

Jim Morrison:
Projected Rumour

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by Leon *Barnard*

“Testing The Bounds of Reality”

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MorrisonMoments.Com

in the beginning...

One word leads into another
until they all add up to make a sentence.

In 1970

Jim Morrison was sentenced to three years
in Raiford Prison in Dade County, Florida
for misusing his words during a Doors'
concert there in 1969.

Although no photography
was presented at his trial
showing genital exposure,
Jim had threatened theatrically
to do so, and the power of suggestion
& hysteria that followed
convicted him of a crime
he did not actually commit.

Was it lewd and lascivious
behavior in public?
Perhaps yes,
if you consider bad language
to be detrimental to the health and well being
of an audience populated
primarily by teenagers.

But do you really suppose
he exposed himself
and nobody took a picture?

Hundreds of flesh-seeking flash cubes
signaled the use
of myriad instamatics
that evening,
yet none recorded a single inch
of evidence
revealing Morrison's
prick at posterity.

Time passed future opportunity...

Months later,
Jim and I had lunch together
weeks before his flight to Paris
where he eventually disappeared.

We talked about his trial of tribulation
and the probability of serving several years
behind bars in the slammer.

During the conversation
he touched lightly on his thoughts
for the future
and mentioned the possibility
of a change in identity.

We joked about his putting
on blackface
and going underground
'incognegro',
but that was just because
we couldn't resist the
play on words,
and it had absolutely nothing
to with anything racial,
just facial.

He expressed a desire
to drop the role of teen idol
and so-called “Superstar” performer
altogether,
and, having had it with Hollywood hype,
he wanted to get on with perfecting his life
by performing his art;
anonymously, if necessary,
incognito
for freedom and survival.

When lunch and conversation
were over
we parted as friends sometimes do
when they sense they may never again
see each other.

After shaking my hand,
warmly,
he sauntered his way...
and I went mine.

But before departure
he gave me one final choice
of napkin-scribbled words
which I shall now write
and ask that you recite slowly
and distinctly:

“The man who travels
cross-country
in a caravan of One,
is always alone
in unfamiliar places,
where he is no longer a general
to anyone in particular.”

Projected Rumour:

At three o'clock in the morning
on March 31st of 1987,
I received a person to person
phone call from a
"Mr. James Douglas Morrison".

“Jimbo?”

“Yes.”

“Where.”

*“Tucumcari, New Mexico,
Route 66 Cafe.”*

“What’s on the menu?”

I mean, what’s the ‘special’ of the day?”

*“Chili,
the best Texas chili in town.”*

“Anything else?”

*“Hershey’s with almonds;
the best Texas chili
and chocolate
in town
--now get your ass over here!”*

*“Alright!
see’ya when I get there!
Everything okay?”*

*“Yeah, I saw your ad
in the L.A. Times
about this book you’re writing,
lets talk about.”*

*“Alright!
see’ya when I get there!
Leave a note at the Post Office,
I should be getting there in
a couple of days... I need to get
my oil changed before - Jim?”*

“Yeah?”

“I thought you died in a bathtub...”

*“We’ll talk about it Leon,
I’ve gotta go now,
I’m in a phone booth outside
a Seven Eleven and there are some
people here who seem to recognize me;
see you when you get here...”*

*“Okay Jim,
see’ya later, stay cool!”*

click!

Can you see by the dawn's early light?

Yes,
if you've been sleeping
on the floor of your studio
by an open window.

I took notes at 5:30
that morning and began to write
this story;
fact,
and figment of imagination,
poetic prose,
written to be read in slow motion...
one paragraph into each page
at a time.

To be published by word of mouth
as a project of,
rumour:

Upon reading...
please give this story away...

The Baritone Sound of Boisterous Men Laughing

Once in a great while
and out of a wild brew yonder,
there comes a rock & roll singing star
with the stature of a
Jesse Helms
and/or an
Abraham Lincoln.

And for me to try
to draw a parallel here
is not only ludicrous
but laughable to a point
of guffaw!

ha! ha!

But what better way
is there for me to begin an ending
to a paragraph
that has little import
and absolutely no
meaning?

(you be the judge)

Jim's affection
for outrageous activity
that leads nowhere
and has no meaning,
entered my memory of him
as I replaced the talking apparatus
back into the cradle
of its receiver,
and prepared myself
for thinking about
a new adventure.

I recalled the histrionics
of the concerts on the road,
especially the spontaneous ones
Jim gave outside the usual
performing places.

Sometimes he outdid himself
with impromptu performances
given in hotel lobbies,
hallways,
and even crowded elevators
that dropped down
into public dining rooms & fancy eating parlors;
wherever,
and moreover,
whenever the notion played to his whimsy.

For example,
I'll never forget the time
he decided to entertain
the waitressing troupes
serving up slices of cream pie
at Marie Callender's in Houston.

He jumped up on a table
surrounded on four sides
by a company of men
who appeared to have been outfitted
by the local rage & haberdasher
in Corn On The Cob,
Iowa.

Their wives,
and/or girlfriends,
curtsied in wrap-around polka dots
as they excused themselves
upon their return,
having visited the powder room
to freshen up blotches of mascara
and redo pin stripes
of lavender and lime green
eyeliner that made them up
to look like lizards.

I had to laugh
when Jim began his verbal
hyperbole:

“--I, am the Lizard King!”

he shouted to the rafters,
making a noise that sounded like
someone being sodomized
against their own free will.

“I can do anything!”

Turning left
he moved right into action,
tap-toeing like a tease dancer
whose tutu had caught on fire.

And then he began a rousing rendition
of “The End” (a cappella)
although accompanied by applause
from innocent bystanders
and accommodating friends;
embarrassed at times,
though somehow feeling privileged
to be a witness to his story
in the making.

Approaching
the infamous segment
which deals with the
Oedipal Complex,
he swiftly changed direction
and went with Tom Lehrer's
version instead:

*“There once was a man
called Oedipus Rex,
let me tell you ‘bout his wild complex,
and how he got in Freud’s index,
‘cuz he loved his mother!”*

Jim brought the house down
faced with lemon meringue,
licking his lips
through laughter & tears of yellowed
corn starch,
sugar & syrup.

I lay back in bed...
and renewed my daydreaming
about the upcoming visit to
New Mexico:

“What would be next,”
I mused in silence before sleeping,
*“and where in the world
did it all begin?”*

**It all began
on the pitcher's mound
in the center of
Dodger Stadium...**

Let me explain:

On September 8th of 1983
I did in fact work for the Coca-Cola
Bottling Company of Los Angeles,
photographing Little League
baseball pitching & batting contestants
competing for trophies & parental approval
at Dodger Stadium.

I had been hired by Tom McMahon,
Coke's West Coast
Community Relation's man,
to shoot publicity pictures
for his company and
the L.A. Dodgers.

1. It was a great day
for outdoor photography.

2. The sky was lightly overcast
with a thin layer of high clouds
making conditions nearly perfect for
good snapshot artistry.

3. An even distribution of light
would work to my advantage and I looked
forward to the occasion with hope
full of enthusiasm & anticipation.

4. The event was scheduled
for the early afternoon and was to precede
an evening's game between
the Dodgers and the San Diego Padres.

En route to the
ballpark

I chatted with my host
as he steered our way clear
of any freeway mishap
in complete control of the motorcar
that delivered us to the stadium.

We talked about protocol & procedure,
perspective as it pertains to politeness,
politely,
and other such mundane
pleasantries
of pure public relations.

I guaranteed my best effort
and assured Tom
that because of my working experience
and professional relationship
with Jim Morrison,
I understood the pressures
put upon celebrities
and therefore would be tactful
while photographing the Dodgers;
especially Steve Sax,
their 1st class second baseman.

I knew that a good snap
of Steve
would not only add flare
to a publicity package,
but it would also contribute
handsomely
to my own portfolio
of celebrity
pictures.

Little did I know
that what was to follow
would be prehistoric
to a premonition I'd had
just one year prior
to our first & last
meeting.

Inadvertently
I had written a terse verse
of prediction to the evolution
on my future.

Please listen
so I may hear the echo
of my own words:

“There was a time
when men paid money
and stood in line
to throw baseballs,
at other men
who earned a living
by poking their painted faces
through a hole
in backdrop canvas
designed to bring attention
and people to the
Fair...

Standing still
in a universe pushing
thru turnstiles,
I often wonder'd
when I was a child
what might've happened
had they been
hit.”

“How we move
across the desert
in gowns of gabardine,
showing off our ignorance
so willing to be
seen.”

The game began
at 7:00 P.M.

At 6:55 I took head & shoulder
shots of Steve Sax,
head to head in conversation
with Tom McMahon.

They were discussing
future plans in which they
would be meeting again
for a trade show
in Las Vegas.

During the conversation
Steve began praising
a new girlfriend who would also
be working the show
with them.

Busy doing my job
taking publicity pictures,
I lost contact with what was
actually being said...
and instead got caught up
in the *music of the moment*
via Steve's verbal affection
as he expressed it about his
new lady.

It sounded to me
as I listened to the *tone* of his voice,
(rather than to his actual words)
that this was indeed a woman
for whom he felt
a great attraction.

Spontaneously,
~ and without hesitation ~
innocently,
without giving it any thought
(and feeling as good as I did at the moment)

I offered to photograph her;
simply take her picture.

“I would like to photograph her!”

I blurted out.

“What did you say?!”

he responded,

clutching the baseball

he was holding tightly in his hand,

eyes glaring,

piercingly staring.

At first I didn't even know
it was a bad vibration.

"I would like to photograph her."

I repeated,
standing there on the field
in front of umpteen thousand
people...

including his teammates.

*“How would you like
to have this, in your face!?”*

He shouted viciously,
gesturing with the baseball
to threaten me and underline
his displeasure.

(Now it dawned on me
that I had hurt his feelings.)

I think he may have misinterpreted
my intentions.

I feel certain he projected
his *own* self doubts,
and perhaps revealed a tumor
in the Steve Sax playboy
rumour.

Witnesses said

I made a mistake by asking.

Needless to say I was downright
befuddled as I missed under stood
there in the presence of the
cheering crowd already assembled.

I walked fifteen paces forward,
hand extended,
and apologized.

“It only hurts to apologize
if you don’t feel the pain of sorrow.”

I was sorry
to have hurt his feelings.
He took & shook my hand
and gave me his,
speechlessly... gesturing...
regret with his eyes.

“Sometimes no conversation
is better than none at all.”

Game Time:

Strategically placed loudspeakers
amplified the voice
that introduced the players
to their names.

The crowd roared abundantly
at each identification,
and good house keepers squealed!
their good housekeeping squeal
of approval at each enunciation;
casting glances flirtatiously
left & right to fellow fans
of enthusiasm...

...while ass bandits
combed the bleachers
looking for ladies turn'd on
by the sight & scent
of men sweating
to overcome obstacles
and other such challenging
situations.

hiding & seeking

finding & keeping

winning & laughing

losing & weeping

--Games.

Out of context:

*“Hey Jim,
ever been to a baseball game?”*

*”Yeah, when I was a kid,
but I never really got into ’em very much
because I, uh,
I’ve always had this urge
to come out here to the pitcher’s mound
and remind all the people that it’s only a game;
--have fun, enjoy it,
--but remember, it’s only a game!”*

**It was a meeting
of minds over matter
at midnight
on the mound in the
“City of The Angels”
September 9th
1983.**

Let me explain...

Following
my near fatal brush with mishap
I returned to my seat in the 3rd row
section above the Dodger dugout,
blushingly blending into
a freckled though faceless
sea of spectators.

Lets face it,
my moment as a potential catcher's mitt
had momentarily passed right by
would be historians and other
natural enquirers completely unnoticed,
unrecorded for future generations
of bobbysoxers and Reebocks jocks
except by me.

Meanwhile,
Rotunda Ricebottom,
having completed her star-spangled
soprano warbling,
gracefully waddled to her seat
falling behind her.

She had lyrically stumbled
a time or two in her singing delivery
of our nationally televised anthem,
and later confessed to
an overwhelming urge she'd had
during her patriotic performance,
to get down - to get waaay down,
and boogie!

Steve Sax,
himself warmed-up
and ready to boogie,
assumed a protective position
standing guard over a dusty,
squared-shaped ground pillow
that players kick and sometimes steal
while making their rounds
running the diamond.

I fix-focused for a closeup
as I viewed him from a safe distance,
and noticed tiny lines of tension
forming moistened rivulets
on his forehead above,
and just between his bushy
eyebrows.

“Further evidence,”
I quoted my thoughts,
“that static electricity
continued to flow between us
in a duel of wits in the early autumn’s
summer setting sun.”

He fidgeted & fumbled
his way through the first two innings,
while the nice lady next to me
nervously adjusted,
then readjusted,
the seams in her circa
World War 2 stockings
in a feeble attempt
to morally support me
and stay collected.

Sensing my discomfort
and absence of social security
and malice,
she gingerly flashed me
a warm lettuce smile,
laced with the love of char broiled
cheeseburgers,
smother'd in mustard & onions
and chased down with ice cold
paper-cupped beer.

cheers!

For reasons of my own,
I went home early--exhausted!
Now I laid me down to sleep,
neither counting my blessings
nor fantasizing about little
Bo Derek
let alone Little Bo Peep...
much too tired
to even think about
sheep.

Out of this World:

I dreamed that I died
in my sleep that night,
until I awoken'd to find
that I was...

questioning my existence

Half awake
now,
half asleep,
feeling drowsy,
somewhere in between
time & space
I found myself
projected
out of my body,
traveling by the speed
of sudden thought
back to the pitcher's mound
in the center of Dodger
Stadium.

Arriving there
simultaneously
was an old friend
I hadn't see in
Ages.

“--How’d you, get here?”

I asked, dumbfounded.

*“The same way you did Leon,
I came in on a sympathetic
wavelength named desire;
the desire to see an old friend
I haven’t seen in ages.*

What’s shakin’, besides you and L.A.?”

“Couldn’t be better,” I faked,
looking as though I’d just seen a ghost.

*“But, uh, how did I, uh, I mean you...
how the hell’d we get here!?”*

*“Just go with it for a minute Leon,
trust me, everything’s gonna be alright,
just as soon as you accept it. --Relax,
some scene out here today huh?
Shake you up a little?”*

*“--Relax? Easy for you to say,
mister laidback--a little?
It blew my mind, that’s all!
That jock wanted to kill me,
and mess up my pretty face!
Did you see the look in his eyes?
--Jim, how are you? Where, are you?
Were you here, then, too?
Can you please tell me what the hell’s
goin’ on here? Is this some kind of a joke
or something?”*

*“It’s a reunion, that’s all,
just a little meeting of minds over matter.”*

“But I thought...”

beginning to blurt again...

“I thought you died in a bathtub in Paris...”

*“I didn’t,” he interrupted,
“but lets talk about that later...
I wanna know what’s going on now;
do you ever see any of the guys
in the band?*

*How’bout Kathy and Frank?
I heard they were living
up in Santa Barbara somewhere.*

*I visited them once
but they didn’t see me.*

*You were there too,
doing a video interview for a book
or something.*

A Feast of Friends?”

We continued our small talk
rap-chatting session for nearly
three hours into the early morning's
tomorrow.

Eventually I calmed down
and eased with comfort into a new mood
of communication.

I answered his questions
and he questioned my answers
with more questions.

We talked about past times,
and fast times on the rock & roll road
to rhinestones,
and reminisced a plan we'd plotted
for the future;

joking,
according to the plan,
laughing,
at times wholeheartedly;

two sets of blue eyes twinkling
in the arid essence
of a moon reflected sunlight
that was assuredly shining
on Chicago by now.

We were, as they say,
just two good'ole boys
shootin' the bull full of *cosmic gossip*
and interplanetary exaggeration.

Afterall,
hadn't we both just come from
a writing place
where bullshit is no longer
an endanger'd feces?

He spoke fluent
Jimbo Mumbo Jumbo
and I graciously took it to
the bottom Lion.

Were it possible--nay,
that is to say--available,
we might've even swapped sips
from a tankard of ale in a toast to
Auld Lang Syne;

saluting people & places
longingly forgotten,
and forevermore never ever again
ever brought to mind.

period.

Setting me up
he pointedly dug his Tony Lama heels
into the play dirt upon which
we were sitting,
thereby scratching the smooth surface
of a new direction in my fly-by-night
story and our moonlit shoot-the-shit
conversation.

“Really Jim,” I observed,
giggling like a drunken schoolgirl,

*“--cowboy boots?
isn't that a dead giveaway?”*

“Yeah, I guess,” he exhaled,
pausing long enough
to drop his eyelids nonchalantly,
to raise them again
just as slowly as the sun rising flag
is raised during reveille at Fort Knox.

*“Right! but there are some things
in life that are definitely worth fighting for...
and keeping.”*

*“I know what you mean--dignity,
for example?”*

*Like the time you held your head high
when you got busted in Phoenix
for interfering with the flight
of a national airline--that
kind of dignity?”*

*“You got that right, Leon.
Y’know, sometimes you’re a real whiz kid,
aren’t you?”*

*“I’ve got my ways...
but I know what you mean about
possessions n’ things,
and situations like Miami and Phoenix.
Do you ever wish you hadn’t done it,
the Miami thing?”*

“Done what, word man?”

*“You know, Miami?
the night the shit hit the fan?”*

“Did it hit a fan?

--Oh, I'm sorry!

Was it that Levesque guy?

*He was the only one who testified
to being offended.”*

*“Yeah, I think you disrupted
his path to self-righteousness.*

Wasn't that a trip about The Tonight Show?

*And Anita Bryant? Well, that was to be expected,
but Jackie Gleason, and Richard Nixon?”*

*“And the CIA;
remember the ‘Rallies For Decency’
in Florida and Maryland?
They turned into riots.”*

*“I keep good company.
The CIA--really? the CIA?
You really are a high rolling
storyteller, aren't you Leon?
Don't you have any shame?”*

*“Not right at the writing moment,
I'm on a roll hotter'n Barbara Ann's bunnns...
fresh out of the oven.
Do you think you ever slept with her?”*

“Who, Barbara Ann?”

*“--No, asshole,
the fuckin’ CIA!”*

*“The fuckin’ CIA?
Is that a special branch
of their service?
No, especially not on a first date.
Listen Leon, I learned a lesson
from the whole thing
and maybe you should too:*

*“I pulled it off
on the platform
to satisfy the prurient
interest of the puritanical,
and died the supposed death
of a ragdoll in Paris,
first,
to save my lily white ass
from rotting in jail,
and secondly,
to put a start to the rumour
about what really went down
in Dade County.”*

*“What d’ya mean rumour Jim,
wasn’t there some truth to...”*

*“Sure, there was some truth alright,
but not enough to cancel
my subscription to the resurrection.
Can you imagine three fuckin’ years
in Raiford Prison?”*

*“I don’t even wanna try.
I can’t even imagine three years
in Florida, let alone three days...
too hot and humid.”*

*“Spoken like a real Californian;
do you think I did it?”*

“Did what?”

*“You know,
take my dick out on stage
just to put it in the limelight?”*

*Like I was waving a midwife’s finger
up the cootchie of the sexual revolution
or something?*

What’s next? phone sex?”

“Come’on Jim, lighten up!”

*“No, really man,
think about it,”
people went crazy
in the South,
at the mere suggestion of it.*

*Whether it happened
or didn't happen,
is somewhat irrelevant
when you consider the emotional
reaction,
to just the possibility,
that anything other than
good or bad guerilla theater
happened at all that night.”*

*“The power of suggestion
and hysteria is what set people off.
I mean, there were no pictures
or proof of anything...
disc jockeys were breaking
our records over the airwaves
all across the country.
We couldn’t play anywhere
that year, remember?
I was convicted by rumors
in the media before I even went to trial;
me and my little’ole dick found guilty!
Slam dunk! case closed!”*

** cracks up laughing **

“In a land of Democracy?”

he continued.

*“They wouldn’t treat O.J. Simpson
like that would they?”*

Anita Bryant didn’t see it did she?

Why’d she get so worked-up about it?”

*“Maybe she has a vivid imagination;
maybe she saw it semi-up when you guys
played the Ed Sullivan show.”*

*“Right, I think it does say something
about a society of evangelical
TV worshippers, don’t you?”*

*“That’s a prejudiced question.
TV? as in transvestite?”*

*“No, ass bite,
you know what I mean;
TV as in Trance-induced Visualization:
‘Whoever controls the media
controls the mind’.”*

*“TV teaches us things
without our knowing about it?
Hmm, a nation of transvestites...”* I mused,
taking my chances...

*“Leon, let me tell you something,
your brilliance shines in your simplicity,
and in that light any reasonable thinking
is totally eclipsed.”*

*“Are you putting me on Jim?
or are you putting me down?”*

Grinning broadly,
he placed his hand squarely
on my shoulder,
squeezing affection into my collar bone
up the back of my neck.

Chills gathered in my crown
to celebrate a fireworks of display there
of cerebral gratification.

Then he spoke gently,
himself sincerely:

*“Remember Leon,
even though I may be embellishing
a memory through the use
of my imagination--you,
are writing this essay yourself.”*

*“Putting words in your mouth
so to speak? Making up stories?”*

“So to speak.”

“Then I guess I’m a pretty cool guy...”

*“I guess you are,
if you, say so.”*

“Projected rumour?”

“And humour.”

*“Then please tell me,
‘O Great Creator of Being’,
if a poet is one who transcribes
thoughts & feelings
and puts them down to rest on paper,
what is paper?”*

*“Again Leon,
you’ve got me spellbound.”*

We word wrestled
in circles and cycles of nonsense
and nonchalance
for another half hour,
talking about nearly nothing
and just about everything
before I asked:

*“Hey Jim,
ever been to a baseball game?”*

*“Yeah,
when I was a kid,
but I never really got into ’em very much,
because I, uh, I’ve always had this urge
to come out here to the pitcher’s mound
and remind all the people
that it’s only a game:
Have fun, enjoy it,
--but realize,
it is only a game!”*

Tossing his hair to the air
in Morrison manner,
he cupped his fingers to his mouth
like a megaphone
and shouted:

“It is only a fuckin’ game!”

Springing to his feet like a gazelle does
to beat the agony of being eaten in defeat

--quickly!

he ran the bases sidestep kicking
and skipping playfully like a freedom child
who'd broken loose from his royal harness
of grand tradition.

I puffed along
and joined him
in his Morrison moment
of merriment & sorrow.

*“All things considered Jim,
cosmic gossip and all,
trials of tribulation, karma, et cetera,
how do you expect to rate?”*

“By spitting on the ground,”
he spat,
“--see, like this!”

Rubbing his nose first,
then his paws together,
he paused to purse and spat
upon the grateful dry ground
again.

*“Come’on Leon,
lets race for home!”*

We took off
in the flurry of a hurry
and he got there just as quickly
as I collided into him.

Hitting the dirt
like two dusty dudes do
who've taken a tumble
from a haystack into a pile
of horse manure
while drunk on roller skates and beer,
we rolled in flakes of green laughter
and appreciation to be free
from cumbersome sleeping bodies
that were lying prone, unconscious,
somewhere else on earth
in somewhat separate places;
approximately 2,675.03 miles
apart from each other
and the suburbs of the
“City of The Angels”

I was resting peacefully
in Huntington Beach,
California;

he was on the other side
of God knows where.

This is The End

*“Can you picture what will be,
so limitless and free.”*

--Jim Morrison

Projected Rumour:

one part concentrate / 3 parts imagination

*“Each time you read it
something more will be revealed.”*

*“Lets just say
I was testing the bounds
of reality.”*

--Jim Morrison