Vietnam

Jeremy, you strike me as an idealist - who genuinely cares about *the poor people in Africa* - it's not merely a line - like it is for the others.

My feeling is it has something to do with your time in Vietnam?

You moved there in 1996, aged 35. (I went to Taiwan in 1996 aged 33! Though not to fill an Oxford position, i admit.) So what prompted the move?

Francis Collins,(ts3:30): *(You) describe(d) this experience of addressing a conference of neurologists and looking over at a* ***'sea of white men'*** *and thinking 'I can not spend my life with these people'.*

(Ironically 25 years later, you organized the Feb 1 Teleconference with - *not a sea of white men as such* - more a refined pool of them.)

Here you were at 34, up on stage, the guy who fell short on his A-levels, twice, rejected by all of them - now headlining Oxford conferences - feeling bored. You look out condescendingly over a *sea of white men* - hear yourself speak in that out-of-body way - hear them still laughing at your jokes - but taking no pleasure in that.

You were younger, street-smarter, more energetic than them. Brash, idealistic by nature - but not yet sure about what.

The cushy conference scene though - you knew already - *the answer sure ain't there*. It was not the *real* world. (Technically, everything is the *real* world - even academic cliques.)

At that time, is it fair to say you were driven by twin, conflictive impulses?

- gnawing need to authenticate yourself - sense of the imposter (the A-level nightmares?)
- reservoir feeling that you are special - you were meant for *greater things*...

After the conference you went to the coffee room for the usual chitchat - overheard someone (do your remember whom?) talking about a gig in Vietnam?

You: *Actually it wasn't in the coffee room, it was actually in the bar, where still things do happen (laughter).*

Sorry, my mistake. Bloody Francis Collins - unreliable as usual. So he says you *overheard* a conversation - is that right - or did *they* approach you?

Uhr, uhm **-** *and* ***they*** *were looking for a director* (at Oxford pay, clears throat) *of what was then a* ***nascent program*** *(11:21) in Vietnam, Ho Chi Mihn city, in Vietnam, in 1995.* (my brackets)

Oh - so it was more of a head-hunting thing? Do you happen to remember 'they's' name(s)? The recruiters? Or is that classified?

Anyway, piqued your curiosity. A few beers later you were in. As you say, things *still do happen* in bars - Oxford bars at least.

So in 1996 you moved there . Thought a few years tops (me too with Taiwan, initially) - then succumb to normalcy by going ... *"back to a migraine clinic in Oxford or Edinburgh*" (not me too).

In fact stayed 18 very, very happy years living in what is a remarkable country.

Me; a little longer. *Very very happy years?* - constant *very, very happiness* is not my metric for weighing existence, but there is a life-affirming spirit in Taiwan that i'll always be grateful for. It's a place where you're *allowed to be*. Don't get automatically locked up for that. So yeah, also a *remarkable country* - especially in today's *War on Freedom* climate.

Conversely, did the freedom from the scientific herd's regulation, that the Vietnam anti-freedom system afforded, better suit your urge to explore restless dreams ...?

Then SARS happened. You were on the frontline. You tell us that in almost every speech you make. Did SARS feed your dare-devil adventurousness?

The chance to coordinate with centralized political power holders - to orchestrate operations - for the *common-good* - was that the clincher - I can see how that would be intoxicating. You were very good at - won the Ho Chi Minh Medal no less.

I've always thought Vietnam was a good example of how Communism *can* work. They kicked the US's corrupt-arsed invasion out - Ho Chi Minh - (a) won - (b) ran/developed the country without plunging everyone into famine.

Meanwhile, Vietnamese people are spiritual, resilient, funny, respectful, artistic, brave, community-based. Plus the food is great - and it's geographically beautiful.

Hard not to like that. But it's not just the Vietnamese people you rave about - you especially lavish praise on the *remarkable* achievements of Vietnam's political system, saying it:

... *offers such hope of where a country can develop and change, and embrace the modern world.*

But hang on, Jeremy, Vietnam is, after all, a totalitarian regime.

I found this, actually 'found' is too fancy, it was the first entry on the search page for *Vietnam political persecution*. It's a World Report on Human Rights in Vietnam. Seems at odds with your impression:

World Report: *Those who criticize the one party regime face police intimidation, harassment, restricted movement, physical assault, detention, and arrest and imprisonment. Police detain political detainees for months without access to legal counsel and subject them to abusive interrogations.*

Pretty sure you'd be safe though, right? In fact they awarded you *two* medals of honour - the same number Lipkin received from the CCP.

Interestingly, the 2nd listing on the search page, the Amnesty site, also documents *punishment for distributing "disinformation" on the pandemic* , including the censorship of anyone questioning the official origin and/or draconian lockdowns (with the help of Facebook no doubt.)

As someone who is big on lockdowns and censoring origin talk, i can see how you would love that - how you would enthuse that the Vietnam regime *offers such hope of where a country* (heck - a whole planet!) *can develop and change, and embrace the modern world* - without being slowed down by tedious accountability.

Yeah - no. I'd still rather Taiwan as a symbol of *hope for embracing the modern world* - it's a free country for a start. If you're gonna build something - get the foundations right.

But Taiwan's not your favourite topic, is it? I know that coz i tried searching *Jeremy Farrar Taiwan.* Captain Covid, architect of the world's Covid response/cover-up(?) - and - *Taiwan* - the country that was by far the most successful in the world at containing it - without draconian lockdowns. Surely there would be some cross-over mention…?

But nothing. Nada. That simple word, *Taiwan* has never left your lips in public.

Why is that, Jeremy?

As a world health expert - could you not bring yourself to *take the politics out* for five minutes? To analyse whether the world had/has something to learn from Taiwan's investigation of the origin of Covid - it's handling/control of the disease?

What happened to *the common-good*?

Sorry, those are rhetorical questions. We both know why. Idealistically, you prefer totalitarianism (with yourself near the apex) - *One Planet* and all that.

A democracy like Taiwan where people are still allowed to question you, is only going to mess that up.

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