

Urban Blight: Sidney 2020

*Life in, and around, one of the Pacific Rim's poorest, and yet most multicultural cities.
A true blight in the modern urban Corporate lanscape.*

- Exactly how dark is 2020?

Sandi McKinnon of Cable Free Sydney talked to some guy on the street and got a surprising answer.....

They'll tell you 2020 is bad. They tell you it's violent, unfair, dark and inhuman. Corporations own the air we breathe, gangers own the streets we walk, and both want our souls, lives and dollars. And I can tell you from experience - they're not half wrong.

The collapse screwed up a lot of things, the economy, social order, the environment. The US dragged the rest of the world down with it, a recession of unseen proportions. Millions died of starvation, AIDs II cut loose, and ol' Satan himself seemed just about ready to ride down the earth with his fiery hordes.

Things didn't get much better over the next decade, they just changed shape. The IEC arose as the new world superpower. Megacorps took their place as world powers. Governments ceased to provide welfare. Education and healthcare became the province of the privileged few. Yep, Australia was hit hard, but the collapse was mere oil on the slope it was already sliding down.

But where the doomcryers really get on my nerve, is when they preach about the nostalgic pre-collapse era. The time of milk, honey, happiness and all that crap. The world economy was, and always will be shaky and in the shit nine times out of ten. The number of unemployed usually extended beyond the 10% mark in 1990, and economies of the world took nose-dives at regular intervals. AIDs was rampant, the only people who cared were infected, and people who were infected weren't interested in a vaccine. 2020 doesn't have a monopoly on crime either, New York in the early 90's had more corpses than tourists, and handguns were a handbag item. Corporations? They've always been powerful, just not always so noticeable. Mitsubishi not only controlled vast manufacturing and industry interests, but also owned the world's fifth largest bank, and billions in forestry and mining. Earned more than Saudi Arabia as well. This was in 1996 for god's sake! Some golden era.

This self-delusion makes 2020 bad. Not the simple fact that crime, injustice or poverty exists, but that people are not willing to fight it. They look back in time for their messiah, look back for the magical cure, and they convince themselves that things were better. This soothes them, and smoothes the path for injustice to continue. People have lost hope. You know your society's really in the shit when they stop looking forward for better times, and keep looking back.

The future in 2020 is dark, because it promises more of the same. Unless some slackers get their ass' into gear and change it...'

-Dr Rueben Kennett, ex-History Professor, unemployed paraplegic and drunk since 2003

- Technology: Miraculous or Malevolent?

Cable Free Sydney asked the question to a few local punters...

"Technology? Neat isn't it? We've got Nanotech, neurotech, cybertech, biotech. Mind you, that's all I know. And that's more than my dad." -

Karen Linkholf, 17 and unemployed, Sydney

"Did you know that cyberlimbs as we know them, were available 25 years ago? Surprising eh. The sheer simple fact, demonstrated throughout history, is that what a society is capable of, is not what the common man gets. You may wake up in the morning and think that the world you live in is crazy beyond belief, more technology than humanity. Pray to god that you're not rich. Then you'd really have a problem."

- **Mike Berringer**, Lecturer at Petrochem Sydney University

"The good I've seen from technology are nanomachines and bioengineered antibodies and drugs. The bad I've seen involves using the above to fix. Unfortunately I see more bad than good during working hours."

- **Justine Carver, MD**, Sydney Metropolitan Hospital

"Technology can do anything my friend, anything at all. Reconstruct your arm, make it faster, stronger, even sport a designer plastic cover. Replace your eyes, see further, sharper, and even in the dark! Hook your brain directly into virtual reality, let you really sense what's going on. All this of course, at bargain prices. Now if you'll just give us a retina scan, we'll run a quick credit check..."

- **Frankie 'Smooth' Heinrech**, manager at Techtronics

"Technology is the work of Satan, and those that welcome it into their bodies make themselves his unholy tool."

- **Chief Inquisitor Ramon Bell** [Ed's note: a real wacko]

- Violence: What is it, who uses it, and where's it at in 2020 Sydney?

A few local bod's gave **Cable Free Sydney's Sandi McKinnon** a moment of their time to tell us;

"Violence is action, a tool. If you don't consider it as an option you're putting yourself a step behind the competition." - **Antonette Marcellous**, self-titled 'Godmother' of Sydney

"My sonny got beat up last week. Broken jaw, nose, punctured lung. Breaks my heart it does. Can't say it's going to keep him doing the same to the Turks that did it to him though..." - **Geremo Pereclous**, local resident

"I killed a guy once. Gave me nightmares for months on end, kept seeing the guys' bloodied face whenever I closed my eyes. Became paranoid, kept looking over my shoulder and my kept hand on my gun. Changed my life it did. For the better..." - Some crazy on Kings Street

"2020 is violent. Granted, everybody can't be pacifists if most of the population also carries some form of weapon. But it isn't a war zone in every street, every day of the week. Same streets? Some days? Sure. But when it does happen, it still cut me up on the inside." - **Dr Rueben Kennett**, ex-History Professor, unemployed paraplegic and drunk since 2003

"It ain't pretty, but it's necessary. Not that I enjoy it though, I even feel uncomfortable when I break some guys arms or something trivial like that. But a mans' gotta do what a mans' gotta do..." - **Reoshi Thu Fui**, Korean heavy

"Death, regardless of the age, regardless of the situation, is still a shock. A shock that He decided to make now the time to take another back into His fold. There's too many funerals to organize these days." - **Father Patrick Callahan**, of St. Adam's on the Quay

- [The Media: Why it rules you, your life and the rest of the world](#)

Sandi McKinnon, in an excerpt from her award-winning documentary titled 'Free Press/ Captive Audience' explains why;

"In a world where information is king, this makes who provides information the kingmaker. What you see, hear and even think is dictated by the media. Screamsheets, braintance, television even the old grapevine all feed your mind, and if it's being fed shit, you can expect your mind to grow into a vegetable."

Today is an age where each interest is trying to feed you different flavoured media. Soft and bland from the corporations, and hot and fiery from the underground. Each of these groups, these information providers, has no interest whatsoever to tell you the truth. Corporations have their own news networks to keep their employees happy and productive. So what if there's radioactive contamination three doors down? Doesn't help productivity, doesn't get reported. Every conspiracy nut and his uncle has their own cable channel or pirate radio station to 'inform' you of the latest plot between Arasaka and the Aliens. These underground stations would broadcast regardless of evidence. It isn't even a case anymore of a different interpretation on the same event. The media of today doesn't need to report the news, it manufactures it. In most cases, don't even try looking for a even a grain of truth, it's all shit, and they know it.

Style over substance; what it looks like is more important than what it is. In 2020 a savvy 'punk should know what's what. They should know what they see isn't totally it. Hell, in this age of paranoia and skepticism this must be common knowledge. There are two ways people deal with this. Most become unbelieving lame-ass', using blanket cynicism as an excuse for their apathy. Others become truth-seeking crusaders. The world needs more of the latter. Badly.

If you think you're free from this problem, think again. What you wear, say and do is media. You lie, dress and act to influence people. You're media-corp's yourselves. Don't just do it, do it for a decent reason. Oh, and watch your back, and the news on at least two channels."

- [Inequality: The have lots and the have nots](#)

In Sydney, seems everyone's a sociological ethicist! At least according to those interviewed by **Cable Free Sydney**...

"Global inequalities quadrupled in the period 1970-1995. They got worse after that. In an age where the possibilities are endless, reality is limited. Technology, information, capital, entertainment, even a decent life, is held by a few select individuals. Billions each night in poverty look up to the stars. But they're told they can't touch."

- **Frank Black**, in a **Daily Red** article entitled '[Why Revolution is Inevitable](#)', 12/2/20

"You can't live in a penthouse, eat real food and walk home safely at night. Someone else can. Tough titties, this is 2020. Live with it. Or change it. Your choice."

- **Dr Rueben Kennett**, ex-History Professor, unemployed paraplegic and drunk since 2003

"Inequalities are what will tear this society apart. It's all historical materialism man. We're going to tear those corporate glitteratzi apart like Lenin did in 1930 man."

- **Red Bolsh**, editor of the **Daily Red**

"Inequalities exist today, and will exist tomorrow. They're part of life. God's way of handing out candy."

- **Harold Jackson**, employee of **Petrochem Inc**

"2020 is another year of America. The year of opportunity. You can do anything, know anything, see anything. You have to work for it though. Or have rich parents. Either or."

- **Max Frasier**, CHOOH2 attendant at Clontart Street Station

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