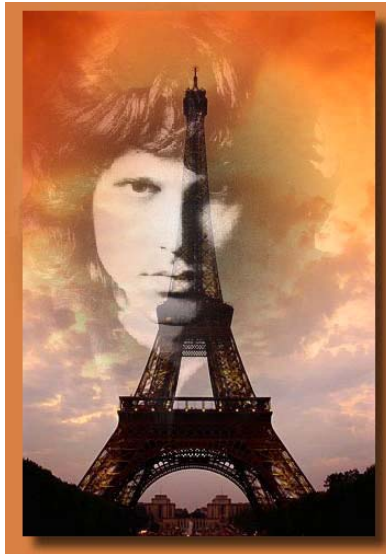


## PEOPLE ARE STRANGE



**By: John Holmes, REHP**

I hate Monday mornings. Arriving at the office at 7:30AM to unlock the door and disarm the security system, my routine is so predictable. On comes the computer to check today's schedule and any email I missed on my Blackberry. I read my Microsoft outlook calendar - November 27. I focus in on the number. I recall that Morrison, Joplin and Hendrix all died in their 27<sup>th</sup> year. The trinity all had abused substances. I think how addicted I am to coffee. I wish somebody would be here before me to make a pot. I will make a note to tell my office assistant she needs to have my coffee ready when I arrive (just kidding). I just want my java! I hear the staff arriving one by one. They are grateful that "someone" has already started the brew. The stories of their weekend adventures have already started. It is always pretty much the same: Spouse problems, bad dates, somebody had a party, or it was just another boring weekend.

The first phone call and it is not 8:00AM yet. I wait to see how many rings before the phone is answered. Only three rings, somebody must be in a good mood. The call is a complaint (surprise) about a bag of used hypodermic needles dumped along the road. I think this is a strange human behavior to litter our highways with agents of death. Ironic my earlier thoughts about the dead rock idols and now a call about needles. After talking to my lead inspector, we decide to go to the site together to see if we can just pickup the sack and that will be that. I am always concerned when it comes to needles because a "stick" can happen so easily. My lead inspector changes his mind about being my copilot so I depart alone to clean up the mess before anything happens.

As I am driving the county truck to where I think the syringes were dumped, my mind starts to wander when my radio starts to play "Riders on the Storm". I am instantly spiraled back to 1969.

I was waiting for a bus to downtown San Francisco. My transistor radio played top 40 tunes, what we now call "Golden Oldies". A news story came on about how they are trying to stop the spread of disease with a needle exchange program. They would start a trial program in Haight-Ashbury. I remember thinking that was a strange way to stop the spread of disease. Why not just get the hippies off hard drugs? My favorite song "Light My Fire" by *The Doors* burned into my ears. The announcer interrupted the song to remind the audience that *The Doors* were performing that night in San Francisco's Winterland Ice Rink. I could not believe my luck that *The Doors* were performing on my night off. I decided to go see my favorite group who were led by my favorite singer, Jim Morrison.

That night, I walked up and down the steep hill streets, taking in the feel of the city that night for a few hours until it was time to get in line to see Jim. I was excited just to be there. Time passed and the line shortened. I was finally inside. On the main floor, I picked a spot to stand where I could see well and not so close that I had to look up all night.

This would be one of the greatest nights of my life. I would stand within 25 feet of Jim Morrison. The mood of the arena changed as *The Doors* were about to perform. A pot-haze cloud formed a couple feet above the floor which unlocked my doors of perception.

It got really quiet as the *The Doors* sauntered onstage. They started to play a song, but no Jim! I hoped he was not in jail again. He had just been arrested earlier that week at Miami's Dinner Key Auditorium. Then I saw him. The Lizard King wore his signature leather pants and black shirt. His unbuttoned ruffled shirt exposed his chest. The band shifted to play "Touch Me", followed by "Love Her Madly." The crowd screamed in excitement, and I was even more electrified because Jim was drinking a Bud. I could not believe Morrison and I drank the same beer. Jim was drinking Bud and singing at the same time. Here was the greatest performer I had ever seen. As I tried to get his attention, my shouts were drowned out by the crowd. I shouted, "Share your Bud." Not realizing that the song was over, I just kept yelling. Mr. Mojo Risin' heard my pleas. In true Morrison fashion, he threw the can of beer at me. It hit me right in the middle of my chest. Momentarily dazed, I somehow managed to pick up the can of beer. I then did what any Morrison fan would do. I guzzled it down. I shared a Bud with Jim Morrison.

My mind has wandered so far that I miss my turn to where the needles have been dumped. I turn the truck around and try to find the location. Pulling off the road I check the map, and the page I need had gotten wet and is unreadable. I spy an attractive woman waiting for a bus. As I ask her for directions, my mind again wanders; this time to Paris in 2007.

As I watched the women walk by on the sidewalk of the Champs Elysées, I asked my wife, "Where are we going next?"

She replied, "We're headed to the Arc De Triomphe and the Eiffel Tower. If we have time, we'll see Moulin Rouge, the Louvre, and the Basilique Du Sacre-Coeur. We have a full schedule today."

However, the place I had to see before we left Paris was the “Cimetiere Pere Lachaise”, the city’s most famous cemetery.

As I climb back into the county truck, I thank the attractive woman for the directions. My mind is not on work, but I have to get back to the investigation. I finally arrive where the needles were dumped. As luck would have it, most of the needles are still in a container, and the few that are on the ground, I am able to pick up without being pricked.

But my mind is still stuck in Paris. My wife and I were tired of touring, but I was determined to go to “Cimetiere Pere Lachaise.” I told my wife, “My interest in this cemetery is because Jim Morrison is buried there, and I need to see his grave. I have some unfinished business with him.”

My wife replied, “We can make the stop but it will have to be quick.” I nodded my head in agreement.

I detoured into a market claiming a deep thirst to my wife and hid a beer in my coat pocket. When we arrived at the cemetery, I found, in a corner of the cemetery, a simple grave site - only a headstone. I was glad that we were the only people there as we stood at his grave. I popped the lid on the beer, took a large swig and slowly poured the rest on the grave. As I murmured, “Jim thanks for the poetry, the music and the memories. I hope you enjoy this French beer as much as I enjoyed your Bud.”

As the golden liquid puddled on the hallowed ground, the dry earth drank in the intoxicant. The acrid odor rose hitting our nostrils. My wife gazed into my eyes and with a wry smile said, “Morrison was right, people are strange. Then she wrapped her arms around me and whispered in my ear, “Je t’aime.”

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*Healthy Stories* is available on Amazon at [http://www.amazon.com/Healthy-Stories-Sharing-Health-Department/dp/0615206344/ref=sr\\_1\\_7?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1224865070&sr=8-7](http://www.amazon.com/Healthy-Stories-Sharing-Health-Department/dp/0615206344/ref=sr_1_7?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1224865070&sr=8-7)