

HERMIT HERALD

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QUOTE FOR THE DAY:

**“They’re coming to take me away ha haaa,
they’re coming to take me away.”**

**Jerry Samuels, 1966 novelty record describing
a man’s descent into madness**

“ME” IS “US”

**That’s right, dear readers, just substitute “us”
for “me” in the above quote and you’re onto
the theme. But first, an apology. The Hermit
regrets the long hiatus since issue 145.
Preparations for the fall migration and other
issues have taken priority. It’s nice to be back
at the keyboard and the opportunity to
somewhat frequently annoy my Democrat and
Republican friends with topics they’d just as
soon not read about; some might say,
“inconvenient truths”.**

SO WHY ARE WE ALL GOING MAD?

You know the old saying, “Insanity is hereditary, you get it from your children.” The update on that is that you get it from your political leaders.

With just over two weeks to midterm elections, let’s take a look at where leaders in both parties have taken us, recalling from HH issue 143 that 68 percent of voters don’t want Biden to run again In 2024, and 65% say the same thing about Trump.

DIVIDER IN CHIEF

That would be the great unifier, President Joseph Biden. Instead of trying to bring the country together the president declared, “America is at an inflection point.” Because, “MAGA Republicans do not respect the constitution. Donald Trump and MAGA Republicans represent an extremism that threatens the very foundation of our republic.” As columnist Bret Stephens points out, “Calling out MAGA Republicans is painting with way too broad a brush. The whole speech (Biden’s)

reminded me of Hillary Clinton's deadly 'basket of deplorables' remark which may have cost her the 2016 election: it did more to alienate a lot of voters than it did to persuade them." Apparently, Hillary still doesn't get it as she likened Trump supporters to Nazis in a speech the weekend of September 24th.

When not worsening divisions within the United States, we have a president who oversaw the days of infamy in our withdrawal from Afghanistan and who not twice, but on four occasions has said we will go to war to defend Taiwan, only to have his aides forced to dial back his statements. All to be taken in the light of the just released report that says our Air Force and Navy have become greatly weakened.

Then we have the latest Saudi debacle. Having called the de facto leader of Saudi Arabia, Mohammed Bin Salman (MBS) a, "Pariah" in the aftermath of the killing of Mr. Kashoggi, the president goes to Saudi Arabia, fist bumps MBS and tries to negotiate increased oil production. The embarrassment of the Saudis further cutting production this past week was

palpable, made even more so by the president beseeching them to hold off for at least a month – why? – the midterms, of course – only to be rebuffed again. The president has now said we will have to retaliate, suggesting a cessation of arms sales to the Saudis. Oh, great idea- give the Iranian proxies a leg up in their battles against the Saudis in Syria, and weaken our strongest ally, next to Israel, in the region. Not very smart Mr. president. On this and other issues, like Taiwan, the president speaks loudly and carries a small stick.

Let's not forget the conference on the Americas in May. With the administration's abject failure on immigration, that was to be a primary focus of the meetings, but the U.S. wouldn't invite Venezuela, Nicaragua and Cuba because we don't like their governments. Honduras, Guatemala and Costa Rica however insisted those countries be invited. How could the important regional issues be discussed without them? VP Harris, speaking of her close ties with the three central American countries, (critical countries re the immigration crisis) assured that the presidents of those countries

would attend; they boycotted and sent junior officers instead.

Fast forward to the Saudis cutting production, and, in a moment reminiscent of the fist bump, the Administration is trying to make nice with Venezuela – hey, they have lots of oil. The pitch goes something like this. “Listen if you guys loosen up just a tiny bit on human rights, maybe we can ease up on some of the sanctions, you know, and maybe you could sell us a few barrels of oil – pretty please.”

We were on the cusp of energy independence until Biden cancelled pipelines and numerous other fossil fuel endeavors. What a disaster! Yes, climate change is very worrisome, but you can only eliminate fossil fuels as you match those decreases with new clean energy sources.

Ukraine – that’s all been discussed in earlier issues. I would ask any of you who are interested in this topic to do your own research. Go back to 2014 and the coup that toppled the pro Russian Ukrainian government with the urging, if not outright

assistance, of the U.S. But, bottom line, the U.S. did not do all it could to avoid the war. Do not conflate those words as supporting Russia's actions. On the contrary, they are reprehensible. The point is thousands are being killed on both sides without our having exhausted all options. Think about this; in effect, right now, we have a proxy WWII. Zelensky is seeking membership in NATO (hopefully, fast track), then we can have real WWII.

Add to the mix Kamala Harris with her nervous laugh at totally inappropriate times and her not soon to be forgotten speech in the company of top South Koreans at the DMZ. "The United States shares a very important relationship, which is an alliance with the Republic of North Korea. It is an alliance that is strong and enduring." Sheesh!!

The actions and words of this president are problematic, to say the least. Would it be redundant to ask, "Where's Jackie?"

THE DIVIDER

No, not Biden – the other one – Trump! The book, “The Divider – Trump in the White House 2017-2021” by Peter Baker and Susan Glasser, chronicles the experiences of many of Trumps closest aides, and Mr. Trump’s petulant rages which kept his staff in a mode of perpetual damage control for the better part of four years. And, that was just within the White House.

Outside the White House, whether you are a Democrat or Republican, you cannot deny that the media and big tech were out to get Trump, even before he was elected. He survived two impeachment trials and has faced and still faces, numerous law suits on a host of issues.

He created turmoil amongst our allies by threatening NATO for the ongoing failure of many countries to pay their required share. While the media were horrified, conservatives loudly applauded his “kick ass” attitude. NATO breathed a sigh of relief when “hail fellow, well met” Biden took office.

Within his own country, much as within the White House, Trump was a very divisive

figure; intemperate outbursts, personal attacks and name calling, totally unbecoming the president of the United States.

All of these behaviors pale under the shadow of the legacy he has left in his attempt to overturn the election results and the January 6th attack on the Capitol.

But, know this. In a September 27, 2022 Monmouth poll, 61% of Republicans still believe Biden didn't win the election. Speak about perceiving what you want to perceive, you are talking about a group that consists of many well educated, thoughtful people. How can so many continue believe the election was stolen when every rock has been turned over and not a shred of evidence has been uncovered to support these beliefs? The answer is simple. Mr. Trump and his enablers keep up the mantra, "The election was stolen and that's the truth." A bit like religion, yes? Take it on faith, proof not necessary.

The resistance to the facts, brought us to the day of infamy, January 6th, worse than the awful withdrawal from Afghanistan. How life-

threatening and horrible for the country, but so reflective of our deep divisions in the country.

All of this, like a black hole pulling everything into its center, pulls the events of January 6th, the illegal taking of classified documents, and the subpoena of Mr. Trump by the Congress into today's vortex. Where is this all going?

As Michelle Goldberg reported on 9/27/22, "In recent weeks, as Trump's legal troubles have mounted, his endorsement of QAnon has become more forthright. On 9/12/22 he reposted an image of himself wearing a Q label lapel pin and the words, 'the storm is coming.'"

Attorney General Garland will be having to decide whether or not to criminally prosecute Mr. Trump for his role in the January 6th riots, the taking of classified documents or the failure to honor the just issued subpoena.

As reported in the NY Times, "Mr. Trump's supporters have viewed any investigative steps around the former president as illegitimate attacks by a partisan Justice

Department that is out to get him. And his detractors believe that any decision not to prosecute, no matter the evidence, would show that Mr. Trump is indeed above the law.”

Oh, and Mr. Trump has some words to say, “If these radical, vicious, racist prosecutors do anything wrong or illegal, I hope we are going to have in this country the biggest protests we have ever had in Washington, D.C., in New York, Atlanta and elsewhere because our country and our elections are corrupt.”

Not to be left out, Senator Lindsey Graham predicted, “There would be riots in the streets” if Mr. Trump were to be prosecuted. Trump and Graham may contend these are only warnings, but many will interpret them as threats, if not permission slips. As they say at QAnon, “The storm is coming.”

CODA

Are two thirds of the American public wrong that they don’t want either of these two men to sit in the oval office for a second term?

The point is that Trump and Biden have become enablers of the growing divide in the country.

The immediate concerns of the voters at midterms are inflation, gas prices, crime, immigration and abortion legislation, or the lack thereof. Simmering under these seemingly more important issues are fears over the fate of democracy.

71 percent of all voters believe that democracy is at risk, but only 7% identify that as the most important problem (Siena college poll) – understandable, as the above cited concerns relate to our ability to survive and put food on the table. Make no mistake, however, the democracy at risk issue is huge.

28 percent of all voters and 41 percent of Republicans said they have little or no faith in the accuracy of this year's midterm elections.

As a nation we are so polarized that the actions of a few, say the extreme examples of wokeness by a minority of hyper liberals, becomes a perceived attribute of all

Democrats. Nothing could be further from the truth, but group think, on both sides of the aisle, results in a one size fits all mentality.

In mid September, columnist Max Fisher wrote, “The United States fits pretty cleanly into what is now a well-established global pattern of democratic backsliding.’

“First society polarizes, often over a backlash to social change, to demographic change, to strengthening political power by racial, ethnic or religious minorities, and generally amid rising social distrust.”

“This trend has picked up speed globally, only in the last twenty years or so. So it’s hard to say exactly how common it is for countries that begin on this path end up like Hungary or Turkey. But very few democracies have begun to slide and then reversed course.”

Remember, “I’m OK, you’re OK”? Apparently not. We’re all mad at each other- a little crazy you might say. They’re coming to take us away Ha haaa. They’re coming to take us away.

Your faithful scribe, PB