

Ok, lets starto ole Peeto's tale ala media res, which is a high falluuting way to say we begin in the middle of things. We begin at this moment, which for all appearances is a happy picture, but it's not. Now, I imagine the reader now has the impression, concluding from my former sentence, that this is, indeed, a not happy or sad picture, but it's not. No, this picture depicts a deep and powerful state of what I call, for lack of a better currently lexically enshrined word, Gnarbaflex.

The best way I can describe Gnarbaflex is it is a temporary or transient state of being where all conceivable outcomes have not only proven to exist, they have been suddenly replaced by the inconcievable. Gnarbaflex is that state of mind where you are hanging outside thought, instinct and experience and are like Wily E. Coyote hanging in the air looking down before he plummets down. A deer in the headlight is in a state of Gnarbaflex.

The first time I experienced a state of Gnarbaflex was on a rubber raft kids of my ilk in the pre-boogie board days used to catch waves because we were too young to have surfboards in the waters off San Clemente...which is odd, because I remember an earlier state of Gnarbaflex, when they broke into my early morning fix of Thunderbirds to announce Roberto Clemente died...odd how I just remembered that...any ways that afternoon in San Clemente I experienced the thing surfers really seek in those waves...

I got tubed.

Being tubed is what it is all about...I wrote a poem about it.

I think it will give you some idea, if you don't already, what I'm talking about.

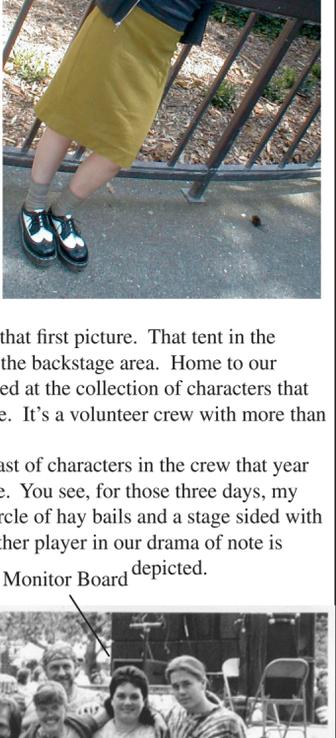
Timeless incandescence,
without sound or place;
caught under the graceful arc of a wave,
caressed by several tons of water.
Swept up in the torrent of the surf
you claw into position
struggling into the current
the tremendous release of power
drops you the force of the wave
aligning your body with its push to shore
immersed in the stomach of the wave
you fall into the approaching shore
cutting along the face
to increase the length of your fall
at the end of the best waves
the crest falls over you,
covering you with a sheet of water
encased inside a pocket of air,
you are in the soul of the wave
the thunder is gone, the sun is gone.
all that remains is the incandescent blue soul of the wave
a place where time is not, but your are.

And there I am in the picture smiling wearing a Red Sox hat not because I like the Sox, but I feel for them and I hate the Yankees. Standing talking to the first woman I ever truly and deeply loved, a woman who at the time only wanted to be friends, a woman who came looking for me at the Whole Earth Festival because she knew I would likely be working it not knowing she would walk out of left field into a whirlwind day or women in my life...the day nearly every woman I've ever had feelings for reached out and touched me...it was, of course, mother's day.

So here I am. It is 1992. I am managing a stage for a music, crafts and education festival, which in of it's own is a frenetic race against the clock to get bands up, off, into their cars and out. A couple of months earlier, I had ended a relationship with my longest-lived girlfriend. Myvanwy Morgan or Myv. One hell of a Welsh cutie and lover of the arts.

We weren't on the best of terms. Not in a permanently fatal way, but in the expected way when it's still fresh over.

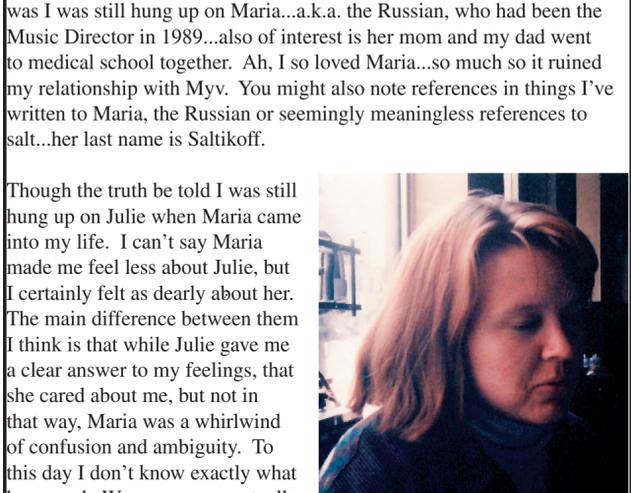
And while usually the backstage area is a safe haven for only acts and staff can get back there, Myv was working one of the other stages, so she has full access and since we tend to take breaks at other stages the chances of running into each other is good.



I'm just trying to set the stage for that first picture. That tent in the background is the dressing tent of the backstage area. Home to our eclectic crew. You would be amazed at the collection of characters that emerge each year to work the stage. It's a volunteer crew with more than thirty years of history.

Not only does this show you the cast of characters in the crew that year it shows the area this all took place. You see, for those three days, my whole world is this 60 foot semicircle of hay bails and a stage sided with two platforms for the stacks. Another player in our drama of note is

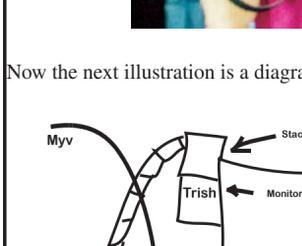
Scaffold Trisha Monitor Board depicted.



Her name is Trish. She is very near and dear and close to my heart. I love her dearly and beyond that you'd have to ask her, because she tells a better story than me...suffice to say, she knows all my secrets and, especially, the players in this story.

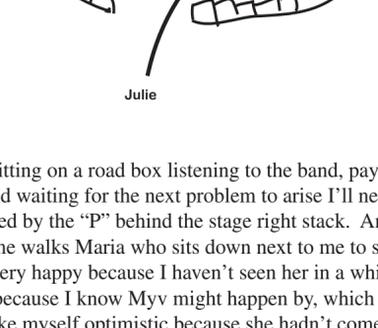
Now amongst several things, a major reason Myv and I didn't work out was I was still hung up on Maria...a.k.a. the Russian, who had been the Music Director in 1989...also of interest is her mom and my dad went to medical school together. Ah, I so loved Maria...so much so it ruined my relationship with Myv. You might also note references in things I've written to Maria, the Russian or seemingly meaningless references to salt...her last name is Saltikoff.

Though the truth be told I was still hung up on Julie when Maria came into my life. I can't say Maria made me feel less about Julie, but I certainly felt as dearly about her. The main difference between them I think is that while Julie gave me a clear answer to my feelings, that she cared about me, but not in that way, Maria was a whirlwind of confusion and ambiguity. To this day I don't know exactly what happened. We were never actually involved so to speak, but there was something happening. It just never became anything tangible.

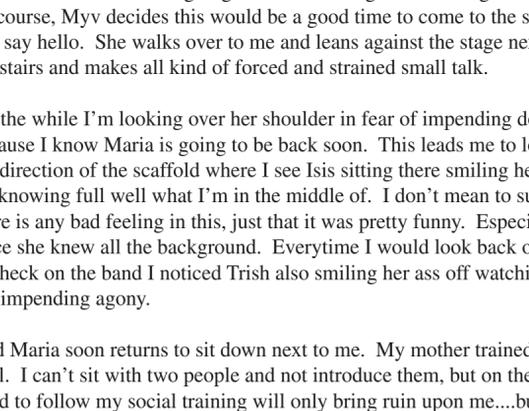


The last person in this story is Isis. Isis, mighty Isis...we dated a couple of times, but mostly are just really good friends. Now, Isis like Trish only play a minor role, that of observer of this particular episode, but I thought I'd include them because for better or worse they were, like Myv, Maria and Julie, women with which I was involved. They are also the only two players at this place who knew all the players.

Oh, and I almost forgot one last player, who really is responsible for this whole. He is the man who took the picture, Dan Ng, who also happened to be Isis' roommate at the time. He happened to be at the right place and the right time to take this picture at precisely the right moment. He'd good about things like that. He's a rare picture of him.



Now the next illustration is a diagram of where this all took place.



So here I am sitting on a road box listening to the band, paying attention to the clock and waiting for the next problem to arise I'll need to solve. I am represented by the "P" behind the stage right stack. And all of a sudden up to me walks Maria who sits down next to me to say hello. I am suddenly very happy because I haven't seen her in a while and slightly apprehensive because I know Myv might happen by, which would be bad, but I try to make myself optimistic because she hadn't come by once the whole weekend, which actually should have made me more fearful, but I'm happy talking to Maria who has stoked the fires of possibility. After a bit Maria tells me she's going into the dressing tent to change her shirt. Of course, Myv decides this would be a good time to come to the stage and say hello. She walks over to me and leans against the stage next to the stairs and makes all kind of forced and strained small talk.

All the while I'm looking over her shoulder in fear of impending doom because I know Maria is going to be back soon. This leads me to look in the direction of the scaffolding where I see Isis sitting there smiling her ass off knowing full well what I'm in the middle of. I don't mean to suggest there is any bad feeling in this, just that it was pretty funny. Especially since she knew all the background. Everytime I would look back on stage to check on the band I noticed Trish also smiling her ass off watching my impending agony.

And Maria soon returns to sit down next to me. My mother trained me well. I can't sit with two people and not introduce them, but on the other hand to follow my social training will only bring ruin upon me...but I can't resist such deep conditioning. It is instinctual and I start to do it before I realize what I'm doing.

"Myv, this is Maria. Maria, this is Myv."

Such a simple sentence. Such a simple hell it let loose. You see Maria knew nothing of Myv (to my knowledge), while Myv, not only knew all about Maria, she had a major grudge against this person she'd never met. So Myv's hair on the back of her neck go up. Maria not really knowing what is going on, starts to get amped in response. Myv fumes and leaves back the way she came. Maria, confused and a little irritated for this unknown animosity takes her leave the other way. I walk back to the dressing tent to see where Myv went because I don't like hurting people and she obviously was pretty hurt. So there I am standing in front of the dressing tent wondering where Myv went and what on Earth could happen next when who should walk up to me?

Not Julie...a fellow staff member who is carrying a message to me that my mother has decided to make an unannounced visit to the Festival and is currently wandering around and will hook up with me later. This turned out to be someone playing a practical joke, but this person didn't know my mother was in the throes of her colitis and on the way to the cancer situation. She was in no state to be travelling or walking around a festival. I should have realized this was too far fetched to be believable, but my parents dropping in without notice is one of a college kids frequent anxieties. So I've just become even more freaked out. And then enter Julie knocking my mind so completely off kilter I lost all consciousness, but still remained to all appearances awake and even happy. I am numbly looking at Julie when I hear my name. I turn around and, well, Dan took the picture...a picture worth more than a thousand words.

