

TRIBES

(Folks, there's R-rated language throughout this thing. Normally I can edit it out; this time, not so much. I may do so later, but now I want to leave it as I wrote it.)

I'm generally an optimist, and it's been my pleasure to be able to write mostly about the good and the noble things in our lives. But the events in the Gulf – of Mexico – have brought to a head a summer and a year that has been getting progressively uglier and more painful to watch.

Who can not see the way the country has changed, not since 9/11, but before that – since the 2000 election? Who cannot feel the split, the division, that rips like a shredding sail on a broken mast, canvas tearing like the sound of musketry, as the rigging falls to the deck?

This breaks my heart. It just breaks my heart into little pieces. I have said less and less as I see more and more, because deep in my core I still don't want to believe that some Americans could willfully and consistently do such destructive things out of such petty and base motivations, things which in time will make the horrors of New Orleans look like a flea circus in a small tent, with the much larger carnival raging unseen in the background.

I've taken sides in these essays, obviously – that's what I do. But I have never, until now, felt the need to take the gloves off and really let fly. I always feared I would regret it, later. I still do. Only now, I fear I will regret it worse if I do not.

So now we must look at **Tribes**.

Now please pay attention to this, because I'm not going to state it again, and if you don't hear it now much mischief will follow:

I believe that the human animal – the raw material of our physical bodies – is essentially interchangeable. By this I mean that I could take the children of Fallujah and turn them all into Astronauts, convert Jewish babies into fanatical, mass-murdering SS guards, and shake a generation of the poorest Voodoo-worshippers in Haiti into a cadre of top-flight nuclear physicists, chemical engineers and computer scientists.

Race has **nothing** to do with this – precisely nothing. The mobs of murdering Hutus and swarms of slaughtering Serbs are as different racially as it is possible to be, and they are cut from precisely the same cloth.

I know this is so because there have been murdering scumbags of every stripe and color in the long history of the human race – *which is depressing* – and that these animals, at any given time, represent only a small percentage of the majority of people, also of every stripe and color – *which is not*. There is no corner on virtue, and no outpost of depravity. Human hearts are indistinguishable and interchangeable. Anyone who claims otherwise is, without further argument or statements necessary, a complete God-damned idiot.

Now, with that said – *have we all heard that loud and clear?* – there are light-years of difference in how various Tribes will behave.

Only a few minutes ago, I had the delightful opportunity to read the comment of a fellow who said he wished that white, middle-class, racist, conservative cocksuckers like myself could have been herded into the Superdome Concentration Camp to see how much *we* like it. Absent, of course, was the fundamental truth of what he plainly does not have the eyes or the imagination to see, namely, that if the Superdome *had* been filled with white, middle-class, racist, conservative cocksuckers like myself, it would not have been a refinery of horror, but rather a citadel of hope and order and restraint and compassion.

That has nothing to do with me being white. If the blacks and Hispanics and Jews and gays that I work with and associate with were there with me, it would have been that much better. That's because the people I associate with – *my* Tribe – consists not of blacks and whites and gays and Hispanics and Asians, but of **individuals** who *do not rape, murder, or steal*. My Tribe consists of people who know that sometimes bad things happen, and that these are an opportunity to show ourselves what we are made of. My people go *into* burning buildings. My Tribe consists of organizers and self-starters, proud and self-reliant people who do not need to be told what to do in a crisis. My Tribe is not fearless; they are something better. They are *courageous*. My Tribe is honorable, and decent, and kind, and inventive. My Tribe knows how to give orders, and how to follow them. My Tribe knows enough about how the world works to figure out ways to boil water, ration food, repair structures, build and maintain makeshift latrines, and care for the wounded and the dead with respect and compassion.

There are some things my Tribe is not good at at all. My Tribe doesn't make excuses. My Tribe will analyze failure and assign blame, but that is to make sure that we do better next time, and we never, *ever* waste valuable energy and time doing so while people are still in danger. My Tribe says, and in their heart completely believes that *it's the other guy that's the hero*. My Tribe does not believe that a single Man can cause, prevent or steer Hurricanes, and my Tribe does not and has never made someone else responsible for their own safety, and that of their loved ones.

My Tribe doesn't fire on people risking their lives, coming to help us. My Tribe doesn't curse such people because they arrived on Day Four, when we felt they should have been here before breakfast on Day One. We are grateful, not to say *indebted*, that they have come at all. My Tribe can't eat *Nike's* and we don't know how to feed seven by boiling a wide-screen TV. My Tribe doesn't give a sweet God Damn about what color the looters are, or what color the rescuers are, because we can plainly see before our very eyes that both those Tribes have colors enough to cover everyone in glory or in shame. My Tribe doesn't see black and white skins. My Tribe only sees black and white **hats**, and the hat we choose to wear is the most personal decision we can make.

That's the other thing, too – the most important thing. My Tribe thinks that while you are born into a Tribe, you do not have to stay there. Good people can join bad Tribes, and bad people can choose good ones. My Tribe thinks you *choose* your Tribe. That, more than anything, is what makes my Tribe unique.

I am so utterly and unabashedly proud of my Tribe, that my words haunt and mock me for their pale weakness and shameful inadequacy.

Membership in my Tribe is not free.

I have been the first person at four accident scenes. I have crawled into overturned cars on country roads, cars whose wheels were still spinning, and gone on hands and knees through broken glass to comfort strangers while uniformed policemen stood around outside and told jokes. I have put my triple-knit polyester chauffeur's blazer over an elderly black woman hit by a bus and used my belt as a tourniquet to slow the dark spread of blood widening beneath her badly broken leg, and been amazed, every time, at how the sounds of approaching sirens seems to come almost before I have time to hold her hand and tell her she's gonna be just fine.

I say this not to glorify myself – on the contrary. I am embarrassed to write such things. I am a pampered and lazy Hollywood TV editor who gets paid insane sums of money to do a cake job while much better people than me do this every day, for peanuts. There is nothing remotely heroic about me. I simply do what millions and millions and millions of my fellow Americans do every day, in ways large and small. They step up to the plate, not because they want to be heroes, but because **someone has to do it**. These simple people donate their time, their money, their food, their cars and their houses every single day, and ask and expect nothing in return, while a few miles away from me in Brentwood millionaire movie stars throw fabulous parties to remind each other how swell they are, then waltz out into their chauffeured limos with their tens or hundreds of millions of dollars firmly in place, feeling good that they had the chance to really make a difference by *raising awareness* of whichever cause they feel will most make up for their feelings of inadequacy and guilt by showing both themselves and us just how much better people they really are.

What kind of money could Barbra and Martin and Tim and Susan and Gwenneth and George and Steven and Viggo and Linda and Harvey and Brad and Angelina and Ben and all the rest – how much could they really put together, if they actually believed what they say – not to mention the cash available to the Malodorous Michigan Manatee of Mendacity? What kind of check could they write? \$500 million would be less than 10% of every outspoken celebrities' combined wealth. That money could take every poor person in LA county and put them into much nicer apartments than the one I live in. They could, at a stroke, shame the President, the Congress, and the evil NeoCon warmongers by putting every displaced person in New Orleans in a Marriott for a year. They claim this is the kind of better human they have evolved into.

Why don't they do it?

They don't do it because that Tribe worships the golden statue of themselves, that's why. A church-going pharmacist in Des Moines would be ashamed of herself for giving only 10% of her modest salary. But Sean Penn can take himself, an entourage and a personal photographer – that's three or four people in a four-person boat – and show us all how incredibly big and down-home he is by sailing off a few feet to rescue people, before the boat sinks from the incompetence of failing to put in the drainage plug. He wore a very nice white flak vest, instead of the passé orange life preserver, because getting shot at is a lot more macho looking, if a million or so times less likely, than drowning because you went out into the water with a *lead* vest rather than a *life* vest. It's a scene in the trailer that runs incessantly in their heads: *In a world run by evil corporations, a rebel who plays by his own rules starts a deadly game of cat and mouse with an all-powerful conspiracy in this searing portrait of extraordinary courage in a life under siege, starring...me!*

I was actually ready to publicly commend the guy, until I heard about the personal photographer. If he wanted to help people – and that's all – he could have paid for that boat, and a few hundred others, manned them with reasonably competent recreational boaters, and sent out a flotilla. But no. It's not about having people saved. It's about something else entirely. It's about having people saved *by Sean Penn*. That's when I realized that whether it's the Murderous Regime in Iraq, or the Murderous Regime in Iran, or the Murderous Storm in Louisiana...ultimately, it's all about Sean Penn. Peace Be Upon Him.

But thank God we have people like him, and the rest of that vain, useless, smug, self-centered, incompetent, insecure and thoroughly **broken** Tribe to point out the error of our ways.

I hate those sons of bitches with all of my heart. And the fact that so much of our society has come to worship these shallow, egomaniacal *dolts* says a lot about where we are, and none of it is good.

Now this next point is so obvious, so simple and so self-evident that there is no way the deep thinkers of the far left will possibly be able to see it.

Let's not talk about Black and White tribes... I know too many pathetic, hateful, racists and more decent, capable and kind people of both colors for that to make any sense at all. Do you not? Do you not know corrupt, ignorant, violent people, both black and white, to cure you of this elementary idiocy? Have you not met and talked and laughed with people who were funny, decent, upright, honest and honorable of every shade so that the very idea of racial politics should just seem like a desperate and divisive and just plain *evil* tactic to hold power?

If such a thing is not self-evident to you, please get off my property. Right now. I should tell you I own a gun and I know how to use it. I assure you that the pleasure I would take in shooting you would be temporary, minimal, and deeply regretted later.

Now, for the rest of you, let's get past Republican and Democrat, Red and Blue, too. Let's talk about *these* two Tribes: Pink, the color of bunny ears, and Grey, the color of a mechanical pencil lead.

I live in both worlds. In entertainment, everything is Pink, the color of **Angelyne's** Stingray – it's exciting and dynamic and glamorous. I'm also a pilot, and I know honest-to-God rocket scientists, and combat flight crews and Special Ops guys -- stone-cold Grey, all of them -- and am proud and deeply honored to call them my friends.

The Pink Tribe is all about feeling good: feeling good about *yourself!* Sexually, emotionally, artistically – nothing is off limits, nothing is forbidden, convention is fossilized insanity and everybody gets to do their own thing without regard to consequences, reality, or natural law. We all have our own reality – one small personal reality is called “science,” say – and we Make Our Own Luck and we Visualize Good Things and There Are No Coincidences and Everything Happens for a Reason and You Can Be Whatever You Want to Be and we all have Special Psychic Powers and if something Bad should happen it’s because Someone Bad Made It Happen. A Spell, perhaps.

The Pink Tribe motto, in fact, is the ultimate Zen Koan, the sound of one hand clapping: EVERYBODY IS SPECIAL.

Then, in the other corner, there is the Grey Tribe – the grey of reinforced concrete. This is a Tribe where emotion is repressed because Emotion Clouds Judgment. This is the world of Quadratic Equations and Stress Risers and Loads Torsional, Compressive and Tensile, a place where Reality Can Ruin Your Best Day, the place where Murphy mercilessly picks off the Weak and the Incompetent, where the Speed Limit is 186,282.36 miles per second, where every bridge has a Failure Load and levees come in 50 year, 100 year and 1000 Year Flood Flavors.

The Grey Tribe motto is, near as I can tell, THINGS BREAK SOMETIMES AND PLEASE DON’T LET IT BE MY BRIDGE.

Now, let’s do a little free associating, just to take the model for a test spin:

I’m going to throw out some names, and you tell me whether you think they are Pink or Grey? Okay? Ready?

Donald Rumsfeld.

Al Sharpton.

Bill Clinton.

Ted Kennedy.

George W. Bush.

Condoleeza Rice.

Okay, my score is Grey, Pink, Pink, Pink, Grey and Grey. Easy, right? Dems = Pink, Repubs = Grey. Now how about these?

John Kennedy

Abraham Lincoln

Ronald Reagan

Franklin Roosevelt

These are more interesting, because there is something very Pink, something warm and emotional and comforting about them. Put all four of them at a dinner table (which I would trade the rest of my life to serve ice water for) and I think you would see four warm, gentle, bright and genuinely funny men.

Now, think:

Cuban Missile Crisis

Fredericksburg

Reykjavik

Pearl Harbor

I get solid Grey scores here. What about you? I get tough, hard-nosed, capable, competent, *confident* men facing evil straight in the eye and not backing down. (And anyone who even thinks about selling short *Reykjavik* as a symbol for those eight years of steadfast resolution should see my gun warning, above).

Also, I see two Democrats and two Republicans. Opposing parties. Same Tribe.

Now, when things are going swimmingly, when the End of History has arrived, as it did in the 90’s, having a Pink president (*careful!*) is no big deal. In fact, it’s a downright advantage. He can be a goodwill ambassador, and charm the pants (*you heard me!*) off of foreign dignitaries and have everyone cooing and gushing about how swell Americans are once the fascists are out of power.

Now, unfortunately for Pink Power, there remain in the world a few people not impressed by this attitude.

Not long ago, National Geographic ran a really first-rate, 4-hour documentary called **INSIDE 9/11**, as perfect an example as you could possibly want of the power of a *real* documentary to enlighten and inform without taking sides.

Watching it was horrible, especially for people like me, because we feel like if we had only known what was going on *we could have done something about it*.

A few weeks ago, a reader was kind enough to send me a link about a theory and seminar called *The Bulletproof Mind*, written by Lt. Colonel Dave Grossman. Just the small blurb I read enlarged my mental horizon by an order of magnitude, because it clarified many of the confusing things I have been feeling as so much of the country plunges deeper into irresponsibility, fantasy, bitterness and delusion.

I excerpt a small portion of it here, without permission, in the hope that those of you who are serious about surviving things like *Katrina* will go [here](#) and buy it.

Lt. Colonel Grossman, a far better man than me, a man who does things I only talk about, writes in his introduction to *The Bulletproof Mind*:

One Vietnam veteran, an old retired colonel, once said this to me: "Most of the people in our society are sheep. They are kind, gentle, productive creatures who can only hurt one another by accident."

This is true. Remember, the murder rate is six per 100,000 per year, and the aggravated assault rate is four per 1,000 per year. What this means is that the vast majority of Americans are not inclined to hurt one another.

Some estimates say that two million Americans are victims of violent crimes every year, a tragic, staggering number, perhaps an all-time record rate of violent crime. But there are almost 300 million total Americans, which means that the odds of being a victim of violent crime is considerably less than one in a hundred on any given year. Furthermore, since many violent crimes are committed by repeat offenders, the actual number of violent citizens is considerably less than two million.

Thus there is a paradox, and we must grasp both ends of the situation: We may well be in the most violent times in history, but violence is still remarkably rare. This is because most citizens are kind, decent people who are not capable of hurting each other, except by accident or under extreme provocation. They are sheep.

I mean nothing negative by calling them sheep. To me it is like the pretty, blue robin's egg. Inside it is soft and gooey but someday it will grow into something wonderful. But the egg cannot survive without its hard blue shell. Police officers, soldiers and other warriors are like that shell, and someday the civilization they protect will grow into something wonderful. For now, though, they need warriors to protect them from the predators.

"Then there are the wolves," the old war veteran said, "and the wolves feed on the sheep without mercy." Do you believe there are wolves out there who will feed on the flock without mercy? You better believe it. There are evil men in this world and they are capable of evil deeds. The moment you forget that or pretend it is not so, you become a sheep. There is no safety in denial.

"Then there are sheepdogs," he went on, "and I'm a sheepdog. I live to protect the flock and confront the wolf." Or, as a sign in one California law enforcement agency put it, "We intimidate those who intimidate others."

If you have no capacity for violence then you are a healthy productive citizen: a sheep. If you have a capacity for violence and no empathy for your fellow citizens, then you have defined an aggressive sociopath--a wolf. But what if you have a capacity for violence, and a deep love for your fellow citizens? Then you are a sheepdog, a warrior, someone who is walking the hero's path. Someone who can walk into the heart of darkness, into the universal human phobia, and walk out unscathed.

He continues:

Let me expand on this old soldier's excellent model of the sheep, wolves, and sheepdogs. We know that the sheep live in denial; that is what makes them sheep. They do not want to believe that there is evil in the world. They can accept the fact that fires can happen, which is why they want fire extinguishers, fire sprinklers, fire alarms and fire exits throughout their kids' schools. But many of them are outraged at the idea of putting an armed police officer in their kid's school. Our children are dozens of times more likely to be killed, and thousands of times more likely to be seriously injured, by school violence than by school fires, but the sheep's only response to the possibility of violence is denial. The idea of someone coming to kill or harm their children is just too hard, so they choose the path of denial.

The sheep generally do not like the sheepdog. He looks a lot like the wolf. He has fangs and the capacity for violence. The difference, though, is that the sheepdog must not, cannot and will not ever harm the sheep. Any sheepdog that intentionally harms the lowliest little lamb will be punished and removed. The world cannot work any other way, at least not in a representative democracy or a republic such as ours.

Still, the sheepdog disturbs the sheep. He is a constant reminder that there are wolves in the land. They would prefer that he didn't tell them where to go, or give them traffic tickets, or stand at the ready in our airports in camouflage fatigues holding an M-16. The sheep would much rather have the sheepdog cash in his fangs, spray paint himself white, and go, "Baa." Until the wolf shows up. Then the entire flock tries desperately to hide behind one lonely sheepdog. As Kipling said in his poem about "Tommy" the British soldier:

While it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that,
an' "Tommy, fall be'ind,"
But it's "Please to walk in front, sir,"
when there's trouble in the wind,
There's trouble in the wind, my boys,
there's trouble in the wind,
O it's "Please to walk in front, sir,"
when there's trouble in the wind.

Understand that there is nothing morally superior about being a sheepdog; it is just what you choose to be. Also understand that a sheepdog is a funny critter: He is always sniffing around out on the perimeter, checking the breeze, barking at things that go bump in the night, and yearning for a righteous battle. That is, the young sheepdogs yearn for a righteous battle. The old sheepdogs are a little older and wiser, but they move to the sound of the guns when needed right along with the young ones.

Here is how the sheep and the sheepdog think differently. **The sheep pretend the wolf will never come, but the sheepdog lives for that day.** After the attacks on September 11, 2001, most of the sheep, that is, most citizens in America said, "Thank God I wasn't on one of those planes." The sheepdogs, the warriors, said, "Dear God, I wish I could have been on one of those planes. Maybe I could have made a difference." When you

are truly transformed into a warrior and have truly invested yourself into warriorhood, you want to be there. You want to be able to make a difference.

While there is nothing morally superior about the sheepdog, the warrior, he does have one real advantage -- only one. He is able to survive and thrive in an environment that destroys 98 percent of the population.

[Emphasis mine – BW]

And that is how I felt watching every minute of that 4 hour documentary.

I could have done something.

If I had known, if I had only *known*, I could have run over that evil, sick son of a bitch Mohammed Atta in the parking lot. I could have been on one of those airplanes. They only had *box cutters*, for the love of God! Those seat cushions have straps on the back for floatation; they'd make excellent shields against a goddam *two inch blade*. *Ladies, listen carefully...when I say go, you throw your shoes and cell phones and these little liquor bottles and cushions and whatever you can, just throw them right in the face of these cocksuckers and guys, when we get up there we need to kill them, fast, just break their fucking necks, just stomp on their heads until they are dead, because I know how to land a goddam airplane and...and...*

Now of course, right at this moment there are people without honor or courage who read that and think this is one big jerk-off chickenhawk fantasy and on some level I guess it is. All I can tell you is that watching that show, I wished to God I had been on one of those planes, asking only that we knew what only Flight 93 knew, and that was the fate that was waiting for us if we did nothing.

Because everybody dies. Even liberals. And all I can say is that I believe in my heart that I would rather die for something bigger than myself than lead a life where nothing is more important than *me*. I admit freely that were I actually there I might freeze up, and wet my pants, and hide behind a stewardess, because you can never really know until you are there. But my times on the highways late at night, and with the only engine silent at 9000 feet over the South Georgia pine forests and at 400 feet climbing out of Prescott Arizona on Christmas day reassure me, a little, that perhaps I might do okay. Just as well as a common person, a common American person in a crisis – that's all I pray for.

Much has been said regarding how much more massive an event *Katrina* is relative to lower Manhattan. But the fact remains that firemen went up the stairs when people were coming down, and one ordinary group of people on an ordinary flight on an ordinary day defeated the very best that the global terror network could put together. Our ladies junior varsity squad whipped the living shit out of their Super Bowl A-team over Pennsylvania that day, and they did it because for one brief shining moment enough passengers on that airplane went **Grey**.

And in Louisiana last week the governor cried and the mayor blamed everyone but himself, and half the country bought every single stinking Pink lie about global warming and missing National Guard units and blamed the sheepdogs while the wolves raped and pillaged and looted everything in sight.

Hundreds of New York firemen and policemen never came home, **never** came home, but New Orleans Police Chief P. Edwin Compass III said, of his men, "*If I put you out on the street and made you get into gun battles all day with no place to urinate and no place to defecate, I don't think you'd be too happy either... Our vehicles can't get any gas. The water in the street is contaminated. My officers are walking around in wet shoes.*"

Well, Chief, I'm sorry your men's feet are wet, but getting their feet wet is *part of their fucking job*. New York's Finest aren't complaining about wet feet or places to pee because they **died** doing **their** jobs. They were sheepdogs.

Here is a video of New Orleans finest helping themselves at WalMart.

So, on one hand, we have a very blue city – New York – confronted, out of the clear morning of a perfect fall day, with no warning – with a terror attack, and they march toward the sounds of screams and falling bodies and die by the hundreds. One the other hand, we have New Orleans law enforcement – also blue – whining about wet shoes and helping themselves to the happy period of lawlessness that followed an event that had been expected for no less than seventy-two hours.

In New York, we had a governor who got every available resource on the ground as fast as it could get there, and in Louisiana we have a governor who...cried. Governor, your job is to *not cry*. Your job is to be strong. We have plenty of civilians crying. You want to cry, cry in the car on the way home like everybody else did four years ago. Crying Governors, race-baiting mayors and looting police do not a Finest Hour make.

In New Orleans we have a mayor who left some 400-500 buses sitting fueled and underwater in the Ray Nagin Memorial Motor Pool saying that evil white conservative America was selling out his people within 24 hours of the catastrophe, from a safe and dry and adequately toileted location, while four years ago we had a Mayor who ran to the site of the disaster so quickly it is a full-blown miracle he was not killed when a building collapsed literally on top of his magnificent, combed-over head.

Now, much has been made of the fact that Ray Nagin is an incompetent, race-baiting black man, and Rudy Giuliani, who was neither, is white. Also, feminists are upset that people dare attack Governor Blanco because she is incompetent, weak, indecisive, and also a woman. And no doubt there are salivating long-haired, short-cortexed idiots just waiting for this to be over so they can sail into the comments section and tell me what a racist and misogynist I am.

Well, here's the news flash: Nagin isn't incompetent because he's black. He's incompetent because he's incompetent. Condoleeza Rice is black. Colin Powell is black. Ted Kennedy, a man well-acquainted with rising water crises is as white as they come. Kennedy is incompetent; Rice and Powell are two of the most competent people on the planet.

This is about tribes, all right: not black and white tribes, but rather a battle between the *capable* and the *culpable*.

Same holds for Governor Blanco. She's not weak because she's a woman, or because she's a Democrat. Truman was a democrat. The Buck stopped *there*. She's weak and indecisive because that is the individual she is. I wish history could work with variables: I'd love to see what Margaret Thatcher would have done in such a case. It would not only have been better, it would have been *good*. That woman was *tough*. She could be Grey as granite. And, for this, the Pink Tribe despises her.

Now it may come as a shock to those foreign luminaries who come to lecture us on how an American city leveled by forces roughly equivalent to a nuclear explosion reduce it to something "like a third world country."

This difference being lost on them seems to be this: in an American city there is garbage on the streets and people wander around looking for food and water, AFTER BEING LEVELED BY A CAT 5 HURRICANE, which is the storm swell of the Dec. 2004 tsunami, plus winds, extending inland not for two or three miles but for two or three HUNDRED MILES. In a third world country, people living in stacks of garbage, searching for food and water happens EVERY STINKING DAY. That is the NORM.

It may come as a bit of a shock to these worldly sophisticates, who are so quick to point out how parochial and ignorant we simple folk are, that the United States of America has local, state and federal governments! And that this is the order in which *crises* are *dealt with!*

A person of some modest education might have remembered that the worship and adulation fostered after 9/11 was for the NYPD and the FDNY. No one was buying FEMA hats after 9/11, because FEMA is essentially a mop-up agency. It's the first responders, the local governments, that will determine if a city will live or die. The *State* -- that means, the "governor"-- has the sole authority to mobilize the National Guard, and the governor of the state of Louisiana was not only slow to do that, she turned down NG assistance from several OTHER states as well. The President does not have the **authority** to drop precious egg salad sandwiches from Michael Moore's missing helicopters. We do this ON PURPOSE. We limit the power of the federal government, as those of us fortunate enough to have spent time in Civics, rather than Self Esteem classes, are aware. This is so that we do not develop a central power so strong that eventually we end up with idiot inbred royals, or *Presidentes* for life, on the face of OUR money.

Now, if the critics on the far left are saying that George W Bush needs more power, then by all means let's amend the Constitution before Hurricane season ends. Me, I'm agin' it. I think the man has enough to do, really, besides worry about how many water bottles need to be kept in the basement of the courthouse in Alachua county, Florida and take down the names of every potential bus driver in Torrance California, not to mention the name of every first responder in every town and county in every state of the Union. I've noticed they are not shy about criticizing his performance as President. That's legitimate, because *that's his job*. His job is not to tell the Mayor of New Orleans which buses need to be at which corners at what times and with what drivers to pick up which people and take them to which destinations. That's *the mayor's* job.

It's always such a *pleasure* to have Germans enlighten us on the best way to move large groups of sick, downtrodden people by rail. The only motivation I can ascribe to such behavior is that same one that propels young dim boys to tear the wings off flies.

Here is the Grey philosophy I try to live by:

Sometimes, Bad Things Happen. Some things are beyond my control, beyond the control of the smartest and best people we have, even beyond the awesome, subtle and unlimited control of the simpering, sub-human village idiot from Texas.

Hurricanes come. They have come for all of human history, and more are coming. Barbarians also come to steal or destroy what they cannot make themselves, and they, like human tempests, have swept a path of destruction through civilization since before history was written on clay tablets on the banks of the Euphrates.

I am not a wolf. I have never harmed a person in my life. But I am not a sheep, either. I know these forces are out there, and wishing it were not so will not only not make them go away -- it will rob me of my chance to **kick their ass** when they show up.

I am a sheepdog - an amateur, stand-by sheepdog. Police officers and elected officials get *paid* to be sheepdogs. Sheepdogs don't cry, and they don't complain about wet feet, and they don't wail about conspiracies while waiting for the help that *they themselves* are sworn to provide.

Also, unlike so many in the 'reality-based' community, I do not believe in a deity. For instance, I don't believe that a single god-king can summon storms, hypnotize entire populations and be the focus for evil in the world. Many people refer to Iraq as George Bush's war, a charge I find shockingly unfair -- to *me*. I voted for him in 2004, and I support that war in earnest. In future billboards, I would like to be mentioned as having Kids Die in George Bush and Bill Whittle's War for Oil, and I expect the new crop of MoveOn bumper stickers to say DEFEND AMERICA: STOP BUSH AND WHITTLE. I'm tired of being left out of this. George Bush did not take over the White House with a six-shooter; people voted him into office with the biggest number of votes in American history. I'm one of those people, and *damn you* liberal cheapskate sons of bitches, I demand my equal time.

On the subject of disasters man-made and natural, one more thing from INSIDE 9/11 rings a powerful bell with me. At the very end, as Osama makes his way out of Afghanistan and into hiding, he tells an *Al Jazeera* reporter his motivations for the 9/11 attack. In his own words, to the friendly folks back home, he explains that his goal was to hurt America so badly that we would have *no choice* but to go after him and start the world-wide jihad that would result in him becoming the new Caliph, ruling from his recently completed palace outside Kandahar. He had seen much of the Pink tribe in his formative years, seen weakness and retreat in places like Somalia. He thought he had our number but he made the mistake of having perhaps the least Pink individual in modern history in the White House. He made a worse mistake in flying his murdering deathbots into a town that looked Pink, that was painted Pink from head to toe, but whose foundation was rock-solid granite Grey.

If I had gotten my 2000 voting wish and Al Gore had been president that day, would he have been Grey enough to knock that entire regime over and carry the fight to the rest of the region? Or would he have issued Stern Warnings and Worked With Our Allies and gotten the UN to Issue a Major Ultimatum?

I don't know.

But I do know, that there, in his own words, the wolf said why he did what he did: he wanted to provoke War with the US, and would do whatever was necessary to accomplish it. And if we had not given him this war, **he would have kept striking until he got what he was looking for.** Nothing about US foreign policy, no word about injustice for the Palestinians or Evil Corporations or any of that. No, he said he wanted to start a war with the US. And so he has it. And he would have done whatever he had to do to get it.

And they will strike again, and those silent, dogged sheepdogs who have succeeded so many times in the dark silent hours will miss a scent somewhere, and more people will die and that's what we can expect. Not dying of Influenza or Black Death, not being steamrolled under Nazi jackboots or watching Mongol hordes swarming towards us over the horizon as we run for the city walls. None of that. Only *this*.

And when they come, storms man-made and natural, what will the sheepdog/sheep ratio be? Enough?

Now, when Pink Tribesmen say that these people can be reasoned with, they are doing what sheep do: living in denial.

Because to say we are responsible for the terrorists in the world is a way to say we can control this wolf. If we believe we made him, then that means we control him. We can *unmake* him. Such a worldview appeals to the left, because it gives them Godlike Mental Powers. All we have to do is act differently and he will go away. It's complete moral cowardice, of course – but it's understandable cowardice. It's denial, because if all the sins are ours then all we must do is repent and the wolf will go away.

But that's not what the wolf says. The wolf is not interested in what we do. He does not spare little lambs because they rub up against his leg and make cooing sounds. The wolf wants to swallow us whole. He wants the fight. He wants the war and the conflict. And he will keep on huffing and puffing until one of three things happen: We show him our throat, for him to rip out; or we convert to Islam and become part of his Caliphate; or we head out into the forest with a shotgun and blow his fucking head off.

I made my decision by about 9:30 eastern on September 11th, 2001. I have never regretted it.

It takes courage to fight oncoming storms. **Courage.**

Courage isn't free. It is *taught*, taught by certain tribes who have been around enough and seen enough incoming storms to know what one looks like. And I think the people of this nation, and those of New Orleans, specifically, desire and deserve some fundamental lessons in courage.

Because we are going to need it.