

# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## Pigs, Pestilence & Rats

Eric · Thursday, June 11th, 2015

I've gotten 4 traffic tickets in the last 2 weeks.



### Speeding Ticket

The first was for speeding on the 2 Freeway in Glendale, where the cop was in hiding under an overpass. An obvious speed trap! He said I was going 80. I said I was going no faster than anyone else in the left lane. Let's see who's right. I've called the Ticket Clinic.

The 2nd was just a \$73 parking ticket right here at Echo Park Lake. I was showing a new friend around the neighborhood. I was probably just in too expansive a mood, was unaware of the No Parking sign on Fridays 10-12, so no doubt I was rightfully punished by the Hebrew Gods who always make sure you're looking over your shoulder for doom. Whenever you're not, boom! You get ticketed, or .... annihilated.

The 3rd was for a non-working tail light, also right here in the hood around Dodger Stadium. I had just gotten off one of those ridiculously short exit ramps on the 110 freeway, going south, and as soon as I got off, there... was a cop standing in the road next to his vehicle (you know what we called cops back in the 60s, right?).



### "Police" in the 60s

He motions for me to slow down. I react hostilely, as I usually do when gestured by such creatures, and I swat him my own wrist gesture of uncomprehension and I drive on, thinking "why did I just do that?"

Naturally, a minute later, he's following me in his black & white, down Solano Canyon onto Academy Way. I drive extra carefully, making sure to make full stops at the lazy neighborhood stop signs. Nevertheless, after a minute, he flashes his lights, pulls me over, and proceeds to ticket me for the busted tail light. As he's at my window, writing me the ticket, I make sure to tell him, "You're doing a really good job, Officer. A really good job." I say it about 10 times in a row, just to express my frustration and to aggravate him. He says, "I hear you, Sir," so I tell him again 4 more times. "Really good job, Officer. Really good job."

Number 4 is just this last Sunday. I've been driving the new "fam" to San Gabriel for dim sum, to one of Jonathan Gold's favorite dumpling houses where we've never been. It's on Valley

Boulevard; I know how to get there, more or less, but since it's a new place, I ask my wife to turn on her Waze GPS with the Elvis voice. "Check it out, baby, police activity ahead." Very funny.



Elvis

So... Elvis tells me to "keep left, baby" for the Del Mar exit off the 10 East, because there's an exit ramp to the left. I've taken it before; it used to be for car pools, but now it's been changed into an Express Lane. We've paid for the Express gadget, but it's not on the windshield, and hell, Elvis keeps saying, "keep left, baby," so I do, cutting across all the white lines and a couple of bus lanes to make the Del Mar left lane exit. Dumb move, well done.

Next thing? Whataya know? There's a CHP Officer following me slowly off the ramp onto Del Mar. For a while. Eventually, predictably, his red lights come on, the #^{\wedge} pulls me over, and does me a favor. He gives me a less expensive ticket for "just interfering with bus traffic" rather than the outrageous \$500 ticket for crossing 2 white-striped lanes of traffic. "Thanks a lot, Officer. Serve and protect."

4 in 2 weeks.

And now it's 2 in the morning and I've just been awakened by TWO different nightmares. In each one I'm being pursued and attacked by frighteningly-disgusting vampire-zombie creatures. The first one is a homophile-stalking Caucasian opera vampire dude who keeps trying to sink his rotten teeth into me, both inside ... and outside the theater... in the fancy downtown streets of.... somewhere.



Legosi vists Trules dreams

I feel like Swiss cheese.

The 2nd pursuer is a small, sharp-toothed zombie girl, maybe from *Day of the Living Dead*, short blond hair, pink, rabid eyes... she's running across an old linoleum kitchen floor, also trying to sink her pointed buck teeth into my neck.



Living Dead

I bolt up awake, each time, barely escaping each set of imminently-lethal, razor-sharp teeth.

I get out of bed, walk to the laundry room, just beyond the old linoleum-tiled kitchen. There's another dead rat caught in a trap behind the washing machine. Like all the others of late, its body is stiff with rigor mortis, its long tail sticking stiffly out behind its quite dead body.



Night crawler no more

We've had a recent infestation of rats. Unsettling. In fact, sort of haunting and repulsive. Rats in the garage. Rats in the kitchen and laundry room. We're under attack. And they're not the cute *Ratatouille* type, "Remy" rats, the clever, haute cuisine, chef types. No, these are just the hungry,

dirty, scampering types, that plague every city, along with the coyotes in the parks, and the poor homeless in the streets. Plagues. And not just for Egyptians or Jews. No. But for the whole lot of us lousy Angelenos.



Power in numbers

And sure, we have Western Exterminator, the very reputable “pest control” company, who come out in their happy yellow trucks to take the dead, trapped rats away and to set new traps. But, please! How the fuck are we going to get rid of these rats? It’s a curse. Not at all cool, for trendy, gentrified Echo Park. Get these fucking rodents out of my house! Out of my garage! Out of my dreams, for Christ’s sake!

My wife says that I have an anger management problem. That I’m attracting all this pestilence to me. By my fury. By the way I treat poor phone representatives when I am short tempered with them. When I lose my patience because they can’t take care of my problem and just pass me on to another department.

“Let me transfer you to Customer Service, Sir.”

“I thought you WERE Customer Service.”

“No, Sir, we are Customer Service within Tech Support. You have to speak to....”

You get the point. It pisses me off. I have no tolerance for bureaucratic incompetence. I get loud. I get aggressive.

And right now! While I’m ranting about all this on Facebook, lying on my favorite purple couch in the living room—Bam! Snap! Another trap goes off in the kitchen. Behind the plastic bin of dog food.

Another rat – caught dead – in a trap. I hear the small beast futilely try to escape, then.... silence.

What? Tell me. Am I now supposed to go gently and quietly back to sleep?

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