

# Home, Sweet Home: Dispatches from the Manchurian Candidate Factory: #8

Κύριε, ἐλέησον. (Lord, have mercy.)

My own opinion regarding the stuff I write: “Anecdotally rich but analytically impoverished.”

— quoting Richard Wolin in: *the wind from the east*

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

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

(10-14-22) Still struggling with the aftermath of a lice infection. It's now relegated to the back burner, though. You might say, at this point, I'm not so much concerned about the head lice problem as I am with the head louse question. Never a Dulles moment, Eh? *Es handelt auch um endlösung, nicht nur um entläusung. Oder?* Sorry, no translation available 'ere on account of me natural-born timidity, wot?

## Sassenach and His Yankee Damyankee Tricks:

Some of the technologies I've been exposed to over the last years are, in the phrase popularized by E.F. Schumacher decades ago, “appropriate technologies” all right. Question is, appropriate for what? For the termite mound, I'd say. Perhaps not so appropriate for those of us interested in living in societies constructed as though people mattered. So, how do you put the genie back in the bottle? You can't. A major problem for us, one among many. Pursuing this line further, I just recommended to my remaining sister, Irene, a book, *Splinterlands*, by John Feffer. A dismal book, but one with a happy ending. An ending in which the protagonist manages to kill himself before a pair of squabbling AIs in the form of two androids, arguing over whether to apply what they primly call “pain protocols” can resolve their differences and come to a decision. I hate it when someone (Feffer) demonstrates imagination well beyond mine. Just hate it.

(10-20-22) Whereas in the past, I have complained of cursors jumping around on the page; they now seem to have the freedom of the entire computer screen inasmuch as I sometimes see them jumping from window to window. Most confusing.

## Juegos de Manos, Juegos de Villanos:

Nothing to report. *Bismillah!* However, two K.D.s (Known Dacoits), i.e., my neighbor, long-suffering Tyson, and another individual, name unknown, are still on the loose with occasional sightings of Tyson noted.

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

(10-14-22) A metal water dish I leave outside for “Mr. Cat” has gone missing. Maybe he took it, wouldn't put it past him. (Update 10-15-22) This morning, found the errant dish on some bushes in our complex. Problem solved. Or is it? 'Ere! I fink I'm being trifled with!

(10-17-22) Found one of my glucose test strip last night on the carpet in the bedroom. Not wanting to let it go to waste, I overlooked the nagging (sic) question of just how it got there and, this morning, used it. Result: 349, a very high number, one I've not seen since my emergency room visit of over a decade ago. On retest with another strip, got a reading of 103. And so, in the immortal words of Watkin Tudor Jones, half of the *Die Antwoord* hip-hop duo, I ask: “Where the f\*k I am?” (Remember to substitute the letter ‘o’ for the asterisk). You'll excuse his fake(?) *plaasjaapie* English, I'm sure.

## Speed Bumps on the Road to Ragnarök:

(10-10-22) I call it the Funny Coincidences File. A tabulation of incidents for the week.

| Monday “CVS Day” | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday         | Sunday           |
|------------------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|------------------|------------------|
| 45               | 18      | 16        | 13       | 8      | Stopped counting | Stopped counting |

(10-17-22) Got a reply from Santa Monica on my further “request for clarification” about that street selling permit, though I've not yet taken the time from my oh-so-busy schedule to even glance at it.

(10-18-22) Witnessing the behavior of pedestrians today, as I went about my errands, I'd say it was, at times, anything but pedestrian. As in the following Devil's Dictionary definition:

**ZIGZAG**, v.t. *To move forward uncertainly, from side to side, as one carrying the white man's burden.*

“He zedjagged so uncomen wyde  
Thet non coude pas on eyder syde;  
So, to com sauflly thruh, I been  
Constreynet for to doodge betwene.”

— Ambrose Bierce

Instead of “doodging betwene,” I come to a stop and assume the position: hands folded in front, patiently looking fixedly at one spot (never at the pedestrian in question; wouldn't want to be, umm, misunderstood – I have a prior, you know ) and wait for them to pass. *Mba kayere!* (So to speak).

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

(10-13-22) Sent this email out today:

Hi,

*Wast (sic) today thinking about Frau Westhäusler; you might remember her, Irene.*

*She wast the German schoolteacher in Bremerhaven with family behind the iron curtain. In Poland, I remember.*

*I liked her, lots.*

(signed)  
the Chickamauga Kid

(10-18-22) *Dernièrement, en dépit d'une série de salves nourries, je dirai même de salves d'une intensité froissant parfois la démente, je pense que je m'en tire assez bien. Quitte à paraître un rien spécial, disont ; j'ai pris l'habitude suivante. Avant d'affronter le feu, je me répète : "Heute bleibe Ich vollkommen stumm! Aber Morgen. Aber Morgen..."* (Lately, in spite of a series of intense salvos, I would even go so far as to say, salvos of an intensity at times skirting insanity, I think I'm coping rather well. Risking the possibility of seeming a tad peculiar, shall we say; I've gotten into the following habit. Before going into action, I say to myself: "Today, I remain completely mute! Tomorrow, however. Tomorrow..."

Sitting outside, this evening, the smell of burning paper wafts across my steps and I wonder: is it possible that the wind carries all the way from Langley?

The so-called "homeopathic" approach to dealing with reality consists, for me, in the following. An exceedingly small dose, administered at irregular intervals, enough to provide some defense but not enough, really, for me to actually understand any of what's going on.

(10-20-22) Having taken to never leaving my bungalow without being armed to the teeth, *par les temps qui courent, on sait jamais* (these days, one never knows), I thought I'd describe my weapons of choice: 1) A Sony voice recorder for immediately noting the particulars of selected outrages upon my person as I go about my day. 2) A highly visible folder containing samples of my, by now, well-known (in certain circles) incendiary fliers. To highlight the point, I chose Day-Glo Orange. My question, dear Irene: Day-Glo Orange, *tu trouves pas que ça fait un peut clinquant?* (Day-Glo Orange, don't you find it a bit showy?).

(10-21-22) Thinking tonight about the likelihood of my story becoming generally known, I reach for parallels with the contrasting trajectories of the former East Germany and Romania. In the first, the government of a re-unified Germany soon made available software to methodically scan and piece together the billions(?) of strips of paper left behind by the Stasi after their last-minute shredding. By contrast, in Romania, I hear that, of the kilometers, perhaps fifty(?), of file cabinets containing the life histories of its unfortunate citizens, only one kilometer or so has so far been released. Care to take a guess as to which way things will go here? Ah, Gentle Reader™, if only your Friend and Humble Narrator™ knew how to set up a football pool...

### Conclusions

In spite of my formerly latent, though by now quite pronounced, anti-Americanism, I used to think of this place as the "Land of the Almighty Proximity Fuse™" (reason I came here in the first place, wot?) much as Turgot, minister of Louis XVI, once spoke of America as the "Hope of the Human Race." However, on digesting the many and various *peripeteia* of the last fifty years of my life, I now think "Land of the Almighty *Chekist*™" would be more appropriate.

Some Romans (Petronius and Statius) said "It was fear in the world that first made Gods." Nah. Not so. *Secondo me*, (and Fabian Scheidler, author of *The End of the Megamachine*) it was big, bad agriculture, i.e., what I am slowly coming to call the "Ten Thousand Year Reich" (in its various guises), and the concomitant social-political needs of the attendant rulers and assorted impedimenta (Maniacs or ruthless mediocrities, the lot, essentially. Starting with that Sargon I). Check out the *Lascaux* paintings, if you don't believe me. Not even a hint of a depiction of anything resembling a god anywhere among the frescoes.

I may have figured out why I sometimes slip into something approximating "Mockney" or "Appalachianese" when I write. I now see it as a self-conscious effort to be seen for what I take myself for: a mere stenographer wot spits in 'is soup. Wiv' sophomoric attempts at slapstick for seasoning, thrown in for good measure. I don't think in ideas but in slogans, rather. Or, as the joke goes, how can I know what to think until I've heard what I have to say?

In order to have reached the current state of affairs, this had to have been "an insensible and irredeemable establishment, perhaps criminally senseless as well." (Source of the phrase unknown).

What kind of a place would compel its citizens to behave in the way I have seen so many act? I struggle to find a reasonable alternative to: a government of occupation. The slaves and even the quislings of this place, victims of forces possessing nearly unlimited discretionary powers, forces with no discernible moral standards whatever. Who will speak for the prey? Should anyone do so, this setup might quickly be revealed as a house of cards.

Anyways, enough of my Obscure and Pretentious Malarkey™ (for now).

Hoping I remain yr. fair-haired boy, I am:

(signed)  
the Chickamauga Kid™

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.

P.P.S. Noticing a marked increase in the frequency of occurrence of "printer's devils," some of them quite curious, I will, in future, leave them as is, only adding the standard indication "(sic)" to show this is how I found them in the text. If thus flagged, you may safely assume I did not mean to write what appears nearby.

P.P.P.S. In the sixties, by means of an offer to make a documentary film of his life, *Mehdi Ben Barka*, the Moroccan dissident, was lured from exile in safe Switzerland to Paris. He was last seen being escorted from a cafe where he had been waiting, into a car driven by French plainclothesmen. His body is said to have been dissolved in a vat of acid. They may even have killed him first, if he was especially lucky. Vanity.