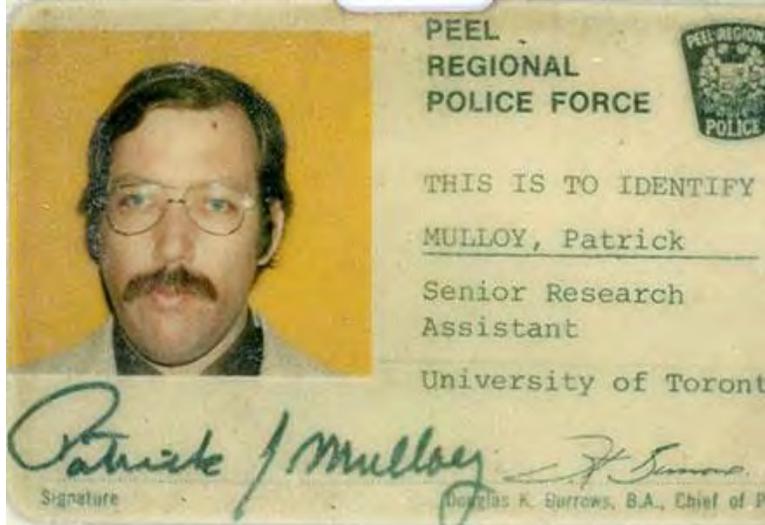




Romancing the Foam No. 105

Earth Day Police – Earth Day 4, April 1974



Its 1974 or 1975. I'm a graduate student at the University of Toronto – Social Theory – and I have just scored a job with the Criminology Centre as a Senior Research Assistant in a participant observation study on police discretion. What it means is that I ride around in police cars and take notes on how they make their decisions. Having only recently shed my pony tail and beard and washed the patchouli and sandalwood scent from my clothes, I decide to enter

this venture with an open mind and open eyes. We are researching the Peel Regional Police – the Toronto Police nixed the idea. The Peel Regional Police occupy the rapidly growing suburbs of Mississauga and Brampton due west of Toronto. It is the second largest municipal police service in Ontario (after Toronto) and the third largest in Canada (Montreal is also bigger). The police force is a blend of cops imported from the UK, Toronto cops wanting to get out of the city, and a handful of cops originally from the Mississauga and Brampton Police Forces.

I'm supposed to be randomly assigned but the cops have the right to refuse to take me along if they feel like it. And they are skillful at manipulating my random assignments. The first day I am assigned to Ian Campbell recently from Liverpool. He is an ex-bobby, big, polite, equipped with a wry sense of humor and deceptively smart. Our first stop is a substation in an old fire station away from the prying eyes of higher ranking staff. I meet Vynachenko and Haegel – two world wise crusty ex Toronto cops. Everyone calls Vynachenko "Vinny" or the "mad Russian" behind his back. Vinny looks like he just stepped out of a Cossack recruiting poster - large, burly, barrel chested, black hair, black Cossack mustache, darkish skin and intense piercing black eyes. Haegel is Germanic, strawberry blondish hair, somewhat softer with a mild impish streak but he looks like he probably knows everything and can get you to talk about it. Ian, Vinny and Haegel interrogate me. I'm not going to lie to these guys. So I tell them about my hippie antiwar past, what I am studying, what I think of cruds and pukers, all of my various opinions. And anything else they wanted to know. After 4 hours, Vinny asks Ian and Haegel – "whadda ya think?" Haegel: "he doesn't seem to be too big of a pain in the ass." Ian "I can ride with him." Vinny, shrugs "ya, me too I guess." So Ian and I finish the shift doing police work.

A few weeks later I am riding with Haegel and we have joined Vinny for coffee in an old gravel pit where the Sarge doesn't know how to find us. Vinny is pissed off. There is a large housing development in the area under construction and dump trucks every 5 to 10 minutes are tracking thick wet clay through a

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residential neighborhood and all along the highway. People are calling up the station and nothing is happening. Haegel used to do traffic in Toronto and knows the scales. He mentions that there is a scale on the Queens, why don't we run some trucks down to the scales and have them weighed. We snag about half a dozen trucks and ticket the ones (most of them) that are overweight. While we are snagging trucks Haegel worries that we are not accomplishing much by ticketing the drivers – they are poor working slobbs like we are - so he gives me his law book and tells me to find something. I find a three “somethings”: 1) we can ticket the crane operator for over filling the trucks, 2) we can ticket the developer for the same and 3) we can ticket the trucking company for unsafe trucks.

This goes OK the next day, and due to my random assignments, we get a new recruit and people know who to ticket and which laws to use. By the third day the scales are shut down. Vinny knows how to open the window and Haegel knows how to open the scales so I hoist Haegel up through the window and we are in business. Vinny is mad because obviously, someone is trying to stop this crusade. He and the guy I am riding with start bringing in convoys of 4 or 5 trucks to the scale. Vinny now insists that the developer bring a front-end loader to the scale and if a truck is over loaded, the developer must remove the excess from the truck and if the truck has bad tires or any other safety issue, the tires must be replaced and the safety issues fixed before the truck leaves the scales.

The next morning at start of shift, the Sarge announces that Vinny, Haegel and anyone who I am riding with will be doing traffic for the next two weeks – which involves sitting in a car with a radar gun waiting for someone to speed – from midnight to 7 am on roads that have very little to no traffic at that time. This is like being asked to sit in the corner. Also no one is to have anything to do with the scale. We do notice that trucks stopped running through the residential neighborhood, are not over loaded and track out less clay.

Back at the gravel pit, drinking coffee one night, I realized the we did the truck thing over earth day – Earth Day 4. Someone said – “no shit? What's that?” I explain Earth Day. “Cool. We're environmental.”

Haegel and Vinny taught me that there is little bit of environmental in just about everybody and that goes for beer too.



I commemorated the latest Earth Day by drinking beer from Bell's Beer located in Comstock, Michigan. Larry Bell started a home brew shop in Kalamazoo in 1983 and sold his first beer in 1985. I had my first Bell's Beer at the Eccentric Café

sometime in late 1993 or early 1994. I have reviewed 29 of their beers on Beeradvocate.com. The company is fiercely independent and remains family owned. Larry's daughter, Laura became CEO in

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2017. The Company is also tied to its community and its environmental commitment puts it among the top sustainable North American breweries.

The Comstock brewery began its 8th expansion in 2017 and on google maps you first notice that the brewery roof is white. That is to reflect sunlight and reduce the need for air conditioning. Next you notice something is growing on their warehouse roof – it's a green roof planted with sedum. The green roof increases the insulation value of the roof, extends the life of the waterproof membrane underneath, and it reduces storm water runoff. Less noticeable from the air are the bike racks and outdoor Fix-it-Station



that Bell's installed for bike riding employees and guests. Bell's embraces the Adopt a Highway program and three times a year Bell's employees clean up a stretch of M-96 outside of the Brewery. Spent grain



from the brewery goes to a local farmer who feeds it to his dairy cows.

Bell's has made a major commitment to energy efficiency. They have combined high efficient lighting with reflective light tubes that harvest day light to reduce the need for artificial light. Occupancy controls reduce lighting to unoccupied areas. The brewery uses outside air to cool the cold storage warehouse during the winter. They use a heat exchanger to cool their wort and heat water for new batches of beer. The heat exchanger

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saves 17 million Btus per day. Bell's heats their corporate office building with a 16-ton closed loop geothermal field. The hop field immediately east of the brewery sits on top of an 85-ton geothermal field that controls the temperature of the brewery using glycol filled tubes. Bell's installed an ammonia based refrigeration system that saves over one million kilowatt hours of electricity per year. They have implemented an energy storage system that stores 3.3 million Btus of heat for future use. Big fans reduce the need for summer time air conditioning and a high efficiency boiler saves and recycles energy for the steam used for process heat in the brewery. Bell's lights all outdoor areas with LED lights.

Bell's tracks water use throughout the brewery and a cellar Clean-in-Place system has cut the amount of water used to clean tanks by 65%. Modifications to a vacuum filler pump saves about 2.5 million gallons of water per year. Bell's Bio-Energy system treats their wastewater, generates electricity, and captures waste heat for use in the brewery. In 2015 the Comstock brewery recycled over 300 tons of material – achieving a landfill diversion rate of 91%.

Bell's also gives back to communities where they sell their beer through sponsorships and donations.



For Earth Day 47 I am drinking Bell's Porter (5.6% alcohol by volume). It has a 6-month shelf life and my bottle is 6 weeks old. This beer reminds why you should drink more porter. Prying off the cap releases chocolate and mild roast aromas - nothing harsh or burnt. The smell is mostly about the malt with medium malt aromas, low hop aromas, low fermentation aromas, medium low roast aromas and medium chocolate aromas. Bell's Porter pours deep brown with ruby highlights. Very fine bubbles compose a 3" tan cap with medium retention and moderate lace. This is a very creamy beer with dark chocolate, spice, a hint of cinnamon, medium hop flavors, medium hop bitterness, medium chocolate and a trace of coffee and grains. The malt flavors are moderately strong. The hop bitterness and the chocolate from the grains produce a lingering dark chocolate bitterness with light roast notes. Nothing is harsh or burnt. Bell's Porter has a medium full body, medium carbonation and a slight grainy astringency that shows up on the finish. I rate this fulfilling, very easy to drink porter 89. It is a top porter from a leading sustainable brewery. Cheers and Happy

Earth Day to Vinny and Haegel!