

Foreseen Consequences, Politics, Music



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"Finding the Challenges" is an original column appearing every other Wednesday at Everything-Voluntary.com, by Verbal Vol. Verbal is a software engineer, college professor, corporate information officer, life long student, farmer, libertarian, literarian, student of computer science and self-ordering phenomena. Archived columns can be found [here](#). FTC-only RSS feed available [here](#).

Today, I will talk about a particular tragedy of the miscalculations in regulation, control, and law enforcement. I will touch again on the cesspools of politics in Kentucky over the continued bondage of a plant, but in every other debate as well, in many different places. And I will celebrate music, that great collective activity that is the very essence of individualism, freedom, creativity, voluntarism, complexity, and amazing combinations.

The Price We Pay

My family and I bid adieu to a young man recently. We knew him, his parents, his former wife, and his kids. They were all victims of the War on Drugs. He was the addict.

Did he die in prison, or jail, or in a therapy environment? No, he died in the early dawn of a regular Sunday morning in a front yard, down the street from where he lived with relatives in a kind of childlike limbo where we put 42-year-old addicts with whom we no longer wish to deal.

Who knows where all the points in his life were where he decided one thing and not the other. On this particular pre-dawn morning, he rigged his bed to look as though he were in it, then he quietly escaped into his final darkness. The law enforcement people called to the scene saw no sign of foul play, and it looked as though his worn body had just failed. The results of an autopsy are pending, but no one saw a need to put a priority on it. And people like myself, not technically a member of the family, will probably never know exactly what happened. We'll never know if he was going out or coming in. We'll just know he is gone.

We'll know what kind of hell he has been in for more than two decades. At least in the early part of his life, before he met whoever offered him his first drink or hit, he had a golden childhood. He was handsome, he was smart, he had a great sense of humor, he drove a

sports car, and he graduated from college twice. But he could never graduate from drugs. Everybody watched him go by. They would shake their heads and say that somebody should do something about that.

I'll bet that he often thought from time to time that somebody was going to stop him – I mean, hell, don't we spend billions in this country fighting the War on Drugs? Was he so unreasonable to expect some savior to swoop in to snatch him from the jaws of the foreseen consequences. His government schooling had taught him that the government has an answer for everything – he was just waiting for his turn.

He was getting caught from time to time for DUI. He even got some time to himself to think about what he was doing. But he was not getting tripped up at the dozens of doctors' offices where he was getting prescriptions. He was not apprehended at the pharmacies where he was getting both legitimate and illegitimate prescriptions filled. I told you he was smart. And he was very charming. Nobody saw through the ruses when he feigned problems at several ERs in the region. Then he started to injure himself on purpose to fool the folks at various Emergency Treatment facilities, acid burns, nail guns, ...

There was an intervention. Expensive counselors were engaged. By then he was accomplished at blowing smoke up everyone's ductwork. He went to a private recovery facility, for a substantial period of time, attending 12-step meetings every day. He was cheered on by his then-wife, his 4-year-old daughter, and his blood family, to get back to his job and his family. He had a career and wife and child to build his recovery around.

I'll not burden you with the sordid tale after that. Let's just say that all intentions came to naught. Maybe it was an illness. Maybe it was a mental illness. No single person was at fault. But everybody, who thought that the government was going to take care of it, was an accomplice. Everybody who guaranteed that government was going to do lots of stuff, and spend lots of money, and end the tragedy, was an accomplice, with malice of forethought, was a stone cold liar. I wrote a similar thought in the last column, how much I love it when statisticians cite a failure of the state to say that the state is necessary to prevent that failure.

This young man did not have a day of his affliction that did not coincide with the highly touted War on Drugs. He twisted slowly in the wind for more than 20 years while the political scum engaged in chestbeating about how they were going to stop it. It was BS, folks. It was BS when Richard Nixon said it, it was BS when Nancy Reagan made it her cause, it was BS when Bill Clinton made a great spectacle of expanding law enforcement, and it was super BS when all of the law enforcement agencies began to see it as a way to solve their own addiction for taxpayers' money.

If you should become an addict – narcotic, alcoholic, sexual, arcade games, gambling, or internet, *ad infinitum* – you have only one chance to get better, in my opinion – voluntarily

put the temptations away from you and hope with all your life force that you have the strength, the intellect, the reason, and the self-ownership to survive. If you believe someone else will do it for you, then let me explain the idea of foreseen consequences.

Politics

The heart of the lie that is the War on Drugs is politics and the motivations of its practitioners. One of the reasons why I got into trouble with the groupies at the Kentucky Hemp Initiative, on Facebook, was that I thought that they had open agenda. I thought they wanted a good commercial crop for Kentucky because the continued demonization of hemp was unreasonable on its face, groundless in fact. What I had failed to see was that there were several hidden agenda among the political insiders. Politics are not about solving problems, they are about finding problems that make a good cover for the shenanigans. The card-carrying politicians that have roped (pun intended) off the hemp question as their new playground, have already agreed who will get what, including taxes and graft and propaganda. They didn't need anybody talking about reality.

As long as we continue to let politicians game the system for their own gratification, cutting secret deals for secret profit, there are no issues that are important to them. They will cut any kind of a deal that meets three qualifications:

- It can be untruthfully claimed as a success in the next election cycle (which starts today), but
- it is successful in illicit redistribution of wealth, while
- it really doesn't do anything – specifically it doesn't undercut previous illicit redistributions of wealth.

Please do not confuse the reference to wealth as implying that really wealthy people are at risk or at fault. The wealth that is purloined is the moderate wealth of the middle class.

Also, as an aside, since my last column I did try another Facebook group, The Real Kentucky Hemp Initiative, and I can assure you that it is worth checking out. These are people who have an upfront agenda that deals with the ridiculous bars against tax-free farming of any crop which comports with the non-aggression principle. There is no monopolistic tax exploitation and central planning for more government.

Music

When we are duly fed up with politicians, it seems almost impossible that humans could act in concert for a truly unique, positive, desired outcome. But it took a concert for me to see something differently. It was a concert in which our granddaughter performed as a member of an astounding ensemble at the Stephen Collins Foster Summer Band Camp on the

campus of Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond, Kentucky. It will be my last expression of grandfatherly pride to say that she did a terrific job with her flute. This commentary is about music and more understanding of human interaction.

It's called Foster Music Camp for short, and it is the second oldest, continuously running, band camp for high school musicians in the USA. The camp, of course, is named after the famous composer of "My Old Kentucky Home," "Camptown Races," "Swanee River," and more. Stephen Foster was a rock star of the 19th Century. And by the way, if you are in a trivia game, he was not from Kentucky (rather Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania), but he did have a lengthy stay with relatives at Federal Hill in Bardstown, Kentucky, where he penned "My Old Kentucky Home."

But the concert! The grand finale featured a combined orchestra, two bands, percussion ensemble, and chorus, of over 500 students ... and it worked! In fact, it was brilliant.

On the way home I began to question myself about encouraging my granddaughter to participate in such a clearly collective activity where unity and rigorous adherence to a norm were obviously prized. Was I being inconsistent, and what about individualism? I also thought about how I am a real fan of rugby - particularly the New Zealand All Blacks - and I am a longtime fan of the University of Kentucky basketball teams. And in truth, I am not much of an individual sport follower. Well, for that matter, I don't like most team sports.

What I cherish in both basketball and rugby are the extremely complex actions of individuals within the context of multiple individuals, within the context of teams with different overall and temporary objectives. Furthermore, I like the chemistry that brews among the infinitely different combinations of individuals. The chemistry is never the same from team to team and from season to season. The moment to moment makeup of teams and of individual expression is not the same. They work within complex environments. There is hardly any plain old linearity or simple cause and effect.

Then I thought about my favorite type of music, jazz. Even when you are listening to a recording - it will not change in any musical way - of a deceased performer, like Louis Armstrong ("My Walking Stick") or Thelonious Monk ("April in Paris"), who will never play a further version, it is still an infinite revelation. It is the apex of individual creativity. It is the presence of human fallibility and the possibility of failure that hold the divine spark. It is the way in which people can be different that lends timelessness to great music. Listen to two separate tenors sing the same aria, say Je Crois Entendre Encore, from Bizet's "The Pearl Fishermen," say Jussi Björling and David Gilmour (that's right, Pink Floyd's guitarist). Listen to Roy Orbison sing "Crying," then listen to his duet with K. D. lang. Moments of music are like snowflakes. Music does not dull the individual; it heightens the specialty of the individual.

If your child must go to a government school, encourage her to use every opportunity for preserving her individuality. Stress music, art, drama, athletics, debate. Make the most of chances to do the unique things with infinite outcomes. And a great individual soon learns how to turn the commonplace on its head, to question the foregone conclusion, to make one-of-a-kind connections with each of many relationships.

Here are the lessons I have drawn from the foregoing and how I hope to make use of them. When you face the greatest challenge of your life, you may not rely on others to vanquish it for you. All good people will certainly care about your problem, but if you cannot solve it, how can they possibly solve it despite you.

This is certainly the case when we come to government schemes to solve problems. First, there is a great chance that the government scheme doesn't even address that to which it purports to respond. It's probably about something else, something venal, something that cannot bear the light of day. Second, the government scheme will likely identify the problem as you, then evaluate the solution as getting rid of you or taking your freedom away. Third, a government plan hatched at some point in, and under the conditions of, the past, is severely handicapped in terms of what is going on with you now.

You can rise through and above the sameness that is holding you back. Look for the fantastic differences in the music, the art, the literature, the performance. Untold wealth awaits you there. There is an old saying, grow where you are. That's why this column is titled "Finding the Challenges."