

Home, Sweet Home: Dispatches from the Manchurian Candidate Factory: #9

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

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

In which I introduce a new idea: “the Crazy Pill.” My dose of (forcibly administered ‘round the clock, no chance of “cheeking” *these* meds. My only resort: to continue to be as cheeky as I can) insanity. All this part of a show with a cast of thousands and some simply smashing production value. Lemme tell ya.

“The product of the human brain has escaped the control of human hands. This is the comedy of science.”

— Karel Čapek

Sassenach and His Yankee Damyankee Tricks (if I'm not mixing metaphors here):

(10-26-22) An utter and complete fiasco today at my workbench as I work on my very own “Democracy Wall” (note the ambiguity, please). Over the last two to three days, I've faced a mysterious and worsening situation of an unknown technical origin. With: multiple sensors suddenly become erratic, peculiar behavior of a DOS-based editor, momentary current surges into breadboard ten times above normal, though with no damaged electronics! This. Is. No. Fun. A critical anodyne for my perhaps somewhat peculiar life, gone. Perhaps gone for good. Sould (sic) Brother Not Happy™.

In an analogous situation, I remember, over a decade ago, being taunted by a cashier at a Jon's in Hollywood. Regarding a project I was working on, she said: “Maybe you cannot do it? Maybe it is too difficult?” Interestingly Colette, present with me, was at that time working in concert with others to destabilizing me psychologically. I had just asked her to leave, with the police called. One of whom told me quietly: “We'll get you your medication.” History repeating itself.

Juegos de Manos, Juegos de Villanos:

Nothing to report, thankfully. Though I will take the opportunity to remind you, Gentle Reader™, that there is suffering in this world. (Pause) Some of it inconceivable to us here. (Further pause). And then there is Russian suffering. (Yet another pause). Beyond which lies Chinese-level suffering. A single anecdote should do. As told by Solzhenitsyn, in one of the camps, probably during WWII, with harsh conditions occasioned by the war, the death rate climbed astronomically, with Russian inmates naturally bemoaning their condition. Chinese prisoners, however, on hearing their complaints chortled, pointing to the flies buzzing around. The implication being that it's not *really* a proper famine as long as there are still flies alive.

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

(10-27-22) This AM, I check the temp of my fridge as I usually do when I wake up. The thermometer I keep there for this purpose is missing, although I remember seeing it last night. Interestingly, due to the lice problem I'm dealing with, I now sleep on my couch, not six feet from the kitchen. Thus the exception to my new rule according to which I omit mention of the various incidents in which items of no consequence frequently go missing from ~~Grand~~ Central Station my bungalow. That Grand Central Station is known to be open for business at all hours, I need not remind you, Gentle Reader™...

Florid, in-your-face, grab-ass banditry, if you ask me. *Tabernouche!*

To-day, an Aktion!:

(10-27-22, in the morning) Today, I inaugurate sales of my book in Santa Monica. On the very spot where, on September 18, 1988, a day which may yet live in infamy, I was arrested by what may turn out to have been Robocops (from *robot*, the Czech word for forced labor, as done by serfs) while *reading*, *inside* the library, though there are *slight* attenuating circumstances in favor of the arresting SMPD officers, Trisler and Brown. (Update: 10-27-22, 14:55PM. *Aktion* canceled! Staples, apparently shorthanded just now, three employees seen in printing department notwithstanding, is unable to fill my order until the morrow around 4-5PM. Sigh.) (Update: 10-28-22, 5:57PM, The employee I spoke with by phone, pleading a large backlog of orders, tells me my print job from the previous night is not yet started. I ask for a better estimate after getting a suspiciously vague ETA. The employee quickly tells me he can have it ready in fifteen minutes). Pleading a backlog of orders, 'e was.

Speed Bumps on the Road to Ragnarök:

(10-26-22) The wait. Another Staple(s) of my life. Detailed here, for your delectation, in numbered steps:

1. Entering the Staples on Santa Rosalia near Crenshaw to laminate the Santa Monica business license I'm required to display next to my wares.
2. Expecting quite a wait, I pull up a seat. I am not to be disappointed.
3. As I wait, several voices nearby, two of them women ahead of me, begin a near-continuous barrage of talk. Garrulous, loud and obnoxious, they were. And much oppressed into the bargain, I'd wager.
4. Manage to read a bunch of pages of the book I'd brought along before someone becomes available to take my order.
5. Later, as she leaves, one of the obnoxious two manages a parting shot (this said quietly, for a change): “Come in, boy.”
6. Still more delays as the poor employee figures out my my bill, finally telling me to pay at the main checkout line, to which she accompanies me.
7. Finally at the counter, there is a further delay. Again, another obnoxiously loud barrage of words between a customer and an employee. I say words as the stream of utterances does not have the coherence to qualify as conversation.

8. Before leaving, the poor woman, speaking(?) with the Staples employee, begins repeating the words: "The water's different." This repeated an unconscionable number of time from the point of view of common sense.

(10-27-22) Today it was back to Staples for another crack at decent (even indecent is OK, I'm no longer so particular) service. I can report the following:

1. After a wait of not more than five minutes, I'm approached by Staples personnel. So far, so good.
2. A poker-faced young man at the print desk mistakes my request for 110lb paper for a number of copies instead of a type of paper.
3. Beginning to feel that "*déjà vous*" feeling as in "*'im again*," I, in an attempt to forestall the comedy of errors I've come to associate with Staples/Santa Rosalia, request pen and paper to make my requirements explicit.
4. After a considerable wait, I write down what I need, at which point the young man tells me that nothing whatever can be printed today for the heavier paper weights as the print center is understaffed, rattling off what weights I can print by myself on a nearby copy machine.
5. With my hopes for a Santa Monica visit later today cruelly dashed, I choose to return tomorrow to pickup the fliers I had hoped to display.
6. Neglecting to stick my tongue out as he of the poker face turns his back, I take my leave and beat an orderly retreat.
7. Time elapsed: fifteen minutes.

(10-29-22) Once more to Staples, Ho! The good news: I got my twelve fliers. The bad news: while there, I was given several different prices, ranging from about \$8 up to \$20. Confused though I was, I serenely managed to keep me wits about me and opted for the \$8 price, Natch! What's next? Ordeal by fire?

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

During the years in which I was weathering a cluster of over a dozen car accidents, Colette Walczak managed to turn the thing into a joke, ridiculing a few into the bargain. Admonishing me, she said the reason for those darn accidents was that I drive too slowly. Over the course of several months, she repeated herself. Had to, on account of no comprehension from dimbulb. It took years and a conversation with my other sister for me to get it. Hapless, wot?

I'm on my way to the bank. Just off the bus, I wait for the light to change when a little old black woman blocking my way quietly whispers: "Oaf." Or was it "Ofay," rather? Today, at Staples though, it was "Boy." Can't make up 'is mind, our *Sassenach*, can 'e? *Toute la gamme y passe, quoi*. (Everything goes, no?)

Conclusion:

I have a vision of *desperadoes* crowding some *Bahnhof*, waiting for the last train out. Last train to where, exactly? India?

Though Irene and I do not have the official status of *assimilados*, we do share some features. It does not seem to have been of help. Quite the contrary, I suspect.

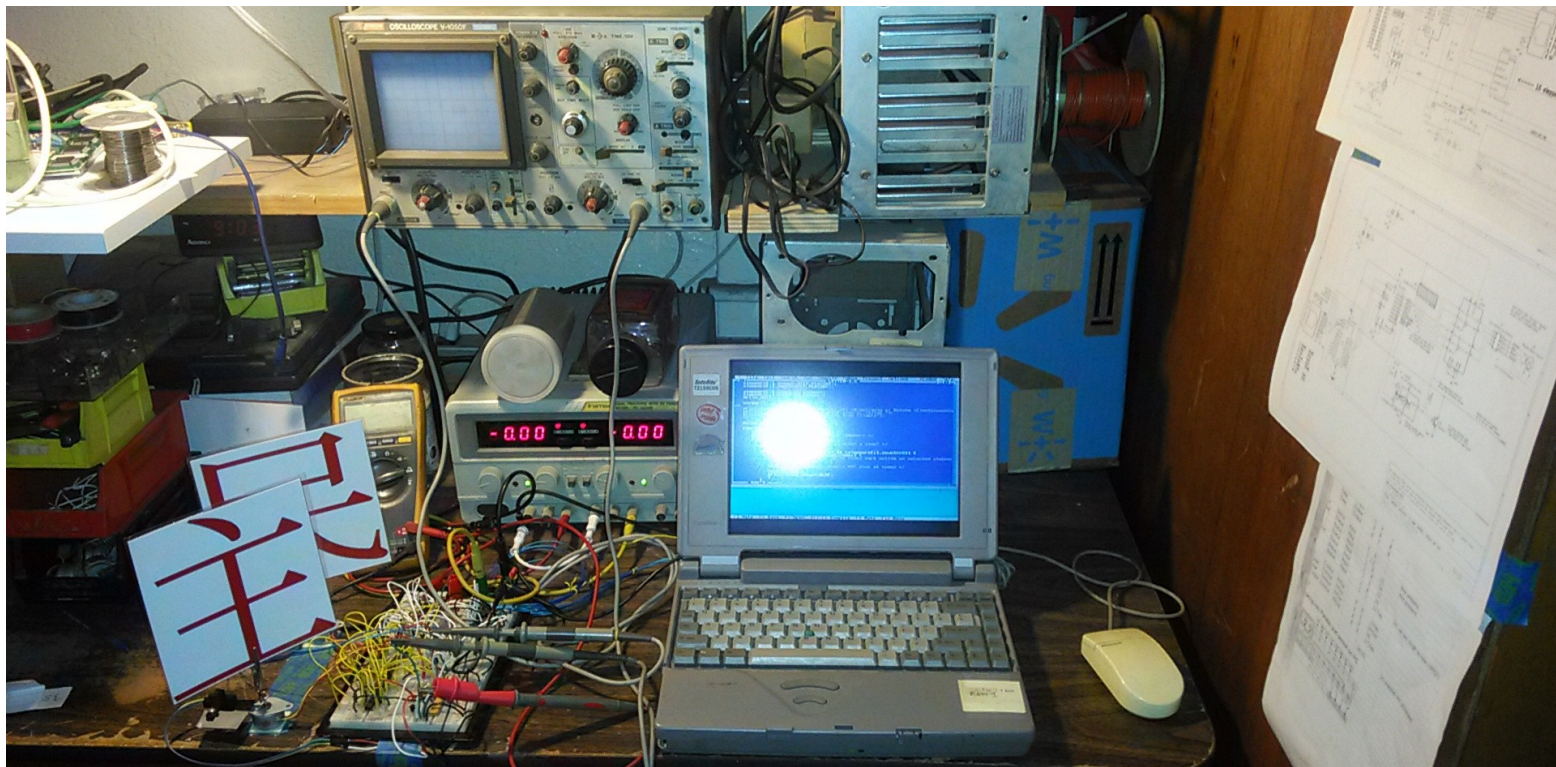
What was tried with me is (maybe) within the realm of a normal police state; could what was done to Colette be more like the M.O. of a so-called "Crazy State"?

Anyway, 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 and Colette (the latter dead of breast cancer in 2018): May our wordless tears, yours and mine, eventually prove invincible.

P.P.S. Irene: Regards to our *Tonton*, Eh?



The scene of this week's technical fiasco. 2 of 16 rotating letter controllers for my "Democracy Wall" on the left. Software being debugged at right. Test instruments above and to the side. With none of it, far as I can tell, working right. Soul Brother Not Happy™.