

Introduction

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Hello, everyone, and welcome to
An Old Guy Who Knows Shit

Stluhdog here. Ever since I was a kid of 12 trying to turn discarded lawn mowers into go-karts, I have known to go to the old, established hardware store rather than the new shiny one, because the old established hardware store always had an old guy who knew shit, and he could be counted on to help me solve my engineering problem. He and another old guy who knew shit helped me through two failed attempts to finally driving a wood-frame lawn-mower powered go-kart that could go a solid 15 mph all over the neighborhood. I was one cool sumbitch and I owed it all to old guys who knew shit.

Now, somehow or other I find myself suddenly a septuagenarian. Dang. I certainly never thought I'd meet that requirement, but here I am, no question an old guy. But do I know shit?

You may find it hard to believe that I do, since it is true that I went to Catholic school through 12th grade, but by the time I was a sophomore at 15 or so I was completely separated from the church, and had, in fact, embarked on a quest to figure it all out for myself, since they had gotten it so spectacularly wrong.

And when I broke free from the shackles of "faith" in a world my senses told me had to be crap, I just opened my eyes and tried to really look, to listen and really hear, and you know what? weird shit started happening right and left. I took part in and/or witnessed a series of astounding events I am tempted to call supernatural, because they defy the laws of physics, but they are not ghost stories, they are stories of perceptions and energies and people with extraordinary powers, and even other beings that cannot be explained by physics. And yet, they are real. They exist. I am an old guy who knows a lotta shit in general, and we may get to that, but what I know about specifically that you may not know about is possibly best explained by the famous words of Hamlet:

There are more things in heaven and Earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy

I know that the natural world is filled with powers and energies and even beings none of which are biological and yet I know they exist. And what this old guy who knows shit wants to share with you first is my stories of these extraordinary, super natural events, that I honestly attest are true, and actually happened.

Why now, you ask?

Well, if you are paying any attention at all, you know we have a lot of work to do. And if you're like me, you are frustrated out the wazzoo because the chokehold that the powers that be have on what we are doing is a fatal chokehold, and if we cannot break

free we are all toast. And as we rise up, and protest, and try to make substantive change, this old guy who knows shit wants to make sure that everybody out there who wants to participate in this revolution is firing on all cylinders. And my stories just might help you find cylinders worth of power you do not know you have.

Why should you trust that I am indeed an old guy who knows shit, and not just another old fart who's fulla shit? because that's kind of an impressive claim, there, buddy. Well, I'm going to give you a few thoughts to think about freedom and America, and when I'm done you can decide if you think I'm old guy who knows shit or just an old fart who's fulla shit.

The first thing I want to talk about is freedom.

Freedom is hard. Wow. Impressive wisdom from the old guy. Stick with me for a minute here. Freedom is complicated. Freedom is ipso facto a contradiction because no such thing as actual freedom can exist. Your freedom is curbed where mine begins. That alone is huge, and requires a respect for each other's freedom that we often, shall we say, lack. Then it's limited by nature – you need water and food and not to be sick before you can think about being “free” in any way shape or form. You have to spend freedom to fight the many, many people who conspire to take that freedom away. There is no such thing as actual freedom. But the freedom that refers to an open heart, is accessible, and in spite of all the complexities, for those of us in the trenches it's pretty simple, freedom is people living and loving together and creating positive communities that expand individual's horizons rather than trying to control or limit individual's horizons. The *language* of freedom does allow us to create community spaces where freedom can truly thrive that some outsiders might call a lie but I would call those places pockets of truth, and I think there are thousands of them all over the country. Because that describes a very high percentage of our communities.

But what we have to remember is that this is not the freedom this country was founded on, nor has it been the definition of freedom the wealthy and powerful have operated under lo these 400 years. Go back to the original colonists. I was taught that the original impulses that founded this country grew out of a need for freedom, primarily freedom of commerce and freedom of religion. But what they both wanted was the freedom to oppress on their own terms. The religious zealots needed the freedom to exercise unfettered power to control their congregations. And the capitalists needed the freedom to keep slaves. The language “all men are created equal” did not come about easily, and the only way it passed muster at all was the universal understanding that “men” meant white male property owners. We all know Washington and Jefferson had slaves, and yet they were two of the original founding fathers of our freedom! They founded a country on a principle of freedom that allowed them to enslave human beings. Think about that. You can have freedom and slavery both at the same time. I believe that fatal flaw came about because the one underlying objective that they all agreed on was that this country's purpose would be to make money, and some things – well, slavery – just had to be compromised to get the dang thing off the ground. The careful writing of the constitution, and the creation of departments that would serve as checks and balances

on each other had nothing to do with maintaining egalitarianism, although much of the language was inspired by new ideas about “freedom,” but that was not the point, the POINT was that this was business and they did not trust each other not to try to take over if they had a big windfall. The fact is, We the ACTUAL people never had anything to DO with it except the rich guys needed somebody to do the actual WORK, so that’s where all that Freedom talk came in handy because it kept us quiet while we made all their money for them. Folks who talk about “the people needing to take the government back” have it totally wrong – we never had it in the first place. Don’t believe me? What is the electoral college and why is it there? They called it an experiment in democracy, and then they inserted this manipulate-able electoral college thing between the voting and the electing. This brilliant little construct has thwarted the will of the people to disastrous consequences twice in 16 years and we are still living with the consequences of both of those events. It was “democracy” designed for the rich, to keep them in power and to keep us making money for them indefinitely.

The Naturalization Act of 1790 outlined how “free white people” could become citizens. There it is, folks, they put it in writing in 1790. The first qualification for freedom was whiteness. And even though they did not write it into law until citizens united in 2010, it has also been the rule since the beginning that whether or not your voice is heard depends on how much money you have, the more money equals more voice, that’s what citizens united made into actual law. I only recently realized myself that this was never designed to be an enclave of freedom at all – it was designed from the git-go to keep the little guy happy while he made money for the rich white guys.

So. Do not try to tell me institutionalized racism is not systemic in America. It is the cornerstone upon which this country was built! The purpose of this new experiment in country-ness, was, quite simply, to make money for white people.

And that means the freedom this country is fully committed to protecting is the freedom to make money, not the freedom to live. Money wins over life, it wins over liberty and it definitely wins over the pursuit of happiness every time, because that was part of the fatal flaw in their creation: in order to get this money-making thing started at all, they had to say, ok, making money will be the most important thing. So they compromised the foundational principle that they were themselves embedding in stone, which is that all men are created equal, by saying, OK, we will allow you to enslave people to make money, as long as they are not white, and we’ll agree that all *white* men are created equal. And by writing the one thing - we are all equal - while doing the opposite - enslaving people of color, they embedded deep into the very fabric of the heart of America, into the very root of our consciousness, two things that are still true: 1. making money is the most important thing; it justifies anything, including enslavement, and 2. people of color are not among the “all men” who are created equal. *White guys making money* is more important than freedom or equality or human rights or anything, and THAT is the foundational principle we have inherited from our forefathers.

**Our greatest evil - making money justifies enslavement - has roots that are exactly as deep as our greatest virtue, that all men are created equal.

Today, people are finally seeing the outrageousness of where african-americans are in our culture today, but they still are not seeing the outrageousness of a few dozen white guys benefiting from *all* that the greatest country in the world can generate while everything else goes to pot. I think they get away with this because a critical strategy of right wing & Fox News propagandist machines is to equate the freedom to make money with the freedom to live, while in fact they are two completely different things. And people do not realize that by supporting their call for the freedom to make money, they are not only profoundly reducing their own freedom to live day to day, they are embracing the eventual ultimate loss of freedom - the loss of a livable planet. Sure, we have accomplished a lot of good stuff getting here, technology and science and medicine and all that, but none of that was for its own sake. Whatever it was, the REAL objective in doing it was TO MAKE MONEY. Here, it is absolutely morally acceptable, in fact, it is the achievement of our original objective, that a few dozen white guys have, literally, trillions of dollars they could not possibly live long enough to spend, while millions of Americans starve and the planet dies. The right frames the freedom to make money as the patriotic, flag-waving freedom, because, well, isn't that the freedom we all want? To make more money? and more? and more? The truth is, the freedom to make money is mostly not available to the 80% of you who do not already have money. It is a lie they convince you of so you will continue to grant them their much deserved freedom to oppress - you.

At some point, folks, human life and our earth have to become more important than making money. The freedom to live must prevail over the freedom to make money. This battle is what we need to be firing on all cylinders to fight.

Which sounds like a call to action, doesn't it? Well it sort of is, so, for whom am I recruiting?

Well, folks, we are the Compassion Love and Beauty team, and we are engaging the Greed Cruelty and Ugliness team in an epic battle for the continued existence of homo sapiens on this earth. This sounds astoundingly comic book epic, and yet it is real. It is profoundly real. Climate change has passed a critical tipping point. The earth will get hotter by degrees, not tenths of degrees. The poles are melting. We can't stop that. The oceans are already half poisoned and we are in the middle of the eighth great extinction. It's too late to stop any of that because it is happening *now*.

But how bad does it have to get? Do we have to lose *all* of our coastal cities? Is there any possibility for a different outcome? Any hope of anything but steady decline for our great-grandchildren? This comic book episode has had a lot of exposition leading up to this moment, with great villains! The Greed Cruelty and Ugliness team has the field, and they have had it for a long time. They believe they are immune to the damage they do, and so they blithely continue to destroy everything to stay in power and keep their wealth. Where oh where is the hero of this tale? Who will save our descendants from this horrid fate? Well. I'm pretty sure you already know that the hero of this tale is you. You and me and our families and neighbors and their families and neighbors on down

the line. We are the ones history finds here at this moment who can affect the changes needed to give our great grandchildren a chance at something other than a hard-scrabble struggle to find a place cool enough to live, never mind free. If not us then no-one because it will be too late. Honest to God, folks. And if you hadn't figured this out for yourself yet, I'm sorry to be a harbinger of bad news, but we all need to at least know who we are: We are the central characters in an apocalyptic tale that is being written with our lives, an apocalyptic tale whose plot now stands at that point where now it looks like things can only lead to certain destruction. It's that moment right before the superhero(s) come charging in. Compassion Love and Beauty team? I believe this is our cue.

And it is the power of compassion gives the Compassion Love and Beauty team a leg up that they currently do not know they have: Compassion is a nuke. We do not appreciate that yet, and I don't understand it because it kinda seems like holding a feather up to a hurricane. But the thing is, in every human conflict if you ask what is the compassionate response, it will always give you the best answer. And what if we had compassion for Mother Earth? Just think, they made their corporations people and gave them rights, but Mother Earth, upon whom we depend, does not to this day get the compassion we give a dog. What is solid in this life? True? Lasting? Real? Is it money or corporations? No. It's our Mother Earth. And right now she is evicting us. She has no compassion for us because we have had no compassion for her – but we see now, in the pandemic, what can happen if we stop abusing Her later when we don't *have* to stop. Compassion contains great, great power. I hear from an earth mother friend that there is an awakening happening. I hope she's right. Maybe my stories can contribute to an awakening, an awakening to the power we need to get done the shit we need to get done.

So is that a good reason to listen to my stories? Whadaya think? An old guy who knows shit? Or an old fart who's fulla shit?

Either way, the stories are true. I hope you keep listening. Try to keep an open mind and hear them in the spirit with which I share them.

This is an old guy who knows shit, signing off till next time.