

Driving Reality and the Fireball Effect

Written by Alex Baer

Friday, 12 October 2012 19:25

There are moments in life that make us gasp and seem to stop time in its tracks, submersing us in clear Jell-O -- and then time starts up again, at 1/20th speed. All the while, at the restart, you know something is horribly wrong, and that you're in real trouble.

You've had those moments: The tick of the clock when you feel the pit of your stomach leaves and falls through the floor, the temperature instantly plummets to sub-zero. Yes, and the instant you're sure you're in a car wreck, already in motion, patiently waiting for final impact.

Sometimes, it's the same feeling, but on a different scale: The first time you saw initial impacts at the Twin Towers. That first moment of hearing Kennedy had been shot -- both of them.

Or the time you dreamed you were at Daytona, slipstreaming too tight, pushing past 200 -- then a ripple of air, and you're airborne, a fantastically quick, nanosecond pirouette overhead drivers passing beneath.

Timelocked: □ Clear Jell-O. □ The Waiting. □ The Knowing. □ And the explosion you will never hear, the fireball you will never feel.

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My partner and I were joking around a little, wondering if we could endure this event, inexplicably tagged a debate, watching our Vice President square off against a teabagging Eddie Munster who spent all his time in short pants skipping math class, polishing his lies and perfecting his innocent look instead.

The prospect of another manic performance in a lie-sprinting contest? Let's say we tried to be fair, and had enough Romney after the introductions. And here was another wannabe flight, hovering idly on the runway of the joyless Politico Airport...

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My partner thought there was still a wire cage out in storage, a big fold-out contraption -- an instant kennel she had for transporting *very* big dogs. Big as it is, she pointed out, only one of us could fit inside, safely imprisoned, and unable to bring or do harm once the maddening Republican dog-whistle-speak began in Ryan's rehearsed mini-speeches and talking-bullets.

This was because I had earlier entertained the thought of installing thick chains bolted to the floor in front of the teevee, with comfy iron wrist straps. Thought we'd lay in a supply of straitjackets, considering the dire straits the country is in. Maybe get some thick, leather restraints, you know, maybe a gurney, a heart machine, smelling salts, some leather bite-down tabs...

It was a humorous upgrade on her idea to protect the teevee with a panel of bulletproof plexiglass, to keep the thing unshattered when we started to throw small objects at the teevee out of our anger and frustration -- dining room chairs, recliners, book cases, pickup trucks, or whatever.

But, seeing as how the cage was only big enough for one of us, we laughingly agreed the teevee should instead go inside, not us, and that we'd watch the picture through the bars of the protective cage.

See, we try to be reasonable people, and want to do the right thing; we want to show some civic responsibility, and make an earnest step toward the alien party, and toward compromise.

I'm a military veteran. She is not, but she has lots of civic pride and accomplishment under her belt, and works in a thankless job to try and help people's lives become better.

We lasted longer than we thought we might during the broadcast. We made it all the way to where Paul Ryan said we owe veterans "a great deal of gratitude."

Timelock flickering: □ Clear Jell-O in peripheral vision. □ Feeling blood drain away from extremities -- there is no palpable threat, but amidst this adrenalin dump, little else but a hot, livid glow. □ Lividity.

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- **This vast pool of gratitude for veterans, obviously, was the reason Paul Ryan and all the Republicans shot down a jobs bill for returning veterans.** □ ***Way to go, supporting the troops, you hypocrites.***

The remote was close. The power button was handy. It is possible this is why we still have a teevee, but I am not as clear on that point as I wished I was. I know it was some time after the click, and after the absence of light and sound, before we spoke.

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The teevee still works. We did not really put it in a cage, you know. We are not violent people. All of that was just our own joke, the way people do, trying to put a smile on the limits of human patience in the face of harsh, inhuman testing.

After a bit, we drifted here and there, puttering with odds and ends, until sleep. Morning came early -- it always does when you have a neighbor who has placed a solitary rooster in a cage on his front lawn. The crowing starts about 5:00, every morning. Our neighbors are enthusiastic Republicans.

As I say, we are not violent people, although we occasionally entertain violent fantasies involving roosters. Sometimes, the neighbors also star in these passing daydreams.

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After some years and medical events, I am unemployed. So, I had the morning free. I used it to write almost 5,000 words -- about 20 pages -- in just over an hour flat. Those pages are already dumped. They were never meant to see light of day.

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I was channeling as much rage as I have ever felt, or would ever care to feel again. It was an ultimately peaceful way to slip the latch on my old cage, and let the tiger harmlessly pad around the house, getting the kinks out.

It had been a fitful night, but it eventually passed. This election will pass. Eventually.

Today, we have a cold rain, compounding last night's shivers. But, you know -- the part that keeps me so damn chilled today, using hot coffee as both comforter and shield?

I am not sure if Americans will ever shake off their comas, rid themselves of the impossible ignorance and profound depths of propaganda and superstitions that have been grown into them from the last 25 years of right-wing seed-planting.

Half of all Americans will probably vote Republican in November, casting their votes, instantly twisting through space, arcing into the high wall, flying metal shards slashing their own throats, not able to hear that hot report, not able to feel the fireball.

But their kids, and all the rest of us -- we sure as hell will.

You hit the wall that hard, that fast, the image really stays with you -- all the smoke and flames climbing higher, all that waste and wreckage. With one driver, it's bad enough -- but, with a whole *country*...

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Just waiting for the clear Jell-O to stop, now -- trying real hard to be patient.