



"My psychiatrist told me I was crazy and I said I want a second opinion. He said, 'okay, you're ugly too.'" - Rodney Dangerfield

A dodo bird crashed into my mailbox last week. A *handwritten* note from a "Ms. Wilson." No, not some long lost friend from school. Not a creative inmate wanting help. As *The Guardian* noted recently, "Writing letters to complete strangers can make the world a better place."

Oh, okay, especially if by better we mean more astounding. In this case it was a religious appeal, her letter filling the page with perfect script. My better angels said, "well, how lovely." The skeptic said, "Are you serious, honey?" The angels won that round.

I got some cool sunglasses to celebrate. Not the style, the functionality. These babies are also reading glasses. So I get to read and look away without changing glasses when it's sunny out. One thing I noticed was waytoo chubby lady butts hanging out of bathing suits on our pool and barbeque deck. Sitting near a flawless young brunette didn't help their cause, although goddess lady's constant cellphone jabbering just about leveled the playing field. 'So I'm like... so then he goes you're so gorgeous and I was like so flattered but uh also kinda grossed out since his brother Pete . . . So then he was like uh really surprised and I go . . . '

*'Ma'am, excuse me, but would you mind piping [the *^&%\$#*] down a little? I'm trying to think here.'*

Maybe I could have lightened the tone by wearing my "Harvard Law . . . just kidding" t-shirt.

These sunglasses may not get me a diplomatic post (especially from the UK, right Mr. Darroch?). And yet all Ambassador Darroch did was privately call Trump inept and insecure. He did not call him an outright liar, though the Washington Post's fact checkers have logged over 10,000 false or misleading statements so far from Trump. The rate has soared since he took office, now topping 22 a day. In one recent burst, he hit one lie per *minute*. Despite this, Trump recently claimed in an exchange with reporters that the outcome of the Mueller probe showed him to be "a very honest guy." Let's absorb this burst of sunshine in context, including proper sunglasses. Both before and after that self-assessment, Trump made false statements about President Obama, NATO, immigrants, tariffs, the national debt and deficit, you name it. One of my favorites is how importers to the U.S. like China are paying the cost of tariffs and not American consumers. Nice try, man. And oh yes, he "doesn't have a racist bone in his body." Yeah, sure. Maybe you're a jellyfish. But how can they get bone spurs?

Back on the street with those truth serum bifocal sunglasses. He stood four foot seven, a hundred pounds with a little beard and mustache and black T-shirt that read "Wasn't Me." He polished off a bag of potato chips washed down with a can of grape soda. His left sneaker was untied and he spoke to no one in particular. Used rather lewd language, too. I didn't ask him if he recommends those chips. No problem with the soda as I hate grape. Doesn't everyone else over the age of ten? Other T-shirts announced their presence from 80 feet, many of these on women. "Anybody Else 2020"; "I Love Meat"; "Elit and Caviar." Along came a white male about 30 smoking a cigarette. It should have read, "Smoke 'Em If You Got 'Em," not "Nantucket." Then a well-built black man in camo pants, a huge black knitted sock hat, no shirt. A plain faced woman's shirt said "Berlin Moscow Paris." Well, I love Paris and would like to see Berlin someday. Moscow not so much. Sorry, Vladimir. Then along came "You can't make everyone Happy/You Are Not an Avocado." I love that one. Maybe the meat lady would approve, too.

So far not bad. The girls and I stopped at a Washington Street bus stop to rest a minute. A young white woman with a wretched complexion, though not as bad as Tommy Lee Jones, yelled at me, "What's wrong with your stupid dog?" after Lady said hello. The woman barked that "she frightened me." Yeah, right, a seven pound 11-year old sweetie with no teeth on a short leash. "You must lead a frightening life," I said. She recommended a crude behavior which I thoughtfully declined. Then things got a tad less pleasant as we exchanged broader world views and she called Lady my stupid dog again. "Well, she's sure as hell smarter and nicer than you, and way prettier, too." Rude letter follows, as my dad used to say.

Speaking of getting under my skin. Otezla markets itself as a cure for a condition I have never seen: "moderate to severe plaque psoriasis." A 30-day supply is \$3,398. What a bargain. In one ad we note a kid with a drab gray wing collar shirt, hand cranking pasta with his

girlfriend's family, his unlikely sleeves rolled up. Oh we get it, pharma folks. You didn't want any pattern or color in his shirt so we wouldn't be distracted from how smooth his arms look. And see how his future in-laws are beaming to beat the band? Over a hundred bucks a day? No problem. *"Otezla may be able to help with that."* Or not. Well, you could just buy fresh pasta, wear Hawaiian shirts, and save three grand a month. Come on down!

Ah, shirts. The girls and I walked down Washington Street toward the park. We overtook an ancient Chinese man (Ming Dynasty at least) wearing a loose fitting white shirt that might have been woven the year he was born. It had been worn and washed so often that it had two inch tears in the back. This of in contrast to Millennials wearing pre-torn pants. One young lady's pants were so severely ripped that they looked ready to fall off. Like after a run up Hacksaw Ridge. Combined with wall to wall tattoos, a nose ring and a Red Sox hat it's a fine look. Especially the nose ring. (*Blechh.*)

Once again we inhaled Ming's Supermarket. The stench of rotten fish blasted out the doorway like mackerel mace. Many of the employees wear coolie hats. To the right of their dumpster lay a large dead frog. 'Hey that looks great, are they on sale? Maybe we could re-do that high school biology lab. Get the electrodes!'

Home again. Every morning around 7:00 some elderly Chinese (we're blocks from Chinatown) practice Tai He on the children's playground. Soft Asian music plays on their radio. Before the kiddees arrive. An elderly woman, a park regular, performed her own graceful movements thirty feet away. My heart rate slowed just watching them. Unlike rude bus stop lady, they liked my girls. Brilliant, these old timers.

Cruel sunglasses and I soldiered on. Happy faces greeted us almost everywhere, smiling cherry blossoms lifted on the summer breeze. We finally reached home, the girls ready for a nap. I tossed my sunglasses on the kitchen counter. They needed a rest, too. Who knows where they're headed next.

Time for lunch. An avocado and shrimp salad sounded nice. No meat, the lettuce legitimately torn from the back.

Above: Portrait of the author in cool sunglasses