

A JOURNEY TO THE DARK SIDE



**THE FOLLOWING IS INTENDED PRIMARILY AS A CHRONICLE OF THE CHANGES I HAVE
WITNESSED IN CALIFORNIA AND OUR NATION WITHIN MY LIFETIME AND SOME
OBSERVATIONS ON THE IMPACT THOSE CHANGES HAVE HAD ON OUR LIVES AND VALUES
TODAY**

I was born in the small central valley town of Selma just south of Fresno and smack dab in the middle of California in the period following the Great Depression and just months before Pearl Harbor was attacked.

Can't say if it was the best of times or the worst of times historically but I had hard working, honest, loving parents who devoted themselves to me and my two sisters. We never had a lot of money but there was always food on the table and a roof over our heads. We did things as a family and shared whatever we had. So, for me it was the best of times in the things that really mattered in my life. My dad was the finest man I have ever known. he lived his life for us kids and my mom.

At that time California was the "Golden Land". Hot summers. Cool, wet winters. Fertile soil. Abundant crops. From agriculture to manufacturing, jobs in all fields were plentiful for those willing to work. Criminal activity was the exception and I remember little exposure to it other than in the movies. We did not lock our doors, often left keys in the car so they would be easy to find. Like most folks we attended Church and believed in "God and Country" in that order.

Historically, I know there was racism but I did not see it in my own life or experiences and it never occurred to me to hate someone who was "different" than me.

In many ways it was a much simpler time. We did not have the medical "miracles" we have today but also we did not have many of the other things and "stuff" we can't seem to live without, and often can't afford, today. I started working with my dad in his shop when I was 12 and by the time I was 15 years old I had an after school job. After graduating from High School I had a full time job at a shoe store and later a men's clothing store. I only made a bit over \$100 a week but taxes were low and I rented an apartment for \$50 a month. Utilities were only a few dollars a month. You could hardly fit \$20 worth of groceries in the back seat of a car. Come Friday night you could put ten gallons of gas in your car, go to the movies, have burgers and root beer after and finish the evening at the bowling alley and do it all for \$10 or less.

Stop Pulling the Wagon

Are You Tired Of Government Lies, Hypocrisy and Corruption?

If there was some incident of corruption in government it was considered shameful if discovered and those who practiced it were outcasts and looked down upon, not made into "Rock Stars" as they so often are today.

Your word was considered your bond and a handshake was considered more binding than a legal document is today. I remember my father taught me at a young age that if a person's word was not good then likely the person was not good for much else and to never trust them.

So when did the country I love begin the journey to what I call the "dark side" or as they refer to it in the Star Wars movies, "The Dark Side of the Force"?

I have thought about it often and it seems to me that much of it can be attributed to four things. The "Great Society" and beginning of the Welfare State, The Vietnam War, the "Drug Culture", all followed by the decline of reverence for human life and basic values.

Government in particular seems to be corrupt at all levels, very little at a local small town level, more so at a county level, much more so at a state level and nearly totally corrupt at the federal level. It is not that everyone involved in Government is corrupt but the small percentage that are honest are overwhelmed by what I like to call a "Consortium of Clowns, Criminals and Lunatics". The "Good Guys & Gals" don't have a chance.

What used to be simple truth has been corrupted and it is destroying our culture. What we are left with is half-truths which are often more damaging than an outright lie. Take a lie and put some lipstick on it and call it "Talking Points" or "Spin". We face an onslaught of it daily from politicians, advertisers and too many of the people we must deal with in the normal course of living. I am often dismayed and amused when people I know seem surprised that a politician who has a history of lying to us is caught in a lie.

I fear we have gone past the point of no return and are doomed to a world where the values I was raised with are becoming nothing more than a quaint, outmoded anachronism. If I look back at the history of great civilizations it would seem that the Second Law of Thermodynamics applies to humanity as well as in nature. Entropy dictates that order eventually descends into decay and disorder. We are descending from the order and structure of our founders to the decay and destruction of a lawless society based on lies, corruption, chaos and theft.

And the people bowed and prayed to the neon god they made. (Paul Simon - Sound of Silence - 1960)

Bob Bandy