

Homo sayswhaticus

Lance Manion

Smashwords Edition

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"The writer is not an all-powerful architect of our reading experience. The writer guides the way we imagine but does not determine it. A writer lays down words, but they are inert. They need a catalyst to come to life. The catalyst is the reader's imagination."

Jonathan Gottschall

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Introduction

If I was really old and tired of living I think I'd overdose on Viagra. Death by boner sounds pretty cool. They'd have to saw it off if they wanted to give me a closed casket. I'd have only my dick cremated and as my final wish ask that a handful of it be thrown in the face of Mila Kunis. A facial from beyond the grave. She's so hot that I bet she gets that a lot. Probably walks around with goggles and those white disposable masks so she doesn't breathe in too much dick dust as relatives of deceased men keep her in a perpetual cloud. Dick Dust would make a good radio name. "This one's going out to Mila ..."

Had enough?

That's pretty much what you're going to get if you read this book. Don't know what the point is? Neither do I most of the time. I've stopped trying to talk people into reading my stories, all I can do is keep writing and hope that the world suddenly develops a deep yearning to read more weird things.

Until then I'll be humming Replacements songs to myself and pretending that someone is reading these stories and that someday, maybe, I'll reach the lofty heights of being considered an obscure writer.

*And if I don't see ya, in a long, long while
I'll try to find you
Left of the dial*

Homo sayswhaticus

opening story

Lot of pressure on an opening story. I have no statistics to back this up but even as I'm writing this I feel like there are a lot of other things you could be doing and unless I really grab you there is a good chance that these will be the last words you read before turning your attention elsewhere.

If you're a guy then I'd like you to imagine a large explosion that literally rips off the top of a hot young co-ed. This is quickly followed by a car chase and a few off-color jokes made over beer and pizza.

If you're a woman then I'd like you to think about a really romantic man standing there with his zipper down a bit and you can almost make out his dong. Then there is a big explosion which allows you to totally see his dong.

If you're transgender I don't know what to tell you. I have no idea if explosions do anything for you.

These days it's hard to see how books can compete with music and movies. It would take me a couple of paragraphs just to start to describe what it takes about a second to show in a film. Throw in a cool soundtrack in the background and there's no way I can compete. If it sounds to you like I'm trying to convince you to give up reading, I'm not.

I don't think so anyway.

I'm just under a lot of pressure here. There are over eighty stories waiting to be read in this tome but if this story doesn't grab you then they were all penned for naught.

I've got it...

Multiple endings.

A regular ending and then a "writer's cut" and then an "alternate ending." They do it all the time when they're releasing a movie that they don't think will sell well.

This, of course, isn't saying that I don't think book will sell well. I think it will sell just fine.

Then why am I so worried about this first story?

Because your attention span is crap. There. I came right out and said it. Are you happy now? I'm one story in and I've already insulted you.

It's at this point I'd like to give you the "writer's cut." I used the word crap when I really wanted to use the word shit.

Your attention span is shit.

That really didn't help matters much. I'd better have a hell of an "alternate ending" planned.

Nope.

You see the thing is I tend to group men into two categories; those who are comfortable

hanging their arm out the window as they drive and those that are not. I am in the latter group. Why, I'm not sure. Somehow I always feel that out of nowhere I will drive past a mailbox or tree that will lop my arm off. Also, I think it looks belligerent to hang your arm out of a vehicle.

Why do I mention this now?

Because I needed an "alternate ending" and hopefully you briefly imagined me hurtling down a road with my arm severed at the shoulder and blood splurting out all over our nation's highway. If that doesn't make you want to keep reading I don't know what will. So off you go...

third wheel on fire

When you've got to churn out a blog every day you tend to worry about your own motives. When does writing become a chore? How do you know when you're relating a sincere thought and when you're just writing for shock value?

It's hard.

Sometimes it's just the opposite. Sometimes you're holding something back because you're not sure where it will lead but you know in your heart it will be nowhere good.

This topic straddles the line between both. Hold on, I swear I have no idea where this is going to go. I'm just going to start typing and hope for the best.

If you're unfamiliar with Abby and Brittany Hensel they're conjoined twins, each of whom has a separate head but share a single body. When I saw that they had a TV show I couldn't help but watch. I went in, just being honest here, with the intention of making fun of them or their situation but after watching the show I felt my cynical heart thaw a little and I realized that they were pretty damn cool. I just couldn't bring myself to say anything negative.

In fact, by the third show I was actually looking inward a little and wondering if I could find it within myself to bang them. That might sound fucked up but on some level it has to be a compliment because it was the last thing on my mind going into it. I realize that the body is only 16 but with two heads I think that makes them 32 so I was having no issues with that part of it.

I just wondered if I could find it hot.

Then I thought of something else.

And turned the channel. Fast. I just didn't want to think about it.

I had hit the channel randomly and ended up not only going to one of my all-time favorite movies, *Man on Fire*, but my favorite scene in the movie. I wondered if this was somehow connected to Abby and Brittany which is why I mention it now. Rayburn (played by Christopher Walken) is being interviewed by a cop about the intentions of his friend Creasy (Denzel Washington). Both are amazing actors but together they were amazing.

Together.

... together...

I had to go back to Abby and Brittany. I had to go back and admit what I was thinking. Admit it to myself and try to find a way to live with what a completely horrible human being I am.

I wanted to date one of the heads and then cheat on her with the other head. I have no idea how it would work, I didn't bother examining the physics of it, I just knew ... KNEW ... that I wanted to turn them against each other. I wanted these two heads to be fighting over me.

A man can be an artist ... in anything, food, whatever. It depends on how good he is at it. Manion's art is sex. He's about to paint his masterpiece. I have nothing else to say.

I'm not sure which of them it is but I swear it looks like the body belongs to one of them and the other head just came along at the last minute and jumped aboard. It looks like a bad paper mache head you'd wear to a Halloween party. The fact that they can not only share the body and get along so well but step foot out of the house and mingle with the rest of us twisted bastards is just awe-inspiring to me. I would leap at the chance to hang out with them. The problem is that this thought, this terrible desire to be a third squeaky wheel would prevent me from actually doing it.

And what if I did do it? Don't think for a second I couldn't if I put my mind to it. Just for the record, I could have stuck in about a dozen "head" references but I'm trying to take the high road in describing my own personal highway to hell. I know I could seduce one of them. Make her feel like she's the prettiest girl on the torso.

Talk her into things. Terrible things.

And then give her sister a little wink letting her know I was just using her sister to get to her.

And he's gonna wish he never touched a hair on either of their heads.

I know I can't score any points with you by telling you all the dumb jokes I could've made throughout this confession. I'm doomed and I know it. I finished rubbing one out to the twins (I did it! It was glorious!) and then made it back to *Man on Fire* just in time to listen to *Una Palabra* as the credits rolled.

*A word does not say anything
And at the same time it hides everything
Just as the wind that hides the water
Like the flowers that mud hides.*

*A glance does not say anything
And at the same time it says everything
Like rain on your faces
Or an old treasure map*

*A truth does not say anything
And at the same time it hides everything
Like a bonfire that does not go out
Like a stone that is born dust.*

*If one day you need me, I will be nothing
And at the same time I will be everything*

*Because in your four eyes are my wings
And the shore where I drown,
Because in your four eyes are my wings
And the shore where I drown*

Barthelemy

(first appeared at runningoutofink.com on 1/1/2013)

I met this guy last night. Cool in an odd way. It's a shame he died because I saw definite friendship material there.

I was working at a golf club. I'd like to say I have some important position but the truth is I clear away the dishes from the tables. Pay isn't bad and the hours are reasonable so I have nothing to be embarrassed about. Or at least that's the way I wish I felt about it. I was explaining this in perhaps greater detail than needed to my new acquaintance when the power went out. We were in the middle of one of those crazy storms that sneak up on you every now and then. Strong winds, driving rain, the whole show. The power went out in such a way that it almost let you know it had no plans of coming back any time soon.

Which upset this guy to no end. He started damning the weather and damning the fact that he didn't charge his computer's battery and then he started damning pretty much everything he made eye contact with. I was enjoying it. We sat together at the bar and started to drink in earnest. The whole time he kept looking at his watch, as if he had somewhere to be.

I asked him if he needed to go and he said "Nope." Turns out he was right where he was supposed to be. What he needed was power so he could send an e-mail that would alert a woman to the fact he was waiting there so she could join him.

Quite romantic as he explained it. Trouble was if he didn't send the e-mail then no amount of romance would produce her. It took a few clicks of a mouse that at present was uncooperative. I tried to console him by explaining my position on online romances. In summation ... I'm in the camp that says they're a waste of time. "They never work out because neither party is ever who they say they are," I offered up as I went to refill my glass.

"You never know," was all he said by way of a reply. He had a faraway look and as the minutes passed he started to get more agitated. I started to try and convince him again about the futility of meeting a woman he'd never actually seen and he stopped me with a wave of his hand.

"Let me tell you something I've never told a living soul." Obviously with that introduction I was all ears. Even the storm seemed to take it down a notch out of respect for an opening line like that.

"One day I was walking through the woods and I saw a house. I'm talking real woods, not the garden variety you see sprinkled around subdivisions and such. Deep, dark woods. The kind you have to walk a few days through the former before you even approach the latter."

I leaned solemnly in to show him I understood exactly the kind of woods he was talking about.

"There I came upon a house. Not to put too fine a point on it, but that goes to show you the kind of woods I'm talking about here. Normal woods, you see a house, in these kinds of woods you can only come upon them. No driveways. No fences. No windows."

"Balls deep in the woods," I offered.

"Exactly."

He takes a quick sip of his beverage and continues. "So I walk up to this house and look in the window. What do I see but four wolves sitting around a table. Sitting in the chairs. They immediately notice me and awkwardly start to slide off the chairs all nonchalant and then all wander off."

My face must have expressed some confusion.

"I know. They were sitting there doing God knows what but they were all sitting there around a table. In chairs. I felt like I caught them having a meeting or something. As soon as they saw my face in the window they looked embarrassed and slinked off without a word or a growl or anything."

"Wow," was all I could manage.

"So that's why I say you never know."

He finished his drink and stood up. "I need power and I need it now."

I followed him as he futilely tried to plug in his power extension in various outlets.

"What is it they say about lighting?" he asked nobody in particular.

"I don't know. In what context?" I replied but he was already off looking through a closet that bordered the ballroom. He emerged with the long pole that we use to change the light bulbs on the ceiling. He wrapped one end of the power cord around the top of the pole and then plugged in the other end to his laptop.

"I have a very good feeling about this girl. Like she's special. Maybe even *The One*." He got a small smile and then flung open the doors and marched out into the rain.

Obviously I tried to stop him but he was having none of it. Looking back I guess he thought he could pull some Ben Franklin stunt with the pole and the lightning and charge up his laptop in one big burst but you know the sort of lighting those asshole storms seem to bring. The kind that seems to be sitting there just waiting for any big metal object to be thrust upwards so that it can bring down enough electricity to leave a burn mark on the sun. He literally wasn't three steps from the door with his pole when he was struck.

There was nothing anyone could do for him. He was all burnt up, from his toes to the crispy hair on his head. The smell was horrible. I thought it might be somehow like roast beef or something coming out of a deep fryer but no such luck.

I wonder if the girl will read about it in the papers or if she'll think he just stood her up.

The laptop was fried as well or I might have tried to hook up with her myself. Maybe she *is* The One.

You never know.

Egyptian Plover ... over and over

(first appeared at readersentertainment.com on 11/14/12)

I'm sick of brushing my teeth. Sick to death of it. Every day with the brushing. No other part of my body demands this kind of maintenance. I don't need to clean my ears or polish my eyes every day for them to pitch in and do their part. They're on board. Not my teeth. Every day, sometimes twice a day, I have to take that damn brush and toothpaste and scour away for two minutes otherwise I'm sitting in a dentist chair being told I have three cavities. (Note: I was going to say "cavities up the ass" but the ass *is* a cavity and I didn't want to confuse anyone. I'm thoughtful like that.) With the exception of a certain *special* area that requires a good *massage* every day, sometimes twice, there is no part of my body demanding such endless attention. And let's be clear, by *special* I mean my dick and by *massage* I mean rubbing one out. And let's be additionally clear, that is no chore. If brushing my teeth felt like jerking off you wouldn't even be able to look at my face when I smiled for fear of being blinded.

While we're in that neighborhood anyway (which is a bit of luck and lets me avoid one of my notoriously clumsy segues), that neighborhood being below the belt, (an example of one of these segues would be when I say, while speaking about automobiles, "which reminds me of a platypus" when in fact the only similarity between the car in question and a platypus is that I would like to start talking about a platypus) I'm sure some of you are wondering why I'm not whining about all the wiping that goes on during a typical day. How, you ask, does this differ from brushing teeth?

It doesn't really. Going to the bathroom annoys the crap out of me, ironically enough, as well but I don't want to come off as a whiner. Somehow pooping seems like a natural process while having to put toothpaste on a brush and hurl that brush against your teeth for a few minutes seems unnatural. I think I can say without fear of correction that we are the only animal that brushes our teeth. That is if you don't count those little birds that fly in and clean the teeth of crocodiles and hippopotamuses, which you shouldn't because if I could sit out on the back deck with a cold beer and have little birds pick my teeth clean I think I'd just about die of joy.

You certainly don't see those birds pitching in to help clean the other end of the hippo, I'll tell you that much. In fact, I bet a few of them get killed each year flying away all content and oblivious with a belly full of whatever it is they fished out of the hippo's mouth and getting caught in the downward path of a large dump. I have to admit the picture in my head of two little legs sticking straight out of a steaming hippopotamus turd is both sad and hysterical.

Perhaps instead of just complaining I should show a little of that "can-do" attitude and teach a bird to clean my teeth so I don't have to dread those few minutes every day. If I get one of those large parrot-type birds with the large beaks I'm sure I could get it to wield the toothbrush pretty effectively. Not so sure about applying the toothpaste though.

Which brings up another sore point. Why can't the makers of Crest just make Crest? Why do they have to keep messing with the formula? I like the blue minty regular Crest. I don't need whitener, I don't lay awake at night worrying about plaque or gingivitis, and if I want mouthwash I'll go out and buy some damn mouthwash. Quit sticking it in my toothpaste and changing the way it tastes. I'm not a 14 year-old girl, I don't want sparkles on my toothbrush like I'm brushing with My Little Pony. For all I know the fumes from these mutant pastes will drive my parrot into a killing rage and he'll attack my mouth mid-brush.

I'd like to wrap this up with a witty comment but for the life of me I can't remember what it is they say about crocodile smiles. Or is tears?

the friendly skies

If I'm honest, and what good is a lie without a sprinkling of honesty, airports have always played a significant role in my life. My parents weren't pilots or any nonsense like that but for a variety of reasons which don't need explaining here, I've had some of the most poignant moments of my life either at airports or because of them.

I can't imagine I'm unique in this. With all the hellos and goodbyes that take place there, along with the occasional crash, it follows that there would be some wonderful stuff mixed in with some horrible stuff happening on almost a daily basis. That's my opinion and my story anyway.

Seeing all those emotions being played out at the doors and ramps and curbs would naturally attract someone like me. When I was younger I wanted to be one of those baggage handlers that meet you as you pull up in front with all your bags and enthusiasm and dread, hand cart in hand, to help travelers get where they are going. Someone like me would enjoy that line of work but it would probably leave me wanting more so I decided to start my own airport.

Not as easy as you'd think.

The first problem was the land required. I always thought those little wannabe landing strips with their short runways and tiny hangars seemed a little lame so if I was going to do it I wanted to do it right. The problem I alluded to just a sentence back is that to be able to afford enough land to do it right meant I had to build my airport out in the middle of nowhere. In retrospect it seems like an obvious and serious problem but when you're under the spell of building airports sometimes the little things slip through the cracks.

Once I had the land, the building of the actual airport wasn't much different than building anything else. A lot of headaches with construction and budgets and such but nothing I wasn't expecting. As it neared completion there was even a little interest from the local press. Well, local meaning the closest town about 60 miles away.

So eventually the cranes and cement mixers roared off to their next project and I was left alone with my brand new airport. I walked to the end of my largest runway, capable of handling the largest commercial aircraft, and screamed. It wasn't a scream of triumph or frustration but instead I'd found that screaming was the only way to figure out the exact dimensions of my brain. If you do it loud enough you can see where your grey matter ends and your skull begins all around your head. It only works when you are all alone in a very quiet place. And I was.

My airport.

That night I flipped the switch and illuminated the landing lights on the runways as if to welcome all the planes above me to stop in for a visit.

None of them did. I watched them, little white streaks high in the sky busy going from one place to another, and suddenly realized that most of the people sitting in their cramped and uncomfortable seats had little interest in making an unscheduled stop. I bet even the new state-of-the-art baggage handling system wouldn't entice them considering

that their baggage wouldn't actually be leaving the plane.

Finally I walked back into the concourse. Through the food court, through the video arcade, past the duty-free shops, and out to the parking garage. Don't misunderstand, I was aware when I began that airplanes have destinations and they typically call ahead to reserve a landing time and all but in my enthusiasm to own an airport of my very own I guess I didn't think it through entirely. Probably explained why the gift shop in my airport didn't really feature anything from the small town 60 miles away.

Some of you are probably thinking how nice it would be to land somewhere with no lines and just fly right through customs without waiting. There's where I went wrong, you're not finishing the thought. Once you get outside of the airport there's nowhere to go.

I know. I didn't see that coming either.

Now, of course, I do.

Without the embraces hello and the tearful partings an airport, like anywhere else, can be a lonely place.

I walked back out to my largest runway and laid down. Looking up at the little blinking lights I thought about all the forces conspiring to keep me alone.

Lemon Drops

The economy certainly fucks up going to see a movie. It's not the cost of a ticket that's the problem as much as it is the cost of snacks. What's the point of going to see a flick if you can't load up on candy, popcorn, and a beverage the size of a child's wading pool? It's part of the whole experience.

These days you have to stop at the Dollar Store on the way and buy discount candy and then try and sneak it in. The theater, fully aware of how outrageous their prices are now, is doing everything short of a pat-down to stop patrons from slipping in with their own candy. I think it's easier these days to get on board a trans-Atlantic flight with a handgun than to try and slip into a movie with a box of Good & Plenty you purchased at the 7-11 on the drive over. What I want to know is how the theater can prevent people from carrying candy on their person. Was there some sort of snack food martial law called after popcorn hit \$9 a bucket?

Then even after you're able to push the box of discount Lemon Drops far enough into your colon to avoid detection, you're not out of the woods. The ushers are marching up and down the aisles with their flashlights looking for contraband to start making its discreet way out of pockets and purses like so many sugary Punxsutawney Phils checking to see how many more days of winter are left before the coming attractions wrap up.

Want to know the worst part? Really? I don't think you do. Everyone always says yes and then when the worst part is unveiled they suddenly wish they hadn't seen it and go dashing off to vomit or seek forgiveness somewhere. In this case I doubt it's going to be that bad but I wanted to give you a minute to decide before I leapt headlong into the worst part.

The worst part is the discount candy itself. As soon as you put one of these bargain basement confectioneries in your mouth they immediately grab hold of your loosest filling and decide to stay put. You can swirl saliva around it all you want but it's not

dissolving or loosening its grip on your tooth. Sure enough about 30 seconds into the feature presentation the Lemon Drop makes a break for it still clutching the filling and you're spilling soda and screaming like a little girl ... which is just what the ushers have been waiting for.

I think there was less excitement during a WW II prisoner escape behind German lines than what goes on in the next few seconds. If you think that the theater isn't well aware of the adhesive properties of discount Lemon Drops, you're fooling yourself. They know exactly what that wailing noise coming from aisle 14 is and they have the blazing hot spotlight trained on your seat in under five seconds. Before you know it there are a dozen rent-a-cops each holding back a frothing security dog barreling down the darkened aisles ready to haul you to theater prison.

Didn't I tell you that was the worst part?

I'm a movie-lover from way back and I still have trouble forking over such a large amount of cash for a simple two-and-a-half hour escape from reality. To really get my money's worth now I've come up with a way to make movies even more interesting: I assume that actors are playing the same characters I've seen them play in previous movies. Take Ethan Hawke for instance. I just saw him in the horror flick *Sinister*. I found it more enjoyable to pretend that he was the same character he played in *Dead Poets Society*. As soon as it started I was like "Oh, I wondered what he would end up doing for a living. A writer. How nice." It also made me more invested as the movie progressed as I really identified with his *DPS* persona.

I won't even go into most Denzel Washington films where only a few minutes into it I'm yelling "Holy shit, can this guy get a fucking break?! He just stopped a fucking runaway train and now *this*?" It's usually right about then, as I'm getting worked up about Denzel's new set of problems, that the little yellow candy hurls itself into the depths of my throat, sticks to the little thing hanging from the roof of my mouth and causes sirens to begin their task of alerting the theater security staff that they have another lemon dropper on their hands.

Don't get me started on theater prison. Let's just say you'll get it both good *and* plenty and leave it at that.

boner

Believe me, by now I know that your desire for details when it comes to my brilliant ideas knows no bounds so I will start off by telling you when it first came to me. I was sitting in the parking lot of a prescription drug establishment when I heard two people yelling at each other. I wasn't exactly eavesdropping but once I heard the fireworks begin I didn't rush to pull out of my spot and drive away either. They were employees of the store and they were really going at it and there was no denying I was enjoying the show. Looking down I couldn't help but notice I had an argument boner going. This wasn't some little discussion chubby; this was a full-blown throbbing argument boner.

And that got me to thinking...

What if blood engorging your penis could be the result of emotions other than sex and violence? Wouldn't it be nice if your dick could be used to express the lengths and depths of other feelings? Like sadness. You could get a sadness boner. Going to a funeral would

be like going to a strip club, you'd have to wear loose fitting pants so nobody would see your sadness boner.

Or maybe society would go in the completely opposite direction and men wouldn't wear pants to funerals to show everyone how much they were mourning the deceased.

"Do you know if they were close?"

"Look for yourself, his dick is about bursting with grief."

I realize that presently showing off your penis is unacceptable but in this new world of emoting through boners I think everyone would be a bit more relaxed about the whole thing. It would be like watching a dog wag its tail. It would be just another way to express yourself.

There could be complications if a man enjoys wrestling or jiu jitsu, but as long as both parties understood that the reason their boners were poking into each other was sports-related I'm sure they would be fine with it. Remember, if you're going to make an omelet you're going to have to break a few eggs with your cooking boner.

I just think the benefits of having a meaty lie-detector swinging between your legs would be a great idea. If someone walks into a bank packing wood you'd know right away he was either there to rob the place or he wants to bang one of the tellers. Ol' Rusty the security guard would get his shooting boner ready just in case it turned out that the man was indeed sporting a bank-robbing boner. If not, Sally might have a decision to make.

You see, a boner never lies. You can't fake a boner, it's either there or it's not. If someone asks you if you're up for a trip to Baskin Robbins they can just take a peek downstairs at your ice cream boner and judge for themselves.

Of course, the fact that the primary function of the boner is sexual in nature might lead to some confusion. It would be easy to imagine a scenario where one party is looking to get laid and the other party is interested in two scoops of strawberry ... well, easy for me. My mind tends to be very comfortable processing these very types of scenarios so don't get discouraged if you don't immediately have a clear picture of a frustrated woman attacking an erect man with a waffle cone. Trust me, a little practice and it will become second nature to you.

Don't believe me? Take a look at my enormous advice boner.

Sports

I just want to start by saying right off the bat that when I talk about sports I'm not talking about individual activities that we all enjoy participating in every now and again, I'm talking about Sports with a capital "S." Sports as in stadiums full of people cheering on groups of men who are being paid millions of dollars a year to throw a ball, kick a ball, or hit a ball with a stick.

I'd also like to start out by bringing to your attention the fact that I slipped in the phrase "right off the bat" in a sentence having to do with sports so that's a pretty impressive thing to do right off the bat.

Just want to make sure you didn't miss it. I know F. Scott Fitzgerald wouldn't stoop to pointing out when he had turned a particularly witty phrase but I'm the first person to admit I'm no F. Scott Fitzgerald. I would suggest that perhaps having an "F" in front of a

writer's name might help but in my case there are already too many critics who harbor F. Lance Manion sentiments.

I realize that talking about how fucked up Sports are is hardly a novel idea but if I limited myself to writing about novel ideas my next book would have about five stories and that's only because nobody else seems interested in writing about my masturbation preferences. Perhaps in the future historians will wrestle with that particular bologna but for now I seem to have that topic to myself.

Jerking off aside, I'd still like to throw down a few thoughts about the (not particularly novel) idea that explaining Sports to an alien race would be difficult. If they happened to pop down and ask us what all the ruckus was all about, I honestly think we'd have a hard time rationalizing what was going on.

Even if we were able to explain how currency is our way of valuing various contributions to the whole, I'm not sure we'd be doing anything more than making ourselves look worse. That's assuming that this alien race wasn't similar to ants and bees and such, which we would know immediately because they would take one look at some people starving and some people living in mansions and annihilate the lot of us on the spot, and believed in the old fashioned theory of division of labor and risk and reward and to the victor go the spoils and so on and so forth. Even then I wonder if they wouldn't shake their green bug-eyed head(s) and ask "So tell me again why you care if that guy hits that ball with a stick."

Perhaps they would think we were hedging our evolutionary bets that we'll be able to think our way out of the constraints of gravity and feel that just to be safe we should breed a race of hulking humanoids capable of hurling spacecraft out of our atmosphere with a few grunts and one big heave-ho.

I have to believe that they would consider this nonsense and shake their green bug-eyed head(s) in disdain.

So how would you explain it?

If we as a species had overcome all manner of disease and famine you could make the case that we need some sort of distraction before we finish up inventing ways to skip across the universe introducing ourselves to other sentient beings but that hardly seems the case. In parts of the world people are dying from ailments that we could easily treat with a quick injection if we saw fit.

But no. There are people making hundreds of millions of dollars because they are good at tackling other people.

What would our alien friends make of that?

Would they cock their head(s) and ask what else they did to warrant such extravagant lifestyles while all around them people suffer? How would we go about explaining that we all contribute our currency to watch them play a game and that's really all that's expected of them?

My guess is that they would wonder how we managed to send out the Pioneer spacecrafts in the first place. If you're unfamiliar with the Pioneer program, my guess is that you're still wondering what's wrong with paying athletes millions to throw, kick, or hit a ball with a stick. You'd better run off and check to see if "your team" is winning.

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