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JUNE 2023
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MY DAYS: VOLUME 1
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WATCH FACE
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Cluck cluck, cluck cluck?
What?
Cluck, cluck, cluck.

Why are you in my bed?

Cluuuuck.

Did we?

Cluck.

Quit talking chicken; I'm not bi-animal; I speak English.

Cluck. What time is it?

WTF?

Cluck. It's a simple question?

WTF? Two days ago, I was a cardboard box, and yesterday I was a ... I don't even know what the fuck I was. And today, I'm a glowing watch face. What the ...?

Cluck.

I can't remember a thing from last night; did we...?

Cluck. Don't worry. We didn't...

Do you want to?

Cluck.

I can't believe I'm doing it with a chicken.

Cluck. I can't believe I'm doing it with a watch face.

You hurt my feelings. Let me mark this down. It's 7:15 AM. Do you have a pen and pad?

Cluck.

What's your name?

Cluck, Leroy.

OMG, am I gay?

Cluck. I don't think watch faces can be anything sexual.

I can change my face. What the frig is happening to me? I'm detached from my body; did you do that to me?

Cluck, we got incredibly position-ey last night.

That's not a word.

Cluck, it is now.

That's not how words work.

CLUCK. CLUCK. CLUCK.

Calm down, or I will take you into the kitchen.

Cluck. I've instructed Crow if anything were to happen to me, he'd gather his brethren and rain down on your parade, delivering you a pain-filled gauntlet.

A football drill?

Cluck?

Gauntlet.

Cluck.

Is there a Watch Face Pride Parade?

Coke float. What kind of bird is Crow?

Cluck. Are you stupid?

It's now 8:35 AM. Are you horny again?

Cluck.

You're insatiable.

Did you really sleep with Leroy, the chicken?

I think so, Sparkly, but that's not what this is about.

I don't think it's about anything?

Sparkly, give me a moment.

Leroy, you're tickling me... oh... grab a towel.

Sparkly, how did I turn into a Watch Face?

Procrastination powered by Depression.

What?

Three weeks ago, your watch started to fail. Rebooting. Rebooting. Rebooting. It kept saying rebooting or went to the Samsung Pay screen.

No time.

No steps.

No elevations.

This made you sad because you love your watch, which is a weird thing to love.

I love you.

I love shoes.

I can become a shoe, Sparkly.

Leroy, take your wing off my... oh... grab another towel, go on, Sparkly.

So, you went to Best Buy, which in the past was called Future Shop, and you told them you had watch insurance, and they told you they'd replace the watch at no cost.

Cool.

But fucking Depression ...

I fucked Depression?

No. Just Leroy. You took the watch home and put it on its charger, and a day later, the time came back on, and it started counting steps. You knew it was still broken, but because you were depressed, you became overwhelmed and were content with keeping the watch the way it was.

Mental Health + Drugs

What?

The mayor of Reno, Nevada, is on the news. Like so many short-sighted idiots, she's trying to blame homelessness on mental health issues and drugs. Such a simple-minded theory on a complex issue. Who the fuck gets to decide if someone is mentally stable or not?

You are a Watch Face, and you just had sex with a Chicken.

Leroy is sexy, and so?

Reno continued to say that 70% of the street's suffering is due to drug usage. Do you know what I have to say about that?

Fuck off.

You do know me, Sparkly. I would challenge Reno with one simple riddle; What came first, the drugs or the homelessness?

Great question.

Precisely. I say precisely too often. What's another word for precisely?

Specially.

Precisely.

Yes.

Okay, this is the last thing I will say on this matter. I used to work in a predatory business. One that preyed on and needed people to suffer, be mentally disorganized, or struggling with addiction issues. People who had been dealt shitty life cards.

And the monsters I worked for willfully did this to me ... list below.

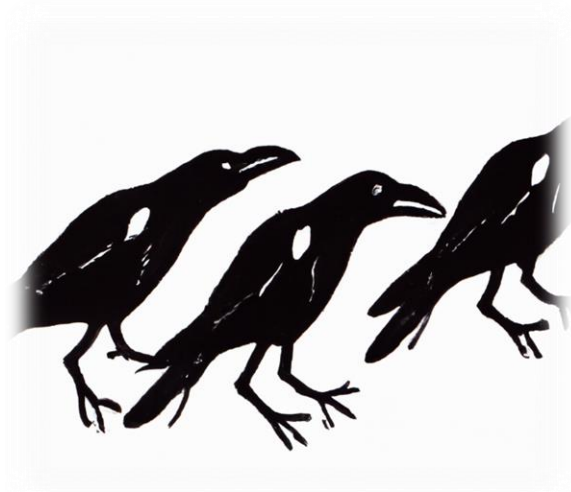
1. Ended my career as I was about to turn 60 after 15 years of impeccable service.
2. Used me for six months by allowing me to keep the company phone if I answered client calls.
3. They got pissed when I sought out legal advice.
4. Vowed to destroy me financially and emotionally for standing up for myself.

It's worked. They have financially destroyed me. I'm about to turn 63, and I'm fucking terrified I will die on the streets through no fault of my own. And now Reno, is on the tube preaching that everyone suffering has done it to themselves. FUCKING, PLEASE.

Leroy?

Cluck.

Can you send a murder of crows to Reno to visit the mayor?



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Cluck.

Thank you. I'd do it myself, but with me being a dangling watch face ... well ... I don't think I'm all that intimidating. Oh. And while you're at it, send another murder to visit my former employer. Let me grab the three primary monsters' addresses. Do you know how many companies are hiring 63-year-olds? What would you like for breakfast?

Cluck. Cluck.

Zero. Excellent guess, Leroy. And salmon. Excellent choice.

Cluck.

It's 9:15. I'm dangling off my body. But miraculously, I still seem to be working. I know. I'll tap you back onto your body. **Tap. Tap. Tap.** This is trippy. I went to bed as a man and woke a dangling watch face having sex with a chicken.

It could be worse.

Are you listening to yourself? What could be worse than transitioning from human to watch face?

Lots of things.

Like?

Are you going to make me list them?

Never mind.

The point of this story is turning you into a watch face did you a favour. Filing an insurance claim forced you to confront procrastination, especially because you've been struggling after a period of monster-inflicted bleakness. Becoming a watch faced forced you to file before your policy expired.

Actually ...

What?

J filed the claim with the store that used to be in the future but was so daft they didn't realize they would fail—how could Future Shop not know it was a stupid name?

Leroy.

Cluck.

I don't care if I'm dangling; I have boundaries.

Oh ... oh ... oh ... towel.

Let's go?

Me.

Yes, you J. Package me up and send me to the insurance company.

J?

Yes.

I'm scared.

Why?

It's dark in here.

You told me to package you up.

I don't like the dark. I'm getting sleepy.

I was trapped in a purgatory between nothingness and watch face for three days.

The insurance certificate arrived. J took me, now an opaque hologram of nothingness to Best Buy. The Best Buy clerk presented him with a sparkling new watch. And wella, I turned back into a human from the opaque hologram I had become.

Time back.

Steps back.

Elevations back.

If it hadn't been for a night of fitful sleep and my morphing from human to an overly sexualized dangling watch face, the insurance would have expired. The rest of my life would have been lived out as a sexually ambivalent, non-functioning-non-binary-once-upon-a-time, digital watch face.

Are you mentally stable?

Specifically?

Yes.

See you tomorrow.

Wait, I thought you were going to talk about birds today?

I did that yesterday. And besides, Leroy is a chicken.

Stop it, Leroy. You're insatiable. We can't do it anymore. I'm no longer a dangling watch face but a man with feelings and dreams. Oops, I almost spelled feelings with an 'a.' Good work, fingers. Good correcting.

Are you talking to your fingers?

Someone's got to. Oh my, six more Americans were bitten in Etobicoke yesterday.

Are you okay?

Is this what Depression looks like?

Leroy, stop. I can't. I don't want to be called a chicken...

Cluck.

What's that?

Cluck.

You're a mother...?

Cluck.

That might make things worse.

This is probably good; I accidentally spelled good with a 'c.'

Anyway, anyhow, another word for anyway, this is an excellent place to →

STOP FOR THE DAY.

Grammarly Readability Score = 87

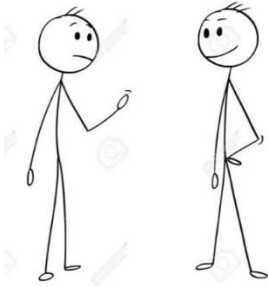
Really?

Utterly.

Grammarly Readability Record = 99 (May 1, 2023)



STEPHOES STEPHOES



January 16

You → Standing in front of me.

Takeout ready.

6 PM

I couldn't take my eyes off you.

Adorable.

I'm not creepy. No?

I know you wanted me. Your eyes were undressing me. You kept glancing my way.

You're beautiful. Mature. Flowing locks. Amazing round eyes.

I'm not creepy. Maybe?

I scurried away. Why? Because of hunger. For you → takeout ready.

Creepy.

I wanted to talk to you. I couldn't find the words.

I'd love to meet you again.

I'm an adult.


Am I?

I SAW YOU → A MISSED CONNECTION
I SAW YOU → A MISSED CONNECTION

Stalker?

FEBRUARY 1982

UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN SKI TRIP

SASKATOON SASKATCHEWAN   TO JACKSON HOLE WYOMING 

I like to organize things, be in charge, bring people together. I had gone skiing once in my life. I wanted to go again. I was excelling (not) scholastically during my second year of university. My father was gravely ill. I needed to escape.

Hey, Bernie ⁽¹⁾, I don't like where the University Ski Club is going ⁽²⁾— let's start our own club. Want to?

Sure.

You most certainly are great at dialogue.

Sure am.

We can raise funds. Bingos, dances, the works. After all, I am a quarterback. And the top DJ at the U of S. This should be a piece of cake.

Where shall we go?

I'm thinking Jackson Hole, Wyoming; it's only a 3,148-kilometer round trip through spectacular mountain scenery.

How will we recruit people?

Don't worry. We will.

We did.

Thirty-six thirsty souls joined our ski club and together we commenced raising funds.

OPENING COST OF THE TRIP
OPENING COST OF THE TRIP

\$800.00 per person.

The price included transportation, lodging (one week), lift tickets, the whole works.

BINGO!

Bernie and I planned and planned and planned.

VEHICLES VEHICLES

Two fifteen Passenger Vans + One Six Passenger Van + Three Ponies.

On February 12, we hit the open road. Kilometre one, Cam was pickled. By kilometer fifteen, out of Saskatoon, thirty out of thirty-six, were sauced. Of course, Bernie and I, and the assigned drivers had to abstain.

By kilometer thirty, thirty-two people were juiced.

FLASH FORWARD FLASH FORWARD

Kilometer two thousand, the same thirty-two, were still zooming.

Flash Backward: We screeched up to the pumps in Regina for the first fuel up. The second of the two vans used precisely \$2.53 less petrol.

I did an outstanding job of drafting behind you? Bernie exclaimed.

Outside of Milestone, Saskatchewan, I noticed flashing lights behind us – we were only a short distance from the border. The police were in hot pursuit. Panic took over the passengers. The windows were cracked open. Empties were blasted out of the vans, bouncing over the approaching patrol car.

Excuse me, sir, license, and registration. Thank you. Have you been drinking?

No, sir.

FIVE MINUTES PASS FIVE MINUTES PASS

Okay, thirty-six white people, I will let you off with a warning. Please refrain from littering.

BORDER CROSSING BORDER CROSSING

Breezy.

Guys, when we hit the next town, I will stop to stock up on supplies.

PLENTYWOOD, MONTANA PLENTYWOOD, MONTANA

Thirty-three mature university students pour out of the vans into a gas station convenience store. Whitey ⁽³⁾ moseys up to the counter to pay for a six-pack + Doritos.

Whitey is asked for ID. Whitey fumbles around in his pockets for several minutes, looking for his ID. Seven minutes later, Bernie and I entered the store to pay for our fuel top-ups. We had to wait for Whitey to get out of the way; he was still fishing through his jacket.

Later, back on the road, we asked our passengers if they'd picked up everything they needed.

Thirty-three mature university students had poured out of the vans into a gas stations conveniences store.

Thirty-two mature university students exited a gas station convenience store with a hefty bounty of liquids and snacks.

Whitey was the only mature university student who made it to the counter to pay. So, we were on the lamb.

LET IT SNOW. LET IT SNOW. LET IT SNOW.

The roads were treacherous. We pulled into an all-night diner in Billings. Mark E., dropped out of one of the Vans, crumpling into a ball on the ground, giggling.

In Bozeman, one of the Vans needed repairs. I can't recall for what. While waiting, thirty-three mature university students found a bar.

We weaved our way through the breathtakingly, outrageously-gorgeous Gallatin Expressway to West Yellowstone.

Oh, my, is this all the snow in the world?

Yes.

It sure, is white.

It most certainly, is.

*Baby ran.
She ran away.
Why she ran.
I got to say.
I'm lonesome, all the time.*

We slashed our way through Idaho, on the westward side of the majestic Tetons. We climbed and climbed and climbed, music blaring, drinks flowing freely, as we continued our ascent into Jackson, Wyoming – clank, clank, clank, that's not good.

The drafting Van was towed into Jackson by a big rig, saving \$6.25 in petrol. We were rescued by a good Samaritan trucker. Who likely was skirting a few safety regulations by towing a van full of mature kids on a snow-covered mountain highway. + losing a large portion of his livelihood because drivers make enough living to survive driving big rigs. So, this might be an early explanation of ~~Trump~~⁽⁴⁾.

Thank you. Not for Trump.

What can I say about Jackson Hole?

Wait for it. Wait for it. Wait for it –

Why do you always do things in threes?

Probably because of Beetlejuice.

– a winter wonderland.

Really, that’s the best description you can give of Jackson Hole.

No.

SECOND NIGHT @ GRAND TETON VILLAGE SECOND NIGHT @ GRAND TETON VILLAGE

We were holding fort firmly. The opposing forces from the south were assaulting us, from the south, duh ⁽⁵⁾. Snowballs were pelting us in a grandiose fashion.

BLAM. BLAM. BLAM. SPLAT. BLAM. BLAM. BLAM. SPLAT.

The enemy force’s attack, although fierce, began to peter out. Chris Ramsay, the lead singer of IBS ⁽⁶⁾ – take it away Chris –

*The sky burnt fire red this morning.
I woke from a dream, and the rain was pouring.
My ears took refuge in the rhythm of the rain.
But now trouble’s leaving town.
And I’ll never be the same.
Trouble’s leaving town.
Now I know the voices calling.
Trouble’s leaving town.
I’ve known it now for quite some time.
Trouble’s leaving town.
It’s really crazy there inside me.*

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– IBS eventually changed their name to something less bowel orientated: Different Initials. Chris was holding our enemy at bay while standing on the second-floor railing when a final blast of white death landed, sending him in an airborne cartwheel to the iced walkway below. Chris fractured his skull, blood pouring out of his ears, asked for a Schnapps, peach if I recall correctly, and a moment of drunken sobriety arrived for the rest of us. Chris was airlifted to Salt Lake City, Utah, where he resided for the rest of the trip, plus an additional two weeks, to give his fractured skull, time to un-fracture, just a little.

Before we embarked on this epic journey, the last thing I did was sign everyone up with extra insurance.

Whew.

Thank you, whewer!

A FLASH ⁽⁷⁾ TO THE FUTURE - 1989: CIRCA REGINA, SASKATCHEWAN
A FLASH ⁽⁷⁾ TO THE FUTURE - 1989: CIRCA REGINA, SASKATCHEWAN

I was living in Regina. Different Initials were in town playing at The Venue. I hooked up with the band after their gig to get smashed. We got smashed. Chris was taking this Rock Star thing seriously. We shot some shots. Chris became reflective—he was actually glistening— “Linds, I think there may be a chance that I am the devil.” He’s not.

As for Different Initials, they eventually broke up, but they shone brightly during their time in the sun.

May I suggest a few things?

Sure.

GOOGLE: Different Initials - Ruminations (and listen to Trouble’s Leaving Town)

The tram is for expert skiers only. There is no easy way down. If you are not an expert skier, you have no business being on the tram.

Funny, you’d think they’d make the announcement before the tram started to move. Oh well, I’ve skied before, poorly.

Wow! It’s incredible up here. What’s a double black diamond? Oh well, I’ll eventually catch up with my skis, I’ll just keep my arms out like a bird, hold my face high, smile, and if this belly slide isn’t too tricky, I’m almost sure I’ll reach the bottom in one piece (?).

I did; I am an expert skier now!

You weren’t on your skis.

Want to grab a bison burger and a beer?

The week was a rousing unforgettable (some of it forgotten because of liquor) success; all had a grand time—except for Chris, of course.

What does any of this have to do with border crossings?

Nothing.

It was time to go home. Two hundred kilometres into our home journey Whitey looked at the tires on the lead Van—“hmm, bald”—I kid you not.

We slid and glided our way along the Interstate. Just before we were hit the border, the storage door on the lead Van broke off and flew through the air, almost decapitating the drafting van. Both vans screeched to a halt.

The second person intoxicated at the start of this odyssey, Mark E, searched the ditch for the vesper-like door, swaggering. He stumbled his way through the snowdrifts, stopping briefly, at the entrance of VAN 1, and in a halting slurring timber, asked, “Has anyone seen my budgie?”

THE BORDER CROSSING: SCOBEY BORDER CROSSING, SASKATCHEWAN THE BOKDEK CKO??ING: SCOBEX BOKDEK CKO??ING, SASKATCHEWAN

The vans had become artful masterpieces. |←←SARCASM ALERT→→| Wonderfully tasteful.

BOOBS with the caption, MY MOM was etched into the salty grime of Van 1.

VAN 1 ART VAN 1 ART

- A Large Penis with a stream of (?) shooting out of it →
- In the direction of MY MOM.
- Captioned with HEAT SEEKING→→→→

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Graduation was not a given for this crew.

A steady torrent of drunks flowed out of the Vans entering Customs.

Mark stayed behind to help the Border Agent drain the partially filled cans – help = drank.

Satiated, it was Mark's turn at the Custom's Counter.

Sir, where's your bag?

I left her at home.

Just go. Go. Go.

We hit the open blacktop once more.

BLACK LIVES MATTER
BLACK LIVES MATTER

1. Bernard Hrapchak (Bernie) happened to be one of my best friends throughout my youth. Bernie was a warm soul and planning this trip with him was a joyous experience. Unfortunately, Bernie died June 21, 2016, at the far too-young age of fifty-four. RIP.
2. The U of S Ski Club was going to Whitefish Montana. I'm sure Whitefish Montana is an incredible place. What I really didn't like was how cool people in a Ski Club seemed; for that reason, Bernie, and I (who are not cool at all) decided the cool thing would be to form our own Ski Club.
3. Whitey is one of my best friends. His name is Darryl Wacker. Whitey is his nickname. His moniker isn't entirely because of his pale skin, while at the same time, being entirely about his pale skin. So, you see, Whitey is a ginger; the summer sun is not his friend; hence, Whitey, said the white guy.
4. ~~Trump~~: I vowed never to utter or type that name again. In 2020, I read sixty books: a delightful mixture of all genres. Irrespective of genre, forty-two of those books mentioned ~~Trump~~. On a gloriously sunny, sweltering, Sunday, in beautiful Vancouver, I was walking gleefully on the Seawall when I heard an angry sixty-year-old man (?) snapping at his female friend, "If so-and-so keeps eating that crap, he's going to die. Before he does, he'll turn into a fat-fucking blob, like ~~Trump~~. My vow was based upon a need to escape an inescapable sickness – thus the double strikethroughs. I know I've failed. I'm taking baby steps.
5. Duh.
6. IBS = Irritable Bowel Movement.
7. Redundant = when I typed FLASH, initially, I had placed QUICK before it.