

Introduction - The View

“I can see for miles and miles and....”

I'm writing this story perched about 2000 feet high in a gloriously tranquil home facing “west south west” in the Sierras, perfectly tucked away atop a mountain in a delightful Californian 49'ers gold town called Sonora. I pause and contemplate my next thought as I shell pistachios and sip Laughing Magpie vintage 2004, a robust Australian Shiraz. When I write in the afternoon I plan a break to allow me to be on the deck and in the spa to enjoy every sumptuously vivid gathering sunset. I've never tired of the glory of the sun drifting languidly toward the horizon through the course of the day then in one magnificent heartbeat vanishing in a breathtaking violet glow.

With the Judge's ever present spirit about me as I move through my day, now is the time to seek out my spot marking the nexus between two wooden posts on the deck. It's here that I settle to observe the sun, and mark its relative height off the horizon. Though I confess I'm but a novice in such matters, I've boldly calculated the sun's comparative drop in relation to time and distance from the horizon. Finally, I measure this quotient against the notches carved onto the deck's posts whereupon I'm lead confidently to a powerful conviction in the sun doing exactly what it should at precisely the right time every day. The glory of God surrounds us yet we so seldom have the time, inclination or indeed opportunity to stop and survey, much less fully take in this awe inspiring majesty. From my rather modest vantage point, planet earth is doing just fine.

I hope for a time in the near future when our collective consciousness compels us, or better yet shames us, into forging a covenant with our Earth to care for her as she nurtures us; she too is a living organism. Put quite simply, we all perish if she herself was to face peril.

The Judge enjoys the view; I hear the echo in the canyons of my mind of his bellowing and jubilant shouts of “rock 'n' roll.” It's as if he wants to drown

Doc and the Judge

out thoughts in me he finds too serious and somber, in short, thoughts not of the dude language we shared. I clear my head and continue down the path of today's thoughts while assuring the Judge I haven't lost the spirit and beg his continued indulgence on this journey.

The closest city lights visible are far enough away to serve as bearings on the horizon in the flawless evening sky. They're barely noticed though they do in their own way make a bold statement like a lightly jeweled necklace an elegant woman of means favors to softly adorn her lustrous skin. Everything in between is pleasing. The happily situated smattering of cottages and farms mercifully all remain closer to the distant city lights than to me and my hilltop reverie.



I can see for miles and miles from the Sonora deck!

This, my friend is the view. I found it a few years ago while on a national tour promoting breast cancer awareness for young women with my wife Mari. She was diagnosed with terminal breast cancer at age 29. Wherever we travelled I remember noting that even a cursory glance of mine across any one of those crowded waiting rooms and I'd feel we surely must be amidst expectant mothers. There were so many young, vibrant, beautiful women who only upon closer scrutiny betrayed their crushing anguish. The stunned look of first diagnosis burned ever present in their eyes. Some wore wigs while bald statements preferred by others, nonetheless all these young women in vari-

ous stages of treatment for this horribly sneaky disease strove to live normal, fulfilling lives with whatever time remained for each of them.

Mari died at the age of 35 in this village surrounded by friends and family who held her hand to the end just as she'd held the hands of hundreds around the country offering each solace in their final hour. I now live in Sonora permanently; it's been my place of healing and contemplation.

As we grow older we each gain experience and learn from experiences shared by others. It's clear we take our memories with us and keep them close wherever we choose to be. How did we get here? How do we convince the person in the mirror that he should be wearing this face? What vexing questions these are. The Judge says it doesn't look much like me and truthfully even to me it doesn't seem much like me so who could it be?

I believe what we see in the mirror is us. Put simply this is who we are now, better still it manifests who and what we've become. Some feel it's far too late for radical change and perhaps that's so, however it's never too late to pull back the layers, dispense with silly deceptions and begin to be inquisitive about ourselves.

The why's and the how's become polemic. The why nevertheless is easy to answer as it brings us into a broad discussion with our truest self, the how actually seems more complex until we accept why and how are interrelated as they must be.

Take a moment to prominently identify the most important goal in your life right now. Then go slowly back identifying the markers in life that guided your way, you know them; they always stand alone as defining moments. As you identify and seek to understand them then chronologically plot these moments it brings you full circle back to this moment. Your place now is a destination reached as a direct result of every development reached, in every moment lived and through every decision taken. Therefore, what's important to you today was perennially thus.

Memories of the past selected and pulled to the surface play significant roles as they seek to flesh out an understanding of the voyage toward today. In short they've molded us into who we were meant to be, answering why we find ourselves as we do here and now. This process culminates in a focus on,

understanding of, and finally an acceptance of who we were before the catastrophic but no less defining events mapped our course toward our destination. Thus the continuum is perpetuated in us until the next big fork in the road offers us up new directions and possibilities.

On this point I believe every shake up, every welcome and unwelcome disruption in our lives is in and of itself life changing. Be it positive or negative it remains a critical agent of change and lays in wait, positively charged for exponential growth and development in our lives. Ultimately no matter that the foundation of our world bend, falter or breaks down under the burden of change, our lives at that moment have inexorably changed and now propels us into new, exciting directions if only we'll allow this newness to lead us onward. The only bad decision I feel sure is to deny change, thereby denying oneself the possibility to fully explore and adjust robustly to these shifting new landscapes of flux. Change is full of prescience and promise however change denied is fear merely reacting in the guise of action.

Change is unstoppable, to that end to fail to change abreast of change is not an appropriate action nor is it an action of stoicism. In short it's neither a more reasoned nor more rational response. In fact, every day you fail to embrace change is an act of cowardice and betrayal of your potential power to prevail over perceived fears. "Break on thru to the other side," was a watershed anthem for change in mesmerizing style sung by Jim Morrison in his signature style in the 60's.

When we identify all those qualities we know we possess and bundle them up and sort them out, only then can we make sense of this data and only after that can we accept we're all fundamentally righteous in our moment on earth. We're riddled with the same faults and frailties humans have always struggled with. We recognize shortcomings but they are fortifying tools to be used as we acknowledge powerful strength flourishes from identified weaknesses if only we'll accept and permit change to permeate our lives from them. Thus, as we begin to understand we can begin to embrace and eventually accept ourselves, only then does the raging battle within begin to subside.

As we seek to know peace with self we must also stand back and honestly assess our personal data. We need to look back at the highs as well as the lows, each must be equally weighted against the goals we'd set for ourselves at that time. I think most of us believe we can look back with pride at our accom-

plishments. We've attempted to right wrongs, raise families and work hard. We feel that we've contributed in some small way to community, country and mankind.

I seek peace. I stare in the mirror as I shave and try to find a little something in my face every day that signals peace may be just around the corner. I yearn for peace. I seek peace with family and friends. I enjoy peace with my animals, my environment, and yes even my God who is now my most constant companion guiding my way, sharing my load and moving me toward the radiant light of peace.

My approach has been to search the barren gaps between defining moments where I seek to search out memories that may have fallen down chasms in between. I don't rely on the recollections of others, instead I choose to go inside seeking to find things that connect to other puzzle parts, then as in a jigsaw I fit them all into their own unique place in my own "work in progress" life.

I discovered a beautiful memory of my mother as a young bride and with a young family of her own sneaking food out every afternoon to leave by the side of the wide alley that separated the backs of houses in my hometown. This alley was visited daily by young black women with their children as they busily sorted through the refuse for food. On their heads they balanced tightly wrapped sheets containing their findings which mostly consisted of food scraps and clothes that could be recycled for their children. Mother would fry extra chicken, hamburgers and so on which she'd carefully wrap in paper and leave in the alley for these mothers and their children.

I also remember my mother's solemn prayers every evening as she whispered passionately to God "My children will never go to bed hungry, they have a wonderful daddy who makes good money but Lord, I know many children do." She'd finish up every night's prayer vigil with this blessing "Dear God, we have enough to get by and I thank you, I thank you for giving us our daily bread and for giving me this family."

My mother was goodness personified. Her goodness was given quietly, discreetly, thoughtfully. It's been a great joy for me to discover during this process her fingerprint evidenced throughout my life; I'm very proud of it and it has served me extremely well. Indeed mother's own sense of generosity and fairness has been the very foundation stone upon which every transaction I

entered into during my adult life has been predicated.

It's as if throughout the project of this book she's been sitting by my side reading my mind prompting me and helping me fill in the blanks. She knew all my secrets including the ones that kept her awake at night. Only after she'd been able to reach me by phone (no matter the time of day or night) to confirm that I'd arrived home safely was she able herself to relax and go to sleep. I suspect mothers have done thus down through the ages.

Her daily prayers came to include the safe keeping of her son Doc and his friend the Judge. This story is a meditation on the times and on their lives as they rode the 70's wildly, without fear or favor. They were great friends forever.

When "tomorrow" arrived as it must for us all, it was a shock akin to a rude interruption by an uninvited party guest; we each dealt with it in our own way. The Judge just wanted to shut the door on this boorish guest. I recognized early on he was neither ready for nor interested in the promise of a million tomorrows. For me tomorrow snuck in while I was too busy to notice and now I sit here on my deck with another glorious sunset ablaze and ponder. No doubt I've mellowed. I concede. I sit here on the deck again on this brilliant evening as I reflect back on those extraordinary days of bell bottom jeans, gravity defying afros, those wicked sky high times. Hoochie Coo!

It was the early 70's. The flowery dogma of the sixties was finally dimming. Woodstock became a more distant memory every day though a kernel of its heady spirit lived on and will in perpetuity as it was indeed a seminal moment in the culture of this nation. The Woodstock generation was the most powerful unified voice of change modern America has experienced. It stopped a war as it gave voice to a generation that agitated for the emancipation of women and minorities. What happened?

Perhaps you'll find some semblance of your own life here. Close your eyes and relax... there. Now open your eyes and relax, now read on... it's important we remain steadfast, focused. This ride goes back to a time of great tumult, great joy, incredible and memorable music, deep faith and conviction, along with a smattering of breathtaking recklessness. You're going back to a time where youthful exuberance, skin tight leather pants and unabashed excess were the currency of the day.

Here We Go!

Doc and the Judge were two sharp, young guns with savvy; they'd made lots of money for the men in suits who were behind them. They made more than enough for themselves, too, though for them it was never about money, it was simply about being dudes. The time had come. They blazed onto the scene leaving their legacy over a tumultuous decade.

By their parents' standards they were undeniably and certifiably fucked up. Friends agreed too but they also knew they were razor smart to boot! "Crazy like a fox both those boys are," allies and competitors alike would say. As their legend spread they began to add, "Everyone knows they're like a fox pack, they're shrewd, cunning, focused. They'll have you for breakfast - you know the type I mean?" I think the Judge saw it more as "Butch and the Kid."



*Doc as a young Marine ...
"Road guards out!"*

There was no hippie rhetoric, nor any peace or love medallions to be found here. Doc was a recently returned Marine. The Judge was a myopic, dyslexic, long-haired, sardonic, scratch-golfer, a lefty who played from the right side. Both misfits perhaps but it was 1970 and a lifelong friendship blossomed the night of Doc and the Judge's first meeting as they sat on the roof of the radio station. They were smoking. And they had two six-packs of St. Pauli Girl and a bottle of Wild Turkey.

Doc waited for the right moment to pour out with onerous gravity and equally weighted eloquence to share his thoughts with the Judge... "We'll never again be what we were yesterday and tomorrow

Doc and the Judge

not what we are today.” The Judge chided, “That’s heavy dude, toss me a girl.” He hit it once then threw it all the way back, then asked for the bottle. Two shots of Wild Turkey and he finished with a jowl shaking, belch, followed by his own articulation on the matter, “Someday that thin thread that connects us to reality is going to snap!” I tossed him his Kool’s.

So began a chaotic and precious friendship, the fundamentals of which were laid down that evening. They each agreed they were pretty fucked up, but it was sorted out and agreed that Doc would play the role of visionary, thinker, man of judgment and deal maker. The Judge was forever the brilliant flame of idealism that shone radiant.

The Wedding

The Judge got one of his abiding fantasies out of the way with unusual expediency even for him. He wanted to marry a tall bartender with big tits who loved the Dolphins, the Gators, the University of Michigan, Notre Dame Football, Arnold Palmer, and Muhammad Ali. No mean feat I'm sure you'd agree.

Needless to say the Judge had his pick of bartenders and cocktail waitresses. He never left a tip of less than \$50 and if the bill was more than \$100 then the tip equaled the tab. I remember on one particular occasion giving the Judge \$125 as the tip for a \$125 dollar tab. He hated small denominations and so he'd asked me to get the five twenty dollar notes changed for a hundred dollar bill, then to add \$25 to the remaining \$25 to make it total \$50.00. He felt that the \$100 and \$50 bills together would be more impressive than lots of smaller notes with the bar staff.

To this end I asked our waitress to make the exchanges, first she took the five twenty's to the cashier and traded them for a hundred dollar bill which she brought back to us, then I gave her \$50 in various denominations and asked her to bring back a \$50 bill. As we prepared to leave the bar we'd ask if we'd been "good customers?" The answer was always, "yes!" We always asked if she'd served, "customers quite like us?" The answer was always, "uh uh, no." Finally the carrot was dangled with the Judge holding up the \$150 asking if this bought us extra favors. The answer was mostly, "well, maybe, but not much." Then he'd hold up another fifty and ask for a phone number and when we might call. The response was generally, "Great, call me tonight." That was how Doc and the Judge on occasion developed plans for the evening.

It was a fateful night when a short bartender with huge tits got the nod from the Judge. The scene was electric, and had the "ring of perfect for a day or two" authenticity about it. In short it was every fairy tale rolled into one only this tale starred an all drinking, all snorting, big tit, princess with salty vocabulary winning this valiant prince's heart. When we got to her apartment,

we met her roomy who had small tits. They were twins.

I was bored and thereby asleep in minutes to the rhythm of love coming from the other room. The amorous couple locked themselves up for a love-in rivaled only by John Lennon and Yoko Ono's for a few days. After this magical period ended the Judge left the apartment to call me with genuine urgency in his tone sharing his powerful conviction that, "This short, big tit, bartender is the one dude."

We arranged to meet at a bar to discuss his latest need - an emergency wedding! "Why this one Judge," I asked. "She fits," he said, "anyway, I like the way she says "fuck me, fuck me, fuck me." "Judge come on, you know they all say that," was the most intellectual guidance I could offer on the spot. I shared information with him gleaned back in school in Georgia where couples routinely headed to South Carolina to secure emergency marriages - in a day! In Georgia this was usually done to save the young lady's virtue and the young man's hide. We synchronized watches and arranged to gather at a set time to leave for South Carolina that evening.

The Judge and the buxom bride were married at 4 p.m. at the Courthouse in Aiken, South Carolina the next day. Naturally as the only other party to this affair I tripled as Best Man, photographer and signatory to the proceedings. The Best Man's obligations now dispensed with I offered up a hasty toast to the newlyweds then suggested we hit the road for Atlanta to catch Brother Dave Gardner at the Domino Lounge where we'd celebrate the adorable couple with some good southern humor. Everybody agreed so off we went.

His bride whispered she'd been experiencing an increasingly urgent "call of nature" and needed a bathroom "NOW" just as we entered a two-lane country road. "Must be nerves," she offered with anguish. I slowed the car and started pulling over safely out of traffic, whereupon she took off for some bushes before the car had fully stopped. She scooped up her dress and began running wildly toward some bushes ahead.

The moment we lost sight of her we heard an unusual plop sound, and thereafter her cries coming from beyond the bushes, quickly followed by laughter, then endless, "fuck me, fuck me dead, fuck meee." In a few minutes she emerged to let us know she'd run straight into an open cesspool and immediately sank to her waist in her white wedding dress and her killer white

satin bridal sandals. It was indeed, "A nice day for a white wedding" two full decades before Billy Idol's immortal anthem.

She cursed, moaned, screamed and cried as she made her way back to the car. Every step of hers toward the car led the Judge to take several corresponding steps back from the steaming, stinking slime that covered her from head to toe in the still afternoon heat that was summertime in Georgia. The Judge added with humor and disgust, "Honey, we just got married and offered our vows before God, which included richer and poorer, better or worse...sickness and health, not shitty and stinky! Sorry babe but you're walking." She appeared to be in total shock.

The Judge asked me how far we were from the next town. When I answered a couple of miles, he reiterated just in case there was any confusion that she'd definitely be walking. She walked in a daze by the car still wildly crying, screaming, cursing but interspersed now with shrill peals of laughter in utter disbelief at her predicament. Finally she was able to flag down a pickup truck and the driver allowed her to ride in the back. Just like in the movies she told him to, "Step on it and follow the car in front."

When we arrived in town I walked toward the driver and attempted to offer him a tip for his assistance. He seemed to be a rather typical shy and retiring old southern gent. While he flatly refused and suggested I was, "very generous" the incident had in fact made his day. "Anyway," he added, "it don't seem right to accept money from a couple of newlyweds getting off to such a shitty start," chortling heartily at his own excellent humor. All in all, his Georgia humor was a great appetizer for Brother Dave.

We hosed the Judge's new bride down at the fire house in town; she changed into jeans further along at a gas station. In Atlanta, the Judge bought his new bride a fancy black, low cut dress. Brother Dave introduced her on stage that evening as a big-tit, Ft. Lauderdale bartender who'd chosen to spend her wedding night with him. I have no notion what happened in those next two days, nor in fact how we got back to Florida safely.

Back home, the Judge's first purchase as a family man was a Siberian husky he named "Shit-ka." He wanted to get on with the full family experience. He went on to explain he wanted to begin the marriage steeped in tradition like others do. So despite buying the gorgeous puppy all the way in Sitka, Alaska he felt

naming it Shit-ka more appropriately honored his wedding day memories.

Sadly, the marriage didn't last, though there was a collective twitter of shock among friends, all stunned that the marriage had lasted quite as long as it had. We heard the collective clucking and drawing of breath in awe as they cited it may have lasted as many as several weeks, can you imagine it? They chortled in chorus.

Nonetheless, the Judge and his short, big tit, Venus were enlightened pragmatists and remained firm friends and drinking buddies. They understood the kindred spirit concept and quickly acknowledged that for them beyond drinking, sex, and having fun they had nothing at all in common.

This predicament was no one's fault it simply failed to live up to the fantasy. Apparently she wanted a man she could control. As for his part the Judge knew he could rely on the Doc for a strong shoulder to laugh on. He moved on quickly in high dudgeon all the way at his savvy.

Doc and the Judge set forth onto new adventures, the Judge still laughing heartily at this lucky escape. The Judge's real fantasy was to take over the Jazzman's FM radio station. He wanted an outlet to express what was in his head: straight ahead rock 'n' roll, free expression, zero bullshit, all envisioned through the prism of a chaotic, savant, young mind. He got his wish and thus "SHE" was born. WSHE ... "She's only rock 'n' roll bitch," the Judge would say with a hiss.

**Doc and the Judge: Sex, Drugs, Rock 'N' Roll & A One-Eyed
Scratch Golfer**

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