

The Courier, (Nine Notes from a Back Seat Universe)

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I drank too much Sunday night. After downing two slices of greasy pizza, I board a Monday morning plane for Las Vegas. Instant and severe culture shock in 108° volcanic sun-spot scorched air, an infinite dry sea of poorly dressed over-weight obsessive tourism and glittering architectural air conditioned mazes of disorienting non-clocked endlessly mirrored ambient-drone gambling.

Drank a little too much Monday night. After downing a Starbucks and something resembling a pastry, I wander over to the Guggenstein Heritage Museum somewhere jewel boxed within the city-sized Venetian (complete with full-scale indoor canal replica and faux sky that changes with the passing of real time) in search of some purpose to anything. My being, the difference between this and that, the larger meanings, my job...

Tuesday 7 PM. Stood and perspired patiently while two full-size 18 wheeled tractor trailers split a total of 9 crates of overvalued paintings between them, and met my immediate family that I will "run with" for the next three days. Truckers are a breed among themselves, living in a parallel universe. Each tractor-trailer has a two-person team, comprised of a married couple with dogs, a home business on the road if you will.

My immediate-proximate family in the security follow-up car of this convoy is: Francis, a happy and talkative white haired five-foot tall post



*Nine notes
(from this back-seat
universe):*

1. The back seat of a standard town-car is not meant to serve as a universe, a chair, a bed, a table, or a room. It can, however, host as a sluggardly vermiculated temporal capsule.

2. "News-Talk Radio" is a dangerous social cancer, and a vile persona of caustic diatribe named Rush Limbaugh is the biggest tumor.

3. All commercial radio should be banned and everyone involved in the industry hunted down and killed.

4. Watching the passing landscape of North America is far preferable to staring at the back of men's heads.

5. Some ears have more than their fair share of hair.

6. Truckers are a breed among themselves, living in a parallel universe. Like everyone else, they come in all sizes and shapes (though usually imposing) and temperament (usually candid). What they all have in common is their specialized vocation. They are chiseled from the discarded stone of the contemporary human condition.

heart by-pass Irishman in his 60's, and Keith, in his 30's, well over six foot, an unnaturally tanned and buff robot. Francis loves to look at the world, and Keith frequently looks at himself in the sun-visor mirror. Both are from, and exemplary of Boston, thick local accents included no charge. They are hired security. I am the courier. They show me the back seat (my universe), the concealed location of the shotgun and my pillow. I jump in and we contractually 'shadow' escort the two wheeled whales down a long winding road and an extruded serpentine journey.

The ensuing odyssey stretches over 60 plus continuous hours and some nine or ten territories of national soil, stopping only for the necessary (in order of importance) personnel (driver) switching, re-fuelling, sporadic dining, abatement relief, and dog walking. I, in the meantime, contemplate the meaning of things from my back-seat universe.

True mavericks and disenfranchised outsiders, heroic frontiersmen and women connecting the world of commerce to 'us' the producers and consumers. Our professional American gypsies, living fringe to most perceived cultural norms, they are the civil glue that binds us to the 'things' we need, cherish and desire. Each individual of palpable mettle and character has more storied miles about the American landscape than a Barnes and Noble bookstore.

7. "The Flying J" is a major truck-stop chain serving both the commercial and domestic road-warrior. They supply everything you might wish for: clean showering facilities, laundry accommodations, a restaurant, large restrooms, clothes, hats, lots of food and snacks and drinks, truck and auto related repair parts and accessories, high-end literature, endless knickknacks for every (kitsch) taste, lawn windmills, pro-American paraphernalia...and an ocean of fuel. A 'service product provider' of our contemporary era- the "Wal-Mart" for the freeway breed.

8. The diesel truck is a central and predominant fixture within this contemporary computer web-based economy. This vessel connects all the physical (materials and goods) dots of a market economy within each continental

border. This form of internal-combustion black-cloud discharging industry will not change anytime soon, certainly not in our or the next lifetime.

9. The superhighway is a gaseous envelope.

We arrive in NYC Friday 4 AM, and position the two rolling giants on the narrow 57th street chop-shop row that the Guggenstein storage facility is clustered and concealed within, and wait until 8 AM for the art-handling crew to show up for work. 9 AM. Job's done, I'm going home. Minutes later a taxi dumps me at the studio door.

It goes without saying that I am compensated well enough for my humble yet imperative task, but we all know that it is about much more than 'that'. As I sit here writing this gratuitous ascertainment, I glance over to, into and through my 'translucent human skull' knickknack that I purchased from The Flying J and ponder what 'that' just might be...the purpose of being, the difference between this and that, the larger meanings, my job...