

Juneteenth

The contrails and the snails beneath my feet begin to crumble...

A million dumptrucks heading somewhere.

Messenger front page:

“At a rally for Senator Barack Obama in Detroit on Monday, two Muslim women said they were prohibited from sitting behind the candidate because they were wearing head scarves and campaign volunteers did not want them to appear with him in news photographs or live television coverage.

“The Obama campaign said it quickly called the women to apologize after learning of the incident. ‘It doesn’t reflect the orientation of the campaign,’ said Anita Dunn, a senior adviser to Mr. Obama.”

Ah, but what does it say about the campaign’s Occidentation?

The article from which this nugget emanated is headlined “Obama’s Campaign Tightens Control of Image and Access,” and goes on to report that “Tensions between Mr. Obama’s campaign and the news media broke into full view when aides announced two weeks ago that he was flying to Chicago but then sent his plane – and traveling press corps – there while he stayed in Washington to meet with Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton.

“The bureau chiefs of the major television news networks and The Associated Press wrote Mr. Obama’s top aides a stern letter on June 6, saying, ‘There are many ways in a campaign to control your message and conduct private meetings that do not involve deceiving the press corps.’”

But did no one find this trick admirable, cool even, at the level of, say, the Thirty-Six Tactics? It’s a classic: *Rattle east, strike west*. Very Oriental.

Attend to the spectacle long enough and you’ll see all three dozen tactics deployed over and over. Timeless. To your mind, the most frequently invoked these days are *Stage a false show of sight and sound*, *Pretend ignorant when knowing* and *Something*

out of nothing. The motto of disaster capitalism might as well be *Loot a burning house* or *Grab a lamb in passing*. But one should never underestimate either *Transport a corpse to plant mischief* or *Plot of charming beauty*. Or, for that matter, *Use other's knife to kill*. And if all else fails, *Run!*

You have walked along 44th between Fifth and Sixth before. Even had a drink at the Algonquin bar, but maybe your eyes weren't open then. It's an amazing architectural block. Building after building. Not least, Warren & Wetmore's New York Yacht Club where between the columns of the façade, three limestone window bays, shaped like the sterns of 17th century Dutch ships appear to jut out over the street. OMG.



Walk a bit further west. Ah, that's where Durst has moved the National Debt Clock. At 6ish this evening, its racking up the digits as usual, more or less in the area of \$9,207,268,900,000 – which a display below conveniently breaks down per American family – a modest \$78,109.

Have to sell a lot of tulips to pay that sum off.

Sol sistere

And over the vertical horizon of your laptop screen, the *Times* also rises.

Top headline: "U.S. Says [military] Exercise by Israel Seemed Directed at Iran." Gee, d'ya really think so? I mean maybe they were just, you know, practicing to, uh keep in shape, right?

"More than 100 Israeli F-16 and F-15 fighters participated in the maneuvers, which were carried out over the eastern Mediterranean and over Greece during the first week of June, American officials said.

"The exercise also included Israeli helicopters that could be used to rescue downed pilots. The helicopters and refueling tankers flew more than 900 miles, which is about the same distance between Israel and Iran's uranium enrichment plant at Natanz, American officials said."

Well sure, but hey, let's not jump to conclusions. I mean lots of places are about 900 miles from Israel: Qatar, Khartoum, Tirana, Bucharest, Odessa...

Cow one is not cow two.

The map is not the territory.

The word is not the thing.

As old Al Koryzbski supposedly said.

Of course, if one were to contemplate any sort of military adventure, whether a limited strike or the conquest of a territory, it'd be a smart move to appoint General Semantics to oversee the operation.

Outside the self.

Dow faw down go boom.

The banks. The levees. The sandbags. The river.

Wrongest day of the year?

6/21 We all howl at a different moon.

Walking history.

All the ungovernable joneses.

6/22 "News came. Kornilov's faithful Tekhintsi [a fearsome division of Mohammedan tribesmen from Central Asia] had slaughtered his guards at Bykhov, and he had escaped. Kaledin was marching north.... The Soviet of Moscow had set up a Military Revolutionary Committee, and was negotiating with the commander of the city for possession of the arsenal, so that the workers might be armed.

"With these facts was mixed an astounding jumble of rumors, distortions, and plain lies. For instance, an intelligent young Cadet, formerly private secretary to Miluykov and then to Tereshchenko, drew us aside and told us all about the taking of the Winter Palace.

"The Bolsheviki were led by German and Austrian officers,' he affirmed.

"Is that so?' we replied, politely. 'How do you know?'

"A friend of mine was there and saw them.'

"How could he tell they were German officers?'

"Oh, because they wore German uniforms!'

"There were hundreds of such absurd tales, and they were not only solemnly

published by the anti-Bolshevik press, but believed by the most unlikely persons – Socialist Revolutionaries and Mensheviks who had always been distinguished by their sober devotion to facts....

“But more serious were the stories of Bolshevik violence and terrorism. For example, it was said and printed that the Red Guards had not only thoroughly looted the Winter Palace, but that they had massacred the *yunkers* after disarming them, had killed some of the Ministers in cold blood; and as for the women soldiers, most of them had been violated, and many had committed suicide because of the tortures they had gone through..... All these stories were swallowed whole by the crowd in the Duma. But worse still, the mothers and fathers of the students and the students and the women read these frightful tales (often accompanied by lists of names), and toward nightfall the Duma began to be besieged by frantic citizens....

“A typical case is that of Prince Tumanov, whose body it was announced in many newspapers had been found floating in the Moika Canal. A few hours later this was denied by the Prince’s family, who added that the Prince was under arrest, so the press identified the dead man as General Denisov. The General having also come to life, we investigated, and could find no trace of any body having been found whatever....”

Wrote John Reed in “Plunging Ahead,” fifth chapter of *Ten Days*...

Don’t go changeling just to please me...

So much conformity, so little time.

Typhoon Fengshen inundates the central Philippines.

6/23 Let them drink ethanol.

Under the sun: seven billion moons.

*...Willie and Millie got married last fall
They had little Willie Junior, and that ain't all
The baby got famous in his crib you see
Doin' that hand jive on TV
Hand jive, hand jive, doin' that crazy hand jive...*

Bo Diddley Bo Diddley have you heard?
Something something mocking bird...

Pile driving begins on the Seminary site. Northwest corner. Boom shakalalakaka. Tables vibrate. Trembling surface of the milk in the little white pitcher Gwen sits drawing. The old brick building rises and sinks, not visibly, but perceptibly. The bum knows. At the far end of the rubble, a steamshovel stands motionless as a frozen Golem, a load of dirt suspended in its bucket.

Three piles driven home in the coffee hour. The whole thing's going down, literally, forty feet from where you sit most mornings at the south side of Table 4.

What spirits they stirring up below? The ground can't be liking this blunt trauma any more than it did the thermal well drilling of late winter, early spring. So you'll see Wednesday, when you sit in that chair again, what comes up through the floorboards and enters your feet.

Sharif don't like it...

Thus passes George Carlin. New York son.

A couple of weeks ago, the American Israeli Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) upped the existing high ante by sending seven thousand members to Washing to lobby Congress for the swift passage of H.Con.Res.362, and its parallel Senate version. The nub of the bill – introduced by a certain Rep. Gary Ackerman (D-New York) – is this:

“Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), that

Congress demands that the President initiate an international effort to immediately and dramatically increase the economic, political, and diplomatic pressure on Iran to verifiably suspend its nuclear enrichment activities by, inter alia, prohibiting the export to Iran of all refined petroleum products; imposing stringent inspection requirements on all persons, vehicles, ships, planes, trains, and cargo entering or departing Iran; and prohibiting the international movement of all Iranian officials not involved in negotiating the suspension of Iran's nuclear program."

And lo, "bi-partisan supporters" – including several of Bush's harshest congressional critics – have been flocking toward this resolution like flies to...

So much so that an aide to Nancy Pelosi quipped: "once this hits the floor, it'll pass like a hot knife through butter."

No shortage of butch language in the air. One might even imagine that AIPAC wrote the bill and appointed Ackerman the bag man. Great moments in puppet theater, behind, almost, the curtain.

But, uh, whose navy will be in charge of enforcing the blockade?

6/24 Running late near noon you call home. K. & G. are studying French, cramming for G.'s regents in an hour.

"I'll be there soon," you say.

And K. replies "I can't wait to see you."

How many years have you known one another, thirty, isn't it? *I can't wait to see you.* You begin to melt into the earth even as the top of your head rises, pulled upward by an invisible cord.

Don't need a gun to blow your mind...

New York Sun headline: "Iran's 'Nightmare Scenarios' Mulled Here" – whatever that means. Mulled as in wine or cider? And where is "here"?

Ah, dateline Washington, so here must be there. But the gist of the dispatch is that "An attack on the U.S. 5th Fleet, exploding Saudi oil refineries, and a Hezbollah

operation against a soft target in the Americas, Asia, or Europe. These are scenarios America's intelligence analysts are now poring over as Israel signals its preparedness to deal with Iran's race for the A-bomb."

The article's author, a certain Eli Lake, Staff Reporter, waxes on about all sorts of fantastical schemes by which the Persians might wreak revenge for an attack on them by Israel. Good grief, as Charlie Brown used to say. Next column over from this masterpiece, the headline "Capitalism Said Key to Finding New Drugs." Got that right.

Noctilucent clouds.