

What if - Then what Will it hurt - Does it taste good

When my schedule at work is not so hectic, I drive down to Broadway and have a long lunch in one of the restaurants there. Digesting the food with US Today, coffee and a cigar is Tai Chi for my soul. I do not like to be interrupted. In my tranquility I heard my friend John Conner yelling, and it was not the usual little voice inside my head.

"Hey Stan, is it hanging as usual?" It came from the front door. I raised my arms, looked at the ceiling and said:

"Serenity now." It did not help. He was still coming toward my table while the other guests had stopped eating. Being a former living man, his sense of humor is slightly warped. You see, he was declared dead for over ten hours before he woke up and scared the living Saints out of the night nurse at the morgue. Here he is now, sitting at my table ordering a pitcher.

"I just came from the courthouse in the neighboring town." He said, and went on:

"The judge was about to lecture me on drivin' when I cut him off. I said Sir; with all due respect, this isn't goin' to help at all. If yo' want to prevent repeat speeders like myself, yo' need a good skin biter that really hurts. Force us to have a sticker on all windows sayin' - I am an IDIOT. The looks from the other commuters in traffic jams an' at red lights is better medicine than payin' a fee. Last year the police force here wrote 27,000 tickets. Obviously that didn't help traffic safety at all, only the revenue. Ask any of the 24,000 citizens here. Then I told the judge to enjoy my money an' left." I looked at John Conner with my Harrison Ford smile and said:

"Yo' do make sure people remember yo', don't'cha."

He nodding while finishing his first glass and then spoke again:

"And I remember them too, 'cause City Hall is on a dead end street. My kind'a way."

He grabs a section of my newspaper, and points at the editor's column. He reads upside down too. He never ceases to surprise me.

"The most intelligent thing to do is to have a commission investigate how to step up and tighten security for the UN troops presence in Iraq. They make it sound so sudden, don't they Stan?"

I had several answers and angles orbiting my skull, but he cut off my response by saying:

"Ove' 195 wars man, since they were established in 1947. Haven't prevented a single one, an' now this car bomb is a surprise."

Connors eyes glowed at me. He is going to break it down for me now. I better nod and listen.

"You've seen the cartoon movie Stan, about the giant iron man that fell to earth an' hung out with a kid, huh? Yeah, well, it's like describin' a giant toothless an' brainless body. They don't even have software designed for chaos. What they are is delusional small fry."

And then he burped. My goodness, that is simply put, and he is right too. But then I asked myself... Common gathering and, what?... A dead man is telling me a tale... I looked up, and suddenly a flying pig passes by the restaurant's window. I swear on my career it did. Do I get the chills because I am shivering or do I shiver because I am chilly? I hoped a second pitcher would cover his brunch. I was not ready to hear another eye opener and I was not good at excusing myself. He ordered a third one. I am forced to have a longer lunch.

"Yo' give free advice to a workin' mom with two kids. Both kids snifflin' next to her from a diehard cold. Floods of snot everywhere man. So I told her to take one potato, one red beet an' two carrots through a juice presser an' let 'em drink that every mornin'. Most potent produce there is. Considerin' it's the top priority for the care taker she is, right Stan. What was her first reaction yo' ask?"

My body language said "?". So he got to his point:

"Does it taste good, was her first thought...? She galvanized 'em with fried Twinkies or what? Yo' see Stan, if yo' born again, yo' won't risk endin' up with a stupid mom. Look at me. Re-baked an' ready by forty-two. No, today's kids need guidance, maybe a union."

After finishing his glass he is still looking through it while making a statement in Caribbean:

"An me ther nuw Hoffa mon."

That is the John Conner I know, watching him drinking pitchers and making straight uncompromised statements. I met former friends of his and they all say that he is wilder now after his reappearance from the morgue. His thoughts are far beyond anyone's horizon, really. It is like getting to know a person all over again. Kind of weird but he knows it too. So everybody gets along just fine. That is what they all are saying... That drunken hobo, he had them manipulated too! He is socially accepted, but gets wild while flushing down pitchers. Taking advantage of his freak accident, scaring everyone when he is sober. Only the lunatic is free because he is accepted as one. But this one... *is arguing back and closing the issue every time...* Dear reader, if he is the future and goes from zero to hero, we are history. In my next column I will tell you more about the opinions of my friend John Conner.

Your man in the zone
Stanley Mintras