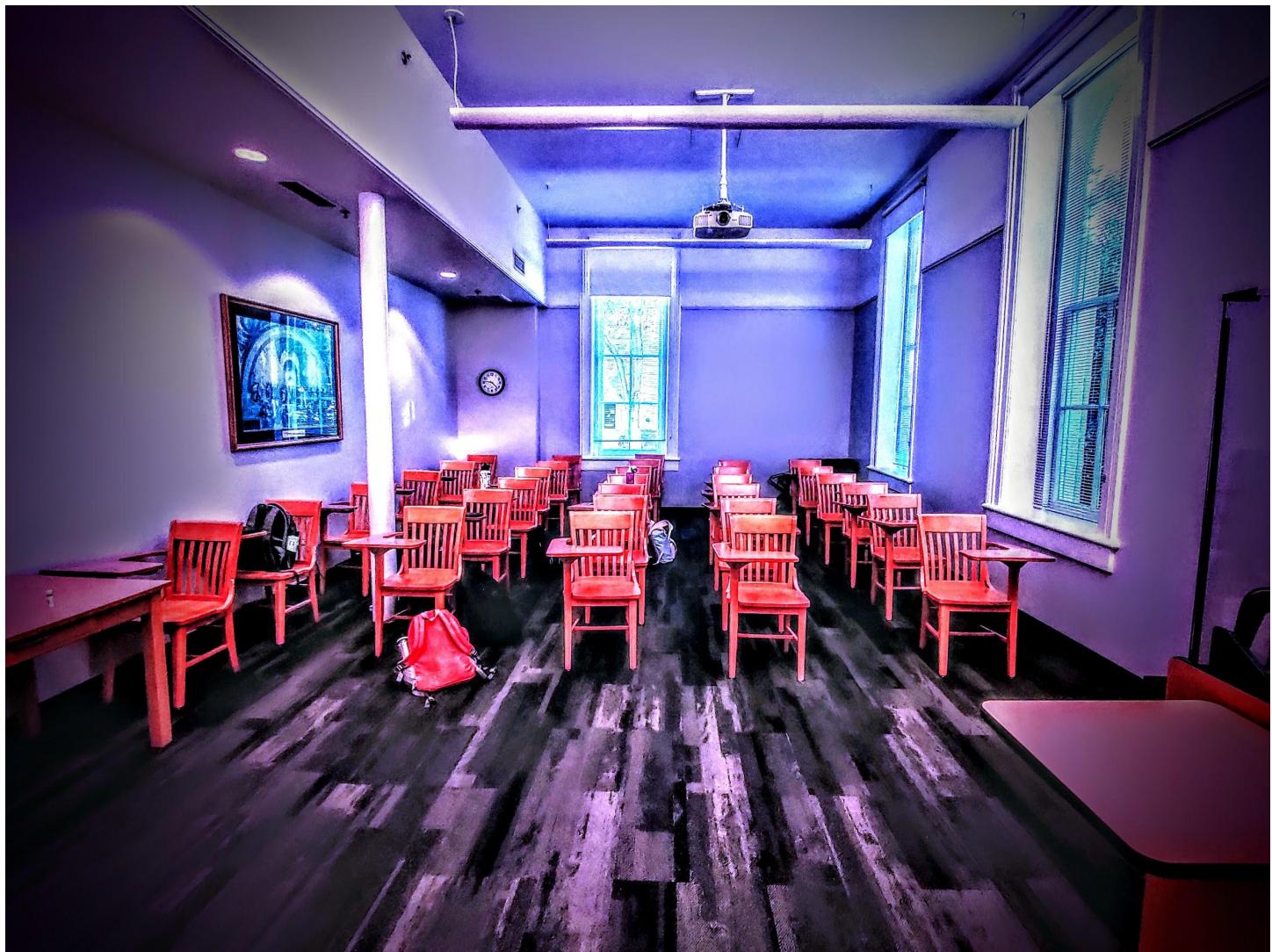


The Sensationalist: #7

10/26/22

"Is the grass greener? Maybe...but it's just fucking grass" -Ellis Zusel



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Patchwork Quilt

Lily Montgomery

A patchwork quilt; that's my life thus far. The first square is pink, pink for the color of my nursery, for the love I felt the minute I was born. Pink for the small apartment I lived in while my 20 year old parents got their lives together.

The blanket turned brown with our move to Baltimore when I was 7. Brown for the dirt outside our house, deep inside the city. There's holes in the quilt, holes from the bullet casings we found on our lawn. The brown was home, comforted in the familiar chaos.

There's a blue ribbon woven in, for my brother who was hurt in a way we didn't know how to live with. The ribbon tears through the brown, ripping my home to shreds.

The next patch is orange, for change. Orange for the 673 mile drive down to our new home while the leaves fell around us.

The gray piece is sown in, sprinkled with black as my feelings and body changed. 12 years old, in a new place, all I wanted to do was fit in. The blanket fades to pitch black as I realize my patch doesn't fit in, the lines aren't cut straight.

The last patch is rainbow, rainbow as we move to a new, vibrantly open place. The colors meld together as I learn to accept myself, I pull swathes of fabric down from the closet and weave them into the new life I've built.

On Exile

Henry Levitt

Not too long ago, in the grand schema of human history, exile used to be a common punishment. But all that changed with the pesky 15th Article of the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It states that every individual has a right to a nationality. While I may take issue with this right, it will not be on the grounds of my personal incredulity that I will argue for exile to be used once more (it just seems inane that of all of the UN's "rights" we do not follow, we have decided to follow this one. Especially because it creates such an inconvenience with sentencing for specific crimes). Besides, exile is an awesome punishment and risk-mitigation technique. The principle of exile being, the criminal in question cannot commit their nefarious activities on the offended nation's soil, or to that nation's citizens, if they are incapable of entering the territory. The punishment aspect of exile runs deeper, though: exile is analogous to being disowned by one's family; your government does not recognize you as a citizen, it will not provide any benefits to you, and will not fight for you. Odds are, you are also being separated from your family, friends, most connections, assets, and countrymen--but at least you're not dead...right?

While exile is not the best punishment for every crime, it does offer an elegant solution to certain disruptive deeds. The first crime that comes to mind as fitting of the punishment of exile is treason. Now this can be high treason, low treason, mediocre treason, red treason, blue treason, and even the kind of treason that makes you take off your socks and wade in the piss-filled kiddie pool. For the sake of this essay, treason will be defined as an attempt to dismantle the standing government and/or its necessary institutions. Someone, usually a high profile, public individual, who attempts treason ought not to be protected by the same government he tried to overthrow. The insurgent has proven that he does not value the systems and mechanisms that maintain the rule of law, so he need not be subjected to those laws at all. The government's next steps should then be to strip the individual of his citizenship, blacklist him, and send him on his not-so-merry way to sulk on St. Helena or brood on the sun-soaked beaches of a Thai island. While this may not seem wholly a disagreeable fate, one must remember that in such banishment exists a certain social isolation and a shameful smudge, similar to the mark of Cain, that can never be wiped clean. I am a firm believer of the punishment fitting the crime, and it appears that exile fits treason like Cindarella's glass slipper fits her foot. There are many other benefits of exile besides the satisfaction of a perfectly apt punishment that will be discussed after I highlight a couple more crimes deserving of exile.

Another crime that can be met with exile is extreme tax evasion. The justification follows similarly to treason: one does not value the benefits and responsibilities of the government's social contract, and so, she should be freed from those proverbial shackles. Perhaps exile on the first offense is too grave, but the second

offense warrants exile for at least as long as the game of hide-and-seek with the taxman was played. Ideally, capital exile would be implemented, where the felon is forced to live in a moneyless commune for some time. However, I and a few other contributors to this magazine may be tempted to commit tax evasion if this were the case, so I cannot in good conscience label this a punishment.

One last crime that ought to result in exile is gross public annoyance (gross as in very obvious, though sometimes it can be repulsive, too). This is not a real crime currently, though if it were, exile would be ideal. We would be able to banish the offenders and never be annoyed by them again. The only issue is that the internet has enabled insufferable figures like Elon Musk, Andrew Tate, Kanye West, and Marjorie Taylor Greene (though she would already be exiled for treason) to become even more annoying from literally anywhere in the world and without any form of citizenship. So perhaps a better solution would be to raze the internet--but that is a topic for another essay.

I previously made the case that exile is the most fitting punishment for the aforementioned wrongdoings, but I have yet to logically argue why exile is, in and of itself, a first-class punishment. Firstly, exile removes the problem person immediately--they are instantly and wholly ripped from the fabric of society and have no recourse as homeland security and immigration officials will be on the lookout for the traitor. And while I will acknowledge that social media and the internet can still act as a proxy to facilitate treason even from abroad, the fact that the person can never actually step foot in the country again will circumvent greater issues that arise from unresolved treason.

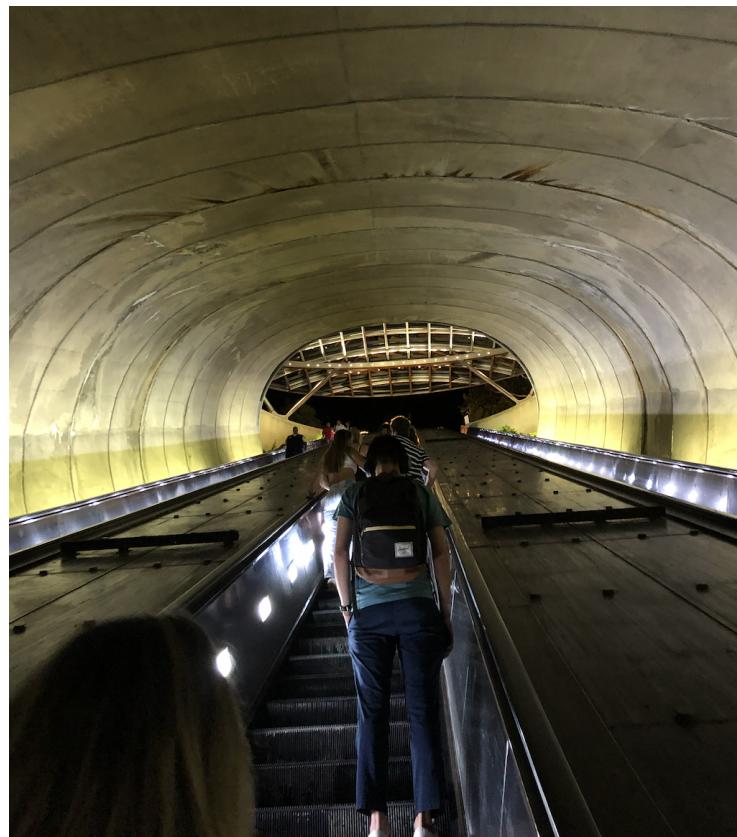
Furthermore, exile requires the least effort and taxpayer intervention to assuage the threat caused by the banished individual. Instead of imprisoning them (most likely in a decadent white collar prison) where they must be fed, given a bed, treated decently, etc, all the government must do is put the name on a "do not enter list" and let those snide customs officials take it from there. This will cost much less money and likely present some joy to those twisted custom officials. After all, I believe everyone deserves some kind of joy.

And finally, while exile is great for mitigating threats, it is also a unique punishment. One's freedoms are not necessarily restricted, but their national identity is stripped and they will forever live in shame, failure, loneliness, and perhaps neuroticism. They will be separated from the life they created and probably their purpose of treason, too. Overall, the traitor's existence will change drastically.

Exile has unfortunately been phased out in many industrialized nations due to part one of article 15 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. However, I see no reason why courts should not keep this punishment in their back pockets reserved to deliver the perfect, beautifully ironic, punishment to traitors, repeat tax evaders, and grossly annoying figures. Exile may have been the past, but I believe it is also the future. That is why I'm asking you to please sign my [change.org](https://www.change.org) petition asking the United Nations to amend article 15 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Ascent to the Heavens

Andrew Knispel



Hopefully

Foolishly

Blindly

I can only trust

For my arrival

What lies in wait

Unable to look high enough

But I am

I can look back on my path

As I strive to achieve

Start Your Free Indoor Herb Garden with Me!

All of my projects thus far have been personal, but I thought it would be fun to involve all of you in this next one. I do apologize for not starting this earlier, so unfortunately it will only be free for my warm-weather-residing brethren and sistren. However, I still encourage everyone capable of this project to give it a shot and send me pictures to be featured in future issues. This is a multi-week project, and so I will publish one phase each week for you to follow along.



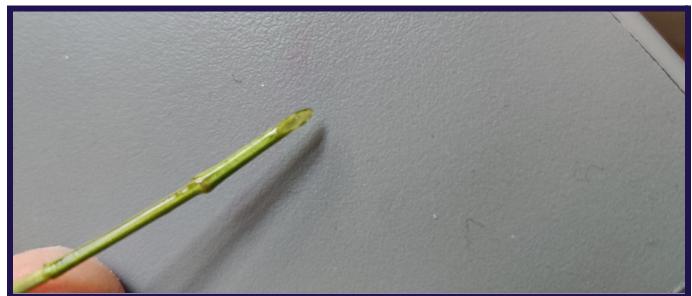
Materials for the first step:

- Scissors
- Herb cuttings
- Water
- Drinking cup

Step 1: Locate herb plants. Botanical gardens are probably your best bet. There is most likely a botanical garden in a 20 minute radius from you and usually entry is free. Once in the botanical garden, gently pinch

off a 6 inch cutting (not including flowers) of herbs of your choice. The image to the left and below is Mexican Tarragon. I visited the Latin American Ethnobotanical garden to procure my cutting. If herb plants in your area have lost their leaves, you can pick up a packet of herbs from the supermarket with excellent results.

Step 2: Now we're going to propagate the herbs. This means that we're going to stimulate the herb cutting to grow roots so that it can be planted in soil. To do this, strip off the bottom third of the leaves and use your scissors to make a diagonal cut at the end of the stem as seen below:



Step 3: Put the cuttings in the water (cut side down) and fill until the water is 1-2 inches below the first leaf. Now we wait until the next update.



Any Green Light at All

Sanaa Wright

In a world full of Gatsby's,
Endless tunes of laughter
Functions dragging on into the night
Until there really no function at all besides
Some dancing from who to who
But never more than that

In a dream of plucked flowers
And drooping daisies
Falling, swirling into pools of
Orange liquor and convenient kisses
Handed out like cutlery and party favors

In every moment
In the heart of every moment
where there any green light at all
Anything to reach for
Or to have
I am like Carraway
Watching from
Across the
River

Texas Death Penalty Pilot Program [Transcript]

The following is a transcript of an interview with Texas executioner Dr. D.Z. Capria. He recently started a new pilot program that uses heroin to kill its death row inmates. I wanted to know more about this cutting edge program, so I went straight to the horse's mouth to learn more.

Frankie Vinehardt III: Hello Mr. Capria, how are you today?

D.Z.Capria: Great, thank you. It's actually Dr. Capria, but you can call me D.Z.

Frankie Vinehardt III: I wasn't aware that you're a doctor. My apologies, D.Z.

D.Z.Capria: Technically it's an honorary PhD from Amarillo Community College...but the State doesn't have to know that [incoherent chuckling].

***Awkward pause ensues**

Frankie Vinehardt III: ...Stupendous. I wanted to talk to you today about your new pilot program. I hear you're killing murderers with heroin.

D.Z.Capria: Yes sir. And we hope to expand to include drug dealers and rapists next year. [Mutters unintelligibly about rapists despite half the guards' ongoing sexual assault cases]

Frankie Vinehardt III: Are you worried about your heroin supply if you kill all the dealers?

D.Z.Capria: Oh Mr. Vineheardt, not at all! My brother worked for Blackwater back in '02 and has an in with the Taliban [prideful smirk]. They sell some of the best black tar on the market. Even better than the Mexican stuff if you can believe it!

Frankie Vinehardt III: Hmmmm, I think I'll need a sample. So how did this program start?

D.Z.Capria: [Rolls eyes and gurgles] The attorney general changed the death penalty rules last year. Now, we get a \$20,000 deductible per felon for lethal injection and whatever we don't use we get to keep. Big Pharma marks up the drugs by 1,500% so we would have to pay out of pocket about \$4,000. It's just not worth it.

Frankie Vinehardt III: But how did you decide to use heroin?

D.Z.Capria: Last Christmas I gave my nephew a \$100 gift card to Red Lobster, and somehow he managed to trade it for enough heroin to OD. Thankfully [sarcasm detected] we got him the Narcan just in time. Ever since then I've been giving him a Red Lobster gift card every time we need to...dispatch an inmate. We've figured out that it takes about \$65 in Red Lobster gift cards to kill an adult male.

Frankie Vinehardt III: Has the program been a success?

D.Z.Capria: I would say so. We've put down more people in the last year than the last seven years combined. [Girates nervously in chair] Most deaths are relatively easy and quick, too.

Frankie Vinehardt III: Most? Has there been a time when the procedure didn't go as planned?

D.Z.Capria: Well, after the local Red Lobster closed, we didn't know where to get heroin. So we gave our inmates mandatory prostate exams [Blushes and coughs]. We take health very seriously here. Unfortunately we didn't find any pure heroin, but there was a bag labeled "speedball" so we gave it a shot. After administering the dose, the inmate shit himself, broke out of the constraints, and started running around the room and banging on the door. Officially he died of cardiac arrest, but we're pretty sure the 27 bullets we put into his body might have had something to do with it! [Laughs heartily] You should have seen the look on his face! [Dr. Capria stares blankly then cracks into a smile and begins to laugh again].

Frankie Vinehardt III: Right. What about when the injection goes well? Does it kill the criminal completely?

D.Z.Capria: Oh they're dead alright. Deader than dead. So dead that they're ab-so-lutely dead! You've never seen someone deader than that.

Frankie Vinehardt III: Impressive. Thank you for allowing me the interview today. You should join my blunt rotation sometime.

D.Z.Capria: [Face gets red] The fuck did you say to me? Did you just reference pot? Get the fuck out! Get the fuck out you dirty addict! This interview is over. Security!

*...and the truth is, you're inseparable from life,
But life is separable from you.*

THE POINTLESS PANTS PROJECT (P.P.P.) UPDATE

Unfortunately, no progress (that I am at liberty to divulge) has been made this week. P.P.P. is still in the same stage as the last issue, however, the secret outfit is almost finished. I would like to share that the correct date for the fashion show is November 18th. Original music will also be made for this event.

Music of the #7: Model1

Henry Levitt

This has been The Sensationalist: #7

“Self-pity is the most dangerous vice”