Bad news is, since November 30, the mail carrier has *not* picked up my package sitting outside, though I have seen him twice. As to the phone conversation about this problem I had yesterday with my local post office, I prefer not to further impose on you just now, Gentle Reader™.

- And now (written on 12-2-21), I find myself shipping twenty pieces of a used integrated circuit, something called a Xilinx XC2018, to a customer with a Chinese name. Where to exactly, I know not.

The incongruity of actually selling XC2018s, now-worthless computer chips, obsolete 20 years ago, to "Greater China" (could this be the actual destination?), caused me to break into loud, repeated, convulsive bursts of laughter for minutes tonight. I had tears in my eyes and laughed like a jackass as is sometimes my habit (Colette Walczak knew the laugh). And, as I was very loud and it was late (now past midnight, as I write this), I'm afraid my reputation around my apartment complex, not to mention the wider neighborhood, may conceivably suffer (I'm rather low on my supply of that *gravitas*, right now). Never have so few (namely me) laughed so hard, for so long, over so little. The punch line: "XC2018s to Greater China." *Fokken* priceless, too killing. Mwahahahahaha!

As I re-read the malarkey in the above paragraph, an idea! I may start giving away the rest of my stock of these damn XC2018s. To celebrate. Appropriate, no? On the bus for starters. A place where I seem to spend a lot of time these days (or is it the ever-present atmospheric that make it seem that way?). Yet another bit of street theater to add to my repertory.

I hope the above anecdote will not reflect too badly on me or my sanity.

Yesterday, after two months of ~~fruitless~~ maddening exchanges of emails and phone calls, the saga of my search for guidance from LADOT parking division came to an end. A kind soul in parking enforcement assured me I could, without violating City ordinances, permanently park my solar-powered tricycle near the sidewalk to provide my bungalow with electricity. A solar hot water heater, also on the tricycle, will complete the system. With the tricycle to be parked on the grass strip between the sidewalk and the curb when I am not riding it. Before hanging up, the operator, twice, also advised me to put a lock on it...

And so, late this morning I settle on the sidewalk outside our complex, preparing to assemble a frame for the solar panel my landlord is unwilling to allow on AFJ premises, forcing me to put it on the tricycle. As I carry things to the street, a procession of women begins, one after the other, many pushing prams. I even suspect one of them was making circuits around the block as I'm pretty sure I saw her several times that morning. With what seemed like metronome regularity, they came. With trajectories perfectly timed to intersect my path just as I walk out of the front gate. Uncanny. There must be some kind of marshaling yard somewhere nearby, no?

With striking frequency, this phenomenon happens. In public places, stores, on foot or bicycle, even on my street; with people I have known for years as much as with strangers. They can be close by or heading in my general direction from across the street. Regardless, they seem to head straight for me, with the nearby ones veering away at the last moment.

My firmly adopted tactic in situations where the other person is close and possibly on a collision course with me (increasingly frequent, in recent experience): to immediately come to a full stop, with my hands crossed in front of me, looking away, while I quietly wait for the other person to pass. A

procedure at times taking several seconds, depending. If the person in question manages to bump into me in the process, I sometimes quietly say: “Excuse me.”

And then there are the ever-present refrains: “Go.” “Leave.” “Shit” (a recent innovation). “Stop.” “;Si!” etc, sometimes whispered, sometimes shouted (from the rooftops ?). Even more insidious and not unrelated, are what I call “*synthetic* ideas of reference.” The phrase “ideas of reference” describes a symptom of mental illness in which a person thinks others are talking about him. An example of the synthetic variety should illustrate and give an idea of how widespread the practice is. An Iranian émigré, living in Los Angeles, lands in Tehran for a family visit. During routine questioning by a member of Iranian state security, he finds himself innocuously asked: “Do you still have that framed picture of the Shah on the right of your mantelpiece?” Nowadays, I get variations on that particular trick several times a day. And me a paranoid schizophrenic.

(12-7-21). Waiting at a bus stop, facing away from any oncoming buses in my, by now customary, posture I manage to miss two before relenting and graciously accepting to board a third which pulled up to me rather than stopping some distance away. Immediately, I notice an awful smell but sit down anyway. Moments later, the driver charges toward the back, shouting as she passes me: “Who brought this shit on the bus (or words similar)?” A passenger had apparently “marked his linen.” With the bus smelling to high heaven, everyone soon exited, including the driver. Just outside the bus, close by, talking on her phone, she became very busy indeed until another bus pulled up. Shades of *Scheißminister*, mentioned in a previous email?

The next bus took me, without further incidents, to the post office on Washington Blvd. where I found, not completely to my surprise, two of my four packages unacceptable to the clerk. Amounting to a “wastage” of only some 50%, not too bad. Though for one of the two “refuseniks,” if I may refer to my rejected packages thus, the reason given was not valid. Both in my opinion and that of eBay – where I later complained. The post office clerk peremptorily claiming I had not paid enough postage though I tried to explain I had done so online and had benefited from a discount.

Later that afternoon, I managed to successfully retrieved several books I has reserved online from the Baldwin Hills branch of the LA public library. As you will see though, it was a ticklish business, a close-run thing indeed.

1. Arriving, I go directly to the shelves looking for mine.
2. Not finding them, I hand the clerk my card asking for their whereabouts.
3. She quickly returns with all four.
4. I hand over two books I am returning, she then gives me a receipt for the four.
5. Waiting, puzzled as to why I don’t get my books, I ask.
6. She seems confused by my question, I *quietly* repeat myself, saying that I’m waiting for the four she pulled from the shelves.
7. After further explanation on my part, she reaches behind her, and processes the four in question, before handing them to me. Claiming momentary confusion, she was.
8. My head swimming, I quickly make good my escape.

(12-8-21) Another brief interlude as I work outside, near the sidewalk. Two workmen, maybe surveyors, stop not twenty feet from me with some equipment. As they go about their work, in the next minutes, their conversation includes the following phrases:

- “Ten million dollars.” This phrase repeated at least twice, possibly more times.
- “We’ll take care of you.” Said twice or more.
- “International Date Line.”

I somehow do not find credible the possibility that people can hold a coherent conversation using all of the above phrases within a span of a few tens of seconds. Sorry.

On the same day, I witnessed a textbook example of out-and-out provocation with, as bonus, an eyewitness. I have been outside much of the afternoon working when, at about 4:30PM, I note the following sequence of events in the voice recorder I often carry:

1. Creating the “atmosphere”: As I work on the sidewalk, I have been there for hours, putting together the solar-powered tricycle, I begin noticing someone across the street speaking in a voice which carries. “Synchronization” is exhibited, a commonplace event for me. This continues for some time. (“Synchronization” is where someone’s movements immediately trigger sounds or voice from another person, see my book).
2. The “creator” leaves the scene: The source of this behavior leaves, there is silence.
3. The “witness” positions herself: At some point, a neighbor from my complex appears on the sidewalk, waiting. I do not notice her presence yet as she is behind me.
4. The “trigger-man“ appears, delivering the “payload”: A young man strolling by, soon appears. He pauses next to me and initiates a brief conversation as I work. His very first words: “Are you working?” or “Do you work?” I quietly ask him to repeat himself. We converse for a minute or so about my tricycle. After wishing me well, he leaves.
5. The “witness” silently observes: Sometime during this conversation, I first notice the young woman standing just outside my field of view. I don’t know how long she has been there.
6. The “witness” leaves: As she waits, a car pulls up, loud rap music blaring. Lyrics repeatedly mentioning gangs. She gets in the car.
7. A parting shot: As she does so, I hear her say one word: “Leave” or “Go.” This young person is the daughter of Tyson, a long-term neighbor.

Today, 12-10-21, working outside near the street, I witnessed a variant on the above scenario. This time though, the “atmosphere” was in part created by the presence for a number of minutes of one or more police cars with the assistance of a nearby neighbor, a man I have nicknamed “Tub-thumper” on account of his occasional verbal broadsides and stentorian voice. None of the officers engaged me but I could hear, for some time, the characteristic crackle of a police radio and what sounded like the voice of a dispatcher, the officer(s) mostly conversing with “Tub-thumper.” Today’s scene replicated the provocation of two days ago, literally point for point. Further details available upon request

Bref, un programme chargé. (In summary, quite a busy show.)

Sometime during the Ceaușescu years, a nation-wide joke contest is announced. With third prize of 100 Lei, second prize of 1000 Lei. First prize: fifteen years. Thank G*d we're Americans. ¿Qué no?

Watched another Stéphane Bern documentary, this one on Zola. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TUdnSX7DbnE> (in French). Did you know that in 19th century slang a "zola" could be a chamber

pot? How fitting (for my purposes anyway, as I have one dangling all day from a hook on my porch. Rank provocation on my part, wot?). The word "Zola," roughly the French equivalent of "potty mouth."

Bismark used to quip that G*d looked after drunks, fools and Americans. Well, I'm an American myself, a-and I don't drink... (could I be a twofer perhaps?). Maybe this helps explain how in G*d's name I've been able to sleepwalk through so many successive minefields over the last fifty years and emerge (relatively) unscathed. Or could another (partial) answer to this riddle lie in my pronounced eccentricities? I mean, really...

As to the title of this piece, "Solitaire/*Jeu de Patience*." It hints at both my predicament (in English) and stance (in French). I have ended every friendship, some with people I have known for decades; they having made their peace with *Sassenach* and, in the process, become entirely too frantic in their trolling for my taste. I am therefore alone, quite alone. Recently, as suggested by a therapist at Kaiser, I joined video/phone peer support groups at the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) and something called the "Friendship Line." As to the French translation of the word Solitaire: "*Jeu de Patience*" (Game of Patience), it refers to my stance, briefly mentioned above, regarding the increasingly frequent, at times *distasteful in the extreme*, provocations I must endure throughout the day.

Thanks for your attention,
(signed)
Bergendahl/Bergie (in LA, Natch!)

P.S. To Irene: May our wordless tears eventually prove invincible.

P.P.S. The message I sent the customer who ordered these darn chips:

New message to: [redacted]
To:
[redacted]
[redacted] Airport Way
Portland OR [redacted]
US

Hello,
Your order is much appreciated.
However, there may be a delay in shipping as I am having a slight problem of an unknown technical nature in dealing with the USPS web site when I attempt to schedule a pickup of the item.
A tracking number has been successfully issued by eBay: [redacted]
Thanks,
Bergendahl/Bergie (in Los Angeles)

P.P.P.S. When Sister #1 says to police as they try to prevent me killing myself at her studio in Manhattan: "I don't want to lose him," that buys a *certain* amount of loyalty. When Sister #2 says to me in my kitchen, with tears in her eyes, at a time when she was manipulating me to, among other things, get me to kill myself: "It would not be good for you," that too, buys a *certain* amount of loyalty. There are, of course, *certain* other conclusions one could draw from these two incidents... I will refrain.