

DRIVING ON THE BONES OF GOD

GoldType



**You and I
may get
smoked, but
the fat cats
will still dine
on peacock
tongues**

J O E B A G E A N T

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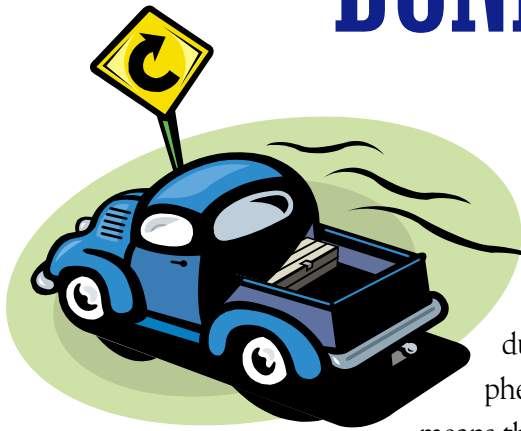
JOE BAGEANT

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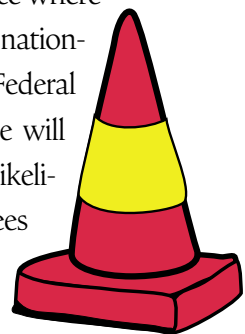
It is 7 am, already hot as hell and another code red day. I am cresting Mount Weather on Route 7 Virginia, driving into the face of a blood red sun behind a pink sticky haze that makes commuting so ghostlike here during the dog days of August. The code red is an atmospheric pollution rating, not a Homeland Security alert. It means the air is not safe to breathe unless you have to.

Beneath the sandwich and cigarette wrappers on the floor of my truck, beneath the road and down hundreds of feet within the earth a hidden city awaits the Apocalypse: a complete underground city with apartments and dormitories, cafeterias, a hospital and its own transit system – a battery powered subway. It has TV communication, streets and sidewalks, a water purification system, power plant and general office buildings. A small lake fed by fresh underground springs ripples in its artificial lighting.

Well, that's what former government workers who have served inside Mount Weather have said. Others say it is no fancier than the average US Army base anywhere in the world, but with a lake.

Ever since the Eisenhower administration, this has been the designated place where the most important people in government will go in a nuclear emergency or national disaster. Mount Weather is the hub of a nerve center of about 100 other Federal Relocation Centers, which guarantee that the really big players in the game will escape, asses intact, even the worst disasters they manage to create. In every likelihood, this "undisclosed location" sheltered Dick Cheney during 911. Employees say so, anyway.

To be in charge of the nation from the bowels of this bizarre monument to



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Cold War thinking would give far saner people than Cheney Doctor Strangelovian delusions. So we can only speculate what that congenitally paranoid old reptile must have experienced; he must have had quite a time keeping that reflexive gloved hand in his lap. Throw in the fact that most of the hired help down there in the hidden city are born-again fundamentalist Christian pod people (mainly because that's about all we have around here), and I don't know about you, but I cannot think of a stranger damned place on this earth.

Mount Weather has always been controversial. Back in 1975, Senator John Tunney complained that it held dossiers on more than 100,000 Americans and that huge "bubble domed" computer banks were compiling data on virtually all Americans. He felt Mount Weather was "out of control." We will never know if it was for, after two Senate hearings were successfully stonewalled by Mount Weather officials, the inquiry died. At that time Mount Weather's "survivor list" had 6,500 names on it. Understandably, just who made it onto the list was a hot item of Capitol Hill gossip and a grisly status symbol of sorts. Chief Justice Earl Warren is said to have been hacked off because, although he made the survivor's list, his wife did not.

I drive over the wooded brow of this technology stuffed mountain twice a day most days, so I often find myself contemplating its meaning. An indigenous medicine man once told me that the earth is a single living deity and that stone mountains such as this are its bones. But lately I find myself actually considering the warnings from the conspiracy freaks, and wondering if I haven't slipped over into the ranks of the "black helicopter" crowd. The mountain-that-never-sleeps has understandably stirred paranoia among already-paranoid elements. By that I mean the appropriately-fearful-but-for-less-than-sane-reasons crowd, such as Aryan Nations and white militias, Virginia's strange Libertarian Party types, and so on. It long ago became part of modern conspiracy mythology, in this case representing fear of big government and technology. I am no fan of conspiracy cults, but always find anything new about Mount Weather interesting. So when I came across this little doozie on an Internet brochure, I was hooked:

WARNING! NO AMERICAN PATRIOT – OR FUNDAMENTAL BORN AGAIN CHRISTIAN – SHOULD BE AT HOME DURING ANY NATIONAL HOLIDAY!

It turned out to be a warning about the planned use of Mount Weather, published by Cutting Edge Ministries in South Carolina. (Contrary to popular belief, fundamentalist Christians are not always rabid George Bush supporters. Six or eight of them seem to be against him.) One of the agencies said to be inside Mount weather is called the Western Virginia Office of Controlled Conflict Operations, which dates back to the early 1950's and the nuclear war freakout that birthed Continuity of Government (COG) activities.

According to the November 18, 1991, New York Times, a secret federal agency [FEMA & COG],

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acting outside the Constitution in the early 1980s, established a line of succession to the presidency to ensure continued government in the event of a devastating nuclear attack. In the words of a report by the Fund for Constitutional Government, succession or succession-by-designation would be implemented by unknown persons who would pick three potential successor presidents in advance of an emergency. These potential successors to the Oval Office are not elected, and Congress does not confirm them. Whatever the case, the intelligence spooks, as reported in the Times, had hatched a plan.

One of the best-kept secrets in this country is that half the intelligence community is nuttier than a bag of grandma's peanut brittle, and in fact, to be so seems a job qualification. I've met a dozen or so over the years and there is always a point in any extended conversation with them where a normal listener starts hearing those alarming weeeeeoooooweeee space sounds as the intelligence spook rattles on about how the world really works. So when the brochure cited the book *Behold A Pale Horse* by author Bill Cooper, my weeeeeoooooweeee alarm went off. Cooper is retired U.S. Naval Intelligence and worked on a project called "New World Order" back before the term took on negative tones. The upshot of the brochure was that Cooper made a case over a decade ago that there was a neocon junta coming, and says that September 11th triggered a piece of legislation that "lay in the weeds" undetected for 11 years 1 month, before the Twin Towers attack, when its provisions were finally enacted. Cooper: "At 3:30am, Saturday, August 4, 1990 ... a minority of United States senators, maybe ten at the most, passed Senate Intelligence Authorization Act for fiscal year, 1991 (S.B. 2834)... Since most attention had been focused upon the Middle East crisis, the public and most Congressmen know absolutely nothing about this bill."

The bill gave the president the power to initiate war, appropriate public funds, define foreign policy goals, and decide what is important to our national security in language so broad as to be basically unlimited.

One more piece of wonk-talk and we will move on. Cooper details some of the scarier National Security Directives, in particular #138, entitled, "International Terrorism", issued 4/3/84. This directive endorsed the principle of preemptive strikes and retaliatory raids against terrorists. Its declared purpose is to reduce international terrorism ... Unfortunately, that can mean American citizens, under the right circumstances, or individual or members of any group the president feels is not on the government's side. And that is the point where Bill Collins – who believes real patriots may well turn out to be people who rebel against the government if things get bad enough – really wigs out.

Especially about the data collection. "I know from my stint with the Office of Naval Intelligence that these dossiers consist of information collected about American men and women who are

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most likely to resist the destruction of our Constitution. . . The data bank is constantly updated so that, when the appointed hour arrives, all patriots can be rounded up with little, if any, effort.” He says the plan calls for this to be accomplished in the dead of night on a national holiday such as Thanksgiving (hence the all caps warning mentioned earlier in the Cutting Edge brochure), when everyone, no matter their religion, race, or creed, will be at home.

Well, of course the average reader’s weeeeeeeeeee button is going full blast at this point about old Bill Collins. So was mine. But I’d be willing to bet you ten dollars to half a ginger cake Cooper and most of his fellow travelers are in such a databank, probably under some heading the public would not flinch at seeing arrested as ‘terrorist’ during any big national security panic.

So now I find myself wondering if I have ultimately gone batshit, become a black helicopter type. . . thinking that if the government can round up paranoids who have harmed no one (yet anyway), who else would be on that list? Registered socialists like me? Whatever the case, thinking down less traveled alleys, no matter how dark and goofy, should not be cause for arrest during any kind of national emergency whatsoever. Hell, one’s protests from a cell in an undisclosed location would not even be noticed during terrorist frenzies, which now look to be a permanent fixture of America for a long time to come.

I’m quite sure by now I have pushed the reading on your nutcase meter over into the red. Speculating on these sorts of things is a credibility risk, but one I have to take. There is just too much of a repressive stench in the air around this capital of ours to avoid mentioning the darkest possible outcomes. If the worst does happen in my lifetime, I want history to record and my grandchildren to know that I gave honest voice to the chill I felt in the air during my times. Even if history proves me dead wrong, and I surely hope it does, then I will happily take my seat on the mythological black chopper with the rest of the nutjobs. Nevertheless, I have received numerous emails from psychiatrists, escapees from Nazi Germany and even one from a former Nazi Party member, who say an authoritarian takeover is underway, or at least being attempted, and that the people in power are dangerous. But the bottom line for me is this: when it comes to the current administration, I really don’t trust the fuckers. Period.

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Whatever this old mountain will or will not be used for in the future, it will not likely host Dick Cheney again. I am tempted to say that once is enough for anybody to be cooped up with that sour old cutthroat, but that is not the reason. Since 9/11, thinking has changed regarding saving the asses of the spooks, generals, bureaucrats and politicians deemed worthy of surviving terrorism or

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some nuclear cookout in downtown D.C. It is no longer considered a good idea to stash the nation's power elite in one location.

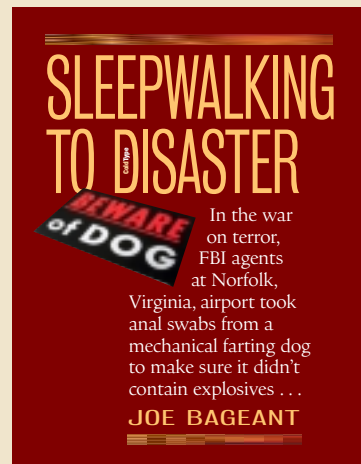
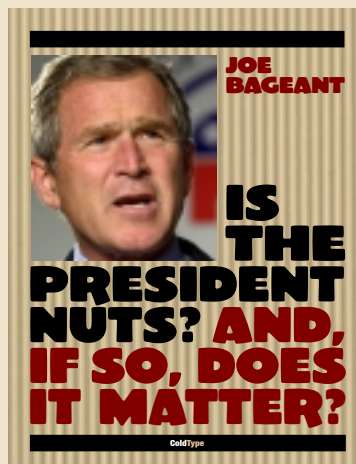
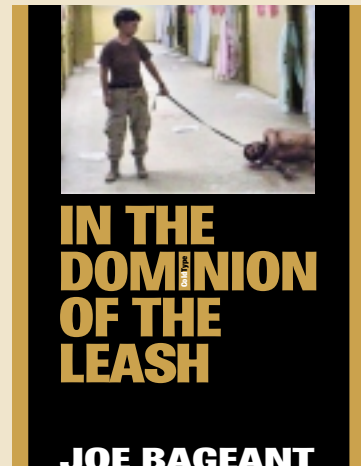
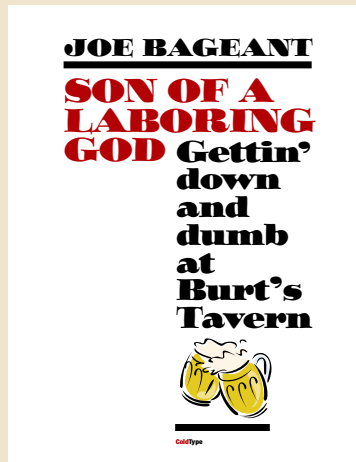
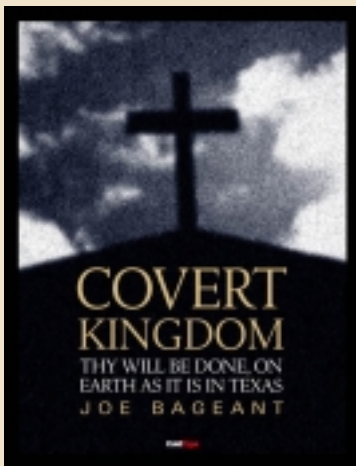
Thus, beginning with the Homeland Security Department's mid-2003 meetings in Crystal City Virginia, emphasis was put on a dispersal approach, creating a wide rural network of safe houses funded by the agency. In other words, chopper them out into the Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania countryside to stay with security-cleared citizens of the right sort. (Wanna bet all or most were Bush contributors?) What it really means is that hundreds of very well-off people with horse farms and estates are getting free heliports, airstrips, private traffic-free back entrance roads, additions to their homes, high speed communications and other amenities. All installed by clearance wielding "security construction" companies that appeared after the early Crystal City meetings. Companies with vague names, all of which seem to contain the word security. In fact, I noticed a while back that an old farm near my own ancestral farm has sprouted an airstrip. I'm sure this has not gone unnoticed by my heavily-armed near-militia cousins living in the house trailer on the ridge up the road. Big-time deer hunters, they practice with their super-scoped high-powered rifles all weekend nearly every weekend all year round. If push ever comes to shove in this country, things may get very interesting over there on those farms, don't you think?

But I'm trying not to think. Like I said, it is hot as hell, another code red in the middle of Dog Days, those days when snakes molt and strike blindly at anything that moves and Congress slithers away from sweltering Washington. And here I am in my old beater truck with two bald tires weaving in and out of windowless vans full of illegal Mexican laborers...rolling down the sides of a hollowed-out mountain, into a landscape dotted with the secret safe houses of the unnamed powerful. The closer you drive to DC, the more money you drive through and the more obvious becomes reality gap between them and us, even in such miserably democratic matters as commuting. As I write plans are being floated for a new commuting lane, a toll "Lexus lane" for those who can afford to pay to whiz past puds like me and those Mexicans in the vans. A red Humvee passes at 85...one of those big commuter helicopters streaks overhead toward DC. Yet somewhere beneath this road rests a cool spring-fed lake carved into the granite, rippling under artificial sunlight in a subterranean city that never chokes in the red haze. And this morning as I left home I saw that the honeysuckle on my backyard fence has died. Some days just make you want to cry.



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