



Science of the Lambs

Chapter One

PROLOGUE - The New World Disorder

It is the year 2025 and the world is utterly mad. The principal culprits for this outbreak of global insanity are cows although monkeys, pigs and even innocent little baby lambs are also complicit.

When, back in 2009, Derek Gow a previously uncontroversial dairy farmer in the sleepy Devon hamlet of Lifton imported a herd of Heck cows from Germany they became the only such beasts in the UK, he surely had little idea of the media sensation that would ensue. The more aggressive members of the herd appeared to be aggravated by Gow's efforts to feed and milk them. Their response to such inflammatory behaviour was to attempt to gore or trample him. After six years of near- death experiences Gow finally reached the end of his tether. Fame, or probably infamy, beckoned when on January 5th, 2015 the Daily Telegraph ran an intriguing headline about Gow's cows "Devon farmer forced to kill 'Nazi' cows because they are too aggressive". The media's fuse had been lit and it burned furiously. The following day USA Today portrayed the story in even more sensational terms "Murderous Nazi super cows turned into sausages". Not to be outdone the Daily Mail punningly dubbed their article "The HERD Reich". With Nazi Killer Cows caught in the media's crosshairs it seemed that Hitler's Unternehmen Seelöwe (Operation Sea Lion), the planned but unexecuted invasion of Britain, had finally been achieved some seventy years after Der Führer's demise. Perhaps this was a cunning Nazi sleeper plan - Unternehmen Heckrinder (Operation Heck Cattle), a stealth invasion of Britain by highly trained bovine National Socialist fifth columnists? Journalistic quips and speculation aside when reading his press clippings Mr. Gow must have wondered what the Heck he had got himself involved with.

The Nazi references in the media did not reflect the cattle's personal political allegiances. These were no Bovine Blackshirts. Instead they referred to the stock's genetic or rather eugenic origins in Germany. In the 1920's the brothers Lutz and Heinz Heck respectively ran the Berlin and Munich zoos where they commenced a breeding programme in an attempt to recreate the ancient breed of Aurochs from descendent domestic cattle. Aurochs were giant extinct wild cattle standing over two meters high at the shoulder and armed with massive

horns. They once roamed freely across the plains and forests of Europe, Asia and North Africa because any creature trying to impede their progress would have a short life expectancy. They were gangsta Aberdeen Angus on steroids. The species became extinct of natural causes, not drug abuse, in the Jaktorów Forest, Poland in 1627.

The notion of recreating an extinct species accorded well with the human tendency to consider the past to be a Golden Age worthy of return. For the Nazis, this meant the restoration of the Niebelungenleid a mythical utopian past of prosperity, pride and perfection enjoyed by Aryan folk in the time of Old Germania. Under the patronage of Reichsjägermeister Hermann Göring the Nazis sought to recreate their primeval paradise in the Reich-occupied Bialowieza Forest straddling the Polish/Belarus border. An avid hunter, Göring was perhaps less driven by National Socialist ideals than the prospect of having something besides Jews and other untermenschen to persecute. Along with the Heck cattle (pseudo-Aurochs) Bison, Boar, Deer and Elk were released into the wilds of the former royal hunting grounds. The forest became a propagandised progenitor of Jurassic Park, a primordial testament to the Nazi's ubermenschen desire both to control nature and kill it at will.

With their muscular build and lethal-looking horns Heck cattle resembled Aurochs in some regards but they were far from indisputable duplicates. Nonetheless they had inherited the wild beast's characteristic natural aggression. These critters were not the passive Bessies, Daisies or Ermintrudes populating the rural arcadia portrayed in the BBC radio soap opera 'The Archers. They wouldn't be content chewing the cud on Pat and Tony Archer's Bridge Farm before metamorphosing it into milk that they are obliged to sell to supermarkets at less than their cost of production. No, these Hecks were red in hoof and jaw.

Of course, despite the headline writer's hyperbole Gow's cows hadn't actually killed anybody, at least not yet, but they were bowver bovines and didn't take kindly to Sunday rambler trespassing onto their pasturelands or to farmhands inveigling them into the dairy. Round-up necessitated an athletic youth being placed astride the loading ramp as bait. The human red rag hurling himself aside at the final moment as the charging behemoth found itself confined in the back of a transporter truck instead of cheerily watching adolescent gore drip from its horns. The bemused beast had failed to fulfil its reputation as an Auroch assassin.

Gow had the last laugh. Having slaughtered the seven Heck's with the worst attitude problems he had them converted into sausages. Sensing a good marketing opportunity, he decided to breed the remaining herd for meat declaring – "I'm not sure how appealing Third Reich sausages would be but they are very tasty, a bit like venison." From Brats to Bratwurst in one fell swoop. But Gow's fascist sausage ingredients were a mere harbinger of deeper, darker events to come. With the allegedly homicidal Hecks the food chain was only toying with the notion of eliminating its predators but those early hoof prints in the Devon mud meant that the culinary catabasis into an era of carnivorous catastrophe had taken its first tentative steps.

By 2025, a decade after Gow's Hecks made their media debut the geopolitical atlas had shifted markedly. One of the principal changes was that the nation state Gow's cows had inhabited Great Britain and Northern Ireland no longer existed. Britain's unexpected election of a majority UKIP government in 2020 had been one of the major change agents. As Prime Minister Nigel Farrago, a man with an Italian name, French lineage and a German wife wasted no time in polishing his European credentials by withdrawing his country from the EU. Like Groucho Marx he had no intention of belonging to any club that would accept a cad like him as a member. Shortly thereafter Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales, the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man and Carshalton were all granted independence and the rump of the country was re-named Little England. The Isle of Wight eschewed the offer of separation and quietly resumed its traditional role as a museum of English life in the 1950's. Realising that their mandate had been accomplished and that their party name had become redundant UKIP rebranded as the Former United Kingdom Unilateralist Party (FUKUP).

Little England's aristocracy had also experienced a bewildering flurry of change. After sixty five years of sitting on the throne Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II suddenly experienced movement. Her unexpected desire to "follow in mater's footsteps" and retire to the remote Castle of May (now beyond her Realm in newly-independent Scotland) in the company of several cellars of gin and tonic caught her successor Prince Charles on the hop. The second Elizabethan Era had ended abruptly and having spent sixty-five years playing the role of The Apprentice even Lord Sugar had grown weary of Charles. Two weeks after his ascension to the throne King Charles VII declared that "Mommy had been correct. The job wasn't right for One after all" and abdicated. Camilla Duchess of Cornwall's divorce papers were served faster than a Djokovic volley and a generous out of court settlement forbade her any mention of tampons or "that biatch Diana" in any memoirs she might care to write. These days the reclusive former monarch rested on his laurels as well as his hollyhocks in the secluded gardens of his Highgrove estate. Nobody gave a fuck, least of all the plants.

Hence King William V became the reigning monarch. With Queen Consort Catherine, or 'Wills and Kate' as the windscreen sticker on their Rolls Royce popularly proclaimed, the pair actively supported causes intended to sustain endangered species – like Royalty. All accusations of dumbing down the monarchy were strenuously denied and the Middleton family resented all talk of bringing Chav influences to bear on the aristocracy. Nothing could be allowed to sully Kate's reign or her sister Pippa's stellar career as an authoress and social guru. Pippa's literary tour de force 'Celebrate' had become a cult bible and essential reading for aspiring socialites with IQ's lower than the Bank Rate. Original and imaginative concepts adorned the book's pages and sparkled into life, like the 'recipe for ice' or 'how about a bonfire on Bonfire Night?' Such acuity was topped only by her visionary insight that cake staleness can be prevented by sealing the confection in an 'airtight tin'. As well as her justly-celebrated brain Pippa also possessed a famous bottom albeit on a more modest scale than her fellow celebrity-for- being-a-celebrity Kim Kardashian's far-flung outlying territories. All-night party people would be bereft without Pippa's gnomonic insights and her svelte buttocks. "Darling, how does one make ice?" "Bloody good question dear. Haven't got a bloody clue. Usually buy a pack of the stuff in Waitrose. Better look it up in Pippa's Celebrate." Pippa was the poster-child of the Hipsters.

Elsewhere in Europe Greece finally jettisoned the Euro and reinstated the Drachma. The Greek Finance Minister asserted that this action eliminated national debt at a stroke as all the country's debt had been denominated in Euros. Unsurprisingly Greece no longer participates in the EU. Nor do Italy, Spain or Portugal whose prospering Black economies unfortunately yielded no tax revenues to support their destitute conventional economies. Italy had, in effect, become an elongated transit tube funnelling economic and religious migrants from North Africa and the Middle East directly toward the new EU borders of France and Austria. Italian people-smugglers had displaced their African antecedents and business was booming. Although the Black Market economy was going gangbusters the conventional Italian economy remained as sick as a poorly parrot as tax evasion remained an Italian art form to rival the Baroque.

Even Francesco Schettino, the hapless former captain of the wrecked Costa Concordia who was famously navigating his way around his young girlfriend on the liner's bridge rather than navigating the vessel at the moment his career, marriage and ship literally hit the rocks, now skippered one of the migrants' coffin ships following his release from prison. Rather than landing refugees on inconvenient outlying islands such as Lampedusa, Schettino and his fellow captains now sailed directly into the Mafia- controlled port of Gioia Tauro where, as part of a bundled service, Frecciarossa trains were waiting to speed the immigrants northward toward EU territory. With the exception of the French Rivera the EU

border no longer extended to its summer playground of The Mediterranean and the chic, well-heeled residents of the Côte d'Azur did not appreciate indigent, sandal-heeled intruders disembarking on the sacred sands of Pampelonne beach.

Further East Russia had renamed itself the Union of Pootinist Republics (UPR) and its borders bore an uncanny resemblance to those of the former USSR. For this reason, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Romania, Bulgaria and Croatia were also no longer member states in the emasculated rump of the EU. None of which deterred the Bruxelles Eurocrats from promulgating endless new edicts on the morphology of fruit and vegetables while pondering the perpetual dilemma of how best to administer a collection of disparate nation-states sharing a currency union despite retaining sovereign powers and divergent independent economic policies. As ever this essential contradiction posed by the EU's founding principles defied resolution. Little England may have finally answered the 'West Lothian Question' by the simple expedient of closing the border with Scotland but the EU was no closer to cracking its 'Saxe-Coburg Question'.

In the UPR statuary offered the new career path to fame and fortune as monuments to its eponymous founder vastly outnumbered the combined stone tributes to Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Trotsky and other minor luminaries of the Socialist pantheon. Today's super-rich Oligarchs didn't control oil fields, airlines or former State monopolies they stood with chisel and mallet in hand ready to sculpt.

The UPR was utterly egalitarian in the administration of its core competency – stifling dissent. It mattered not one jot if you were the Leader of the Opposition, a nouveau riche sculptor the member of a talentless, post-punk, politically active, all- female band or an Oligarch - the State treated everyone to an equal measure of persecution. Those Oligarchs who had overlooked pledging their allegiance to President-for-Life Pootin all now resided in New Moscow, those areas of London formerly known as Belgravia, Mayfair and Knightsbridge. They were also understandably jittery about people sporting furled umbrellas in their presence or receiving afternoon tea invitations from former FSB agents for which occasion protocol demanded the presence of Geiger counters just in case Polonium 210 turned up as an unexpected guest.

Continuing on an eastward geopolitical trajectory the Peoples Republic of China (PRC) continued to prosper and consolidate its dominance of the global economy. Even the

Americans had been forced to concede that the Chinese Communist Party was far more adroit at this capitalism business than Western entrepreneurs and corporations ever had been. China was on a high, it had the world's highest GDP, highest population, highest buildings and the highest levels of pollution. So dense was the smog in most conurbations that foreign visitors often had to be assisted to their destinations by local guides or muggers as they were known colloquially. The PRC had also cornered the market on product piracy. The insignia 'Made in China' was a sure-fire guarantee that the item had been invented and designed elsewhere.

The PRC eschewed the blatant expansionist and neo-imperialistic policies of the UPR but instead concentrated on monopolising the planet's supplies of renewable and irreplaceable raw materials. Nowadays these resources included edible meat. Increasingly the world's cattle ranches were located in Wuhan not Wyoming. Chinese cowboys had become a reality. Their emergence had been reflected in the selection of their anglicised names adopted for dealing with westerners. Sunny, Max, Kim, Hawaii and Brainy were passé but Wayne, Clint, Sundance, Shiloh, Wild Bill, Pistol Pete and Annie were en vogue. Such was the popularity of Chinese cowboy chic that American cowpokes were hired as mentors to pass along the traditional western skills of horse riding, lassoing, rodeo, barroom brawling, cussin', womanising and spitting although it transpired that the Chinese students had much to teach their tutors in the latter regard.

The most seismic geopolitical upheaval had occurred in the Middle East. The Barbaric State (BS) now controlled the majority of the world's dwindling reserves of oil as well as awesome amounts of sand and dust. The BS had enjoyed a brief yet chequered history. As a political entity it was unrecognised by any other state despite trading with most. As is usual cold-shouldering the BS and subjecting it to relentless pejorative rhetoric became a matter of the utmost moral principle for the United Nations, state governments, NGO's and diplomats alike. Unfortunately, in this case the principle involved was the value and scarcity of oil so words and deeds rarely tallied.

Like many established and accepted states the ethos of the BS was a labyrinthine knot of contradictions. In addition to leading the world in the provision of Jihadi training facilities it emulated Western corporate planning methodologies by producing glossy annual reports replete with copious statistics depicting kill ratios by territory; well-executed social networking strategies; well-executed hostages; a rapacious hunger for territory, recruits, materiel, and esoteric, violent tracts from tafkiri doctrines that made the Marquis de Sade look like a pacifist. Recruits were targeted by shrewd appeals to young, foreign-born,

disenchanted Muslims. Their basic message was “why squander your life killing infidels on your X-Box or Play Station when you could be doing the real thing?” Separate but equally targeted messages appealed to Muslim girls to emigrate so that the male dogs of war could play with a little pussy before being rewarded by the waiting celestial virgins.

In many ways the rise of the BS echoed the medieval crusades. To most western minds the distinctions between Sunni and Shia Muslim theologies seemed obscure. The BS eliminated this confusion by the simple expedient of eliminating most Shias. Survivors were offered a choice of conversion or crucifixion. Shias were not the only apostates to attract the BS’s doctrine of religious-cleansing. They also took umbrage with Coptic Christians; Kurds; Chaldeans; Yazidis; Kuffars; Women’s Rights Activists; Aid workers; Journalists; Captives; Tourists; Sunbathers; Antiquities; Art and Cartoonists, especially cartoonists, all of whom were purified by the BS’s avenging sword, commando knife or AK47. They took umbrage with anyone who was not a fellow Jihadist and even then you were not exempt if you happened to belong to an Al-Qaeda affiliated group. Umbrage is an acquired taste, much like Marmite, you either love it or hate it and the Jihadists seemed to thrive on the stuff. Most of all, the BS was an apocalyptic movement foreshadowing the end of days when the armies of Rome are lured to their ultimate defeat at Dabiq. In conquering most of the Middle East and large tracts of Africa the BS was re-enacting the medieval crusades by dragging lands and peoples kicking and screaming into the Twelfth century.

The leader of the BS’s self-proclaimed Caliphate was Caliph Abu al-Benghazi Sa’Dist. At its inception his movement had been termed ISIL; then ISIS and Daesh before rebranding simply as Islamic State once its geographic ambitions extended beyond Iraq, Syria and The Levant. The BS had moved swiftly to acquire new territories, converts, corpses and oil fields. They traversed the trackless desert terrain in their American Dodge Ram and Chevy Silverado pick-up trucks nattily converted into mobile gun platforms. The trucks had been charitably donated to their cause by the Iraqi Army who for some unaccountable reason thought that running away on foot was preferable to driving away from the advancing Jihadi swarm in the comfort of an air-conditioned 4x4. Ultimately though the pick-ups had been donated by the American taxpayers as they had paid for the damn things in the first place which was doubly ironic as they were now paying again for the USAF to blow them up.

Sa’Dist had quickly tired of hearing his Caliphate referred to as ‘so-called Islamic State’ on the BBC news and World Service so he decided to amplify the movement’s key apocalyptic message to non-believers and changed the name yet again to Barbaric State. The new name was emblematic of the Jihadist’s ambition to create ever more terrifying means of riding the

planet of kuffars and apostates. Once upon a time stoning, beheading, crucifixion or immolation sufficed but the challenge to today's visionary executioners to devise new modes of brutality was immense. Their R&D department, which occupied a warren of cells, dungeons, oubliettes and laboratories buried deep beneath the desert East of Raqqa in the dusty little town of Wa'Dafuq, experimented to devise innovate and increasingly debased torture methods that would have left Josef Mengele slack-jawed in wonderment and envy.

Allied nations' Air Forces continue to pound BS territory but other than the unexpected appearance of 50 American right-wing fundamentalist Christians at a Turkish border point armed to their perfect white teeth with M16's and bibles all attempts to entice the armies of Rome to the apocalyptic final showdown had failed. No Western leaders since George 'Dubya' Bush and Tony 'Bambi' Blair had been dumb enough to put 'Boots on the Ground', or the sand, or the dust of the Arabian Peninsula.

Israel had seen the writing on the Wailing Wall. Encirclement by Arabs had been survivable. Encirclement by the BS was suicidal. The ancient holy relics of Jerusalem and Bethlehem were dismantled and along with the entire Israeli population and its Iron Dome missile defence system shipped to South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands where The Holy Land was recreated. Israelites, after all, were quite accustomed to the occasional Exodus. A few days before the national relocation commenced Prime Minister Matisyahu, previously the world's only Hebrew reggae singer, experienced a strange dream. Finding himself on board a boat en route to Antarctica he was mortified to discover that he had forgotten to pack any pyjamas. Unsure of the Freudian or Jungian interpretation of his premonition he was nonetheless alert to the Biblical power of prophecy and the following day he duly issued an edict that all evacuees must remember to bring their nightwear. Ambiguity in the wording of his Press Release however resulted in the strange sight of masses of citizens awaiting embarkation for the polar South Atlantic on the docksides of Haifa, Tel Aviv and Ashdod clad in a colourful variety of lingerie, baby doll negligees, onesies and nightshirts. And lo it came to pass that God's Chosen People set sail for new Promised Land looking like the casting line for a Feydeau farce.

The former British Overseas Territory of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands proved so remote and inhospitable that Hamas celebrated victory and decided that the travel costs to the South Atlantic were prohibitively expensive and promptly abandoned its pledge to destroy the State of Israel. After all, the buggers had rather unsportingly run away. It just wasn't cricket.

On arriving in the new Prom-iced Land Israelites marked the event by commissioning a new National Anthem written in the style of William Blake:

And did those snowshoes in modern time Walk upon Israel's mountains white:

And was the holy Penguin of God,

On Israel's pleasant glaciers seen!

And did the Countenance Divine,

Shine forth upon our blizzard-clouded hills?

And was New Jerusalem builded here,

Among these dark Satanic Floes?

Bring me my Iron Dome of burning Gold;

Bring me my Uzi of desire:

Bring me my Cobra Attack Helicopter: O clouds unfold!

Bring me my Napalm Bomb of fire!

I will not cease from Anti-Semitic Fight,

Nor shall my Spike Anti-Tank Guided Missile sleep in my hand:

Till we have built New Jerusalem,

In Little England's white & unpleasant former Land

No Little English Falklands style Naval Task Force sailed to the rescue of the territories' 30 residents and millions of penguins. By 2025 austerity budget cuts had reduced the Royal Navy to two aircraft carriers whose flight decks were utterly uncluttered by aircraft. In fact, 'aircraft carriers' was somewhat of a misnomer. Strictly speaking these vessels were non-aircraft carrying carriers as their cargo of F35-B jump jets remained 'in development' which is where they had been for the preceding fifteen years. If by some miracle Lockheed ever moved from development into production Little England could no longer afford to buy

the planes anyway having squandered the military budget on cost overruns for the aircraft carriers. The Navy's rather toothless flagships were complimented by several dozen inflatable multi-functional 'nuclear deterrent and attack' dinghies. Organising a day trip around Portsmouth Harbour was a difficult task for the Admiralty these days, mounting a naval challenge to a foe at the other end of the globe was out of the question.

Finally, the United States had wearied of trying to defend its porous southern border against intrusion by illegal immigrants and made Mexico the 51st State or as Mexico preferred to see matters the USA became its 32nd State. Following the merger, the US had more oil, more gas, more pot and better chimichangas whereas Mexico got four expansion NFL franchises, won consecutive World Series baseball championships and encouraged prominent Narco Cartel families to head north and enjoy the dolce vita in Las Vegas. The Mexican drug wars were finally over, they were now the United States of America and Mexico (USAM) drug wars. After more than half a century as the only member of the US Commonwealth Puerto Ricans were outraged to have been beaten to Statehood by the upstarts in Mexico.

The election of President Donald Trump and his running mate Sarah Palin on November 8th, 2016 provided political satirists with an inexhaustible supply of raw material while simultaneously causing apoplexy among foreign leaders and US diplomats. Between them the 'Leaders of the Free World' could just about muster a double-digit IQ but only on a good day. Consequently, the forty-fifth Presidency of the United States played out like a 21st Century Hollywood remake of 'Bedtime for Bonzo'.

Trump had promised the electorate a maverick Presidency, one that would dispense with conventional political wisdom and shake things up in Washington. He did not disappoint. Within two months of his inauguration he had re-branded the White House 'Trump DC,' added it to his luxury hotel portfolio and was charging Trump Platinum card members \$25k per person per night to 'sleep with the President'. His 'plain talking' had succeeded in offending and ostracising every world leader be they friend or foe. The US thus entered a self-imposed period of 'splendid isolation'. 'All the better to focus on issues in our own backyard rather than deal with those furriners' declared the new President. When, during his domestic briefing, Trump learned that the US National Debt stood a few nickels short of \$20 trillion he took Executive action and ordered the Attorney General to file for Chapter 11, a tactic he'd successfully deployed several times during his business career. Despite being informed that the Bankruptcy code related to businesses not nation states Trump

persisted and took the matter to an exasperated Supreme Court giving no truck to advice that were his appeal to succeed, and the US default on its debt, it would effectively herald the demise of the capitalist system. So the splendid international isolation was accompanied by four years of pointless domestic stagnation as the argument crept through the disbelieving courts and added billions to the debt in legal fees.

Unfortunately, Trump's Cabinet were of no assistance in disentangling either the international or domestic impasses. Eschewing the traditional methods of appointing like-minded political colleagues, subject-matter experts or career diplomats to key administration posts Trump avowed not to honour 'those who had gotten us into this mess in the first place' and instead appointed contestants from his reality TV show 'The Celebrity Apprentice' who 'I've seen solving real world problems in person.' Problems as daunting as raising the most money by selling wedding dresses or assembling a special four-page male fitness editorial for Cosmopolitan. Thus, in his hour of need, Trump's 'Kitchen Cabinet' comprised the intellectual titans La Toya Jackson, Dennis Rodman, Lou Ferrigno, Khloe Kardashian, Sharon Osbourne, Arsenio Hall, Gary Busey, Meat Loaf, Cyndi Lauper and David Cassidy collectively known to the media as 'The Trumpette Section'. Sadly, none of these heavy hitters had much to contribute to economic policy or the mounting problems of State.

Despite these challenges Trump managed to honour a traditional Republican election pledge and 'get the government off people's backs' by closing the public school system and selling all the former educational real estate via his property development company. Instead Alphabet, Google's new holding company, was awarded a contract to provide remote learning capabilities to America's youth and Walmart were assigned a franchise to replace FEMA's \$11 billion annual budget by providing disaster relief programmes. "They have locations all across this great country and offer an ample supply of paracetamol, energy bars and clothing" declared an exuberant President.

Trump was, however, thwarted in his promise to 'build a wall along the US-Mexican border to exclude rapists' by the merger accomplished during the dog days of the Obama administration. He was heartened to learn that the new USAM border with Guatemala and Belize was only 697 miles long compared to the 1,989 miles of the former US-Mexico border. Also, by using illegal migrant labour he could build the wall at a fraction of the budgeted cost.

Throughout this strange combination of mayhem and inertia Vice President Palin, who was so out of her depth that she constituted a danger to shipping, kept the populace entertained with her blithe social commentary such as "But obviously, we've got to stand with our North Korean allies" and her penchant for enhancing the language with her folksy illiteracy by crafting neologisms like 'Refudiate', 'squirmish,' 'misunderestimate' and 'wee-wee'd up'. Her imaginative use of English resulted in a redefinition of the term Palindrome. No longer did it only refer to a word like 'radar' that is spelled the same the same forward or backward but also to pure Alaskan gibberish. God bless the United States of America (and Mexico) because with leaders like these it needed all the help it could get!

Elsewhere on the planet, primarily South America, Australasia, the Indian sub- continent and Tristan da Cunha little happened and sensible nations kept their heads down hoping that no one else noticed.

Clearly events had unfolded rapidly over the decade since Gow's Hecks became sausages. The world had changed and precious little of it was for the better. The portents had been present in 2015 but no futurologist, prophet, soothsayer or mere mortal had accurately foretold what would occur with livestock contagion, cross-species contamination and food security, nor their dramatic impact on geopolitics. Instead the world's intellects were preoccupied with climate change, reducing carbon footprints, renewable energy, rising sea levels, terrorist threats, regional conflicts, and the pair of booty's belonging to Kim Kardashian and Pippa Middleton.

Arguably the initial clues to the forthcoming Ebola contagion arose back in 1989 in the unlikely environs of Reston, VA close to Dulles International Airport. Reston, a planned 1960's community, was in effect a commuter suburb of Washington DC lying only about 10 miles west of the Beltway. Along with 50,000 people it was also home to several hundred crab-eating Macaque monkeys housed in the Hazleton Laboratories. Despite the frequent monkey business conducted in the nearby US Congress & House of Representatives Macaques were not endemic to Virginia and had been imported from the Philippines. Despite being immigrants these monkeys were not destined to collect Green Cards, settle and prosper in their new homeland. Instead they were being quarantined following their arrival at Dulles prior to being shipped to university, military, private or government research laboratories where the lucky ones were injected with HIV, anthrax, botulism or bubonic plague. The less fortunate were subjected to invasive brain experimentation. None of this was done for the Macaques benefit, instead the research was designed for the betterment of higher primates.

One of those higher primates and a beneficiary of the Macaques sacrifice in the cause of cosmetic testing was Kim Kardashian. Kim K was the planet's finest living example of a media creation. She represented celebrity's apogee and was simply famous for being famous, a socialite and TV personality who enjoyed occupying and taking selfies of her curvaceous physique. As a higher primate, Kim was unique in possessing two asses. The first was her husband Kanye West, a famous Rap & Hip- Hop chanteur. Kanye possessed an ego that was never knowingly upstaged particularly at entertainment industry award shows. Being married to Kanye did nothing to harm Kim's career prospects. Her second ass was her own prodigious posterior. In 2014 Kim attempted to break the internet by revealing her pneumatic derriere and vertiginously deep butt crack on the cover of Paper magazine. The internet survived the exposure but only by a hair's breadth and several server farms were sacrificed in her attempt. When the celebrated couple were invited to attend a charity function in London attendees were exhorted to 'display their largesse'. Kim was up for that challenge and obliged by wearing a figure-hugging black bustier corset topped by a transparent bubble-wrap skirt. Her largesse was unmistakable; indeed it had been gift-wrapped for the occasion. Vocabulary and spelling had never been her strong suit.

Back in Reston several decades earlier, much to the scientist's chagrin the Reston Macaques began dying in quarantine before making their rightful contribution to scientific advancement and Kim's future fame. The monkeys were infected with a new strain of the Ebola virus imaginatively named the Reston Virus (RESTV). After testing the animal handlers employed at the site six were found to have seroconverted but remained asymptomatic. The virus had crossed species but it could be assumed to have a low pathogenicity rate in humans.

Despite this welcome discovery the notion that Ebola had taken residence in suburban Washington DC alarmed officials. Down the road, George H. W. Bush had recently taken residency in The White House and he took a dim view of pathogens as neighbours. No Sirree! Bush was a man who preferred his viruses to inhabit remoter locations like Saddam Hussein's Iraq. Bush became the planet's foremost NIMBY and the administration's Centers for Disease Control and the Army rolled into action. Two of the unfortunate Macaques were injected with massive doses of Ebola in a failed attempt to produce an antidote vaccine, the rest were exterminated and incinerated. The laboratory building was deemed a Level 4 biohazard and demolished.

Over the next 6 years RESTV was detected in monkeys imported from The Philippines at facilities in the US and Italy but humans remained unaffected. Then in 2008-09 Ebola was detected in Philippino pigs. It had also crossed species infecting a swineherd and a meat processing worker. Four other humans, who had been in the vicinity of the poorly porkers, were infected but all six remained asymptomatic to Ebola.

In 2014-15 a significant Ebola outbreak occurred in West Africa mainly affecting Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia with secondary or outlying incidents reported in Nigeria, Senegal, Democratic Republic of Congo, Spain, Mali, the UK & USA. Five strains of Ebola were identified in the outbreak including RESTV. Over ten thousand fatalities resulted from twenty thousand human infections. The cause was attributed to cross-species contamination arising from humans eating diseased bush food.

Before 2016 few people had paid much attention to autothysis. The process of self-sacrifice in the animal kingdom hadn't extended far beyond a few species of genetically empowered ants and termites that possessed the ability to rupture or explode internal organs thereby releasing toxins to kill predators...as well as themselves. These valiant ants and termites were the animal variants of the suicide bomber. Ants could be armed and dangerous. Termites could be terrorists. As few humans had occasion to interact with, or piss off, these volatile creatures the concept of animal suicide remained a largely unexplored topic. As with the link between animal foodstuffs and the spread of Ebola people also missed the early warning signs of developing autothysis.

As the first incident occurred in the picturesque but remote and sleepy glacial U- shaped valley of Lauterbrunnen in Switzerland the case of the kamikaze cows attracted less media attention than Gow's famous publicity-friendly Hecks. In the summer of 2009, over the course of three days, twenty-nine cows and bulls threw themselves over a precipice on the steep-sided valley plummeting to their deaths on the rocks of the peaceful valley bottom hundreds of meters below. Investigators were puzzled by the suicide and indeterminate in their explanations – severe weather spooking the herd, disorientation or demonic possession each being mooted as causes. No one connected the incident with the presence of parties of Alpine rambblers on footpaths far below the cliff disturbing the animal's tranquillity with their incessant yodelling, inane sing-songs, idle chitter chatter and ludicrous bell-bedecked lederhosen. This was not a case of suicide but the first attempted homicide by animals. Their murderous endeavours were thwarted by the fact that bovine aeronautics remained in their infancy and a 750kg cow or 1,000kg bull has notoriously poor aerodynamics. Udders had yet to evolve into rudders and the tail rotor remained

significantly underpowered. In fact, none of their airborne technology would help cows achieve a pin-point landing. Rather than pulverising their intended targets the cattle simply missed the ramblers by a country mile and splattered themselves across the exposed rocks. A local restaurant re-branded to Die Fliegende Kuh whose signature dish was a tenderised steak served with a 'Cow on the Rocks' cocktail. Otherwise the bizarre initial attempt at Bovine Homicide went unnoticed and faded into obscurity.

The would-be cow bombers broader motive was simple revenge. Livestock raised for human consumption were seeking to avenge their kind on their predators, us. In the recent past the practices of animal husbandry and the meat processing industries had poor track records. Bovine spongiform encephalopathy (Mad Cow Disease) in cattle; scrapie in sheep and goats; cross-species contamination between the two; horsemeat contamination in foods purported to contain beef were merely the headline news items in a succession of recurrent production crises, scandals, frauds and epidemics crippling agriculture and food retailing.

As humans mismanaged their food supply animals suffered as a consequence. At the height of the 1996 Ebola epidemic in the UK 4.4 million cattle were destroyed and incinerated on funeral pyres. Livestock were sick of human failings and wanted people to share their suffering. Like Göring's desire to recreate an historic utopia through Aurochs, cattle hankered for the simpler past life of an Ungulate Utopia. The ability to chew the cud in the peace of an Alpine pasture with the freedom to fart as much methane into the atmosphere as they pleased seemed preferable to death from BSE and mass incineration. Being raised for human food was bad enough as the only outcome was a managed death before being butchered, ending up on a plate or in a take-out container but being slaughtered prematurely because of human negligence was worse. If they possessed the power of speech livestock would have proclaimed "We're mad as hell and we ain't going to take it no more". It was time for action.

Ebola offered a tantalising path for revenge demonstrating the inherent vulnerability present in the food chain. As the noted epicurean Jean-Anthelme Brillat-Savarin was fond of saying "Tell me what you eat, and I will tell you what you are." The aphorism could equally apply to the animal kingdom. Industrial mass-production meant cows were no longer simple ruminants grazing on stalks of grass in their peaceful pastures. The modern cow was fed a diet of antibiotics, hormones, pesticides, fertilizers, and protein supplements. Before 1987 this bovine banquet included bone meal protein supplements derived from the carcasses of sick and infected animals. Thus, herbivores became both carnivores and cannibals. Thus, scrapie infected sheep begat Ebola in cattle which in turn begat vCJD in humans.

Variant Creutzfeldt - Jakob disease is a human neurological degenerative disease. No cause of death is attractive to the victim but vCJD is a particularly nasty piece of work and would be no sane person's choice of exit music. 229 people contracted the disease in 1987 and died as a consequence, 177 of them in the UK. Small beer as a body count but for the first time other than the occasional accidental choking of an over-exuberant diner Meat really was Murder. Animals had a weapon...themselves. Planet Earth was entering the Age of Autothysis.

Ebola offered a much more fertile prospect for predator punishment than vCJD. The West African epidemic had a far higher body count and had it not been contained relatively swiftly and had diffusion occurred on a larger scale it would have been far worse. Other than productivity Ebola offered further advantages over vCJD. It was highly contagious and via human-human transmission could spread like the proverbial Plague. It was also faster-acting with victims typically succumbing only a week or two after the advent of symptoms.

Ever conscious of the commercial imperative to minimise cost and maximise profit cattle feed manufacturers in Albania, Romania, Serbia, Bulgaria and China more or less simultaneously hit upon the idea of importing pig by-products from The Philippines where production costs were negligible and Ebola thrived in the animal population. Their concentrated cattlefeed supplements fortified with nourishing Ebola allowed the disease to first enter the Western meat food chain in 2017. The downtrodden, exploited and yoked masses of mad-as-hell cows across the world simply wolfed it down.

Ironically the first known victim of cow-borne Ebola was Cordelia Charlotte Burgermeister. Ironic because at the height of the UK BSE epidemic in 1990 the then four-year-old Cordelia Dummer's father John Selwyn Dummer, Conservative Minister for Agriculture, had attempted to feed a hamburger to his daughter in front of the assembled British media in a vain attempt to demonstrate the safety of British beef. Prudently, and showing a wisdom beyond her tender years, Cordelia demurred to eat the parentally proffered burger. Bravely, and stupidly, the Minister instead bit into the burger and seemed to pronounce it both "delicious and perfectly safe" although with Dummer's mouth being full of meat and bun it's impossible to be definitive about the quote. The Press Pack maintained a healthy distance for fear that the Minister would projectile vomit.

The incident remained the most infamous political food gaffe since President Bush Senior vomited into the lap of the Japanese Prime Minister at a State Reception. As a rule politicians and food don't mix well. A rule proven yet again many years later when Ed Moribund, then Leader of the Labour Party, was filmed maladroitly masticating a Bacon Butty while looking as uncomfortable as a puritan in a whorehouse. Sometime after Dummer had been lampooned by the media for his ill-judged burger photocall a family friend's 21-year-old daughter contracted vCJD and suffered a lingering and painful death. By that time British beef had been banned in the EU for a decade and Russia for sixteen years.

Twenty-seven years after the incident Cordelia's judgement on what to put in her mouth finally deserted her. While dining with her German husband at the Beef Bizarre pop-up restaurant in Islington she devoured a medium-rare Filet Mignon. Two days later the headaches, nausea, muscle pain and fever began. Diagnosis at this point may have offered a ray of hope had an antidote been available. After the West African Ebola outbreak two potential serums had been commissioned for testing but once the outbreak was contained Big Pharma adjusted its R&D priorities. Why produce a cure for an illness that had already been controlled? No market, no money, no margin, no antidote. Cordelia's fate was sealed along with those of millions of other carnivores. Their goose was cooked.

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