

Prologue and Chapter One In The Bank

May 31, 2022

Couldn't decide on whether to write this one in first or third person.

Decided to go with what I know. Also needed the set up for why Jimmy Moran is telling this story, the prequel, and that came to me as well. So far so good. Got to go.

You fine, five readers have a great day. It's already Tuesday.

Memorial Day

May 30, 2022



Okay this was a cheat. I did this last night before going to bed because I didn't want to leave this day blank.

Lisa is a stickler about putting out the flags on Memorial Day and they will stay up until she decides to take them down. Her dad, Norb, served in both WWII and Korea. My dad, Ed, served in Korea.

So, first she went out and fastened the little flags with zip ties,



but when the wind kicked up, she went back out and gorilla taped them into place.



That saved me the headache of having to chase them onto the neighbors' properties every hour or so.

My contribution to the Memorial Day Celebration was to move Sgt. Wilson (our unknown soldier rescued from a local curiosity shop - Mr. Thrift) from his perch on a shelf in the basement kitchen area where he watches over the back door and keeps us safe, while having the occasional conversation with Claire when she pokes her head through the door to extort carrots,



to upstairs in the main floor living room where he takes his place of honor before the fireplace - The Great Kahuna.



I also stopped at one of those VFW tables when I went by Murdochs to pick up another 8 bags of pellets for the mules, where, after contributing to the donations bucket and getting my poppy and small flag as a momentos, I engaged in a pleasant conversation with the two couples manning the table (one husband served in Vietnam and one between Korea and Vietnam) and they were so nice that I went to my car and came back and gave them the last complete set I have for TCT, inscribing all of their names into the three books and then posing for a selfie with the group.



Left to right, that's Garry and Patty Wilson, and Donna and Jack Roberts. Great group of folks. Thank you Garry and Jack for your service and Patty and Donna for your support and sacrifice. Please pass it on to all of your members at the Longmont VFW Post. Oh, and a little bit of news on the publishing front, I noticed for the first time, that all three books are getting reviews from Canada. UK and Australia, so I'm happy to see that The Claire Trilogy is wearing well in other countries whose citizens swear we Americans have bastardized their proper version of the English language. Thank you

all for overlooking the missing double consonants and the dropped "u".

Can translations be far off?

Le Cul Sage, en français!

Finally, back on the East Coast, news from the Collinsfest finds Eileen Cotto serving up twenty six helpings of old fashioned whipped cream, when she pied Joe Serrano (a long respected, non-lethal attack, often used in place of dueling pistols, last applied to a member of the OFC, when Ed Macdootz pied Lenny in front of his mother, on the day Lenny moved out of Aunt Violet's Flop House in 1977).



To quote the brilliant [Dexys Midnight Runners "Come on Eileen". . .](#)
"Toora loora, toora loo rye ay."
[https://www.bing.com/videos/search?
q=Dexy+Midnight+Runners+Come+ON+Eileen&docid=6079987576
39909498&mid=39B63098C13F0A96DFB139B63098C13F0A96DF
B1&view=detail&FORM=VIRE](https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=Dexy+Midnight+Runners+Come+ON+Eileen&docid=607998757639909498&mid=39B63098C13F0A96DFB139B63098C13F0A96DFB1&view=detail&FORM=VIRE)
We await with bated breath for the next move in this lifetime chess
match.

Well, I hope you fine, five readers have somewhere nice to convene with family and friends. And don't forget that moment of silence for our fallen.

I have a novel to write. Wish me luck.

But most of all have a great day.

Mojo and BFFs

May 29, 2022



Yesterday was a busy day - with morning chores and then a barbeque over at Luke & Georgie's place. In between chasing grandchildren, Luke and I talked writer shop, discussing his revisions of his next novel - another thriller - and the marketing plans for his debut, dropping in August:

LOOK

19 Gen 5

AUSTRIA

9x19

"McCaffrey writes with the taut no-nonsense energy of early Lee Child but with a noir sensibility all his own. A dynamite debut."
—Junot Diaz, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, *This is How You Lose Her* & *Drown*

LEBANON RED

LUKE MCCAFFREY

"*Lebanon Red* moves so seamlessly from the backstreets of the Bronx to the shady underworld of Beirut you're liable to find yourself wishing you'd packed a side-arm for the read."

—Colin Broderick, writer/director of *A Bend in The River*

LEBANON RED

BEIRUT, LEBANON, 2020: HOME TO INTERNATIONAL GANGSTERS, FOREIGN SPIES AND SOLDIERS OF FORTUNE.

O'Hara Poit, released early from prison under the pretext of a Covid-19 outbreak, now owes the men who orchestrated it – a radical organization with connections to fringe elements deep within the U.S. political establishment. O'Hara is given an alias and sent to Beirut, where he is tasked with tracking down his estranged childhood friend, Red, now a member of a violent anarchist militia being trained by the Volk Group – an elite Russian mercenary force. When Red's militia returns to America, they plan to unleash mayhem and bring down the country. In his quest to stop this from happening, O'Hara must navigate his way among gangsters, spies and even Saudi princes. He meets a beautiful woman, makes dangerous enemies, and learns that nothing in his life is as it seems, and nobody is safe – least of all himself. The mission to find Red becomes a mission to survive.

Luke McCaffrey is a native of the Bronx, New York, who has also lived in North Carolina and Egypt. He currently resides in Colorado with his wife, three daughters and their dog Cairo. He wrote this novel while serving as a firefighter with the Denver Fire Department.

BLACK & ROSE
writing

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I have to say, I am very excited for and proud of him. *Matthew 3:17*. But marketing, like everything else worthwhile, requires constant care and the assistance of many friends and colleagues. It also takes luck. Luke is working steadily on developing the first two and embracing the last. Fingers crossed.

Speaking of close friends and luck, my dear BFF Helen LaLousis, yes that Helen, is down in Florida doing real estate closings, hawking her amazing essential oil products - <https://www.facebook.com/SimplySacredOils/> (the only mystical products we use) - at trade shows, while also visiting with a core group of wonderful friends, including the amazing Anne Hillman (Hi Anne), throughout the state. Always selfless, Helen texted me to let me know that she made time to bring *The Claire Trilogy* for a photo shoot at the iconic Key West bar, Sloppy Joe's, to boost its mojo levels going forward and propel me forward towards its successful prequel. Here's the wonderful woman going full out in front of the bar:



Like Hemingway and his relationship with Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas in Paris, I've been blessed with Lesbian Luck, first through

my sister Veronica, since childhood, and later through her loving soulmate, my second sister, b, the McCaffrey Fairy Godmothers and Clan leaders for the past few decades. However, I'm quite certain that Helen and I have traversed many lifetimes together. Since we became reacquainted in this latest lifetime at the turn of this Century, this woman has been there for me countless times. I love her like my siblings (without that corresponding desire to kill her). I tried to honor that relationship through the interactions between Helen's character and Jimmy Moran in TCT. Love ya Helen!

Like any good sibling, I'm looking for the right Sapphic sister to come along so I can make that introduction and force Helen to settle down. She and my also single friend Lenny, are incorrigible bachelor(ette)s. They also both share an eye for beautiful women. Speaking of friends I hold dear, the members of the OFC were performing a running text commentary yesterday in anticipation of the final showdown between Eileen Cotto and Joe Serrano at this year's Collinsfest in upstate New York. Interspersed among the brilliant and titilating limericks - Joe and BC were in top form - there were visual references (film clips) to the classic movies *The Warriors* and *A Clockwork Orange*, along with a short German Sex video showing a leatherbound dominatrix whipping a naked man tied to a tree. Given that the bound man was facing the tree, we could not tell if it was Serrano, although there were no signs of Waldo. We had to ask BC - our resident German expert - to translate as we did not want to miss any of the brilliant dialogue. In the end it seems smart money was all on Eileen, who, rumor has it, loves her leather. As I have begged for video of the cataclysmic event, should the two meet over the three day event, I will do my best to share it with my readers should the opportunity present itself. I wonder if Eileen speaks German?

Back in the Bronx, my lifetime dear (incorrigible bachelor) friend and accomplice, and longtime adopted Clan member, Lenny, was out and about catching some fresh air with his Hawthorne Wood (powerful male energy) magic staff and sent us this photo of him in a local park performing a Druidic incantation of a protection spell for poor Joe Serrano, given the ovewhelling odds against him at Collinsfest.



Lenny is truly a modern day Gandalf and a loyal friend. BC intimated - in surprisingly good German I must say - that rumor has it that there may be other photos of a younger Lenny, magical staff in hand, available for purchase - Bitcoin only - on the Dark Web.

Leather optional.

Well, as I mentioned yesterday, I hope to start up the prequel in the early hours of tomorrow morning, so I'm not sure if I will have any creative mojo left to make a blog entry. Just know that if I do go silent, it will not be a result of my sudden demise - I have too many magical mediums here on earth on speed dial to allow my passage to the other side of the veil silence me - but because I am hard and happily at work on another project. Wish me luck.

However, on the odd chance that there is any sudden demise involving a milk truck. It was BC.

In the interim, you fine, five readers go out there and make this a Summer to remember.

But start off with making today a great one.

I have a Kitty to cuddle and rounds to make and miles to go before I sleep.

Perennials - Memorial Day Weekend - Georgia O'Keefe

May 28, 2022



I mentioned a few posts back that because of the pending County water restrictions, Lisa decided that we weren't planting new flowers this year. But that doesn't stop me from giving the bushes and trees their tiny ration of water in the morning at the same time I refill the bird bath and fountain, all in conformity with the mandated times and days - which actually start next week.

As I was making my water rounds yesterday, I spotted this beauty off by itself on the most western side of the front of the house. Now I don't know for sure but I believe it's an Iris.

My grandfather, Spaghetti, planted Irises back in the Bronx along the edge of the family home front wall, facing the street. He did it because my mother asked him too. And he took care of those Irises along with all of his other flowers and shrubs - he planted beautiful roses for Posey by the front stairs. Whatever areas around the house that were not covered with cement had lush vegetation.

Spaghetti made sure all of the plants had manure - which he used to collect in buckets down by the horse trails in Van Cortlandt Park. He had two green thumbs.

So did Posey, who handled all of the family interior gardening, including raising the seeds in window boxes that the Ginger asked her to plant for him one year in the seventies, which turned into the nicest set of pot plants seen Bronxside of the Northwestern United States. Who knew Posey was such a Gangster? She really missed her calling. Posey was very upset when she returned from the store one day to find all of her window plants missing, along with the Ginger.

Most flowers are a lot of work, even perennials. By the time I left the Bronx, there may have been one Iris left along that wall to remind me of my mother. Despite my best efforts, I just don't have the same knack for it as my ancestors.

Well, I have no idea where this particular Iris came from. Lisa only plants flowers in boxes or large pots, because the earth is so poor around here that only the feral grass and weeds can survive.

However, this beauty sprouted all on its own, out of the unforgiving land, off in a unexpected spot, despite the challenges and adverse conditions.

It's like the pigeons that roost on top of Gepetto's Studio most days. It followed me from the Bronx to remind me of those McCaffreys that came before me and the lands where they/I come from. We are perennials. We never give up. We never forget our roots.

I will continue to water this maverick. I just hope I don't have the same luck that Charlie Brown had with his Christmas tree.

And looking at this photo of my beautiful Once-Bronx-Iris, I think Georgia O'Keefe may have been onto something. <https://>

www.rubylove.com/blogs/blog/2017-03-29-georgia-okeeffe-paintings-flowers-or-vaginas. And that's just icing on the cake. And let us not forget that beautiful song by the Goo Goo Dolls: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NdYWuo9OFAw>

". . . I just want you to know who I am."

Well, it's Memorial Day Weekend, so I hope my fine, five readers have plans to gather with friends and family for trips to the beach, pools and barbeques. Celebrate your continued existence, your perennial nature. But also take a moment to remember all of those men and women who have sacrificed their lives in the service to their country to protect, among other things, your Constitutional rights to freely gather and commune with other citizens. If we are not vigilant, those rights can be taken from us in a flash.

But most of all, make today a great one.

I've got to go and see about a Kitty.

Milestones - Congrats Scarlett - Time For A Prequel

May 27, 2022



Yesterday evening was my granddaughter Scarlett's graduation from the Gateway Montessori school in Longmont. Sorry, that was the only decent shot I took of her - wearing the bright socks - sitting by the head of school during the commencement ceremony. But here's another of her looking cool.



Now I have all the intentions in the world of seeing her (and the other grandchildren) graduate college, and maybe receive her doctorate, but at my age, you have to play the odds and grab each graduation you can as they come along, just in case.

Scarlett is the first of my three granddaughters - followed by Savanna and Stella. Here's a shot of the entire family of Luke (another novelist whose debut novel, *Lebanon Red*, drops on August 11th - please check it out), Georgie, and the three Sibilant

Sisters, scouting out potential future locations for raising their family.



Yes the children are all characters in The Claire Trilogy. Scarlett is every bit as bright, loving and caring as her character in the Novel.

She is wonderful with Claire, who adores her and the other munchkins. Scarlett, in turn, adores her younger sisters. She was an easy character to steal.

Here's another shot of Scarlett with her mom - Aussie (now US Citizen) model Georgie - and Savanna, at around the ages and sizes I had them in my head when I was writing TWA.



As I look at this photo, I realize that Georgie could probably play Petrichor in a film adaptation of TCT. She has all the right qualities. Certainly bumped up the McCaffrey gene pool in the aesthetics department. Savanna is also a beauty and has all the cuteness and sweetness of her character. So it was so easy to imagine the sibling scenes in TWA.

Speaking of surprising siblings, when I wrote TWA, Stella was not yet born (or even conceived?), so I wasn't able to work her in as a character. But when I was writing AAA, I knew I was going to work a baby into the mix at its end whose character would carry over into KMAG, and beyond.

Luckily, Stella turned out to be equally as precocious as her sisters.



That is clearly the McCaffrey genes manifesting. McCaffrey children are taught how to deal with the world through rough play with their siblings. Survival of the fittest. I have no doubt that Stella could face down the entire US army if she had too. Now I need to allow the three girls to all grow up while I figure out the full story of the sequel to TCT in my head. All three will play

significant roles in that sequel and I can share that both Scarlett & Savannah will most likely be full blown powerful adult witches, (spoiler alert) having stayed behind at the end of KMAG under the care and tutelage of Helen and Bobbi. They will also be extremely wealthy, as will Lucian, given the provisions Jimmy & Gina made for them with the attorney John Vaughan (hey Jackie, love to Sue and the kids/grandkids). Throw the returning now adults Stella and Apollo into the mix, along with their favorite four legged, interdimensional consigliere, and I have a wonderful character foundation for the next series. Watch out world.

But before I can get to what happens in the future, I need to complete the prequel. All I can share is that there was magic all along. Fortunately, if the creation gods are kind, I intend to start that project this Monday, Memorial Day (with a goal of finishing it by Labor Day). There, I've now set my challenge publically.

Unfortunately, that will mean that my early morning hours will be spent writing that prequel, leaving me little time or creative juices to work on my daily blog. I will try to post updates - I was able to do that while I wrote KMAG - so we'll see how it works out. But there may be gaps in these blogs during this summer. Stay tuned. Wish me luck.

Well, TGIF. There's a long weekend ahead so I hope you will all be able to duck out of your jobs early and start the unofficial commencement of the summer season with excitement and intent. I know Collinsfest, Maureen Collins' version of Yasger's Farm in upstate New York, looks promising with the expected showdown between the two OFC Titans, Carl Lafong and Bubbles. I hope someone videos the event. Even money on whether BC makes an appearance.

But before any of that, I have a Kitty to cuddle and my rounds to make.

One last thing. I received a recent AAA review (surprisingly, though thankfully, 5 star, given its critique) that complained that I improperly used "aural" instead of "oral" when it came to communications among the characters in my books, so I want to clear that up. It's all a matter of perspective. I intentionally, not mistakenly, used "aural" because it is meant to signal to the readers that the particular communication could be *heard* by the recipient - *aurally* - as

opposed to just manifested psychically in their minds without sound (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/aural>) - and not that the words were being spoken by a character - orally (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/oral>). The focus remained throughout on the recipient because in AAA those particular characters had evolved and could now receive communications psychically - not just through their sense of hearing. But they could also - and often did - continue to *hear* the spoken word by other characters. The changes were in the characters' ability to perceive and receive a communication, so the context is the ear, not the mouth. I hope that helps. And thank you "Kindle Customer" for that 5 star rating.

Well you fine, five readers get a move on. The long weekend awaits. Have fun.

But make today a great one.

A Matter Of Trust

May 26, 2022



Yesterday I knew it was going to be a busy day work-wise, so I decided to reduce the distractions and just give Claire and Honey their carrot tithe right up front before they came by my office window to extort it from me and force me to stop what I was working on to deal with it.

My usual routine is that I go out in the morning and open the two gates, one off the back area and one off the side corral, so the mules have free access to my back yard and upper side property. If I don't do that first thing, Claire will come to the side gate and begin to pound on it with her very powerful hoof. Never mind the racket,

which reminds me of the way my mother used to pound on the house pipes with her cane to get our attention - she didn't do cell phones, that pounding ultimately leads to the bolt busting free of the gate and post which leaves me to tie it closed with rope until I can repair it. The mules know I am a well-trained monkey who hates repairing things.



Claire always leads when it comes to advancing on the upper territory. She is fearless. Honey always hangs back until Claire walks through the gate. Only then will Honey follow her. As Billy Joel sang, it is a matter of trust.

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=Billy+Joel+A+Matter+of+Trust&view=detail&mid=F44174E197B0D87FC19DF44174E197B0D87FC19D&FORM=VIRE0&ru=%2fsear>

ch%3fFORM%3dSLBRDF%26pc%3dSL17%26q%3dBilly%2520Jo el%2520A%2520Matter%2520of%2520Trust

Back in the last century I once had coffee with this talented and generous man. He may not remember it but I always will. He autographed a photo for my wife, Lisa. But that's a story for a different blog and I digress.

Claire knows me better than most people, so, as soon as I have the gate tied open (for sudden wind purposes - I don't want them to swing wildly and hit the mules), she'll waltz through it like she owns the place. Claire trusts me. Honey may not trust me but she trusts Claire. So as soon as I leave the general area, she'll follow Claire through. And that is good enough for me.

Don't get me wrong, I wish I could walk up to Honey and throw my arms around her neck like I can Claire, or that she would sneak up behind me and give me love bites, or steal my hat out of playfulness, or come up to my chest and nuzzle me while I scratch her ears and whisper sweet nothings. Honey will never talk to me.

It's been over two years now and Honey remains distant until Lisa and I are compelled to chase her down and halter her for her mani-pedi, a good brushing or some medicinal intervention.

But as long as I know Honey is happy, that is all that matters. My primary purpose in adopting Honey was to provide Claire with a constant companion to replace Mr. Rogers. My secondary purpose in adopting Honey was to provide her with as good a life as I could, to make up for what I've been told has not been the most pleasant of lives. Her trusting me doesn't factor into that equation.

I find my rewards in other ways. For example, their constant visual proximity is an absolute joy for me.

During the day the mules parade past my office windows numerous times as they graze the area. During the summer, they'll often stand in that area taking their standing three legged nap - the back left leg always a little bent and non-weight bearing, because the tall building shades that part of my backyard. Sometimes they'll head back down to the side corral for long draughts at the water troughs, or to eat some alfalfa pellets or some hay. Then they come back up for a lie down in an open area behind the workshop - their siesta.

And sometimes, like yesterday morning, they'll stop by in the area under the back deck and eat their carrot tithe, Honey always standing on the other side of Claire.



As I said, Claire trusts me and Honey trusts Claire. And that's just fine, because I know they are happy. I look out off my back deck late each evening before I call it a day to check on the mules to make sure they are okay. Most nights, Spring through Fall, they are easy to spot along the outer reaches of the outdoor lights of their barn. In the winter I can usually spot them in the doorway of the barn. Sometimes I have to search the darkness for their large silhouettes, always close to one another. Claire is always looking after her smaller charge. I trust her to do that. And when I see them together I trust that all is right in my little world.

Well, today is Thursday and I have recycling to gather, a Kitty to cuddle and my rounds to do. Then the law summons me. You fine, five readers make your peace with the work week, and pay your tithe to society. Trust that it will be enough to get you to the promise land. Friday is just one wake up away. But most of all, make today a great one.

Keep Your Teeth In A Safe Place

May 25, 2022



When my siblings and I were young, each summer my father would pack the three generations of family up into his station wagon, like a gypsy caravan, including whatever dog or cats may have been living with us, and take us north for a few weeks of vacation. During the earlier years we traveled north through upstate New York visiting famous forts and other historical places. We later went along the east coast until we finally found a farmhouse in Maine that my father fell in love with and would afterwards rent for two weeks every summer.

My mother loved the summer. She was a Black Irish Burke, with blue eyes and raven hair in her youth, and she could tan like an Italian. She would lay in the sun for hours, while the McCaffrey gened of the family would last for ten minutes before retreating like Vampires to whatever shade they could find to protect their freckled, porcelain skin. My brother John and I got her melanin, and could

hang with Mom, while the rest of my siblings suffered their forced freckled retreat.

Mom used to tell us she was an Indian princess. Which made sense since she was always collecting Native American tourist chotchkiees whenever we traveled. She would proudly display these items in this glass doored cabinet we had in our living room. I managed to hang on to some of them.







Whenever I look at them I think of her.

But before the McCaffreys found that house in Belgrade Lakes Maine, we were a bit more nomadic, going wherever my father decided and staying for times at what you would call B&Bs or bungalow rentals whenever the drive or the day's events wore him out.

One particular place I recall staying was, oddly enough, a bungalow oasis called Green Acres, just like the 1960s TV show.

Two particular events occurred at GA that make it stand out in my memory. My father tried to teach my mother to drive until she almost sent the car off a steep embankment (after many attempts, she gave up trying to learn). But the second event was far more memorable.

The family would disperse into as many rooms as the bungalow had. We filled every inch. Most of the kids slept on any furniture

long enough to hold us and the adults would take whatever bedrooms were available. Posie and Big Eddie ("Spaghetti") always took the bedroom the furthest away from the kids. Their precocious Border Collie, Pepper, would sleep with them on the bed.

Now this one particular warm summer night, as we all dozed peacefully, we were awakened by the bellowing curses of Spaghetti as he came storming out of the back bedroom in his Long Johns, with a buttoned poop shoot - which he wore all four seasons - swinging whatever stick he had collected that day over his head as he chased something through the darkened house. This of course woke the entire family - and probably the entire GA populace - as the garbled words - "My teeth, I'll kill him!" in his Northern Ireland brogue - repeatedly filled the air.

Posie immediately followed from the bedroom shouting in her softer lilting Leitrim brogue - "Stop Eddie. You'll wake the neighbors!" Of course the rest of us were now happily engaging our attention on whatever was the focus of his rage - until it finally lept over the couch with my younger brothers on it.

At first I thought it was a small bear.

Turns out. It was Pepper, Spaghetti's border collie.

Now most often, the old Irish would put their false teeth - they all had them - in glassware beside their beds at night. Spaghetti liked to slip his set under his pillow. I guess he preferred warm lint to cold water when he slipped them back in.

Well, the restless Pepper burrowed under that pillow that particular night and snatched the set in his mouth. The sudden movement woke my grandfather cursing like a sailor and the chase was on.

That chase lasted a good twenty minutes during which the entire family tried to capture the very agile and intelligent Pepper, until the Ginger opened the cottage door and Pepper, followed by Spaghetti, Posie and my Dad exited in perfect key stone copper fashion.

My mother, properly mortified, got us all up and packed and into the car by the time the other three adults, Spaghetti now with his dog worn teeth firmly in place, and Pepper actually proudly grinning with his own set of real ones following up the rear. Posie was loudly castigating Spaghetti for his oral hygiene practices. We were gone from the place before sunrise.

Life is full of such snapshots.

Well I need to get a move on. The hump awaits us all.

But first a Kitty cuddle and the rounds.

You fine, five readers go out there and make your way in the world.

But most of all, have a great day.

When Creatures Sleep

May 24, 2022



Yesterday afternoon was overcast, a low pressure system that always causes my sinuses to suffer. It can make me a bit grumpy, and I hate being grumpy. If it gets to be too much of a distraction, I usually take an Aleve and it subsides. Hyde transforms back to Jekyll. Of course, the Aleve is upstairs in the first-floor bathroom, which requires me to rise from my basement lair to retrieve one. As I got up from my desk to go upstairs I noticed that my guard dogs, Jeter and Blue, were completely unperturbed by the weather, and in fact, were both sleeping soundly by the door to my office.

Jeter was snoring, his nasal passages passing for a Kazoo. It was a cheap imitation of Orpheus' lyre, charming his Cerberus mate Blue, into a deep sleep.



Adhering to the adage, "let sleeping dogs lie," I crept past them, crossed the basement living room and climbed the long stairway to ground level. There I spotted the back sliding door off the livingroom open, and given the iffy weather, I went over to close it. As I looked out over the back deck and onto the back property, I noticed my guard mules, both Claire and Honey sleeping as well.



Now, as a rule, you never see both mules reclined sleeping at the same time unless they are absolutely certain that they are fully protected and safe. One usually stands guard over the other.

Yesterday, Honey was doing the sleepy head nod while Claire looked like a beached whale and was out for the count.

Well, happy to see them so comfortable, I retrieved my Aleve and then went to the kitchen, which faces the front of the house, to get a glass of water to wash it down. So while I was there I gazed out towards the front deck and grotto area, which is the opening photo, to see if I could spot my feral guard-cat Smokey hanging around with the other mystical creatures under the magic canopy of Jack the Spruce.

At first I didn't notice him/her, but when I focused I thought I spotted a grey ball by the opening of the bomb shelter. Sure enough, it was Smokey's head resting at the entrance. He/She was fast asleep.



I stood there for a while watching Smokey to make absolutely sure that he/she was catnapping. And I don't know whether or not it was the Aleve kicking in, but at seeing the last of my fur family at total rest my grumpiness dissipated.

You see, animals are very sensitive to danger and pending disaster.

They get jumpy and agitated, and if the feeling is very strong, they will look to flee, to escape to somewhere safer. <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20220211-the-animals-that-predict-disasters>

So in that moment I felt a complete calm come over me. My fur family was signaling that all was well, and that at least for that moment, my little piece of the world was secure. I took great comfort in that. And in their presense in my life.

Well, speaking of Smokey, I need to go feed him/her and provide my morning cuddle. Then to my rounds. Monday is again behind us, so rejoice. But most of all, make today a great one.

A Day Of Rest - Simple Pleasures - Don Winslow

May 23, 2022



Yesterday was a beautiful day. Not too hot. Not too cool. The Three Witches stayed white with snow at those higher elevations, which made it easier to spot them from afar.

I put on my muck boots and did the outside chores, which included gathering wheelbarrows full of mule muffins, restocking the hay bags, refilling the troughs, and carrying down the latest bag of Timothy-Hay Pellets from my garage, for the mules' snack, which keeps saving me the cost of a gym membership. Old McCaffreys, like Spaghetti, and now me, may not be comfortable taking our shirts off at the beach, but if we can continue tossing hay bales onto stacks and into racks, we can continue to toss humans if the need arises.

It's when you are out there on the property doing manual labor that you really appreciate how good the Universe has been to you. My property looked so pretty as I was walking my wheelbarrow back from Hadrian's wall that I had to pull out the phone and snap a photo.



Now whenever I'm doing outdoor chores, the mules move up to the more vegetated area in the spot in the above photo just right of my house to graze and forage on the higher grass and shrubs. They hate the bright yellow wheelbarrow so they give it lots of space.

You can see in the above photo how cropped the grass is. They are better than a John Deere mower. They also knock down all of the high grass in the back yard which saves me the headache of mowing either area.



That's the two of them earning their keep yesterday. I am a big fan of Honey's blonde mane.

Time definitely slowed down yesterday morning because I was able to get all my work done with a few hours to spare before having to pick up Lisa from work, so feeling quite guilty, I grabbed Don Winslow's latest book, *City on Fire*, sat in my recliner, and started to read.



I only got 100 pages into it because you never want to rush a good book. And DW is an amazing writer. Not in that show-off look at my big words kinda way, but in his ability to imbue each of his characters with their own style and personality with just a few words, and thereby drive a relatively intimate story forward towards a very big conclusion. And if you are Irish-American, you pick up every nuance of the family dynamic. The Ryans, the Murphys, these are my tribe. It is pure gold. I cannot wait for another stolen block of time so I can finish it. Well done Don Winslow, there is a reason you are at the top of the literary world.

And then, after snatching her from work, Lisa and I stopped off at MOS and had a great meal, saw most of the regulars, including Lonnie (always makes one feel so welcome) and Kyle, and got to meet Kyle's lovely blond friend, Cyndi Lawson, whose smile was

dazzling. I will have to have Kyle snap a selfie of the two of them for another posting.

Then it was home to feed the mules their dinner and to finish this week's binge watching of season one of *Night Sky*, on Amazon.

J.K. Simmons And Sissy Spacek are amazing. We give it 5/5 stars, with a caveat that the portuguese language parts without subtitles is a tiny bit annoying (but you can get the gist through context). However, I highly recommend it for the writing, story and acting. it has *The Claire Trilogy* mystical feel to it. Ends with an actual cliff-hanger. Cannot wait for the next season.

Anyway, another Monday is upon us, but my *joie de vivre* has been replenished by nature, magical creatures, physical exertion, great literature and film. So bring it on.

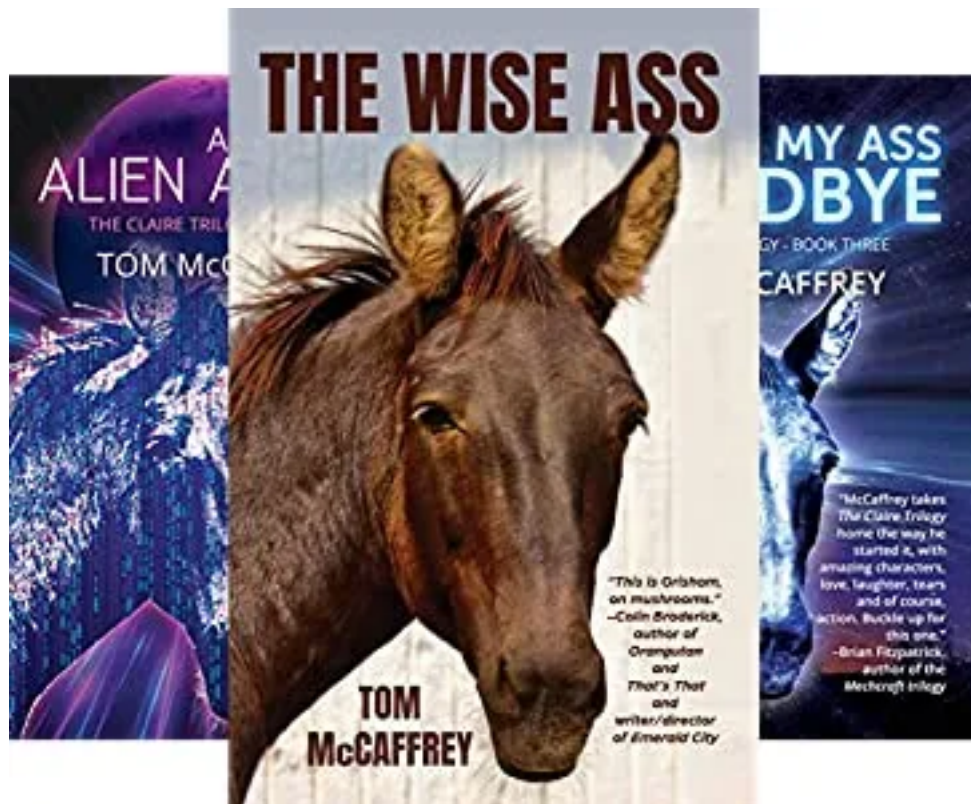
But first, a Kitty cuddle and my rounds.

You fine, five readers go out and conquer. No prisoners.

But have an amazing day!

Repeaters

May 22, 2022



As I've told you many times, I read the reviews. Now posting reviews can be time consuming, and if I am going to impose on the reader's time, I am thrilled if they take the time just to read my work.

But I have learned now that the readers out there take their reading very seriously, and since Amazon has given them this platform, they are going to speak their minds.

Of course I love the five star reviews the most. I'm barely human, but enough so to enjoy a compliment. Over the past fifteen months, as the three novels of The Clair Trilogy were released, I've gotten some wonderful five star reviews for all three books. A lot of them come in under generic names like "Amazon Customer" or "Kindle Customer." And there have been some that are wonderful one-offs, and I have published a few of those in the past.

But there are readers who are repeater reviewers. They come back again and again. And I am just thrilled when they are happy. Some of my reviewers have distinctive monikers that make them easy to remember, especially when they reappear for all three books.

This morning I would like to acknowledge some of my Amazon repeaters, and thank them publicly, because I can't do it on the Amazon web pages.

Now the first one, is a baby boomer like me.

Tejanogrande (Large Texan)

TWA

Tejanogrande

5.0 out of 5 stars Fantastic

Reviewed in the United States on June 7, 2021

Verified Purchase

Loved every part of this book from beginning to end. Eagerly awaiting the next in the series. Please please hurry.

AAA

Tejanogrande

5.0 out of 5 stars what can I say?

Reviewed in the United States on December 25, 2021

Verified Purchase

I waited for this sequel for months. Read the first again the day before it came out. Then read this one in one sitting. Now I wait on the third in the trilogy as impatient as I did for the second. I know all things come to an end, but I honestly dread the ending to this story. In my seventy years, 65 at least spent reading hundreds if not thousands of books, this has to be a story I have enjoyed way more than most.

KMAG

Tejanogrande

5.0 out of 5 stars It is with great sadness.....

Reviewed in the United States on March 27, 2022

Verified Purchase

I suppose it is true that all good things must come to an end. This trilogy has been the best of good things. I am amazed that as a 70 year old man I have shed many a tear and laughs while reading this

series. I often felt like I was a part of this family of misfits and will remember all of them like the memories I have of my own family members who have passed over before me. Thank you very much Mr. McCaffrey for an amazing journey.

This next one I had to keep winning over during the read.

Carolyn Hoyt

TWA

[by Carolyn Hoyt](#)

5.0 out of 5 stars Keep Reading

Reviewed in the United States on April 19, 2022

I almost stopped reading early in the book as the endless gun drills and Lenahan character were annoying and boring. However, I am so glad I kept reading as the real story developed and the amazing Claire, Blue and Bobbi took over. Read and enjoy.

AAA

[by Carolyn Hoyt](#)

5.0 out of 5 stars The Family Continues to GroGrow

Reviewed in the United States on April 25, 2022

Second book in the series is just as much fun as the first one. New and interesting characters and plot lines. Definitely a sci-fi ending. Looking forward to book three and I very rarely enjoy sci-fi. Claire is truly a magical being.

KMAG

[by Carolyn Hoyt](#)

5.0 out of 5 stars Claire Forever

Reviewed in the United States on May 1, 2022

This book is a sort of happily ever after, but maybe not. Suffering from Covid phobia since March 2020, I almost stopped reading at the very first mention, but thankfully did not. The story developed very well and Claire continues to triumph even from the other side. I hope we will be reading more books from this author and Claire.

And this third one was pleasantly surprised by the first book, and then surprised me with a two-fer for KMAG.

Radio290

TWA

Radio290

5.0 out of 5 stars Very fun to read

Reviewed in the United States on June 9, 2021

Verified Purchase

This wasn't what I expected. It was better. I thoroughly enjoyed this book and I am disappointed the others in the series are not out yet. I am looking forward to reading them.

AAA

Radio290

5.0 out of 5 stars Five Stars. Wonderful story

Reviewed in the United States on December 26, 2021

Verified Purchase

Is this a fantasy book? Sci-Fi? I don't know, but when I think of fantasy/Sci-Fi books that I have read and liked, are books by Terry Brooks, Robin McKinley, James Patterson (who has written a couple fantasy yarns), and Dean Koontz. AAA is so well done that it rates right amongst those written by the aforementioned writers. Good writing, good reading.

KMAG

Radio290

5.0 out of 5 stars Enjoyed it immensely!

Reviewed in the United States on April 1, 2022

Verified Purchase

Politics? A handful of readers are complaining about politics? You're kidding. They are referring to a character in a novel speaking. I thoroughly enjoyed the series including this book. I would recommend starting with the 1st book in the series. I did that, expecting it was some lawyer / crime drama. It wasn't necessarily such a book and took me by surprise. It is science-fiction and it has incredible concepts that are meshed together very well. I liked it.

The writer draws me into the story and makes me feel as if I am right there, watching Claire and the others.

Radio290

5.0 out of 5 stars I am hooked.

Reviewed in the United States on April 1, 2022

I would suggest that you begin with the first book in the trilogy. I when I bought it, I was expecting a lawyer / crime type drama and soon realized it wasn't necessarily so. It was better. I've been waiting for a few months for this 3rd book in the series. I am reluctant to label it since it might turn people away. But I guess it is science fiction but with some extraordinary concepts by the author. This is real adventure. "Fake" real adventure? Well, "fun" anyhow. Just how the author comes up with this stuff is beyond me. It all clicks. The writing is so good that I feel drawn into it and that the characters are my friends.

Last, but not least, of my three time repeaters.

A. Hillman

TWA

A. Hillman

5.0 out of 5 stars Excellent Book!

Reviewed in the United States on February 27, 2022

I read a lot of books and don't often take the time to write reviews but this book is simply so good that I am moved to let others know about it! Wish I could give it more than five stars!

Tom is a gifted story teller and with just how good this first novel is, I expect many many more to come in his writing career. I can't add anything to the product description other than to say you won't be disappointed. I can't wait to dive into book number two!

AAA

A. Hillman

5.0 out of 5 stars What a ride! Beam me up!

Reviewed in the United States on March 1, 2022

Verified Purchase

What a way to follow up the first book in the Clair trilogy. Another “can’t put it down” book. In this one, Jimmy rockets off into space with Everett heading back to Everett’s home planet to play lawyer and defend him for breaking the rule against interfering on earth by saving his (Jimmy's) life in The Wise Ass.

Their crew is still together on earth, in fact growing in numbers by a few more magical characters.

Hurry up book number 3!

KMAG

A. Hillman

5.0 out of 5 stars Another home run!

Reviewed in the United States on March 25, 2022

I couldn’t wait for the release of this third book from the Claire trilogy and downloaded it onto my kindle as soon as it was released!

It was a good, easy, enjoyable read of a creative and well written book. Aliens, talking animals, pixies, psychics, and more...all peacefully coexisting in our “normal” world. A world that has been turned upside by a virus these past two years, something that the author wove naturally into the background of the story line.

I am hoping that we will see the characters in a future installment from the literary brain and fingers of my new favorite author Tom M!

I had a couple of repeat readers who compressed their reviews into one or two postings.

Here's one who did it in two.

Dallas

TWA & AAA

dallas

5.0 out of 5 stars Magical

Reviewed in the United States on May 1, 2022

Verified Purchase

Reading these two books has been a truly enchanting experience. I
on

ly wish I had a Claire to share my thoughts with. Can't wait to read no. 3.

KMAG

dallas

5.0 out of 5 stars Pure magic

Reviewed in the United States on May 18, 2022

Verified Purchase

I am completely enchanted by Claire. I have large corralls that I am sure you would love. All three books in this series are amazing. There is a teaser at the end of the third book that looks like a sequel and I am anxiously awaiting it's debut. Do yourself a favor and take a ride with Claire and her family of misfits.

And here are those one-off readers that saved their reviews until completing all three books. These offered the added bonus of selling all three at once to the next inquisitive potential reader.

The Claire Trilogy

Deb

5.0 out of 5 stars Thanks for this entertaining story.

Reviewed in the United States on May 17, 2022

Verified Purchase

I enjoyed all 3 books in this series. It was nice to read something uplifting and interesting to me. I love science fiction and this was the most fun and interesting information about how we might be introduced to our friends in the universe. I will be looking at my neighbors differently. Looking forward to the next stories.

don

5.0 out of 5 stars Great trilogy

Reviewed in the United States on May 16, 2022

Verified Purchase

There is not enough words to describe how much I enjoyed these books and sincerely hope that more are coming. What a great escape from all the problems we have endured the last couple of

years. Tom you are a great story teller and I highly recommend these 3 books.

R. Hanson

5.0 out of 5 stars **Fantastic !**

Reviewed in the United States on May 4, 2022

Verified Purchase

The best of the three! Glad I ignored the silly reviews upset over COVID,

This book is great! Lots of action, Love, Camaraderie, very good ending!

Who knows, maybe another series with Apollo and Stella.

Highly recommend!

Toni Johnson

5.0 out of 5 stars **Best series ever**

Reviewed in the United States on April 28, 2022

Verified Purchase

I thoroughly enjoyed this series. The characters were fully developed without being Boring. Even as things progressed to the supernatural I was engrossed with this series I am so sad it is over!

Fe Hager

5.0 out of 5 stars **Outstanding Read!**

Reviewed in the United States on April 22, 2022

Verified Purchase

Could not put this series down. Fast paced, full of action! Loved all the characters. Full of additude! Great storyline!

Alice

5.0 out of 5 stars **This series was awesome**

Reviewed in the United States on April 19, 2022

Verified Purchase

It was a total surprise. Liked everything about it. I think they could make a great movie or TV series.

Ctg

5.0 out of 5 stars **Great ending to the saga**

Reviewed in the United States on April 16, 2022

Verified Purchase

Tom did an awesome job with this saga great read fun and entertaining.

J. Tully

5.0 out of 5 stars Fun Trilogy

Reviewed in the United States on April 16, 2022

Verified Purchase

Can't wait for your next books. The Claire Trilogy transported me outside our galaxy and opened my eyes to a different means of communication. Your books were fun, timely, imaginative, very inspiring and emphasized the importance of being loyal to family and friends, including our four legged friends. Keep using your gifts, Tom.

Elaine M Staltare

5.0 out of 5 stars Wildly Creative & Suspenseful!

Reviewed in the United States on April 16, 2022

Verified Purchase

Tom McCaffrey's Trilogy took me on a wild journey into a world that made me feel as though I was actually there! This Trilogy is something everyone should experience. You will look forward to reading more and more to discover what happens next! The authors incredible imagination is out of this world! Highly recommended!

Savannah Kacey

5.0 out of 5 stars So so so good!

Reviewed in the United States on April 16, 2022

Verified Purchase

Don't read Kissing My Ass Goodbye until you've enjoyed the other two books in the series. You need time to get to know the characters and immerse yourself in their wonderful loving magical reality. Only then will you be able to fully embrace and celebrate the hope for our future on this planet contained within.

Judy M. Valentine

5.0 out of 5 stars **Yup, it's good.**

Reviewed in the United States on April 14, 2022

Verified Purchase

The trilogy was truly a fun read. It was such a nice alternative to today's reality. I would recommend that you find time to relax & take this flight of fantasy.

RyanRanch

5.0 out of 5 stars **Fun read**

Reviewed in the United States on April 13, 2022

Verified Purchase

I enjoyed this trilogy. Still reading the last book but I like what I have read.

Something different

John King

5.0 out of 5 stars **Great fun!**

Reviewed in the United States on April 9, 2022

Verified Purchase

Read the first two books and had to pre-order and wait a few months for the third. When I received it, I started the series over from the beginning. Was even better the second time around. I would recommend this series to anyone who wants to forget all their worries and distress for a few hours.

Patricia Marquez

5.0 out of 5 stars **Great story.**

Reviewed in the United States on April 8, 2022

Verified Purchase

Enjoyed all three books! Looking forward to your next book. Enjoyed all the characters. Sorry to have seen Claire go.

Anna

5.0 out of 5 stars **What a Trilogy! What an Ending!!!**

Reviewed in the United States on April 7, 2022

Where do I begin?

To say that The Claire Trilogy was three books of solid reading pleasure doesn't even begin to describe how much I enjoyed Tim

McCaffrey's work. Start with a great story and a very unique point of view and roll it together with some great science fiction, a hefty dose or twenty of magic, love of family, a flawed hero redeemed, amazing friends...Oh, just read them! I couldn't wait for the next book and when they arrived, they did not disappoint in the least. It's a great adventure where you will wish the fun would never end, but when you get there, the ending is beyond satisfying. I hope Tim has more literary goodness up his sleeve to share.

Bobbi

5.0 out of 5 stars **Prequel coming - YEA!!!**

Reviewed in the United States on April 6, 2022

Verified Purchase

This has to be my favorite set of books in a long time. Mr. McCaffrey sure knows how to spin a tale. I'm so very glad to read that there will be another. Whatever else you do, Tom, don't stop writing! The characters, the story line - awesome. Thank you!

Jab

5.0 out of 5 stars **Fabulous**

Reviewed in the United States on April 3, 2022

Verified Purchase

I loved the series and so sorry it is over for now. The best read in the last three years. So happy I came across these three books .Thanks TOM!!!!!!

brenda a

5.0 out of 5 stars **Kissing My Ass!**

Reviewed in the United States on April 3, 2022

Verified Purchase

I loved the Claire Trilogy and waiting for more! If only mules could talk like Claire who lived and loved.

Kathy Johnson

5.0 out of 5 stars **The Claire Sequels!**

Reviewed in the United States on April 2, 2022

Verified Purchase

I don't usually read sequels, but the Claire books were a must! Thank you for such a great story! I laughed and cried my way

through all three books!

Diana D.

5.0 out of 5 stars **Clever clever series!**

Reviewed in the United States on April 1, 2022

Verified Purchase

I thoroughly enjoyed this 3-book series and was sad when it ended. While this book wasn't as exciting as the other two in the series, it was a good way to wrap up the story. Great author!

Jim Mack

5.0 out of 5 stars **Absolutely a great series**

Reviewed in the United States on March 31, 2022

Verified Purchase

The mark of a good author is the ability to make you care for the characters in his/her books and Tom McCaffrey has knocked that one out of the park! Throughout the series, you find yourself laughing, crying, cheering and holding your breath over whatever Jimmy, Gina, Lenny, Claire and all the other "family members" are up to. Gotta say, (spoiler alert) that I cried over Claire's death, but cheered when it turned out that, just maybe, it wasn't the end of her...

Silvana Ricapito

5.0 out of 5 stars **Love love love this trilogy!**

Reviewed in the United States on March 30, 2022

Verified Purchase

Tom McCaffrey strikes the right balance between believability and fantasy. Would love to have these folks as neighbors! Would to see more of this crew.

KingRam

5.0 out of 5 stars **READ IT!!!! But in order...**

Reviewed in the United States on March 28, 2022

One of the best series/trilogies I have read. These books have everything. I laughed, I cried and I could not put them down until KMAG was finished. Read them from TWA to AAA and then KMAG. Wonderful.

Jack Parman

5.0 out of 5 stars love the books

Reviewed in the United States on March 28, 2022

Verified Purchase

After finish the 1st could not wait for the next two. Very entertaining, well written, and keep me waiting for the next page. Thank you

Shana Pare

5.0 out of 5 stars A very unique series.

Reviewed in the United States on March 26, 2022

Verified Purchase

I am not quite certain what to say about this last book in the series, not without giving the ending away. It follows the path the first two books took with the same entertaining characters. If you have read the first two books, then you will certainly want to read this last one. Hopefully we will see more from Mr. McCaffrey.

Now, as I mentioned, I only included those reviews from readers who posted a recognizable (at least to me) moniker. I greatly appreciate all of the reviewers who posted generically or anonymously as well. This is what spurs me on to want to continue writing. And I'm just about to start up again. I thank each and every one of the readers who read my books, whether you posted a review or not. Writers don't exist without you. Otherwise, we are the proverbial bear shitting alone in the woods.

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU. . . .

Well, I have outdoor chores this morning, and a Kitty to cuddle.



So off I go.

You fine, five readers take advantage of this day of rest and do something fun.

But most of all, have a great day.

Snow In May

May 21, 2022



You cannot make this up. Two-thirds through the month of May Flowers and we get snow in NoCo. And it was literally 90 degrees twenty four hours ago. This really is life on mars. If it had happened a week ago, on Friday the 13th, I would have thought it was the end of times.





The good news is that I was able - for the very first time in my long life - to catch May snowflakes on my tongue. To be honest, they

didn't have that robust flavor of a Christmas snowflake, they were more like a "light" or "diet" beverage. You knew what you were consuming but it didn't taste quite like the original.

I have a video of that event but of course I cannot figure out how to load it here. I may just post it directly on Twitter, assuming I can figure that out. It is probably just as well, as I have a disconcertingly long tongue (which, in its multitude of uses, has gotten me into all kinds of trouble over the years).

Wait, I actually figured how to post it on the "About" page, if you care to waste an additional twenty seconds.

I hope when I come back in my next life - or when they download my personality, charm and brains into that Brad Pitt android, I'll be able to figure out how to work technology in general.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-30583218>

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/quora/2017/04/18/will-humans-merge-with-machines/?sh=330c24d073d1>

<https://www.cnbc.com/2017/02/13/elon-musk-humans-merge-machines-cyborg-artificial-intelligence-robots.html>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7sNKxyvyx-4>

<https://www.technocracy.news/the-great-human-reset-merging-man-and-machine/>

Hell, I'll be the technology.

Well yesterday during a brief exchange on the OFC text thread, I spontaneously varied off my Limerick line of poetry to try to capture something more in line of legitimate verse. A polaroid of my thoughts of reconnecting with old friends. Since I had jotted it down like all of the limericks before hand right into the text feed, BC suggested I repeat it in the blog just to capture it for posterity. So here it is:

Ode to the OFC

To live your life to the very end

Important things you will suspend.

But do not leave those things too late,

To reconnect and challenge fate.

To reach back through time, across the land.

To find that friend and clasp a hand.

*We all have changed but way down deep,
We are the friends we want to keep.*

I know, it's terrible. I'll never be Lenny. But it was ten seconds of work and comes from the heart. I'm much better at being funny, through prose. I will, in the future, stay in my lane. Speaking of humorous, I do hope one of the OFC is collecting the collective Limericks from those texts. They are in equal parts bawdy and bad. But all are funny as shit. I hereby perpetually assign my copyright, royalty free, in the one or two I may have contributed, to any one or more of the OFC members who have the balls to publish the lot. But it must be the lot. Every one of them. Anyway, it is Saturday and I have yet to see how the snow impacts my ability to do outdoor chores. Can't scoop frozen poop. But I have indoor food prep to perform at the very least. The rest of you fine, five readers go out and knock off that "to-do" list, especially if it's in the form of a "honey-do" list. I have a Kitty to warm-up and cuddle, and rounds to make. So I need to head out. But all of you have a great day.

Unqualified Love To The Rescue.

May 20, 2022



All McCaffrey pets are rescues.

I mentioned in the past how we ended up adopting Blue (yep, that one, above). It was a bitter cold winter night during a snow storm. We had recently lost our rescue beagle Shorty to cancer, so we had a major hole in our heart.



Blue was a puppy found tied to a fence in my youngest son's precinct (Go NYPD Blue). My son called us and asked if we would take her in or she would end up being sent to a shelter without any guaranty that she wouldn't be euthenized (pits are a plentiful breed in the NYC shelters and nice people tend to be afraid to adopt them because of their bad reputation). And black Pitties are the last to be adopted.

The truth is that Pitties are powerful dogs. If they are attacked, they don't run, and if engaged, they will defend themselves until the fight is over. But on the same vein they are the most loving and loyal animals you will find anywhere. They are not the monsters the ignorant make them out to be. Like any human version, the monsters you do hear about in the media are usually created by another human monster. Brutalize any creature and the results are always the same.

The first McCaffrey Pittie was Max, a beautiful tan mix we adopted forty years ago who looked like Blue in size and form in a different color. Max was the sweetest dog and loved licking any and all guests that came by the McCaffrey compound in the Bronx. We didn't have any fences around the property, but had no problem leaving our then oldest (and only one at the time) out in a play pen in the back yard if we had to pop into the house for a second. Max would take his position at the yard end of our driveway and curl into a ball. If any passer-by stranger on the street stopped to look up the driveway, Max was on his feet in full guard posture, engaging in a staring contest. If the person stepped one foot towards the back yard, Max started his deep throated growl. That usually stopped the trespasser in their tracks.

If the stranger decided to test Max beyond that first step, Max flew half-way down the driveway teeth bared and chest fully extended, with the most frightening bark. That always sent the intruder on their way. Instantaneously.

The UPS workers knew to leave all packages at the front door.

Luke always slept peacefully through such encounters.

If you were family or a known regular adoptee, you could walk right past Max and he wouldn't even raise his head. He knew who could be trusted. Pure instinct. Dogs are a great judge of character.

Max's body lies sleeping peacefully next to other great McCaffrey dogs like Cindy, Pepper, Shorty, Finny and Duff (and a long lists of the other creatures on the Bronx McCaffrey homestead grounds).

His spirit runs free with that family pack on the other side of the veil, in Spaghetti's care.

Our next great bully breed dog was the Amstaff Maeve (yep, that one).



That's Maeve with my grandson Lucian (yep, that one). Max used to guard Luke in the exact same fashion. I've written in the past how we saved her with an 11th hour reprieve from her scheduled euthenasia at a Manhattan kill shelter, thanks to my niece, Taylor, one St. Patty's day. Thank you Tales. She ended up being the consort to Luke's adopted Mastiff, Cairo,



and Maeve is presently buried, after a long and wonderful life - she passed after I finished writing KMAG - in our Colorado back yard, along with our neurotic terrier Phoebe (named after a first generation Titan) and Lucky the Black Cat, all NY transplants who have now passed beyond the veil. Mr. Rogers has his own plot on the more open land out back.

Blue has a crush on Cairo and loves when he comes to visit.



The point of today's blog is that animals will give you unqualified love and loyalty if you show them the same. An animal in one's home teaches its occupants many lessons. For generations, the stories of McCaffrey fur family members have been recited with the same passion around the family table as that of our most mythic humans.

And now, with the publishing of The Claire Trilogy, just like Spaghetti, some of them have been immortalized in print forever. There is no more accessible a source for unqualified love than a rescued animal. If you feel the urge, visit a local shelter at your next opportunity. There are thousands of animals that would love to share your home and join your family. And if you give that lost Pittie (or any other purported bully-breed) a chance, you won't regret it. For the record, before I sign off, I want to say that I pray the New York Court of Appeals rules that the Bronx Zoo Indian Elephant, Happy, deserves "person" status.

Well speaking of animals, I have a Kitty to cuddle.

It's Friday so you fine, five readers get your weekend on.

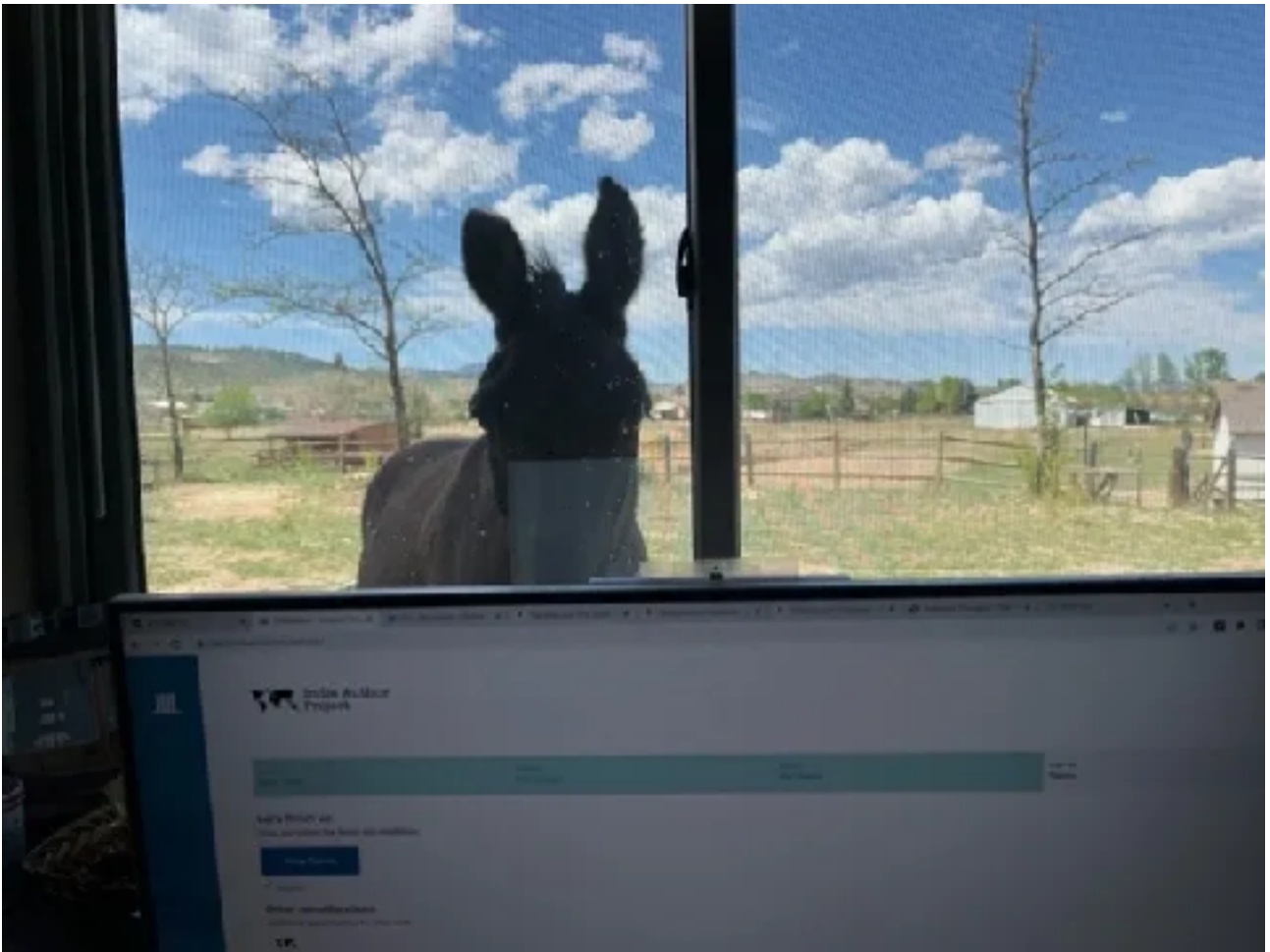
And have a great day!

When The Inmates Rule The Asylum - A Don Winslow Moment

May 19, 2022



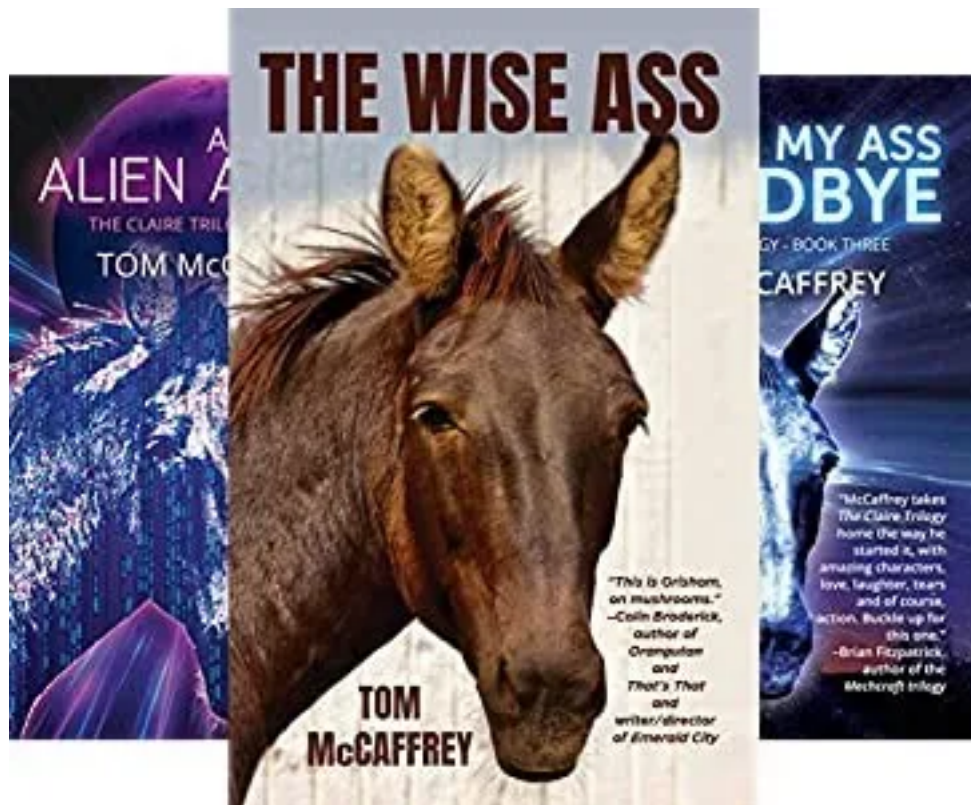
You ever have that feeling that you are being watched? Yesterday afternoon, while I was comfortably slouched in my office chair, feet up on the desk, reading through some work emails, I had that unshakeable sense that I was under surveillance. As I lifted my body into proper sitting position and my eyes rose over the top of my computer screen, I spotted this:



Just look at those eye lashes. The Kardashians would kill for them. But I sensed there was something else, so I quickly spun to my right and spotted this:



Staring down at me like a blond assassin.
It was a full-on, double-pincer, Mule Vulcan mind-meld. I was helpless. My options were to get up and feed them both immediately or face a wheelbarrow of mule-muffin consequences at both windows. And yesterday was hot.
And people wonder how I was able to imagine Claire's dark side. As the opening photo shows, this warden immediately caved to the demands of his inmates. I am a weak man.
But the day did have its highlights. For example, The lovely and popular Canadian, Award Winning Author J.G. MacLeod (obviously a Celt) - <https://www.jgmacleod.com> - retweeted not one, but two of my tweets, which included yesterday's blog - The Pen - and what I call the tricolor of my book covers:



Which I like to post whenever there is a "writers lift" call for a representation of a writer's books. Thank you JGM, that was very kind of you and much appreciated. I count my blessings and those were two biggies.

But the day was not over.

Every once in a rare while on Twitter, you see a posting by one of the Olympus level authors. Yesterday, Don Winslow - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Don_Winslow - posted a tweet supporting an event yesterday evening for another amazing Irish writer, Adrian McKinty - <http://officialadrianmckinty.com>

Now this AK event was scheduled to take place in Denver yesterday evening. I seriously thought about hopping in my car and heading down I25 just to people watch. However, I had an early evening appointment scheduled with my wonderful Dentist, Doc Carmen, at Berthoud Family Dentistry, a coterie of female dental professionals that I believe is actually a tribe of Amazons leading the Dental Health field: <https://www.yelp.com/biz/berthoud-family-dentistry-berthoud-2>

In the over two years I have been keeping my teeth in my head through the use of their expert services, during which I laugh my ass off without one sniff of Nitrous Oxide, not one male has been spotted their office. And I am one old dude who is totally fine with their lack of gender diversity. I'm sorry, but it is just nice to be surrounded by a group of professional women whose sole objective is to place foreign objects in one's mouth. But I digress.

Syncronicity at play, on the strong recommendation by my literary mentor, Irish Auteur, Colin Broderick - [https://](https://www.colinbroderick.com)

www.colinbroderick.com - I had just purchased DW's latest work *City On Fire* , which had just arrived on my doorstep and which I intended to start this weekend.

Anyway, after seeing DW's supportive post, I day-dreamed a little about what it must be like to reach the level of success of these writers. And then an idea struck me.

Out of pure cheek (on the level of BC cheekiness), I posted a response to DW's post. A cat-call from the chorus that incorporated my musings of someday reaching that level of success.

I was about to sign off and head out to Doc Carmen's when I spotted the following "Liked by Don Winslow" in my Twitter feed:



Liked

by Don Winslow



Tom @wisecelt · 13h



Replying to @donwinslow @adrianmckinty and @TatteredCover

Good luck tonight Adrian McKinty. Well done Don Winslow for paying it forward. Just picked up your novel and cannot wait to read it.

As a fellow Coloradan, someday I hope I'll have a Don Winslow promoting my novels:



Don Winslow

@donwinslow

Following

#1 International bestselling author Author of 3 New York Times Critics Choice Best books of the Year. #WinslowDigitalArmy #DonWinslowBookClub



Now anyone on Twitter knows that it is relatively easy to hit the heart symbol when you read a post that tickles your fancy without

much thought. I make it a practice to read and "like" tweets if only to let the poster know that someone out there is reading and appreciating their bon mots. But you do have to read the post. Now DW's "liked" could have been a finger twitch meant for the next posting, but I'm going to convince myself that he saw my post and appreciated its audacity. And I can live with that.

You see, there is magic in this world.

Thank you Don Winslow for that moment.

Anyway, Thursday beckons, and I have a Kitty to cuddle and rounds to make, so I must flee.

You fine, five readers take care of business so you can clear your slates for Friday.

But most of all, have a great day!

The Pen

May 18, 2022



I cannot remember what grade in grammar school I first got to use a cartridge pen. I believe it was in sixth grade - Mrs. Clinton's class.

Mrs. Clinton was a big woman, amazingly strong, who did not suffer fools easily. She wore orthopedic shoes which gave her a distinctive gait. Her go-to corporal punishment - administered to boys only - was hair pulling (face slapping was left to our black wimpy nuns - who had mastered that art like ninjas). If you got Mrs. C going - and we did regularly - she would fly down an aisle and demonstrate her ambidexterity, swinging from one offender's head to the next with the ease of an orangutan moving across the jungle canopies from one tree limb to another. I am certain her regularly lifting me from my seat by my hair (until my thighs jammed against the bottom of the desktop) hastened the early death of my hair follicles.

But moving up to cartridge pens (I believe they were Sheaffer pens) was one of the signs of an upperclassman in Catholic school (not being sexist - just too lazy at 2 a.m. to look up the gender neutral term). You could identify us by the ubiquitous blue ink that would be spotted around the tips of our index and middle fingers of our dominant hand. You could also identify all of the lefthanded (Satan followers) students by the stains on the palm blade of their left hands as they followed their writing left to right across each page. Indeed, I believe that ink spotting may have been one of the tests administered during the Massachusetts witch trials.

Indeed, all of our inclined wooden desks had that vestigial round hole in the upper right corner that once held the ink jars for the original fountain pens (with the lever that drew the ink into the body of the pen) and before that, to dip the quill.

Now all of the siblings in my family who had freckles - Veronica, Eddie and the Ginger - had absolutely beautiful cursive writing penmanship - it came to them naturally, and they each regularly received an A in that box on the back of their report cards. Indeed, it was a visual pleasure to gaze upon their handiwork, even when the Ginger wrote "Go fuck yourself." Although it was Eddie's fiddling with his cartridge pen in the presence of (while ignoring) Monsignor Fitzgerald (and his champ/chump admonitions) on report card day

that led to his summary dismissal from the altar boys moments after I had been bounced because the other box on the back of my report card "Courtesy and Cooperation" had a D in it. John (the youngest) and I leaned more towards the Black-Irish Burke lineage, we tanned like Spaniards, and had the handwriting skills of the Cro-Magnon race.

But learning to use the cartridge pen was as much a sign of your Catholicism in the sixties as learning your Catechism. I resented my more freewheeling comrades attending P.S. 81, with their easy BICs. Their fingertips were only stained with nicotine.

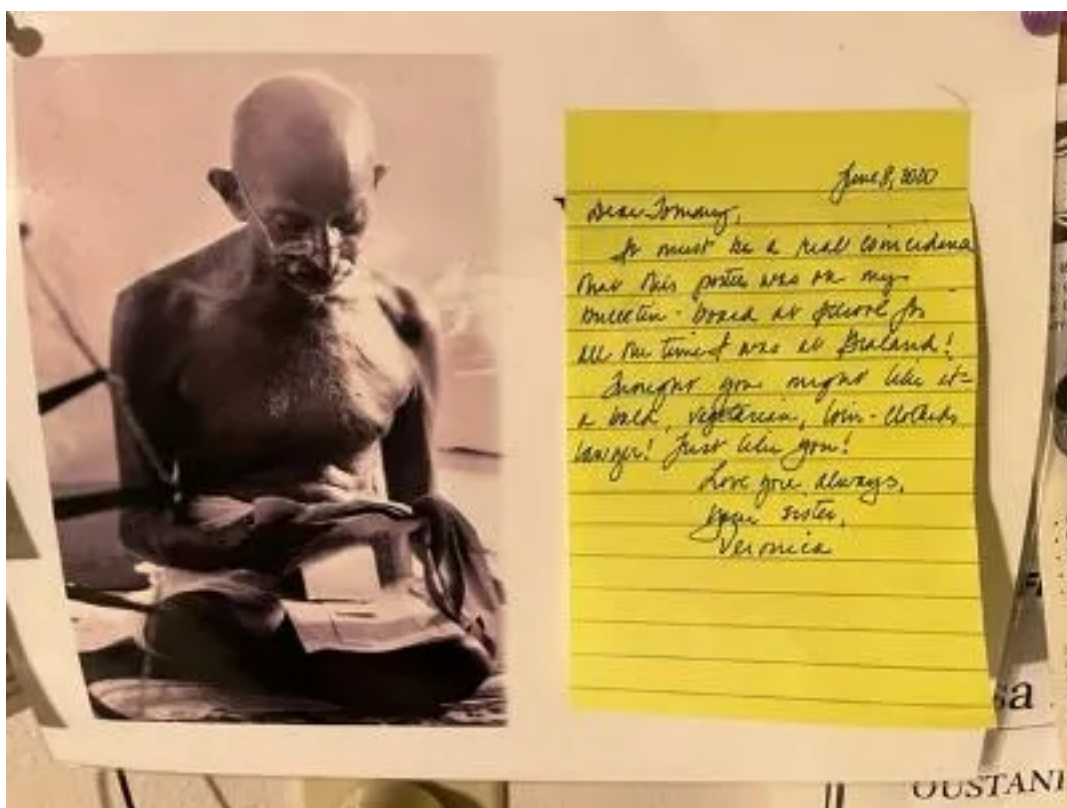
I was able to leave the ink cartridge pens behind when I graduated St. Maggie's and started attending Cardinal Spellman. But the nuns and priests were right - my transition to the pure decadence of a ball point pen was a slippery slope. What little discipline I had developed trying to master the cartridge pen rapidly dissipated.

This led to a Domino effect and soon I had no discipline at all. It was the pin prick in a balloon, nothing to save it from its own self destruction, as the air that was its lifeblood sought freedom from its rubbery constraints.

Of course, it didn't help my discipline teaming up with Lenny (yes, that one) from the first day of freshman year. I have now - literally yesterday - seen documentation that clearly establishes that he was the most incorrigible of the two of us - Butch Cassidy to my Sundance - continuing his anarchistic ways on his own during his senior year in Spellman, while Joe Serrano and I (and the Betts Brothers and John Hughes) spent our mornings dutifully cutting class at DeWitt Clinton HS and eating salt bagels and drinking "punch bowls" at the bagel shop on Jerome Avenue (yep directly up the No. 4 subway line from Yankee Stadium and my old stomping grounds at Maccoombs park). But that's a story for a different blog (or the prequel). Pairing up with Joe in Public High School not only hastened my debauchery, but provided an additional benefit. Joey was not just a great musician, he was an artisan who taught me how to fashion water bonges out of wine bottles (and who taught me the base notes for Iron Butterfly's *Inna Godda Davidda* on his guitar). The boy was a maestro with a guitar, a carborundum drill bit and some glass tubing. Again, I digress.

I continued to use BICs throughout my first unsuccessful foray into college. I also used the pen when I first wrote "Ode To Murray Collins" and my first drafts of short stories when I returned to Lehman after I was married. My play, *Revelations*, was written entirely by pen. But it was typed up for me by sister V, that time she came out to me (see that blog).

As I mentioned, V was one of my freckled siblings that had beautiful penmanship and I believe is the only one that continues to cursively write with an ink cartridge pen to this day.



Indeed, V's repetitive gift to me whenever I accomplished anything of value was a cartridge pen, trying to lure me back into the fold. Over the years she has given me Visconti and Mount Blanc pens, which I have never used and ultimately regifted to someone more deserving. I just could not face one more sheet of paper with ink blobs and streaks or return to nightmares of Mrs. C and my phantom hair. And I rarely ever write more than a short sentence by hand - as my penmanship has devolved to the point that even I

cannot read it - and must determine the few decipherable letters and words and then reconstruct the sentence in context.

I believe the above cartridge pen is the last one V gave me. I keep it in my desk drawer just in case there is a Zombie Apocalypse and I need to stab one of them in the eye and there are no hunting knives handy. Ghandi would understand. Needs must.

Well speaking of writing, I must do some legal work.

But before that it's a Kitty cuddle and my rounds.

And today is hump day for all of you camel aficionados out there.

You fine, five readers take the hill and hold it until midnight. Use a pen if necessary.

But during that exercise, have a great day.

There Is Magic In This World

May 17, 2022



"The universe is full of magical things patiently waiting for our wits to grow sharper." *A Shadow Passes*, Eden Phillpotts (1919) [And not, as commonly believed, by William Butler Yeats or Bertrand Russell]

I tend to find magic in what others would consider common place or coincidental. Like this morning's photo, above, of a house under a full moon that I never should have been able to buy but for the indecision of stranger that led to them backing out of a contract, just long enough for me to swoop in and nail down an offer without ever visiting the property, before the person came back to their senses.

That led to me living in this rural part of NoCo, which led to me doing my walks, which led to me meeting and adopting Claire, which led to me writing TWA, which led to the present success of *The Claire Trilogy*.

Here is Claire yesterday, standing watch over the sleeping Honey.

Nothing more magical than this:



As I have gotten older, I have realized that my life has always been that strange combination of unforeseeable coincidences that keep propelling me forward towards something better or away from something worse. Either me always being in the right place at the right time to be offered an opportunity that wasn't on my radar, or me being in the wrong place with things looking kind of grim and others around me being in the right place at the right time to basically save my ass, or to open a door for me where, a moment before, there wasn't even a doorway.

When I was very young, my sister, Veronica, to whom I am devoted, introduced me to her cribbed version of John Burrough's phrase, "Leap and the net will appear." She didn't tell me that the net may not appear until after your first bounce, but it somehow always

showed up and caught me before I got beyond a few cracked bones and a solid bruising.

I cannot tell you how many times in my life where I have had that inner dialogue that always ended with the cautious me saying "this is crazy," immediately followed by the spontaneous me saying "Fuckit, I'm doing it anyway."

So I guess the real magic is believing in yourself, and that if you can do that, the universe will provide the rest.

Speaking of magical coincidences, the recent events with BC in his hometown is a case in point.

Despite being modern fantasy literature's latest incarnation of a Voldemortian villain, he really is a great guy, who has embraced his new found infamy as the character you love to hate with a wonderful sense of humor that has me often tearing up from laughter at his antics.

And he has embraced his role as one of the trilogy's ambassadors, which led him to track down the only copy of TWA in the Rochester public library system and, through pure coincidence, meet and befriend the librarian who was the fan who brought that book into the public library.

BC may be one of the few people who is more likely to strike up a conversation with a total stranger than I am.

Anyway, BC's latest fortuitous engagement with this librarian ultimately led to his delivery yesterday of the inscribed complete set of The Claire Trilogy to Maria, the librarian, pictured below.



Thank you Maria for your support, and for not chasing BC out of the library with a broom. I hope you enjoy the read. Well, Monday is in the rearview, so let's get moving. You fine, five readers see if you can spot the magic in your lives. I'll start with a cuddle of the Magical Smokey, and then the guaranteed magic from each morning's rounds. But whatever else you do, make today a great one.

Thank You Brian (and Janice) Erickson & Flower Moon

May 16, 2022



I've mentioned in the past that I have these lovely neighbors, Brian and Janice Erickson. Well, Janice is lovely and Brian is a pisser, given that he is a Boston Sox fan so his taste in baseball teams (and possibly his sanity) is patently questionable - c'mon we all know who holds the most championships. Anyway, given his Boston roots, Brian is first and foremost a patriot, so all last year it drove him absolutely crazy to drive past my flag and see it faded beyond recognition from the bleaching Colorado sun. Finally he

could take it no more and sent his lovely wife around to deliver a replacement. Well, yesterday, as part of my to do list, I replaced Old Bleached and Tattered with Brian's spanking new Old Glory. Just in time for Memorial Day. It looks wonderful. Thank you Brian and Janice.

Speaking of chores, I spent the morning chopping fruits and veggies for the week, and, of course, Claire and Honey came by to collect their tithe.



I've learned that it is more time efficient to just bust up a five pound bag and leave it on the back table, otherwise I have to stop

between chops and feed Claire and Honey one at a time at the back door. And Claire chews quickly, so I am no sooner turning back to chopping when she is stomping at the back door for her next carrot. This prevents me from getting into a rhythm. Received word from Mark and Sara (God Bless the NYPD), our family Bee Keepers, that the very cool art piece we found in a local curiosity shop arrived safely at their home above the Tappanzee.



Also learned that Mark has made contact with yet another beekeeper name McCaffrey from down south. This innate fascination with honey production may explain why all McCaffreys are consistently sweeter than the average population. It's in our blood.

Indeed, it has been scientifically proven that we are twice as sweet as the average Boston Sox fan.

And while yesterday was a beautiful day here in NoCo, I didn't get away without manual labor. I had to move all of the patio furniture from its winter quarters in Geppetto's Studio out in the back to the upper back deck. It seemed a much farther distance than you'd think on a hot day. I could hear Honey chuckling everytime I walked past her carrying furniture balanced on my head and could have sworn I heard her whisper to Claire, "whose the pack animal now?!" It was Orwellian.

Last night was the Full Flower Moon, and while there was allegedly a full lunar eclipse, it seemed perfectly bright when I stopped to check on this month's intention candle coming back in from feeding C & H.



I'll just happily accept whatever additional magical bonuses came along with the eclipse. Thank you Universe!

Well, another Monday awaits.

Must give my Kitty a cuddle and get moving.

I hope my fine, five readers are well rested for the week ahead.

So let's start it out right and make today a great one.

A Perfect Day

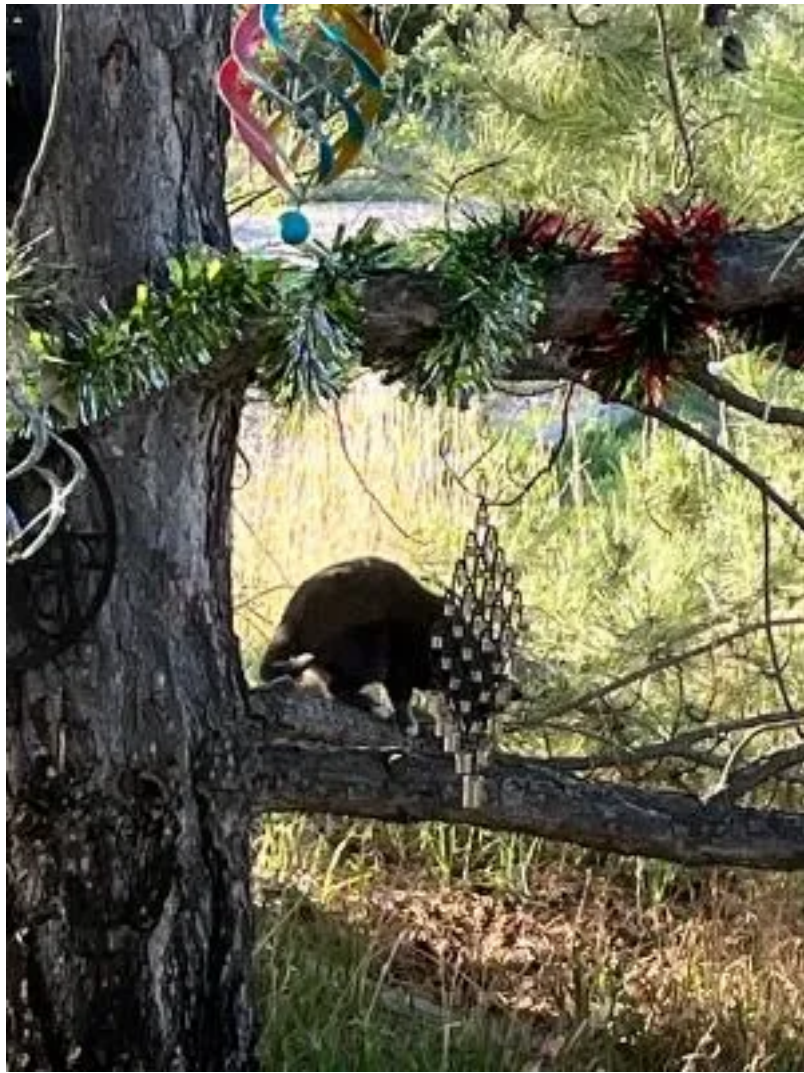
May 15, 2022



Claire was very disappointed yesterday morning when she arrived at the flower boxes and found them empty. So much so that she refused to show her face in the photo. She totally forgave me later when I brought back all of the remains of the watermelon - kids never finish their slices - from the barbeque at Luke & Georgie's place down the road. Must keep the star happy. Speaking of barbeques, my labor contribution was shucking the corn (a natural extension of my Keurig shucking expertise):



I like to do that outside because the corn silk gets everywhere and I have Smokey to keep me company while doing his/her acrobatics among Jack The Spruce's tree limbs:



I didn't take too many photos at the BBQ because while I love snapping them when I am alone and not engaged in socializing, I am terrible once I am engaged, because I try to keep in the moment with the people I am with, and the truth is, I never stop talking. So I try to let others take the photos and send them to me afterwards. But I did snap a couple while watching the granddaughters rough housing it on the trampoline before we sat down to eat. The first was a scrum of the three of them in the center.



Lisa was working the mat like a wrestling referee.
And then I caught them a second later when the scrum broke.



That's Scarlett, Stella and Savanna (that's right - they are all characters in TCT) going left to right as they explode out of the center mass.

My contribution to the event led to the scum. I was reaching under the net anytime any of the girls got close enough to my side and grabbing a leg while making monster sounds and trying to pull them to me. This would force the other two girls to grab the upper torso and arms of the captured sister to pull her free of my grip, ending with the now tangled group of sisters wrapped in a protective scum in the middle of the area, out of my reach.

Like wild animals, McCaffreys always turn play into life lessons.

This game reinforced (1) family loyalty to your siblings; (2) never leave a sibling behind no matter how scary the situation and (3) *The Dude* is crazy. Next I'm going to teach them all how to dig very large holes on the back property in the middle of the night. That is

the gift that keeps on giving. Spaghetti taught us all how to dig the perfect hole in the dark. My turn to pay it forward.

Speaking of gifts, I gave Scarlett my very expensive motorized and computerized telescope that I bought when I first came west and never used because it was just too damn hard and frustrating for this old dog to master. I never read directions. If I can't figure out something by eyeballing it, I give up.

Scarlett (initially with Luke's assistance) will actually make use of it because, like all good star children, she is fascinated with astronomy and already rattles off amazing statistics about the different heavenly bodies. Following the pattern she has already established as "Big Sister," Scarlett will then teach her siblings everything they need to know, including how to work the telescope and what they are looking at. Kids today are frightening with how easily they take to technology.

The food and conversation at the BBQ was first rate, as we covered topics like the girls' future education and extra curricular activities for the year ahead and other family business. Of course, Georgie shared the Clan Leaders' input from the Fairy Godmothers, my family never makes a move on the education front without their blessing. As a result, the Fairy Godmothers have directly imprinted on my children and now their children, and they all have done amazingly well in the process. It takes a Clan.

Luke and I also had some time to talk about marketing strategies for our books. I am very excited over the upcoming release of his debut novel:

5:11



Search Amazon

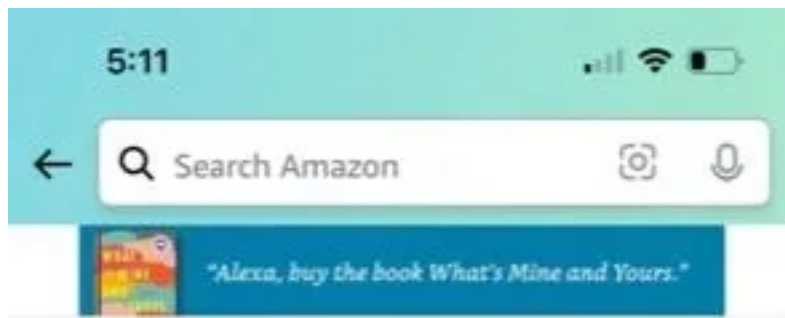


"Alexa, buy the book *What's Mine and Yours*."

Luke McCaffrey

Lebanon Red





Luke McCaffrey
Lebanon Red



That front cover blurb is by Junot Diaz: <https://www.newyorker.com/contributors/junot-diaz>

The back cover blurb is by Colin Broderick: [https://
www.colinbroderick.com/](https://www.colinbroderick.com/)

I'm not lying, I get goose bumps just knowing this is happening.

I wish him nothing but success: Matthew 3:17

Speaking of novels, that Friday the 13th bump continued to carry yesterday as all three books remained in the top twenty on the Amazon Dark Humor list:

4:05



Search Amazon



Dark Comedy ▾

Best Sellers

New Releases

#1



Master of the Mountain: A Reincarnation LitRPG Adventure (Dragon Core Chronicles Book 2)

★★★★★ 44

#2



The Wise Ass (The Claire Trilogy Book 1)

★★★★★ 3,565

#3



The Stalking Dead (Gang of Ghouls Book 1)

★★★★★ 1,461

#4



The Inspector Graham Mysteries: Books 1-4 (Inspector Graham Collection Book 1)

★★★★★ 1,363



4:05



Search Amazon



#14



Kissing My Ass Goodbye (The Claire Trilogy Book 3)

★★★★☆ 421

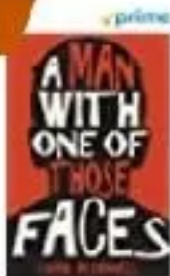
#15



Criminal Spirits (Gang of Ghouls Book 7)

★★★★☆ 704

#16



A Man With One of Those Faces (The Dublin Trilogy Book 1)

★★★★☆ 3,219

#17



An Alien Appeal (The Claire Trilogy Book 2)

★★★★☆ 895

#18



Damaged Gods: A Monster Romance (Monsters of Saint Mark's)



So yesterday was indeed a perfect day all around. As good as it gets.

But today's another day, and I have my weekly fruit & veggie prep to perform and some other chores I didn't get to yesterday because of my social calendar. So I better get to it now.

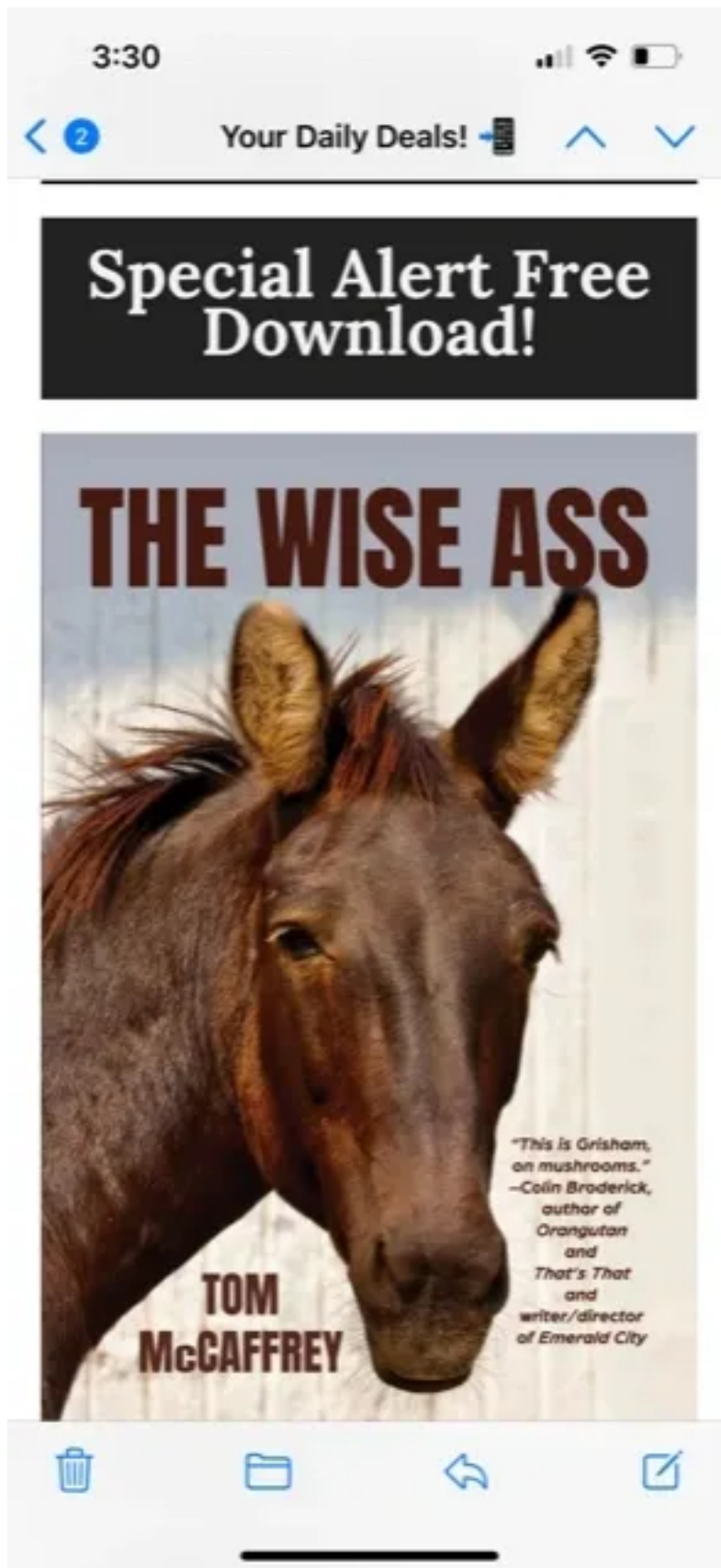
But first a Kitty cuddle.

You fine, five readers put up your feet and give the Lord this day of rest.

And have a great day!

Friday The Thirteenth - Lucky For Some

May 14, 2022



Now yesterday was Friday the 13th of May. It was the only one during 2022. Which makes it that much more special, or potent.

Most people have been raised with the idea that it is an unlucky date.

[https://www.yahoo.com/lifestyle/why-friday-13th-considered-unlucky-180221604.html?](https://www.yahoo.com/lifestyle/why-friday-13th-considered-unlucky-180221604.html?guccounter=1&guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuYmluZy5jb20v&guce_referrer_sig=AQAAAI-7eJ4gTlxeRtYITuaK2z4jGyg0KsAZtQiCbDRrKoTkUsL0VYF2qvQ0gxfdy0q3qpcYiTNXiny0l8F_MulvzgLHyhYUhY_iTsCo5sL-buoE61Y7UP1S9_M4j7QEIz7FFkyn6Y1Hq0kAQCmEfnM_Olwa7HdywIN4K--pkOuM2oGf)

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So, counterintuitively, it is the perfect date for the powers that be at BRW, in conjunction with Bookbub, to push a marketing effort for *The Claire Trilogy* by giving TWA ebooks away in a free Amazon download.

Now conventional wisdom may ask how giving away your goods - royalty free - helps the writer (or the publisher for that matter). Well, monetarily, with respect to TWA alone, it really doesn't. But when you factor in that TWA, along with AAA and KMAG, make up what has been consistently marketed for the past year, and actually sold for the last 5 months, as *The Claire Trilogy*, it is really rather brilliant.

You see, for some reason, let's go with what I like to call magic, over the past fifteen months, relatively speaking, TWA has been critically and commercially successful, given that it is put out by an independant publisher - and no members of the gliterati at the New York Times, The New Yorker, or on LitHub seems to have noticed it.

It's publication has been a Cinderella backstory - long after giving up his literary dreams, a sixty-plus old dude rises from obscurity to get a shot at being a published author. There is a feeling of hope to that back story. Never give up.

The book's story itself is a genre mash-up. As I often tell people, if I were pitching this to Hollywood, it would be

"*Goodfellas* meets *Wizard of Oz*, meets *Mr. Ed*, meets *Mork & Mindy*, meets *The Craft*." It is part legal thriller, part mafia story, part Sci-fi and part magical fantasy.

Conventional wisdom would prognosticate its failure right out of the gate.

But there is nothing conventional about this old author, and, as it turned out, *TWA* is a fun and easy to read book. It's been repeatedly referred to as "unputdownable."

Moreover, there has been a grassroots, word-of-mouth, elevator whisper campaign in the field, backed up with brilliant strategic Amazon and Facebook marketing by BRW (Thank you Reagan Rothe and your team at BRW). There has not been one day since its publication, where I haven't collared some stranger I meet or speak to and talked them into buying a copy of *TWA*. I am shameless. And all of my crazy friends and relatives - especially those who appear as characters in *TCT* - have been pounding the virtual and actual pavement pushing those books as well. I appreciate all of their collaborative and individual efforts.

I mean, in the end, what does a prospective reader have to lose, given that its Kindle version of *TWA* will cost approximately the same you'll spend on a Venti and cookie at Starbucks, without the calories, and it won't go cold while your are slowly sipping it.

So after fifteen months, *TWA* has proven itself to be a perfect introduction to my writing. A substantial number of readers have enjoyed the crazy story and its loveable characters, which is understandable, not because I am a brilliant writer, but because of how much I love my friends and family that form their basis, and how much I have enjoyed all of the fun we have shared along the way.

And the cherry on top is that Claire exists and is so much more magical than I could ever hope to capture with words.

Which brings me back to how - at least in my mind - giving away *TWA* for the day works for either publisher or writer.

It's a little bit like the streetcorner dealer handing out that first free hit of literary crack. You hope that their first experience in the magical world of Claire The Mule is mind blowing and creates a curious craving that hooks the reader for the long haul. And you show them at the same time you are offering that first free hit that there are two more books with a continuation of that storyline and the same characters from the first book. Come on back, we'll be waiting.

So, given all of the magical trappings surrounding *The Claire Trilogy*, yesterday, Friday the 13th, was the perfectly lucky day to give away TWA.



Now I don't know how many free copies of *TWA* were actually downloaded yesterday, but there were enough to push it to the Amazon No. 1 release in three separate categories, and I am reservedly confident that most of them will be back to my literary street corner looking to repeat the endorphin-fueled literary experience with *AAA* and *KMAG*. Indeed, BRW has already reported a corresponding bump in sales of those two books yesterday.

You build your readership one book at a time. So yesterday was a very lucky day for me. And I hope equally so for all of those readers who can now enjoy their time this weekend with *TWA for free* and then come back to the Amazon or some other bookstore looking for more. And the truth is, they don't even have to come back for my books, because there are a lot of wonderful writers out there that can also satisfy their recurring cravings (take my son's book, *Lebanon Red*, as an example). But I hope mine are the first ones they reach for in the short term (sorry Luke - we McCaffreys are a competitive lot). Literature is a lifelong addiction.

In the meantime, I must go back to the literary lab and write that prequel that has been bouncing around in my head - the magic was always there. Then the sequel - the kids are all right.

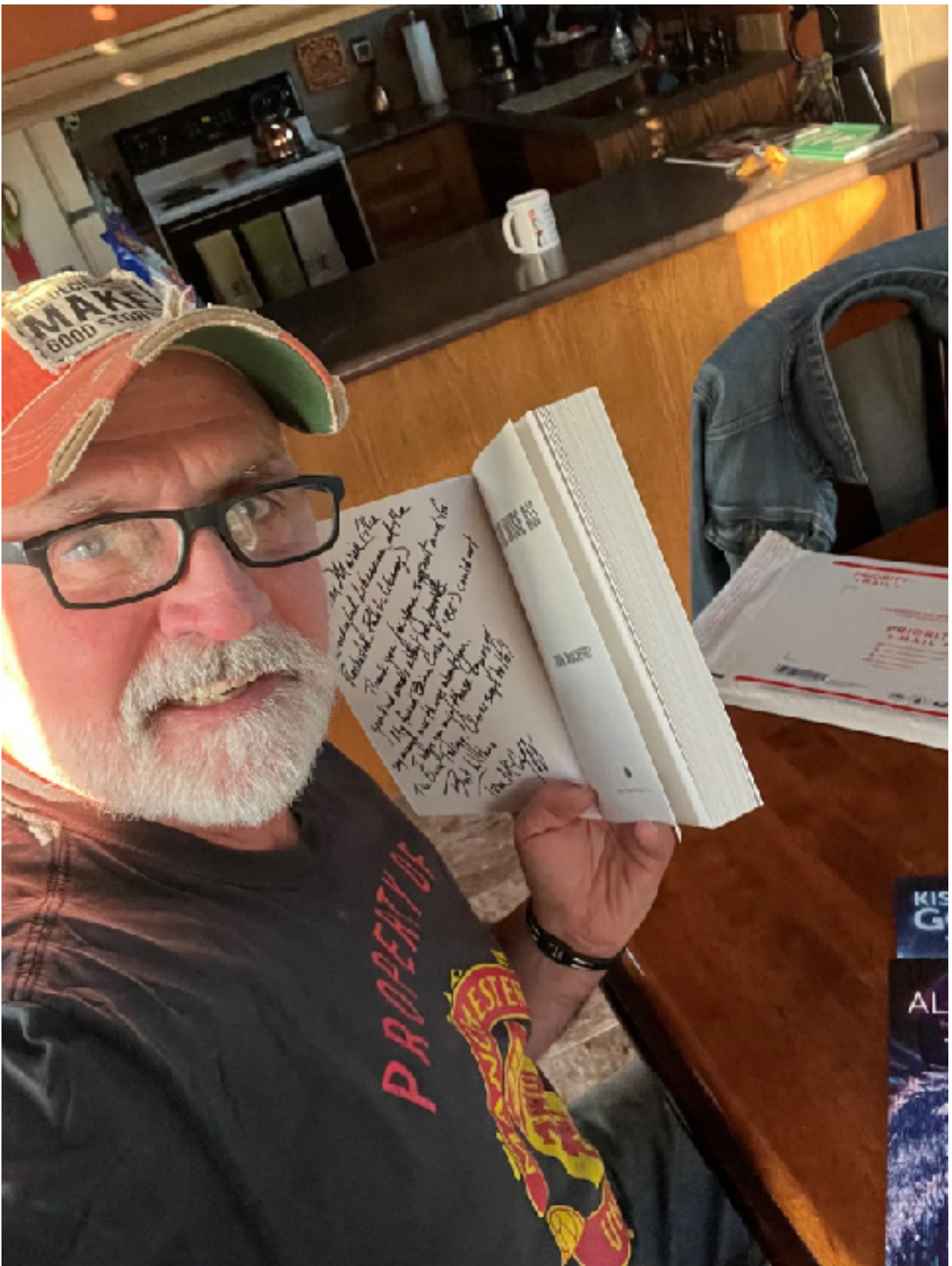
Well, it's Saturday and my chores await. Smokey is waiting to be cuddled and my four legged friends in the neighborhood are waiting for their treats.

If you were one of those lucky readers who downloaded *TWA* yesterday, I really hope you find some time to enjoy it this weekend.

But no matter what you do, have a great day.

Six Degrees of Kevin Bacon - Stephen Furst - Maria The Librarian

May 13, 2022



Now I'm sure you have all heard of, or maybe even played, the Six Degrees of Kevin Bacon Game. The way it was first pitched to me,

the parlor game goes something like you can connect every actor in Hollywood with the actor Kevin Bacon through six or less other actors and/or films.

I have even seen it played to connect KB in six moves to common folk.

I can play that game. Back in the early 90s, I actually took Luke (his first novel *Lebanon Red* drops this August and is up for pre-sale on all major distribution channels) to an Annex talk given by Kevin Bacon in lower Manhattan. As an added bonus Kevin's wife, the amazing actress Kyra Sedgewick, was sitting there in the front row.

The small audience members were able to circle the two actors at the end and share our good wishes so we are talking about being within a few feet of those two talented people, who get bonus points for staying together forever in a business that ruins relationships just for sport.

Well I also have another line of connection to Kevin Bacon. I became friends with the actor/director/producer Stephen Furst through a mystical, medical script I had written called *Spark of Faith*. Stephen wanted to produce it and so he optioned it. He was an amazing, generous and very kind man. He died way too young at the age of 63 from complications of a lifetime of diabetes (the same childhood onset version of the disease that recently took my sister-in-law, Michele. SF was a huge fundraiser and voice/face in the effort to cure that disease). I attended his burial service in LA. I still have the last voicemail he left me saved on my phone. He had that unique voice. Stephen was survived by his beautiful wife Lorraine (who Stephen shared was a lawyer) and his extremely talented sons, Nathan and Griff. He often shared how much he loved his family.

<https://www.bing.com/images/search?view=detailV2&thid=ATOOLPBEE685CA6A0D8079BF46BFE9C3E406AAFED42F773E877DE73213556C3689D899&mediaurl=https%3a%2f%2fmedia.gettyimages.com%2fphotos%2factor-stephen-furst-attends-a-mothers-day-salute-to-tv-moms-at-the-picture-id81009548&expw=669&q=stephen+furst&FORM=IRPRST&selectedIndex=0&cbid=ATOOLPBEE685CA6A0D8079BF46BFE9C3E406AAFED42F773E877DE73213556C3689D899&cbn=KnowledgeCard&idpp=overlayview&ajaxhist=0&ajaxserp=0>

Most people know Stephen as the character "Flounder" from *Animal House*, but he also starred in TV Shows like *St.*

Elsewhere and *Babylon 5*. He was also an accomplished director.

Stephen was hilarious in *Animal House*. Which is my second connection to Kevin Bacon, who played "Chip Diller," one of the evil frat boys in *Animal House*. And here's one more connection to both KB and SF, as Luke and I were entering the Annex that night on the way to see Kevin Bacon speak, who do we walk past but the actor Peter Riegert, who played "Donald Schoenstein" aka "Boon" in AH, and who just happened to be passing the Annex building at that particular moment. You have to love Manhattan.

Well, I'm going to play that 6 Degrees game now with the Rochester Librarian, who we now know is named Maria. So using the Stephen Furst connection - 1. Kevin (AH), 2. to Stephen (AH), 3. to me (SOF), 4. to BC (lifetime of shared hijinx & nasty character in KMAG), 5. to Maria in Rochester (The Claire Trilogy). Without SF: 1. Kevin at Annex, 2. to Peter Riegert outside the Annex, 3. to me/Luke at Annex, 4. to BC (see above), 5. to Maria (the now famous Rochester Librarian through TCT).

Oh, I forgot to make that last connection.

You see BC went back to the Rochester library yesterday to mark his territory after being unceremoniously interrupted from his book burning agenda. So he placed the Pewter mug Lisa & I gave him for being an usher in our wedding party 44 years ago (that has to be the last one in existence) along with the now reserved copy of TWA and for good measure he placed one of the T-shirts from the Mamaroneck Beach Yacht & Cabana Club, where BC and I worked during the notorious summer of 1976 (which will certainly make its way into the prequel).



Of course BC sought Maria out and explained that after their interesting introduction the day before, that I would be sending her an inscribed set of TCT.

During that interaction, Maria shared that she had already ordered AAA and KMAG to complete TCT set for the Rochester Library. My many thanks to you Maria for doing that.

Maria also impressed BC with her knowledge of the TWA story and backstory she drew from the detailed acknowledgements in TWA,

even making the connection that Hemingway had also written about his friends and family.

For BC's sake, let's hope that the set I am sending out this morning, reaches Maria (*via* BC) before Maria reads KMAG.

Well, it magical Friday, and I have a Kitty to cuddle and rounds to make, and then off to the Post Office to drop Maria's books in the mail. I'll post whatever BC reports when he delivers them to her.

Hopefully they'll snap a photo. Hopefully it will not be a crime scene photo.

You fine, five readers go out there and make a wish for whatever floats your boat.

No matter what happens, you are in for a treat.

As a side note before I sign off, yesterday's OFC group text was highlighted by Professor Joe Serrano's enlightening discussion about the derivation of the term FOPA, which was raised as a medical topic for discussion by the reigning Queen of the OFC, Eileen Cotto. I'm pretty sure Joe recited a Limerick to Eileen about the subject. You just cannot make this up.

So the rest of you go out there and have a great day.

And if anyone out there knows Kevin Bacon, please get him to read TCT, so we can bring this full circle. Hell, Kevin and Kyra could play Jimmy and Gina, hint-hint.

BC's Bookburning Tour - Never Underestimate A Librarian

May 12, 2022



As my fine, five readers know, when KMAG dropped, BC (the true, in every sense of the word, basis for literature's new Voldemort) took his lovely wife, Nan, on an off-the-grid roadtrip, in an effort to lay low until the heat created by his paragon of evil character in the novel, cooled off.

But BC could only carry so much of his limitless resources in his milk truck - he keeps his many millions in a walk in bank safe.

Given how he likes to throw his cash around, he's known to leave hundred dollar bills as tips to truck stop wait staff, after a while he had to return to his home base in upstate New York to replenish. There BC came up with one more of his ingenious plans. Banking on the fact that no one would actually spend any money to purchase my books, he decided that he could guaranty his safety in the homestead by ensuring that my books do not appear in the

public library, where the real die-hard readers, the ones that will stop at nothing to have access to their stories, can be found. BC figured that if there were any fanatics out there that could pose a danger to life and limb, it would be among the library readers. After all, the first us public library was established before the Revolution, back when its clientel were not afraid to take matters into their own hands.

<https://freedomssystem.org/1731-benjamin-franklin-opened-the-1st-us-library/>

Well BC first went to the local library, where, after being lectured by the librarian there that he obviously confused the name Tom McCaffrey with that of the brilliant literary scion author, writer Todd McCaffrey (son of author Anne - *Dragonriders of Pern*), BC established that no free, loan-out copies of my books were to be found on library shelves within walking distance of his home.

But BC is a creative bugger and a bit of a programming genius, so he hacked into the statewide library system only to find that there was one copy of TWA in their records. This copy was located in the central library in the city of Rochester.

So BC took to the road once again yesterday and tracked down that one copy of TWA, the other books were not to be found, and sent me this photo as a public taunt.



He was just about to swipe it off the shelf, to be burned with the thousands of copies of The Claire Trilogy paperbacks he had pinched during his off-the-grid travels off truck-stop tables (he sends over complimentary unlimited coffee to their tables and waits until the truckers - who are well known voracious readers - go to the rest room), when he was set upon by the ever vigilant librarian.

Oh, but BC has not survived this long without being the wiliest of characters, so when the librarian asked why he was tucking the

copy of TWA into his fanny pack, the now masked BC explained that he was actually Norwegian, and that, in Norway, the true home of the fanny pack, one never carries a book in one's delicate hands, ever.

Well, that smart little Librarian knew a book burner when she saw one, so she told BC that, unfortunately for him, the one copy of TWA had been, just that moment, reserved by one of the Kodak family, and that BC would have to wait until it was returned to their library system. She also volunteered that she was a big fan of The Claire Trilogy and was working on bringing the other two volumes to her library shelves.

But given that he was a purported visitor to our country, and she had never met a true Norwegian, she asked if he would pose for a selfie with her and the book.



I understand that this photo has now been circulated among all NYS libraries, with what is now classified as a BC alert, and that particular set of The Claire Trilogy will at least find a safe haven, in the reserved section, in that particular Rochester Library branch. Never underestimate the resourcefulness of a Librarian:

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=Sienfeld+Librarian&docid=607988892054868141&mid=AB2EE9B8B95434630533AB2EE9B8B95434630533&view=detail&FORM=VIRE>

For the record, during my youth, I loved to spend rainy or snowy days sitting at one of the tables in the Riverdale Branch of the NY Public Library. They remain a wonderful resource.

Anyway, its recycling day, so I must take care of that, along with my Kitty cuddling, before I make my rounds.

But if any of my fine, five readers get a chance, stop into your local library and see if they carry The Claire Trilogy. I have made sure through donations that the Berthoud public library had multiple copies of the entire set. Reading is power.

And may you all have a wonderful day!

A Summer With No Flowers

May 11, 2022



Just learned that the local Water Company is installing water restrictions in our area starting June 1st. Given that Lisa and I have been following the Colorado maxim of not planting flowers before Mother's Day, we were going to make our major selections this weekend. Given also that our flowers have at best a 50/50 chance of surviving the summer when there is plenty of water, especially since the mules do love to raid Lisa's flower boxes, the safer bet will be to forego aesthetics altogether in the name of the greater good.

When I went to tell the Mules, Honey did not look too happy. She is the main culprit when it comes to raiding flower boxes. Oh well,

she'll just have to go with the reduced flow and a less exotic diet. Needs must.

Speaking of interesting creatures, we have a den of foxes in our area and every once in a while I spot one during my morning rounds. They are extremely wary of people and quite fast so its very hard for me to capture a photo. But last week I spotted one crossing Beverly and without trying to focus I just lifted my iPhone and started snapping. Voila.



About as clear as most Big Foot photos, but I'll take it. Proof, that like Big Foot, Foxes are real.

Speaking of photos, I had to stop by the Larimer Sheriff's Office yesterday afternoon for my head shot for my renewal Concealed Carry Permit (I cannot believe its been five years). Given what the photo looked like, now with my white beard, actually quite comparable to a Big Foot (maybe a Yeti) photo, I assume my face will scare off most miscreants wishing to do me bodily harm. Given the price of bullets, that's definitely a good thing.

Well I have a few additional matters on my plate this morning, so I shall limit today's blog to these boring little tidbits. I'm off for a Kitty cuddle and then my rounds.

For you fine, five readers, take the hill and get over the hump day.

And make today a great one.

Men With Earrings - Where's Waldo Indeed

May 10, 2022



I've worn an earring in my left earlobe since late 1975, early 1976. I can't be more specific after all of these years, except to say that it had to be before March 1976. I know that because I had my ear pierced by Terry "Goose" Gans (RIP), while very drunk at a housewarming Vodka party hosted by Murray (RIP), Joe and Lenny at Aunt Violet's Flop House. So it had to have happened before Murray passed in March of 76, before I moved into his room there. Back then, very few men wore earrings, and those that did were often challenged on their masculinity and/or sexuality (that whole right ear if you are gay kind of thing). Throughout the seventies, my earring was often a leading topic of conversation. I only had to defend my honor once when challenged on both (masc/sex) issues late one Saturday night in a bathroom in a bar on 242nd street when the drunk bastard standing next to me by the

sinks didn't realize that the mirror he was looking in threw back an inverted image of my earring placement. He wasn't hitting on me, but he didn't like the idea of a potentially gay guy sharing his bathroom. I listened to his shit until he put his hand on my shoulder. Being drunk and stupid didn't end well for him. I'm guessing he never did that again.

And I did get to use my earring as a prop to enrage another obnoxious attorney into apoplexy during a deposition when I leaned across the table, pointed at my earring, and said on the record "you see this, it's an earring, not a hearing aid, so there's no need to constantly shout!"

Now I have an aversion to wearing jewelry on my hands, rings or watches, ever since Billy McDonagh, who was an Assistant Manager at Daitch Shopwell, where I worked in my early teens, explained how he lost his ring finger when his ring got caught as he leapt off the top of a fence he was climbing. I also noticed that the older men I worked with once I entered the construction field in my late teens, never wore hand jewelry for similar reasons - it gets caught on dangerous things and bad things happen.

But on one industrial boiler job out in Brooklyn, there was one older pipe fitter who wore an earring who was into spiritual things and who would shoot the shit with the laborers and brickies during coffee breaks. When I asked him about his earring he explained that he wore it rather than hand jewelry for the obvious safety reasons stated, but then explained the long history of men wearing earrings dating back centuries.

<https://discover.hubpages.com/style/Why-do-Men-wearing-Earrings-reasons#:~:text=It%20is%20believed%20that%20men%20have%20worn%20earrings,warriors%20wore%20them%20as%20a%20mark%20of%20honor.>

I remember he explained that he once was a merchant marine, and that sailors often pierced their ears as a tradition when they first crossed the international date line at sea. He suggested that this is how the Pirates started wearing them. Some sea farers sliced their wedding bands at an angle and then jammed the two sharpened points through their earlobe. Anyway, I noticed that no one gave the pipefitter any shit for wearing the earring, so I figured that if the opportunity presented itself, I would try it.

Which brings me back to this particular Vodka party. I was really drunk, and Goose was one of the perennial cuties in my neighborhood, who I had known since we swam on the same RNH summer swim team starting in gradeschool. She convinced me and a few others - pretty sure Joe Serrano and John Hughes were two of them - that she could pierce all of our ears without pain in no time flat.

She then produced a huge safety pin and a lighter from her purse and after some field sterilization, which included dousing the ears and pin with Vodka, proceeded to pierce all of our ears in about ten minutes.

Truthfully, I did not remember the event clearly until the next morning when I went to remove my t-shirt before showering and it caught on the piece of wire Goose had placed in the new hole to allow it to heal. I figured, screw it, its done. So I left it in.

I've worn different styles of earrings over the years, but I have worn a simple gold hoop since I became a lawyer. The one I have now I've had in for over almost two decades, as it was a gift from my lesbian BFF Helen LaLousis - whose family was in the jewelry business - shortly after we first met.

And I have to say that the earring in the above painting does distract one's eyes from WS's relative ugly visage. If I ever grew my hair out we could be twins.

Now recent events compel me to return once more to the Joe's Ass storyline.

Joe's backdoor has really created a internet firestorm, as photos are arriving from all over the world, this one from Mumbai, from a source known only as "Disco" (rumor has it that one of the OFC - Mike Augustyni - may be hiding in that part of the world) allegedly taken in the early 70s and showing what is represented to be a photo of Joe's very tan posterior without any sign of Waldo or g-string tan lines.



I can confirm from memory that it does look like Joe is standing between his Javellin (I was surrounded by cops once while driving it) and Mike Augustyni's blue sports car.

I tell you that Mo C's Memorial Day Weekend Extravaganza cannot come soon enough so we can put this matter to rest once and for all. Schwartz, do not forget to take photos. Where's Waldo Indeed! Anyway, its now 4 am, and I need to get a move on. Smokey and other outdoor creatures await my attention.

But the worst of the week is over as Monday is now in the rear view mirror.

You fine, five readers go out and enjoy your Tuesday.

And make it a great day.

No Rest For The Wicked, Discerning Asses & Phallic Symbols

May 9, 2022



Sunday may be a day of rest for the Good Christians, but for us Lapse Catholics/Druids, its just another day in the salt mines. Yesterday, while my wife worked on Mother's Day, I had a list of chores I needed to get done before picking her up from work. First, I had to get both the back and front fountains demucked, refilled and running again. Managed to get the back fountain up and working

properly, above. Got the front fountain demucked but its water pump is shot, so I ordered a new one from Amazon and will complete the job later today after business hours, assuming the pump arrives. Then I had to repair the whirligig out by Geppetto's Workshop, where one of its four giant arms and funnels had come loose due to the ridiculous wind storms we have been having. This meant picking up some JB Weld from Ace in Berthoud and then dragging out the tall ladder from the G's shop, and carrying mixture and funnel arm up the ladder and repairing it and waiting up there for fifteen minutes while the reinserted arm and mixture cured enough for me to get back down and leave the rest for the sun. Then I went and collected another wheelbarrow of mule muffins and refilled the main water trough in the back while I stayed close to the whirligig just in case the repair didn't hold and the arm and funnel came back down. Once that was done, and the arm remained solid, it was humping the ladder back into Geppetto's Shop. Luckily Claire remained close in her supervisory position,



That's her peeking into Gepetto's just to make sure I wasn't goofing off (she calls it "skiving") after returning the ladder to its storage spot. She knows me so well.

Well, then I needed to take care of a month's worth of Keurig Shucking.





And Claire was right beside me, keeping count of the empty plastic containers saved from the landfill.



She counted four hundred. I need to cut back on my coffee. Speaking of discerning Asses, it wasn't all work, I had my iPhone with me throughout the day and was keeping up with the OFC repercussions of disseminating the photo of Joe's ass to the four compass points of the world *via* posting the blog on Twitter - through a series of popular retweeting, over 100,000 pairs of eyes, as far reaching as Tasmania and Mumbai, have gazed upon that ass. This included reports that Joe's lovely and eternally patient wife, Donna, had received an anonymous phone call (from Jaysree Whitelaw) alerting her to the posting. There was also an immediate disinformation campaign waged on the Internet by the denizens of the tattoo world suggesting that the original photo was not of Joe's back door at all, and offering another obviously doctored photo of his purported derrier to prove the lie:

I have not laughed this hard all day! -
Bwahahahahahahahaha!!!



The plot, and the ass, thickens.

(For the record, I claim no copyright in the above photo - or the tattoo or original Waldo character contained therein - and use the aggregate only for its patent newsworthiness and its irrefutable parodic value).

Luckily, I also received through my website an email with the heading "Schwartz" sent to me by none other than the mythic Jimmy Whitelaw (husband of eternally lovely Jaysree, childhood friend of Murray and the Collins Clan, as well as the mysterious Yvette Benson, whose recent rise from OFC obscurity suggests she may be behind the ass disinformation campaign - notice how I worked "behind" and "ass" into that sentence. Of course, given the recent litanies of Joe's licentious Eileen Cotto limericks (love alliteration), which I believe Joe has been peddling on the Dark

Web, that young lady cannot be ruled out either. BC was on the road, so I ruled him out just this once.)

After proffering pleasantries, Jimmy offered his opinion that the original ass photo may be of questionable provenance - something about the absense of g-string tan lines. So, in a series of direct email exchanges, it was decided that - at the upcoming gathering of thousands of the Collins Clan (bigger than Woodstock I) at Maureen C's upstate home this Memorial Day Weekend - Jimmy would put Joe to his proof to see whether, once and for all, they will find Waldo (and g-string tan lines). I expect a photo with the day's local newspaper in the shot to put this issue to rest. Truth will out! (WS Merchant of Venice, 2:2). Stay tuned.

Anyway, the weekend was not without its pleasures or treasures, as I was able to locate and purchase an original Irish Blackthorn Shillelagh from one of the Berthoud curiosity shops, "The Rancher's Wife," whose proprietress had obtained it from a local estate. It had obviously been left in Colorado by the earliest Celtic settlers to the United States, who got here just before Eric the Red.



These phallic cudgels are also known as an Irish "fighting stick" (and, for the record, the rumored "Irish Curse" has solely to do with drinking). Spaghetti had one which one of my demon siblings snatched before the great man was cold in his grave. For the record, I snatched Spaghetti's hurling stick. Well now I have a Shillelagh of my own (okay OFC have at that entire paragraph) - and I will guard it with my life.

Well, another Monday is upon us all. Best to get a move on.

First a quick Kitty cuddle and my rounds.

But you fine, five readers, make today a great one.

Life's Signposts & Joe Serrano & Happy Mothers' Day

May 8, 2022



Yesterday I was returning from Longmont, having stopped there to pick up a dozen 5 pound bags of carrots for my weekly prep, when I was just blown away by the look of the mountains I refer to as the Three Witches in The Claire Trilogy - left to right - Maiden, Mother and Crone. It had to have hit 70 degrees in my back yard yesterday and there they were, majestically covered in snow. They really are the visual signpost I look to whenever I am returning home. That middle one is where Jimmy and Michelle meet up towards the end of AAA.

They remind me of my transient nature, my mortality - humankind will come and go but those mountains will always be here. A signpost for those that come after me.

And that is why I write. To leave something behind that will hopefully last far longer than my corporeal manifestation on this earth.

That is also why I have gone out of my way to include as many friends, family and neighbors - human and otherwise - as I can cram into the story. That is also why I write about those same entities in these blogs, so that any reader who cares can learn about what was so special to me about them that warranted their inclusion in The Claire Trilogy.

One of those friends is Joe Serrano. I've known him just short of forever. We've gotten into a lot of mischief back in the day, lived together at Aunt Violet's Flop House and he was even in my wedding party (I was in his first one as well). Joe even wore tails at my wedding as a decoy in case there was an attempt on my life.

Joe was so happy to reconnect when we put the OFC back together and was thrilled to be included as a character in TCT - even though he was one of the bad guys. I gave his character what I consider the coolest bad guy line: "Was that your ride?"

You see, growing up, Joe would come out with these memorable lines, usually just when the shit was hitting the fan. And our collective fan was covered in shit.

Joe still entertains us all with the most filthy and creative Limericks one could ever imagine. He is hilarious. He literally brings tears to my eyes.

Now Joe is the most recent member of the OFC to cross into retirement. Luckily, he keeps himself busy teaching racquetball - sharing his talent with younger folk for a game he still loves playing in his mid 60s - and building things like pizza ovens and patios. He also does woodwork.



He has also written songs from his days in the band Guilty.



Here is a photo capturing Joe and half of me back in the glory days. This is the character I described in KMAG.



These are many of Joe's signposts - along with his amazing daughters (as well as his lovely wife Donna) - that Joe has established along the way in a very rewarding life. I mention them here because Joe is a friend worth remembering. I want you to know why he'll forever be a character in my trilogy (and hopefully under another name in my prequel).

Now Joe is a competitor, and when he saw that I recently posted the front door of one of the other members of the OFC - BC in his Hazmat suit - he immediately sent me a photo of his own front door.



And since Joe has always been a gambler, he immediately upped the ante and sent me a photo of his back door as well:



Now of course, I cannot attest that this is indeed Joe's back door. It could indeed be a body double. And quite honestly, I thought it would be tanner. But nothing would surprise me when it comes to Joe. Whether it's raising Hell back in the days of AVFH, or being the coolest band member in Guilty, or marvelling the medical world with his abilities around x-ray and other radiation based scanning devices, or embarrassing younger men on the raquetball court, or building pizza ovens or creating wooden works of art, or even his

founder's role in the MTC, Joe has made his mark. And I want the world to know this.

So there you go, Joe.

Now it is Sunday. I hope you all get to rest.

To the mothers out there, including my lovely wife, Happy Mothers Day.

If your mom is still on this side of the veil, call, visit and, if you can, give her an extra hug. If she's passed, call up the best memory you have. She'll feel it on the other side of the veil.

So here's to my passed mothers (Vera and Momma C) and grandmothers (Nana and Posie) and all other women in my life that offered me motherly love or advice along the way. And remember, you don't have to give birth to someone to be a mother.

My sisters, v&b, have been excellent mothers to all of my children.

So Smokey is waiting and I must finish up.

All of you fine, five readers go out there and enjoy the day.

And make it a great one.

Yvette Benson & Family - First Literary Pilgrim

May 7, 2022



Yesterday I had the absolute thrill of meeting with Yvette Benson & her family at Mike O'Shays in Longmont. Going left to right in the above photo, we have baby Nora (granddaughter), Erin (daughter) Yvette, myself, Y's husband, Jack (fine Celt/Norseman from Queens who attended Xavier HS and used to attend the same Turkeybowls as Clan McCaffrey against Fordam Prep), and grandson Leo (hence the genetic Norse strawberry blond hair color). Jack also shared a story concerning the derivation of his family's name while coming through Ellis Island.

Now Yvette and I are connected through Six Degrees of Separation.

Yvette grew up on the East side of the Grand Concourse (dubbed the "Jewish Riviera" by my mentor, New Yorker writer and cartoonist, Lou Meyers) in the Bronx right across that great expanse from my neighborhood, on its West side, close to Yankee Stadium.

She was childhood friends with the Collins Clan, and Jimmy Whitelaw and Jaysree (Now reminded by Yvette that J's last name is Garcia).

Of course my readers know how I became close to the Collins Clan once they moved up to Riverdale in the mid-seventies, and through them I became friends with Jimmy ("Schwartz") Whitelaw through Denis ("Murray") Collins. Well Jimmy married Jaysree and they and their daughter, Asha, later moved to Riverdale, where we (including Lisa) all became close "couples" friends, and used to socialize. Happy Days. Well Jimmy and Jaysree (and their expanding brood) then moved upstate - a massive migration led by the core gravity of the Collins' Clan and followed by Joe Serrano and Mike Augustyni and others (BC had already relocated having gone to Uni upstate, where his blood thickened to such a point where he could no longer live long-term below a certain latitude. He also met the lovely Nan and realized that she was a one-in-a-million opportunity not to squandered).

Anyway, I haven't seen the Whitelaws since the 90s, and of course, being the "no good, so-and-so" (a term I filched from Dutch Collins, who never cursed, despite my many attempts at drawing it out of him) I lost touch with everyone and just focused on my immediate family and legal career.

Now you readers all know how after TWA was published that old gang of mine then reconnected and its core has become the OFC, who I interact with through group text on a daily basis, and blog about regularly. Most of them also appear as characters in The Claire Trilogy.

You also know that I can be reached through email on this website - always a thrill when someone actually does it - so back on March 12th of this year, I was surprised to see an email with the heading "Eileen Collins." Hoping someone had risen from "Bubbles" Collins' notorious man-eater past with compromising photos which I would immediately share with the OFC, and possibly blackmail Eileen, I quickly opened the email and was met instead with this lovely missive from Yvette Benson:

"Good morning. Your books came to my attention via Jaysree. I have to imagine you know only one. She was my neighbor in the

other part of the Bronx from ages 5-14. The Collins lived in the 3 family on the other side and Jim Whitelaw lived in the apartment building across the street. So, your blog the other day talking about Eileen and Dennis brought back some wonderful memories of growing up and I thank you.

I've read TWA and AAA and really enjoyed them both. Unique stories that were easy to read and kept going to unexpected places. I've even pre-ordered the 3rd.

I even have a Colorado connection now with my daughter and family living in Denver.

So, please keep writing and I'll keep reading....your 6th blog reader. Jaysree says she'll start too so you'll have 7.

Have a great day."

Now despite the fact that the witty Yvette was challenging Claire's Theorum (there can only be five, fine readers of the blog) and she stole my tag line "Have a great day." I was immediately intrigued by this email, and responded right away.

Well this began an email friendship, during which Yvette shared that her daughter, the lovely Erin (who I hope takes me up on my offer to share her creative writing) moved to Colorado (Denver) back in 2017 as well. One day, Yvette shared her intention of visiting Erin in early May and maybe making their way north for a visit. Now most people I know who say that then realize that its a solid hour's drive north up I25 to get to the Hinterlands, so never really follow through, but Yvette is that brand of feisty New Yorker who always means what she says. Last week she confirmed that she and her family would be at MOS's on Friday for lunch.

Friday is always magical so I was thrilled to meet up with Yvette and family and share a wonderful meal - including introducing them to Lonnie and wonderful staff and telling them background stories to the novels and about Lonnie and Lisa's first introduction through askew family crests, and recounting our six-degrees connections.

Yvette and family finally had to return to Denver. On her way out, Yvette stopped to rub Lisa's Irish Blessing for good luck and she and I snapped a photo in front of the writer's library section of the MOS bar:



But I do want to acknowledge for posterity, that this was the first recorded instance of a literary pilgrimmage where one of my readers, who I had never previously met, made the long trip to MOS in Longmont to make a personal connection with me as a writer - and meet the staff I so often fondly blog about. This historical event is now in the books and I have made a new family of friends. Thank you Bensons. A win-win.

Anyway, it's Saturday and I have my weekend chores to take care of, so I must flee.

But first a cuddle with my Kitty and my rounds.

The rest of you fine, five readers (including Yvette) go out and have a day to remember.

And make it a great one.

Cuddle At Your Own Risk

May 6, 2022



I snapped this photo yesterday morning of my feral cat, Smokey, poking his/her out of the bomb shelter in the Grotto and keeping an eye on the house.

Smokey looks sufficiently bad-assed that I thought I may have to post warning signs beyond the already existing obnoxious ones warning potential trespassers of being shot more than once, and without a warning shot, or possibly facing off with my free-range mules or Bigfoot should you venture onto my property without ringing the Titanic bell in the driveway as you approach. That allows the spirits/sprites of the land and home to know you are coming. They hate being surprised. The other entities take their lead from them.



It also lets Smokey know that you have come in peace and should not be shredded and your remains left to be dispersed by the fairies, fed to the dragons, or left as mulch for Jack the Spruce. So this blog serves as my PSA warning the general public not to be misled by photos of Smokey cutley cuddling around my feet.



That is all a ruse to mislead those who are not one of my fine, five readers, and whom, without the purest of motives enter onto this hallowed ground, without first ringing that bell. Even the Amazon, Fed Ex and Postal workers know to ring the bell. Forewarned is forearmed.

Speaking of forewarned, today is magical Friday. Do something special that puts it on the emotional Hallmark Map.

Before I go to visit Smokey, I want to give a shout out to one of my fine, five readers, Adrienne Stucki, who recently posted a single amazing review for *The Claire Trilogy* and identified herself to the world as one of my five blog readers:

"Adrienne Stucki

5.0 de 5 estrellas **Fabulous!**

Calificado en Estados Unidos el 4 de mayo de 2022

Compra verificada

I have read all three books in this series. I read them in a week. I was sorry to see them end. Wonderful group of characters, great writing, laugh out loud humor and imagination. I hope this author writes more books. I am one of his "5 "followers on his daily blog. :)" Thank you Adrienne, your review is greatly appreciated. Note that for some reason my Amazon pages have converted to Spanish, so I am slowly learning the language of Lisa's maternal Marerro blood line.

May you and the other four readers have an amazing day!

Stoicism

May 5, 2022



While I completely understand the importance of rain in an arid region like NOCO, which seems ready to spontaneously combust whenever the sun shines more than an hour, it doesn't make it any more pleasant to deal with. The hard clay earth turns into instant muck that can give way at just the wrong moment as you descend down a hill and land you sliding on your ass the remainder of the trip. And you learn that muck boots are a necessity, because once that mud gets on any of your other footwear, you need a half-hour with a firm brush in the slop sink to get it off. And you never really succeed.

Spring rain in these parts is cold. It permeates your clothes and then takes hold of your body temperature. You can throw on a hoodie sweatshirt, and maybe wrap up in a blanket, but the only way to get it out of your bones is fifteen minutes in a really hot shower, the kind of shower that leaves your skin a glowing crimson.

Followed by a hot cup of coffee.

Now I've often mentioned how Claire and Honey are smart when it comes to dealing with the weather. If the wind kicks up or it snows hard and the temperature drops, if they haven't gotten their winter coats on yet, they will retreat to the barn where Honey (an Arizona mule) will stand in the stall area below the heaters while Claire will stand watch in the doorway. There is hay and water in the barn, so they are good for the duration.

But every once in a while, during a rain storm, like yesterday, I will look outside and see the two of them, standing side by side, like two WWI sentries staring out through the mists, across the muddy trenches, into the hinterland. If that were me standing next to one or more of my siblings, we would last about 15 minutes before we would turn on each other just to distract us from our own respective discomfort. And it is times like that when I am most thankful for having a roof over my head and the boiler churning out heat.

Mules are the ultimate Stoics: "a [creature] who can endure pain or hardship without showing their feelings or complaining." <https://www.bing.com/search?FORM=SLBRDF&pc=SL17&q=Stoic>

Claire and Honey can put up with enormous discomfort and still do whatever they need to do. The snippets of their backstories that I have learned confirm that fact.

I'd like to think that I could summon my stoicism should the need arise, but honestly, I know I'm the type who likes to bitch about his misery, even if there is no one around to hear me. I'm not saying that I cannot survive disasters, McCaffreys are raised to take their beatings and get back on their feet. But you will always know we are not happy.

Still, I find inspiration from my two mules. Maybe they'll rub off on me.

And that is also why I made a promise to both Claire and Honey, and Mr. Rogers as well, that they can relax a bit, and enjoy their retirements, and do whatever makes them happy. Because they have paid their dues. They have each suffered stoically. They deserve to live their lives out in as much comfort as I can provide them.

But every once in a while, I see them out there in the elements, testing their fortitude and resolve, showing themselves that they can still handle whatever the world throws at them without a whimper.

And I promise myself to try and be more like them should the need arise, while secretly praying that it never will.

Well, Happy Thursday. Use today to line up the perfect weekend, however you define that.

But most of all, make today memorably great.

Time to go cuddle my stoic kitty.

The Singing Sicilian - Congrats To Carolyn Clarke

May 4, 2022



What happens in Casa Claire, stays in Casa Claire. My wife thinks that Claire may have a bit of a crush on the monstrous Sicilian mastiff Cairo, for when she lets Cairo out for his - what in polite company are referred to as his evening ablutions - Claire races up to the west side of the house and follows him around on his circuit, finally following him right up to the entrance to the side deck. Lisa was worried Claire was going to follow Cairo right in the side door. I'm not sure our deck is warranted to withstand the extra weight. I can understand what Claire sees in Cairo. First, I was told Claire is a Sicilian Mule, something about the dark cross like fur markings on her back and shoulders, so they are compatriots. Cairo's not much smaller than Honey, and is a fine looking specimen. And like most Sicilians, Cairo is very vocal, and if given any reason will sing in his *basso profundo* voice. He knows that if he gets on a Pavorattian vocal roll the audience will usually throw handfuls of scoobies at him, just to have some peace. The love of Cairo's life was the large white Amstaff, Maeve, who prominently features in

The Claire Trilogy. They were inseparable until Maeve's recent passing at a fine old age (McCaffrey animals live well past the national average). Maeve's physical body has joined her dead cousins on Boot Hill out in our back yard, although her spirit remains a constant presence. Claire, in turn, has never gotten over MR's passing. So the two distant cousins may just be seeking companionship in their autumn years. All the more reason it is good to let Cairo come stay with his cousins for long stretches and the odd weekend.

Cairo also uses his deep singing voice to make sure that I sleep on the couch in the living room during his stays, because while he will follow Blue and Jeter down the dungeon stairs to the basement in search of treats, he will then walk outside and around the house up the hill and onto the side or back deck rather than walking back up the steps. The man who installed the tiling warned us that dogs hate the tiles on the steps, but I wouldn't listen. My dogs don't love it but have gotten acclimated over time. Needs must.

So Cairo refuses to go up the fourteen steps to the Tower and sleep with the family in our master bedroom. The first night he stayed over with us, he started to sing a midnight aria at the foot of the stairs until I came down and joined him in the living room for the rest of the night. No amount of my best cursing could quiet him. Anyway, Cairo's human charges are expected to return today, so he can return to his *raison d'être* of protecting my small three granddaughters while they dress him up and hitch rides on his back as he traverses their home and property. And while it is unimaginable that anywhere could be more delightful for any non-human than Casa Claire it is undeniable that Cairo's eyes light up when he hears the sounds of the young girls lilting voices as they come to collect him.

And while my back will not miss my nights on the couch, I will miss his occasional aria. Until his next stay.

Well, its time to get a move on, the hump waits for no man (or woman). Neither does Smokey.

So you fine, five readers go out there and take the hill.

And make it a great day.

In closing, I do wish to congratulate my BRW stablemate, Carolyn Clarke, for her win of the top prize in the Maxy Award Literary &

Humor Category with her book, *And Then There's Margaret*. Well done CC.

[https://www.amazon.com/-/es/Carolyn-Clarke-ebook/dp/B09WD9L7WM/ref=sr_1_1?](https://www.amazon.com/-/es/Carolyn-Clarke-ebook/dp/B09WD9L7WM/ref=sr_1_1?__mk_es_US=%C3%85M%C3%85%C5%BD%C3%95%C3%91&cr)

[mk_es_US=%C3%85M%C3%85%C5%BD%C3%95%C3%91&cr](https://www.amazon.com/-/es/Carolyn-Clarke-ebook/dp/B09WD9L7WM/ref=sr_1_1?__mk_es_US=%C3%85M%C3%85%C5%BD%C3%95%C3%91&cr)

[id=303K270W0E2UB&keywords=And+then+there%27s+Margaret&qid=1651658005&s=digital-](https://www.amazon.com/-/es/Carolyn-Clarke-ebook/dp/B09WD9L7WM/ref=sr_1_1?__mk_es_US=%C3%85M%C3%85%C5%BD%C3%95%C3%91&cr)

[text&sprefix=and+then+there%27s+margaret%2Cdigital-](https://www.amazon.com/-/es/Carolyn-Clarke-ebook/dp/B09WD9L7WM/ref=sr_1_1?__mk_es_US=%C3%85M%C3%85%C5%BD%C3%95%C3%91&cr)

[text%2C124&sr=1-1](https://www.amazon.com/-/es/Carolyn-Clarke-ebook/dp/B09WD9L7WM/ref=sr_1_1?__mk_es_US=%C3%85M%C3%85%C5%BD%C3%95%C3%91&cr)

<https://www.facebook.com/maxyawards/>

Lucian Mattiace Is A Character - A True Wise Ass

May 3, 2022



Speaking of characters, I mentioned yesterday that I was glad to learn Methuselah's real name because I was worried that the then chosen name for the magnificent bull suggested by my fabulously talented and eccentric nephew Brian Evans - Lucious - was too close to the name of the little boy in TWA who started out so intricately involved with Jimmy Moran's initial interactions with Claire the mule, and then became one of his crew of misfits. While that little boy in The Claire Trilogy was initially inspired by one of the younger children of the wonderful, local McQueen family, who I spotted one morning working among his siblings, carrying his weight and size in hay to distribute the many animals on their property, the character was named after and based on my grandson, Lucian Mattiace. That is the young imp above. Perfect McCaffrey smirk.

Lucian is a very gifted child. He is smart, cultured, and extremely athletic. He moves with an almost feral grace.

He is also brilliant. At nine years old, last Christmas, the little bastard beat me in a game of chess before I even realized I was at risk (for the record I entered the game expecting to allow him to stay competitive for ego purposes before delivering the *coup de grâce* in a way that would leave him in awe of his brilliant lawyer/author grandfather. Big mistake.) He has the killer instinct of his mother, Jackie.

Anyway, as the first grandchild of his generation, he is doted upon by the Fairy Godmothers, v&b, wants for nothing when it comes to education, extra curriculums (he plays violin as well as drums and key board) and athletic training of all sorts. He snowboards every winter in Breckenridge. He is blessed with a combination of the intelligence, natural athleticism and competitiveness of his mother, the height and extremely long limbs of his biological father, thank you Matt, and has been mentored for years in all things athletic by the tandem competitive team of ex-D1 athletes, Jackie and her man, Zack, thank you Zack.

If I could ever figure out how to embed video in this damn blog, I would show how effortlessly he scampers like a monkey up the toughest rock walls.

Wait, lets see if this works: <https://t.co/q7ordcR1mE>

Not bad for a nine-year old.

But what I appreciate most about him is that he is also a natural wise ass. From an early age our personal exchange was always initiated and ended with the shaking of our closed fists at one another with the mantra "knuckle sandwich." That quickly evolved into the little monster delivering me devastatingly glib one liners that would have made the OFC stand up and cheer. The kid's lines are so subtle he could write dialogue for the best of BBC comedy shows. I have to bring my A game whenever I know he will be at a family function, and have yet to best him. It is a humbling experience.

So of course I was going to incorporate a nicer version of this particular Clan member into *The Claire Trilogy*, along with his cousins, the other grandchildren, Scarlett, Savanna and Stella. Here is a recent photo of the three angels - left to right Savanna, Scarlett & Stella - along with their parents, Luke, whose brilliant first novel, ***Lebanon Red***, is up for presale on Amazon and all major distribution outlets, and Georgina, the beautiful Aussie model turned magical McCaffrey mother.



So, along with all of my friends, I am thrilled that my grandchildren will live forever in literature. I note the McCaffrey death stare coming from little Stella on Mummy's lap. The last female McCaffrey to don that stare is Lucian's mom, Jackie. Watch out world.

And all of their their characters will all play their roles as grown ups in the sequel should I ever get around to writing it. But first, the prequel.

But before I can even think about advancing my creative output, I must deal with day-to-day obligations, so off for a kitty cuddle and then my rounds. Then lawyering.

The rest of my fine, five readers go out there and show the world who is boss.

But make today a great one.

Meet Methuselah

May 2, 2022



During my acclimation to living in the country I was introduced to all kinds of "livestock" animals as I explored my newfound home. One of those noble creatures was what I later learned was a Watusa longhorn bull I used to pass on my trips from Berthoud to Longmont. Now I didn't know until after I had written TWA and sent it off to the publisher that this particular breed of cattle were not just a Texas Longhorn I had learned of though college athletics. Nor did I know this bull's name.

I learned both of these things the first time I passed the field where I was used to seeing him guarding his herd of cows and calves, noticed his absence, and just happened to see a farmer a quarter mile further South on a tractor and pulled over and asked him if he knew of the whereabouts of the magnificent longhorn a bit up the road.

Until that day, I had named the fictional creature "Lucious" after a suggestion from my brilliant and flamboyant nephew, Brian Evans, who happened to be riding with me past the creature on his first and only visit to Berthoud. It was a cool but problematic name given that I had already named one of my children characters after my grandson, Lucian.

Anyway, during my conversation with the farmer/rancher, I asked him about the bull and learned that the bull was actually a Watusa and his name was Methuselah.

Now the Watusi breed are also known as Ankole Longhorn or Sanga cattle. It is a landrace breed, originally native to East Africa, meaning that it comes from a group of genetically related animals unique to a given geographical area that all descend from the same set of ancestors, with a certain level of genetic uniformity.

<https://homesteadontherange.com/2017/05/09/what-is-a-landrace-breed>

Indeed Watusi are such an ancient breed they are found on paintings on Egyptian pyramid walls.

<https://www.roysfarm.com/ankole-watusi-cattle/>

[#:~:text=It%20is%20also%20known%20as%20Ankole%20Longhorn%2C%20and, and%20in%20the%20Egyptian%20arts%20and%20pyramid%20walls.](#)

Now of course I knew none of this when I first decided to include the bull Methuselah as a character in TWA. I was just fascinated by this noble creature, and the length of his horns, and used to pull over on the side of the road and watch him strutting among his many adoring cows like he was Hugh Hephner. That bull had style.

I snapped this particular photo of him standing by a wooden post, about five feet high and two feet wide, because it provided a sense of scale for his general size and his horns. And he was alert, always looking around to make sure all of his charges were happy

and safe, including when I snapped this photo. And I always liked that protector archetype character in life and fiction.

So during this same conversation with the farmer/rancher months later, I learned that the now identified Methuselah, who was as correspondingly old as his Biblical namesake, had been retired to his daughter's ranch to happily live out the remainder of his days off the protector's clock. I was happy about that, because I was just experiencing how some of the creatures I had come to know and love would sometimes disappear from the farms or ranches I would pass, without any retirement, all in the name of animal husbandry. Now, I could have just left things as they were in life and my novel, but I decided right there and then that the now retired Methuselah deserved to be properly identified in this small piece of literature, and, as I was just then completing the final edits, I went back and, with Claire's approval, added his literal cattle race and proper name as soon as I returned home that day. I wanted the true Methuselah to be remembered forever. And now, at least among my fine, five readers, he will be.

It basically is the same logic I applied when I included all of my friends and family as characters in the story. When our bodies are all turned to dust and we have crossed the veil, we, as characters at least, will all continue to inhabit the fictional universe of The Claire Trilogy for as long as there are copies on actual or virtual bookshelves. It's a tiny legacy in the big scheme of things. But it's mine. And I'm thrilled that Methuselah will always play his tiny role along with the rest of the crew.

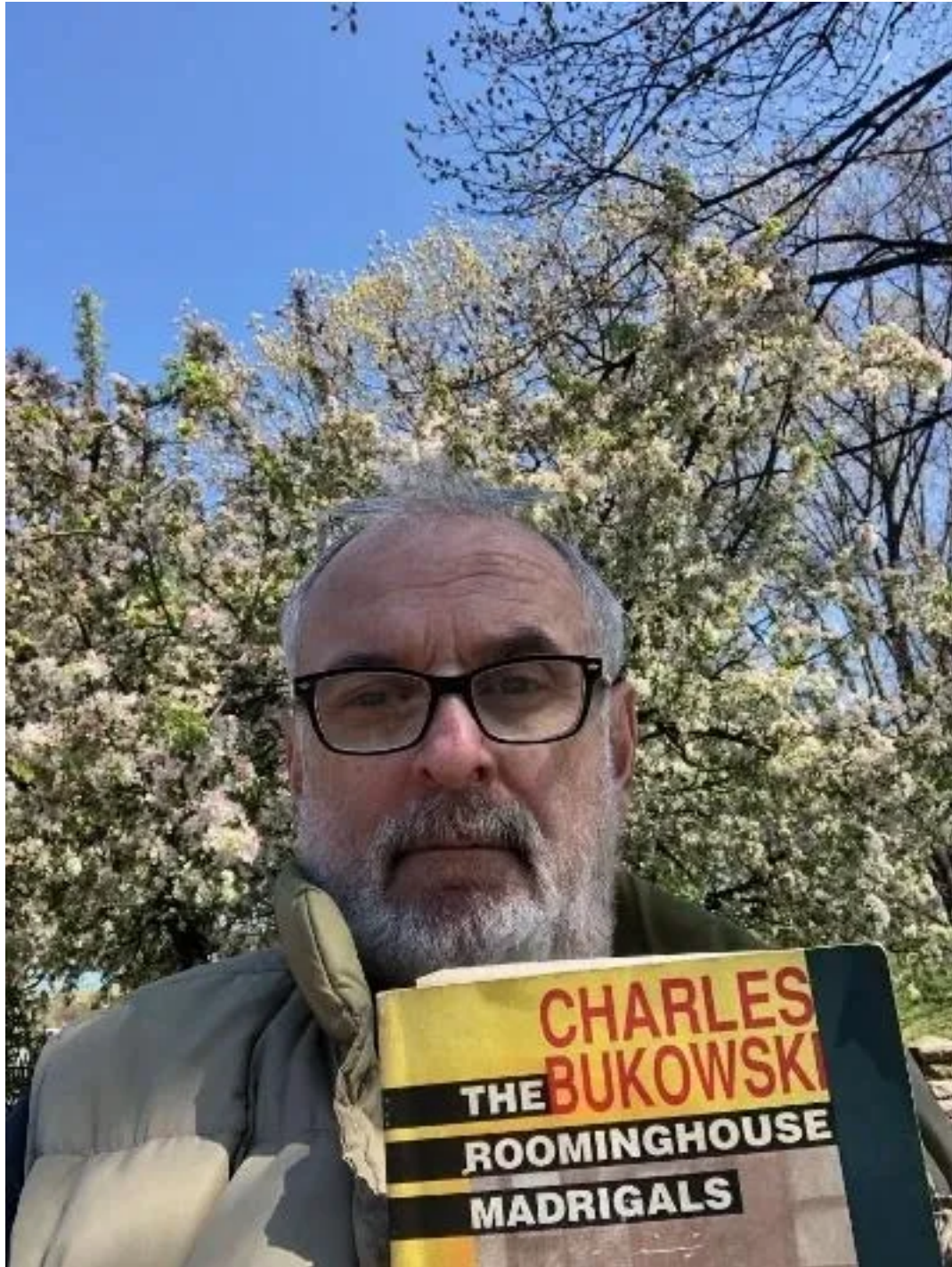
Well, another Monday is upon us and I have a kitty to cuddle and rounds to make before I put on my lawyer hat. So I must flee.

The rest of you fine, five readers go forth and conquer.

But each and every one of you have an amazing day.

Lenny Is The New Bukowski - There I Said It - Joe's Pizza Oven

May 1, 2022



The above photo is one my old and dear friend Lenny sent to the OFC yesterday. He has survived his recent bout with all the worst symptoms of a nasty virus and decided to get out of his Bronx apartment and read some Charles Bukowski *forus* in a nearby park. I take that photo as a sign.

I've mentioned how Lenny is also an amazing poet, Indeed, I have read all of CB's works, novels and poetry (Colin Broderick turned me onto him in the early 90s) and have also read most of Lenny's works - he has enough for a couple of collections - and IMHO, Lenny's poetry is on par, if not, at times, better than CB's.

I have even posted some of Lenny's work in my past blogs to give my fine five readers a taste.

Well, given the new black moon, when new projects should be initiated, the above photo made me go foraging for a couple of Lenny's poems - whose copyright in both remain with Mark Lenahan (c) 2022 based solely upon this publishing - which is being published for its newsworthiness in order to support my professional position. I will let the reader decide, but you know where I stand.

The Hill

The Hill made verdant by the blood of scores of battles won & lost

The new war rages

Insensible & feral.

No peace process.

No big round table in Paris.

No men of calm or compromise.

Veins in the teeth,

The Hill is chosen.

Fists of cowards clenched in notions of retribution unguided.

Exceptionalism the *Deus ex Machina*,

Blood flows and seeps.

Eyelids grow heavy,

Breaths shorter.

Brows furrow.

Fists unclench only enough to release the middle finger.

"Now put the tube in!

This is the Hill I choose to die on."

In Civil War

Street traffic increases
Seven PM silence is broken
Tendrils reach
Ambivalent words unspoken
THE BRONX is Alive tonight
Pots and pans clang.
MIDDLE FINGER shouts
Yeah, we are still here god
Together at the elbows
Together in the strain
BRONX MOTHERFUCKERS
Epicenter
We've been your test monkey before.
TIME TO PAY UP YOU NASTY MOFOS!!!

MIDDLE finger raised
Upper arm crossbow holding high
This will be your last spit in the eye
Oh My!!! You ignored the solution?
Strip us naked
Skinner Box rats sniff at your government cheese
and choose the path of the electric shock instead.
Choice of trauma
Docile slaves with asses in the air waiting to be fucked
or twitchy little anomalies.
Feet set. Chest bared,
the dare issued.
We don't mind some civil war.

So there, I have dragged the Bronx Poet Lenny screaming and kicking into the sunlight. If you enjoy Lenny's work, send me an email letting me know on this website, and I will post some more. I love being right. He needs to be discovered. If you meet Lenny, ask him to recite some of his poetry, I'm hoping, now that he has recovered from death's door, he starts hitting the open mic circuit.

Speaking of new projects, Joe took the black moon initiative to restore the patio he laid fifteen years ago (all right OFC, take a moment to get it out of your system), which was built specifically for his eldest daughter's graduation from high school.



Yes that is a brick pizza oven off in the far corner which Joe built to make brick oven pizza. He has been a connoisseur of pizza ever since he and Stein broke all kind of traffic (and other) laws (the statute of limitations has run on the lot) delivering Bronx pizza back in the 70s. I hope, now that Joe is retired, that he makes good use of that oven when unexpected guests like BC arrive on his doorstep. He can always cook pizza in it afterwards.

Speaking of BC and graduations, his daughter Beth's graduation went off without a hitch, and she now has her BA tucked safely away in her back pocket while she pushes forward to finish up her Pharmacist program. Well done Beth, Nan and BC.

Well, it is Sunday, and I really want you all to make it a day of rest. Everything other than the essentials will keep.

I'm off for a kitty cuddle and my rounds.

Make today a great one. You all deserve nothing less.