

“City Drivin” by Ken Overcast

Country folks and city folks are on a completely different wave length. I’m sure that’s probably not hot breaking news to you, but nothing seems to bring those differences to light better than the way the two groups of people drive.

Country folks for the most part are courteous sorts, and are worried about pulling out in front of someone on the road and inconveniencing them. It really doesn’t have anything to do with “Do I have time to make it?”, but it’s more about “That guy’s in a hurry too, and I don’t want him to have to slow down for me.” It’s all about putting your neighbor before yourself. I think I read something about that in a big black book one time.

The only real problem with that philosophy is that it flat won’t work in the city. A fella ‘d be sitting at an intersection for a week with a cornball countrified attitude like that. I think those city cousins of ours all get their driver’s licenses down at the bumper car booth at the State Fair.

One of my Great Uncles was quite a carpenter and, although he was from the Ozarks of southern Missouri, he had to go where the work was, and consequently spent several months a year in places like Dallas or Chicago, working on big commercial construction projects.

On one of his stints in Chicago, there was a huge black guy on his crew they called Pork Chop. Pork Chop lived way down on the south side of town someplace several miles from the job site, and the rest of the boys were speculating about how long it must take him to drive to work every day through all that terrible city traffic. The guesses were all over the map, but the general consensus was it must be at least a two hour drive in the rush hour traffic.

“Naw,” ol’ Pork Chop grinned, “iss only ‘bout 45 minutes, maybe a hour at da mos’.”

I guess I forgot to mention that he drove a beat up old ’54 Buick that literally had dents in the dents on every fender. It was the sorriest lookin’ old rattle trap you ever saw. That can be a real advantage if you choose to apply the Pork Chop methodology of getting to work on time.

“When I need t’ get on da street, ‘r in a traffic lane, I jus’ wait ‘til I sees a rich man in one o’ them bran’ new shiny cars comin’, an’ den I jus’ pull right out in front of ‘em. Dey stop ever time an’ let me pull right in. Dey ain’t gonna hurt my o’ car dat’s fo shore, and dey ain’t ‘bout to bend dere’s up.”

If someday you find yourself stuck in situation like ol’ Pork Chop, it might be worth it to give his idea a try. It sure seemed to work for him.

The differences in brain waves of city folks and your average country bumpkin really come to the surface in the way they’re inclined to perceive other people and their intentions. Some city folks can be plumb nasty and can get as mean as a cornered badger when things don’t go their way.

It takes quite a little to torque off a country boy that really isn’t used to the way folks wave in the city. You can push a bumpkin over the edge, but it usually takes some doin’. Urbanites use a strange, but universal mono-digital gesture of contempt, known in some naive circles as the “Hawaiian Good Luck Sign.” That’s just not necessary.

My friend Craig lives up in Saskatchewan, and is about the most mild mannered, nice guy you could ever ask for. He’d walk ten miles to get out of an argument. A while back he had to be in one of the bigger cities up that way on business. He was driving his four-wheel drive pickup with the bale bed on the back and was in the city to pick up some machinery parts or something.

On one of the town’s busiest thoroughfares, the stoplight turned red and Craig stopped, but the guy behind him didn’t. A foreign lookin’ guy with a towel wrapped around his head ran his little compact car right into the back of the pickup. It’s not like Craig had stopped suddenly or anything, it was just a normal slowdown and stop deal. It was obviously the other guy’s fault.

Bein' not an overly excitable type, Craig got out to survey the damage. Of course there was none to the quarter inch steel plate on the bale bed of his pickup, but the little compact car hadn't fared quite so well.

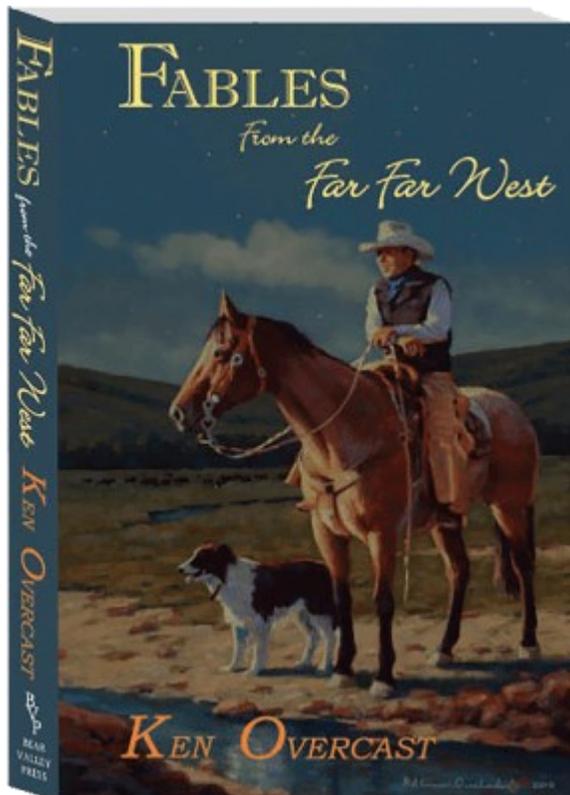
Here's where it got a little strange ... you know, that city attitude I was telling you about. The foreign lookin' dude in the little car went ballistic. Although Craig couldn't understand ALL he said, some of the nastier words were very recognizable. He was yellin' and jumping up and down and using that famous wave I was telling you about.

It's difficult to reason with a person in that state of mind, so when Craig had heard all he cared to, and had seen there was no damage to the back of his pickup, he calmly walked back and got in behind the wheel. The livid little man was still hopping up and down, screaming those foreign accented obscenities and so generously flashing the "Hawaiian Good Luck Sign" with both hands now.

Knowing that ignoring someone that out of touch with reality is probably the right course of action, Craig pulled about ten feet forward and then jammed it in reverse and gave 'er a little gas. This time he really gave the little lunatic something to scream about.

The resulting crunching sound would be music to the ears of most every country boy I know. They then permanently parted company, with the very last vision in Craig's rear view mirror being an irate bearded little man jumping up and down in the growing pool of antifreeze on the street.

I guess you could say it was sort of like a good bye kiss. Who says revenge isn't sweet?



Fables From the Far Far West, Book of Short Stories
From the Real West

Regular price \$16.95

THE PRAIRIE STAR, Terri Adams, *"Take a step back in time or just across the road. If you have ever leaned against a corral fence visiting with friends or sat in a coffee shop with strangers you will feel at home on the pages of Ken's books. He knows how your ranching neighbor talks. He knows how your old truck drives.*

He knows the feel of dirt on the teeth, a rope in the hand, and the slobbery kiss of a dog. Most of all, Ken knows how to tell a story and deliver a smile."

240 Pages with Photos and Illustrations
Illustrated by Ben Crane

<https://ken-overcast.myshopify.com/products/fables-from-the-far-far-west-book>