

FRIDAY WRAP

#2.16.1

'A Glimpse of Humour'

6 May 2011



Destination reached – 22 April 2011

Wrap

- ~ Rap -- to talk., *conversation*.
- ~ a piece of thin, flat bread *that can contain anything* eaten as a sandwich.
- ~ Signaling *the end (ie of a week)*
- ~ *Under wraps – secret*.

The World is a book,
and those who do not travel
read only a page.

St. Augustine

The Tourist

Part I.

On the road.

Thursday 21 April 2011.

The day started off as per normal.

Train to work and business as usual.

I had a fairly normal day with enough problems to keep me occupied. We normally get to go home early on the day before Easter Weekend but there was no such announcement on this Good Thursday(?).

So with a quick announcement and goodbye I was off on my Extended Easter Vacation. I received 3 days off from work (for hard work, yes hard work) and took one extra day (no, not to recover)



On our way...

to make it a long weekend of 13 days!! (Yag-hoo!!).

Missed the train because it was on time but caught the next one and was home just before 15h00. Then it was a quick check on the baggage and quick goodbyes to close friends and neighbours and we were on our way.

We had planned this holiday for a long time; we were off on a 13 day trip to South East Asia.

I told people I was going to the Kramat and I did not lie as we did pass an old Muslim Cemetery and we did say a prayer.

With my son in Johannesburg and my daughter off to work we were dropped by a friend and our journey started on the drop-off point at Cape Town International.

We (wife, sister-in-law and I) started off as tourists in our own city with prayers in the new facility and Kentucky for supper before we boarded the 1850 Qatar Airways plane to

**When preparing to travel,
lay out all your clothes and
all your money. Then take
half the clothes and twice
the money.
Susan Heller**

Doha with a two-hour stopover in Johannesburg.

The Air Crew was some of the prettiest I ever saw. Very much like the girl in the Qatar Airways advert. They were of different nationalities, no Ay-rabs, and were probably chosen more for their beauty than anything else. The guys too. Big strapping young fellows with perfectly coiffed hair. Mmmmm!

Once the airplane doors closes you are at the mercy of the pilot and all those mechanics who demonstrated against low wages that worked on the plane and you are resigned to fate. That is the time you start praying loud and fast.

And that's the wonderful thing about family travel: it provides you with experiences that will remain locked forever in the scar tissue of your mind.

Dave Barry

And off we went. Good bye Cape Town, we are gonna miss you.

Johannesburg.

Two hour wait. Time to stretch the legs etc. Exercise. Take advantage of the empty toilet.

I'm careful of airplane toilets because it works with vacuum and not by water flushing. Remember the story of the old lady who had her intestines sucked out on a plane? So I rather pee in the basin. I lie!

And it's so compact in the toilet. I used the toilet seat covers as toilet roll before I figured out the toilet roll was on the other side of the toilet bowl.

Crew changeover.

The good looking crew made way for the second crew which was almost as good looking but not as good looking. Their pants were all tight though.

It was strange. My wife and I and my son were all in the same city and we could not greet nor see each other.



Arriving Doha



IATA	ICAO	Callsign
QR	QTR	QATARI
Founded	November 22, 1993	
Hubs	Doha International Airport	
Fleet size	93 (+139 orders) incl. cargo	
Destinations	100	
Company slogan	World's 5-star airline	
Parent company	Government of Qatar	
Headquarters	Qatar Airways Towers Doha, Qatar	
Key people	AKBAR AL BAKER (CEO)	
Website	www.qatarairways.com	

To get away from one's working environment is, in a sense, to get away from one's self; and this is often the chief advantage of travel and change.

Charles Horton Cooley

The plane was really, really full now with a lot of holiday makers off on various holiday destinations.

Take off.

The plane had an inter-active video/audio/game console with some of the latest movies and music which kept every one entertained if they weren't sleeping.



Doha International Airport

**Travel and change of place
impart new vigor to the mind.**

Seneca

We were served a hot meal next and later more snacks and drinks. These day airline food has come a long way from the grey gunge you use to get. (remember Najmah?) These days airline food looks, smell and taste good. And with the proliferation of 'Arab' Airlines you are guaranteed Halaal food too. But it remains overly processed almost mushy.

(How do they get the texture in the 'creamy scrambled egg'? Is it actually eggs? Is it really chicken eggs?)

But I have a nagging suspicion that all airline food is 'doctored' - they add some fibre and, I suspect, that they add Imodium as well. They don't want crowds of people wanting to use the

toilets on the plane at the same time. There will be a riot.

So on the flight you feel all blocked up. The food is overly processed almost mushy going in and less than twenty four hours later... equally mushy coming out.

And on we flew. Into the night.

There was a huge variety of movies to watch but all the serious movies ones with lots of talking was difficult to follow and was made difficulterer (?) by the constant passing of passengers along the aisle and the air hostesses in their tight pants.

So I managed to watch 'Faster' with 'The Rock'. Fast, forgettable 'skiet, skop and donner'. Nice action though. And they had big guns.

And on and on we flew.

Airplanes are not made for comfortable sleep but boy do the passengers sleep, so most of the time you hear a chorus

of snores.

On we flew.

Heading north up the east side of Africa, not flying over the sea. Probably because it's easier to find the black box on land than in the sea. The black box of the Air France plane that crashed into the Atlantic was only recovered this week, two years after the event.

Africa looked peaceful from the air. Maybe it was because all the politicians were sleeping. And the pirates.

We met some fellow South Africans who booked with the same agent who were doing exactly the same tour but in reverse order. We were going to be at the same hotel the next week and we were going to catch up on experiences. It was Mother and Father and three sons and daughters-in-law. Father was into freight or dagga, I couldn't remember which.

Friday 22 April 2011.

The sun was rising as we crossed from Africa to Arabia and out of the window all that could be seen were endless sand dunes. Gone was the green and browns of Africa now it was just the dull yellow of the desert.

After a quick snack breakfast (more processed food) the airplane started it's descent to Doha, Qatar.

At this time I found the icon for the music on the screen and was happily listening to 'Song in the key of life' by Stevie Wonder, 'Purple Rain' by Prince and the music from 'Buena Vista Social Club' which never fails to give me a thrill.

Doha.

Disembarking at Doha International you get hit by a wall of dry heat. After being on an airplane for almost 12 hours a short walk with 'fresh air' was welcoming. But, damn, it was hot.

Little did we know that we were never going to experience cold until our return trip home.

We got off the plane and boarded a bus to the terminal. We walked in on the

one side, through security, no customs and passport control here, to be shoo'd to our exit point as passengers were already boarding. So up by the stairs, down by the other stairs onto another bus and to the plane. We were on Doha International for just a few minutes. At least the Ay-rabs can be efficient. Excuse me if I sound peeved.

Doha International Airport

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

([IATA: DOH](#), [ICAO: OTBD](#)) ([Arabic](#): [رابطم \(ييلودلا ةحودلا\)](#)) is the only commercial [airport](#) in [Qatar](#). It has three [mosques](#), free [Wi-Fi](#), a [duty-free](#) area, a few eateries and 42 parking bays for aircraft. There are also 60 check-in gates, 8 baggage claim belts and over 1,000 car parking spaces.

The airport suffers from overutilization even though the airport has been expanded numerous times. The current capacity stands at 12 million passengers per year.^[3] Its 15,000 ft (4,600 m) [runway](#) is one of the [longest](#) at a civil airport. It is the main base of [Qatar Airways](#). In the past, the airport was mostly used by Qatari holiday makers and foreign workers coming for the oil and gas sector. Now the airport is attracting more people such as holiday makers and transit travelers. It is also growing as Qatar Airways is expanding more rapidly. The control tower and ancillary buildings were designed by [Curtis W. Fentress](#), FAIA, RIBA of [Fentress Architects](#).

The existing airport will be replaced in late 2011 or early 2012 when the first phase of [New Doha International Airport](#) is expected to open.

The airport is currently ranked as a 3-star by [Skytrax](#) along with seven other airports.¹

**No one realizes how beautiful
it is to travel until he
comes home and rests his head
on his old, familiar pillow.**

Lin Yutang



We have arrived

We were soon back in the air heading east.

Over the Gulf of Oman which is the only sea route to Iraq and Kuwait and was used by hundreds of oil tankers, cargo ships and warships. On this day, of the parts we saw, it was all calm.

On we went.

There was a thick cloud cover now for almost all of the rest of the way.

I did a little wave like I promised an Indian buddy when we crossed India. I don't think his mother saw though.

And on we flew.

The plane crossed over the coast of India and headed out over the Bay of Bengal just south of Pakistan with Bin Laden very much still alive though his days were numbered.

On still.

Over the coast of Myanmar (Burma), home of an oppressive military regime and Nobel peace prize winner Aung San Suu

Kyi who was under house arrest for almost twenty one years.

The sky above was very cloudy as this region was experiencing their monsoon season. That means its stays hot with sporadic squalls of rain.

Descent.

Qatar Airways flight QR610 has landed.

Just as the sun was setting.

We were on the verge of our great South East Asian Adventure.

**If you reject the food,
ignore the customs,
fear the religion and
avoid the people,
you might better stay home.**

James Michener