

Home, Sweet Home: Dispatches from the Manchurian Candidate Factory: #12

Κύριε, ἐλέησον. (Lord, have mercy.)

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

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

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“Having gotten mixed-up in writing, I have been punished for my impudence;
Refractory, I have offended my era’s mentality.
The accumulated calumnies could very well get the better of my carcass;
As useless as it may be, my voice will nevertheless survive in these pages.

— Lu Xun’s autograph/poem (1933). My translation from the French

“Les autres, du moins, avaient honte de leur brigandage ; mais que faire avec celui-ci qui en est fier!” (The others, at least, were ashamed of their depredations; but what’s to be done with this one who’s proud of them!)
— Julien Benda, quoting from a story by Tolstoy. My translation

The Cat Walks (Backward, Natch!)

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

(11-15-22) Walking home after running errands, I made a detour up La Cienega to the Kaiser Optometrist office thinking to make an appointment and getting prices as I’d just had a lens fall out of my glasses. The clerk got me an appointment for that afternoon at 2:40PM, helpfully adding that signing in did not start until 12:30PM. It being before noon, I went **hoe** (sic). Around 1:30PM, I headed out again, thinking I’d be in plenty of time as the office is less than two miles away. Unfortunately, I did not factor in the five consecutive buses which drove by, neglecting to stop... Hours later, I gave up and headed home.

(11-16-22) Called Kaiser to see a dermatologist. Had to call twice as first operator kept confusing dermatology with rheumatology. Second operator, *idem*. Though I did manage to eventually snag an appointment for next February about: possible lice, other itches, small growth on my ear and a face rash.

Sassenach and His Yankee Damyankee Tricks:

Juegos de Manos. Juegos de Villanos:

(11-16-22) A quick sequence of events:

1. I’m outside, near my steps, assembling a cart for book sales when Tyson, followed by an obviously frightened-looking daughter, loudly kicks a cardboard box, packing material partly obstructing the walkway, as he walks into the complex. I, facing away from him say nothing, neither does he.
2. Later, a daughter of his, followed by a young black man, brushes against me with elbow extended as she walks by, down the narrow walkway. It would have been wiser of me to step out of the way as they approached. Recently, I’ve seen this young man with her frequently. I believe he now shares Tyson’s cramped apartment consisting of, I think, two rooms plus kitchen and bathroom. Sharing this space are six people and a mid-sized dog. Years ago, in better times, I had occasion to visit them while providing internet access, I don’t imagine conditions have improved much since... I’ve read that the oppressor prefers his victims to appear degraded. For practical reasons. It makes the job of his underlings that much easier psychologically as they can then look down on the “tools” as well as objectify them. Something I, long ago, noticed Colette Walczak, poor thing, attempt to do to me.
3. Another daughter of Tyson, later that night, also walks by. This time, I step out of the way.

I have made it policy to:

1. Ignore Tyson altogether, literally turning away whenever he comes near.
2. As with the Kaiser doctors regarding the state of my health, and for the same reasons, I will *not* bestir myself to deal with police again on the pending stuff: two assaults and one burglary with DNA material possibly still available on a soiled item. I don’t want to risk appearing tiresome...
3. Ignore attempts by Tyson to, at times, intimidate me while, at other times, solicit sympathy. This happened days before an LAPD detective called about issuing a warrant for him.
4. Ignore the (now less frequent than in months past) provocations from Tyson’s three children, the youngest a boy about ten.

I once saw him, if I’m repeating myself, the story still bears retelling, walking near our complex. This was years ago. As I walked behind, I was shocked to notice the puppy he was leading on a leash could not keep up. Yet Tyson, that poor man, would not slow his pace, forcing the little dog to scurry ahead from time to time, only to fail and find itself being *dragged on its foot pads*. Again and again. This behavior on the part of Tyson typifies the labile stance of Man regarding two important poles of existence. That of the Master and that of the Slave. Man can be the one, Man can be the other, Man can be the one then, later, the other, Man can even, as evidenced by Tyson’s actions at that moment, be both at the same time.

As I sit in my bungalow, a man walks by, talking loudly in a Caribbean accent about someone being “chicken.” No further specifics mentioned. Stay tuned.

Les Casses de l’Oncle Sam (Uncle Sam’s Robberies) - With Apologies to Harriet Beecher Stowe and Frédéric Dard:

(11-19-22) Last night, after some peculiar sounds coming from my desktop’s DVD drive, the journaling file system in my main hard disk, gave up the ghost. The operating system, up till now always able to handle such emergencies, gave up with an error message telling me to: “run fsck manually.” As I’ve not been able to make a full data backup of that drive or an image of the entire system in over a year, I may be fsck’d myself. Once more, Soul Brother Not Happy™.

Speed Bumps on the Road to Ragnarök:

Bus drivers becoming increasingly *unhinged* in their behavior (Metro recently set a record of five consecutive buses driving by without stopping. One driver may even have raised his hand to his mouth as he drove by.). That tears it, I’m buying a pedometer...

(11-19-22) Got my refund from Santa Monica today. They overcharged, ignoring my request for a permit to sell books *only*. Now, about that street seller permit...

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

(11-17-22) Elaborated from notes in my diary, a quick recap of today's sortie, deep in the heart of dread Staples, Santa Rosalia branch. There to pickup an order.

1. On entering the store, by now used to the interminable waits, I pull up a chair, pull out a book and sit, reading, in a visible, high traffic area near the print shop, feet from the counter. Soon, I hear someone mention something called a "game chair." Whatever. And I wait, for maybe as much as an hour.
2. Finally, *hors de mes gonds* (become unhinged), (in spite of the Nadanil™ I've been frantically popping every few minutes), I impatiently (believe I got a gentle reminder to behave, from an unknown party, just about then – thanks!) ask a young employee flitting about if I can get some service.
3. After another spell a clerk asks if I perhaps need help. Politely as I can, I continue reading my book, ignoring her.
4. After another wait, I step up to counter only to wait some more. A woman cuts in ahead of me, getting service. I remind her I'm ahead in line, as the clerk looks for my order, the same woman cuts in again. Sandwiched between words with this customer, the clerk tell me my order cannot be found and that she needs an order number. Another customer, a man, soon cuts in ahead of me, again I protest.
5. Another wait before a different clerk, a red-haired young woman, taking heed of my protest, *is* able to locate the order. I find it was not done properly.
6. I wait another few minutes while it is being redone although, thinking back, I should have taken what was on offer, paid and high-tailed it outta there.
7. My debit card payment accepted, I apologize to this last clerk, telling her I must be a headache for all of them there and, briefly holding her hand, I thank her, to which she replies "You're welcome."
8. *Exeunt omnes*. And, lest anyone wonder if I'm making this up: Store: 1376, Date: 11/17/22, Transaction: 33988, Time: 2:32PM, Cashier: 2035709

Let you in on a little trick. Whenever I'm headed for that Staples, I always bring along a supply of Nadanil™ (a little-known soporific and tranquilizer). Although one time, by mistake, I brought my Caligulon™ (credit to Reed for the name) instead and, sad to say, as is my wont, at the very first hint of provocation, I turned into a raging Male Negro Suspect™. Staples were very nice, that time; but let me know if it happened again, they'd put me away, they would.

Wink-wink, Nudge-nudge:

Walking home on Adams Blvd., after an overly long day. A man, youngish (what a pity), says as we cross paths: "Why alienate people you might have to deal with someday?" Or words similar. As I **pounce** (sic) said about another incident, this is contempt of a rare order. From another angle though, the suggestion is appreciated as I've never been much of a practical person.

On what may be a not entirely unrelated line of speculation, I'd like to briefly summarize some of the "atmospherics" surrounding me for decades:

1. *Nilüfer Çagatai*, a close friend of my sister Irene, waxing ironic, and perhaps prescient, in my presence, about the CIA while they were undergrads.
2. Robert Seidenstein at the junior college in Upstate New York where he taught English, joking about "spooks" to a colleague in my presence.
3. Victor Morton, my former therapist, mentions, during a therapy session, he'd interviewed for a job at the CIA.
4. My friend, Thaddeus Walczak, father of Colette, alluding to bad "company" at an ice skating show in Idaho, decades ago.
5. Dinner at Ted's in Idaho with an American, his wife, two guests from Nepal(?); in which the man replies to a question: "Oh, the usual turn and burn."
6. Irene reacting visibly at home in Florence, Italy when I **causally** (sic) brought up Victor Morton's mention of the CIA.
7. Darryl (last name unknown), former husband of Carole Lewis's daughter, in Ted Walczak's kitchen: "Nigger plant." Pungent, this was. And revealing.
8. Irene bluntly, during a Skype talk, says: "CIA," apropos nothing. Later perhaps causing, in Boris Johnson's phrase, "plaster to fall from the ceiling."
9. Byron Wright, casually mentions the CIA while explaining the meaning of my social security number. Also once suggested I: "Leave out the pedo stuff" as we discussed the outline of my book; later began to ghost write the whole book when I had merely asked him to edit. I canceled the work.
10. Jeannine Frank, stumbling as she pronounces the German word "*Diktatur*" on the cover of a book I'm showing her. Strains (even my) credulity, no?

I remember a comment by Noam Chomsky in which he characterized this government as a criminal regime. No "Wink-wink, Nudge-nudge" here. But I wonder, reading Julien Benda's *Treason of the Intellectuals*, whether we are not seeing something worse: a return, beginning with the 20th century to an as yet incomplete barbarism. One of the crown jewels of Man's progress over the last centuries has been the much improved treatment of some of the most helpless among us: prisoners of war, criminals and suspects (look up an Italian by the name of Beccaria). I read in Benda that, not too long ago, it was not unusual to roast POWs alive. Nowadays, we need not go further afield than Europe in the 1940s (look up something called *Dora-Nordhausen*); Iran under the Shah and, likely, his successors; Cambodia in the 1970s, etc., to know that such practices have not been stamped out entirely. And then, in this century, among other flagrant cases, there is that poor soul, José Padilla, imprisoned by Attorney General Gonzalez's Justice Department. A human being held under conditions so calculatedly odd that they led to his current shocking mental state.

Chomsky, ever the optimist.

Conclusions:

I have, more than once, on **public** (sic) transportation, noticed the aftermath of acts by people who slide the fliers I had put on the floor minutes earlier, out of the conspicuous way. The same applies to fliers I randomly staple to phone poles and tape to the ground; they too, quickly disappear. Isn't there something terribly fragile about a place where those who presumably own and operate it feel they have to resort to such grab-ass censorship? Funny. And I thought this was the land of the almighty "Repressive Tolerance," to borrow Marcuse's phrase. Why are the "Above," whoever they are, so, so afraid of an out of touch, neurotic, inferiority complex-ridden, eccentric nobody? A paranoid schizophrenic and a man with a shameful prior history of involvement with underage girls.

To take a nice kid like I was and begin, at sixteen, to measure and groom him for one of the worse fates imaginable! I recall comments by a machinist in the San Gabriel Valley. A peculiar man who spoke to me in detail of the impact of a crossbow bolt on a possum. I also remember hearing the words "oven cleaner," in an analogy with AIDS and, I think, a broad hint about my future. An anecdote told in my book, with intimations of more than the usual *Sachlichkeit* of bureaucrats.

Anyways, enough of my Obscure and Pretentious Malarkey™ (for now). Hoping I remain yr. fair-haired boy, I am:

(signed)

A writer, am I? Nöööö. A crime reporter, rather.

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