

# Home, Sweet Home: Dispatches from the Manchurian Candidate Factory: #10

*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.

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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

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

(11-1-22) Here I inaugurate a new section mostly composed of memories dredged up from long ago. Memories I now reassess in light of what little I know of my peculiar life. I'll add to it as past events become clearer to me and as I reinterpret them.

1. In the summer of 1973, after finishing my first year at Caltech, I had just turned 18, I hitchhiked across the US from Los Angeles to the Bronx. First making a detour to Tempe, Arizona where I visited an old schoolteacher of mine, Greg Bailey. On the way back to Los Angeles, I stopped briefly at the Grand Canyon where I remember being stuck overnight by the freeway near Seligman, Arizona. I eventually made it back to Los Angeles.
2. After a few days, I continued on an itinerary which eventually took me up the coast along PCH to the Canadian border where I was refused entry. I continued east through North(?) Dakota, then onward to Chicago and upstate New York, before heading south to meet my family.
3. Leaving Los Angeles for the second leg of my trip, I went up the coast on the 101. Continuing on PCH, I was picked up by two young women who dropped me off after a brief ride later that day.
4. There were probably, around that time, other stops which I cannot recall.
5. Still on PCH, I hitched a ride with several young people who took me home for dinner. One of them spoke of something called “Tall Cedars of Lebanon,” I had never heard the reference before. Silent, I sat apart and at one point, one of them jokingly said: “If you don't talk, you don't eat.” After dinner, I remember we had mac and cheese, I spent the night in their house. I don't remember much else and the next morning, took to the road again.
6. I remember briefly visiting Big Sur and getting a ride on a motorcycle. During that time, I once slept out in the open on the slope of a hill.
7. The important parts I will now mention. Continuing up the coast on PCH, without incidents I can remember, I reached San Francisco.
8. It was there that, somehow, I met two young women. One who gave her name as Lena with the other possibly called Elizabeth(?)/Elsbeth(?). Lena spoke with a Scandinavian accent, the other was possibly American. Both around twenty, they were traveling together, we spent some time talking that afternoon as we wandered about San Francisco, I remember advising Lena to exaggerate her accent to assist in finding a place to stay, which I heard her do during a phone call she made. Later that afternoon, we parted company, I never saw them again.
9. I later went to a community center located in town, looking for a place to spend the night. As I waited, an unusual-looking woman walked in. Noticing my interest, a black man at the community center commented to me: “That's a man.” I was surprised but paid no further attention to her.
10. It was also there that I met a man who walked in and after a conversation with someone, accosted me, engaged me in a brief conversation and offered dinner and a place to spend the night. At that moment, I remember a woman, maybe an employee or the manager of the center, in her late twenties or early thirties, briefly look at me with what I'd now call a look of concern. She said nothing, though.
11. The man, whose name I don't remember, took me to a restaurant for dinner. Later, at his apartment, I admired the view of the city and we talked before he invited me to spend the night in the high-rise where he lived. I remember him telling me he was bisexual and, before I went to sleep, alone, in his bed, he joked that he would wake me in the morning in the most wonderful way. I do not remember replying. I spent the night in his bed, alone, while he slept elsewhere, in the living room perhaps.
12. He seemed to be in his late thirties or forties, rather handsome. He may have owned an electronics company, was originally from the US south or had connections there, though he spoke without a southern accent. White, rather tall, he mentioned some Jewish ancestry. The next morning, in his car, before he dropped me off, he spoke of the contempt Jews had toward blacks, mentioning a conversation with a secretary in which she had made some negative remarks. He then asked me what might be the reason for her attitude. I replied I did not know, speculating that maybe the ancestors of blacks being closer to the land than Jews might perhaps be a partial explanation. He dropped me off somewhere in town and I never saw him again.
13. After leaving San Francisco, I got a ride from an older man, a retired or former college professor. Possibly someone who had taught at UC Santa Cruz. He told me he had made money in the stock market and drove a small sports convertible. We continued up PCH, talking throughout the drive.
14. Stopping for the night, he took me to visit what he said was a former grad(?) student of his, possibly with a degree in literature. This man, in his thirties perhaps, lived with his wife in a tiny house in the countryside. I remember the four of us having dinner, talking about *Finnegan's Wake* and having some homemade goat cheese. I also remember the former professor mention the, at that time, famous “Ho Chi Minh” sandals. I asked if he would show me how to make them, he agreed to, though he never did.
15. In the morning, he and I continued up PCH where we visited a friend of his, an old man living in a house right on PCH. The man and I talked a bit. I remember the man's surprise when he found out I had never heard of something called the Peano axioms. He may have been a retired teacher of some sort.
16. After some time conversing with his friend, the ex-professor and I continued up the coast to Oregon where he dropped me off, still on PCH. I vaguely remember an awkward moment as we parted company, though I may be mistaken.
17. Still on PCH, still hitchhiking, I was picked up by two people. A man and his girlfriend, both white, she in her twenties, he a bit older. I later learned he was a heroin addict. We stopped to get some gas, he pulled a trick on the gas station attendant and we drove off without paying.
18. That night, driving north, the two of them and I stole a motorcycle parked in front of a bar. We were seen. Eventually followed by a police car, we were caught after skidding off the road. All three of us were arrested. Convicted of a misdemeanor, I got one month in county jail in Gold Beach, Oregon.
19. Almost a month later, near the end of my trip, visiting my friends the Seidensteins in Saranac Lake, New York, Robert found a receipt from the jail among my things. I thought I had removed all evidence of my incarceration. He commented on it briefly, I did not discuss it with him at any length.
20. After an uneventful end of trip, a week or so later, I met my parents and sister in New York after their arrival from Europe. After they had settled in their new apartment in the Bronx, mother quietly told me that father knew I had been in jail. On another occasion that summer, I also remember telling her and Irene about my encounter with the bisexual man in San Francisco, telling them of our dinner, the night in his apartment and of his sexual preferences. Mother cautioned me not to mention it to father. About my arrest: I don't know how he found out, I certainly never brought it up. Father never spoke of it directly, once merely saying, apropos nothing: “Don't let anyone set you up.” I did not reply.

21. It was only decade later, here in Los Angeles, in 2022, that I heard the word “Lena” somewhere. Which word prompted me to remember and, weeks later, write this.

Spooky. Perhaps wiser, better informed, more experienced and cooler heads than mine can make sense of all this.

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

Looking at my neighbors in our complex lately, I realize I'm in far, far better psychological shape than most of them! I can only imagine the level of their suffering which must approach that of Colette's and Irene's – along with that of so, so many others. Again, this is ghastly.

(11-1-22) Speaking by video with Dr. Baxley, my psychiatrist at Kaiser, he pronounced me well. An assessment I mostly agreed with, adding that I do realize I'm seriously ill, mentioning a bout of depression in 1994 lasting six months as well as numerous psychotic episodes going back to 1988. I speculated that the reason for this drastic change may lie in my improved diet. A suggestion to which he did not respond.

*Sassenach and His Yankee Damyankee Tricks:*

With my current, not entirely settled, lice problem firmly in mind, I think back to the visit Colette and I made to her father in Idaho in 2017. On the way there, sleeping in my car, as was our habit, I had no problems with bedbugs. Neither was there a manifestation during the first night I slept there (in a separate bed). So how was it that on the second and succeeding nights I was eaten alive by these critters?

Years ago, I repeated to Colette the joke told by Dick Gregory, the comic and political activist. A joke in which he, imitating what he considered was the Establishment's assessment of him said, in a black accent: “That's Lucille's boy. That nigger crazy.” If I remember, I believe I then got a long, lingering look from her.

(11-1-22) More odd electronics and computer problems with the electronic ones the most puzzling. Power supplies and/or LED strips I propose to use in my “Democracy Wall” continue misbehaving in peculiar ways. Trying to get a handle on this, I'm progressively simplifying my test setup. For the last week, I've been quite at sea. Although the main part of this project which requires no electronics, is almost done and just about ready to display. In addition to these software/hardware problems, for several months now, I've been aware of other anomalies. Things such as my induction stovetop and possibly my glucose meter and electronic scale as well. I, long ago, took the the position that I'll not contest the technical high ground (competing here would be a fool's game), I'm also aware that none of this matters much, no more than the on-again, off-again delivery and pickup service of our post office. In the last analysis, it doesn't really matter. *A luta continua!*

*Juegos de Manos, Juegos de Villanos:*

Again nothing to report, thankfully.

Though if something untoward were to happen again, something in the vein of “I'll beat your ass!” (heard on the street recently) or even another outright physical attack. My stock answer, I've decided, will be: “That shouldn't be too difficult for you.” Or, alternately, I'll say: “I couldn't possibly fight, I just don't have the spine/backbone for it.” That'll bitch it.

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

*Idem.*

*Speed Bumps on the Road to Ragnarök:*

(10-30-22) In spite of an email assurance, though with no name attached to the communication, that all I needed to sell in Santa Monica was my business license; going over my paperwork and the Santa Monica business office web site, I found I do need a street selling permit. And I was merrily going to head out last week to flog my wares wiv'out. Foolish, foolish me. Perfidy, thy name is “~~sender unknown~~” *Sassenach*.

(10-30-22) The cart I hope to use to carry my book-selling stuff, the one I ordered from China via eBay, now overdue was, according to China Post Tracking, in the hands of USPS. Delivered, it was, on October 25. In Miami, Florida.

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

Some have asked, not necessarily with the best intentions, why I do this. Let my answer ring out, loud and clear: “R2P, R2P.”

*Conclusions*

By any chance, does any of what I've described in my book, in these emails and elsewhere amount to treason or sedition on the part of certain parties (not me obviously unless, of course, I've been grievously misinformed as to the nature of this place)? A-and could these parties conceivably be in business for themselves?

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

(signed)  
*Malvoisin (dit) le Bienheureux*

P.S. To my sisters, Irene Sophie Hawkins of Florence, Italy and Colette Jose Walczak of Santa Monica, California (the latter dead of breast cancer in 2018): May our wordless tears, yours and mine, eventually prove invincible.

P.P.S. A final note of no more than passing historical importance. After movement began on the “*Compromesso storico*” (Historic compromise) I believe it only took some months before Aldo Moro's body was found in the trunk of a car.