

Notes on
A Highly Specific, Definitely Incomplete History
of the 21st Century
Author of book: Chuck Klosterman
Author of Notes: William Gasarch

1 Three Man Weave

There was an game of Basketball between *United Tribes Technical College* *North Dakota State University at Bottineau*. The United Tribes team only had 5 players. 2 of them fouled out. So they played the last 66 seconds of the game as 3 on 5.

They Won!

This is amazing!

But what intrigues me (Bill Gasarch) is that this was in the 1988. No Video, No audio, No Internet, No Cell phones taking pictures. If it was not for Chuck K's reporting on it, nobody would know.

2 My Zombie Myself

Vampires: People can like actual vampires. Vampires can have a personality, can be charming.

Zombies: People cannot like actual zombies. They have no personality. People can still like the concept, and like Zombie Movies.

Zombie movies are a metaphor for life. They are easy to kill but they just keep coming. Like your spam email.

3 Thats Not How it Happened

Nostalgia is a funny thing. When you hear a song or watch a TV show from the past and you like it, you might just be liking the times it was done in. It may remind you of a pleasant time. This can be confused with liking the actual song or TV show.

I (Bill) might like the book *Arm in Arm* for real or because it reminds me of liking it as a kid. Not sure which.

In the past people would have a limited number of (say) cassettes so they would listen to the few they had a lot (Clyde and his kids watched Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country over and over again.) Hence people having nostalgia because they have heard a song a lot of times as a kid may stop being a thing.

4 The Light who has Lighted the World

Tim Teabow was a football player who was also a strong christian. But he never said or did anything offensive, so those who didn't like his overt displays of his faith didn't have anything to really complain about. (Reminds me of Republicans who don't like transgender so they complain about the issue of HS sports and men to women people. A fair issue, but not to the extend they complain about it.)

Faith: In the 20th century only two incumbent presidents won reelection with high unemployment and a bad Economy: FDR and Ronald Reagan. Both said that there already-in-progress plan to jumpstart the economy was better than the hypothetical plan of their opponent. And people had Faith in that. (Obama did the same in 2012.)

Tough football players are often bad citizens and people seem to connect the two, which is probably not a real connection. If Teabow was an asshole he would not be polarizing.

5 I Need to be Alive (in Order to Watch TV)

Watching a sports event on tape is just VERY DIFFERENT then watching it live. Just KNOWING that the outcome is already known makes watching it very strange. Chuck often fast forwards to the end.

Why is it so different (and worse)?

1. When watching a sporting event thats recorded you fast forward through commercials. This is actually bad— *It's during those moments when nothing is happening that the drama of a game becomes more palpable.*
2. Watching the game on tape removes your from the experience. The Networks can do a lot for you (instant replays, interesting commentary) but they cannot make you forget that the outcome is already known.

3. You have the freedom to turn it off. Note that if you watch a bad football game LIVE then you can blame the players for making it boring. IF you watch a bad football ON TAPE then you only have yourself to blame for keeping on watching it.
4. People feel (irrationally) that they have an actual affect on the game. Their cheering, their being there, helps their team. Note that fans often say *we won the game* as if they are part of the team. But seeing it on tape you cannot think these things.
5. Since the game already ended... it was just a game. Not an emotional experience.
6. In this day and age its impossible to not know the outcome ahead of time. Or to turn this around- if you watch a game live you can be surprised. On tape- not so much.

6 I Will Choose Free Will

The four best TV shows of the last 10 years (the book was written in 2017) were

The Sopranos

The Wire

Mad Men

Breaking Bad

Chuck thinks the best one is Breaking Bad.

All four deal with Morality.

Mad Men: Set in the 1960's, every action a character takes is a commentary on the era.

The Sopranos: Tony was evil, so no real debate or internal conflict.

The Wire: All of the characters are good and bad. So hard to make a moral statement.

Breaking Bad: Here Morality is a personal choice. We see Walter White CHANGING.

Note that in the other shows, characters do not really CHOOSE their morality. They do not change.

7 Speed Kills (Until it Doesn't)

The record for the 100 meter race:

In 1968 Jim Hines did it in 9.95 seconds. He was the first person to break 10 seconds. This record stood for 15 years. He was at a high altitude (Mexico City Olympics).

In 1983 Calvin Smith did it in 9.93 seconds. Also at a high altitude. (Zurich Switzerland)

Since then the records was broken often. (Steroids may have helped.) (Side note- Florence Joyner, the female record holder, had such a drastic improvement in her time that Steroids were suspected, but never proven.)

In 2009 Usain Bolt did it in 9.58 seconds which was WAY faster than second best Tyson Gay, 2.69. Usain is tall which is unusual for a sprinter and NOT the key to his success.

Chuck thinks this will be broken but wonders if there is an upper limit. I'll note that its 2023 and still not broken, or even come close to.

Reza Noubary is a scientist who thinks the limit is 9.44.

That there is a limit depresses Chuck but not me.

Humans are terrible sprinters compared to most other animals, though we hold our own at long distances.

8 The City that Time Remembered (Tulsa Oklahoma)

In 1957 the community of Tulsa OK buried a car and some gasoline and oil as part of a time capsule. The residents all guessed what the population of Tulsa would be in 2007. Of those that were still alive (it was 50 years later!) the one who came the closest would win the car.

9 White's Shadow

Royce White was an NBA player who said (and this is believed) that he had a mental illness and demanded some consideration from his team.

Not in the book: He later played in Canada and did well. He was leading BLM protests, but later became a MAGA Republican endorsed by Steve Bannon (Royce lost the primary).

He is black so I am surprised Steve Bannon endorsed him.