

7-15-24



Wanna Bet?

Something tells me that since the attempt on ex-prez Donald Trump's life, we won't be hearing too much anymore about replacing Joe Biden as the Democratic nominee — the calls for which had become almost deafening just before the shooting. I get the vibe that folks are just throwing in the towel at this point, between Biden's stubborn insistence on running a race he cannot win (but in which he can do plenty to ensure no one else on his side wins, either), and then this national mood of ... sympathy?, yes, I suppose that's exactly it, sympathy for Donald Trump, a man who may never have had a genuine feeling of sympathy for anyone else in his entire post-pubertal life. At this point, his continuation presidency feels almost anointed, the man being awfully hard to openly criticize after someone so explicitly tried to kill him, even though he himself has called for death (or for something almost indistinguishable from death) for countless others, and he is supported by plenty of folks who scarcely try to hide their own murderous bloodlust for those they label enemies. It's all very topsy-turvy, through-the-looking glass type stuff. Anyway, I guess folks don't want to babble on about the End of Democracy anymore, which is unfortunate because while the loss of what we call "democracy" would be no great loss at all, the terrifying shit-show that is most likely to replace it in the event of a second Trump regime is something we shouldn't just meekly accept.

Maybe that's our saving grace after all, then ... the silver lining that will begin to shine once all the blood and feces is washed away. Maybe it takes what we face today, the ~~actual~~ ^{now} destruction of civil society and the incalculable suffering of millions who had until ~~now~~ been just comfortable enough in their bondage to not care enough to put in the effort to gain real freedom, before people band together and create real change ~~through~~ through the eradication of the scourge of state and hierarchical governance. Maybe we need to live with our collective neck under an even less accommodating boot for awhile before we insist on having no boot at all keeping us resigned to immobility. I don't know ... but I strongly suspect we are all about to find out.

Bending the Iron Bar

I've sometimes been accused of not caring enough about the victims of horrific acts while too strongly defending perpetrators of horrors. Allow me to attempt an explanation — perhaps what seems like insensitivity to some peoples' loss and suffering is really more of a by-product of my perception, in the context of most of the personal conversations I have (especially in prison), that my voice is one of perilously few to call for the humanization of cultural "villains". It seems to me that recognizing a person's humanity, ANY person's humanity, opens us to recognition of some suffering on their parts as well, along with what they surely imagine are their own good motives or simply a lack of better options. If my "defense" of presumably indefensible people seems one-sided, that's because it usually is. Popular causes and celebrated victims need neither my support nor my defense, while on the other hand, just as a severely bent iron bar cannot be made straight without first bending it even further in the opposite direction, I believe the greatest need in cases of "everybody knows" is for those who care about fairness and truth to provide a strong and corrective counter-narrative where no one else will.

That said, it truly bothers me that the sympathy I've shown for would-be-assassin Thomas Matthew Crooks' martyrdom are likely felt as unsympathetic to those who were hurt by the attempt on Trump's life and who would've been devastated had the attempt been successful. I'm especially thinking of those closest to me, as I have many dedicated Trump supporters in my immediate family and among my friends. My thoughts on all of this are in no way meant to disparage them or disregard their unhappiness, but again, I feel some obligation to offer what minuscule counterbalance I can to the colossally skewed cultural narrative of these events. I care deeply about the feelings of those I love, never wanting my words to hurt them, and I do care about anyone else who was hurt by what happened to Donald Trump, as well as for the man himself... my opinions of his character aside, it cannot be easy to have come that close to death.

I also have my own beliefs, of course, one being that the stories we collectively tell ourselves at times like these are invariably unfair to some of the people involved, and as one who has far too often been on the receiving end of such unfairness, I'm uniquely sensitive to the need for people to speak firmly and honestly about the under-acknowledged sides to any given story, and

LOUDLY against the unfairness that such bias causes for actual human beings just like you, me, and everyone else.

One of countless many unfair stories in the wake of the Trump shooting was just reported on TMZ (America's source for REAL news, right?). Evidently, musician and actor Jack Black's co-conspirator, Kyle Gass (together, the band "Tenacious D") made what outraged commentators are calling an "insensitive joke" when he told audience members that what he wants for his birthday is, "next time, don't miss" ... a clear reference to the mere millimeters by which Mr Crooks' bullet whizzed past ~~the~~ Trump's cranium. Sure, the comment is crass, and it certainly does nothing to dampen the violence-inspiring rhetoric we're consumed by today. But in the great rush to condemn this "insensitivity," are we forgetting that perhaps not one single time in history has Donald Trump himself ever passed up an opportunity to be offensive and insensitive to anyone he isn't especially fond of or does not see as an asset? Honestly, it's his very trademark, this unmuzzled insensitivity, and it's no stretch to argue that that's a real contributor to what got him shot in the first place. But we're not allowed to talk about that anymore, I suppose.

What ~~troubles~~ ^{troubles} me, then, is that I just don't believe we should allow this ~~historical~~ ^{historical} moment to whitewash Mr. Trump's proven character now, or to indulge in some convenient cultural amnesia out of a misplaced concern for "sensitivity" as this whole assassination incident forces the biggest push in my lifetime for, quite literally, "politically correct" ~~commentary~~ commentary. We're seeing Joe Biden slammed - absurdly - for saying Trump needed to be "put in the crosshairs", which was an obvious metaphor for more fastidiously scrutinizing Trump's public comments and which was clearly made without one iota of violent undertone. It's all so deeply disingenuous, I could just puke.

I guarantee that, like Kyle Gass, millions who heard the news of the attempt on Trump's life were deflated to learn he was just barely injured ... not because they are callous people, or because they simply "don't like Trump" that much, but because they sense in his rhetoric, his actions, and his associations a genuinely existential to their own futures; a contempt for their well-being as he single-mindedly pursues his own mad quest for

ultimate power. Though few of these primarily Liberal-identifying people would generally condone violence, and most are probably anti-gun to the core, I'm certain that many of these disaffected folks also felt, for a fleeting moment, a deep sense of relief that Donald Trump had been dispatched at the barrel of a rifle. But, such people will not — they cannot — say any of this out loud, because they are invariably POLITICAL people. Speaking too honestly is simply not politically correct, and this entire disgusting, savage, tragic spectacle is entirely about POLITICS: those endless battles for control over the state, and therefore necessarily control over our neighbors.

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"I call it the State, where everyone, good and bad, is a poison-drinker: the State where everyone, good and bad, loses himself: the State where universal slow suicide is called — life."

~Friedrich Nietzsche

"The men who make violent protests are not cruel and heartless monsters, but rather it is their supersensitiveness to the wrong and injustice surrounding them which compels them to pay the toll of our social crimes."

~Emma Goldman