

**FOOD FOR THOUGHT 11  
(PART FOUR-B):  
*IMPORTANT NOTICE***

***“FOOD FOR THOUGHT 11-A”  
CONTEST IS WON  
HANDS DOWN***

**BY**

**RANDALL M. TILLOTSON!!**



**TO THE READER:**

The long genesis of “Food for Thought Eleven, Part Four” goes on. As you can see if you look at the website, the original “Part Four” has now become “Part Four-A.” You are now, at this very moment, reading “Part Four-B.” And, in “Part Four-C,” the plan is that I’ll at last complete my own withering attack on the Left Gatekeepers, who will include—possibly among others—Frank Rich, Alexander Cockburn, Matthew Rothschild, and the prize-winner of them all, Nicholas Lemann in *The New Yorker*.

Readers will remember, I hope, that the original “Food for Thought, Part 4” ended with a contest proposal. To jog memories, I’ll cite *here* the relevant paragraphs from *there*. If you remember them well, you can skip down to the ● (bullet) mark:

Just one more distinction between “genuine” 9/11 ignorance and other kinds has to be made before we leave it behind. That is to say, we’ve got to talk about “denial.” Some will argue that the word “genuine” can’t logically be used if what we’re saying is that people, out of denial, *will* themselves into a “perfect” or “genuine” 9/11 ignorance. It’s a point well taken: You can’t go into denial of something unless, somehow, you *know* it’s there.

In any case, the important thing about this kind of 9/11 ignorance—setting aside the word “genuine” for now—is that it arises, precisely as the original perpetrators intended, from *fear*. For people with this kind of 9/11 ignorance, not only the *actual* facts and events of 9/11 *themselves* are too frightening and horrifying to think about, remember, analyze, or explore, but the ongoing *results* of those facts and events, fascism among them, are even *more* horrifying and frightening. So who can possibly blame that kind of people—the ones who are in this kind of “denial-ignorance”?

Well, that depends. I suppose you can’t really blame them *personally*, if only because that would be insensitive and ill-mannered, if not caddish or plain villainous. And, after all, it’s a free country, and you can’t bring blame upon others just for exercising their own individual and Constitutionally guaranteed *rights*—those, for example, to “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” These people, the frightened and in-denial people, are simply pursuing the happiness, or the *relative* happiness, that’s achievable for them by maintaining, through psychological self-trickery, a state of 9/11 ignorance.

But now, dear readers, a game, albeit a deadly serious one. To wit: Who among you will be the first to spot the blunder in that preceding paragraph, in the paragraph just written? Who among you will be the first who can see, seize, and denounce that blunder—and *possibly* even consider how it would or wouldn’t apply to the argument that a policy of *tolerance* toward those in 9/11-denial is a policy both humane and right, a policy in no need of defense? On the other hand, forget about the argument if you’d rather and just find the blunder—since applying the blunder *to* the argument is what *I’m* going to do next anyway. You can leave the work to me, if you choose.

So, here’s the offer: If you’re the first to spot the blunder (I mean, the on-purpose blunder) in the paragraph now twice before this one, *and* if you can also summon up the good luck of being the first reader to <mailto:ericlarsen@ericlarsen.net> tell me what that blunder is (assuming, of course, that you’re right!), I’ll in return cite your name as the winner (unless you don’t want me to) in this essay and also send you a free copy of <http://www.fetchbook.info/compare.do?search=1593760981> *A Nation Gone Blind*, inscribed by me to you.

I’ll now upload this first chunk of “Food for Thought Eleven, Part Four,” and, while I’m waiting <mailto:ericlarsen@ericlarsen.net> to hear from you, I’ll be hard at work finishing the rest of Part Four.

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Well, how the best-laid schemes of mice and men gang oft a-gley. I won’t tell you how *many* entrants there were to the contest, but I will tell you these two things:

- 1) What the “blunder” was that I stuck into the paragraph in question, and
- 2) that Randall Tillotson, winning hands down, met the terms of the contest in a way far more masterly and complex way than would have been required for him to win. He deserves a real round of applause.

First, the “blunder.” And here it is: “And, after all, it’s a free country, and you can’t bring blame upon others just for exercising their own individual and Constitutionally guaranteed *rights*. . .” And, everyone, do you see it now? The old instincts of professorhood in me urge the giving of yet *another* quiz rather than simply revealing here—even for those who did most poorly—the “*right answer*.” And yet, here as in the classroom, we can carry on such rigor and good intentions only so far.

The blunder is this: The fact is that we *don’t* any longer live in a free country, and the fact is that we *don’t* any longer have the Constitutionally guaranteed rights that are cited—neither of life, nor of liberty, nor of the pursuit of happiness.

*SUCH BAD STUDENTS YOU’VE BEEN!!!* And no excuses, either, please, of the kind I used to get at John Jay College *all* the time—“I was too *busy* to do my reading, Prof. After all, you posted the quiz on November 20, and that was only *two days* before Thanksgiving.” Ah, what is an instructor to do in the face of such laziness and failure? What is a *person* to do? How is *anyone* going to wake up the slumbering giant, this whole fat and flatulent *nation* of ours that’s not only gone *blind*, but that’s *also* gone *deaf and dumb*, and then, on top of all *that*, has lain down and fallen into so stuporous, so deep, so life-disengaging a *sleep* as to be all but indistinguishable from death itself ?????

But enough. We have let ourselves be seduced and blind-led into the jaws of the neoconservatives’ fascist-plan—and *still* we sleep. It may be—may very well be—that all the drop-scenes are about to drop at once upon a hundred thousand stages, and yet, even now, we sleep in denial, in ignorance, in passivity, in *danger*. Except for those few still awake, who *plead* most, most eloquently indeed, for us to *do something*—have a look here, [http://onlinejournal.com/artman/publish/article\\_1463.shtml](http://onlinejournal.com/artman/publish/article_1463.shtml) for example, at “America Has Left the Building” by the impassioned and bluntly lyrical Phil Rockstroh. Or have a look *here*, at “When History Becomes Chopped Liver,” <http://www.thepeoplesvoice.org/cgi-bin/blogs/voices.php/2006/11/19/p12280> Carolyn Baker’s incomparable lament that “one of the myriad reasons the vast majority of Americans have allowed the most criminal administration in the history of this nation to continue unabated, with nary a peep of indignation, is that they themselves have so little knowledge of *their* history” [my emphasis], which is to say that they continue to dwell in the ignorance—whether in its *pure* form or its “denial” form—that’s our topic here. Or take a look, finally, at the Stan Goff piece, “Reflecting on Rumsfeld,” [http://www.truthdig.com/report/print/200601017\\_reflecting\\_on\\_rumsfeld](http://www.truthdig.com/report/print/200601017_reflecting_on_rumsfeld) that’s cited by Carolyn Baker:

The United States is not suffering from some collective personality disorder called compassion fatigue. We are suffering from the most well-funded thought-control

experiment in history, more sophisticated and deadly by many orders of magnitude than anything contrived by Kim Jong Il—the latest *bete noir* of American public discourse, and we are suffering from the complicity of journalistic hacks like Judith Miller and the anodyne intellectual narcotics of policy think tanks.

Or, last, though hardly least, take a look *here*, at the words of Randall Tillotson, the man of wide reading, much experience, strong insight, deep conscience, quickness of response, and no mean ability with words who is the winner of our “The Left Gatekeepers, Our Enemies” contest.

EL



Date: Tue, 21 Nov 2006

From: [rotillotson@sbcglobal.net](mailto:rotillotson@sbcglobal.net)

Subject: To answer Food for Thought 11-4

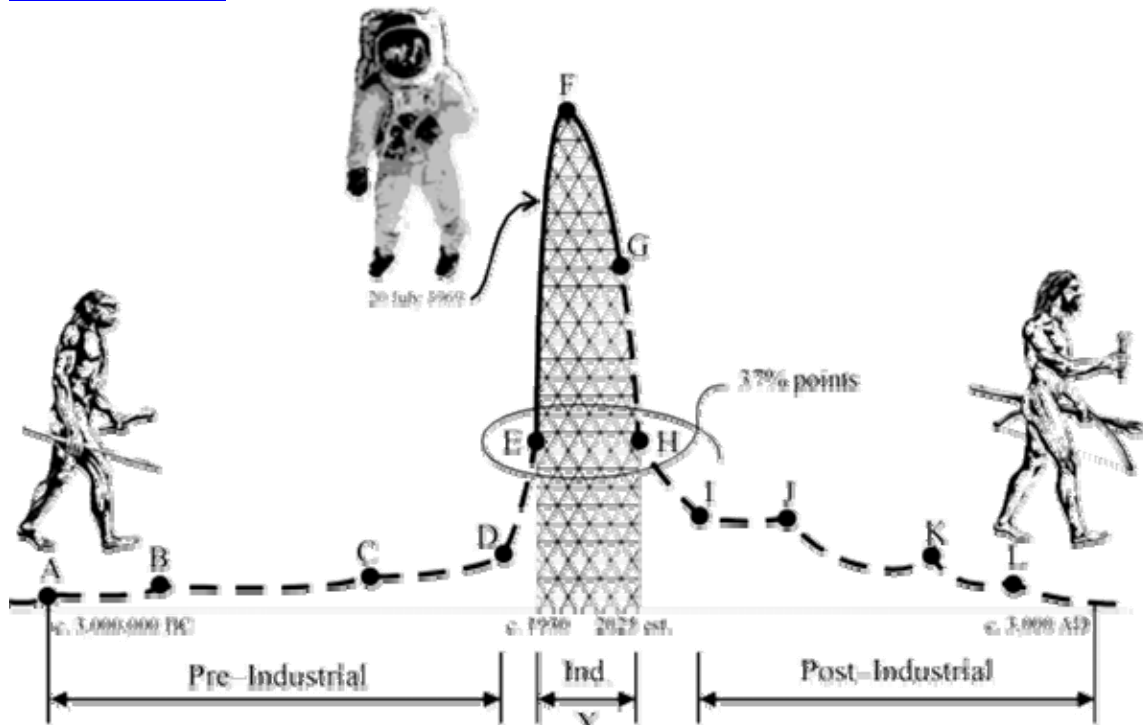
As far as your contest goes in Food for Thought 11-4, it's pretty obvious that we can “blame them personally” and they have “rights” that they are responsible for defending along with the rest of us (e pluribus unum) who actively attempt to maintain our grip on those rights in our tiring hands. As I remember it, when my wife was sworn in as a new citizen, the oath she swore was the same as the President of this country and all military personnel, myself included when I entered the U.S. Navy, and that is to “protect and defend the Constitution of the United States from all enemies, foreign and domestic.” These are citizens who are in violation of that oath. By their denial, they are going to get me hauled off to a camp and disappeared, while they remain ignorant and free and will believe the lie the state says about my alleged crime, “Gee, I didn't know he was a \_\_\_\_\_!!! I always thought that he was out there, but I never suspected that he. . .”

I'm dealing with a person like that right now. He believes that the geological fact of peak oil is bogus. I ask, “Have you read anything about it?” Answer: “really don't read much these days”(a very popular response that I hear). Of course, if you read the material, the conclusions are sound enough to present to any jury and win your case hands down. That's the rub isn't it—nobody reads. Jesus! I've got a library that would make most public librarians drool. I don't understand why I'm so damned different.

When I mentioned 9/11, the peak oil guy said, “Oh, I read the 9/11 Commission Report and I think they're right. It was just incompetence.” This is a guy that is in denial with a moat and fortress. He is a Viet Nam vet. One day he says, “You know, I just read a book on the Viet Nam War, and we were over there for nothing.” I was overjoyed and congratulated him on waking up. What did he do later? He got a license plate that says, “Viet Nam Vet.” His two tours in Viet Nam murdering Johnson's “little yellow dwarfs with pen knives” didn't give him a guilty conscience. He doesn't understand that the concept of cognitive dissonance fits him like a glove. I sent him your web site with “Food for Thought 11-2.” He claims to have read it. “Very interesting,” he said—his way of

saying nothing. I sent him *Loose Change*. Not a peep. He's probably still hiding under the bed. I'm piercing his tender nerve points with this material, like a diabolical acupuncturist. The America we grew up in is gone. That is the lie that has to be experienced as an individual. It's gone forever, if we don't collectively act, and I don't think there will be enough of us to act in force. I hope I'm wrong.

Here's an example of what I did at work, just to test the reality waters. I put this picture up on the cork board at my desk. It's taken from an essay by Richard Duncan on his Olduvai Theory about world energy crashing that I got from the web site [www.dieoff.com](http://www.dieoff.com)



1. Pre Industrial Phase [c. 3, 000, 000 BC to 1765]
  - A - Tool making (c. 3, 000, 000 BC)
  - B - Fire used (c. 1, 000, 000 BC)
  - C - Neolithic agricultural revolution (c. 8, 000 BC)
  - D - Watts steam engine of 1765 Industrial Phase (1930-2025)
2. Industrial Phase [1930 to 2025, estimated ]
  - E - Per capita energy-use 37% of peak value
  - F - Peak energy-use
  - G - Present energy-use
  - H - Per capita energy-use 37% of peak value
3. Post Industrial Phase [c. 2100 and beyond ]
  - J, K, and L=Recurring future attempts at industrialization fail. Other scenarios are possible.

This picture was up on the wall for about three years. During that time, only one person asked me what it meant, although hundreds would pass by my cubicle over a period of a month. When I started to explain it, this person immediately turned 180° and fled the

room, shouting, “Stop!!! Don’t tell me anymore. I don’t want to hear about it!!!!” She never came into that room again and would phone me to come to her cubicle if she needed to talk to me.

James Howard Kunstler titles his latest book *The Long Emergency: Surviving the Converging Catastrophes of the Twenty-First Century*. The government is well aware of all these converging catastrophes, and they have plans for us. Those of us that can see will resist, but a coward that is in denial is no different to me than a French collaborator and needs, at the minimum, to symbolically have his/her head shaved. Their cowardice is hurting us as well as themselves, but we will have to do the fighting for them because they’re scared. Who the hell isn’t? That’s why Ortega y Gasset’s quote that I sent to you<sup>1</sup> fits these cowards like a glove. I’m truly skeptical that we can gather up enough reality-based people to promote change. Where I live, in the bible-belt of California, the population is not just out of touch with reality, “insane,” as you proposed, but actively digging “trenches for their defenses” when the unspeakable truths slips into their view.

I previously mentioned to you that I worked at a co-operative radio station in Canada. Well, the blindness there was just as bad, and this was with the so-called “Leftist” crowd, some even calling themselves anarchists. Ha! What bull. I finally quit the station because it was infiltrated with at least a dozen government agents who were working full time to destroy the station from within. The new station manager attempted to throw out all the tape archives that went back over twenty years. “I need the room,” he said from his football stadium office. Two of us scooped up the tapes and saved them. We went to the board of directors to report this outrage. They didn’t seem interested but eventually agreed to tell him not to throw them out. Then these same people tried to nominate a refugee to the board of directors. The Canadian Broadcast Act, of which I had a copy,

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<sup>1</sup> “Take stock of those around you and you will see them wandering about lost through life, like sleep-walkers in the midst of their good or evil fortune, without the slightest suspicion of what is happening to them. You will hear them talk in precise terms about themselves and their surroundings, which would seem to point to them having ideas on the matter. But start to analyze those ideas and you will find that they hardly reflect in any way the reality to which they appear to refer, and if you go deeper you will discover that there is not even an attempt to adjust the ideas to this reality. Quite the contrary: through these notions the individual is trying to cut off any personal vision of reality, of his own very life. For life is at the start a chaos in which one is lost. The individual suspects this, but he is frightened at finding himself face to face with this terrible reality, and tries to cover it over with a curtain of fantasy, where everything is clear. It does not worry him that his “ideas” are not true, he uses them as trenches for the defense of his existence, as scarecrows to frighten away reality.

“The man with the clear head is the man who frees himself from those fantastic “ideas” and looks life in the face, realizes that everything in it is problematic, and feels himself lost. As this is the simple truth—that to live is to feel oneself lost—he who accepts it has already begun to find himself, to be on firm ground. Instinctively, as do the shipwrecked, he will look round for something to which to cling, and that tragic, ruthless glance, absolutely sincere, because it is a question of his salvation, will cause him to bring order into the chaos of his life. These are the only genuine ideas; the ideas of the shipwrecked. All the rest is rhetoric, posturing, farce. He who does not really feel himself lost, is lost without remission; that is to say, he never finds himself, never comes up against his own reality.” (*The Revolt of the Masses*, 25th Anniversary Edition, 1957, W.W. Norton, PP. 156-157). [note added by EL]

stated that only Canadian citizens can be members of the board of directors. I read this out at the annual general meeting where the election was to take place. Even though I had the document, the board refused to read it, and they said my statement as a lie. They just stated that it's legal to have a refugee on the board. A very G. W. Bush-type of action. "Law? What law? Constitution? It's just a piece of paper." The blind membership agreed with the board and the refugee was elected to the board. The following Monday, I and another member went to the equivalent of the FCC in Canada and reported this. We were told by a commission member that if we hadn't come in and reported this to them and they'd found out about it by accident, the station would have immediately and permanently lost its license to broadcast. She sent the board a letter ordering them to immediately remove the refugee from the board or permanently lose the license to broadcast at the end of thirty days.

Because the three of us who were attempting to safeguard the station were attending every board of directors meetings, they just decided to illegally hold the meetings at house of one of the members. This was in total violation of the Co-operative Act, of which I had a copy. I couldn't get anyone who had a program at the station interested. They weren't interested in what the board was doing. It was still the three of us against a corrupt board, while the rest of these fake "activists broadcasters" went along for the ride.

Finally, they placed the last straw for me. The board hired a black South African woman with absolutely no book-keeping training at all for the job of bookkeeper. While I complained about hiring an unqualified person, I was told by the lesbian programmer who'd promoted her that I was a racist and misogynist. A good tool to stop dissent. What did this poor, oppressed black woman do? Why she just stole nearly all the station's operating funds and took a plane to South Africa. The board had to hold an emergency membership meeting to announce that the station may have to file for bankruptcy. When I asked if the board had filed charges with the police, the chairman told me that they had "bigger issues to deal with." Getting the police to attempt to recover the \$60,000+ was not important? What did the regular members do at that meeting? They just quietly stared either at the board or at the three of us fighting them, their jaws drooping like the man's in Millet's "Man with the Hoe." ("Who loosened and let down this brutal jaw? / Whose was the hand that slanted back this brow? / Whose breath blew out the light within this brain?")<sup>2</sup> Blind and dumb, as well. These zombie members, the majority, never seemed to have the ability to think. It's like something, a Buck Rogers ray-gun perhaps, had zapped that portion of their brains meant for reasoning and critical analysis, leaving them

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<sup>2</sup> Bowed by the weight of centuries he leans  
 Upon his hoe and gazes on the ground,  
 The emptiness of ages in his face,  
 And on his back the burden of the world.  
 Who made him dead to rapture and despair,  
 A thing that grieves not and that never hopes,  
 Stolid and stunned, a brother to the ox?  
 Who loosened and let down this brutal jaw?  
 Whose was the hand that slanted back this brow?  
 Whose breath blew out the light within this brain?  
 —Edwin Markham, "The Man with the Hoe," 1899. [note added by EL]

automatons, animated robots. They seemed to be cruising through life on automatic pilot until one day, to paraphrase a line from Han Shan's poem about the bug trapped in a bowl, "they stop, look up, and they've grown old." Ralph Nader warned American independent radio stations that they better keep their slates clean because if the government wants to shut them down one day and they are in violation in some manner, they will be legally shut down. He also said there are lots of stations in danger of that happening in situations similar to some of the jams I mentioned previously, like the refugee story.

So I have had a lot of "in the trenches" experience with the insanity of the North American public, both above and below the 49th parallel, and, to paraphrase the title of a book on the Kennedy assassination, *History Will Not Absolve Us*, history will not absolve them. I'm <http://www.ericlarsen.net/foodforthought11.2.html> tired of being polite, too. Why should I be nice to them? They're hurting me, making me feel as though I'm the one that's wrong and a nut job.<sup>3</sup> I know I'm not, but it's a battle every single day.

Anyhow, that's my answer to "Food for Thought 11-4."

Randall M. Tillotson  
Los Osos, California

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<sup>3</sup> "The United States is not suffering from some collective personality disorder called compassion fatigue. We are suffering from the most well-funded thought-control experiment in history, more sophisticated and deadly by many orders of magnitude than anything contrived by Kim Jong Il—the latest bete noir of American public discourse, and we are suffering from the complicity of journalistic hacks like Judith Miller and the anodyne intellectual narcotics of policy think tanks." Stan Goff. [note added by EL]