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The Day I Was Saved From Ernest Angley

by Ben Hamper

Ordinarily, you might find me doing anything else on a Sunday afternoon but being saved. I'm a firm believer in the old precept that Sunday is a day of rest. I rarely ever leave the fetal position on my humpy sofa for anything other than a pack of Newports, a bowl of Fruit Loops or a grouchy shuffle off to the comfort station. I figure, if the dear Lord had intended for me to accomplish something on this day, he wouldn't have manufactured Bill Kennedy, Big Time Wrestling, Abbott & Costello, Gene Pitney records, beanbag chairs, the U.S.F.L., Hibatchi grills and the wonderously mindless CBS Sunday evening comedy block.

As 347 nuns had ceaselessly reminded me during my Catholic youth, Sunday is the Sabbath, the day on which the Lord took five and strung up a hammock out in his new backyard. No tinkering with invoices, no banging at keys, no calls on the beeper, no bowling league, no P.T.A., no nuthin'.

Still, some people HAVE to work on Sunday. Doctors, firemen, cooks, pickpockets, quarterbacks, reporters, among others, including Faith Healers.

My favorite healer, the Rev. Ernest Angley of Akron, Ohio, was the reason I excluded myself from my usual Sunday somnolence and trekked out to the Flint IMA Sport Arena—on Mother's Day, no less. I've been a big fan of Ernie's for years, struggling to wake by eight o'clock on Sunday mornings so I could catch him curing large portions of the universe on my Sony Trinitron. An invitation to witness earnest Ernest in action seemed like a good reason to vacate the couch.

On arrival, my friend and I strolled up to the arena lost in a shuffle of luckless souls, refugees, bomb shelter mascots and silent types. Whole solemn

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East of Suez

The Sun Never Sets On The American Empire

Imagine this scenario:

It is November, 1983. Sudan, a pro-Western nation of 20 million Arabs and black Africans living in uneasy co-existence in the Horn of Africa, is rocked by a week of Islamic student demonstrations. The pro-U.S. government, led by an American-trained colonel who came to power in a coup d'etat 12 years ago, looks like it's about to be toppled in a revolution.

Four years after the startling downfall of the Shah of Iran, followed a year later by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, that development is viewed as unacceptable by top U.S. officials.

Around the table in the Situation Room on the White House basement are assembled Edwin Meese and James Baker, Vice President Bush, Pentagon Chief Cap Weinberger, CIA Director William Casey, Secretary of State George Schultz, and the stiff-backed admirals and generals of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Casey breaks in: "This time, gentlemen, there is no doubt. Khadafy is behind the whole thing. It's for you to decide, with the President, of course, but I think it's time for us to move in with the R.D.F. That's what it's there for. Use it," he snaps, "or lose it."

The chairman of the Joint Chiefs picks up the telephone, and places a call to General Robert C. Kingston at MacDill Air Force base, commander of the Rapid Deployment Force. Kingston, in turn, relays orders to the commands of the

82nd Airborne Division at Ft. Bragg, North Carolina, and the Seventh Marine Amphibious Brigade at 29 Palms, California. From the White House, a flurry of more calls goes out to the residences of American ambassadors throughout the North Africa and the Middle East.

The message: pending an expected presidential order, U.S. combat forces will be airdropped into the Sudanese capitol of Khartoum within the next 48 hours. Impossible?

In theory, the Rapid Deployment Force was patched together in the Carter administration as a defensive measure to blunt a presumed Soviet campaign to destabilize the Middle East, and especially Saudi Arabia, following the dramatic events of 1978-79. Even then there was significant criticism that the R.D.F. was an army looking for a war.

Today, however, with little public notice and debate, the R.D.F. has been positioned as a full-fledged command force, backed by a sprawling, new network of forward bases stretching throughout North Africa, the Middle East, and Southwest Asia, from Morocco to Pakistan.

While the American public closely follows revolutionary developments in Central America or the political fight over the deployment of U.S. nuclear missiles in Western Europe, this immensely important development, one with equally far-reaching

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by Robert A. Manning

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