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The Nausea of Tribalism

My articles have been eliciting more response than usual, not all of it positive. One guy, not a subscriber, reading my articles elsewhere, suggests that with my hatred of Trump, I should leave the country. I reminded him that Trump, a warmonger, gained the presidency through deceiving Americans as to his intentions. Obviously, this guy doesn't remember the Vietnam era when the right wing coined the bumper sticker 'love it or leave it'. Given the senseless loss of lives—that sentiment reflected tribal nausea.

What do I mean with 'tribal nausea'? America, once the bastion for open debate, has morphed into a home for tribal nausea where citizens cleave onto unexplored assumptions in support of unquestioned authority. For a questioner, this is a maddening turn of events.

I only have to go back to yesterday for an example. After being burned by the local planning department, 30 years ago, I had not been back. But, being the fool that I can be, I stopped in yesterday to see what I needed to do to build a shed on my property.

It's more automated now, with a form you fill out of how they can *assist* you. Of course that form identifies you and your property, but my questions were not about my property, instead what were the rules governing the zone my property is in. The young woman at the counter was pleasant and

helpful until there was something she didn't have an answer and went for someone who had more experience with what I was asking.

After a few minutes, the *heavy* appeared, asking me to justify the legality of my shop, built in 1985, because she could find no permit for it. This, of course, reminded me why I took that 30 year hiatus. She wrote on the form I'd submitted asking about zoning clearance, that I needed to submit a plot plan and a letter declaring legality of my 1980s shop.

My questions were general—she made them specific, wanting me to show proof for a permitted structure from the papers I had with me (this brings much bigger question—but is illustrative of the problem). I wasn't asking for a permit—I was asking for information. She's not an aggrieved party such as a neighbor filing a codes enforcement complaint—she's fishing, like a cop stop for a taillight out—that ends up as a demand to search your car.

Later, at the hardware store I related what happened to a friend who advised me, in no uncertain terms, to not go against the county—as they can be ruthless. That reminded of Tulsi Gabbard (who I had great hope for), becoming one of many who fail to take Trump to task for a host of tyrannical lies to the American people. Sure, she'd lose her job, but unlike McNamara from the Vietnam era, she could avoid a legacy of shame.

I've reacted to some friends and readers lately, and that has to change. But only the reaction—not the substance nor courage to address it. Bad times are coming, from which we can *duck and cover* (move to another country), or risk what needs risked for the integrity of our very souls. It's tough to do, but nobody's getting out of this life alive—anyway.

I grew up, a blue-collar democrat—socially liberal and financially conservative. We read the *NYT* as the paper of record—as well as *The New Yorker*. We saw republicans as mean business types. I'm somewhat vague as to

when it happened but under the editorship of David Remnick at *The New Yorker*, fewer and fewer articles provided substance and questions. My blue-collar Dems, whittled/wasted away into what is now—tribal nausea.

Anyone who still reads the Times, I purposely avoid discussing politics/economics. And, with the left morphed, over two decades, into something unrecognizable, approaching grotesque, my readers and friends are identified as being more from the right.

Some of these newer friends, I euphemistically refer to as good ol boys, white males (often but not always Southerners), with unpretentious convivial manners, and a conservatism acting as cover for intolerant attitudes. Friendship with a good ol boy comes with its own set of problems—when ever convivial good manners and conservatism betray intolerance.

My last article where I took Trump to task as a madman, is a case in point. *Good ol boys* don't see Trump, nor the political landscape he brings as being worthy of their disdain. Just below conviviality, they are on-board with American exceptionalism—sustaining a rather narrow range of focus that precludes getting at actual factual reality.

A *good ol boy* wrote: 'You look down south at Caracas (he means Caracas). Remember something like 8 million people have left the country *under Maduro*. That leaves ones who can't leave....and those that agree with the regime.' The clause, 'under Maduro' betrays his *good ol boy*, not taking into account that it was US foreign policy (distinct from Maduro), that purposely starved Venezuelans for 2 decades, making it impossible for oil exports to be profitable—making life unlivable for the Venezuelan people.

Also, *good ol boys* bring narrow focus to Palestine. They offer right-wing talking points: everybody in the region hates the Palestinians/nobody is willing to take them in. Maybe so, but where's the overview: Arabs lived on that

land for centuries until a bunch of Polish Netanyahu's showed up to claim it in 1947—and began acting-out a Nazi apartheid.

Another friend commented on my Trump article: 'There's so much that goes on behind the scenes. I'm not giving anyone a pass. But ... if the BRICS really are doing joint military maneuvers then they are more than a trading conglomerate. I have a military conscript eligible son so I hate to say this, but perhaps we need to flex our muscles a little... As far as Greenland goes, maybe...it's a negotiating chip to have in his pocket when Taiwan talks start...There's always so much that goes on that we don't know of. It's easy to be an armchair quarterback when we just don't have all the details.'

I reacted, then apologized, for telling him to 'piss off' for describing my efforts as 'armchair quarterbacking'. Who's the real quarterback, Trump? Rubio? If our kids die in a war, Trump will have thrown away their lives. Cueing-up behind Trump's, muscle flexing, shows a lack of understanding for the underlying realities. I'd rather risk friendships—to call-out tribal nauseas.

What does Trump think would make it all better? A 50% rise in an already bloated military budget. Ah, such diplomatic efforts from a peace president.

I pray he doesn't get that. What I pray for is a deeper courage in myself to risk what needs risked. But in doing so, to not hold back. Where I live, there are those who will never accept me—unfortunately that may also be the case with some I call friends?

One last thing: don't worry about the price of silver. No matter the BS they sling, there's not enough silver. Its dull sheen is what will shine the brightest.

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erik@neverhadaboss.com And thank you for taking the time.