

Hiding in Plain Sight

Nobody asked but ...

At the risk of jinxing myself, I will admit that I have never been audited by the IRS. The interesting thing is that my late father, Kilgore Sr., got audited annually. The other day, it occurred to me, why was this so? On the strength of our names alone, it would seem that I should have been a marked man. After much cogitation, thinking about an associated matter, I came to the conclusion that I was invisible to the watchful eye, statistically speaking.

We are not a statistic. Each of us is an individual. Each of us participates in a 1-to-1 relationship with every other person, place, or thing in the Universe, including how the other sees us. My Dad went to the thoroughbred race track nearly every day of his adult life. Now, the IRS maintains a presence at gambling establishments, if such entities are statistically significant, because the numbers are big enough to count on corralling a few big winners every day in the meet. My Dad was never such a big winner. Instead the IRS watched him on an annual cycle to ensure that he was not getting away with anything. Their efforts were as economically unrewarding as was his playing the ponies — Dad always claimed that he broke even, and the only value he derived was to be around the equines.

I, on the other hand, have never been a track *habitué*. Therefore, in the taxman's eye, I am of little interest. I have always played a statistical game, aka keeping a low profile. For instance, back in the old days, when computers were unsophisticated and the IRS was pinioned by its own technological backwardness, I always filed my taxes only on "Tax Day" — figuring that that was the day on which the most numbers needed to be crunched. I may be committing the *wet sidewalk fallacy*, but it seemed to work.

There are billions of tardigrades in a drop of water. Perhaps you can tell us what you know about any single one that stands out from the rest? Don't be embarrassed; individual tardigrades do not statistically matter to us. Don't be superior, tardigrades don't care about us either.

The best part about statistical anonymity is that one is free, at liberty, from the interveners who take no notice.

— Kilgore Forelle