

The Last Word™

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Cities flocking against Flock

Bellevue may have been late to the diaper fetish party when the city—under a tie-breaking vote cast by Mayor Malfunction—recently approved 8 new AI-powered spy cameras run by the far-right Flock Safety. Other cities are already ending their Flock contracts—and much of it is because Flock didn't know when to clam up.

The city of Staunton, Virginia, has ended its Flock contract because of an inflammatory unsolicited e-mail sent by the company's CEO to the local police chief. "Let's call this what it is: Flock, and the law enforcement agencies we partner with, are under coordinated attack," the CEO whined. He continued, "The attacks aren't new. You've been dealing with this forever, and we've been dealing with this since our founding, from the same activist groups who want to defund the police, weaken public safety, and normalize lawlessness."

Aw, somebody needs a hug!

That e-mail sounds like an angry Rosco P. Coltrane but without the down-home charm. Or it sounds like a rant from 1994 from a right-wing talk radio host who didn't have much charm to begin with.

The e-mail backfired mammothly. The backlash against this harangue highlighted just how important the public's concerns were. As a result, Staunton canceled its contract with Flock. Staunton officials said the e-mail "does not reflect" the city's values.

There was speculation that the e-mail was sent en masse to police departments all over the country—which makes it spam.

This comes as Flagstaff, Arizona, is also ending its relationship with Flock after a public backlash. Cambridge, Massachusetts, terminated its contract upon discovering that Flock had installed 2 cameras without the city's knowledge—which violated the contract. Several cities in Washington state recently canceled their Flock contracts.

By stepping up its Flock fascism, Bellevue is more in line with Oakland, California—where city council just voted to waste \$2 million of the taxpayers' money to renew its Flock contract. It's strange that "conservative" small-town Virginia is rejecting Flock, while "liberal" Oakland is digging in on Flock.

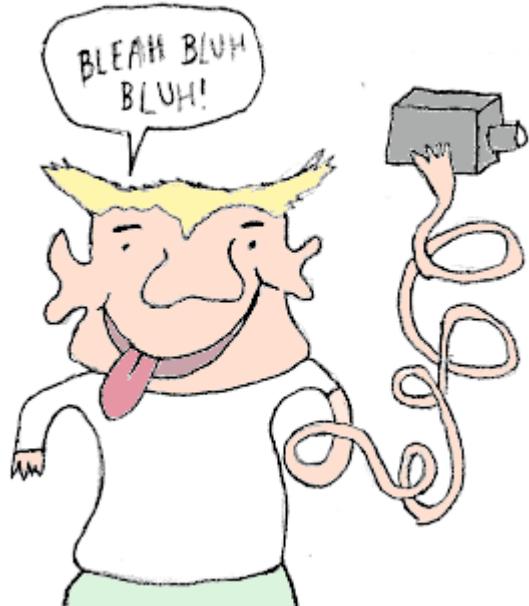
Our adversarial relationship with official institutions is baked in by decades—*decades*—of life experience. But we earn our keep and pay taxes to use the public ways. Dumb people can fight us—and they will. We will fight back.

Here in my car...

In my day, I got toy cars like Matchbox, Hot Wheels, and Tomica so I could play with them—because they're toys, after all. It was part of the People's Universe.

But some people buy cars like this just to collect them—never to play with. Yet, inevitably, prying young hands always find them and play with them, which ruins them all up.

The public Internet is once again bepuzzling our digs, as I've found stories about toy cars like this getting roodledy-doodledy. Somebody posted that they had a collection of *unopened* Hot Wheels cars. But the person went out somewhere and got home to find that their mom had invited over her



friends, who brought along their kids. The tiny tots got into the cars, opened the packages, and scratched up the cars beyond repair. The cars included such goodies as a 1984 Ford Sierra and a 1982 Toyota Supra—which was limited edition, no less.

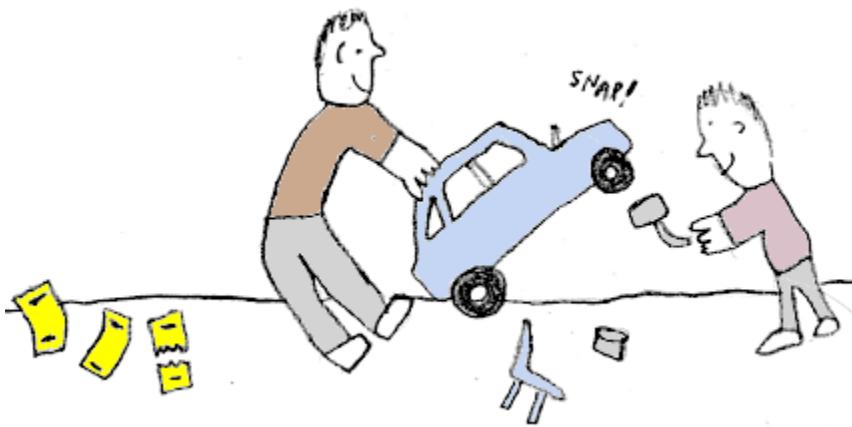
Somebody correctly replied, “Your mom doesn’t understand boundaries and the idea that something that doesn’t belong to her is not to be touched. I wouldn’t keep any valuables out in the open anymore if I were you.” Yet the mom’s response: “They are just cars.”

It’s astonishing that a parent would show such disrespect for their kids’ collectibles—or for boundaries in general. When you entrust family to be around your collectibles, the family has an easy job: to *make absolute sure* nothing bad happens to these items. Family members might be entrusted to transport them, keep them in a safe place, or just be near them—but the principle is the same. There are zero excuses to allow anything bad to befall them. It’s called responsibility and being an adult. What’s even worse is when there’s an element of surprise, like when you find your belongings in ruins when you least expect it.

Some people know nothing about boundaries. I’m responsible, and I knew about boundaries before I even had my first job as a teenager, and didn’t paw through coworkers’ desks. What adult goes into somebody else’s space and disrespects their things, or allows children under their care to do so?

It could be coins, records, stamps, or anything else you collect. People need to mind their business, respect others’ space, and make sure nothing happens to the belongings.

Somebody responded to that thread saying their dad gave away their collectible Hot Wheels cars to a nephew. Someone else said their mom let their cousins play with model cars given to them by their late grandfather. The commenter’s favorite car was destroyed when their cousins tore out the seats and broke the mirrors, wipers, bumpers, and wheels. One other time, this commenter found their entire collection of rare Pokémon cards strewn all over the house, creased, and trampled. This included every card from the original set and all of the holographs: “All of them were mint condition then ruined in an instant.” The magic word!



Someone posted on Facebook that somebody kept going into Walmart and bending the packages on all the Hot Wheels cars so they could buy them cheaply and resell them: “This is what happens when angry little beta boys collect Hot Wheels.” Somebody posted on Reddit that they went to Target and noticed that boxes of 50 Hot Wheels cars had been opened by thieves stealing the best cars. Someone replied, “The fact that an adult most likely did that too makes it so much worse.”

Another post said the Australian postal service pulverized 2 whole boxes of rare Matchbox cars. A slew of low-quality troll posts blamed everyone except the postal service.

Meanwhile, I’ve put together a retrospective of over 50 of this type of scale model vehicles that I amassed in my day...

<http://bunkerblast.info/cars>

Hopefully, my cars won’t have any appointments with the Ru Crew.

Showing no good will to Goodwill

According to reports, trouble has been brewing at the Goodwill store in Bellevue!

Folks on Facebook have been reporting that customers have been urinating and defecating all over the floor there. They’ve vowed not to return because of these unsanitary conditions.

A commenter said that recently, “there was a large amount of diarrhea in the aisle in front of the bathroom.” Upon being notified of this gauntlet, an employee “pulled out a mop and bucket and started to smear it around.”

This patron returned to this store sometime later and "had an unfortunate encounter with a puddle of pee in the toy aisle." This commenter opined, "Two incidents of bodily fluids is more than enough for me."

So now nobody is going to be buying any vintage sports bloopers videocassettes or Rainbow Brite snow globes, thanks to a Curly shuffle and some bonus pee.

America's roast beef...No sir! (a blast from the past)



Time for a fond memory of the open source decade!

It can be a barrel of laughs when grown adults get angry in public. Sometimes it's a big, stupid baby who can't come to grips with being wrong. But this time, it's somebody who may have actually been right. I can't be sure though, and whatever evidence existed is gone after 11 years.

This happened on August 21, 2015. I went to the Arby's in Bellevue for lunchage. As I was downing my roast beef sandwich, there was a man and woman sitting right behind me grumbling about the quality of their meal. Finally, the man summoned the cashier over to their table. The man angrily told the cashier, "This sandwich ain't worth a shit." Best all, he was loud enough that most other customers could clearly hear him.

As the couple was leaving the restaurant, the woman complained, "We got ripped off."

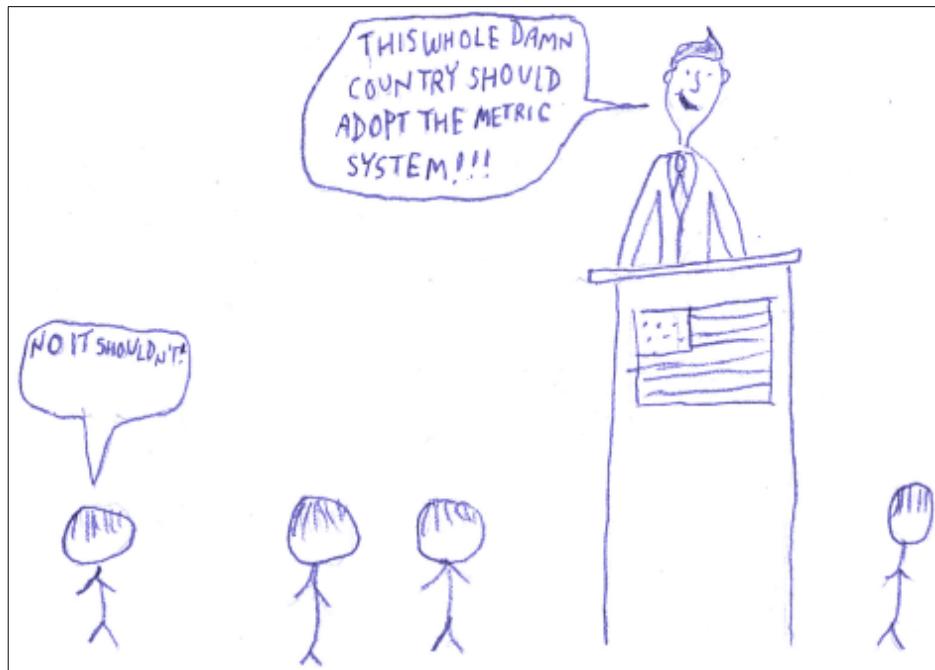
Again, this may have actually been true. It wasn't the cashier's fault, but it may well be true that the food was of poor quality.

At the time, some folks I knew were having some issues, and they called me while I was in Arby's. A family member said they "ruined" my lunch. But by that time, I sort of expected them to call, and hearing a customer loudly cussing in a restaurant over bad food negated the frustration of it.

This incident also brings to mind an episode from years before when I was a junior or senior in high school. One day, we had a class outing somewhere in Florence. For some reason, we went into Central Hardware, a large hardware store. While I was in there, a man was loudly arguing with an employee over something. It was as hilarious as you might imagine. The employee didn't say much, apparently conceding the debate. I'm sure he was a nice guy, but I guess he or store management had to take the L. (What does that saying even mean? When that song came out, I thought it was about the Chicago "L", recalling our Chicago trip where our Horizon stalled on a median.)

One more evening gone to baste!

Stink metric!



A lot is wrong in America today, but luckily, this is one Coke can that's been crushed—for now. You used to hear a lot about America converting to the metric system. A federal law was passed in the 1970s to facilitate *voluntary* conversion, but in the 1980s, someone decided it should be mandatory, and we were supposed to shut up and like it, dammit!

This is one of these policies that benefits big corporations but has real costs to the average person, and is trotted out by the media as some great step forward even though it would actually set us back. Sort of like school uniforms.

By the time I was in 5th grade, forced metrication was all the rage. I found a book in the school library titled *Think Metric!* that described in words that 5th graders could understand how different measures and weights were established and why we should start using the metric system. Some hall monitor type saw the book and thought having to switch was a really great idea.

Amazon sells old copies of this volume, and one of the descriptions (though it appears to be for the wrong book) says, "Very soon Americans will have to use the Metric system of weights and measures." "Have to use"? Who says we "have to use"? Ronald Reagan? (Actually yes.) It's not like how you "have to use" the restroom because it's a physical need. They're using this "have to" language in the 2020s sense, in that it's a rule being imposed on us without our input. This sounds straight out of *Even Gourches Wear Masks!*

Around the same time, we had a Metric Man coloring book floating around our household. Metric Man looked like a comic book superhero, complete with cape, but his specialty was his obsession with the metric system. I decided to fill it out funny. One page mentioned how ancient Egypt measured lengths in cubits, so I drew an anatomically correct mummy. Just to drive the point home, I wrote next to the mummy, "This is a man." Another page said that some measurements were based on the length of a king's feet or arms, and readers were instructed to draw a king measuring a body part. My response to this was just too obvious.

One page said that a past President had urged the United States to use the metric system, and this page directed, "Draw the President speaking." So I drew the President giving a speech to a crowded room, saying, "This whole damn country should adopt the metric system!" Someone in the audience was yelling, "No it shouldn't!"

Much like the Two Minutes Hate we've seen in the 2020s, this coloring book tried to portray dissenters as immoral, unethical, and evil. For this aim, one page consisted of mazes in which Metric Man raced against a sinister looking character called Bad Man. Another spread was a comic book storyline in which a museum reported that a 50-pound gold bar was stolen. Instead of catching the thief, who was about to crash a plane into a school, Metric Man wasted time trying to figure out how many kilograms are in 50 pounds. Can you imagine Superman farting around with metric conversions?

Another thing that was part of the People's Universe around that time was what I called my *Weird* magazines. These weren't really magazines. They were just a few sheets of notebook paper I drew funny pictures on. The centerpiece of these documents was a drawing of Ed McMahon yelling, "Shut the crap up!" I hid these papers right away so my parents wouldn't find that drawing.

The next decade was the one we call the 1990s, when we came closer than ever to forced metrication, under a 1991 executive order by the disastrous George H.W. Bush. But, stunningly, the idea has withered and died since then.

My stance on the metric system is actually only soft opposition. If private individuals want to experiment with the metric system, that's their business. I just don't support it as an official requirement. It's like my article on statehood for D.C. and Puerto Rico a few months ago. I don't have a hard position against statehood. I'd support statehood as long as I think their leaders would follow the Constitution. Under this same tenet, there were events in history that I don't like—and I have a hard position against—but I have no interest in covering up their existence. Reals over feels (as an intelligent person would say).

We're glad to say we've managed to stop forced metrication for the Time Being.

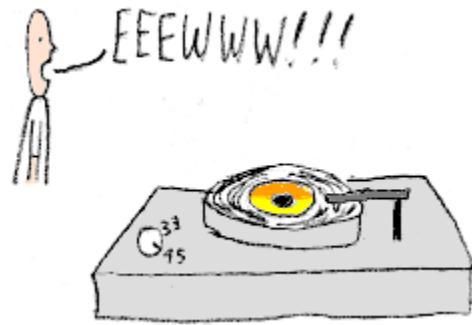
A matter of record (a blast from the past)

This is like the time someone posted a comment on The Online Lunchpail asking why I was using shitty old AdSense to serve my ads and somebody replied, "because your face fell on it."

Let's talk about how one of my diehardmost readers in the late 2010s had a blog of her own. She posted an entry about how she had a few old records that she sold to a local music store years before. A bunch of people commented on her post about old records they had.

But someone stole the show by replying, "I have a record of people pooing."

I bet they did.



Inside the pro-war shock troops

As the right-wing media cheers the Trump regime's illegal, genocidal war in Venezuela, few outlets have even begun to investigate the right-wing foot soldiers who appear to be bombarding social media sites with low-quality, often identical posts supporting this war.

Here's a hint: They're mostly the same paid trolls who have supported other right-wing causes that date back through the Tea Party, the Iraq War, and even before. And yes, they endorsed COVID lockdowns too, so don't think we've forgotten that.

They're hired by the same right-wing web that was responsible for idiotic letters to newspapers even before the rise of the Internet. Yet with the war in Venezuela, they're now shriller than ever. It's bad enough that the regular media is flapping their big yip in support of this deadly war, but some of the real business involves the paid troll racket.

Social media is being targeted by a very sophisticated and well-funded pro-war propaganda campaign run by actual fascists. For decades, this shadowy cabal has whipped up antidemocratic hate while claiming to be for lower taxes or "tough on crime" or hiding under some other guise like that. If you happened to be online while the carpet-bombings of Venezuela were unfolding, you could track the propaganda campaign almost to the very minute.

Within the day, they mobilized their shock troops for rallies in Miami and New York to support the war. These events had laughably low turnout despite this quick mobilization. Protests *against* the war drew many more people.

That pro-war propaganda and events could be organized so quickly is proof that there was an influence network already in place to react to an event like this. The leaders of this effort acted to advance the interests of big corporations, religious fundamentalists in the government, and right-wing overseas dictators.

Many of these online accounts were actually generated and operated entirely by AI. Our electric bills are going up to pay for data centers that facilitate right-wing propaganda campaigns. One we know for sure is AI-generated is one that kept arguing with people on YouTube, whose profile photo

was clearly made by AI and looks like a cross between André the Giant and actor Michael Nader.

Gee, he's really convinced me. At first, I was skeptical of his arguments, but because he has an AI-generated photo, he has all the military and legal experts in the world beaten hands-down!

Although YouTube took down videos that contained factual information that contradicted the "approved" narrative on other topics, it takes no action against AI bots—or hate speech. We just stumbled upon someone who got an account to upload misogynistic commentaries because he was mad that his girlfriend dumped him, and now he's added classist rants along with it.

Here's a recent example of right-wing accounts posting identical items on other issues. A couple weeks ago, multiple accounts on Twitter posted the exact same innocuous low-resolution video showing people walking about in some sort of commercial development. Each posting was accompanied by the exact same complaint verbatim, saying...

"This is literally the 'Mall of America' in Minnesota.

"85% of these people are on welfare, btw."

It's not even clear if the low-quality video was even from Mall of America.

Meanwhile, there has not been any other U.S. military action in recent memory that has received as much media support as the illegal bombing of Venezuela has. The media lied when they said nobody was injured or killed by the bombings. Later reports from more reliable sources say the overall death toll may have been as high as 100. Even Wikipedia admits that 7 U.S. soldiers were injured.

Also, the Australian state of New South Wales recently passed new "anti-protest" laws, which are now being used against people protesting this war—on the grounds that these protests cause "fear and divisiveness." Boo!

I was in my late teens during the George H.W. Bush narcodictatorship. We can assail foreign leaders all we like, but Bush was a true dictator, and the right-wing blob openly supported him. The Bush regime was responsible for more than its share of state disappearances of Americans on American soil. Later, the Tea Party supported itself by selling drugs, which was proven by its repeated scandals in Campbell County in the late 2010s. In addition, big corporations control most TV and radio outlets in the U.S., and information unfavorable to the ruling regime is not completely covered.

Despite the media's general support of the bombing of Venezuela, however, sometimes the media screws up and does their job. George Stephanopoulos was interviewing Marco Rubio about the attack, and Stephanopoulos rightly asked, "What is the legal authority?" Narco Rubio made a fool of himself and replied, "We have court orders." From who? Rubio probably found an old court show on YouTube and jerked his gherkin to it.

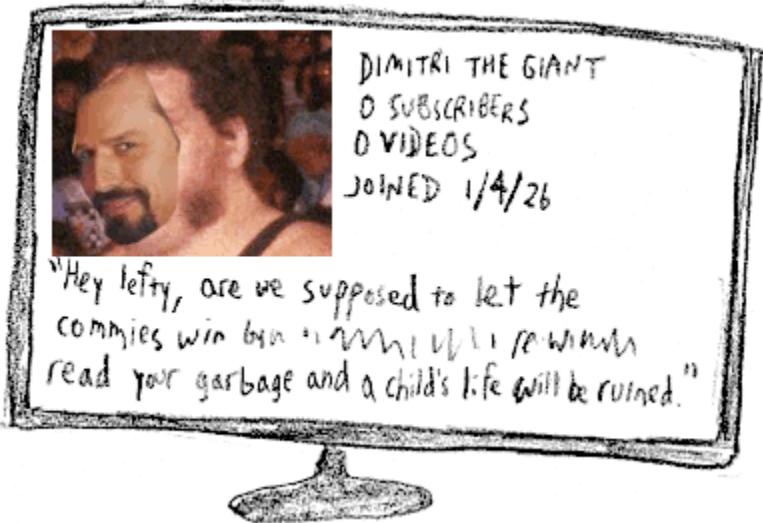
Narco also posted on Twitter that Nicolás Maduro wasn't actually the President of Venezuela. To humiliate Rubio, I replied, "Yes he is the President of Venezuela, stupid." I didn't say whether Maduro was good or bad. I was just stating a fact. Little Marco was factually wrong.

Teachers don't like it when you put down on a math test that 2 plus 2 is 5.

But this shiny object was only in the air for a few days before paid right-wing trolls and AI bots began defending ICE for murdering a woman. They were even louder then. After I had most of this article written, the *Washington Post* reported that ICE was wasting \$8 million of the taxpayers' money to hire "pro-ICE influencers" to republish ICE propaganda.

Short-term rentals and short fuses

It was only a few years ago that the city of Bellevue would make an occasional—and I mean



very occasional—effort to rein in gentrification. It wasn't much, but unlike today, a few positive steps managed to slip through. One of them was the city's ordinance to ban short-term vacation rentals (such as Airbnb) unless it's at the owner's residence. This law was needed because short-term rentals were unfairly manipulating housing costs.

As a perfect example of doublethink, this ordinance was fought by those who opposed allowing small apartments for actual residents. They claimed that people who rented apartments to live in didn't stay there for very long (even though I've had the same apartment for 28 years). Yet people who used short-term rentals—which they supported—stayed there for a much shorter time.

Recently, I found that people were offering short-term rentals in Bellevue in violation of this ordinance. It seemed as if no effort was being made to enforce the law.

I made a brief post about this on Facebook. But Facebook is Facebook. It's not exactly the Greenback Party. So the troll brigade immediately went to town.

Someone who apparently doesn't even live in Bellevue replied in part, "mind your business." Um, no. That's not how it works. Someone *broke the law*, and they did it in a way that could affect my wallet, so it *is* my business.

Next time a state trooper pulls you over, I dare you to say, "Mind your business." Cops love it!

Another person told me, "city ordinances aren't law lmao." Seriously, he said that.

The city code that covers short-term rentals is § 156A.19. If it was a victimless crime, I wouldn't care. But violating this law does serious harm to residents—especially those who can afford it the least. Needless to say, victimless crimes are punished much more harshly than violations that do real harm. This is something we've been telling you for over 30 years, yet nothing is ever done about it.

Lap desk of luxury

Lap desk of luxury, yeah...Wurma wurmp wurma wurmp wurma wurmp wurmp guuurrerrg! (Forgot about that one, didn't you?)

Have you ever had a lap desk? I've had several over the years.

When I was growing up, our entire house was about the size of a walk-in closet. So we had no space. We didn't even have space at our desks, because we used desks to store things we didn't have room for anywhere else. So if we wanted to write important documents, we had to sit on the floor and use a book as a hard surface.

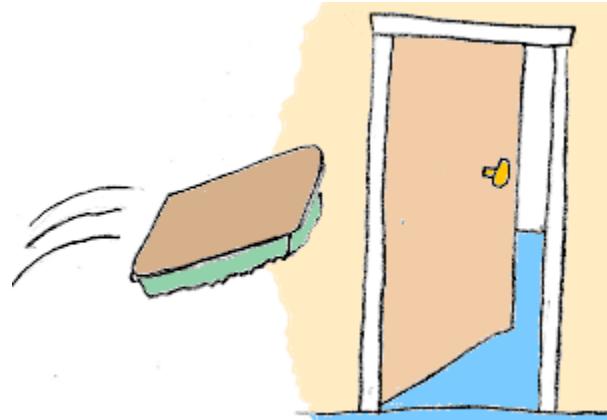
But I got skeeved at for this, because it was ruining the covers of beautiful books. So at some point, maybe in my early teens, I acquired a lap desk. It had a brown surface and a beanbag underside. I remember that the packaging had drawings of people using their lap desk on city buses and other places.

It didn't last long because I kept using it as a shield to block items that were thrown during sibling squabbles. To be fair, these projectiles weren't really hard objects that could inflict real injuries (unlike at school). They were mostly just things like squeaky dog toys. One time, I threw the lap desk back in self-defense, and the corner of it made a big dent in a door (which added to an older dent caused by a book). All of this misuse was too much, and one day, the lap desk broke right in half.

I got a new lap desk with a white surface not long after. A few years after that—while I still had that lap desk—I got something that is supposedly a lap desk, but instead of a beanbag base, the lid opens up and you can store things inside. I mostly used it to store markers and stencils. If you had used it as a lap desk on a TANK bus, it would have been sure to open up and spill everywhere—or some juvenile delinquents would have tried to open it and steal from it.

The lap desk I got as a replacement for the first one was just recently retired. It was so old that it was nicked up beyond reclamation. It also endured extensive abuse during those personal doldrums after the NKU disaster. I would actually write on the lap desk itself, usually things like, "You little woocap!" I finally got rid of this lap desk recently after getting a new one.

Much of the People's Universe was built even before I had a lap desk. For example, a running joke that I launched to make fun of my 3rd grade teachers and Air Supply that got ridiculously out of hand predated my first lap desk by several years. On the other hand, that project is not truly part of the



People's Universe, as it's been depeopled. The People's Universe is for projects that have staying power. We owe a massive debt to lap desks for projects that have been executed in the lap desk era.

Everything is bad for you now unless it is

Everything is bad for you now. Unless it's *actually* bad for you—in which case it's mandatory.

One thing we've noticed in recent years is that almost every conceivable activity is branded as being as dangerous as cigarette smoking. People have used those exact words. They claim that many regular food items are as bad as cigarettes.

It's true that a lot of additives to our food are poison, but many of these didn't appear until my adult life, and not much is being done about these additives. Instead, people are assailing food itself—even without the additives. Yet anyone who suggests limiting dangerous additives gets attacked.

Several years ago, there was a media blitz claiming that cheese and other dairy products were as dangerous as cigarettes. Yet some of these same media outlets have claimed that additives that are known to cause cancer are safe. It's like they consciously try to be wrong 100% of the time.

Meanwhile, nothing is done about toxic pollution. The media has also launched a campaign of Three Mile Island denialism, in which they actually claim with a straight face that this nuclear meltdown had no harmful results. Their main targets instead are consumer products that people buy themselves—not activities of big corporations. One Twitter post even said milk is communist, comparing it to the Soviet Union in the Stalin era.

The obstructionists consider it easier—and more fun—to shame *people* instead of *corporations*. According to their "reasoning", if someone gets cancer or heart disease, you can just point fingers at the person over their food choices instead of at dangerous nuclear plants, utility companies that dumped mercury in the river, or developers that buried dioxin under the playground. Under this line of thought, everything is considered your fault. It makes about as much sense as how I kept getting accused of "causing" the dogs to shit on the back porch.

Some countries have actually made it illegal to run TV or online ads for ordinary food that they deem unhealthy—thus equating food with cigarettes. The ban even applies to cereal, sandwiches, and full meals. Their argument is that this ban helps fight child obesity, but the biggest cause of child and adult obesity was COVID lockdowns—which still have not been fully addressed. Some of the governments that imposed lockdowns appointed committees to study their COVID response, but their reports have often absurdly insisted that lockdowns and other mandates didn't go far enough. That's because these regimes stacked these committees with cronies who had supported lockdowns all along. This differs from governments that instead appointed a grand jury to issue a report. These juries wrote objective reports instead of starting with a flawed conclusion and working backwards.

Plus, some of these ad bans do not apply to corporate logos and names, so huge high-profile companies can circumvent it. The ban mostly affects smaller companies with lesser-known brands.

It's bad when companies exploit consumers. But it's hard to see how Cheerios are in the same category as Camels. If we're worried about ads targeting children, we should have gone after the heavy portfolios full of clothing ads that came with the *Kentucky Post* each Saturday. The *Post* chose to carry all those ads for children's clothes, yet the paper repeatedly insisted that school uniforms were necessary to stop kids from competing with each other over clothes. It doesn't get any more hypocritical than that.

Then there's the giant in the room: Big Pharma ads. TV is full of these lengthy commercials. There's been some talk about cracking down on these often predatory ads for drugs—but there's been no action. I know firsthand that some of Big Pharma's products cause permanent disability. Yet



nothing has been done to rein it in.

The conceptual switcheroo that demonizes healthy food while letting dangerous drugs and additives slide appeals to an alliance of corporate hacks, crackpot influencers, medical quacks, and narcissistic authoritarians. Granted, not doing it might appeal to *different* corporate interests—but less hackish and less powerful than the ones we’re dealing with now. We should go by science, not by which hacks we like better.

In my youth, teenagers and even younger kids could bop into any store and buy the now-taboo foods without any trouble at all. Anyone back then would have considered it laughable to place it on par with smoking.

Some of what’s going on now is just misty-eyed feelings for a Bizarro World that never existed before. To say that eating cheese is as bad as smoking 3 packs of cigarettes a day would be riotous if claims like this didn’t have serious consequences.

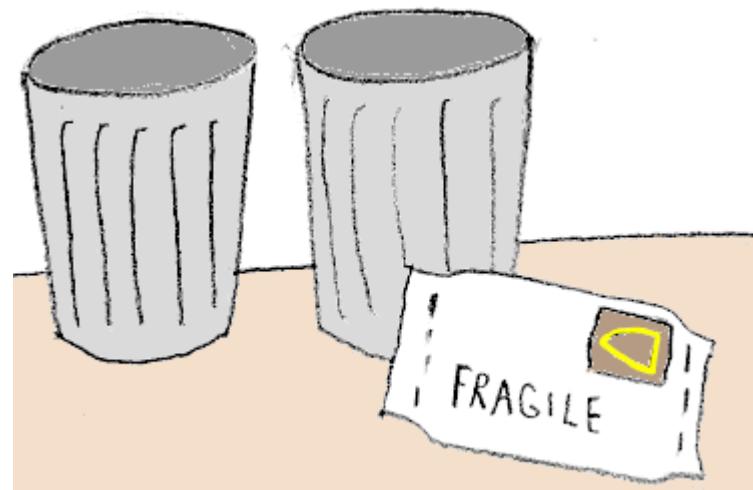
Package deal

It’s risky business for packages these days.

An online comment from a Bellevue resident exposes the dangers faced by packages. The commenter said UPS had placed a package they had ordered next to their garbage cans instead of bringing it to the doorstep. Worse, it was on trash day.

If the parcel hadn’t been found in time, the garbage collectors would have taken it. And it would be history. A perfectly good package, gone.

It reminds me of when I worked at the library, and I overheard a woman who worked there saying some equipment or important documents got thrown out “by mistake.” In this case, however, I don’t know how she knew it was thrown out. It could have just been misplaced. It also reminds me of the story about how some kids accidentally threw away their brand new Rock ‘Em Sock ‘Em Robots on the day they got them by burying the toy in the box to be taken out with the trash.



Weather fears are a storm in a teacup



People today are afraid of everything. They think a coloring book is going to reach down from the sky and gobble them up.

I’ve added some new theatrics to respond to people who are afraid of the weather. If someone is afraid it’s going to snow, I start moving my hand like a puppet, saying in a spooky voice, “Snow...Snow...Snow...Snow...” While chanting like this, I slowly and menacingly move my hand toward the person’s face.

It can apply to any sort of inclement weather. “Rain...Rain...Rain...Rain...”

"Sleet...Sleet...Sleet..."

I had to go to school in weather that was 10 times worse than anything they're worried about. In high school, I had to wait for the bus in bitter cold and wind. It was so windy that the heavy iron flagpole in front of McDonald's was actually swaying. There was no respite. And it was all to attend a shitty school. Our schools almost never closed over weather, and if they did, we had to make up every day.

Everything is big and scary now. I'm gonna scare you by saying, "Boo!"



There's something weird...And it don't look good...

One of my most prized possessions used to be a videocassette we taped off the local news when Michael Dukakis came to town and we went to see him. However, a year or two after this event, I put this tape in the VCR to watch it, and found that it had been taped over with some trashy movie. This was despite the fact that the tape had been clearly labeled.

It was gone. Gone into thin air. I repeat, the label was *very clear*. It infuriates me to this day.

This tape was irreplaceable. And I'll never see it again.

People on the unabashedly public Internet say things like this used to happen to them in the heyday of videocassettes. It was the heyday because people would say, "Hey! You taped over my videocassette!"

One person says that when they were 7, they accidentally taped over their parents' wedding with *Ghostbusters*. One said that when he was in Cub Scouts, his troop did a hilarious skit where they wore tutus and danced to Sugar Plum Fairies music. Five years later, his mom taped over it with *Days Of Our Lives*. Another commenter said they taped over their brother's big high school football game that was shown on TV to record *La Bamba*.

A commenter said they were in a baton twirling class at the age of 5 and it was covered by the local news. The tape lasted about 10 years before their brother taped over it with *Beavis And Butt-Head*. Another person said their brother taped over a family vacation with porn. One said their parents' wedding was erased when their dad taped over it with a Packers game. Another said their mom taped over their 5th grade play with *ER*. Another said their brother taped over their first basketball game with porn. Best all, it wasn't discovered until their parents tried to show the game to out-of-town relatives who were visiting for Thanksgiving.

One person said their brother *purposely* taped over their 1st grade play. In retaliation, this commenter taped over "his precious pinewood derby." Another commenter said they worked at Sears, and they intentionally taped over the paint department employee training video with *Whose Line Is It Anyway?*

Sometimes, things get taped over without ever being recorded in the first place. Someone said their stepdad wanted to record a golf tournament off TV. But this commenter was playing Nintendo right before it and paused the game with the TV off. Instead of the golf match, the VCR recorded 3 hours of a paused video game. One commenter said that when she was a teenager, she was supposed to tape the Super Bowl for her uncle who was at work, but the tape ran out while she was playing a game on her laptop, causing the most important and exciting part of the Super Bowl to be missed.

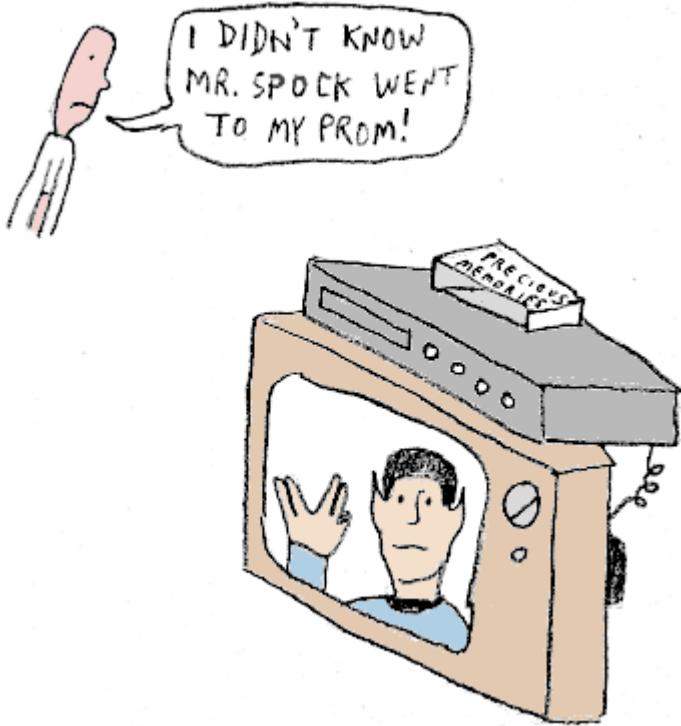
One commenter said their dad taped over all their home videos with *Star Trek*. Someone in a "confessions" forum admitted taping over their parents' wedding with *Nightmare On Elm Street* and leaving them to find out when they tried to play the tape for relatives. Somebody replied saying their graduation and prom tapes were lost when their kids taped over them with *SpongeBob SquarePants*.

In this clip, we see the precise moment when a feller discovers that he taped over his wedding video with *Cops...*

<https://www.tiktok.com/@romijessmaya/video/7010523045559307526>

Another person admitted recording *All My Children* over her son's baptism. Another said she let her mother-in-law borrow her wedding tape, and the mother-in-law then taped over it with soap

operas. Another commenter said her husband taped over their wedding with a football game—even though the tape was labeled. One person recorded a 3-hour marathon of a favorite show only to find her mom had taped over it with 3 hours of the Home Shopping Network. Another said her son recorded over her wedding with wrestling shows. Another said her high school graduation video was lost when her mom recorded *The Little Mermaid* over it.



A commenter said his wife taped over irreplaceable home videos with the O.J. Simpson trial. Another taped over their wedding with *Gilligan's Island*.

Just sit right back and you'll hear a fail!

Less than meets the eye

After some pampered babies insisted on relitigating old garbage from the 1980s in the late 2010s, I reserve the right to respond in kind, but there isn't much to say that I haven't said before. Yet there are a few sorry episodes I haven't touched on much that show just how out of control this racket was.

After their assaults became less pertinent, I've focused more on how condescending people became in the 1990s. It started with junior year of high school and continued through college. School authorities would talk down to you like you were a small child or incapable of comprehending simple ideas. This was as bad as the whimper and scowl I discussed in the last issue.

But there are still a few events to unpack from the broader campaign that I've stored in my mind so I could deal with them after other incidents were hashed out. For example, who was that idiot who kept harassing me at NKU? I don't mean Helmethead. I'm talking about somebody else, who sort of resembled the Clash's Mick Jones with the hairstyle of 1986-era Steve Winwood. This guy was a few years older than me, so I don't know where I would have met him before. I never heard him speak a single word to anyone, except the times he started harassing me. I remember him popping off at me while we were in line at the campus bookstore at the start of a semester.

But he was just one of many morons. That was years after I'd already become the target of doxxing, defamation, and gangstalking—all of which was encouraged by schools I attended. For years, this mob coordinated a campaign against me—for no apparent reason. It spilled from school into my home and into public places.

There's no way I was the only victim. I think some others just didn't even know they were targeted. It appears as if the assailants had an extensive dossier on me. Otherwise, I wouldn't have been attacked out of the blue by people I hadn't met before. Again, it's not entirely clear why I was targeted. I don't even have to speculate that this mob contacted people I associated with, because I already know they did.

While I still had my landline, I kept having to change my phone number because of harassing phone calls. The mob somehow kept finding the new number, even though it was unlisted. This continued until I got rid of my landline in 2010. It turned out that several people who had harassed me years earlier worked for Cincinnati Bell. Clearly, that's where the mob was getting my new number from. At least one of the harassing calls was traced to the campaign office of John Spencer, a right-wing Senate candidate in New York state, which proved one of the assailants was working for Spencer.

One Sunday afternoon in 2008, I received a strange prerecorded call that seemed to promote a new Transformers movie. I traced the call to a certain Catholic high school we all know and "love." This proves direct involvement by someone closely associated with the school. And before anyone says I made it up, I uploaded the entire incident to YouTube, so the naysayers can zip their lip now...

When a school does something as conspicuous and egregious as allow one of its associates to make a junk call to a 35-year-old who the school expelled when he was 16, it lives forever. I will do everything within my power to safeguard the evidence. Someone at the school made a conscious choice to call *me*, so I own the content of the call. It's mine forever. Rehashing it may get boring, but eventually, I'll trot it out again. Also, if the school complains that I posted "their" call, that's an admission that they did it—as if tracing it to them isn't enough of a smoking gun.

I've also found an old list that shows I received a harassing phone call in 2005 that was traced to the Little Miami Local School District. I received several between 2006 and 2008 that were traced to something called Faith & Family/Citizens United. Citizens United was the same far-right organization that instigated the court case that gutted longstanding campaign finance laws. During that timeframe, my phone number had changed, yet Citizens United somehow got the new number. I received a harassing call in 2007 that was traced to the New Jersey Republican State Committee. A few others were traced to major local establishments.

The doxxing goes back since before anyone ever heard the word *doxxing*. I recall a particularly gnawing shenanigan that took place when I was about 15. One day, my brother and I visited a friend who had just been given a batch of computer games from someone he knew. When we launched one of the games, we discovered that someone who had owned this game before had put a bunch of trash talk about me in the high scores list.

This was one of many incidents that proved there was a systematic campaign against me. I have to reiterate this fact in case you're new around here. Not finding little surprises like the above is kind of important.

This also blasts to smithereens the trope that I must have done something to provoke the abuse. I wasn't anywhere in sight when some simpleton decided to waste space on their own disk with nonsense like that. I was living in their heads even though I wasn't even in their presence. In fact, they probably had no idea I would ever see their garbage. It was meant to be consumed by other people, not me.

It was way beyond criminal. It's a crime to spend all those years plotting to harm someone. Imagine if you can how much trouble I'd be in if I'd done the same to those who attacked me. Plus, to be attacked by people who I hadn't met before like the idiot at NKU shows a very deeply coordinated effort. I'd love to see that dossier.

Same shit, different assholes

The doxxing seemingly wasn't just by this cabal. One of my proudest moments is when I participated in a successful campaign to shut down abusive residential centers for "troubled teens" in the late 2000s. This didn't go over too well with "the industry"—the residential center racket.

I remember a particularly bizarre incident circa 2009. I was standing on my front porch one day when a car driven by a younger man started slowly tooling up the street. He appeared to be gazing intently at my building. But then he saw me, and—with a look of surprise on his face—he quickly turned around and traveled back down the street.

I told some of my fellow protesters about it, and they said it appeared as if he was someone hired by abusive programs to track me down and keep tabs on me. They said that's the sort of the thing "the industry" does.

I'm not sure if "the industry" is even different assholes from the rest. By now, they've probably colluded with the other thugs I've dealt with. Each of these factions is well-connected with the same official bodies, so it's hard to imagine that they act completely independently of each other.

Each mob—assuming they're separate—has constantly lied. And they've done it unconvincingly too. The only reason anyone at all believes them is that they had so much pull to begin with. They lie about everything. Maybe someday there will be studies on why they lack the mental acuity required to live in society or exhibit critical thought. They're in a category that one almost has to suspect that it might be as much environmental as political.

MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE!



Throughout my adult life, I wanted so badly to advance in life, but basic needs were not met. One of the most important needs was to bring the harassment to a halt. But nobody even tried. I was completely on my own. You have to take care of the elephant in the room before moving on to anything else in life. But absolutely zero was done. In fact, I was punished every time I fought back. Then, naturally, the far right blew its stack because I—rightly—fought against authorities over other things.

One of the top jobs of our public leaders should have been to break up violent mobs like what I encountered. Instead, they built their agendas around issues like the welfare abuse hoax of the 1990s. They ran on calling everyone else a “welfare cheat”—even people who had jobs—but I didn’t know anyone who was abusing welfare. Which was a more urgent problem? Welfare abuse (which politicians made up) or dangerous gangland attacks by organized packs?

There wasn’t a single day when I woke up and said, “I hope today is the day when they cut off food stamps for the cashier at Burger Chef,” while I kept having to worry about getting attacked at school or in public places for no apparent reason.

FWC didn't see the forest from the trees

This is yet another story about how authorities need to go look up “trespassing” in their *Disney's Wonderful World Of Knowledge* encyclopedia.

Recently, a video appeared on YouTube in which officers from the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission confronted a group of people camping in a state forest. There’s no evidence that they committed any major violations, but the law’s bip bone bipped nonetheless...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9SQf2P-83iU>

Here’s the real oscarism. The FWC gave a trespass warning to the campers banning them from the entire Florida state park system for a whole year, including the entire 200,000-acre forest. The officers pretended like they were actually being lenient: “A year is the *minimum*.”

Why so bad? For one thing, the campers weren’t even being accused of anything worse than some minor violations. Secondly, it’s public property, and you can’t be “trespassed” from public property. Thirdly, this is a due process violation. The FWC jumped straight to the punishment phase and skipped the trial completely. It doesn’t help that the officers threatened to bring in the canines as apparent retaliation for the people not answering a question about where they lived.

Doesn’t law enforcement have more important things to worry about than this? I’ve never woken up and said, “I hope this is the day that 3 apparently homeless people are banned from the whole Florida park system for a year.”

Someone brang gum to study hall

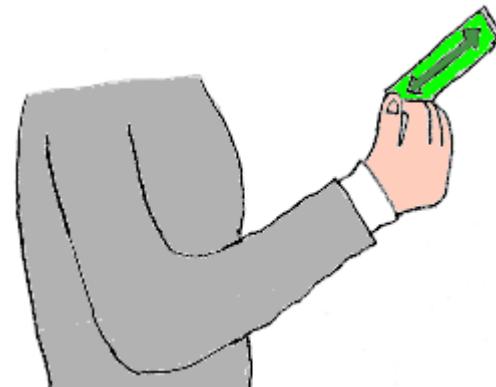
When I was a high school freshman, something funny happened one day in study hall, and it had to do with gum. Imagine that!

I was just sitting there being chill, when I glanced over to my left. I immediately noticed that a girl who was sitting a couple rows over was holding up a piece of gum—just to elicit laughs. It was Wrigley’s Doublemint in the bright green wrapper. It was the old stick shape they had back then.

She was holding it diagonally with her right hand at about waist level. She was gazing at my entire row, and she had a look on her face like she was about to burst out laughing. She sat there like that for a few seconds, giving us enough time to appreciate the hilarity of gum.

I started snickering because it was so funny. The only thing that would have been funnier is if it wasn’t wimpy Doublemint but rather a bubble busting brand. Imagine if she held up a piece of Bazooka instead.

I don’t remember her chewing that stick of gum. She just held it there and let it be funny. I think she used these same theatrics again later that hour.



She must have really liked gum—or at least Doublemint. She probably built her whole day around chewing that stick of gum, and was waiting for the right moment to start chomping away without getting caught by the teachers.

But it still isn't as funny as when someone inexplicably wrote "gum" in a textbook.

Air travel takes a nosedive

Possum on a gum bush! What have they done to air travel?!

The only time I've ever been on a commercial flight was for the conference on institutional abuse in Washington, D.C., in 2017. That was after much of air travel's decline had already taken place, so I didn't have direct experience with the old days to compare it to. When I hear about what flying used to be like though, there's no comparison.

This came to light recently when I saw an article about the state of air travel in 1987. According to this piece, back in 1987, you could arrive at the airport only 20 minutes before the flight's scheduled departure, and odds are that you'd be on the plane faster than you could say, "Pooing is cool." These days, you have to show up hours in advance.

Few places in the free world had tighter security than commercial flights. But even then, flying would require only that you walk through a metal detector and have your bags x-rayed. According to legend, there was none of the clumsy frisking and disrobing that you see today. Supposedly, one of the reasons this was tightened was to ensure that passengers are on the same flight as their bags. If that's the case, the airlines should start enforcing this rule on themselves. Recent stories indicate that airlines keep losing customers' luggage by placing it on the wrong flight.

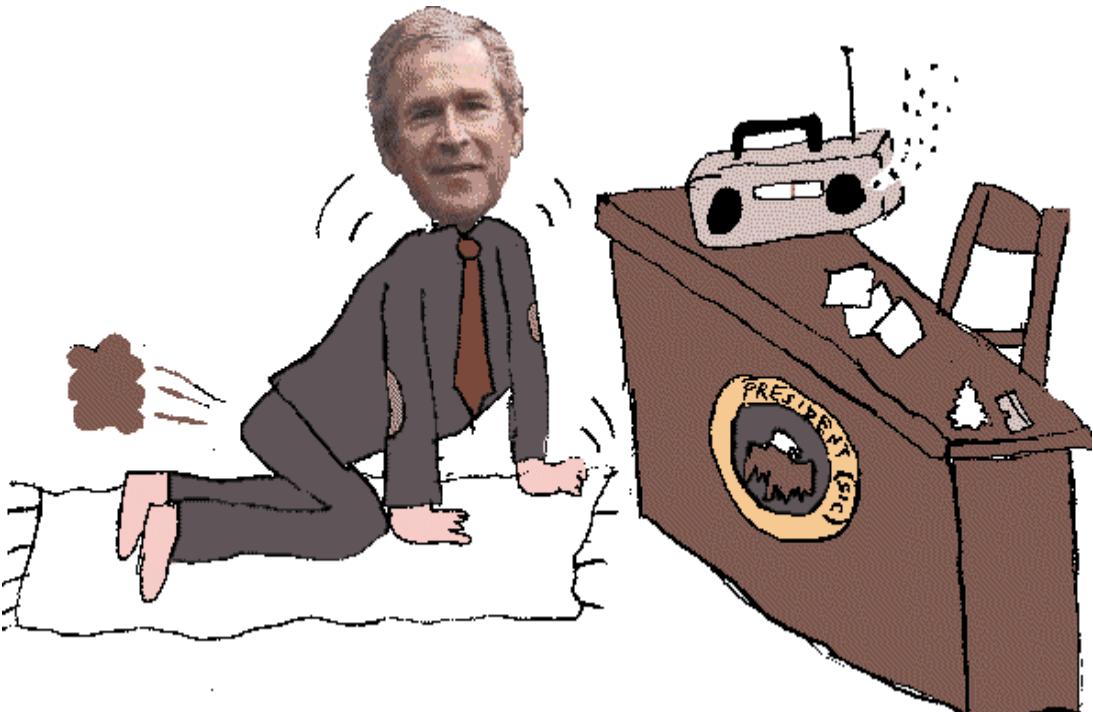
Customers had more choices of airlines in 1987. It was only around that time that big airline mergers were starting to take shape.

In 1987, you could drop off your family members right at the front door of the airport—and wait there to pick them up on the return trip. If you do that now, you'll be chased away.

Best all, passengers could be met by their family right there at the boarding gate. You could send your fam off—and meet them when they got back. But airports banned this in 2001. This is one of the starker and most aggravating changes to air travel ever. On the other hand, allowing passengers to be met at the gate is still the norm in some countries.

Cash ruled in 1987. But by 2010, many major airlines accepted only credit cards even for in-flight purchases. Most no longer accept cash to buy a ticket.

The disastrous changes to travel that occurred in the early 2000s were said to be only "temporary", but most haven't been reversed in the 25 years since. It's the same thing that later happened with COVID mandates. In fact, things still keep getting worse, with the Real ID fascism scheduled to go into full force on May 5, 2027.



Other articles confirm that the flying experience was much better decades ago. One writer said that among the few restrictions was that checked baggage couldn't contain a knife longer than the palm of your hand. Shorter knives were allowed. Others said that as late as mid-2001, they or their friends or

family were allowed to transport a souvenir sword, toy cap gun, or entire bag full of fireworks as a carry-on. We repeat: *as late as mid-2001*. By contrast, a recent traveler said harmless magnets that were even *shaped* like knives were confiscated by the TSA. Another person who flew relatively recently said the TSA seized their hummus, claiming hummus is a banned liquid.

Traveling was so much easier in past times that if you lost your state-issued ID, you could just use a store membership card instead. Not long before, you didn't even need *that*. All you needed was your ticket. They let Dan Quayle get away with telling a bomb joke, so there certainly couldn't have been as much security as now.

All of the above stories prove beyond any reasonable doubt that air travel is one area of life that is far worse than it used to be. There is no sugar-coating this. And for what? We got along fine the way it was.

Society in general has deteriorated into a security state. A grocery store today has more security than commercial flights 50 years ago did. It's like how the TV rating system now applies to cable when it used to not even apply to over-the-air TV. It's truly breathtaking how much we've backslid.

The airline situation might not affect you, because Americans fly far less than some would have you believe, and very, *very* few fly regularly. We're not made of money. Yet, even before the early 2000s, people said flying had become more unpleasant than it was. A series of reactionary moves has made flying worse and worse in increments. It never gets better. Even before I ever flew, I knew about some of this decline, because I had already seen enough in life to know what to look for in our fight against fascism. Those who are older may have also known about it, as their expectations were probably high enough to be shocked at the belligerence, greed, questionable legality, and sheer venom of this trend.

I never had very high expectations, but I had enough life experience by the time I was in college that I knew to keep an eye on things. The slippery slope was already too slick then. If I'd known then how bad things would get, I would have been heartbroken. That's not just a figure of speech. It's *literally* true. Think of that feeling you get in your heart for a split second when something scary happens. Imagine feeling it constantly.

What we need to do is restore air travel at least to 1987 conditions. It may take legislation—at the state or federal level. In particular, we need to bring back the ability of passengers to be met by friends and family at the gate. This seems to be the activity most missed by air travelers. Rich and powerful people who have their own private planes don't want this activity restored, but that's tough.

There has been a concerted and malicious effort to completely erase the America of my youth. The reactionaries behind it should be disqualified from positions of public trust and even from private enterprise. They're among the worst people in America. They weaponize every crisis, and when you challenge them on it, they whimper like a bunch of weaklings.

Games post offices play

You won't believe some of the things our ruling bureaucracy says and thinks they can get away with.

A Tennessee man reported that his local post office hasn't delivered or picked up his mail in 5 years. But the post office said they don't serve his mailbox because of "sewer capacity" concerns.

What does a mailbox have to do with the sewers? It's a mailbox, not a toilet (we hope).



Yet another situation in our schools

There's a developing situation in the Pendleton County Schools, and the nature of it is all too familiar to those who attended some other local school systems.

To be clear, these are only allegations, not verified findings. Yet the story must be reported, because few others are covering it.

A few weeks ago, numerous people in an online thread charged that a teacher in that school district had repeatedly exhibited unacceptable behavior. There are now allegations spanning at least 10 years saying that she has screamed and yelled at students and displayed a poor attitude. One former student reported being struck on the shoulder by this instructor, and said the school refused to do

anything about it.

One parent said that this teacher was serving as a substitute for a 1st grade class, and that she grabbed a toy from a child and threw it in the trash, bragging that the garbage can had vomit in it, which destroyed the toy. The parent complained to the school district, but—you guessed it—nothing was done.

School officials are unable to comment because of privacy laws. However, one parent accused another teacher of violating these laws by blurting out her child's address.

If the allegations are true, who in the school system permits it to go on for 10 years? Not just 10, but 50. Other commenters said some other teachers in Pendleton County have been doing things similar to the above for that long. They say that if students complained, they were expelled.

This is like that county in Florida where a teacher beat all those kids, and the sheriff's department refused to bring charges, saying the abuse was allowed because it was by a school employee and it was on school property.

Orlando airport still doesn't know what "trespassing" means

Because this is a day ending in *y*, we need to unearth yet more right-wing ignorance of trespassing laws. There's never a dull moment. Sometimes we wish there was, but there isn't.

This story takes us to Orlando International Airport—again...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CuR18RXLBQ>

Here's a rundown of that recent clip in case you're afraid an encyclopedia will fly out of your computer screen and yell, "Bleah!" At the start of the video, we're told that a woman who had been previously banned from the airport for "trespassing" is "hiding in a restroom." As the video slogs on, we deduce that the woman is probably homeless.

Once again, the airport is public property *and* is open to the public. There's no such thing as "trespassing" in areas that are publicly accessible and publicly owned. This is so elementary that even a 5-year-old should know it. This applies even if the person has no specific reason to be at the airport. In a free country, you don't need to give a reason. It appears that this incident isn't even in the "secure" part of the airport behind the security gauntlet. But it gets worse. The police tell the woman that she's banned from the airport even if she has actual business there. If she needs to travel, she can't buy a ticket there or catch a flight from there.

Of all the trumped-up "trespassing" incidents captured on video in the past few years, this has got to be among the flimsiest—and most outrageous. It embodies more system failures that can be fully described. Anyone in America who cared about basic law who fell asleep 10 years ago and woke up just now would find this scene completely unrecognizable. This is like ICE. The only things missing are the murders and the SS greatcoats.

And why did they call in so many cops just for one person?

There is a deliberate effort to stack police departments with recruits who are completely unfamiliar with basic legal concepts. Our rulers like it, because this will create an army of cops who will do their bidding because they don't even know what the law is.

The organized troll responses are just as bad. One replied, "It's an airport not a homeless shelter." Then what have you done to stop homelessness, stupid? We can almost guarantee that whoever posted that would actively fight *against* the successful "housing first" programs that have reduced homelessness. Another asked, "What part of you can't purchase a ticket or anything else because you're trespassing do you not understand?" We don't have to understand it, dummy. We just have to be smart enough to know that "trespassing" doesn't apply to public airports if you're actually buying a ticket there—or even if you're not.

In 1990, I went on a small family trip to Charleston, West Virginia, and we visited the main airport there. We traveled by road, not air, so our only business at the airport was mere entertainment. We just strolled right up to the boarding area without any trouble, and nobody said a word to us. This wasn't ancient history. This was 1990. These days, people who might need to travel from an airport are banned from the airport they need to travel from. This also wasn't ancient history. This is now.



Things are stinking all over...

It's time once again to work on clearing our stash of stories we found on the public Internet of shocking things people did at school. This isn't just minor stuff like kids who put ketchup in their chocolate milk (though someone said there was someone at their school who did just that). It's bigger stuff. Read 'em and peep!

One commenter said that in high school, somebody kept shitting inside the hand dryers in the boys' restroom. The principal sent an e-mail to all parents about it, but nobody was ever caught. It stopped just as mysteriously as it began. Someone else said a high school classmate snorted crushed Cheez-Its in the cafeteria. Another commenter said they and their high school friends broke into some tunnels under the school and stole a bunch of candy. This elaborate operation lasted 3 whole weeks. Finally, they stumbled upon the body of a dead fox, and they screamed so loudly that the rest of the school could hear them. Then everyone else in the school figured out there were tunnels underneath, and they all went down there too.

A commenter said a student at their school ate a bunch of pizza, vomited on the playground, and ate the vomit. This same commenter said a male student went into the girls' restroom and set the garbage can on fire. One person said that in middle school, a classmate set up an entire model train layout on his desk in the middle of history class, and the teacher was infuriated.

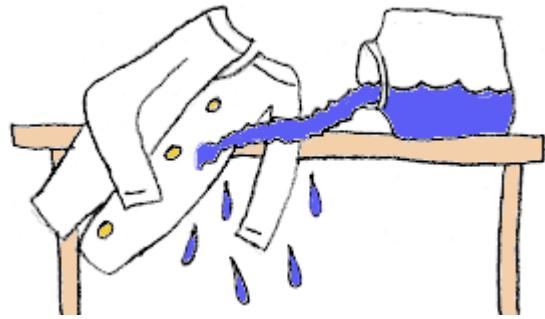
Another student inexplicably brought a whole jar of blue ink to school and accidentally spilled it on a classmate's white jacket—which ruined it. A girl who attended a Catholic school barked at the priest during Ash Wednesday mass, bolted out of the church, and set off fireworks that she had hidden in her bookbag. Another commenter said someone defecated in the towel bin in gym class.

At another school, a 7th grader got in trouble, and the teacher yelled, "Go take a seat in the office!" So the student literally *took* a seat. He grabbed a desk with a chair and started dragging it to the office. Another commenter said a student shit on a teacher's desk on the last day of school. Another said someone peed all over the toilet paper. Another said that during biology class one day, they had to dissect an animal's heart, and a classmate grabbed the heart and put it in his backpack to take home. A duo of students threw a chalkboard out a window. Another student picked his nose, told everyone that the output of it was "edible slime", and tried getting them to eat it. There was a girl who would pick her nose, wipe boogers on the inside of her sock, and later pry out the boogs and eat them—all in the middle of class.

A 3rd grader set fire to his desk in the middle of English class. A high school student kept claiming he had magic powers to turn people into a newt, and he kept picking fights with bigger kids. One student split his pants while doing a somersault, used leaves to cover up his private areas, and then acted like nothing happened. One other time, he shit his pants, wiped his ass with leaves, and returned to class "stinking all over." At another school, a 5th grader shit all over the floor in front of a restroom.

Someone at a private school where you had to pass a very tough exam to be admitted "was just pooping in the corridors and running away." One commenter said that when they attended a university, a student came into the library and drank a bottle of pancake batter. Someone said at their school, a kid ate a sandwich out of a garbage can. Elsewhere, a 3rd grader shit in the urinal in front of everyone, and then urinated in a cup with a dandelion in it and kept it in his desk for a week. A middle schooler forgot his pencil so he cut his finger open and tried doing his schoolwork in blood. A 4th grader shoved scissors and paper clips into an electrical outlet and set a classroom ablaze. A student at a religious high school smeared butter all over the walls during religion class. At another school, a student ate a whole recycling bin full of paper.

One student set a Taco Bell restroom on fire during lunch break. One showed up at school at night just to take a shit through a window. Another shoved wads of his own used tissues the size of tennis balls into his socks and ate them later. He also ate a big pile of dust from under the bleachers in the gym. A high school student shit on the floor in gym class in front of everyone and threw the log in the sink in the locker room. Evidently, he slipped as he was discarding it and ended up smearing much of it on the sink and wall. A student shit in a plant in a corner of the classroom. Another set fire to all



the posters in class. An elementary school child who was only 7 or 8 stole his mom's ring and proposed to a schoolmate he liked.

A high school student climbed into the ceiling, crawled through it, and fell onto a table in the cafeteria in the middle of lunch. Another student brought 2 dead bats to school, "farted so much he had to go out of class", and partook in other misbehavior. An elementary schooler kept stepping in dog shit before school and trying to wipe it off onto classmates. At one school, students kept leaving their lockers unlocked by sticking a pencil through the inside of the lock, so another student shit in a plastic bag and put it in one of these lockers. An idiot at one high school kept taking the library's computers into the restroom so he could play with himself. At yet another school, someone peed on the library books.

A commenter said someone at their school shit in a locker and locked it. After it started stinking, it took days to figure out which locker it was. One student played with himself during recess while eating rocks. Another ate a urinal cake. Another chewed a used wad of gum he found in a urinal. Another cut up a penny and put it in an electrical socket—which created a nice little show when the teacher plugged in the TV. Still another beat his meat to a documentary about Mozart. Another lit a cigar in the restroom and threw it in a trash can full of paper towels. Another regularly urinated on the swings. A 3rd grader crawled under a teacher's desk and tied her shoes together. Another 3rd grader swallowed a whole bag of marbles in class 2 days in a row.

The Berenstain Bears it is not.



One of the dumbest editorials ever gets debunked

Back in December, fascist former Sen. Phil Gramm and some nobody named John F. Early farted out one of the most hilariously idiotic op-eds about American fiscal policy in modern times. Naturally, it was widely stenographed by the media. We weren't even going to respond to it, but it's so laughably stupid that we have to.

The editorial's main complaint is how unfair it is that the government doesn't count welfare as income. But that's because welfare is meant to remedy low incomes—even if only temporarily. It's also known that Gramm has weird ideas about what welfare *is*. He has previously claimed—falsely—that Social Security is welfare. This crusade encouraged crackpot ideas such as the Kentucky Farm Bureau's support of requiring a drug test to receive Social Security.

In fact, Big Lies about what constitutes welfare form the bulk of the op-ed's argument. But this time, instead of focusing on Social Security, the main target is "noncash benefits" like Medicaid. This is the part that made us roll on the floor laughing. Early and Gramm argued that Medicaid is "welfare" because it saves people from having to spend money on medical care, which enables their money to be spent on something else instead.

Seriously. They said that.

They groan that Medicaid "frees up cash that would otherwise be spent on healthcare, allowing the recipients to spend the newly freed cash on other things." Um, yeah, that's kind of the point. But they said that makes it "welfare." Not having to lose your shirt to an unexpected life-threatening illness is "welfare", according to them.

They think welfare doesn't just mean actual handouts, but also anything that doesn't cost anyone with less money than them.

Does anyone take this nonsense seriously? Don't laugh too hard. These clowns aren't read that much by the general public (or General Public), but they're practically worshiped by those in power.

The authors use this argument to conclude that Congress and the President should audit benefit programs in general and change the definition of poverty so that the value of these benefits is deducted from what the poverty line is—thus making far fewer people eligible for these programs.

Phil Gramm is one of these retired politicians like Newt Gingrich who nobody supported to begin with but the media still keeps asking them what they "think." It isn't just Republicans. It's Democrats too. See Donna Shalala.

Meanwhile, Gramm receives a congressional pension that's several times what the average

Social Security beneficiary gets. And he still complains. He's been complaining about the same things for 45 years.

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