



# Yawny's Digest

STARRING IN: THE TRIUMPHANT RETURN OF AUTHORITARIANISM LOL



Vol. XVII, No. 3

"[Americans] have become the greatest drug fiends in the world." —Hamilton Wright, 1908

July 2024

## Shock + Awe Regroups, Waits in Wings

Isn't it funny how everyone was expecting the 2024 election cycle to be the nastiest shit show ever? Full of scandals, nasty attack ads, etc? Instead it's been more like a slow-moving train headed towards a giant pile of rubble.

Both the GOP and Dem primaries were a joke. The DNC cockblocked every Biden challenger with their typical goalpost-moving tactics. There's been almost no campaigning, though you can't really blame our radioactive, ancient candidates for going into lockdown. They're resting peacefully in their cryo coffins, conserving precious fluids for the final run.

The only drama we've seen has come from the media: first, when they thought Trump's felony conviction was game/set/match. That lasted about a week. Then came the "debate," after which every single Beltway pundit all of a sudden decided *en masse*, after glazing Biden's corpse for years, that it was time to float the "we love you, Joe, but please step aside" line. Now that little narrative is fading away too.

The Great White Replacement could still happen. Biden could fall off a cliff, this time literally. Or maybe the shadow wraiths can actually pull off this little coup thing. Not that it'll matter much. Remember: the Nothing Will Fundamentally Change® axiom is still in effect. For example, while Sleepy Joe was sleeping, his crew was slapping on a slew of new Chinese tariffs—but no howls of 'racism' or 'xenophobia' this time. I guess the Pivot to China must have happened. Good job! You can always count on our bitterly divided

partisan representatives to come together, join hands, and sing "Kumbaya" when it comes to matters of foreign policy and trade.

The truth is there are always a buttload of tariffs in place. The tariff schedule's thousands of pages long. There are tariffs on umbrellas, paving stones, tableware, fentanyl. Let's be honest, this whole "free market" meme is 100% fake. The game's more rigged than ever. Tariffs aside, you got your sanctions, subsidies, money printing epidemics, bailouts of colossal corporate failure, legal corruption, y'all know the rest. It's a wet market all right.

It's OK though. It's not the end of the world. Nothing's perfect. Just don't call me a fascist for having isolationism lite embedded in my ancestral Norwegian DNA. It's also part of my cultural heritage. I.e., it's my nature *and* my nurture, so back off with the hate speech. And BTW Norwegians have protected status. Vikings weren't even colonizers. We were *raiders*. It's not the same. You can't lump us in with all the slavers, which FYI includes literally half of the world's populations. And anyway isn't there some kind of statute of limitations on ancestral fuckery? Still, if you persist, against all principles of logic, in hating on Vikings, then you'd better start cancelling Japanese, Turks, and Ghanaians too. Racist.

In any event, despite a lackluster preseason, some real drama is guaranteed right around the corner. Especially on election day, when one-half of the country will absolutely fucking lose their shit.

## The Party Pooper



We can all see the Hollywood Machine desperately striving to make Denis Villeneuve's *Dune* an epic sci-fi/fantasy franchise in the grand tradition of Star Wars, Game of Thrones, and Harry Potter. I guess the CGI is okay. Some of the scenes have a little bit of detail, and I understand that render time can be expensive.

I suppose they had to spend the budget on something, because they sure didn't spend it on developing a nuanced, multilayered script, or fine-tuning the acting performances. Their "ringer" was supposed to be Javier Bardem. He's one of these guys like Jack Nicholson who plays the same character over and over. I just wish he'd learn to enunciate. He's been in Hollywood for like three decades now and you still need subtitles for him. Meanwhile Timothy Chalamet and Zendaya just brood all over the place like they're on a Nike photo shoot.

As far as the narrative goes, Frank Herbert's book was great, but thanks to star casting, we now get what amounts to yet another reluctant-white-savior plot. Sorry for the superficial focus on representation here, but this really is a bad look: because once again, you have a seething mass of scrappy, agitated, religious-fanatic, sand-dwelling tribes in need of leadership from a skinny little blue-eyed white boy. *Pop quiz: what do Peter O'Toole, Jesus, Mark Hamill, and Timothy Chalamet all have in common?* To make matters worse, here the quasi-Arabs are also dope ("spice") fiends, which is silly because everyone knows drugs are totally haram in Islam.

Of course the current situation in the Middle East only magnifies the problem. The top-line message I'm getting from *Dune* is that we really need someone like Timothy Chalamet to go and talk to Hamas. That should work. Actually I thought that's what Jared Kushner was doing. Whatever happened to that.

## SoCal Mystery Theatre



We visited Encinitas recently to see if it would be a good place to live. I had imagined it to be crawling with little surf dudes and surf chicks in flip-flops, slender latte'd blondes all blissed out on sunshine and warm water. To my surprise, the kids had more of a *Stranger Things* vibe going on. They all looked like they were guarding a big secret, or investigating a conspiracy or something. I mean half of them weren't even tan.

## Roger Ebert Rolls Over

Is IMDB an acronym for I aM DumB? I've gotten burned so many times by reviews and ratings posted there. You'd think by now I'd be hip to the fact that your average Neanderthal guns-and-explosions flick by Michael Bay is likely to get an 8/10, while a brilliant, provocative meditation on the meaning of life, reality, alienation, etc. always gets a 7.1. If multiple reviews complain that a movie is "too slow" or "nothing happens" you can pretty much guarantee it's gonna be a masterpiece.

## Hope + Change Lifetime Award

"It turns out I'm pretty good at killing people."

—Nobel Peace Prize winner Barack Obama, 2012



## SUS MARVEL // SKETCHY DC

What's up with superheroes sporting their underwear on the outside? Batman, Aquaman, Superman—they all go out of their way to put on brightly colored butt-hugger undies over their tights. *Tights!* How is that even a thing. Do they also wear regular underwear underneath the tights? Making like a kind of underwear-tights sandwich? Ngl the capes and masks are pretty weird too.

All this gear is not only cringemaxing, it radiates serious pedo energy, especially in today's ultra-triggered culture. Why aren't these weirdos getting called out? I mean, now you can be mocked for, say, wearing a short-sleeve t-shirt over a long-sleeved one, *like every single person did in the 90s*. But that's just a fashion thing; T-shirts aren't there to corral your genitalia and trap stray waste particles.

Go ahead, call me OK Boomer, but if I see a grown man with yellow underwear on the outside sweeping up a child into a protective embrace, you better believe I'm calling 911.

## Lemme Antivax Bang, Bro

Vaccines have stopped devastating epidemics like smallpox and polio. I believe in science! But it's possible to believe in science *and* the corrupting power of concentrated capital.

Listen up: I went in for my annual physical exam and the nurse says "oh you're behind in your shots. Do you want to get them today?" My *shots?* What am I, seven? Am I a puppy? So I'm like "nah I'm good." Then a different nurse asks me the exact same question ten minutes later: are you sure you don't want to get your shots? I'm like *yo why you pressing me fool? You make a commission off this shit?*

When I got home, I immediately went online to look up my medical record. Bro. They've got me scheduled not only for an optional Covid booster shot (hello? 2024), but also for shingles, Tdap, and the flu. I can count the number of times I've had the flu in my entire life on one hand, and I worked with elementary school kids for 25 years! Yet I've never had a flu shot—except for the ONE time they were giving them out for free at my work so I was like fuck it, ok. Then I felt sick the next day and came down *with the fucking flu*. Just because evidence is anecdotal doesn't mean it isn't true.

## Absolutely Unhinged Rant Against a Revered and Beloved Icon

Joni Mitchell thinks she's so great. Always comparing herself to John Coltrane. What nerve—and coming from a Canadian no less. Don't you think she should probably be selling Neutrogena products instead of whimsical folk-jazz paeans to her 101 Topanga Canyon ex-lovers? Sliding up to notes like a high school girl going out for the spring musical. Singing in her little head voice like a baby bird getting fed a worm by its mama. Just because she had Jaco Pastorius in her band for a while doesn't mean he wasn't doing it to finance his drug habit.

### CARRIE NATION PRE-BOOMER FAIL

It's hard to believe there was a temperance movement in America only 100 years ago. Imagine if some woman with an axe started going into all the bars and smashing up all the bottles of liquor tomorrow. I imagine she'd be shot dead in about 24 hours.

Meanwhile, Tdap is recommended to adults for pertussis, a/k/a whooping cough. The CDC rate for pertussis in adults is 1 in 100,000. Do you understand how low that is? It's roughly the same rate of probability as the chance that you will *die by snakebite or dog mauling*. Except that if you get pertussis you don't die, you just take antibiotics. Scary stuff!

For shingles, the incidence rate is still only about 0.7% for my age group. But that's just generic herpes zoster infection, easily treated with antiviral meds; painful complications (PHN) only show up about a tenth of the time, so let's say that's 1 in 1500. If you control for people with compromised immune systems, the number is even lower. Do I think I'm gonna draw the one short straw out of 2000 possible straws? I like those odds.

Now, if I do get shingles, you'll have a good long laugh at my expense. But the last laugh is actually on you too, because all of us are footing the bill for gazillions of vaccine shots, via insanely high premiums and huge taxpayer subsidies. It's true that you can't spell "big pHARMA" without "harm".



## Give Me My J.R.R.K. Preciousss

Even though one of my hobbies is applying knee-jerk postmodern critiques to fantasy literature, I really do love the genre. But I have to ask: what's the story with the authors' obsession with initials. You got C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, J.G. Ballard, George R.R. Martin, Ursula K. LeGuin, J.K. Rowling. What do they think those initials are...runes? Mystical symbols to be pondered, like the obelisk in *2001: A Space Odyssey*, or the thing on the cover of Led Zeppelin's *Presence*?

I guess if you're writing about wizards and talking snakes, you might as well pretend that your name contains secret mystical codes or acronyms for shadowy puppetmaster guilds. It makes sense to try to cast a vague air of mystery over the proceedings.

Here's another theory though. What if Lewis and Tolkien were only copying their hero H.G. Wells, and then it became the thing to do. After all, fantasy writers freely borrow and plagiarize from each other, though not in a bad way. It's more like making a daisy chain into the past, because most fantasy books are fundamentally conservative. Which is fine! The Chronicles of Narnia are a Biblical allegory. Reactionary bourgeois hobbits are the heroes of Lord of the Rings. Ursula LeGuin fetishizes Platonic forms (the "true names" of things). And so on. Plus all the classic fantasy epics are set in a bygone era—either medieval times or the 1950s. Which all tracks for people who believe modernity does kinda suck.

Here's a fantasy book idea for the young people of today: endless masses of heavily medicated, hypnotized youth stare dazedly down at their personal tablet screens. Then one of them drops his tablet, which shatters, breaking the spell, and he or she or they gets transported back to a magical time where kids burned things in vacant lots and threw pennies and rocks at each other to pass the time. True story BTW

## Film Festival Pickup Lines

"SO OVERRATED"	"SO UNDERRATED"
Tarkovsky	Agnes Varda
James Wan	Gaspar Noe
Bong Joon-Ho	Takashi Miike
"Poor Things"	"Dogtooth"
Dame Maggie Smith	Isabelle Huppert

## Paging Dr. Leakey

People are right to be worried about identity theft. You click on a link to claim your credit card class action settlement, and the next thing you know, Bulgarian scammers have emptied your bank account. These big, smash-and-grab operations are pretty scary. But *slow bleeding by fees* is also real, substantial, and mostly legal. “Fees” are like scale infections or ants: once they find you, they tell all their friends, who all build hidden nests in your plumbing or your house plants. From that point on, they just keep on reappearing, no matter how hard you try to eradicate them.

One mutant variant of nuisance fees are these things called “subscriptions.” Back in April I logged into my bank account to see if my tax refund had come in, and out of the corner of my eye I see a \$12 “monthly service fee” for ZipCar. *Wait a minute*, I thought. *I cancelled that shit six months ago*. Then I noticed an \$18/month charge for Hulu, which we only turned on to watch *The Bear*—which was a good show, but that was last year! It’s as if Hulu was charging us \$180 for one show. The bastards are always counting on you to forget to cancel. Before you know it, you’re leaking out like \$100 a month for crap you’re not even using.

It reminds me of how back in the 80s credit card companies would offer you a 0% APR, then would jack it up to 29.9% after the 3-month trial period. By that time, you’d already bought a computer and an Armani suit with their “free” money.

Of course, this is all Drug Pushing 101: “The first dose is on me, kid.” At least with drugs, you get some kind of temporary euphoria, whereas with credit cards, the rush is... cosplaying as a rich person, I guess.

Another good trick they have is making the process of cancelling exceedingly painful. That’ll be the one and only thing you can’t do online. To cancel your account, you have to call India and wait on hold forever while “Wonderwall” drones on in the background.

## Ambitious, Energetic Recent Reads



## United We Stand. Divided We LOL



Everyone goes 100% nuclear with their opinions these days. Yet they won’t say a word out loud unless they feel they’re in a safe space with other people who belong to the same thought tribe. This includes ideas about other people’s occupations. You can dedicate your whole life to a line of work never knowing that a good chunk of the population thinks you’re doing Satan’s bidding.

Job Description	Progressive/Liberal Thought Bubble	Based/Populist Thought Bubble
Doctor	“Impressive”	“Grifter”
Lawyer	“...”	“Fucker”
Military	“You poor soul”	“Gigachad”
Policeman/woman	“Racist”	“Freedom fighter”
Human Resources	“Ugh”	“Ugh”
Engineer	“Nerd”	“Nerd”

## Tim Cook Weaned Too Early

- ✗ Apple changes their power adapters every two years so you can’t reuse the old ones
- ✗ Apple solders memory and storage onto the motherboard so you can’t upgrade components for a reasonable cost
- ✗ iOS apps can only be purchased through the Apple’s App Store, violating basic anti-monopoly standards
- ✗ Apple glazes China harder than anyone

## Do People Even Read Anymore

Why do aspiring young women writers all think they idolize Joan Didion? Shouldn’t they be worshipping Susan Sontag instead? Sure, Joan Didion had cooler personal style, but Sontag had way more identity points. I mean, here’s an Jewish bisexual postmodern activist intellectual who once had *Herbert fucking Marcuse* for a roommate. Not to mention having written “Notes on Camp,” an early defense of genderdivergence. Jesus, what more do you people want. Get your story straight.

## Work With Me On This One

- Yawny: I like Scarlett Johansson.  
 Wife: What man doesn’t like Scarlett Johansson?  
 Yawny: No, I mean I think she’s a pretty good actress.  
 Wife: She’s okay.  
 Yawny: She was good in that alien movie.  
 Wife: What alien movie? Did I see it?  
 Yawny: I don’t know. She’s some kind of sexy alien who’s studying humans.  
 Wife: Big surprise.

## What Was That?

### 🔧 LIFE HACKS 🔧

I think of “life hacks” as being peak 2010s San Francisco. Hey guys! Here are ten ingenious ways to use binder clips! Or: Here’s a quick tip to save a *full minute* out of every day.

It’s not that these tips and tricks are bad; I love jerry-rigging, both as a form of routine brain exercise, and for the refusal to buy a piece of cheap plastic crap from some Uighur slave factory that just does this one thing. Like opening your beer bottle without bending the bottle cap or whatever.

No, what irks me is the term itself: “life hack” sounds bionic, cyborg, engineered. Yet all the life hacks posted online just use household JUNK: like toothpaste and toilet paper rolls. I’d like to believe the term is meant to be ironic, as if to say, “lol, technology says it’ll save humanity, but really this is all just spit and glue and cardboard.”

Sadly I think the invitation to “hack your life” was not gently ironic, but only a cynical ploy by editorial gatekeepers to trick the masses into thinking the great forward-marching tech revolution was for them too, by showing them little penny-saver diversions. *Hi, hacker!*

But as George Carlin famously said, “it’s a big tent, and you ain’t in it.” So while you were figuring out a way to make an iPhone case out of chewing gum, Wall Street arbitrageurs were taking a short position on your life expectancy, thanks to all the data they’ve been collecting from that surveillance state tracking device you’ve been toting around for the last 20 years.





"The end of the world is a product." —Fallout

## Sign o' the Times New Roman

I recently reread *Brave New World* and many of the predictions did seem pretty spot-on. It's funny how so many of the Future Tech projects portrayed as alarming and anti-human are actually fairly normal now: *in vitro* fertilization, sperm donor screening, cloning, etc. One aspect of the book that I found kind of quaint was how Shakespeare appeared to symbolize Art/Beauty/Truth/Humanity/etc. Get this: I have a Master's in Literature from Yale, yet have never read a word of Shakespeare. How is that even possible? See, Huxley is saying. *I told you.*

**Lightning Round**

- John: Weirdo
- George: Weirdo
- Paul: Cringe
- Ringo: NPC

## Crack in Universe Reveals All

You know how when something happens, then five seconds later, something else eerily similar happens? And how you think for a second that maybe you just encountered a rip in the universe's fabric? Or that you're being manipulated by unseen forces?

Well check it out, a certain Digest reader recently emailed me an article about how some football coaches rate draft picks based on the size of the players' butts (google "Andy Reid") at the exact same moment that I had *120 Days of Sodom* open to a page describing the selection of young boys based on the quality of their buttocks. I'm dead serious.

Before you know it, I'm thinking about toilet paper. And don't ask me why, but I thought: what if toilet paper was processed with formaldehyde? Wouldn't it be darkly ironic if butt wiping turned out to be a contributing factor in rising Western cancer rates?

OK, you're probably saying, stop trying to be so edgy. But yo, I looked it up and found out that toilet paper *does* contain formaldehyde!

p.s. do you know what Dude Wipes are? Couldn't you just use toilet paper moistened with water instead? Or jump into the shower? Would those qualify as "life hacks"? What if Dude Wipes cause cancer too?

## Cocoa, Yoko, or Norco?

Naming a pet is a good little challenge. I think most people try to think of something that kind of fits with the family brand. Normies can play it safe while keeping it light with generic names like **Fluffy** or **Blackie**. Nothing wrong with that. But you can also get a little wild with pet names, unlike with children. If you call your kid **By-Tor** or **X11**, they're in for a little hazing. Some gum in the hair. They'll end up as furries or cyber kids. On the other hand, if I met a dog and found out his name was **By-Tor**, it would make me so happy. I would want my dog to play with that dog.

Anyway we got a really cute Labrador puppy last year and thought she deserved an appropriately cute name. For a while I was dead set on **Stevie**, but then I realized the only female Stevies anyone knows are Stevie Nicks and Stevie from *Schitt's Creek*. I got a mental image of a scene at the dog park:

—*What's your dog's name?*  
 —*Stevie.*  
 —*Oh, like Stevie Nicks?*  
 —*No, NOT like Stevie Nicks. Just Stevie.*



Which makes *you* sound like the asshole, instead of *them* for assuming that you might like Fleetwood Mac.

So instead we went with **Sadie**, which it turns out is pretty common for a dog. You'd be surprised at how many people say:

*Oh, Sadie, like the Beatles song "Sexy Sadie."*

To which I can dutifully reply,

*Well, not exactly, but you're close! She's actually named for Sadie Mae Glutz, one of the Manson Girls, whose real name was Susan Atkins. Have you read Child of Satan, Child of God? Susan Atkins imagined that the Beatles named their song "Sexy Sadie" after her—despite the fact that they'd never even met her!*

Now, maybe that dog owner will never speak to me again. But people who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones. Because you're probably feeding your dog *dog food*. You know that stuff is like Slim Jims, but much worse, right? It's funny, because dogs and especially puppies are so cute, then they eat garbage and roadkill and poo. It's hard to reconcile. Ashes to ashes, dust to dust, I guess. Then a beautiful flower arises from the dust because the ash has potassium in it or whatever.

## Timeless Quotes from the Silent Generation

- 1 "I went to Stonehinge. It was pretty cool." —My Father-in-Law
- 2 "It's a blessing in the skies." —My Mother

**BUDGET LIVING**  
WITH: KAISER THE MISER

### KAISER'S WATER-BASED KITCHEN

**Egg sandwich.** Eggs are disgusting but very cheap and a good source of protein. Even at the corner market, an egg is only about 39 cents. Put a fried one between two slices of lightly buttered bread and add free garden lettuce to realize a pretty filling lunch for \$0.70. Serve with unlimited refills of **ice water**.

**Home ramen.** Our hippie co-op has rice and millet ramen noodle pallets for about 40 cents apiece. Bring a medium **pot of water** to boil, add 1 tsp soy sauce, 1 tsp sesame oil, 1/4 packet dashi powder, chopped kale and chives from your garden. Dinner: 2 quarters

**Leftover Luxury.** When you turn 60, everyone gives you a bottle of whiskey for some reason. And the fact that they're free means it's doubly important to make these bottles last even longer, in order to **extend the free ride**. Meanwhile, next time you make coconut curry, steal 2 tablespoons of coconut milk from yourself. Then: 1 oz. whiskey over ice in a tall tumbler + **water to fill** + 2 tablespoons coconut milk + 1 mint leaf from garden = FREE EXTREMELY FANCY COCKTAIL

## ChatGPT Challenges



- ⇒ "Can rats get venereal diseases?"
- ⇒ "Why are my personal concerns far more important to me than climate change?"
- ⇒ "Prove to me that I am not living inside of a computer simulation."
- ⇒ "Write a rap song celebrating the freedom to choose between two presidential candidates represented by (a) a giant douche and (b) a turd sandwich."
- ⇒ "Now be less racist."



All hail this issue's heroic sponsors:  
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