

12/20 *It was the crime of the century*

*Crime of the century...*

*And there were ninety-nine years to go!*

Blackholia in Darktown.

Forego or go for: is that a question?

Fobbits = an Operation Iraqi Freedom term used by grunts. Derogatory, for soldiers who never leave the forward operating base.

Get down there, Arjuna, do your duty!

*An elephant's faithful one hundred percent.*

*The two towers.*

Forward, fobbits! You have a world to win and nothing but your @\$\$ to lose.

The smoke and dust so thick you almost cannot see yourself.

While on another plane, O Arjuna:



NASA/NSF/STFC

“Cosmic Clash,” signs the *Messenger*. Under the byline Dennis Overbye – no, ce n’est pas possible! – the following dispatch:

“Astronomers have released an image of what looks like galactic warfare. In a symphony of X-rays (purple), radio waves (blue) and starlight (red), the composite image shows a jet of energy shooting out of a galaxy and hitting its neighbor to the right before splattering into intergalactic space.

“The galaxies, with the collective name 3C321, orbit each other about 20,000 light-years apart in the constellation Serpens. Each is thought to harbor a supermassive black hole at its center, where gravity, pressure and unworldly magnetic fields squeeze matter and energy out into space like toothpaste from a tube....”

One galaxy’s blue as Krishna the other purple with rage. At least according to “...the astronomers, led by Dan Evans of the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics in Cambridge, Mass., combined data from the Hubble Space Telescope; the Chandra X-Ray Observatory; the Very Large Array radio telescope in Socorro, N.M.; and the Merlin radiotelescope array operated by the Jodrell Bank Observatory in

Britain.”

In a word, unworldly.

And blessings upon “Pinch,” and his *Messenger*, and Dennis Overbye, and I’chaim to the boyz at NASA which has to be less an acronym than a capitalized phonic for No Sir in *Huck Finn* dialect – blessings upon them all for pointing you and millions of others to a faroff quadrant of the heavens and shouting: “Hey, look there!” And then, sotto voce, “See, war is natural, it’s everywhere – even galaxies do it.”

And you pull your nose out of the virtual pages of the *SoNotNews*, and there’s the world that is and the world you’re busy making and you and comet Holmes wink at one another, and Venus keeps her secrets and through your bedroom window *lights flicker from the opposite loft*, while somewhere at the toxic tip of the island, Bear Stearns coughs and coughs. *The country music station plays soft in the daynight*. And still, as a prophet once said, there is *nothing really nothing to turn off*.

And tomorrow’s sol sistere, tra-la, tra-la.

Keep lifting the hill, Krishna. We’re counting on you. Backwards from 0.

In-effing-effible.

Scene of the scene of the crime of the century.

*“A thunderstorm!” He thought. “Of course!”*

*And toppled gently off his horse.*

It all comes around in the foolness of time.

The Dow bats its eyelashes. The same ones it's hanging on by.

The southern sky at 3:47 p.m. EST: Doesn't know whether to shit or go blind.



There you go again, barking like the seventh seal.

Once upon a time in the early '60s, a smooth-cheeked, unsquinting still-latent Man-With-No-Name, pre-Magnum-Force Clint Eastwood starred in a TV western called "Rawhide." You don't remember much about the show beyond a fragment of the title lyrics, chanted over a b/w montage of ornery steers making life tough for their would-be steerers:

*Don't try to understand 'em*

*Just rope and throw and brand 'em...*

So why today, why now? Ah, probably because of the *Messenger* headline: "High Noon in New Orleans: The Bulldozers are Ready." What and whom is forsaken?

12/21 The inside and outside should be permitted to converse.

*A kiddley divey doo wooden shoe.*

On your way to R.B.'s show at a gallery riverward on 22nd, you pass by 192, one of the best bookstores in the city. The window display looks like Civil War surgeon's slop bucket. Wave of nausea soon supplanted by a Hallelujah moment, an upsurge of gratitude that none of your organs are to be found within this casement. How wonderful that you've been spared the horrors of conventional publishing in this cataclysm of the vanities. How many good books thrown into the meat grinder – who

can tell? One can't differentiate on such a battleground in which the soil refuses to absorb, but every surface casts back reflections of refractions of all and nothing – the culture reduced to a vast hall of mirrors in which one can find no stream along whose banks to sit, no glade, no hole in the floor to take a piss.

At such a moment one finds more Elvis impersonators in Dubai than minke whales in the sea. Glass, mirrored or otherwise, for all its wondrous qualities doesn't have a lot of tensile strength.

Showtime at the Dionysius.

Get litigious. Sue for peace.

Stomach bug. Your viscera impersonate a spiral nebula doing the tarantella.

Oy.

Discover the inner bivalve. Does this mean you're on your way to becoming the clam it's all the same to?

...“The exchange rate is like a gift from God for Europeans,” said Danielle Grossenbacher, a broker for Coldwell Banker Hunt Kennedy....  
“Everybody is feeling they have an opportunity to purchase a piece of Manhattan.”

Foreign buyers often purchase quickly because they largely view these apartments as investments like a bond or a stock. Dorothy Somekh, a

Halstead broker, said that in an afternoon a Belgian couple she represented bought a \$1.7 million two-bedroom condo at the Sheffield in Midtown to rent out for about \$7,500 a month. After the couple signed the contract, they headed to Abercrombie & Fitch to shop for clothes for their daughters.

“They’re not really sophisticated investors,” Ms. Somekh said. “But they thought, “Where else can I put my money?”

Anne Marie Moriarty, a Corcoran broker, recently coordinated her meetings with an Italian buyer, Roberto Lorenzon, around his family’s shopping schedule. She showed him some apartments after his trip to Gap Kids for his son and daughter. She met Mr. Lorenzon, a financial adviser, at Victoria’s Secret while he waited for his wife to finish her shopping. While Mr. Lorenzon had a deal fall through on a \$1.3 million penthouse in Murray Hill, he will visit again in January.

“She was all about the stores, and he was all about the condos,” Ms. Moriarty said. “All of the hours were arranged around shopping....”

Of course, a busy shopping season means that Manhattan brokers are running out of time to buy family gifts. Ms. Moriarty, who has worked every day for six straight weeks, has resigned herself to shopping with the last-minute crowds. By the weekend, she said, her British, Irish and Italian buyers will “be home with their presents.”

The above a solstice gurgle from the belly the beast, via of the clack-clack embouchure of the *Messenger* a-sitting, as ever, high and mighty on his master’s knee.

And away to the east, in Mina of Araby, the pilgrim Ahmadinejad, with countless brothers on the Hajj, throws stones at the pillar which is Satan.

12/22 Who needs a harp, when a harp can be broken?

What do you do when your father orders you to kill your brother? And this is not a hypothetical.

MARINES, grunt slang for Many Americans Rushing into Never Ending Shit.

You're taking a leak and the rotors of a helicopter suddenly vibrate the floor, like someone's drilling up through the concrete slab from below. Turn toward the window. Frosted, closed. See a shadow? Not really. And now it's gone.

A gray day, but longer than the one just passed. And you thought *sol sistere* meant shit outa luck standing still. And maybe it do.

"CASTIGLIONE DI CERVIA, Italy – Panic was spreading this August through this tidy village of 2,000 as one person after another fell ill with weeks of high fever, exhaustion and excruciating bone pain, just as most of Italy was enjoying Ferragosto, its most important summer holiday.

'At one point, I simply couldn't stand up to get out of the car,' said Antonio Ciano, 62, an elegant retiree in a pashmina scarf and trendy blue glasses. 'I fell. I thought, O.K., my time is up. I'm going to die. It was really that dramatic.'"

Thus, a new game one can play with the *Times*: Name That Section. Go on, guess. Is the story from Health, Travel, Fashion & Style, World...? Is there any correct answer? Who can say? But usually, a trip to Italy, particularly during Ferragosto, wearing a pashmina scarf and trendy blue glasses does wonders for one's high fever, exhaustion and excruciating bone pain. Just the RX. Which goes to show that the Italians themselves are simply a bunch of complainers. Yo – get a vita!

Turns out that Sr. Ciano and his neighbors were suffering from chikungunya, a cousin of dengue, which hails from lands bordering the Indian Ocean. But lest readers start feeling hot under the collar as they come down with the symptoms of – and begin to spread – a more virulent strain of old fashioned Deport-'em Fever, the *Messenger* assures us that "the immigrants spreading the disease were not humans but insects: tiger mosquitoes, who can thrive in a warming Europe."

Whilst in Egypt "Fashion and Faith Meet, on Foreheads of the Pious," where in Cairo the *Messenger* has noted "a strong undercurrent of competition... an unstated contest among people eager to prove just how religious they are. The field of battle is the street and the focus tends to be on appearance, as opposed to conviction.

"...As Egyptians increasingly emphasize Islam as the cornerstone of identity, there

has been a growing emphasis on public displays of piety.

“...The zebibah, Arabic for raisin, is a dark circle of callused skin, or in some cases a protruding bump, between the hairline and the eyebrows. It emerges on the spot where worshippers press their foreheads into the ground during their daily prayers.

“It may sometimes look like a painful wound, but in Egypt it is worn proudly, the way American professionals in the 1980s felt good about the dark circles under their eyes as a sign of long work hours and little sleep....”

Behold, a star riseth in the East. No, the West. Oy vay ist mir!

Not to worry, it's just Venus, playing with us again. From whichever direction she beckons, we'll saddle up and head that way.

A meteor is the message.

“As Cars Hit More Animals on Roads, Toll Rises.” Toll. Certainly. Yes, stands to reason. But do they mean “tolls,” as in the cost of cleaning up all the road kills? No, that would be “tolls rise.” OK, read the first graph:

“BOZEMAN, Mont. – On a dark highway near Anchorage, Specialist Steven Cavanaugh of the Army, who had survived 300 missions in Iraq, was critically injured... when his vehicle hit a moose. Specialist Cavanaugh died Dec. 6.

“In the early morning darkness in Lincoln, Mont., in October, a pickup slammed into a 830-pound grizzly bear....”

Toll the ancient Yuletide carol... And for chrissake, up the right to arm

bears.

Wake up Magi.

12/23 On July 7, 1950, when you were just over five weeks old, and the Korean War newly arrived in its twelfth day, Hoover sent Truman a most interesting letter, one that has just now been declassified. The gist of this communiqué was that to “protect the country against treason, espionage and sabotage,” the F.B.I. ought to “apprehend all individuals potentially dangerous” to national security. Large scale arrests would be carried out under “a master warrant attached to a list of names” provided by the bureau – an index that Hoover had been compiling since he took over the agency in 1924.

“The index,” Hoover wrote, “now contains approximately twelve thousand individuals, of which approximately ninety-seven per cent are citizens of the United States.” In order to “to make effective these apprehensions, the proclamation suspends the Writ of Habeas Corpus.”

What happened? It’s known that in September 1950, Congress approved a bill that Truman signed authorizing the detention of “dangerous radicals” should the president declare a national emergency, and that he did invoke emergency powers when China entered war in December.

What didn’t happen? No one on your block got hauled off to a military prison. Your mother and father raised you. When things fell apart domestically, they did so without any apparent intervention from the Feds. Your aunt Gladys, a Communist, lost her job at the Department of Welfare when you were around four years old, but she wasn’t drugged and put on a chartered white Gulfstream jet to

have her nails pulled out in Uzbekistan, or get waterboarded in Romania.

WTF, Edgar? WTF, Harry? What went down? What kind of vibe did you drink in with mother's milk? What words surrounded you? What were their qualities?