HOCKENHEIM, HIGHWAY STARS & AURORA

It is time for the *Formula 1 Grosser Preis Santander Von Deutschland 2012*. There is that.

Then there is the fact Jon Lord has died. If you do not know Jon Lord, he was a founding member of, and keyboard player for, Deep Purple. One of the more underrated keyboard players, and bands, of all time (by my book anyway). RIP

And, indescribably, twelve more souls died in Aurora, with scores more injured gravely. I would love to say something pithy, profound and appropriate. However, I have no clue what that would be.

A lot of other stuff has also transpired demanding extreme talking of the trash. The video embedded to the upper right is custom made by my daughter, Jenna, and I, from CGI runs of the Hockenheimring set to the sounds of the timeless Deep Purple classic *Highway Star*. All for this F1 Trash and wake for the Lord thread. Okay, mostly her work, but she swears even I can be taught the necessary skills. We'll see about that. With no further adieu…..

Let's roll.

We are in the summer doldrums. No football. No basketball. Do they even play hockey in the States? I forget. I understand there is some kind of athletic contest coming up across teh pond. In a move that may well INCREASE the safety of one and all, in Olympic Village and the world over, actual stiff British upper lip troops will be filling in for corrupt, fraudulent and incompetent G4 Mercenary Contractors.

Other than that, there is the start of the second half of the baseball season and……Formula One! This week is the German Grand Prix at Hockenheim.

Uh, BREAKING NEWS: My TeeVee just told me:

> “For years people have been working to perfect the margarita. At last, the wait is over. Introducing Bud Light Lime Margaritas. The ready to drink margarita. With the refreshing twist of Bud Light Lime.”

While I had heard of Bud Light Lime before, from Uncle Stanley McChrystal, this is something NEW and, apparently, wonderful. Or, you know, not.

At any rate, qualifying is about to go off at the German Grand Prix. Hockenheimring is a relatively flat, and traditionally very fast circuit. The video really gives a good feel for it. Although shorter than originally laid out to be, it is still nearly three miles long and presents numerous opportunities for overtaking.

At practice, the rain spoiled the fun, and especially so for the German favorite, Michael Schumacher. The Mercedes team may be further plagued by a five place penalty on the grid due to a gearbox change in Nico Rosberg’s equipment. Things were brighter, however, for McLaren, who saw Jenson Button be fast with Lewis Hamilton close behind.

The skies do not look to clear for Saturday’s qualifying, but the rain may hold off. [Quick addendum: watching Q3 now and the track is soaking wet. Both Alonso and Schumacher are radioing that it needs to be stopped, but the stewards do not appear so inclined. The ability of these drivers to keep their cars on the track in these conditions is simply stunning] Race day will be a crapshoot though. Updates after qualifying will be in comments below.

Which brings us to Aurora. I was still up early Friday morning when the first word of the tragedy started coming in. I thought about posting something, but was so numb there was just nothing to say. Not sure much has changed in that regard. The root facts are on the usual relentless babble stream of cable news etc. and I have not even checked in in a bit to see the

latest. The one take that really stuck out to me was by David Sirota, who lives literally right by the scene in suburban Denver:

> Confronting that question, of course, is mind-bending and painful – in the age of "War on Terror" agitprop that purposely defines terrorism in one specific, narrow and politically convenient way, it's akin to the cognitive difficulty of pondering the size of the universe … or, perhaps, death itself. It takes us out of our comfort zone and forces us to consider the causes of all kinds of extremism and violence – not just the foreign Islamic kind that we so flippantly write off as alien. Indeed, at a time when so many bloodlusting Americans cheer on our government proudly assassinating the imams who allegedly inspire Muslim terrorism, a shooting like this (if, indeed, it had nothing to do with Islamic extremism) begs us to wonder why we don't feel similarly bellicose or enraged at the inspirations fueling so many other forms of terrorism – whatever those inspirations may be.
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> These contradictions and omissions, of course, are why such a question will almost certainly be ignored in the now-practiced kabuki theater of horror porn – the kind where vote-seeking politicians issue meaningless platitudes, ratings-stalking reporters breathlessly recount the gory details and attention-starved pundits preen in front of cameras to prognosticate about the electoral implications of mass murder in a presidential swing state. Carefully avoiding the T-word, it is a conspiracy of distraction and reduction, playing to our reflexive desire for soothing diversions and simple answers. The conspirators expect that when the cameras eventually pan away from the

> cataclysm, we will slip back into hyper-sleep for another few weeks, until the next massacre hits, and then the cycle will begin anew.

Yep. About right.

There may not be much front line sports on this weekend, but there is certainly a lot to talk about. What have you all been up to? What is on your mind? Let’s talk.