

TMFRS

LET'S MAKE SENSE OF YER STUPID FUCKING BRAIN

Rat Wars | LifeN'Strife in the Cage

Continual stimulus control will kill the real you.

Summer 2022

Who's fighting who? For what?

Hard times y'all. If you're in a struggle situation right now, don't hesitate to reach out wherever you have support. Including right here.

But let's not get into that issue immediately. Papa jess needs time to settle. Let's just do this week's double episode release, and talk about society in a fun way, huh?

So, just in case you're thinking about time, space, and energy as the mediums of life as much as I have since that last episode - weird concept, not sure where it came from...

Let's put this society vs. biology conversation into a quick metaphor and say

We're basically two tons of seeds thrown on a slab of concrete in a basement with no water. You (reigning kings) can yell and scream and insult the seeds for not immediately growing (time), having no place to spread out or put down roots (space), and no access to water or sunlight (energy)... but I don't see how those things are the SEEDS fault. Pretty sure you're just a shit gardener.

But that's not the metaphor for today.

"Fuckin like bunnies, breedin like RATS."

I think the zoo is still sounding a bit too bright and sunny, “family fun friendly” for this talk. SO we’re going with those words, which keep echoing from my soul thing through my ears.

Which, actually, is from a song about CHOSEN procreation and the human species taking over the planet. But, you know... new meaning all of a sudden. These aren’t wild rodents freely fucking for nature anymore - they’re entrapped, womb output is enforced.

In essence, in our large social systems, we’re all rats fighting in a cage.

Not because we even know each other in some personal rat vendetta or REALISTICALLY because “they’re” comin fer your family’s babies or guns. But because someone is running electricity through the bars.

We don’t see the real threat - the person flipping that switch. We might not even notice the bars - they’ve always been there, we accept and work around them as “normal parts of life”.

But in those bars, we only see each other, feel the pain and panic, and fight the supposed “enemy” right in front of us, as shocked rip through our feet.

Or, instead of electricity - that example was based on a super fucked up old experiment with dogs who learn to be helpless rather than escape - let’s say it’s just a shortage of pellets plaguing our cage, creating supply and demand strain in our rodent stomachs. Our energy deficit is higher than ever, and demanding more and more of our time while depleting our access to space, because we’re working harder trying to find food and live in overpriced, close quarters to get to said exhausting job.

But even as things get desperate... We don’t try to escape the cage. We just live through another bloodbath as we fight over dehydrated pellets and the looming sense of dread. We need to feel empowered to take SOME sort of action, so we direct it at the only opposing force we can identify with black and white thinking - things aren’t going well and it HAS to be SOMEONE’S fault. That someone ISN’T me (all white), so it MUST BE YOU (all black).

Or male, versus female. Or “believing in THIS rat god, versus that one.”

We get EXTREME when we’re under extreme stress and fed extreme ideas that are doubled and tripled down on by our social contacts. And pretty soon, we stop having our own novel, more balanced, perhaps more moderate reactions to the circumstances.

And then we’re in trouble. Because we’re trying to rationally operate without rationale. We’re living on justifications built on justifications, validated by the folks who have the same

justifications. This is the way things are. This is right. You are right. We are right. And if we aren't, then how do you explain things being this way?

It's an ever-tightening, self-justifying loop that presupposes there are universal "right and wrongs" and keeps getting more rigid in those judgements.

And that means our opinions keep exponentially intensifying. There's no "balancing" the scale. There's only adding additional weight to one side, as we seek out and confirm what we already believe. PS - a lot of us rats live in corners of the cage that don't GET alternative views. They're buried down in the dark, climbing over each other, never having another perspective seep in.

So. Without those tricky graytones in between the radical reactions that are being grown, intensified, and transmitted like a contagion... which might help us realize with a wider perspective... "we don't get along in this cage and that creates strain for everyone - we ALL FEEL IT, the competition and discomfort - but at the end of the day, whether we gnaw each other's legs off or not... we are still in this fucking cage." We're fucked.

We're missing the whole picture. And near-blinding ourselves so we'll only be ABLE to absorb the ultra compressed versions of it.

There are many more, and much larger, complicating factors at play than "I'm not trapping or torturing us, so therefore YOU must be." Uh, rightful vengeance and justifications of self-protection to follow.

But we can't see that mortality wounding each other won't help. Because we can't see the finger pushing that electrical shock button or measuring out smaller and smaller cups of pellets for the crew, when we're too busy scrambling around down below.

We can't think clearly about the general issues (we're trapped in this series of systems) that are creating the more dire issues (and have limited resources for everyone, as determined by... SOMEONE, collectively a lot of passive "theys") that are lighting up our survival instincts (also, we're *increasingly* punished over time that make the other problems *increasingly* desperate, as a cumulative result of being *increasingly* terrorized and unable to escape).

And if we COULD find the TIME and SPACE to think our ways to a bigger perspective - "oh, we're all in this together, actually, suffering in socially segregated but often similar ways which none of us are asking for" - we still might not be able to FEEL those realizations in our core, to actually ignite the brain pathways...

Because, well, we're either numb from all the wheel-running or too hopped up on adrenaline and cortisol for a real catalog of emotions. All we've got is fear and frustration, that turn into grief

and rage, to work with. Fuel for continuing on the same reactive neural path, not creating new ones.

Not to mention... our systems are so depleted of resources from fighting, fleeing, feeling defeated on repeat, and everything else that's very energetically costly because it's completely fear-based... SO we have no energy. Even IF we COULD have all these huge thoughts and new views, seeing the overarching issue of our imprisonment, somehow, from *within* those entrapped conditions... you know...

Then what?

What difference can one even make?

We, our self, one little rat... decides to try to dig their way out? Well, we all already know... it won't work.

We decide to try to rally the other rats, so we can all dig separately? Well, that's ineffective if everyone is going to town on their one little area, barely making a dent. And most likely, the majority of rats will be too occupied with their more immediate problems to spare their precious time or energy... even if they agree that it's a good idea to try to work a way out.

Or. Lastly. I guess we try to convince the other rats to look up, see a way out, realize it's going to take more than one of us, agree to cooperate, and form a new structure? Everyone work in unison. Trust the rat below and above you. Believe that we're all pulling for the same goal here. And let's climb ourselves out of this pit. Yes, even agreeing that we'll come back to save the rat who got stuck at the bottom of the pile and all his family members, too.

Well. I think it's clear to see why that doesn't work out in reality.

Why we're still stuck in the cage.

Creating even worse conditions for ourselves as the humans playing gods overhead encourage the squalor.

First of all... communication barriers. Let's not make this a *ratatouille* sort of situation. Let's admit that the rats can't even express their ideas and beliefs to each other. Even if they're the same kind of rat, even from the same family. There are limitations in what they can functionally express to each other. They probably don't even have the resources to express much to themselves. Never learned how, with all the fuckin and fear mongerin and fightin that they've been taught to prioritize. It's a lot of extra energy trying to clearly talk shop with all the other rats. It might be even harder to stop and talk, truthfully, with themselves about their conditions.

Second of all... everything else working against these dudes.

Starting with no time, space, energy. But also the starvation, violence, and other immediate survival threats that we're bumping elbows with every moment of the day.

Can't get out of the cage, so we're always reminded of the conditions we're stuck in. The echo chamber at work. Plus, in our social circle, let's acknowledge even as humans (not rats) that those fear chemicals make us act a lot less domesticated. With increasing volume. And, frankly, that sets off a whole spiraling chain of events, which feeds back into itself.

You know how it goes, even in your own body - when one negative, anxiety or fear-inspiring event kicks off a bunch of emotional, cognitive, and behavioral events that keep deepening while feeling more and more out of control? It's a self-propelling and socially contagious cycle when we're reacting out of fear. And it lasts until something breaks the chain forcefully. You literally cannot do the things you've been doing anymore and have to stop to reconsider how you got here in the first place.

Until then, everything gets more extreme, more reductive, more emotionally charged, less gray-toned, and easier to justify. Because... fear and distress did it. Not me. The conditions are in charge right now. I'm, again, but a powerless meat puppet to the strings being pulled.

And... uh... in a way that's totally true. Because there ARE outside others creating the terror that's pulling your strings. The strings are psychological and financial, mostly. But that's... uh... that's definitely enough. Enough to scare us into submission. Enough to keep us busy. Enough to keep us showing up in the ways we're instructed.

And what's more... Is we don't need the THREATS of the overhead cage keepers to be frightened in with the rest of the ratpack. We also don't need to be rats individually chained to the cage we're in... we'll keep *each other* chained in the same spot.

Acting out of line from the larger rat population signals even stronger fear responses, so we don't want that.

AND our rat homies are PRETTTTTTY insistent that we do things the way THEY do things. Otherwise, we're passing the fear responses onto THEM when the correctness and absolute necessity of their rat lifestyle is called into question.

They will punish you if you think differently, feel differently, act differently. Dare to mention the hands overhead.

But luckily, I guess... most of the rats won't get that far. Because - you know it - they don't have the elements they need to gather that perspective.

So. To quickly pull this conversation all back together.

We're instructed to sell our time... so we can never think for ourselves. Or ACT for ourselves. Because we're also instructed to sell our energy. No time, no energy? No new thoughts, feelings, actions. We COULD figure out a way out of here and apply ourselves to do it... but nope, we actually CAN'T, because of the constraints we face just needing to eat and sleep.

And we CAN'T even get that far - so many of us are unable to see the entrapment condition that way... because we also get no space, with which we could form better perspectives about the broader situation we're ALL in.

No space, as in... your work WORKS itself INTO your brain when thoughts are dominated by the common expectation to "work three jobs or starve your children," thus turning you into a capitalist zombie ant.

No space, as in... you can't engage with the world without being continually reminded of the survival circumstances we're all in - from the news, social media, the view outside your window, your struggling personal contacts.

No space, as in... we're stacked the fuck on top of each other with paper ceilings and hollow doors, and unable to afford THAT without cohabitating IN our luxury boxes where we're stored in what was country.

In our current times, you don't have room for your own thoughts, your own feelings, your own movement, your own energy to become materialized.

None of us do.

Only the cage keepers.

And to make absolutely sure none of us overcome the fear and start turning the rest of the rats into a united force? They divvy up the pellets and other resources a little differently. This inherently superior group gets a few more. This up-and-coming group can work for a more nutritious variety. This historically sacrificed group consistently gets less, no matter what, and those extruded bits are filled with addictive substances....

PLUS, the cage keepers have another trick... they start raising the stakes. Take some pellets away from these guys today. Give them over here tomorrow, seemingly suggesting a changing of power dynamics that will rage forever. Introduce some new threats - so the rats believe that they're falling victim to EACH OTHER. Keep their families and arbitrary social groups on the lookout against all other groups.

NOW let's see you be smarter than your fear and unionize for the purpose of escaping, when you're resentful or turned against everyone who doesn't share the same fur color or pellet status. It's everyone against everyone. Unless you have a WHOLE LOT in common, and then you'll only have factionalized meetings about your complaints, which never gain enough steam to overtake the glass wall.

AND, if that's not working well enough, they can always introduce new, larger threats that destabilize everyone at once, causing a mass fear event. Really churn up those survival instincts so the whole pack is frenzied all at once

They leave the electrical charge on over the weekend. They rattle the cage violently once in a while. They remove all food pellets. They introduce the scent of a new, unknown species, and spread paranoia. They let the temperature in the room climb to unlivable levels. Eh, they don't sweat so much when they're sippin \$10 coffee or taking trips into outer space, anyways. The room burning doesn't really bother them, they have pools at all of their 5 homes. Or their bosses do. And those are part of the perks for working here in the rat room, so they turn a blind eye to the trash can igniting in the corner.

In short. They provoke everyone. Which drives up fear. Which drives up reactivity. Which creates behaviors that drive up MORE fear.

The rats increasingly, indefinitely, turn to tribalism, extreme actions, paranoias, superstitions, outward violence, and mutual-destruction. They don't even know WHAT they're protecting anymore, realistically. They're killing each other to keep things "the same as they were," (you know, back when they predictably got 5 artificial and slightly-less-toxic red pellets a day, and the rest only got 3) never acknowledging that "the same," was never good for them in the first place... or that these limits on resources were regulated from ten levels up. Never REALLY a measure of the performance of the rats, themselves. But they sure feel proud of their high-pellet-earning days and don't ever want to let that personal achievement go.

So, although the cage keepers have always had access to stockpiles of non-expired, non-toxic, or non-material resources... they just **CHOSE** to provide the bare-minimum to slowly poison the masses... at the same time propagating those masses and thus, their available energy - remember, not too much! Just enough to spin their profit-generating wheels. You don't want to overnourish them, or they'll get less desperate and start to wise up.

And meanwhile, the rats battle each other over those shit nuggets, their ever-denser population, their ever-smaller cage, their chronic discomfort and obvious sense of powerlessness as the room gets hotter, the food gets taken away, the water bottle dries up or gets contaminated, and the rusty wheel gets bigger... and the rats start having to run on **MULTIPLE** tetanus-laden wheels each day to get by. Thinking that it actually makes a difference how hard or long they run - when, either way, they're going nowhere and their pellet earning potential is determined by forces they'll never directly observe.

All the while the cage keepers **BLAME** the rats for the pellet shortage, toxic conditions, desperate environment, and space deficit, and tell them to run faster if they want to get out. Gaslight em.

YOU are the problem. There are too many of you. We don't want to take care of you. You should need less from us, take on more wheel spinning for your self, and figure out a way to get out of this cage.

(quote) "Just like they did."

Never acknowledging... they, themselves, were not born in that cage. Their parents weren't born in that cage. Their children will not be residents of that cage. They are a different species, really, altogether. At least **THEY** certainly see it that way, peering down at the diseased and defeated rats clawing at each other's eyes.

But **YOU**... are choosing to be there, rats. It's your own fault. I don't know, you must like it in there or something. Should have just chosen not to be in the cage, like they did.

Plus... really, it's selfish of you no matter what. It's a real drag on **THEM**, they say, to have to worry about you and your lofty "basic needs." Brings down their vibes. Could you just be less demanding? What is with all the handouts? These rotting pellets are more than you deserve, based on how you're still just running in the same place.

Really, there are only so many pellets they **CAN** spare. And they want you to know, there's another group of rats that's gunning for your dinner.

And your wheel.

And your bedding.

And your dirty rat family.

And... this entire cage, actually. They're coming for it all.

So, guess you'd better fight as if your life and your family depend on it. There's not enough for everyone. Oh, ps - this is a "pro rat" cage... so you're going to be pumping out a lot of new "everyones." Yes, there already wasn't enough space or food or medical care for all of you. But it's really important to the cage keepers that you produce more precious baby rats. For them to complain about needing basic resources. But they really need to be here, it's important that they're born.

For... some reason... definitely not to keep turning their wheels with increasingly desperate force and determination to survive against all opposition and odds, or anything... this isn't about using rats for the only resources they have - time and energy...

But's because they really care about you.

You can tell, by the sub-nutrient pellets, dusty woodchips, and ten spinnin' wheels they provide you. They didn't HAVE to do that. This is truly a privileged time in rat history. Again, YOU'RE the idiot if you don't see it that way.

Just don't take the time, space, or energy required to look up and see anything else. Or you might realize that this is an artificial, contained, world removed from the rest of everything in existence. One where they make all the rules. Control all the variables. And in return, sell you the idea that you're living in safe and stable conditions... SO MUCH BETTER than the way things "used to be" when your kind lived on the outside.

You know, back when you were a free-roaming rat... finding your own pellets, based on your own thoughts and instincts, which were accessible as you gathered perspectives in wide open spaces, where - yeah - you faced threats from large, physical predators on an occasional basis...

But DIDN'T spend an artificially-prolonged lifetime trapped in circumstances you weren't designed for, facing invisible, largely constructed, psychological predators and decades of fear-responses directed at the other rats, who were simultaneously directing all of THEIR cumulative terror back at you, instead.

But it doesn't matter.

As long as they can convince you (or enough brains around you) of the danger that's on the "outside," while also drumming up fear for the species members that are sharing your breathing space, scampering over turds in a wire box as you bump up against rats of a different color or wheel-spinning system... your brain doesn't need to waste its attention on THEM. They won't be detected as the fear-ratmasters they truly are. Instead, you'll keep solidifying and acting on your premonitions about the other rodents.

And that's *guaranteed*, because you don't have the extra energy or time or space to act any other way. No reason to go beyond those first "technically logical" thoughts. No payoff if you do, because the actual perpetrators on the other side of this glass wall are too big for you to fight alone anyways. It's actually easier to stay ignorant to the forces that be - call them saviors and follow their call, don't step out of line or think too hard for yourself.

If you ever could. With no livable resources in your little habitat. Unless they're doled out by the powers that be.

Plus, who else are you going to trust to take up the group escape effort, when everyone around here has turned out to be a dirty fucking rat, anyways?

End scene.

RAT WARS PART II

Obviously the next place to take this conversation is... once those rats be riled up, survival systems dialed up... all attacking each other, based on perceived hierarchies and tribes and safety signals... what else do you really think is going on in their individual - I don't know - toilet paper tube homes?

Do you think they're amazing rat parents to their rat babies, considering everything that's going on around them? Or are they perhaps... a bit distracted, angsty, anxious, angry, overly attached, detached, distant, cold, quick to nip, known to leave the kids to fend for themselves...enmeshed in their OWN rat struggles, and finding those shitpoints are traveling down the line to the next logical recipients?

When there's a shortage of food outside the tube, the pressure builds. The rats scramble extra hard. But meanwhile, the wheel race is just getting more demanding - they already couldn't earn their due wages based on the going rate for running 8 hours straight - NOW the pellet inflation ratio is going up. You have to work 12 hours for the same portion of food, which is decreasing in quality week by week, becoming less nutritious and more toxic because of the demand, by the way.

Then, add in all the rats at the wheel factory who are gunning for your pellets. There's a lot of tension between the different fur colors and views on rat leadership and woodchip economics. Hell, there's talk of war or separation among the rat tribes. Every day it feels closer to living with hungry cats, not members of your own species.

You're facing opposition just existing. From up top, the cage keepers. From all around, in your local community. From your own home, in your nippy family. From the local and global environment, which is hot burning poison.

All day, inundated with stories of impending doom in one way or another. You know it's true - you feel it in your bloody paws, empty stomach, and thinning coat.

But you keep running. And keep running home to pass those pellets on to your hoard of pups who you never necessarily asked for or felt prepared to parent. This all just sortof... happened... based on what every other rat was doing and the drive to do right by your species. Or based on, "whoops, had an accident and no access to reproductive care."

Now you're the head of a ratsnest, barely able to feed yourself, taking on more work wherever you can pillage a pellet, spending less and less time with your ratfam, when you do it's tense and hollow... sometimes explosive, when they won't stop squeaking and you just need a minute

of sleep before your next wheel shift. When your rat partner starts pushing the same buttons as your mom did. When they have a new thing to complain about, especially when their lives are being compared to the rats who live in the fancy paper towel tube.

You're doing your best. But you're trapped. You're out of resources to sell. You've already expended all your time, space, and energy just barely scampering by. And the situation is still calling for more out of you.

While, again, the cage keepers chide you for being in this stupid position in the first place. Why didn't you just get a better job? Did you have a whole family you didn't necessarily want based on THOSE pellet earnings? Should have been a plastic ball-runner - though, they admit, they're the hands who choose those rats to get the free-roaming job with a view every day.

So. IDK, should have found a way to impress them I guess.

And you, rat mama or daddy, with all of this going down, are one crimped whisker or stepped on tail away from exploding.

At anyone.

But primarily, you'll predictably lose your shit at 1) the oppositional rats you're encountering along the way throughout your day - when you're already ruminating with clenched fists about the impossibility of your life, you're only a split second interaction away from swingin' em. Or 2) the rats you just happen to encounter the most in your life, who also happen to be the rodents who you care about the most AND feel the most comfortable with. So, ya know, they tend to see the gutter rat come out in you more often than most, by sheer proximity and "letting down of the rat performance" in their presence.

Oh, and all the while, remember that more and more pups are flying down the family pipeline. It's still a breedin' program in here without access to pup preventative care or elective litter terminations.

The cage keeping hands are really wondering when you're going to stop bringing more filthy animals into the world. But they still want you to know that all fetuses are precious gifts from THEIR god who deserve protection. They are sweet tokens of heaven when INSIDE the womb, but a plague on rat-manity once birthed.

Until they reach wheel runnin' age and have a purpose.

Which, based on your circumstances... will be pretty early! Probably not going to be much of a childhood experience for that litter. You need all paws on deck. And what else are they going to do - not like the rats have time or energy or finances to put their kids in piano class. Art is for the rich. Feelings are too. All REAL rats do is run, rough up each other's fur, and ruin bitches.

But it pans out for the best, because that will prepare them for being the strongest rodents in the entire workforce. By first grade they'll be trained to report for duty for all key hours of the day. By middle school they'll be running their first wheel, on top of a failing education. By young adulthood they'll be ready to work 12-18 hours a day straight. Just pumping stimulants and downers to regulate their breaking bodies.

They won't even know any different. Which will be super convenient when the pellet rate falls again and they're suddenly required to work 20 hours a day with their own litters of unwanted pup in tow.

You know what they'll be great for after all that brutalized working? Enforcing the running pace of the other rats. Making sure they know what a hard day looks like, and that there is no other option... because they've had no other option. If THEY couldn't stop running for a drink of water, why should ANY OTHER rat get to take a break? Why would THEY earn enough pellets to feed their families? Why would THEIR pups get to leave the cage in ball-spinning positions?

That's not how it works. Because it didn't work that way when THEY were coming up as hard-knocked rats. And THEY turned out great. Even though mom and dad were miserable and had no time for them... they were regularly abused and dismissed in the world... and they've only known this less-than-mediocre life of not really getting by while giving everything they've got to ungrateful overlords... and next to nothing to their accidental family units.

So there's generation number two in this rat situation. Hardened. Convinced that success is proven by physical breakdown. Or violence. Or unquestionable loyalty to a larger organization.

And it just goes from there.

"My great, great, great, great, great grandpa ran until his toes fell off - then he fed his toes to the family, because his pellet security didn't cover all 45 of his pups. THAT'S what a hard working, nationalistic, moral, rat looks like. THAT'S what this cage is founded on. And THAT's how it has to stay"

When rats suffer, they want everyone to know that they suffered. Preferably, by them living through the same suffering, so we're all equal in the way this whole system is designed to fuck us, at least.

And we get... the prevailing generation of the US. The shitheads who won't shut up about how life was... when life was different? And how everyone is the problem for things ever changing. Even though none of us are benefitting from the past or present options, and never have.

Cool. Now let's talk more about this caged rat conundrum that's taking place in the family household.

So, after those endless hours running, scavenging, fighting off vicious rats, trying to cool down in the heat, and starving all the while.... What's going to be the condition inside the family home?

When papa rat - sortof like papa roach - finally loses his shit at baby rat number 16, bites him right in the nose in a moment of complete life overwhelm and reactivity to all the screeching rats outside the toilet paper tube - what's the lesson here?

Is rat baby 16 absorbing that daddy disease carrier is just a bit stressed out based on the lifetime of overworking and the forecast of working even more than that for the remainder of his miserable plight on these pee-soaked woodchips?

That he never signed up for this in the first place.

That he didn't want to arrive here to be mined for his energetic output and limited time to maximize productivity?

That he wasn't REALLY trying to get partnered up and pupped down, with more mouths than he could ever feed with a white-runner salary... let alone his meager, spinning class earning potential.

And that the cage overseer hasn't responded to the growing unrest among the hungry rats in decades (weeks for them, I guess) even though the population is getting emaciated, destroyed by contagious and endogenous diseases, and too sickly to work. So the only choice is to outrun the rats that are sick NOW. Knowing that he'll be next soon.

He couldn't explain any of that to a kid. And if he did - which, actually, he very well might TRY... I think the majority of us were rant/preached at about this sort of thing from a crushingly young age - the kid wouldn't benefit from it. The rat kid would just learn that the world sucks, it's miserable out there, and life is pain.

Fuck like bunnies, breed like rats.

So, logically, after being told this for his whole upbringing, the rat would just go off and do the same. Act the same. Be the same. Edit himself the same. Conduct his whole life that way. Why expect any different. This is how we rats work.

Long, hard, and until we're crippled. Then, we still can't stop, we have to find a new line of work. And hope that someone will take us as undesirable, decrepit wheel spinners.

But he still wouldn't be able to trace that connective line with his limited perspectives in paw, starting from dad's existence of having no resources and propagandized-pressure to keep sprinting if you want to be a "good rat"... all the way down to the way that his parents are huge assholes to each other and everyone else, definitely throwing jabs left and right if the pups even see them after their wheel spinning jobs at all.

All that childrat knows is, he gets hot and cold interactions from his caregivers... if they're trying at all. Otherwise, he'll probably just get boiling hot interactions. Or just frigidly cold non-interactions.

They're anxious. They're distracted. They're neglectful. And/or they're controlling. They're critical in a way that don't quit. They're not supportive. They can be violent and aggressive at the drop of a hair. And they don't have very positive opinions of... probably anything.

Unless there's a radical rat leader rising up through the ranks who's butt they want to sniff. Not realizing, somehow, that he's part of the elite rat class - rat kings - just feeding them more motivation to run for the benefit of the royal class and destroying the only programs that protected the running class rats at all.

Also, they seem to love the theology that this rat subscribes to. They're fond of that, too. But not the other rats who this religion tells them, "are all their brothers." Nah. Leave that part out.

So. Ratboy learns that he's only acceptable if he falls into the template provided by this sensationalist rat preacher or another one. Doesn't matter which party his parents fall into - he's

sold the idea of a certain way to be. If THEY aren't around enough to pass on a toxic belief system... someone else will see the opportunity and seize it.

He'll learn there's one good way to be. And a whole lot of ways not to be. And then probably get shuttled off to mostly-figure everything out on his own... within ALLLLLLL of the governing rules that he's been brought up on, that is.

WE ALL FIGURE IT OUT FOR OURSELVES. His parents said. While also impressing 95% of their opinions on him as facts from an early age, and severely limiting his ability to accurately figure anything out for himself at all.

A product of rodent culture, his rat class, trickle down cageonomics, pack narratives, interspecies violence and tribalist scapegoating, fear-based reactivity and extremism, and, within his own home, the generational family nip.

And who's that young rat going to become, do you think?

Uh, sounds a lot like me and plenty of other motherfuckers I know, for starters. Difference being, current rat jess has had some things most others have not... the luxury of time, space, and energy at a few key points in life (sometimes through illness, but still)... to get some shit re-sorted out after it was put into my head nonconsentually.

But this sewer monster could have just as easily gone the other way. It was an accident that I ever got my paws on those time, space, energy privileges at all. And it has certainly made me an outcast from the rat class that raised me, let alone my hometown which is even worse.

They'd REALLY prefer that I was spinning jagged wheels my whole life and asking less questions about the idea of "running in place" being a sorry excuse for one. Which, truly, kept me trapped in the same conditions until, like... a month ago.

Yet another reason we DON'T escape the cage, on top of all the rest of them... because we're trained to think we "love" these rats through mere exposure, carefully chosen "nice memories," biological and social programming.

We don't want to go it alone, after a lifetime of sharing our shitty times with rats like us.

What if we're wrong.

What if running 24/7 for 80 years is the real answer to happiness.

What if it's harder outside the cage.

What if the overseeing hands ARE really figuring it out - THEY'VE got the pellet situation under control, and the increasing rat violence, and the continually hotter room... they just don't want us to know what the big plan is yet.

What if's... are scary. And the fear will keep you from making progress. Especially as those cage keepers rattle your shit up.

In the meantime, they DO want us to know that we should keep running as usual. Don't stockpile any pellets, but also don't take them out of storage too quickly. Don't get weird about the trashfire in the corner today. Don't stop fighting the other rats about whether or not it exists.

And whatever you do, be a dedicated wheel spinner, yeah?

It's what this cage was founded on. In a good way. Not in the way they committed genocide.

And, of course, be sure you share that lesson with your pups. They'll never know a different way of life, and that's for THEIR benefit. So they aren't surprised when they grow up and find out, this is it. This is the key to success... if you just give up all your time, space, and energy, you too can have a job and a family. And only nightly shame for the ways that you feel you're failing both. BUT...they'll figure it out. Certainly they know that your abuse is an accidental byproduct of all the top-down abuse. And also, it's probably somehow the brown rats' fault, if we're being honest.

Run or die.

It's the ratcage way.

The ignored or abused rat pup of today, thanks largely to the demands and abuse placed on the rat parents, will become the rat daddy of tomorrow. Recreating the pattern. Producing more loyal workerbeings. Who definitely think and feel for themselves, as long as they're thinking and feeling everything they're told to. And not one thought or feeling further.

So they'll probably never realize why their life has looked and felt the same as their family's model, they'll just assume this is how rats turn out. Because it's the way it's been. Because it's RIGHT. And that's something they're willing to fight for.

And, uhhhh... there you go. There's societal trauma feeding into family trauma feeding back into societal trauma.

Good thing there's a bunch of MFs out there, trying to change all that.

Thank you for doing your part - even if that's just working on YOUR socially traumatized brain. It feeds down the line, just like societal trauma fucks it up.

YOU are the difference makers.

No matter the scale.



Every one of us matters. So take care of your Self.

And Cheers Fuckers.