

Live! From the pen

By David Rubinson

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I have never been more thrilled to be wrong. There was NO Emergency. On the day of the Big Demonstration, all was basically tranquil, non violent, chilled. Except if you watched TV or read the newspapers. If you watched TV or read the newspapers, there was a riot – a nasty confrontation between violent anarchists and stoic disciplined meticulously trained police.

If you watched TV or read the newspapers, a young terrorist had a Molotov Cocktail, but was fortuitously thwarted by the decisive intercession of Heroic Homeland Security personnel, and if you watched TV or read the newspapers, Peace Goons burned the American Flag but the sacrilege was suppressed, thank the Lord, in the nick of time.

But – if you were THERE you saw a totally different Reality on July 29: There was no perceptible publicity, there were no posters, no leaflets, and the time for the demo had changed eight times.

About an hour earlier than the announced schedule, the demonstrators, 4-500 people mostly from The (purposely unorganized) Black Tea Society, formed a decidedly less than critical mass in Copley Square.

Tipping Point or no, they ambled, cum banners, props, signs, music, chants and interesting piercings – whatever it was it wasn't no March but it wasn't wandering either, over to the designated Barbed Wire Free Speech Area near the Convention site.

Of course, everyone had agreed that we were no way sticking digit number one into Auschwitz East – also know as Gitmo North, The Cage or The Pen. Mostly, The Pen had become a tourist attraction – where outtatowners took cute fotos in Yankees Suck t shirts, standing with Aunt Jeannie and Uncle Phil next to the No Blood for Oil and Bush Lies People Die posters.

The crowd was largely younger people, peppered with older veteran peace movement codgers, like me – arriving late since the time had been changed, us codgers being a punctual lot. After all the huffing and puffing, and dire predictions, terrifying Risk Assessments, fear-inspiring Police Estimates, and weeks of intense Ashcrofting, the various Cop Contingents outnumbered the protestors by no less than 3-1. The cops wore their best, and very very expensive Terminator Black bullet-proof and plastic shield stuff. They formed a line between the protestors and the convention delegates' entrance, where dilatory

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Democrats were arriving for the next few hours of speech soporifics and teleprompter tirades, all accompanied by canned ovations, remarkably cute and stupefyingly privileged candidates' progeny and what would prove to be recalcitrant balloons.

The press corps(es) were armed and ready, steadicams aglow, mics at full extension.

The protestors advanced to the Police Line. Face to face belly to belly.

Tragedy seemed imminent. The Tragedy that can only come when all those TV cameras and digital audio recorders have nothing to do. The tragedy of dead air. The 4 o'clock news would be on in 8.5 minutes, and there was no story in sight.

All those anchors, all that Max Factor #11, all the spray and plastic surgery and Journalism degrees from Mid Western schools, and money spent on blue blazers, haircuts, and tasteful sweater suits, would be WASTED, if nothing continued to happen.

With the dread alternatives of either Al Gore or a replay of someone remarkably articulate for a Negro looming – SOMEONE had to DO something.

The cops and media eyebrowed each other. Some kids burned, not an American Flag, but a puppet figure, with two faces – Kerry and Bush.

One kid held up an outrageously obviously bogus papier-mache spoof of a Molotov Cocktail. Hahaha.

OK ! Let's ROLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLL !

The cops pushed the kids.

The kids pushed the Cops.

Cameras whirred.

The cops jumped all over the puppet burners. Pinned them down. Extinguished the massive mannequin inferno.

Cameras whirred.

Two burly sons of Erin glommed the Kid with the cocktail, and grabbed the offending WMD.

Plastic cuffs, away they went.

Cameras whirred. The special Riot Trained State Police arrived en masse. Anchors breathlessly reported the extensive and shocking carnage.

On channel five, some spooked Shiksanchor spewed out how the violence we all feared had finally come, but the police were gaining control. The situation is dangerously out of control, and there was no telling what could happen.....

Cameras whirred.

On channel seven, it was even worse. Another Shiksanchor, if imaginable- even more pinched than the one from 5, managed to send her live and on the scene message despite the wanton destruction and anarchy all around her, heroic in the face of a profound threat

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to her personal safety...

We don't know how long we can hold on here, Bill, but we will stand steadfast in the face of this uncontrollable seething mob, until ordered to evacuate.... back to you Bill.

While the Fox News shill did his Ed Murrow on a roof in the Blitzkreig imitation, all the print pimps got their shots of cops and kids, burning puppets and Molotov aperitifs, dutifully printed in color on the front page of the next morning's papers.

And then, poof. It was over.

The local four o'clock news had been saved from sure disaster. The tragedy of dead air averted. Fifteen minutes later, the old hippies and life long union organizers, and March on Washington veterans, and old Izzie Stone readers arrived, and searched in vein for the eye of the Storm. There was no eye, there was no storm. There wasn't even a drizzle.

I got 3-4 cell phone calls.

Are you OK ?

Of course I'm OK, why ?

Man, I just saw it on TV, there's a riot down there. Are you hurt ?

Of course not, there's no riot.

But I saw it on TV.

No, no riot.

But I SAW IT on TV.

I'm HERE, there's no riot.

But I fucking SAW SAW SAW IT.

ON T V!!!! I SAAAAW IT !

So what do we have here ?

We have the same thing that has gotten many thousands of Iraqis and 1000 US troops dead, and thousands more wounded and many thousands more scarred irreversibly for life. We have media manipulation and fear-mongering, and pimp press, and disinformation campaigns, and above all, we have the deliberate calculated DUPING of We (the group formerly known as) The People for profit and power.

A media exercise to keep us scared,

– to intimidate us from expressing our opinions

– to keep us divided and afraid of our friends and our children,

– to keep us beholden to the powers that be and their police,

– and willing to give up just about anything to feel SAFE. Eager – desperate – to spend our health care money and our environmental protection money, and our education money, and our medical research money, and public airwaves access money, just to feel protected.

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Duped duped duped.

There was no riot.

There were no Kayeedas.

And if Osama has somehow obtained a special battery-powered dialysis machine that works in caves, you can be certain he will be captured just in time for the next coronation.

And the Media will all be there to get it on the air in time for the evening news.

Back to you, Bill.