

Now, Before You Settle In and Get Too Comfy...

Written by Alex Baer

Saturday, 08 December 2012 18:38 - Last Updated Saturday, 08 December 2012 20:09

You know how it is: It's Saturday, and, in your mind's eye, you're vacationing in the tropics, surfing via your motherboard, running fast along topical waves of interest in the vast internet ocean, hooked on something or other you find titanicly interesting, when you strike the unexpected iceberg, snapping to a halt with a sickening lurch.

All you can manage to do is stare numbly and in shock at the screen, dead in the water, dumbstruck and adrift in your one-person lifeboat, and without so much as first aid kit, water, rations, or a flare gun. Or Dramamine.

OK, that's a bit overstated -- although I may still need the Dramamine for *the drama-mine* -- but I'd rather walk the plank than tell you it felt otherwise, that it was only a mild jolt grasped through the rigging and not a lightning bolt taken through the mainmast of my mouse.

Less nautically so, but more specifically: I happened upon some people's blogsites, absolutely by accident and without intent, and was exposed to the reading equivalent of the bubonic plague, leprosy, flesh-eating bacteria, or a parasitic brain infestation -- or maybe all of them, or in some berserk combination.

Good thing I only glanced here and there; had I taken in whole pages, I'd now be in the Little Rubber Bungalow, happily blowing spit-bubbles while my Thorazine (with the Vallium back) percolated its way along my arterial highways.

Explaining the content of those pages will probably now be anticlimactic, like trying to relay the intensity of a nightmare after sitting bolt upright in bed, having taking swings at the chill air -- and now, sweating like mad, trying to babble a reason why.

Here's the upshot: the twin demons of Ignorance and Arrogance are rampaging, still disdainfully certain of being 100% correct and right in all things, all while being utterly clueless.

This sad, double heartbreak can take many frightening forms when it strikes. Outbreaks were

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fairly innocuous and innocent in the past, appearing as bits and pieces of our country's instructional myths -- the gentle and inane things we were all taught in third or fourth grade, long before we awakened to the dismal, startling truths of slave traders or the genocide of native peoples.

You can see this same layer of shallow simplicity in adult interactions everywhere in America anymore -- not to shield young innocents, but everyone, from the evils of too much truth.

We should be old enough by now to acknowledge truths and speak in facts. We do not. We have been dumbed down and our minds left to rot, and our bodies nonetheless expected to continue on, guided only by the steep sides of our deep ruts and the way forward, all of it downhill.

Old joke on the unsuspecting:

- Q: What's the difference between ignorance and apathy?
- A: I don't know and I don't care.
- Q: That's right!
- A: *Whaaa?*

New joke on the unsuspecting:

- A. Critical thinking and basic civics not taught or emphasized in schools
- B. Media long ago abandoning their basic public education and watchdog roles
- C. Presence of bald lies as news and information, then placed on a par with actual facts
- D. Culture's obsession with the trivial: fads, fame, falsehoods, flesh, fantasies, finances, and fabricating fortunes

All of these thoughts (and more) hit at once, just from a quick scan of these people's blogsites, a glancing gaze packing more than a glancing punch from a locomotive leaping the tracks and launching itself into your lap.

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All of the sad, demented, scary right-wingnut memes were in full regalia and happily displayed, righteously and proudly, mementos of rigid beliefs and badges displaying our freedoms of speech. You know them all: Romney-Ryan signs, "Don't Tread on Me" flags, the Confederate stars and bars, tri-corner hats sprouting their sportily-stapled-on teabags, and on and on.

If you wanted to stroll through a museum of Incredibly Shallow, Simplistic, and Wrongheaded Symbols of a Quick Rightwing Fix that Ignores the Real Problems, why then, these blogsites were definitely it.

I was myself viewing these pages with the same level of stunned revulsion that I imagine I could muster had I unexpectedly stumbled into the secreted souvenir display chamber of a serial killer's trophies taken from victims, mounted on the wall for display.

Deep breath to help ward off the creepy chill: I am thankful the election is behind us, and even more thankful that I do not need to formulate the phrases

President Romney

or

Vice President Ryan

, nor speak those syllables aloud into the air I will need to also breathe.

But, there are *millions* of people in America who believe(d) that wretched team to be the better, saner, wiser choice. As much as I abhorred and dreaded that Republican twosome -- with its likely advisers and policies, and all they stood for and failed to stand for -- there is one thing I still detest and fear far worse: *The forces that shaped that preference.*

As much as Romney and Ryan gave (and still give) me a major case of the heebie-jeebies, they were only a one-time show, with any luck. *The forces that shaped them are still here.* Worse, all the errant ideas are still here, too -- along with the wealth, power, tradition, and infrastructure necessary to continue perpetuating such people, policies, and ideas on the American people.

Despite whatever pockets of rightful protest or objection Rush and Fox produce, they are still here. So are the petty billionaires with more money than they could spend in multiple lifetimes, deciding to pour vast fortunes down the rathole of Republican politics. The laws that let them jockey to purchase elections are still on the books.

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Wall Street has not suddenly seen the light and renounced its greedheaded, casino-centric ways, nor apologized or in any way made right their near destruction of the economy, nor the utter destruction of so many people's lives. Bankers, financiers, and the like are not going to start providing refunds for prior grievances and gougings.

Legislators and lawmakers who could authorize helpful changes are lashed to their corporate teats for the cash to run campaigns perpetuating themselves. Racists will continue to feverishly appeal to all but the color-blind for support. Religions will continue to find fertile ground in believers, told they risk their souls by not voting the *wise* way.

In short, there are no signs that Ignorance and Arrogance are in retreat. Quite the opposite. They are at full power. They are in full flower, in all their blooming madness. The spells previously cast on their crowds in the Republican tent are potent and will be renewed. There will be no fresh air or alternate view pumped into that tent. No clear information will be allowed to make its way inside for group or individual ingestion.

In some ways, their confusion is understandable -- life seems bigger and more unknowable all the time. (Do you really think we'll ever have the truth of 9-11 or the reason for two wars all out in the open? Do you imagine we'll find out everything, at last, about the assassinations of the Kennedys and King? Do you really think we'll be introduced to the puppet masters or be allowed to cut any of the strings -- even our own?)

But, in other ways, it seems inconceivable that so many millions of people would have such miserable bullcrap detectors to have not gotten some far better sense that their version of the truth and explanations of things is pure hogwash, and that they have been shorn like sheep, then led to their own slaughter.

- *How can a group always on the **wrong** side of issues claim to be members of the **right**?*

Rightwingers function in lockstep, their Team the thing above all, that one concept pushing out all other thoughts in their heads. But, how can they not see, nor understand, that they are supporting people and policies that have stabbed them in the back all their lives, and will continue to keep slashing at them?

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How can rightwingers fail to see or understand that their Team has lied to them, misled them, fed them misinformation, brainwashed them, traumatized and propagandized them -- done virtually everything in its power to cripple or kill them, along with the American way of life?

How can it be that so many millions of people have gotten it so horribly wrong and been so sorely and severely deluded and deceived? How can they not know they've been hoodwinked and hijacked, taken for a long ride, played for dumb bastards and fools?

The forces that shape these millions of people and their world view still live, multiply, and thrive. Their websites and blog pages are still up, no signs of having been worn down. There's no sign their thinking has slowed or stopped along its usual lines, no signs they've been brought up to speed with the truth.

Their spiral-eyed advocates are still on radio and teevee, and all still in print, bloviating and blasting away with all the usual bombs-away bombast and lambasts. All the delusions, hallucinations, and illusions remain in full force.

Election, *smelection*. As far as rightwingers and their rightwing-nuts are concerned, elections have no consequences -- they will hold fast to their version of the truth, utterly convinced they are right.

Ignorance and Arrogance, taking millions out for a dime-a-dance twirl, then shoving their dates into the shrubs for a buck-a-beer style, romance-and-quickie, two-on-one combo. Ponder that, while you get Democratically comfy for the next four years

And you know, even years later, those same dates will tell you the encounter with the Twin Demons was the best thing that ever happened to them, and how they still pine to this day for that lover. You might think to yourself, *How horrifying, how sad -- how depressing!*

- Yeah, well: Ignorance, Arrogance, Intolerance -- *and baby makes three, all happy, in **the ir***

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blue, blue, blue heaven.

You'd think it'd be enough to make some *red*, irritated eyes *blue* -- and it might, if some of those *red, irritable eyes* would care to see their way clear.

Today's Bonus:

After that grueling mountain climb, you'll need some relief. Here's a masterpiece package of story, animation, and music from the National Film Board of Canada: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gtl1pWkHto0&feature=related>

(Any resemblance between the situation of the tuba player and the yellow cat, and our own in this country, is altogether possible, especially the part about being chased by -- and being driven -- bats. ☺ ~ Enjoy!)