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Dear Calhoun25,

Friday
July 15, 2016

I thought I recognized your handle, but I had to go back to make certain my memory was correct. Sure enough, it was, and as I suspected, you were the one who responded to that letter, a year ago. Thank you, not just for responding then, but for responding now, more than a year later. Life in prison can be quite challenging, and the occasional reply to my posts help in ways I couldn't possibly explain in only a few pages.

With that said, I can only hope and pray that you're right, that I'm "winning the custody case for [my] daughter's affection before the Court of God[,] and that, as a result, He not only puts in a Good Word for me (pun intended), but also gives her a little nudge in the right direction, so she knows how to find and contact me. On April 30th, she'll have that chance, when she finally turns 18 and can make her decisions on her own.—I'm sure that, as a foster child, she's going to have a lot on her plate as she approaches, and passes that milestone, I can still remember my own personal challenges, but I nevertheless hope that I'm somewhere on her mind.

In retrospect, had I known prior to her birth that she was truly my daughter, then I could have taken steps to ensure that I was a part of her life, steps which might have in turn prevented her mother from embarking down the dark and stormy path she chose. Unfortunately, "hindsight," as they say, "is 20/20." In this situation, the truth was further clouded by the fact that her mother had lied to me when we first met, claiming that she was already pregnant, so a month later, when she started claiming she was pregnant with my child while I was in the county jail awaiting trial, I had absolutely no reason whatsoever to believe her. To add insult to injury, these were just rumors I'd heard. Not once did she reach out to me to let me know, and when I was finally released, she was nowhere to be found. Of course, it wasn't as if I was actually looking for her anyway, and why would I have? I hadn't heard from her a single time in the year I'd been incarcerated awaiting trial. Had I known, for even a moment, that it was my daughter she was carrying, then I never would have left the State of California. Instead, I would have bit the proverbial bullet, stayed in Ukiah, and did everything within my power to be a part of my daughter's life.

Here I am, almost 19-years after having met her mother, and what do I have to show for it? Nothing but hopes and dreams, but hopes and dreams can sometimes be the most powerful forces in the world. With any luck, my daughter has the same hopes and dreams as I when it comes to us being a part of each other's lives, and when that time arrives, I'm going to do everything in my power to be the father I never had, the father she deserves.

As far as some of the other things you mentioned, I can't say that I'm familiar with Charles Krauthammer, but then again, it's possible that he's someone I've seen and/or listened to without paying much attention to his name. His story, however, is similar to someone I know as a child, Doug Dix. As it was told to me, Doug broke his neck in a freak volleyball accident, paralyzing himself from the neck down. His parents were extremely wealthy, donating so much money to Kent State University that they actually named the stadium after him (Dix Stadium). Rather than simply laying on his back and sponging off his parents, however, Doug applied himself, learning how to use a computer with a mouth held/operated device and even doing some accounting work. In fact, when I first met him, he was doing some accounting for my uncle's construction company, and was my first experience with someone truly amazing. To this day, I can remember how my mother, who was perfectly capable of working, would go to the extremes in contriving excuses to continue sponging off of welfare, yet here was this guy who was literally paralyzed from the waist down, and who refused to allow it to determine his fate or how he'd live. To be sure, some things were beyond his ability to control. He couldn't, for instance, bathe himself, but if you were judging him on result, you never would have suspected him of being anything less than a perfectly capable man, in every respect. In fact, he's very similar in determination and tenacity to Steven Hawking, who you happened to mention.

Speaking of Steven Hawking, did you know he actually has a special that airs on PBS? I watched one the other day. Which reminds me: if you see someone of Steven Hawking's caliber make a mistake in his hypothesis, how do you go about pointing it out? And by "caliber," I mean his intellect, not his physical limitations, which, as far as I'm concerned, are never a reason to treat anyone differently, which includes pointing out their flaws. His intellect, however, is a reason, or at least, it is in this particular instance when your own intellect, on your best day, falls well short of his, on his worst day. I'd feel like an infant who just learned his first word trying to explain to your father, a rocket scientist, how an internal combustion engine works.

Finally, you mentioned politics, curious to know what I thought about the upcoming 2016 election. Honestly, I could write a book on that subject, and still have issues I wasn't able to cover, but I'll try to keep it brief for now and simply point out a few major flaws in what's currently unfolding.

For starters, I couldn't be more disappointed with mainstream media. And yes, I realize that you asked me about politics, but let's be honest with each other: mainstream media has more to do with politics and shaping our political future than anything else in this world, so we might as well start at the top, right? With that explanation out of the way, think for a minute about what mainstream media's **not** covering. Give up? Then I'll answer it for you: the third party candidates. Why is it that we haven't heard a single peep from mainstream media about the third party candidates, **especially** during an election year in which everyone openly acknowledges that our choices are horrible. It's like being asked to choose if you want a reoccurring outbreak of herpes on your genitals or your anus. In the end, it really doesn't matter much. They're both going to be traumatic to deal with, they're both going to irrevocably alter a significant portion of your life and neither is ever going to get any easier to deal with. To add insult to injury, it doesn't really matter which you end up with, when people find out which you've chosen, they're still going to look at you like you've lost your mind and avoid any

sort of meaningful relationship with you. And this is why this is such a perfect opportunity for the third party candidate. Finally, they've got a chance to stand up and be noticed, to let the American people know that, contrary to what we may have been taught as children, there are other alternatives. Unfortunately, how does one go about doing that when mainstream media refuses to report on the third parties, instead arresting them anytime they try to show up for a debate?

As far as Hillary Clinton's concerned, if she's elected, she'll have managed to pull off the biggest cons (plural) in the American history. For starters, she'll be one of only (two??) people to ever have served as President for more than two terms, albeit in her previous terms were in someone else's name. (Seriously, you really thought Bill was calling all the shots??) And she did it all while constantly breaking all the rules (send me an e-Mail anyone??), and not just any rules, but rules she seen others fired over. And for punishment, she doesn't even lose her security clearance. If everyone's being honest with each other, then we all recognize that anyone else would have seen their career permanently destroyed for less than that, but she's emerged completely untouched. A President should be trustworthy. Unfortunately, in this country, at least, the words "President" and "trustworthy" no longer seem to have anything to do with each other.

Putting aside her ridiculous stories to the side for a moment (seriously, you really want to claim you were under "sniper fire" as you embarked from the plane??), there's one very simple reason I could never vote for Hillary. When she visited the Middle East, she wore the traditional burka, I believe it was called, the scarf covering her head, while negotiating with foreign leaders. I know it's not considered "politically correct," but I can't help but see this as a sign of caving into someone else's beliefs, and if she makes this sort of a compromise where everyone can see it, then what's she willing to do when the doors are closed and no one's watching? Your religious beliefs are just that: yours. While I'll respect your right to believe as you choose to believe, this doesn't mean I intend on practicing your beliefs. And yes, I realize that this was a simple thing, done out of respect, but why is it that we're always going out of our way to respect the beliefs of others, to the point of following their religious customs, when they're not doing the same thing for us? You can bet that, when those same dignitaries came over, their wives weren't allowed to go without their headgear.

As far as Donald Trump's concerned, boy, do I have mixed emotions on that one. On the one hand, he does raise some valid points, but on the other, man, the way he raises them can be so offensive! What makes him so popular is the fact that his points are views have been secretly harbored by many in this country for years now, but I simply can't imagine any situation in which it would be a good idea for someone like him to have their hands on our nuclear launch codes!

Take, for instance, his idea to ban all Muslims from countries with known terrorist ties. When you first hear it, you say that this is a horrible idea, and rightly so. After all, it's not Muslims we have a problem with, it's those idiots who want to use a radicalized version of Islam to justify killing. When you look at the numbers, this is a concept shared by few in the Muslim community, yet they're now being asked to suffer for the sins of those few. At the same time, though, there is some wisdom (shudder) to what he's proposing, and I say this for one very simple reason: can you imagine a terrorist who believes so devoutly in his religion that he's willing to commit mass murder, while simultaneously killing himself, that he'd be willing to deny his religion, stop praying 5x a day and change his appearance, just to gain entry into the country? I can't, which means that such a ban would more than likely be successful, at least, successful in preventing terrorists from entering the country legally to carry out their reign of terror. Unfortunately, most of our problems seem to be coming from within, so the ban really wouldn't do much at all, would it?

If you ask me, there's a better way to handle things. In almost every major incident involving an act of terrorism, if not all, there were warning signs, not only clear to everyone, but also available to law enforcement without the need to stomp all over everyone's rights. What we need to be doing is convincing law enforcement to work together, to use this information before the fact, and not to use it to bat a dead horse afterwards.

I think that Trump's biggest liability as a President is the same thing that made him so popular as a candidate. Namely, when he opens his mouth to speak, he does so without thinking about the consequences of his actions, of how his words will be twisted, regardless as to his intent. (I hear there's medication for that!) When he sticks to the script, he's much more "Presidential" sounding, but in real life, you can't stick to a script past the introductory speech. Sooner or later, you're going to have to start answering unscripted questions (despite the White House's attempt in the past to force reporters to ask only scripted questions). When this happens, Heaven have mercy on us all if Trump's the one in power, because he's going to be sure to offend someone, and with Obama's overindulgence of his executive powers, the precedent has already been laid down for Trump to use it to justify just about any decision he chooses.

Which brings me back to where I started: mainstream media. What ever happened to the news reporting on all sides of the story in a fair and balanced way? Whether it's reporting on only two candidates, and slanting the facts to suit their agenda for that day, or reporting on the sex crime committed down the street, today's media only reports the facts they want us to hear, the side of the story that's going to grab the most headlines, and if it's not something capable of grabbing enough headlines, they'll just make something up. What we, as a country, need to do is stop watching mainstream media, by which I don't mean ignoring the news, just getting our news from an alternative source. When I was at the California Men's Colony (CMC) East Facility, I was fortunate to have access to a program called "RT News," which stood for Russia Today. They reported on all kinds of stories I never heard about on mainstream media, and in detail, from both sides of the coin. Many that I told about RT News refused to watch when they heard that it stood for "Russia Today," thinking that it was a Russian news organization trying to constantly portray America in a negative light, but it really wasn't like that. However, even if it was, this still doesn't change the fact that we should be getting our news from more than one source, and who else to give us

a different perspective than the opposition?

Again, when it comes to politics, there's simply too much to list in such a short space. I just hope that my attempt to cover so many topics in such a short space didn't result in things coming out scrambled or incoherent, but if it did, or you just have more questions, please feel free to follow up with another post, or better yet, send me a letter to the address listed below. Either way, I'll respond to any comments, questions or suggestions, good and bad. In the meantime, take care of yourself, and be safe. The world's become so much crazier than it was when I was out there, with people being killed for all sorts of reasons, and by all manners imaginable. Just yesterday, some idiot in France used a truck, of all things, to kill more than 80 people, proof, once again, that stricter gun control laws won't do anything to stop someone who's determined to kill someone.

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