

Action, Reaction, and a Humpee's Holiday Hunch

Written by Alex Baer

Friday, 03 July 2015 17:26 - Last Updated Friday, 03 July 2015 19:57

Here is a scattered smattering of overheated thoughts for this hot, heat-waved, and patriotically-roasted, spit-skewered expanse of a weekend:

Why is it that the modern world must -- absolutely **MUST** -- trump nature, and whomp-stomp peace and quiet? Well, for that matter, and more to the point, why is there human activity at all?

This one beats hell out of me, and I've been asking that question since I was 3-and-a-half, on a tricycle, pedalling furiously, trying to out-distance a rapidly-gaining Boston terrier named Tag -- a neighbor's dog who was permanently locked in the demented, mindless throes of human-leg-lust, and would launch at any chance for satisfaction, no matter what you'd done or not done.

(There are many sorts of people I have known whose behaviors take after that dog. Most of them are in the *acquisitions* trades, and/or the equally self-rewarding business of their own ego-stoking, inflation, maintenance, and related puffery.)

Meanwhile, at the time, I had no idea that tableau would turn out to be such an apt analogy for the rest of my life, for everything that followed, right up to this very moment -- here I am, and there is always something trying to hump me, and here I am, once again, making my legs go round and round, faster and faster, trying to outdistance the thing with that crazy lust in its eyes.

Thing is, the tricycle gets old, the legs even older, all while the dogs, unbelievably, get younger and stronger and faster and more numerous.

Sometimes it was Cancer or a Brain Tumor trying to have its way with me. Sometimes it was the Military. Sometimes it was Work, or lack of it. Sometimes it was just Me, myself, chasing my own tail, but going way too fast -- even going in the wrong direction, somehow.

Back then, as a child, I somewhat succeeded: My small legs tired. I stopped. I was panting. The dog caught up to me. He was also panting, and was mostly too tired to give it all he had,

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too weary to give it all he had *earlier* wanted so very *desperately* to give. So, it was only a half-hearted humping that I got.

This, too, as I think about it, is an apt analogy for the rest of my life, for everything that followed, right up to this very moment -- trying like hell to outrun The It of The Moment, never quite succeeding completely, but having run myself -- and The It of The Moment -- down so far as to have perhaps altered history a *smidge*, and so, I received only a small portion of the humping for which I had been originally destined by Cancer or The Military or Unemployment or whatever.

I couldn't much tell about the Brain Tumor or my 80-Hour-a-Week Job or the National Employment Outlook, but I knew that I was sure panting like hell, braced against the frame of my tricycle lifestyle, trying to distract myself from the inevitable punishment to come, looking at the world's reflection in the chrome, trying to ring the bell, wonder if getting some tassles would be too, well, froufrou ...

*And now, much time has passed, and there is a **new** now.*

The human race, and not only me, is due for a real humping, and from a much bigger dog, after the way we've been treating this planet -- like they were a dime a dozen, and we could simply board the next one going by, flag it down like a cab, holding out our Earth passports for inspection as if they were transfer slips on a bus line, or rights of passage on a cruise line, a permission slip to walk down a new hallway during class time, a Get-Out-of-Any-Boneheaded-Scrape-I-Make-for-Free card, a brass ring good for unlimited free rides...

Thing is: We're not going to tire out these forces into letting us off easy. Call it a *humpee's* hunch, if you like, but: When it comes, our humping will be from a very big, very-well-rested dog the likes of which no one has ever before seen. If anyone survives it, there will be new myths created, new lore for millennia, new bogeymen for bedtime tales.

Frankly, I don't want to be around when any of this happens, but I just know I will be, That's just how my luck always runs.

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(Thing is, I keep resigning my humanity, every time I get fed up with people, with humanity, with its nonsense, its noise -- but there's nothing for it. Unlike quitting a job and walking away, and enjoying your new status as an ex-Forced Boot Licker Third Class, or whatever, there's no place to go as an ex-human. *No place.* There's no new form you get to take. You don't even get to graduate to some other planet where life makes sense. Hell, there's not even an ex-human's pub you can hang out in, commiserating with others passing through who share your view, your pain, your shame, your sense of renewed hope about next-time-maybe...)

So, I've resigned myself to being human, and to watching the shadow of the Big Dog grow on the horizon line, and on the skin of the planet, and on our cities, and on us. So help me, I don't know what is worse: knowing what's to come, or not having a tricycle worth a damn to help feel like I'm at least *trying* to out-run the thing.

If nothing else, I mean, pedalling like hell takes your mind off what's to come. It forces your attention onto microscopic aspects of your environment is an ancient and honorable method of making time pass swiftly while awaiting punishment, from the principal's office, to, presumably, the gas chamber,

But, then, I suppose that's what all the rest of our entertainments and hobbies and professions and avocations are really all about, all they are really for -- they're all just distractions, minor elements of our surroundings that we might busy our minds with, before Time is called on our Current Session of Consciousness.

Thing is, we haven't been doing our real share of trying to stay ahead of the worst of it. We've only talked about -- politely, abstractly, not at all panicked as we should be -- trying to stay ahead of the worst of it. Or we've done something else completely unrelated, distracting ourselves, somehow pretending we've done all we can, or that what we've actually done will magically protect us.

Out of sight may be out of mind, but, you know, keeping things out of our minds on purpose, because they hurt or are not easy to accommodate or grasp, is really only showing off just how out-of-our-minds we humans actually are.

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Avoidance may be *delish*, and Ignorance may be bliss, but Arrogance about it only adds insult to injury -- with each insult and injury requiring a loud hiss, if not some pithy dissing and some harsh dressing-down.

For example:

Why are we about to drill for oil in the Arctic, when there are always oil spills from drilling, and when the Arctic is the worst possible place on the planet to attempt any sort of a mop-up -- I mean, you've seen what a horrific mess we've made of things with spills in the Gulf of Mexico and off Alaska and such, places which are comparatively ideal for a spill clean-up instead of the arctic?

Well, for that matter, why is it we must not ever -- or hardly ever -- tap free sources of energy from the universe, such as solar, thermal, wind, wave energy?

Why must we have an pipeline running the waist of the country, north to south, over massive aquifers and other irreplaceable natural resources, just to export oil, when there has yet to be a pipeline made by humans which did not leak, spill, gurgle, and belch its contents into every possible unplanned place?

Well, for that matter, why must we support those efforts to extract oil from tar sands in the first place -- one of the most destructive, expensive, and polluting processes of all time?

Well, for that matter, why are we still running our coal-fired electricity generating plants, while shaking our fists at China and India, and everyone else, for doing the same thing?

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We burn more fossil fuels every second. *Every second.*

I read something the other day linking air pollution to dementia -- *fossil fuels, the gift that keeps on giving.* ***The more you use, the dumber you get!***

In our wisdom, humanity traded motorcars for horses. Horses left road apples in the streets, sometimes inconveniencing us, you see. Motorcars, on the other hand, will definitely suffocate us -- a bit more convenient, in some ways, for some, in the long run, I suppose.

Darned shame our *heap of clever* can't -- *won't* -- translate into a *tower of wise*.

That's Primates for You! (This could actually be a new network sitcom title, you know...)

* * * * *

Yeah, I know:

We're doing this because we have to... *get the kids to school and pick up groceries and get the dog to the vet, pick up the cleaning and go to the bank and the dry cleaner and get in some yoga time, or ballet, or karate,* or whatever, *and then go to work and the wall outlets and rechargers and fire up one of a few hundred types of electronic gadgets we can't live without -- some of which may or may not be causing brain cancer in us -- alongside a few million types of electrical gadgets and appliances we can't live without (which may or may not be polluting the planet, and us, from their manufacture and use), while we cook dinner from a toxic box or bag full of some mysterious foodstuffs, and watch some mindless pablum on the Big Scream (TM) teevee to relax, as it tries so very hard to **not** tell us a single important or useful thing about the actual Big Picture (TM) of the world, or universe, in which we live.*

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Yes, I know. I'm just doing what *I* can, too. That's the nature of the problem, right there. For all of us. We need a new *system* of organized solutions, and here we are -- a bunch of disorganized *individuals* slumped down, our hands jammed down into the pockets of our *worn out, usual-solutions* cut-offs, trying to look cool, while the house burns down.

OK, so, right straight out: *What do I really think of humanity? □ Of our chances?*

Well, there was an irresistible observation made recently -- taken out of context a bit, I admit, as it was so perfectly worded by its author -- by one Republican regarding the cruel and unbelievably stupid statements of *another* Republican, *and* regarding the absence of reaction of the *Republican Party* to those cruel, stupid statements:

"It's a level of idiocy I haven't seen in a long time."

Well, fellow humans, we keep having ourselves an ***ongoing absence of reaction*** about everything around here. So far, I have to say, ***it's a level of idiocy I haven't seen in a long time***.

... not since I heard those claws scabbling along the concrete sidewalk, heard that panting, felt the blazing fires exploding in my legs, felt the wind blasting past my scared little face.

But, hey -- no hurry, no hurry. *There's still plenty of peace and quiet to be ruined, and still plenty of Nature around that we have to whip into shape!*

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Holiday Epilogue - with apologies to Andy Rooney

Have you ever noticed fireworks?

The Chinese came up with gunpowder in the middle of the 9th century, and we can't enough of the stuff.

Of course, somebody came up with the wheel, and warfare, a long time before that, and we still haven't gotten our fill of those, either.

With fireworks, there's the really wonderful stuff that professionals do, for big public shows, that are just amazing. Then, there are the different kinds that civilians use to blow off stray body parts. Other kinds are just stashed away for a while by budding geniuses, for use in irritating neighbors at 3:30 in the morning in August, to be clever, and in September, as a sign of unhappiness that summer has ended and some minimal instruction in civilization is again being required of them, and against all the reason of their hormones bursting through hyper-space.

Some fans of fireworks just save them up to use at the end of October, as an opening salvo, as a precursor to smashing mushy pumpkins on your porch or stoop or sidewalk or on your car or cat.

For all you budding geniuses out there -- before you surrender any spare fingers or eyes -- I'd like to say just one thing: This is the best time of your life. If you lose an eye or some fingers now, you'll have the rest of your life to savor your incredible stupidity.

Oh, and one more thing, for you older kids: You like explosions so much, why don't you give away a few years, and some of those agitated body parts, to the military, in the service of your country, and go to Iraq and Afghanistan. I hear we still have plenty of pop-guns and things that go boom over there right now.

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Unfortunately.

And, to you younger kids -- get those flaming paper bags filled with whatever, and yourselves, off my lawn.

One more thing:

You adults? I'd like to honor my former First Sergeant -- a wise, smiling, tolerant tower of a man -- John Brown, of HQ Company, 317th Combat Engineers, and give his short July speech, one I was privileged to hear in formation on three occasions:

*If you want to go forth on the Fifth, watch out how much of that fifth you drink up on the Fourth!
Now, double to the rear and disappear!*

Yes.

Amen.

(And, aahhh, humanity. □ And maybe oohhh, humanity, too, while we're at it...)