

# CLIMATE CHALLENGE

*Gordon Blitz*



*Contact Information:*

*Gordon Blitz*

*[Gordon blitz@yahoo.com](mailto:Gordon_blitz@yahoo.com)*

*626-664-1410*

*1010 N. Kings Road #302*

*West Hollywood, CA 90069*

Man-tall, thin, seventy-years old.

*As the stage lights come up, a man is in bed. A clock radio turns on and announces.*

RADIO VOICE

Good morning. The air will be unhealthy today so the elderly should wear masks. Yes, those same pesky masks you needed to wear to avoid getting COVID. A combination of factors have caused this condition; The remains of the fire and unseasonably warm weather due to high winds. The downpour yesterday temporarily helped extinguish the fires, unfortunately offset by flooding. In other parts of the country, tornadoes killed at least five people following a devastating hurricane season and below freezing temperatures that plummeted the world into a difficult winter.

*Man gets up.*

MAN

Oh god, I hope today is better than yesterday. What a nightmare. When I got up 8 a.m. yesterday, I locked up my condominium and descended to the underground parking. The dashboard on my 2008 hybrid Camry lit up with flashing red lights like a pinball machine. Had my hybrid battery died after 14 years and 110,000 miles? I tried pushing the ignition again after waiting a minute, recreating the distant past when you were told, "Don't pump the gas pedal, you'll flood the engine." Yes, the past, when gas was abundant and no one thought about climate change. The silence shot through my hearing aids until I heard my brain complain, "How am I going to get to my appointment which I've been waiting for for over two months? I need to get ear wax removed." Was I up for this challenge?

*Man takes out a toothbrush and begins brushing his teeth.*

MAN (CONT'D)

Excuse me for brushing my teeth. My mouth is so dry in the morning ever since my recovery from cancer side effects from chemo and radiation. Let's see, what happened next? Oh, so I called the ENT, told them my dilemma and they tried to calm me down with, "There is a 15-minute leeway."

*Man picks up a kindle and hat.*

MAN

I grabbed my kindle and skin cancer protecting hat and trotted off to Cedar Sinai, the location of my ENT office. Who could have imagined that I would be diagnosed with throat cancer at the same office, three years later. My knees and ankles don't enjoy walking at anything beyond a stroll, but I willed myself to pump them up.

*Man shows his iPhone to the audience.*

MAN

I refused to look at my iPhone for the time; it would only make my anxiety boil over about getting there on time.

And I did make it. Afterwards, when my car got towed to Auto Affordable Care, I talked to myself, "What am I going to do if it's the hybrid battery? That's \$4,000! Is it worth it?" Yes, it is my way to try to stall climate change by cutting down my gas consumption. The man who did the car intake after I explained the car symptoms said, "Sounds like it's not the hybrid battery but the other smaller battery." This comforting news took me to a marginally happy zone.

*Man pulls out his tap card from his pant pocket.*

I used my Metro tap card to take the bus back to my West Hollywood condo. Public transportation rules!

*Man shows his mask to the audience.*

I hoped that none of the new COVID variants or poisonous air fragments would seep through my Kn95 mask.

The bus was frigid. A shock to my system since I never use my air conditioning, even in sweltering heat. Of course, those over-the-top temperatures that used to last five days a year have become more commonplace. And having the option of staying in my Santa Monica condo rather than face the searing

heat of WeHo no longer makes any difference. The days of Santa Monica not needing an air conditioner are long gone due to climate change. Thankfully, I have double-paned windows in my WeHo condo which keep the cool in and the fiery air out! The blessing of having two residences.

*Man shows a brochure for the Alaska cruise.*

Thank goodness we are vacationing in Alaska this year. This might be the last time to witness the fjords before they melt. On our last visit in 2004, as the ice caps were thawing, so did the citizens, never having experienced a heat wave. This wasn't the first time climate change reared its head.

*Man shows picture of his husband swimming in Paris along with medals won for the swimming competition.*

In 2018, in Paris for the Gay Games where my husband competed as a swimmer, the weather was stifling. Somehow, despite the weather, he won a bunch of gold medals. Pretty good for a man in his seventies. Restaurants were ill-equipped to handle this phenomenon.

*Man picks up paper to be recycled and food to be composted.*

MAN

So, we recycle and compost, limit our electrical usage, and we try to cope. I got used to not showering every day during the lock-down so I follow that pattern now, and my water usage is diminished. I grew a beard to cut down showering time.

*Man combs his beard and uses a scissor to trim it.*

MAN (CONT'D)

I stretch the time between laundering. And how could I forget walking. This is bible. My salvation. I walk everywhere. Even when I was brutalized by radiation thirty-five times during my cancer treatment, I walked. I pride myself that I always choose walking as my main mode of transportation. What a blessing that my two residences, West Hollywood and Santa Monica, are in walkable cities. Going a weekend

without using a car has become a gratifying accomplishment.

*Man walks around the stage, stops and looks up*

MAN (CONT'D)

I'm filled with gratitude on days when the sky is clear after a rain. I relish the temperate days, when the air is fresh and you can breathe deeply. When there are no nasty particles swirling around in the atmosphere. I love the design that clouds make. The skies can be devastatingly beautiful. The ocean breeze still clears my nostrils. Miracles that I can acknowledge. Mother Nature survives. The earth fights back. It wants to forgive the damage humans have done. All we have left is faith in humanity to slow the ravages of climate change. We each must do our part. A daily challenge to make a difference.