

AUGUST 6, 1987

Was I forever glad to get back home from my last trip. I didn't say anything about it in my reports, but for the whole time we were in Scotland and England I was late to parties, barely made curtain calls to the theater, and had to slip in the backdoors to banquets that'd already started. Friends implored me to hurry, but I seemed to be caught in an inescapable rut of being late.

We were back home going through customs before I discovered the trouble. I was waiting in line there in Dallas like you always do, and glanced up and found out I never had advanced my watch the six hours difference between Central and London time. When we'd landed in London, I'd had such a critical case of jet lag and jet lurch that I'd neglected to reset my watch. By the time I'd recovered, I was so trail broke to following that crowd of goat herders that I went tagging along without being aware of the hours or days.

It didn't get dark over there until nearly midnight, so the shadows weren't relevant compared to the Shortgrass Country. Traffic in the cities was so heavy that a six-hour margin on a cab ride over 10 blocks didn't register. Also, the folks I was with were shooting off flash bulbs and firing their cameras shutters so continuously that it was bound to have had some ill effects on my orientation.

I haven't the slightest notion of what that much high powered light exploding does to the environment, but if a \$1.89 can of shaving cream, or a five percent box of red ant powders is dangerous for your health, then shooting off a flash bulb is probably as bad as being around an X-ray machine.

It wasn't that I didn't show bursts of speed. In the moments before leaving Gatwick air terminal outside London with 14 seconds to spare before takeoff, I outdistanced three American ladies wheeling 1400 pounds of luggage, and had about 4.5 seconds to look in a duty free shop.

During that race I passed a lady rancher who was being temporarily detained over a dispute with the security guards about her gas-powered hair dryer. A friend asked me to arbitrate between the airport police and the lady, but I declined on the grounds that by the time she got through with those four male officers, they would have met their department requirements for training in the art of graceful surrender.

The mistake turned out in my favor. Once I got back to the ranch, I was still on my regular time. It's my best guess that it's no longer against the rules to carry a gas-powered hair dryer on board an international flight out of Gatwick. Even the best of police forces occasionally need retraining.