

# THE SENSATIONALIST: #21

9/14/23

“The Earth is flat! And you killed god!”



This Edition Includes:

2-3: Inhale. Exhale.

4-5: Simple, Cost-Effective Police Reform

6: In God...

7: Don't Scare the Toilet Monkeys!

7: Self Portrait 1

8-9: This is Where I Am Meeting the  
Universe: The Eternal Pool

9: Ego Dearth

# Inhale. Exhale.

Henry Levitt

## *Inhale.*

It's broad daylight on the far corner of the construction yard. I look up to a truck pouring concrete and wince when my eyes make contact with the sun.

## *Exhale.*

I'm in a dingy cleaning supplies room--at least it feels like it. Through the dim lighting, an effort championed by a single, flickering overhead light bulb, I can barely make out control knobs on a table and vague movements of a suited figure in front of me.

## *Inhale.*

The foreman saunters over to me; break's over. He corrals me into a cargo elevator, his carelessly pudgy body wafting self-righteousness stronger than his body odor. His face displays twisted indignance toward my apathetic work attitude.

## *Exhale.*

The suited figure comes closer. I make out his face, freshly shaven, mid 30s, beginnings of deep lines forming from self-imposed stress. He grabs hold of my clammy wrists and leads me directly under the bulb. I hear a metal object dragging on concrete behind me.

## *Inhale.*

The screech and hum of the elevator ends with a brief moment of grinding metal. The two of us step from the platform into an open structure that looks down on the neighborhood of warehouses. Woven around steel beams and through holes in the plywood ceiling are thick, black, electrical cords.

## *Exhale.*

The scratching metal stops at six inches behind my heels. The invisible figures, who dragged the metal object, each grab one of my shoulders and coerce me downwards; my buttocks hits a cold, hard surface--a chair. The suited figure walks towards me once again, now holding two insulted chords, each with a glinting and grotesque tangle of thin copper wires peeking over the rubber insulation.

## *Inhale.*

The foreman hands me a piece of paper and grimaces. It's a warning letter for chronic absenteeism, this time promising termination for three more missed days. It doesn't matter, I know I'm dying by the end of the week.

**Exhale.**

The invisible figures come into peripheral view, kneeling while pulling leather straps tight around my ankles. They fasten my wrists to the arms with old belts and finally bind my abdomen into submission.

**Inhale.**

The foreman turns his back to me, looking out the window and beginning his lecture on my lack of commitment. Accepting my limited days, I let the lack of consequences finally take control. Acting out my first irate intrusive thought, I grabbed a sledgehammer to my left: off the ground, waist level, now shoulders, only pausing when it's hovering over his head--hovering directly in line with his brain stem. His shoulders relax signaling that he's finished his sermon.

**Exhale.**

The serious man, still holding those cords, closes the final distance between us two. Methodically, he wraps one exposed wire around the left chair leg. Then he moves behind me and attaches the second mess of wires to the spine of the chair--just above my highest vertebrae. Satisfied, he takes his place behind the booth with levers and knobs. My hands go limp.

**Inhale.**

My grip strengthens, the sledgehammer hangs in the air, hesitating. The moment swells with gravity.

**Exhale.**

The suited man's hand tightens around the lever directly in the middle of the electricity control board. He pauses, breathing in the significance of his power.

**Inhale.**

I count

**Exhale.**

3, 2, 1...

# Simple, Cost-Effective Police Reform

Henry Levitt

Need it be said that the methods of policing across much of the United States is less than ideal? Daily we are bombarded with headlines about the newest techniques in police brutality and free masterclass videos (if you watch the accompanying advertisement, of course) of violence that belongs only in Brazilian prisons or in books on medieval torture. Not only is such brutality a commonplace occurrence (with many Americans still seeing no problem with law enforcement officers beating the living shit out of a black driver at a traffic stop) but the police have also achieved a higher murder rate than Japan, Singapore, Hong Kong, Luxemburg, and Indonesia; U.S. police kill Americans at a higher rate than murders occur in five countries.

**Obviously, something must change.**

While police reform advocates propose a multitude of improvements local units should make to increase accountability, competence, and community trust, I, with my endless (and often farcical) policy ideas, want to suggest a very simple shift in policing mindset that spends no taxpayer dollars. Now, don't think that I delude myself so much to believe that the forthcoming proposal is the panacea we need, but in conjunction with other reforms, my plan will certainly curtail a significant portion of everything from killings to garden-variety brutality.

The plan is simple: police ought to treat everyone like an attractive, middle class, white woman with a concealed carry permit.

Now this "plan" (if you can call it that) may seem exceedingly basic even to the point of foolishness, but I assure you that this paradigm shift of sorts will carry significantly more benefits than one may initially assume. My rationale is as follows: white women, especially those who are attractive and well-dressed, seem the least threatening to law enforcement officers. And the less threatening a suspect appears, the lower the chance of violence, excessive force, and unsubstantiated killings.

Firstly, attractiveness never hurts. While it is not crucial that a police officer treats an elderly man like an attractive young woman, the added charm will encourage a little more kindness on the officer's part. Pretty privilege is a real thing and I highly doubt that police officers have qualified to be immune to it.

Second, the "middle class" or "well-dressed" stipulation is also not necessary but police officers have historically been quite goulish to the poor. So if officers treat everyone like a middle class, white

woman, then they will assume that the suspect has better things to do than drugs--like picking up the kids from soccer or drinking prosecco by the pool (remember, alcohol is not a drug in the United States).

Third, while law enforcement sees whites, and especially women, as less threatening, I also have a hunch that police learn a little bit of misogyny in the academy and therefore view women as less intelligent. This may seem like a negative, but I think that this actually emerges as a positive. An officer likely gives those they think are dumb more benefit of the doubt; there are fewer assumptions of nefarious scheming. That incident of looking into windows of the house on the market at the end of the street (the listing wasn't on Zillow!) becomes a case of innocent curiosity instead of a forthcoming plan of armed burglary. Besides, this country is filled with a ton of stupid people unaware of the law beyond the prohibition of murder, theft, and public nudity, so any more patience is always helpful.

Finally, I did include that clause "with a concealed carry permit" because it is always important for officers to stay alert in a situation so that they are not caught off guard when a gun magically manifests from nowhere. This does not mean, however, that they should immediately shoot as cops are taught in the academy that white women have notoriously bad aim.

Actually, many fewer officers are killed each year than The Union may have us believe given the extreme measures police infamously take at traffic stops including but not limited to the "shoot if you see any sudden movements" policy. Nine officers were killed in 2021 as a result of "investigative/enforcement activities" which includes everything from traffic stops to active shooter responses. So it is specious that officers absolutely *need* lethal weapons at traffic stops.

Regardless, 73 officers were killed in 2021 while they killed 1,093 individuals in the same year with the overall 2021 kill to death (K/D) ratio coming in at 15:1. This makes police officers an excellent teammate in any generic shoot-em-up video game.

Overall, this simple mental trick--imagining all suspects as an attractive, middle class, white woman--should reduce the amount of killings and beatings by police by a large chunk without spending a penny. Again, while my plan may not be the cure-all, it is certainly an easy and important step in the way of police reform. Furthermore, I will gladly travel around the United States to police stations or meet with The Union bosses free-of-charge to present this plan in order to ensure its economic viability.

**Until the next police reform plan,**

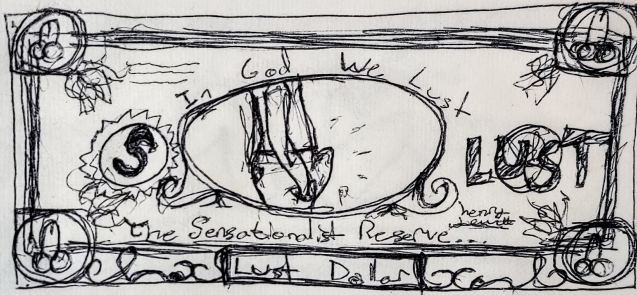
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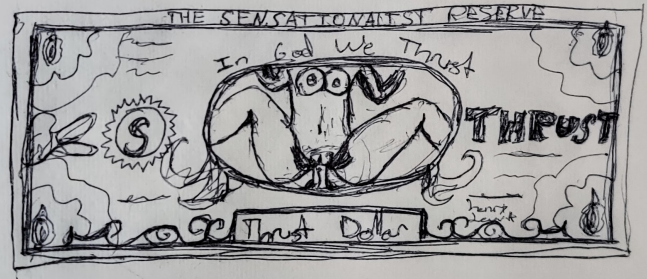
# In God... [Triptych]

Henry Levitt

## 'In God we Lust'



## 'In God We Thrust'



## 'In God we Bust'



# Don't Scare the Toilet Monkeys!

Henry Levitt

I'm so fucking tired of seeing weird shit in places it shouldn't be. Just this morning, in between classes, I had to take a leak. Normal enough, right? Yeah well when I pulled my dick out over the urinal it cast a shadow on all the debris in there. Pretty normal until the fucking brown stuff got scared and started moving around like some kind of messed up sea monkeys. How in the Hell did they get in there? Does no one flush the goddamn piss pot? Well I was so sick of this shit that I took a piss in the urinal on the left. There was no way I could look these fuckers in the eye while dumping ammonia in their house. Anyway, after washing my hands I had to get another look at the urine monkeys. No way I was hallucinating weird shit again. Sure enough, these bastards came out of the dark and started darting around. They saw my face and ran back down the pipe like a bunch of bitches. That's what they are. Yeah well shit's moving around in the urinal and I'm so fucking tired of it. Anyway, what's up with you.

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## **This is Where I am Meeting the Universe: The Eternal Pool**

Henry Levitt

There is a pool of water. It is dark and calm. Trees lend canopy over the water's cool edges. I step in. I step out. I now step out of existence for the entirety of this description. Serene and calm the water's surface buckles underneath an almost imperceptible breeze. Little water bugs glit and glide in the shadows. Further into the stagnant pool is an oblong brown plug extruding a wispy tuft of aquamarine blades that bridge then lie calm among the water's touch. In the center of the pool is a tree. It's small and simple. The trunk finds itself among tufts and blades over nondescript masses of muck, mire, and moss merging mellowly in mirky mirth. Most of the pool is a bog. Along its edges is a slight canal of placid darkness glistening; still.

Under the surface leaves and sticks and bugs lose their name to inches of muck. The bottom of the pool, except for one pebbly cove, is muck. The pool is stagnant. It sighs without ever letting out its full breath. There it holds its water, tree, tufts, and muck in simple, gloomy stagnation.

The water is clear but darkness permeates any visible purity. The water sits still and clean. It is completely pure above the muck it preserves, the muck it suffocates. The pool sustains sterility--pure water on darkening and compressing sticks and leaves. All shapes slowly sink into the shallow abyss of formlessness just below the surface.

And the pool, in its beautiful anaerobic simplicity is forever; still but for the occasional ripples of waterbugs, or a breeze, or a tree's falling debris. Within that water, near the cove, before the murky tufts beg it become bog, is a tiny infinity of timelessness. It was and always will be under those blades of aquamarine grass.

One blade arcs over from its base with all the others and swoops to meet the fine clarity of eternal entombment. The tip of the grass blade is mummified in dark purity of water. Inside the faint perimeter of the pool are many oblong tufts. They tend to connect to form larger islands. Though an island may continuous and seemingly solid, its very nature



is that of smaller tufts, and the tuft blades, and the blade fibers, and the fiber of ever smaller strings.

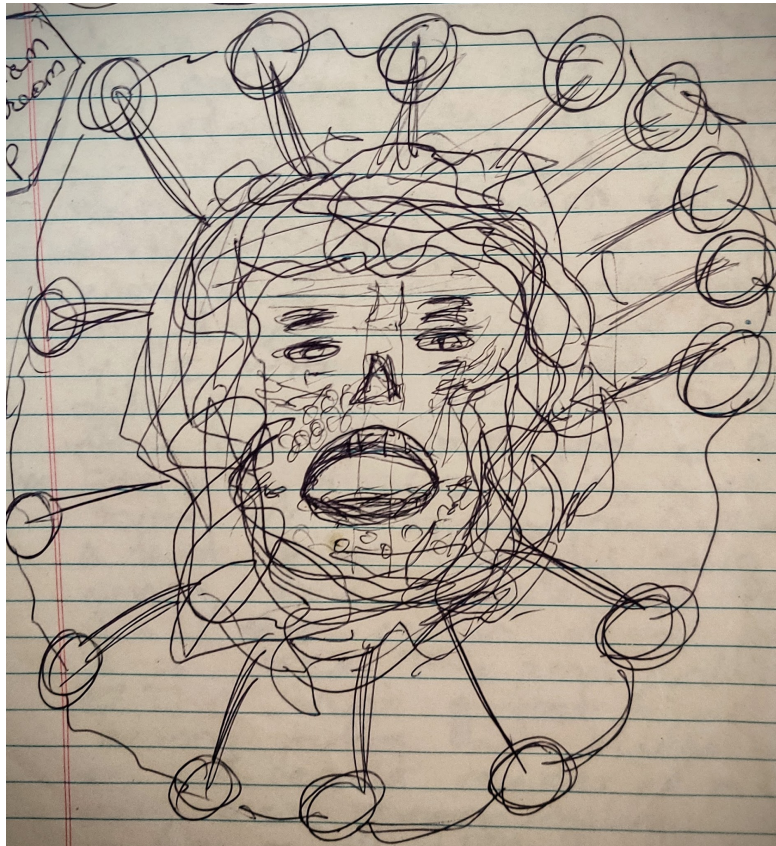
Even the pool, the small simple bog, is unknown. Its shallow depths of clear murk are paradoxical yet fully within its self-contained realm--a little world of its own.

The gloomy depths of the abyss hold brown and navy and deep green mellow stagnation. It is a pool of darkness that creeps no closer to the unknown shade of the forest. The forest is forever beyond the self-suffocating murky mess of formless clarity.

Somewhere within some forest, the pool still glistens in serene isolation. Removed yet embraced by the forest is the pool, forever settled under its eternal weight.

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# EGO DEARTH



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# THIS HAS BEEN THE SENSATIONALIST: #21

“Nothing is perfect; everything is.”