

# The Last Word™

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## Mustn't see TV

The far right doesn't know how to navigate conflict. They'll tear up your Ohio map.

When I talk about the far right, I'm talking about the *actual* far right. Believe it or not, I've been called "far right" because I support *liberal* positions like expanding Social Security and SNAP or protecting civil liberties the way the Constitution says. That's not the "far right" I'm talking about. I'm talking about the *real* far right.

The Trump regime has sputtered from crisis to crisis. DOGE has been like a yak in a crystal shop. The chainsaw episode was like media demigod John Kasich waving around his scissors. But even we have to acknowledge a rare – *very* rare – bright spot in the Trump White House: HHS Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. plans to investigate certain antidepressants called selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRI's) that are being overprescribed to children as young as 6. The drugs can cause dependence and dangerous side effects.

Kennedy's investigation is not far right. But NBC has become far right. NBC even flat-out lied about Kennedy's probe. An article on the network's website reads, "In the past, Kennedy has amplified false claims linking SSRIs to school shootings." Uh, those weren't "false claims." Almost all school shooters had in fact been given psychotropic drugs, often SSRI's.

The "false claims" are from NBC – not Kennedy. It isn't just another editorial disguised as a news story. It's an outright propaganda piece that spreads real disinformation.

NBC is arguing with one of the most popular and highly regarded government figures in America. This is like if they argued with Dwight Eisenhower in 1945 or C. Everett Koop in 1987.

The American media is staunchly pro-Beijing, and NBC is no exception – perhaps because it has interests in China like amusement parks it doesn't want to lose. NBC is like a satellite office of the Chinese Communist Party. This accounts for its stenographing of the COVID lockdown narrative. Consul General Huang Ping said of China's authoritarian COVID response, "China's prevention and control practices have earned valuable time and experience for other countries. ... We hope that the NBC and other U.S. media will objectively and fairly report China's efforts to control the epidemic." Just after that statement, NBC ran several stories strongly favorable to China's policies.

I don't know about you, but if I saw lockdowns like that in 2019, I'd call it far right.

The FCC used to look very unkindly upon broadcast outlets that distorted the news. The airwaves are a public trust, and owning a TV or radio license is a privilege, not a right.

*USA Today* printed the same lie as NBC, but as a print publication, it's allowed to abuse freedom of the press. By contrast, broadcasters are subject to FCC rules.

The taxpayers also should not be forced to subsidize NBC's disinformation. The airport board should cancel the airport's contracts with the CNBC and *Today* stores found there. This isn't a matter of differing opinions. It's a matter of differing facts. Like some other outlets, NBC can no longer be trusted to act as a valuable news source and has contributed to the endless disruption of society and our community in recent years, and they accomplish that by spreading falsehoods.

It's like how during the heyday of right-wing talk radio, many folks rightly felt that colleges should have yanked broadcasts of their sporting events from stations whose hosts spread disinformation. Radio hosts can use their own resources to lie, but don't expect taxpayers to fund it through state universities. If some of the lying talk radio bullies of 20 years ago wanted an airport store,



would you want the airport board giving them a contract?

Except for Kennedy's war on SSRI's, most of what the Trump White House has done is predictably a disaster. You might think Kennedy should be President instead of Trump. If the dinosaur media and corrupt judges hadn't destroyed his presidential campaign, he likely would be.

## Can you tell me how to get to Edwards Street?

There's a word to denote one who thinks trespassing laws apply to public rights-of-way. That word is *idiot*.

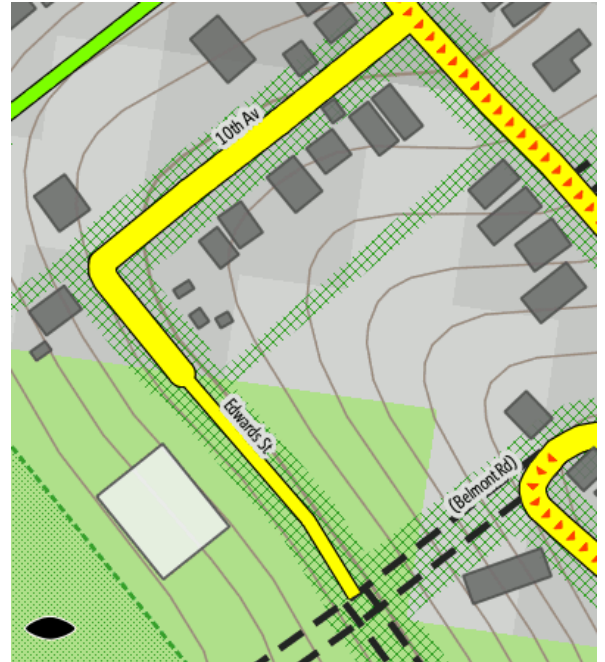
But that didn't stop the blob from trying.

Let's slog over to Dayton, Kentucky. In the late 2000s, our pals had a keen interest in Edwards Avenue—that street that trailed off to an abandoned basketball court. Edwards was and is a public street, and the public right-of-way extends southeast as long as it dares—almost to the 1300 block.

There was a lot of fascism in 2022, but Google Street View shows that even then, the road enjoyed unimpeded access. By 2024, however, that was gone. Just within the past few years, some ultrarightist bozo chose to place a gate across the street with a "NO TRESPASSING" sign.

It's impossible to trespass on a public street, brainiacs—unless perhaps this is some sort of dictatorship, and the media would never allow that, would they? (Yes.)

Recently, I asked on Facebook if anyone knew what the deal was, and they didn't know. So a few days ago, I went up there to inspect the situation. I was surprised to find the gate wide open...



This could mean one of two things. Either the city opened the gate because I was about to drop the hammer, or they didn't and they're going to close it again. I wouldn't count on the former, but it's possible, because it should be clear by now that I don't back down easily.

Yet I'm going to assume whoever closed the road didn't learn, because most dumb people don't, and that the gate will be closed again. Unless I know access to this public road will stay open, I'm going to keep inspecting it until our faces fly off in public.

## Time was up for this grandfather clock

More expensive or irreplaceable items went wastage baste! This rapid-fire romp doesn't have anything as illustrious as the time someone ruined a laminating machine by laminating a slice of ham, or the time somebody used a microwave oven to try to cook rocks in a Coke bottle, but they gleam mightily for you, the weary reader.

This piece has some stories from the public Internet about people breaking items at work, such as a \$2,000 piece of electronics. Another person broke a projector by dropping it from a ceiling mount. Another dropped a very expensive photo scanner at Toys "R" Us. Another worked at a furniture store and hit a sprinkler with a forklift. Over \$10,000 worth of mattresses were ruined.

Another person said they worked at Goodwill and knocked over and shattered a grandfather clock that had been donated. Later, the woman who donated it asked for it back because she had donated it by accident. The clock had been handmade by her late husband's dad. Another commenter dropped and broke a \$40,000 TV camera, and another dropped a \$200,000 set of movie camera lenses. Another lost a walkie-talkie while working at Walmart. Another worked at Circuit City and dropped a big-screen plasma TV set 10 feet. Then they put the TV back in its box and never told anyone. Apparently it got sold that way. (Reminds me of when we dropped a TV on the sidewalk and took it back to Sears.)

One commenter worked at the dining hall of their college. They blew their nose and threw the tissue away, only to discover that what they thought was a trash can was actually a bin full of lettuce for the salad bar. The dining hall had to throw away all that lettuce, thereby wasting it. Another person said they had a coworker who spilled a beverage on her work laptop. The company replaced it, and she did the same thing again later.

One person said they worked at a college bookstore and spilled coffee all over 3 textbooks. All told, the actual retail price of the ruined books was over \$1,000. A person who worked at Lowe's crashed a cherry picker into a shelf full of spa tubs, destroying \$35,000 worth of merchandise. A person who worked at a chewing tobacco factory said a metal piece of machinery got into some of the tobacco, but they couldn't find it, so they had to throw away \$200,000 worth of tobacco. At another workplace, somebody broke an electron microscope.

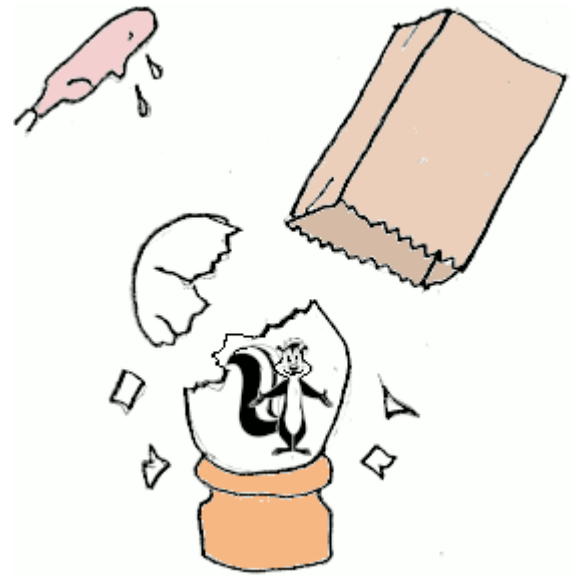
It's not just workers breaking things at work. A 4-year-old boy accidentally shattered a 3,500-year-old jar at a museum.

Another thread describes items that people purchased and planned to resell for profit. I remember the guy who kept posting YouTube videos whining that eBay sided with buyers over sellers too much (which was laughable considering my experiences with deceitful eBay sellers). He used to resell goods like this. Anyway, one person said they had a \$500 tube amp for sale, and a customer was going to show up in an hour to pick it up. Then the amp started making a weird hum, so the seller threw a tantrum and smashed it. It turned out there was nothing wrong with the amp before it was smashed, and that it was just a faulty electrical outlet.

Another person sold a \$12,000 air conditioner, and a forklift driver dropped it just as it was being shipped. Another mishandled a priceless copy of *The Cat In The Hat* from its first printing and ripped it. Still another shattered an antique glass lamp. Another bought an antique Pepé Le Pew snow globe to resell, and it broke in the bag on the way home.

A person who worked for a moving firm said the company broke a \$450,000 stone table at a mansion: "I got in trouble." A commenter who worked at Best Buy pulled over an entire row of 60-inch TV's, breaking all of them and costing \$12,000. One person said that when they were 12, they leaned against a huge stack of clay shingles at a construction site, and they all fell over and broke. The local newspaper then reported a reward was being offered to find the culprit, as hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of shingles were destroyed.

One person said that when they were growing up, they were on a family trip in Wisconsin.





They kept holding a map of Wisconsin out the car window to watch it flap around in the wind like a flag. Their dad got mad and shut the window, but the window closed on the map and tore it in two. Half of the map went flying out the window onto the highway. It just so happened that the police were behind them and pulled them over for littering.

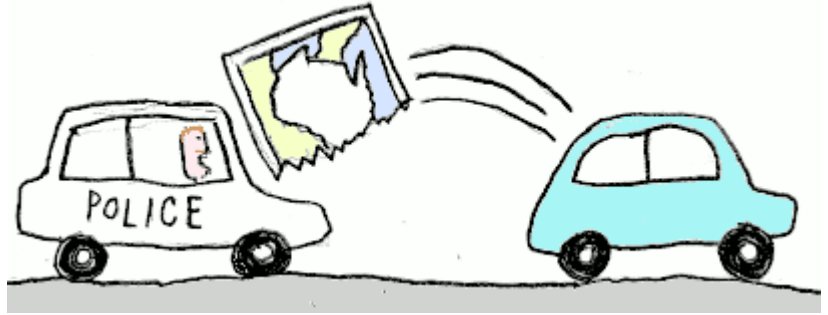
An assistant manager of a McDonald's knocked out the power to an entire town while trying to replace a light bulb. The power was out for a whole day, and all the restaurant's food had to be thrown out.

Somebody said they visited a Cabela's where there were "tons of taxidermy animals throughout the store." A little boy kept misbehaving and tore a wing off of a duck that was on display.

One person said that when she was 3 or 4, she broke a glass swan at her babysitter's home. The swan had a blue liquid inside that leaked onto an expensive pair of white shoes that the babysitter's daughter had purchased to wear to her wedding. The shoes were ruined.

There's a Reddit post titled "Am I wrong to expect my 12yr old to replace the shoes she ruined on purpose?" No details are available, unfortunately. Somebody did reply saying their daughter "broke her lamp after being told not to tilt it sideways multiple times."

*Dusty's Treehouse* it is not.



## Cline broke the law, exhibit #37,396,109,856

The world knows that Cline Middle School violated the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 by blurting out confidential information. You knew that, because I told you. If you didn't know, that falls under the header "Then you should have put on your listening ears and paid attention."

But did you know the school also violated this law when it extorted money from me at the end of my 6<sup>th</sup> grade year? It's true, it's true, it's all true!

FERPA says schools aren't allowed to withhold your report card if you allegedly owe money to the school. In this case, I didn't even owe money. The school falsely accused me of damaging textbooks. Even if I had ruined the books and legitimately owed money for it, the school still wouldn't have been allowed to withhold my report card.

Cline Middle School *literally* committed highway robbery on the last day of school. When my mom picked me up from school that day, I didn't have my report card because I hadn't paid up, and she had to go into the school and give them the money.

We didn't know about FERPA yet. Regardless of that, we probably could have gotten away with not paying, because I can't think of any ways the school could have made life worse if we didn't pay. Whatever the weather, there's no ambiguity that Cline defied FERPA.

You lose, Cline.

## School did a demolition job on my job prospects

You don't get to decide what kind of job someone else gets. But that didn't stop some from trying.

This story is a blast from the past from when I was a high school junior—before I started working at the library. Remember, this was after I was expelled from Brossart. I had spent the summer fighting the ensuing fascism and ended up at another bad school. Not nearly as bad as Brossart, of course, but it wasn't even a real school. It was just a teenage daycare.

There were several social worker types there, and they sometimes bothered us about stupid stuff. One of them pulled me out of class one day so she could have a little chitchat with me about getting a job.

I didn't think it was a bad idea, but the school wasn't an employment agency. They had no

business hounding me about getting a job when they wouldn't lift a finger to help find a better school for me. The school wanted me to find a job even though the school refused to do its own job. I was only 17, and this was during the school year, so the priority should have been school. They needed to find a decent school for me first, and then I could worry about a job. They also promoted illegal discrimination against me by not finding a real school.

I had planned to get a job during the prior summer and had even visited a vocational counselor to help me find one, but the struggles that summer put the kibosh on that. That was caused by the same organization that helped run this teenage daycare. It was their fault I didn't have a job yet. Their actions cost me a whole summer's worth of pay, kept me from gaining experience, and left me with less retirement dough.

The fact that the school didn't lift a finger to help me is sort of like how the Democrats won't lift a finger to stop the Republicans. Or how the Republicans won't lift a finger to stop the Democrats. Neither party will do a damn thing. Why would they? After all, both parties have become nearly identical in their policy stances. They have different *priorities*, but their positions are the same. Any time a party appears to have a better stance, it's only so they can raise money off of it. They've proven they won't do a thing to enact better ideas, and they instead let things get worse so than can justify their grift. They can't use the excuse that they have no political power to enact good ideas, because they somehow enact all of their *bad* ideas at the stroke of a pen.

In short, I was being illegally discriminated against by being shuffled off to what wasn't even a real school. And this school wouldn't do its job by finding a real school for me, and instead behaved like an employment agency, even though my education should have taken priority at that age.

I did start working at the public library just after junior year, but the school still refused to get its poop in a group. When I was a senior, I got to attend Holmes for the early part of each school day, and that's where I got my diploma, but the rest of the school day was back at daycare.

And whooooo man! Let's talk about the *types* of jobs our rulers wanted people to take, and how they would build their entire lives around trying to make sure everyone was conscripted into these jobs. If I didn't get to work at the library, I wanted to work at a store, and I didn't want to have many direct dealings with customers. But our overlords thought everyone should work at a fast food restaurant instead. In recent years, they've made online posts saying everybody should be required to work there, when they refuse to work there themselves. Yet I didn't want to work at a restaurant. Some folks might enjoy restaurant work. To each their own. But I had less than zero interest in it. I hate it, I hate it, I hate it. Hate it with the passion of a million suns. You might say the same about working at a library, but like I said, to each their own.

What's wrong with seeking employment that better matches your interests and skill set?

But something something market. That was always the excuse I heard as to why they didn't want me to work at a store or library instead of a restaurant. They helped create a market *with the purpose of* placing people in less lucrative employment that offered less chance of advancement.

People aren't built to fit into a system that makes them cogs for someone else's profit. Folks are supposed to question authority instead of blindly obeying. Instead of conforming, people are evolved to grow and build. Working for the gain of someone else—especially a big corporation—only rewards compliance. At least I got to work at a library instead of the jobs my proprietors wanted me to work at. ***And they couldn't stand that!***

Being told to work harder by people who had everything handed to them in life gets old, but it's a media evergreen. Loafing by irresponsible zillionaires still goes unchallenged.

If you think people with less means have it so good, then quit your cushy job and go get a low-paying service job instead. It's evil to complain about those with less means having it better.

Maybe I should have just "learned to code."



## They got it all on UHF!

If poologery sells for \$100 a barrel, you'll want drilling rights to the FCC's headquarters.

Let us introduce you to what has now proven to be a dumb deed of the FCC. Back before 1964, many TV sets only had VHF. That changed after Congress authorized the FCC to require sets to include UHF as well. But that wasn't the dumb deed. The dumb deed was the FCC's existing policy that said some cities could have only UHF stations – which dated back to when most sets could only receive VHF. These cities were arbitrarily singled out, and the policy hamstrung TV in these cities until the digital switchover not long ago.

Several rationales for this policy have been offered. One was to encourage people to buy sets that could get UHF, as this started before 1964. Another was that the VHF band had become too crowded, as nearby cities had become flooded with multiple VHF stations first. The FCC had allowed some cities to gobble up several VHF allocations before other cities could get any at all.

One city afflicted by this was Lexington, which the FCC set aside as UHF-only. The Lexington TV market was hurt by this for decades. Tall outdoor antennas were a common sight on houses in Lexington, so viewers could pull in VHF stations from Louisville or Cincinnati. Thankfully, the central city is on high land, so many folks there didn't have to miss their favorite programs – unless perhaps they relied only on Cincinnati's preemption-laden stations.

The fact that Lexington only had UHF stations made that city such a low priority for the networks that they didn't even bring a direct feed there. Lexington stations either built tall antennas to bring in Cincinnati network affiliates to rebroadcast or they relied on a microwave relay that originated at the Carew Tower. Even in the 1970s, when new TV's had UHF, some counties that you'd think would certainly be in the Lexington TV market were actually in another market, because all the markets around Lexington had several VHF stations. Thus, Lexington's standard viewing area was significantly smaller than it should have been. This only changed after Lexington stations teamed up for a big promotional campaign.

Remember also that many early '70s sets still had unstable UHF tuners that did not click onto a station. This continued until a law took effect in 1975 requiring better UHF tuning.

Another city on the FCC's shit list was Fort Wayne. Boy howdy, did Fort Wayne get hit hard! The FCC made Fort Wayne a UHF-only city. There were no VHF channels for commercial stations to use, so commercial broadcasters snapped up each of the available UHF channels there. When PBS came along, Fort Wayne had no VHF or UHF allocations that were open. The city had a shortage of available signals, because the FCC had singled it out to be UHF-only.

So there was no room for Big Bird in Fort Wayne.

The people had to make room, but it was quite a fight. As late as 1975, no PBS was available in Fort Wayne. Families moved there from Chicago and Pittsburgh, and their children cried because they could no longer watch *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*. One disappointed dad also said, "Very quickly, we realized that there wasn't any *Sesame Street* for the young kids." People put up with a lot, but they weren't going to put up with not being able to see Mister Rogers or the ol' Ses.

When people knew what they were missing, they wrote letters demanding PBS in Fort Wayne. In 1975, a low-power translator was built in Fort Wayne to rebroadcast the PBS station at Bowling Green State University in Ohio. But the signal barely reached outside the city limits. Nearby rural areas were out of luck.

It wasn't until 1986 – I repeat, 1986 – that Fort Wayne had a PBS station that broadcast at full power. According to Wikipedia, it was December 5, 1986 – almost 1987. The farms outside Fort Wayne had languished for years with no access to many of the quality programs that the rest of the country enjoyed. Several years earlier, my parents told me I was lucky we didn't live in the mountains where you couldn't pick up anything on TV. I'm not sure how accurate that was, because statistics from back then showed that a vast majority of households in even the most remote counties in America had a TV.



But what was life if you couldn't watch *Masterpiece Theater*? Science teachers sometimes urged us to watch *Nova*, but we wouldn't have been allowed to see it if we lived on the plains of rural northeastern Indiana.

TV and radio in Cincinnati have a reputation for extremely conservative attitudes regarding lyrical and other content. Smaller radio stations generally weren't as stodgy about song lyrics as big broadcasters were, but these stations together probably had less than 1% of the local radio audience. But on paper, Cincinnati looked like a VHF heaven compared to some other cities.

## Walking on, walking on broken glass...

Forty-nine years of faithful service is no match for the greed of healthcare firms...



How did this crap hap?

This was a Bicentennial drinking glass. I had it since I was growing up. But a couple weeks ago, as the glass was sitting in the kitchen sink, a salad bowl tumbled out of the dish drainer and onto it. The bowl wasn't damaged, but this glass was crushed.

This glass was a vintage patriotic item. So why was a heavy bowl placed where it could fall and break something as important as this?

The bowl belonged on a shelf instead, but the shelf was hogged by reams of paperwork that had been sent by healthcare companies lately, mostly regarding their refusal to cover needed medical services. For instance, they've tried to reject paying for my recent heart surgery.

One of the biggest offenders is Quest Diagnostics, which I have to use for lab work because that's who my main doctor uses. Quest keeps sending me a bill for hundreds of dollars for work that was almost a year ago and was supposed to be covered, and I keep having to call them and argue with them about it. Numerous online posts say Quest has done the same thing to other people and sent collection agencies after them.

Some people have this weird idea that insurance doesn't have to cover anything you expect it to cover. They think you're supposed to just buy insurance and then not be able to use it when you need it. They think you should buy it just so you can say you have it. You can't even bubble with it. The pop-up media whines incessantly that Social Security is a Ponzi scheme, but if anything's a Ponzi scheme, it's insurers who won't pay for expenses that customers expect them to pay for.

At minimum, I'd have more room here if I didn't have to keep hoarding paperwork documenting healthcare firms' many stupid mistakes. They were the proximate cause of the destruction of that glass. They claim to be such superpatriots, but it would be a real barrel of laughs if they were prosecuted under statewide flag desecration laws for breaking this glass. To add injury to insult, this happened just as my George Washington Weekend was getting under way.

The incident was crying out to be commemorated with a monument to healthcare companies' bottomless greed. I noticed one of the letters from WellCare included a page that said, "Important Plan Information," but the rest of the page was blank. So I pasted pieces of the broken glass to this sheet of paper. Then I mounted it using a sheet of oaptag.



I hung the resulting artwork on my wall...



It's like the crack in the Liberty Bell or when Francis Scott Key saw the flag still flying at Fort McHenry.

In the immortal words of Ronald McDonald: It's a work of art!

## Facebook doesn't know what privacy means

Facebook's day is over. It's terrible.

In January, Facebook head honcho Mark Zuckerberg said thugs from the Biden regime would "scream" and "curse" while demanding the site remove content it disagreed with, including "things that are true." Naturally, Facebook would remove this content.

One wonders what the White House hoped to accomplish this past October when it got Facebook to make a change that violated the privacy of its users and not tell them until they found it on their own. That was when Facebook began showing how many friends each user had even if they had set their privacy settings not to show it. Even if your friends list is private, the number of friends you have is now automatically public, and Facebook does not let you hide it.

This is deceitful and negligent, as many users had chosen to make this information private. They also were not immediately told of the change. Many only discovered it when they opened their settings and saw a message saying, "Your number of friends is Public," even when they ostensibly had it set so it was private. One user said they found the change when a "toxic ex" found their friends list growing.

This has caused numerous users to leave Facebook for good. They wanted privacy and felt insulted that Facebook didn't even tell them about a change that stole their privacy.

Meanwhile, Facebook still hasn't fixed its notifications feature that has been broken for years. In fact, they've made it even worse.

An article from last May said, "Facebook is decaying, losing nearly 50 million monthly active users in the last three years in the US." Facebook is in even worse shape worldwide, losing a quarter of its visitors since 2021. Just recently, a webcaster said Facebook reach is down 41%. Yet there's no real competition with the same types of features, probably because potential challengers are maligned so much by the tech press.

## Cat's out of the bag about Pink Panther incident

Da-doop. Da-doop. Da-doop-a-doop-a-doop-a-doop-a-doooooooop! Wowwwww!

You may remember those tumultuous days of the '10s when an intelligent person who I regularly saw would review this zine. She gave us funny stories about disrupting a movie on a school outing by using a lighter to pop unpoped popcorn kernels in the theater, and about tearing up two high school athletic fields with her car. She still exists, and she has another story. I touched on it once



before, but I didn't go into detail.

She said that during her later high school years, the school had a little project for her. There was an "educational" film the school wanted to show to students. This was back in the days of the old projector reels. She was assigned to basically ruin two films in one fell swoop. The project was to take a Pink Panther cartoon reel, cut brief portions out of it, and randomly splice them into the "educational" film. This was to get students to pay attention to the "educational" film when it was shown.

The school must have been run by the stupidest people alive if they thought this would turn out the way they wanted. The cooltagonist of this story knew how to do the task right. It's not difficult. But she opted to be cool and sabotage it completely.

The obvious strategy was to splice in the Pink Panther portions upside-down or backwards. There was some of that. But—according to our cooltagonist—the best part was when she actually cut the Pink Panther out of a frame and stuck him onto a frame of the other film using adhesive tape.

It was like a subliminal message. The Pink Panther would be visible for 1/24<sup>th</sup> of a second. That's assuming that frame didn't get caught on the reel from having the Pink Panther stuck to it and stay frozen in place. If that happened, the whole film probably unspooled in an uproarious spectacle.

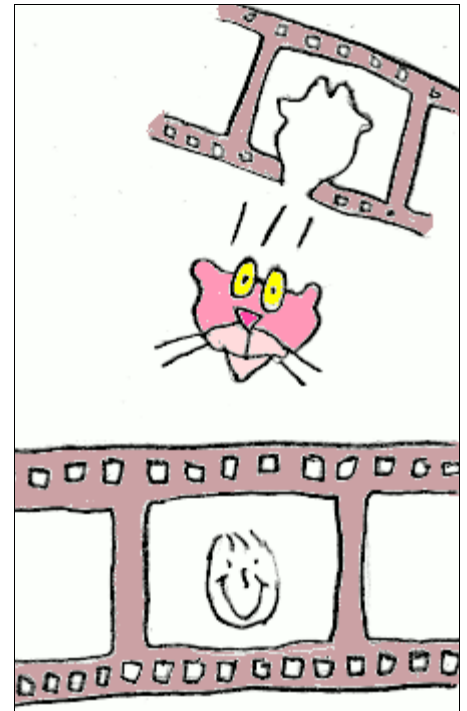
This film wasn't shown for a class that our friend was in, and she probably got in trouble for something else at the same time, so she never got to see what happened when it was shown. Odds are that hilarity ensued. At minimum, the students were treated to random shots of the Pink Panther walking backwards or defying gravity for no apparent reason.

School officials weren't too bright, but they must not have thought too highly of the student body if they thought a cartoon had to be spliced into a film to get them to pay attention. Not every student was a genius, as the school elevated students who honored the far-right policy stances that were in vogue at the time, but most students had to have been smarter than school officials were.

One time when I was in elementary school, our teachers showed us a film full of sports blunders. After it was over, we all begged them to show it backwards. And they did. That's nothing now in the era of digital editing, but that was considered funny back then.

Cutting the Pink Panther out of a frame and sticking him on a frame of another film was sort of like the time when I was in grade school when an illustration of a kid's face was cut out of a textbook that belonged to the school and glued over Elmer on a glue bottle.

The Pink Panther incident was also like something that happened when I was in 7<sup>th</sup> grade. At the end of the school year, we were assigned to make personalized diplomas for the graduating 8<sup>th</sup> graders by pasting a paper silhouette of the grad onto a big sheet of oaptag. Right when this project started, I kept getting in trouble at school, so I ended up getting hardly any of this assignment done. Then I got yelled at because it wasn't done in time. I have no idea what happened to this assignment after that.



## Something's on that new Verizon and it sparkles like the poo...

The prospect of switching to Verizon for Internet is looking dimmer and dimmer because of reports of censorship. To quote one of my old school bus drivers, "It just keeps getting worse and worse!" (She said that during one of the few times when things got better.)

I dropped Zoomtown because I found it blocking just one website over content. One is one too many, and the blocked site wasn't even anything controversial. Despite Spectrum's rectum being stuffed with the loot gained from its outrageously high prices, I haven't found it to be blocking any sites. But Verizon? Whooooo man!

Judging by reports I've found, Verizon has a long-running and recent history of blocking sites.

The company admitted to blocking one site that had controversial content. However, this content was probably not illegal, and it was certainly no worse than Usenet, which could be accessed by any 6-year-old with a dialup modem.

Some defended Verizon's defiance of net neutrality principles, saying you could just switch to a different provider. But if one provider can block one site, it's a slickery slope. Besides, many providers are effectively monopolies, and the Internet itself was created with gobs of scrumptious government funding. The providers also use taxpayer-subsidized infrastructure.

Wait! There's more! Not long ago, it was reported that Verizon was blocking an uncontroversial women's fitness site. Someone speculated that it was blocked because the site violated the far-right Digital Millennium Copyright Act, but that's not Verizon's decision to make. Verizon reportedly blocked an equally uncontroversial site about manga—a style of Japanese comics.

A message board about anime was allegedly blocked. Verizon also allegedly blocked sites that included links to copyrighted content even if the site was "99% legit." Verizon even reportedly blocked the department of motor vehicles site of an unspecified state.

There are only a few kinds of content that don't rise to the level of being protected speech. The bar for what is legally obscene is *very* high. You can't blurt out classified information, violate HIPAA, or harass people, but there's little else that isn't protected. It's typically not the job of Internet providers to police *access* to websites. If illegal activity is going on, that's the purview of law enforcement. To be clear, federal investigators haven't shown much interest in carrying out the law, but service providers have proven incompetent at stopping illegal activity by their own users, so they don't have a lot of credibility in deciding whether to block sites.

Meanwhile, some of the most vile hate speech is subsidized, though I don't know if people buy into these canards as much as they used to. Then again, probably not many did anyway, but the platform for it was and is very loud. Bombastic reactionaries yap, bills are introduced based on their opinions, and we've been forced to finance it.

## Playing by the rules

I'm not a psychologist, but I think I can diagnose someone with narcissistic personality disorder if they utter 4 little words: "They knew the rules."

That's a fascist battle cry that goes back a long way. It usually appeared in right-wing letters to newspapers defending schools and other authorities for punishing someone over something stupid.

It sure is a dumb thing to say, isn't it?

The real issue wasn't that someone knew the rules, but that the rules were stupid, so they deserved to be broken.

But that's the *old* narcissist battle cry. Now we have the *new* narcissist battle cries. They've finally learned how to move on from snappy catchphrases and come up with whole sophisticated concepts that are twisted like a knot.

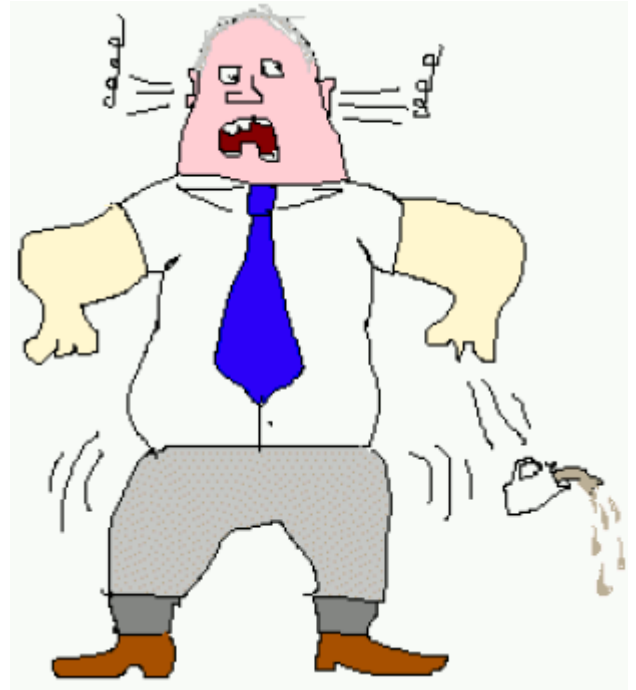
Recently, a woman posted on Twitter that her son is struggling in college because all the COVID fascism made him miss over half of high school. Other folks rightly agreed, saying the same has occurred in their families. But somebody claiming to be a teacher responded with this narcissistic venom...

*"Here are some facts: Your son's not meeting society's expectations for behavior. EVERY person on planet Earth went through covid together.*

*"Your kid doesn't want to change his behavior to match society bc you told him he didn't need to behave differently to help others. HTH!"*

I hope the response to that was, "Fuck off, Nazi."

Why should someone behave differently from before? In my day, we didn't close schools for 2



years at a time over *anything*. I wish Brossart did, but it didn't.

The person who posted the above paragraphs is a teacher? They're probably one of these teachers who has a paddle on their desk.

The Gordian knot of 2020s narcissism was also seen last year in a Reddit post that defended Miami Beach's unconstitutional searches of beachgoers' bags. That person posted...

*"You can avoid your bag being searched by not going to the beach or not taking your bag to the beach.*

*"If you choose to take your bag in, you are consenting to the search."*

That's not how it works, stupid. The whole point of a free country is that you don't have to avoid going to public places like the beach. In a free society, you don't have to choose to stay away from a public place just so you won't be searched.

Sure, you can avoid being searched by not going to the beach. But you have a right to go to the beach. See how America is supposed to work? The Fourth Amendment seems tailor-made for this.

Another great example of the new narcissism is an infamous quote seen on Forward Kentucky, a website for performative "progressives" — i.e., shitlibs. The quote was about how Taiwan controlled COVID: "We got control of it here because we follow orders here, we do what we're told." But that statement doesn't work as a defense of lockdowns, as Taiwan did not issue a nationwide stay-at-home order, and other orders there before that was posted were more lax than in most of the world. Most major restrictions in Taiwan did not come until later. Thus, there was no stay-at-home order for the people to follow. The main point here though is that the article was a chilling defense of unquestioningly following orders. That's in addition to Forward Kentucky's poor attempt at America-bashing, because in shitlib world, there's no such thing as national purpose.

If narcissists don't like being exposed, guess what? They knew the rules! Hahaha, gotcha on that!

## America ages into fascism

It was harder to be 16 in 1989 than in 1979. But it's much harder to be 16 in 2025 than in 1989.

Modern America is a society that unashamedly hates youth. Our rulers also commit elder abuse, but their child abuse is no better. Plus, their definition of *child* applies to adults at older and older ages — but only when it suits their purpose.

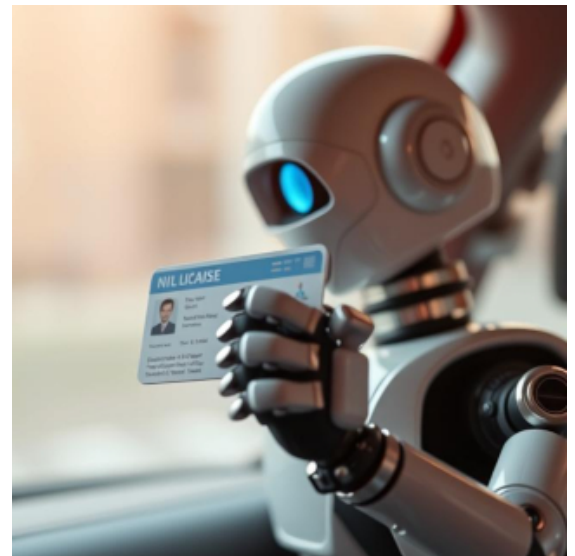
One thing that was far less common in my day was making people show an ID to prove their age. Forty years ago, the only everyday retail purchases that people were carded for were alcohol and tobacco. Other than less common purchases, that's about it. Now you're carded to buy just about anything. Markers, CD's, you name it! In some jurisdictions, even buying food requires proof of age.

You can tell they're building up to expanding carding to more items and more localities. Every planted news story — even though it may seem insightful and informative on its face — has an ulterior motive. For example, a recent news item advised against orange juice. The purpose of this item was not to outline the pros and cons of orange juice — which is in fact one of the healthiest foodstuffs — and let the reader decide. The real purpose was to lay the groundwork for more carding. Like most authoritarian crusades, it will start off slow, so by the time it's fully implemented, people won't even realize how much liberty they've lost.

Propaganda often starts with grains of fact, but the facts are weaponized in an attempt to impart the wrong conclusions and give rise to lies. I think that's what's happening here.

Imagine it's 1789, and an 83-year-old Benjamin Franklin limps into his favorite general store to buy some tea and a new tricorne hat. Imagine the cashier makes Honest Ben whip out his ID to prove he's old enough. Wouldn't that be ridiculous? But that's about where our society is now.

Some have argued that there have been a few positive trends in American public policy in the





past 40 years. But it's *very* few. The people got lucky once or twice. Even if there were a few gains, one thing is clear: The carding and micromanaging of young people is far, far worse now. It's not even close.

A public library in Idaho Falls, Idaho, recently began requiring any patron under the age of 30 – I repeat, 30 – to check in at the desk and show their ID. Kids under 18 not only require a parent, but the parent has to sign an affidavit for them every time they visit the library. Another Idaho library will not admit anyone under 18 unless a parent signs a 3-part waiver.

To my generation, that's unconscionable, considering I actually *worked* at a library before I even turned 18, and I visited public libraries alone before I was 18. Old educational shows and videos depict kids even younger than that visiting libraries. Libraries used to be considered an unassailable asset. There was even a *Happy Days* episode in which the Fonz gave a little pep talk about the importance of libraries – which reportedly resulted in a fivefold increase in library card applications among America's youth. "Everybody is allowed to read. Who would have thought such a thing?" Fonzie told an admiring audience. But that's all gone now.

Even many zoos no longer admit teenage patrons without a parent. That's in addition to their new World Economic Forum-inspired policies requiring all guests to make reservations in advance.

Grocery stores are another afflicted area that needs relief from the itching and irritation. When I was growing up, there was a corner grocery near me that tried to keep kids out, and these self-righteous grumps got mocked relentlessly. Yet these days, it's news if a grocery store *doesn't* ban kids.

A Maryland mall bans teenagers after 4 PM, and malls in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and California have followed that example. Perhaps this isn't surprising in states that had such a totalitarian COVID response, but nationwide chains are bad too. AMC Theatres – which now has almost a nationwide monopoly on movie theaters – says some of its locations require teenagers to be accompanied by a parent even at children's movies. Some retailers even have police harass teens.

These bans send a bad message to our young people, and the bans encourage them to shop online instead. American teens now spend more money on online purchases than they do at in-person stores.

Even the Maryland State Fair banned unaccompanied teenagers.

A 2023 article says banning the young from public spaces has helped fuel the decline in young people's mental health in recent years. In addition, many such policies have been selectively enforced.

Another recent example of using a grain of truth as a foundation for propaganda is the growing chorus on social media complaining of disruptive kids in school. This problem has worsened since 2020 when our rulers decided school wasn't important, but you can bet your bottom dollar it's being weaponized to build up to more bad policy initiatives.

How do we stop this crap from hap? Are we supposed to just sit there and bip?

I'm sick of the tired tropes that "things have changed" and "this isn't your day anymore." How are people any different now from just 40 years ago? Demonizing youth to the extent we see today is hostile. It is not in good faith. There has to be accountability for those who participate in carrying it out. Perhaps we should look into passing new laws to penalize those who have been behind it.

## Chalk up another ruined chalkboard

Chalkboards aren't a very exciting topic, but I think one particular blackboard was seminal in that universe we call my life.

For as long as I can remember, my life has been a long series of personal projects that are somehow linked together. Evidently, I'm in the minority in this regard. Most folks are *event* people, not *project* people. It also means I can bury my beezers in a project (as an intelligent person would say) all day – for many days in a row – and shove aside everything else. Sometimes I even forget to eat.

Let's talk about the chalkboard of doom. When I was in 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, a classroom at school had a huge chalkboard that was like a weekly report card for every student. Every student got a score for behavior for every class period and for lunch and recess. I think it was 0 to 3 but then they changed it to 0 to 4. Our score would govern whether we got to go on an outing on Friday.

I remember one time my score for lunch period was lowered because of what an aging nun



called “the fork episode.” I accidentally dropped a fork in the trash and emptied the whole garbage can to search for it.

This was also the same school where I had a gym teacher who always said, “Park it!”

The weird thing about the chalkboard is that the straight lines that formed the chart appeared to be drawn in chalk, but they were not erasable. It looked like permanent chalk. Plus, the permanent chart wasn’t something that was mass-produced. It was specific to this school.

Seeing this board early in my life influenced me to view things under this same model. School wasn’t left at school any more than work has been left at work or home has been left at home. All of these activities are connected. School also inspired my idea at the time for what would have been one of the first reality shows.

If I end up in some crisis regarding work or finances today that threatens my entire future, the feeling will be the same as it was in 1<sup>st</sup> grade when I received a long lecture by my teacher about misbehaving. This speech wasn’t as bad as later when I kept getting in real trouble, but this shows how the more things change, the more they stay the same.

The chalkboard was gone in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, and I don’t think I saw it all year. I think the next time I saw it was in 4<sup>th</sup> grade. It suddenly resurfaced in the basement, which was used as a classroom for a class of older students. By then, it was completely covered with weird permanent spots and blotches that weren’t there before. But the lines for the chart were still there. I’m guessing the school tried to remove the chart with acetone, which ruined the blackboard.

Also, this was one of a couple schools I attended where we were never referred to by grade level. I don’t know why. It was probably so we’d forget what grade we were in.

I just now remembered that the behavior scoring prompted a bit of minor vandalism to the school. Evidently, a student was mad that the school didn’t give them a 4 in every class period. One day, I noticed someone had written on the big, red, metal door to the school, “I got straight 4’s!” Yeah, I bet.

## Scene of the crime

Call the revolving door “justice” system anything you want. Just don’t call it “progressive.”

We started this zine fighting our local prosecutorial industrial complex, which represented broken windows policing writ stupid. What I mean is that small crimes—if they were crimes at all—were punished fully, while big crimes were overlooked completely.

And let me tell you, the prosecutors, law enforcement agencies, and other officials who were behind that were anything but progressive. Local government officials of both major parties were some of the most ideologically driven and extreme *anywhere*. And they weren’t liberals. Around that time, I actually ended up supporting a Republican candidate because a Democratic incumbent was so right-wing. The Republican had his own scandals later, but he might not have gotten as far as he did if the Democrats had their poop in a group.

In brief, our local officials were soft on crime, and that’s all there was. If you send a struggling mother to jail just because her checking account gets overdrawn, that takes resources away from fighting all the murderers, rapists, and burglars—who got off completely. I was charged with “trespassing” for using the library at NKU when I was no longer a student there, but there were zero charges whatsoever for all the times I was physically assaulted for years before. In Campbell County, you could steal, rape, and kill, but God forbid you show up at a university library where you’re not a student.

Crime pays. That was the rule in Campbell County in the 1980s and 1990s—and even fairly recently. What most people would consider crimes were *de facto* legal. It also became the rule at the national level when George H.W. “Mad Dog” Bush pardoned traitors involved in the Iran-Contra affair – while Bush imprisoned many folks for minor offenses. The pardons touched off their own crime wave through the message they sent to America’s youth.

In the past few years, there has been much discussion of the growing tolerance of serious crime



in very large cities. San Francisco and Manhattan seem to generate the most complaints. It is indeed a real crisis.

But—contrary to some of these complaints—it’s not “progressives” who are behind it. This trend started in very conservative Campbell County decades ago. Campbell County of my youth gifted America with the current crisis of rampant crime.

San Francisco and New York today are not “progressive.” These cities in 2025 are to the right of Cincinnati circa 1993, and it’s not even close. Judging by reports I’ve seen, if I lived in New York or the Bay Area in the 2020s, I would have voted out the elected officials who let violent criminals go. It’s not “progressive” to let killers roam free. I’ve fought hard for penal reform and ending mass incarceration, but there’s some dangerous criminals out there, and they should be behind bars.

Our cities in general have become flat-out fascist. There’s been an undertide of fascism in our big cities for a long time, and the forces of evil occasionally got their way. But now our big cities are largely *unrecognizable*. They’re almost as bad as the rich suburbs now.

Unashamedly despotic areas have more legislative seats than you’d expect. In Maryland, for example, the legislature is almost entirely controlled by two counties—Montgomery and Prince George’s—that are full of very rich Washington, D.C., suburbs. Even rural states give too much power to urban and suburban elites. This is a reversal of a decade ago when rural areas had too much power.

Big urban areas are seeing a level of fascism that had not been seen in my lifetime. Fremont, California—a major Bay Area city—has experienced a far-right petition drive to criminalize the homeless, and city “leaders” were happy to oblige. While an entire class of people is unfairly criminalized, real crimes still are not punished.

While many cities have seen a real increase in serious crime, it’s weaponized to support the failed policies that caused the crisis in the first place—such as more broken windows policing. The cycle will inevitably repeat when doubling down fails. (Sound familiar?)

When the revolving door continues to spin, please—*please*—don’t call it “progressive.” I’m begging you.

## When the bubble gum busts

You keep begging us to write about bubble gum, and we oblige. That’s one of many differences between us and Fox News. When you beg Fox News or *Fortune* to report on bubble gum, they never come through. But we’re not Fox News (thankfully).

In my day, people used to chew bubble gum just so they could blow bubbles that burst and completely covered their face. It often covered their glasses—thereby ruining them. They didn’t care about freshening breath, improving concentration, or the many funky flavors. They just wanted to be obnoxious—and therefore funny.

It was funny when people acted obnoxious in public. Or in private, but public is funnier. One time in 8<sup>th</sup> grade, I got detention after school, and one of the other detainees asked the teacher if he could get a Coke. *That* was funny, but it only had a small audience. A large classroom is a bigger audience.

I saw this headline recently: “Walmart issues stern warning about unexpected customer behavior.” I was hoping the article would be about people acting up in the store. But I was disappointed that the piece was about their buying habits instead.

My 6<sup>th</sup> grade literature teacher once warned the class that gum was not permitted, because it was distracting. I replied that I thought it was because someone might blow a bubble that bursts in their face so they couldn’t be seen cheating by looking at other kids’ test papers. Most schools have an Allowed Cloud against hats, because the brim or bill would cover students’ faces during tests. An article says the U.S. House of Representatives generally bars congresspersons from wearing hats because hats create poor acoustics. But, despite my teacher’s admonition, people bubbled in that class.

If you weren’t living during the bubble gum wars, you’d be amazed at how much everyone





constructed their lives around blowing bubbles just to let it burst in their face. What was even more noteworthy was when they let the goo stick to their face for as long as they dared – and it wasn't even intentional.

Sixth grade was also when I was in the gifted class each Tuesday. We shared this class with the 7<sup>th</sup> graders. Like I've said, the other students in that class were very bookish and scholarly. By contrast, I was a terrible student, and the teacher in that class hated, hated, hated me. In any event, the other kids would never, *ever* bubble. They'd never even let the phrase *bubble gum* be spoken in their presence.

Would they?

Could they???

**Did they?????**

Nah, they couldn't.

They *wouldn't!*

But they did!

One afternoon – the same day I decided I was too fed up to work on some dumb project that didn't even count for a grade anyway – one of the 7<sup>th</sup> graders decided he was fed up too and started goofing off. This was out of character for a great mind such as him, and it elicited a prolonged scowl from the teacher.

After this went on for a few minutes, my classmate did something very strange. He peeled off a huge strand of burst bubble gum that was stuck to his face. I didn't even notice it was there until then. He wasn't even chewing gum then.

Obviously, he must have been bubbling earlier, and he walked around with the evidence dangling from his smiling visage for hours.

After he found the strand of gum, I think he rolled it into a little ball and flicked it onto the floor.

That's intelligence and professionalism!

## You still owe us money, George

Perhaps no modern political figure has been reviled by the public but revered by the dinosaur media as much as George W. Bush. Nikki Haley comes close though.

And Bush still owes money to me – and likely you.

Andy Beshear has become like the Democrats' version of Bush. Ant Farm Andy recently signed yet another Republican bill to accelerate the gutting of Kentucky's progressive income tax. Channel 9 praised the move: "Starting next year, Kentucky residents will be taking home more money." No we won't. The flat tax of 3.5% is still much higher than what was paid under the lowest income bracket under the graduated tax system we had until 2018.

At very minimum, we should restore the fairer graduated tax. The system we've had since 2018 is actually a form of stealing.

Progressive taxes have a noble history. Abraham Lincoln enacted America's first federal income tax, and it was a graduated tax. Years ago, I was part of a very insightful discussion on The People's Forum about progressive taxes in general. It was noted that the most successful countries relied on progressive taxation. But the Democrats today are a boutique party that doesn't have to worry about economic issues like this, and it's a shame Channel 9 distorted the news about the latest tax rip-off.

So how does Bush still owe us money?

Remember the Bush stimulus package? We got zero from it. The only people who received Bush's stimulus were those who made enough money to have to pay income tax. If you were in a lower tax bracket – as most people who read this are – you got a big, fat goose turd. This stimulus was actually welfare for those who needed it the least.

One way that autocrats stay in power is by printing more money so they can claim there's more of it and then misspending it. Bush was term-limited, but the Republicans were buying votes.



The media smirked and grinned about how “everybody” was getting free money just for kicking so much ass. Who’s this mysterious “everybody”? We’re still waiting for our money.

Support for this Potemkin stimulus by so-called news outlets was an in-kind contribution to the Republicans. Media organizations essentially gave free airtime to this cause. The cause of giving free Toy Money to those who need it the least lives on in a significant faction of the party leadership, but the Democrats—like Ant Farm Andy—do absolutely zero to stop it.

Support for upward redistribution of wealth was mainstreamed 30 years ago but remains as cartoonishly evil as ever.

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