

Forward ... Into the Past

Written by Bob Alexander
Tuesday, 04 June 2013 20:30

In 1997 Kevin Costner directed and starred in *The Postman*, a epic post apocalyptic movie that bombed at the box office.

The film begins with this voice-over narration:

The last of the great cities died when my father was a child. Another victim of yet another war. The plagues followed. And the terrors. The living hid themselves away in tiny hamlets in hopes of surviving whatever new madness conspired to rob them of the little that remained. The Earth itself had fallen prey to chaos. For three years a dirty snow fell that even summer could not erase. The ocean was barren. Poisoned. Near death. Sixteen long years passed before the great lungs started working again. My father said it was as if the ocean breathed a great sigh of relief...

A lone wanderer, leading a mule, treks across a barren landscape. The year is 2013.

In the movie electromagnetic pulse weapons destroyed civilization's technology and plunged everyone instantly into a pre-industrial world. Sixteen years after the wars "high tech" meant your village might have a blacksmith. And then after setting this scene the story takes over for the rest of the film's two hours and fifty seven minutes. The Bad Guy is killed, peace begins anew, and by the time 2043 rolls around it looks like civilization as we know it is beginning to make a come back.

When *The Postman* first came out I didn't think it was as terrible as the critics said it was. Periodically movie critics have a strange almost unstoppable momentum. Those who hated *Waterworld* and hadn't exhausted their vitriol on that film had their poison pens at the ready for the next Kevin Costner movie regardless of what it might be. The film critic community en masse stomped the movie into oblivion but Costner committed the ultimate Hollywood sin: He spent 80 million dollars on a movie that only grossed 18 million.

When I first saw *The Postman* in 1997 Global Climate Change wasn't on my radar. I vaguely knew something called The Kyoto Protocol, and thought it looked like industrialized nations were agreeing to limit their production of harmful greenhouse gases. What caught my attention in 1997 were the insane lengths Republicans were going to undermine the Clinton presidency. Republicans had enjoyed twelve long years driving The Big Bus and their collective psyches snapped when Bill Clinton took the wheel. My Republican acquaintances who were fairly placid during the two Reagan terms followed by four years of George H.W. Bush went red-faced-eye-poppingly bananas at the mention of Bill Clinton. And they cranked their blood pressure past the stroke point with Hillary. I had heard about FOX News but I didn't know then that the fledgling cable news network was the primary source of

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the craziness with Limbaugh, Coulter et al. bringing up the rear.

16 years later Republicans have hit lunatic heights of crazy that way-back-when I thought were unimaginable. Politically, for my family anyway, the United States had become uninhabitable. The possibility of discussing *anything* with these crazy people is Not Possible. They have drunk too long from the waters of insanity and 16 years of FOX and 24 years of Rush Limbaugh have *turned millions of Americans into people who literally don't know right from wrong*. So good luck talking to those crazy bastards about anything of real substance when their brains have been eaten up by imaginary scandals and super-sinister plots masterminded by the secret Muslim in the White House.

Over-population and hyper-consumption of fossil fuels is driving the climate change that could bring about human extinction over the next one hundred years. Try talking about that to somebody with ***Benghazi!*** rattling around where his brain used to be. You'll only hear Global warming is a Myth, the Gulf of Mexico is a "Big Ocean" according to Fox News mouthpieces and BP's former chief executive Tony Hayward, and "Drill Baby Drill" is the mantra of that crazy lady who wanted to be vice president of the United States.

Greed, insanity, and denial keep rapacious capitalism going full steam ahead. The leaders at the front are greedy and insane. Their minions are simply insane. And both groups, along with just about everybody else, is in denial. Ben Stein's daddy, economist Herbert Stein, said if something cannot go on forever, it will stop. There is no reason do to anything to make the unsustainable thing stop because it will stop of its own accord.

Good to know.

The problem is while we're waiting around for the Global Capitalism Juggernaut to lurch to a shuddering stop two hundred species a day are going extinct. And there's no guarantee it'll stop before we get on the list of defunct life-forms.

So what to do ... what to do?

Well ... before you go get and read your own copy of *Deep Green Resistance* and join a local DGR group ... I suggest you rent a copy of

The Postman

. It's not a perfect replica of a post industrial society but at least it's not the machismo cartoon world of

Mad Max

. It's a reminder that the human race has spent most of its time on this planet without the toxic toys of civilization. We did okay relatively speaking. We came up with Shakespeare

,
didn't we?

I've heard many times we can't "go back" to a pre-industrial way of life. Somewhere in that

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statement I get the impression it's assumed there are some sort of choices being offered, And there are ... just not the choices we'd like. At

best

we're headed for a post-industrial world. We're not being asked for

permission

. We're going there voluntarily ... or involuntarily. We are going there regardless of how we

feel

about it. The real choice is how we're going to go about it. We can do it smart or stupid. And

how do we talk to each other

about these things ... or

can

we even talk about these things with the "Drill Baby Drill" crowd?

After watching *The Postman*, I turned off our new BigAssTV. I turned off the computer that's plugged into the BigAssTV. I turned off the server that stores all the movies that are watched on the BigAssTV. Then I went through the house turning off all the lights and got ready for bed. I read a couple of chapters on the Kindle before switching off the bedside lamp.

If things turn out the way I hope they do ... if things turn out for the best out of so many bleak possibilities ... maybe someday all my electronic crap will be in a museum showcasing how Anthropocene Man spent his leisure time before The Great Awakening.

Or maybe Martians will find it buried in the rubble.