

ANALOG GUYS IN A DIGITAL WORLD

Special salute to all the real people

It was time to spring for an HDTV. Best Buy has a deal for a 42' flat-screen LCD less than \$1000, so 'me and Velda' go down there and make the arrangements. Geez, a couple of years ago I think the cheapest high-definition digital was four grand.

Delivery is straightforward, they just take it out of the box and place it on the stand. Tomorrow the cable guy hooks it up with the new controller[1]. (I always try to tip these fellas... don't know what Emily Post says, but if it's a major job or they're doing me a favor, I hand them each a \$5.)

Which almost brings me to the point:

We have a problem with the initial cable hookup, so the next day a technician comes and goes through the troubleshooting process, which is quickly successful. It always seems to be successful with these men, and I'm pretty sure none of them has been to college. :)

I remember reading Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's book *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*; Ivan or someone makes the observation that the men who really know how to do things, like laying bricks or raising farm animals, don't get any credit in the Soviet system. They don't get much credit here either.

As someone who mostly deals with words and books and ideas, I only come to down earth some nights and weekends. And most of the people I know live "up there," too. That is, their jobs are engineering, education, clerical, and so on. It's easy for us to lose track of what life is like for a lot of people, if not most of them, who work for a living.

I don't want to get all dewey-eyed here, but my feeling is the real people like these competent, caring, bright (presumably noncollegiate) guys who just got me a dynamite cable signal are the ones who get most screwed by the system. Screwed primarily by a devious subset of the "up there" folks who have used the law basically to plunder them:

"Law grinds the poor, and rich men rule the law."

—Oliver Goldsmith

Well, it isn't rich folks exploiting poor folks, it's more like synthetic folks riding herd on real folks.[2] I've been over this ground before. When you have a powerful government-corporate alliance—in our case for years stealing continuously from the productive class at a rate of 40-50% of wealth generated—the honest working stiff takes it in the shorts every day.

Then maybe these cable guys want to blow off some steam with a few beers or mellow out with a couple of tokes, or not wear their seatbelt, not wear a helmet, wear a gun, drive fast, have fun, do something to remind them they're free. And WHAM! that teeming mass of government parasites known as the criminal justice system grabs them and grinds them into fine sand.

Or tries to.

All I'm saying is these real people feel the sting of the corporate state more than anyone. They, not some group of idealized geniuses, are the Atlas most near the shrugging point. Underneath their even-mannered exteriors, they're "mad as hell and not going to take it anymore;" we need only to point them toward the Bastille.

Free the American 300 million!

[1] On February 17, 2009, by federal edict, over-the-air analog TV signal transmission will cease. Congress has appropriated \$1.5 billion to help the 20 million people who receive analog broadcasts to purchase analog-to-digital converter boxes.

[2] I like Gatewood Galbraith's book, *The Last Free Man in America*, for its analysis of "the synthetics"—big oil, big pharma, big government—which he places at the root of most of our problems.