

DIRTBAGS

A Fun Essay on a Few Unfortunate Memes by Paul Lambrecht

Setting: An old factory, framed by cranes and powerlines. Circling crows.

The Situation: A choke-collar job. Undreamt of by Adam Smith, yet directly resulting from his output of mental flatulence.

A man, a dirtbag, sits snoozing on the toilet, perched like a scummy porcelain gargoyle, with a dirty ring around the bowl like a monster's yellow iris.

I'm no historian but this sad pathetic situation is a direct result of the Magna Charta.

Inside these dusty walls, the wings of hope are clipped by a huge ceiling propeller fan.

Slag-grey dust-filled air circulates and settles in the dusty corners. Human progress advances one benighted generation, one sludgy mophead at a time.

The women are bereft of feminine features, loveliness, qualities. The men are little better, paupers in rags.

Mock-cheeriness and the reluctant relentless dignity of work are present in charitable almost-human levels, thank the Lord.

I write the following essay at great personal risk. Tell the truth and the powers that be will kill you in broad daylight, and the ensuing silence will erase your bones from sights conscious people choose to see.

The dirtbag flushes the john and returns to his bench.

Found in nature, these hungry individuals are represented in dingy factories and though they are copies of the divine image, same as the rest of us, they are not, and will freely admit, not to be especially fresh or crisp reproductions.

All they yearn to do is survive. In the vast majority of cases, one is obscure and forgotten, but every once in a while he will rise up, above the lower dimensions of his nature, to reaffirm the stereotype, to reconfirm in the eyes of all his fellow men, that he lacks that essential purity and freshness which was born in the early age of the

universe, during the formation of the elements. He is a perversion, a corruption of the virgin creation.

He is only aware enough to know that he has a few basic needs. It is how he goes about addressing those needs which reveals his low character.

Another low form of life to be found in the bottom rungs of the socioeconomic ladder is the desperate man, and even he holds the lowlife dirtbag beneath contempt. The desperate man is a prideful and boastful individual who despises the lowlife's generally modest aims.

They are natural companions, tab A and slot B of a fallow dynamic, and probably more prone to murder one another than most other diads to be found in nature.

The lowlife and the desperate man. The fruitless nexus of a worthless jungle tree and vine. These two, though so unlike our modern heroes, likewise mean to grasp what is beyond the mundane, the predestinations of their common yearnings. To transcend, at long last, the structural limitations of their respective niches.

As such, they are worthy of our attention and sympathy. Would that we could only bestow them honor, which is what they really need, to replace their greed for stimulation and relevance.

The lowlife awakens. The factory calls. He has enough wits to find himself at work soon after, right around the time he is expected. Punch in at the clock. Sits at his station. The overseer sets up the flow of widgets, and the angels of industry begin to sing. The lowlife adds his low tenor to the choir. The lowlife is surrounded by other lowlives, brow-beaten and flat-footed as ponies at a petting zoo.

There are a few desperate men littered throughout the factory floor. Most of them are in management. On the factory floor, there are many more managers than workers. The factory's main output is not the plastic product, melted from the little hard pellets of polycarbon, and the excess whittled down to spec, to make a pretty finished part.

No, it is the geyser of amorphous human consciousness which erupts from the homely ratty building near the docks in Seattle.

All the clever speculations, social engineering, useless transacting, and dumb animal ethos. Very little work and less perfection. But it's a living. The lowlife gets through his day with a minimum of glitches. This makes him happy.

The desperate man has done away with the dreary doldrums of his working day, too. His bleaker perspective, the darker intensity of his work, the peaks and valleys of his emotions, are now smoothed out in anticipation of rejoining his more complicated personal life. He drinks three beers in his car on his drive home. He is an older, wiser, more uneven, and more promising version of the lowlife. If only he had caught his break, he might not be so desperate. The front door of his home beckons, and beyond his life, and beyond that, his fate.

The lowlife's home is generally empty, and always lonely. Don't pity him. Trust that you would not want to hear the sad descriptions of the lowlife's suffering cell-mates if there were any. Thankfully there are not. The lowlife's lonely rituals of a night have no place here. Suffice it to say that he has survived, and wakes up the next morning, always a little shocked find himself heart beating one more day. The factory calls. He collects his wits, enough to be at work soon after, right around his scheduled time.

And so it goes, on and on. Always wondering, how the middle 98% live. The ones with nice cars and nice houses and lovely wives, and promising children. The armies of the faithful. The faceless givers. Silent guardians of

the vibrant inner life just beyond the street facades.
Those jealous protectors of the secret keys to happiness.

The lowlife luxuriates in his idle time. What there is of it he fritters away, in an array of unedifying activities. Sitting on bar stools, leafing through online jobs listings, writing wish lists with dream items like "work out today" and "floss teeth". A recipe for heart palpitations and a bloody sink there.

He is intellectually open, though not honest, about the prospects and likelihood of authentic personal transformation.

Unfortunately, the laurel wreaths never come. The window has snapped shut forever on these poor devils and sucked most of the heat out of the room. Another night of short stultifying sleep passes, and the lowlife wakes up, gathers his wits enough to find himself at work the next morning in the vicinity of his scheduled time. Acquits himself passably on the assembly line, and avoids the desperate vicissitudes of social and economic sturm und drang.

The desperate man, perhaps unsurprisingly, is also an inveterate schemer. Through the fickle fondling of fate, he has been unjustly deposited in less than favorable circumstances where his genius and value are necessarily

overlooked and underrewarded. Decades of dead-end jobs have finally worn him down with the disturbing insight that everywhere his superiors are similarly benighted and blind to his merits. As he grows older, greener pastures seem further and not so sunny anymore. So he puts his head down and works. Desperately and hollowly.

But pride still puffs at his breast. Indignity burns his ears and bitter scorn puckers his eyes. Self-disgust swells his waistline, feigned indifference coarsens his habits. Mercenary concerns sharpen his conversational tactics. Doubt ever gnaws at his determinations. He resents the lowlife who all throughout his litany of dramas seemingly remains unscathed, at least—from self-recriminations. The lowlife is the desperate man's only natural inferior. And as they both eschew honor, they often forge an unholy alliance.

They stride through the rabble like rascal kings, emperors with no clothes and cellulite scepters. But their friendships are fraught with combustible hazards. No lowlife has ever been the best man at a desperate man's wedding and vice versa. The lowlife is a congenial bird who lives off the chum in the desperate man's crocodile dental plate.

The problem, at heart, is that the God of personal transformations loves honor and does his earnest mightiest to frustrate the schemes of the desperate man, and thwart the complacency of the lowlife. Ever he stokes embers of ambition and doubt in these wretched sinners.

It is that their instincts are fatally anathemic to success, though. As such God's tough love redemption of their error-stricken souls seems to their lonely misbegotten sympathizers like persecutions. And in the face of such awful justice, all sympathy is pressured into pity.

But pity not these predators, for they will devour it, and crest their perverse heads with it. Learn from their foolishness and if you see one approach, blind him with mace and run the other way, screaming for the mantle of man to be restored inside your noble breast!!!

End.