

The Droogies

By Kenn Hartmann

Good news: spring's here. Bad news: so's winter. To say I'm weary of winter is like saying I'm weary of work. As my fingers bang away on this manual Underwood typewriter, hammering some offbeat curious rhythm on the cumbersome keyboard, the icy wind whistles through the window screen. I'm ready to roll out my sickle as soon as the snow flurries stop. I heard this biker say you got to accept the personae you're born with and his buddy replied, "Well you're an idiot." Who hasn't been an idiot? My father claimed I made a practice of it. I argued that I perfected it. "It's not something to be proud of," he said. "You should be embarrassed." My tendencies weren't latent; on occasion my flair for stupidity knew no bounds.



The name of the movie escapes me at the moment, probably from the undo trauma of trying to change my personae; I could google it, but since I'm typing this on a mechanical typewriter, I won't bother, the sound of banging keys and carriage bell has a soothing effect unlike the lament of not being able to ride my sickle in snow. The movie was about an English hoodlum named Alex and his band of Droogs, a London gang uniformly decked out in white trousers tucked into black combat boots, white shirts, gray suspenders, black bowler hats and they hung out at a starkly futuristic bar that served white milk laced with drugs. Oh, they wore jock straps outside their trousers. The allure escapes me; my defense I've stated.

Alex carried a cane, a fashionably lethal walking stick that deftly hid a fanciful dagger, a stiletto sword, a vicious surprise for the unsuspecting. The movie was dystopian in its view; that's when you take the most sinister and evil elements of corporate gangsters, political psychos and religious zealots and push it to its inevitable conclusion, like "Mad Max" or "Terminator" and recently my wife had me watch "Hunger Games" another dysfunctional utopia. The closer to reality, the more frightening the film - "Soylent Green" might mimic the mission of Monsanto's greed while "Tank Girl" plays more like a lark, although Malcolm McDowell who plays Alex the Droog in the flick I can't remember also plays the baddy in "Tank Girl." So being an impressionable youth, I put together a little ensemble that resembled Droog-style and hit the streets, catching a train to downtown. Oh yeah, I was a real badass, my Droogie dream come true; I even had a white plastic cane that I tapped on the pavement for dramatic effect, imagining how well I accessorized Droog fashion.

I strutted downtown and headed to Grant Park, passing a couple grizzled gentlemen on a bench, you know the type: pigeon feeders, chess players, old codgers in slumping tweeds. They didn't acknowledge my Droogie strut but cast a quizzical glance. Ah, there's no feeling quite as satisfying as being vaguely noticed by lazy old men in the park. There was a wooden barricade on the sidewalk barricading nothing, just there, left over from an earlier anti-war protest or just waiting some future demonstration. It was an obstacle easily avoided however in my youthful vim and teenage vigor, I decided to leap over it to demonstrate my flair. I put my hand on the wooden backbone of the sawhorse and kicked my legs up in a grand leap, which easily made the height but not the distance and I landed squarely on my ass on the wooden spine.

It looked impressive to the observer I'm sure, if they had the erroneous assumption that's what I intended to do, to land on my ass in excruciating pain, precariously balanced, boots dangling in midair. I tried to look nonchalant; the low moan I couldn't conceal. I think I landed on a nail. Concern crept over me that the whole contraption was ready to collapse. I hastened to slide off, but the nail grabbed hold of my trouser seat; the nasty sliver hung me up like a self-inflicted wedgy until the immutable law of gravity took over and sprawled me onto the pavement. Not even my plastic cane could break the fall, it shattered like a toothpick, or should I say, shattered like an illusion? I picked myself up, dusted off and bowed to the codgers who nodded and cracked a smile. My elbows were scraped and bleeding. As I walked away, I heard one old man say, "Look, he ripped his underwear right through to his ass." It wasn't the first time I had heard that. "Is that a jock strap he's wearing?" the other asked. I took it in stride.

I'd like to say this was the extent of an affliction my father referred to as "acting like a horses' ass." In retrospect, there were a few of these escapades. There was the "Then Came Bronson" leather motorcycle jacket and watch cap that easily doubled as the "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" look, the jacket and cap, by the way, I had inherited from my father. And there was the Clint Eastwood poncho phase when I used to hop freight trains and bum about the country. And there was an Obi Wan Kenobi hoodie that I wore during the Ghetto Gallery era. Of course, "Easy Rider" influenced me; Fonda wore leather with a flag patch, mine was a jean jacket with a beaded leather Thunderbird. Thank God, I'm not into "Sons of Anarchy" and was more apt to piece together something out of discards at Salvation Army than to buy it ready-made. Hey, the sun is out! Spring baby! I'm rolling out my sickle! See ya.

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Rescue Shop Biker Church

Rushing Wind Ministries Fox Valley
1110 S. Oneida St. Appleton, WI 54914
www.facebook.com/rescueshopfoxvalley

Pastor Tommy Bongers
920.209.1985



At the Rescue Shop you can come as you are. Suits and ties are allowed but the pastor will probably be the one with the t-shirt, blue jeans, tattoos and ear rings.
1 Samuel 16:7, James 2: 1-4

Black Leather. Tattoos. Jeans.

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