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What's Going on in America?

One Man Stands up by Kneeling Down

The 2012 National Football League (NFL) regular season ended on a high note for rising star San Francisco 49er Quarterback Colin Kaepernick. A second round draft choice in 2011, Kaepernick was given the reigns as the team's starting quarterback in midseason and took the NFL by storm. An athlete blessed with a rare mixture of size, speed, intelligence, and a rocket arm, Kaepernick was viewed as the new breed of quarterback who could terrorize opposing defenses by running or passing, and a new play was added to the league lexicon – the run pass option, whereby Kaepernick was given the choice of deciding which option to choose in mid-play. It would take a while for the league's defenses to adjust to this change, and before they finally did, Kaepernick was looked upon as the second coming. Colin Kaepernick was riding high; life was good, and to paraphrase Tinbuk 3, his future was so bright that he had to wear shades.

2013 started on a low note for Colin Kaepernick when the 49ers lost to the Baltimore Ravens by the score of 34 to 31 in Super Bowl XLVII. Kaepernick continued on with his stellar play throughout the 2013 season which was terminated by a 23 to 17 loss to the eventual Super Bowl Champion Seattle Seahawks in the conference championship game. The measuring stick for any NFL championship quarterback is at least a two to one touchdown to interception ratio, and Kaepernick's 21 touchdowns to only 8 interception spoke well of his mounting greatness. The sting of defeat was soon salved at the start of the 2014 season when Kaepernick was rewarded with a six-year \$126 million contract with \$13 million fully guaranteed. The season proved to be a disaster when the team finished with an 8 and 8 record while his touchdown to interception ratio slid horrifically to 18 to 10. Chinks started appearing in his seemingly indestructible armor, and to make matters worse, head coach Jim Harbaugh, Colin's biggest supporter, left for the college game.

During the 2015 season he struggled under the coaching change, was benched on again and off again, and suffered three injuries. His statistics slid abysmally, the most telling being a poor 6 touchdowns to 5 interceptions ratio. The whole league, as well as its fan base, was wondering what's wrong with Colin Kaepernick? At the start of the 2016 season, everyone who cared to notice was to find out.

Colin is a mixed race child born of a black father and a white mother who was forced by life's circumstances to give him up to adoption the day he was born. His adoptive white parents are deeply religious and sought to teach him the way of the Lord. Bible verses adorn his heavily tottoed firmly muscled body, and what his upbringing impressed upon him the most was a realization of the plight for the socially weakest among us. At the start of the third preseason game of the 2016 NFL season he was observed sitting on the bench while everyone else was standing during the playing of the national anthem. Reporters seeking to create controversy where it otherwise may never have existed immediately sized upon him in post game interviews demanding to know what was up with that? The

controversy was born when Colin stated: "I am not going to stand up to show pride in a flag for a country that oppresses black people and people of color. To me, this is bigger than football and it would be selfish on my part to look the other way. There are bodies in the street and people getting paid leave and getting away with murder." The bodies he was referring to were young black men denied their basic human rights when they were killed by overzealous white police officers that were not so much as being charged or tried, or on the rare occasion when they were, their Police Union lawyers working hand-in-hand with allied district attorneys got them off. This outrage birthed the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement, and they now had a readily recognizable poster child in Kaepernick. Following protestations that he was disrespecting America's military personnel, Colin to prove he meant no disrespect to the armed services, choose to kneel during every remaining game that season. The NFL, rattled by an 8% decrease in viewership employed various pressure tactics, but he would not be swayed. Soon teammate Eric Reid joined him in kneeling, and other players across the league were either kneeling or displaying other forms of protest. Rapper Eminem gave him a shout out at the beginning of the video to the song "Untouchable" stating, "This is for Colin, ball up a fist." For his part, Colin put his money where his mouth is donating a million dollars to black causes, and starting a youth camp to teach young blacks what their rights are when inevitably stopped by the police.

Kaepernick suffered through a horrendous 2016 season compiling a 1 win and 10 loss record for those games he started, but he rebounded with a 16 to 4 touchdown to interception ratio proving that even on a bad team he is, at least, talented enough to always be a starting quarterback in the NFL. This point is important to note because Kaepernick chose to opt out of his contract at the end of the season and became a free agent. He remains a free agent to this day as all 32 NFL teams have blackballed him, a point he proved by suing the NFL for collusion in October of 2017 and consenting to a confidential settlement in February of 2019. In 2018 mega athletic shoe manufacturer Nike featured him as the centerpiece in an advertising campaign based on the slogan, "Believe in something. Even if it means sacrificing everything." Like the great Muhammad Ali before him who was stripped of his Heavyweight Boxing Title and banned from boxing for three years during the prime of his career for refusing to participate in the Vietnam "Conflict" while famously stating, "Ain't no Viet Cong ever called me nigger," Colin Kaepernick in a bonified American hero now. Due to recent events, he may yet make it back into the NFL, but at age 32 he is most likely past his prime. By indeed sacrificing something he has gained everything, not the least of which is the admiration of a socially awakening public who now unequivocally believes in him.

The Bellicose Bellowing of a Bungling Blowhard

A year before Colin Kaepernick was championing the cause of marginalized people of color during the NFL's 2016 campaign, a campaign of a very different order was taking flight. When Donald J. Trump accompanied by his beautiful model/wife Melania descended down an escalator in Trump Tower on June 16th, 2015 to announce his candidacy for president, most just took it to be a media stunt designed to attract attention and now

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they lament the fact that it wasn't. Trump, an intellectual cross between a bull in a china closet and a compulsive liar sliced through the 17 other Republican candidates like a hot knife through butter and proved that there was no bar too low for him to limbo under as he spewed insults, innuendo, conspiracy theories, and the rallying cry of, "It's so unfair," for the benefit of a disgruntled aging white base who felt left behind in a rapidly transforming America. A billionaire who deftly utilized smoke and mirrors to convince the fading lower middle class that he was just like them and therefore could commiserate with their plight and lift them out of it if only they would elect him, he threaded the needle of suspended disbelief, and won a narrow electoral college driven victory to become America's 45th President.

Trump, who has now elevated the craft of lying, diversion, and shifting of narratives to an art form has a long history of racism beginning with his unwavering insistence that four black youths and one and Hispanic youth that collectively came to become known as the "Central Park Five" are guilty of the 1989 rape and subsequent long physical recovery of 28-year-old Trisha Meili who was knocked unconscious while jogging and then brutalized, but miraculously survived even though she lost 80% of her blood before being discovered and hospitalized. The youths were wrongly accused and imprisoned as Trump took out a full page ad in The New York Times calling for the death penalty. These scared young men were intimidated and coerced into testifying against each other and would be in prison to this day had not another criminal come forward admitting to the crime, and his DNA evidence showed it to be so in 2002. After their release it took another 12 years before they won their lawsuit against the City of New York and were awarded a \$41 million wrongful conviction settlement. As recently as 2019 Trump has stated in a CNN News interview, "They admitted they were guilty. The police doing the original investigation say they were guilty. The fact that that case was settled with so much evidence against them is outrageous. And the woman, so badly injured, will never be the same." Remember this well because it solidifies the point that Trump and the police have an unbreakable bond even when either or both are proven dead wrong.

Next came Trump's ginning up of serial Illinois political candidate Andy Martin's 2004 "Birtherism Movement" a peckerwood feeding frenzy of soft racism which insisted that 44th U.S. President Barack Obama was a closet Muslim who was born overseas and therefore was not a natural born U.S. citizen thus making him ineligible to be the nation's president. Obama produced his birth certificate in late 2008 and the birthers immediately claimed it was a forgery. Subsequent evidence proved that it most certainly was not. Undaunted by the facts, in a 2011 interview on the Today Show Trump claimed that he had dispatched a team of investigators, and, "they cannot believe what they're finding." Anyone who knew the real Donald Trump knew he was lying, not only because his lips were moving, but because he was too cheap to ever foot the bill for a team of investigators.

There was the disparaging of Mexicans as, "murderers and rapists," on the day of his announcement and the accusation that the Hispanic judge overseeing his Trump University scam case could not be trusted to rule fairly because of biases concerning Trump's overt racism. Then came the

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Access Hollywood tape where he admitted to his proclivity for grabbing women, "by the pussy," shenanigans with porn stars and Playboy bunnies, the accusation that political rival (Lyn') Ted Cruz's father had assisted in the Kennedy assassination, and his failure to denounce the Ku Klux Klan who, after all, vote too. And that was all before he was even elected. He's not called the "Teflon Don" for nothing, and debate abounds as to whether it's because nothing ever seems to stick to him, or because he runs his businesses and his presidency like a Mafia Don.

The Trump train chugged along on tracks constructed of iron forged unreality, the most telling indication that such would define his presidency being his insistence that his inauguration ceremony was the, "biggest one ever," even though it paled in comparison to his perpetual adversary Obama's. Even with indisputable photographic evidence, short-lived Press Secretary Sean Spicer (he of the permanent deer in the headlights look) insisted to the press pool that such was true. It was the first crack in an ever widening credibility gap that could now span the width of the Grand Canyon. Political strategist Kelly Ann Conway laughed the telling of such tall tales off as, "alternative facts." So facts were not facts anymore, but a form of silly putty to be molded and shaped into whatever narrative of the day Trump's narcissism and vanity dictated. As with the emperor who had no clothes, it was readily apparent that Trump was transforming into the "Mad King" before the public's disbelieving eyes.

The Mad King's watershed moment for proving his ingrained racism and undeniable aversion to the truth came with the "Charlottesville Incident" which occurred on August 11th and 12th, 2017 when white supremacist Richard Spencer called for a "Unite the Right" rally on the campus of the University of Virginia. On the evening of the 11th a group of about 200 white neo-Nazi's or White Nationalists (take your pick) marched with tiki torches and chanted, "Jews will not replace us." The reason for the protest was opposition to the removal of a statue of famed Confederate Army General Robert E. Lee from a city park, so how Jews got into the mix is anyone's guess. The next day the neo-Nazis and counter protestors, some belonging to the left wing group Antifa, violently clashed on city streets and events turned deadly when White Nationalist James Fields drove his car at high speed into a group of the counter protestors killing 32 year old Heather Heyer while injuring 19 others. Trump's original statements on August 14th concerning these events did little to turn down the temperature on the heat of the moment, and his clarifying comments on August 19th proved to be worse. Stated the President in a heated exchange with reporters: "Well I do think there's blame. Yes, I think there's blame on both sides. If you look at -- If you look at both sides -- I think there's blame on both sides. And I have no doubt about it, and you don't have any doubt about it either." For the record, personally, I do have doubts about it. Donald Trump immersed in his unceasing vanity and habitually driven by his white privilege does not have the right to speak for me. One group consisted of White Nationalists and neo-Nazis who he had previously referred to as, "fine people," and the other group opposed them. So one group was most definitely better than the other one, and that group was the one in opposition to the Nazis.

The first three-and-a-half years of the Trump Administration have been nothing more than a chaotic mishmash of endless vendettas, mangled

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and/or misleading facts, gross mismanagement, attacks on the free press as, "fake news," floundering incompetence, sloth-like inaction towards those things requiring immediate action, and unabashed perpetual lying. So many lies in fact that the public has grown numb to them, and many have simply tuned him out while waiting to vote him out in an election that is supposed to happen come November. This is an apathy for which the nation could pay dearly because, for reasons to be illuminated upon below, it will become readily apparent that the Mad King wants to become a tyrant, and even more apparent that contentious conditions now rampant within America have become the fertile ground that could make that desire a reality.

The Man Who Changed the World

George Perry Floyd, Jr. was born into humble circumstances on October 14th, 1973 in Fayetteville, North Carolina. His family moved to Houston, Texas when he was young and he became a star football and basketball player for Yates High School. Upon graduation, he attended South Florida Community College and played basketball there, before transferring to Texas A&M University-Kingsville before dropping out. Upon returning to Houston he waded through his rough and rowdy days becoming involved in the city's early hip-hop scene before gravitating to drug possession and petty theft arrests. The thefts increased in amount and intensity until he crossed a line that he could not return from and became the main leader in a five person home invasion where he pushed a handgun into a woman's abdomen. When reeled in by the long arm of the law he agreed to a plea deal in 2009 and was sentenced to five years in prison. Paroled in 2013, Floyd was apparently reformed to the point where he became a member of a local ministry known as Resurrection Houston. Wanting a fresh start, and perhaps realizing that a clean break with past negative influences was necessary, he moved to Minneapolis, Minnesota in 2014. He found employment as a truck driver and a bouncer in a local bar, but lost these jobs with the Coronavirus lockdown, Then on April 3rd it was discovered that he was asymptomatic for the virus himself. Out of work, perhaps worried that his symptoms would turn positive, perhaps succumbing to despair, he passed a fake twenty dollar bill at a local store and refused to give back the cigarettes when the store clerk insisted that he should. As he walked out towards a fate that would be witnessed around the globe the store clerk called the police.

Eight Minutes 46 Seconds

*Say his name:
George Floyd!*

*Monday May 25th, 2020
What happened?
They killed him
Who killed him?
Four police officers
One in particular*

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Who placed his knee on Floyd's throat
And brought his full body weight down
While the three others stood around
And watched it happen
For eight minutes 46 seconds
Overkill in the extreme
Because for the last
Two minutes 53 seconds
Floyd was already dead

Floyd died hard
Begging for his life
Saying for all to hear:
"I can't breathe!"
This proud black man
Who could have whipped any one
Of these tough guy cops
One on one in a fair fight
Called out for his mother, and
Finally made his final plea:
"P L E A S E !!!"
They didn't listen
They killed him, anyway

Wednesday night May 27th, 2020
Protestors burned a few buildings
And made it obvious that
They wouldn't let up
Until justice was served

Thursday afternoon May 28th, 2020
Justice was not served
As completely tone deaf
White mouthpieces held a news conference
And served up a word salad
The worst serving being when
The county attorney stated that the
Cop absolving evidence was not yet in
What the protestors heard was:
Bullshit! Bullshit!! Bullshit!!!
White mouthpieces spewing nonsense
Cowards one and all who thought
That they were in control
Of a seething rage about to explode
They thought that the protestors
Would heed their warnings
Because they said so
Because they held important positions
Because they were in charge
Because their white privilege was on high display
You will go along with our system
Because we said so

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*A prosecuting attorney only wants to bring charges
On cases that they are sure they will win
A human life was of secondary importance
To their conviction record
It's all about winning to them
Bullshit! Bullshit!! Bullshit!!!
Cowards one and all*

*Thursday night May 28th, 2020
This whole damn thing didn't have to happen
Although anyone with half a brain
Knew that it was going to
You could see it coming
Like a runaway freight train
Minneapolis is burning
I'm supposed to renounce violence of any sort
But it's hard to shed a tear for the demise
Of the cop's Third Precinct Police Station
Because like Pontius Pilate passing
Christ on to King Herod
They fired their own
But wouldn't arrest their own
Washing their hands they passed the buck
To cowards even more cowardly than them
Millions of dollars of damage
Done to innocent businesses
Apparently the white mouthpieces felt that it was
Better to let the town burn
Than to take on the cop's police union
America's President Donald J. Trump
Who we all know is lying
If his lips are moving
Threatened the protestors by Tweeting:
"When the looting starts. The shooting starts."
Gasoline thrown on the fire
By the racist leader of the free world*

*Friday mid-morning May 29th, 2020
The killer cop has been apprehended
While the three bystander cops
Are still at large
Too little too late
White privilege is now in flames
The raw nerves of Americans
Cooped up for three months
Because of the health pandemic
Are wildly throbbing across the nation
The country's eight minute 46 second snuff film
Is just too fresh in mind
The rage is just too intense
This outrage will have to burn itself out
In its own way, in its own time*

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*A black man in handcuffs
With his face pushed into the asphalt
Begging for his life
Was killed in the streets
Of Minneapolis, Minnesota
In the span of eight minutes 46 seconds
By four renegade cops*

*Say his name:
George Floyd!*

The police officer who killed George Floyd is one Derek Chauvin a man who had compiled a record of 18 excessive force complaints over his 19 year career. He was the training officer of the three other officers, two who were rookies with one only being on the force for four days. They are all guilty, but it's undeniable that Chauvin was the alpha dog of this death pack. George Floyd may have just become another statistic amongst a long line of black people killed by the police, most of whom got away with it, if not for seventeen-year-old Darnella Frazier who filmed the whole sordid affair despite the evil withering stare that Chauvin directed straight at her. She had the courage to hold her ground, and for her efforts she is now being harassed on the internet for not stepping in and stopping it, which has driven her headlong into therapy. It is not up to a seventeen year old teenager to police the streets of America and save others from the police, it's up to the police, and any cop not up to that job does not deserve to be a cop. Those who condemn this poor child are the real cowards. Leave her be for she's the one who has given the man who will change the world this power. Frazier has defended herself on Facebook stating: "Fighting would've gotten someone else killed or in the same position George (may he Rest in Peace) was in! If it wasn't for me 4 cops would still have their jobs, causing other problems. My video went world wide for everyone to see and know!!" This brave girl whose family lives near the scene of the murder are not even currently staying in their home. Leave them be, if you have any shred of decency – leave them be.

As America erupted in protests and the advantageous looted until there was nothing left to loot and the buildings burned and will most likely remain hollowed out shells in the poorest of neighborhoods the Mad King displayed a staggering lack of empathy. The three bystander officers were finally arrested on June 3rd, and were arraigned the following morning which was the same day that Reverend Al Sharpton laid down the eulogy of the ages at the sanctuary on the campus of North Central University. Raining down lightning bolts of fire and brimstone Reverend Al proclaimed, "George Floyd's story has been the story of black folks. Because ever since 401 years ago, the reason we could never be who we wanted and dreamed to be is you kept your knee on our neck. It's time for us to stand up in George's name and say, 'Get your knees off our necks!'"

There are now protests against police brutality of black people in every major American city and in the smaller cities in every state in America. There have been other protests at other times, but this time it's differ-

ent, because of the skin colors of the protestors: black, brown, yellow, red, and white. But one thing is not any different, that being that these protests against police brutality have so incensed some of the police that they have responded by brutalizing their accusers causing the protests to spread around the world from London to Paris to Rio de Janeiro. They're marching in the streets in Germany and Australia and New Zealand, but nowhere are the marches more noticeable and more telling than they are in Washington D.C. which has irked the ire of the Mad King to such a degree, that in conjunction with Attorney General William Barr, otherwise known as The Hand of the King, that they have called for our nation's active military to put down what they viewed as an insurrection. On Monday June 1st under Barr's orders the National Guard, the Capitol Police on Horseback, and a National Guard helicopter fired on protestors with pepper balls and buzzed them at low altitude causing them to flee from Lafayette Park adjacent to the White House. Given the proclivity of helicopters for crashing in urban areas, this was an extremely dangerous show of force. Most egregious was that the attack occurred a mere 24 minutes before the 6 p.m. curfew which would have given Barr some political cover, but he could care less about what the press and the public think of him, he performs like a lap dog for an audience of one – that's all that matters to this toady. Then the Mad King emerged from the White House with Barr, his daughter and son-in-law, spunky little mouth piece Press Secretary Kayleigh McEanny, Secretary of Defense Mark T. Esper, and Mark Milley the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in tow. They strolled across Lafayette Park and up to the steps of Saint John's Episcopal Church, the famed "Church of the Presidents" which has suffered a recent fire in its basement believed to have been started by vandals. In a stunt more brazen than even his most obnoxious tweets Trump held a bible aloft and upside down and completed his photo op for the benefit of his evangelical base. Reprisals were many and swift in coming, first from Bishop Mariann Budde the head of the church, and then from retired U.S. General James (Mad Dog) Mattis who wrote: "When I joined the military, some 50 years ago, I swore an oath to support and defend the Constitution. Never did I dream that troops taking that same oath would be ordered under any circumstance to violate the Constitutional rights of their fellow citizens—much less to provide a bizarre photo op for the elected commander-in-chief, with military leadership standing alongside...Donald Trump is the first president in my lifetime who does not try to unite the American people—does not even pretend to try. Instead, he tries to divide us. We are witnessing the consequences of three years of this deliberate effort. We are witnessing the consequences of three years without mature leadership. We can unite without him, drawing on the strengths inherent in our civil society." Mattis who had resigned the Trump cabinet as The Secretary of Defense the year before in protest to the withdrawal of troops in Syria which left our allies the Kurds to be alienated, had vowed to remain apolitical and never criticize this administration. He had obviously forgotten about Nixon and just as obviously had had enough of Donald Trump, a man who has the Midas Touch in reverse because the "photo op" debacle only served to further divide the nation. To date, three other generals and one admiral have spoken out against attacking U.S. citizens exercising their constitutional right to peacefully protest.

Always big on walls, no matter if they are effective or not, Trump and

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Barr have fenced off Lafayette Park and subsequently have constructed a mile wide perimeter of fencing around the White House to stifle the noise of the protestors and the flash bang explosions of the police. All is cozy and comfy and quiet for now, but those voices will definitely be heard come November; no wall is ever going to stop that.

The Mad King is notoriously thin-skinned, but even at that, nobody has more talent for getting under it than Washington D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser. While Trump may think that the U.S. is his country, Bowser knows that D.C. is her city. She ordered the National Guard out of the city's hotels and then ordered the Public Works Department and several volunteers to paint "BLACK LIVES MATTER" in huge block yellow letters across 16th Street which leads to the White House, and then renamed the street "Black Lives Matter Plaza." These letters can be seen from space.

On Tuesday June 9th, George Floyd was laid to rest next to his mother that he called out to when being murdered by Derek Chauvin. Reverend Al, exhausted by now, couldn't quite achieve the height of his Minneapolis eulogy when he spoke at the Fountain of Praise Church in Houston, but it's doubtful if anything ever again will. Rest in Peace George Floyd.

George Floyd is a bonifide martyr now. The memorial hastily thrown up at the place of his last breath has achieved landmark status within the city of Minneapolis, and is looked upon by many as hallowed ground. This unlikeliest of all heroes has become a national hero and now serves as the visible face for dynamic sweeping change to policing, and the positive collateral changes that will undoubtedly follow it.

In Minneapolis, where this whole thing started, Floyd's six-year-old daughter Gianna, the youngest of his five children, when held aloft on the shoulders of former National Basketball Association player and former high school teammate Steven Jackson gleefully shouted to onlookers, "Daddy changed the world!" You're right about that Gianna, you're certainly right about that.

A Perfect Storm

With the Coronavirus pandemic far from over in America, an outraged public, cooped up in their places of domicile for over three months was bursting at the seams for a reason that was good enough to venture out in public. Then came this cataclysmic moment in America's history and nothing will ever be the same again. We have all seen this film, and for those of us who are old enough, it is indelibly etched into our memories and ranks right up there with the Kennedy assassination, and the crumbling of the Twin Towers and it cannot be erased. The murder of George Floyd as presented on America's eight minute and 46 second snuff film became the spark that ignited the fire of pent up frustration and righteous indignation. A national outpouring of rage that needed an outlet, a pressure relief valve, or an atomic explosion – take your pick – the country just needed to vent, but that need rapidly swelled into a citizen's uprising.

The Mad King handled the pandemic with the dexterity and political acumen with which he handles everything else: ignore it, deny its existence, acknowledge its existence but downplay its importance, and when

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it can no longer be scoffed at; appoint someone woefully unqualified to manage it. Or not, because when Vice President Mike Pence was named the head of the Coronavirus Task Force anyone remotely familiar with the man knew that it would be a botched effort of gargantuan proportions. In the liberal dictionary, under the word “smug” there’s a picture of Mike Pence a man who appears supremely confident in his abilities with the sad irony being that he has no ability whatsoever. Dr. Anthony Fauci, America’s preeminent immunologist rose to the occasion and won the trust of the nation, but anyone who steals the limelight, to say nothing of the microphone from Trump, is never long for their job. The term “social distancing” was added to the national lexicon, and those who could were ordered to stay at home and away from contact with the other members of the species *Homo sapiens*, and most who felt that they couldn’t, because they needed the income from their jobs were laid off, furloughed, or fired from said jobs anyway. Our President who knew of the virus in January but who failed to react until early March hesitated to use the Defense Production Act (DPA) to effectuate the manufacture of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for the benefit of first responders and medical workers who took to cutting out plastic garbage bags for gowns and wearing their girlfriend’s or their own panties for masks. But when the virus proved to be particularly rampant in our nation’s meat packing plants he quickly utilized the DPA to order workers back onto their production lines despite the inherent dangers. Just come between Trump and his bacon and nothing is a bridge too far.

America rapidly entered a tenuous period of financial freefall without a net with no bottom in sight. Under such conditions it was a country glued to the television watching the national death count rise on the crawl at the bottom of the screen when they saw the breaking news of the George Floyd murder. Being, in effect, a captive audience, more Americans saw this horrific event unfold before their disbelieving eyes than they had ever seen of any other natural or manmade disaster.

George Floyd’s death did not occur in a vacuum, it was the third death to occur to black people at the hands of the police in the mere span of 92 days, averaging a killing a month, and if the truth be told, there have been police killings of innocent blacks occurring at this rate for decades.

On February 3rd, Ahmand Arbery, a handsome promising young black man was gunned down in Brunswick, Georgia from the blast of a shotgun by a father/son white redneck team so sure of their white privilege that they filmed the entire event themselves. Arbery’s crime was jogging while black. It wasn’t until May 5th, that the video was released and immediately went viral. These men were finally arrested on May 5th, and most likely would never have been if not for that video. Arbery was 25 years old.

On the evening of March 13h, in Louisville, Kentucky, Breonna Taylor a young black woman, an EMT working on the front lines of the Cononavirus pandemic, was shot eight times and killed in the bed of her own apartment when three police officers acting under the veil of a no knock warrant for drug offenses used a battering ram to enter, the only problem being that they entered the wrong address. Taylor’s boyfriend, Kenneth Walker, in legal possession of a firearm permit, fearing a home invasion opened fire setting off the killing of Taylor. One of the officers received a

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gunshot wound and Walker was arrested on charges of first degree murder. As usual, the police lied stating that they had announced themselves, but Walker's 911 call recording revealed that such was not the case, and besides, who announces themselves with a no knock warrant? It would come to light that these Louisville police were so unprofessional and so untalented as not to realize that the individual they were after was already in custody. To date, no police have been arrested. Taylor was 26 years old.

It was a perfect storm of cascading events that laid bare the very fact that there was more than one virus lying in wait to attack unsuspecting or unlucky Americans, and that virus had existed in our land for centuries, and its name is racism, which when coupled with the worst of all viruses, that being poverty, has now birthed a national debate that starts with one word – disproportionate. People of color suffer disproportionately in the clutches of the virus, at the knees of the police, and in the cells of the prison industrial complex.

How deep and sweeping will the changes brought about by this moral reawakening be? It's time to get real about one thing. Like the great comedian/political commentator Bill Maher warns, let's not harbor any illusions as to what it would be like without the police. They are quick to tell us that they are not marriage or addiction counselors, and the parenting of our kids falls outside their job description. Someone has to keep the peace, and deal with the murderers, rapists, thieves, and violently aggressive. Let their title go from law enforcement to guardians if you like, but they cannot be done away with entirely. Instead of saying defund, let's say reallocation of resources, but not commit to completely abandoning a system that works on some levels and just needs to be reorganized on so many others. I refuse to believe that all cops are bad, but I know, because I have seen with my own eyes, that there are bad cops. Rip them out root and branch, put their actions on data bases for all the world to see, hold them accountable, never let them possess a firearm again...and then, leave them be to either evolve into better human beings or go to their graves with headstones marked with the words "Good Riddance."

Like his ungodly hero Richard Milhous Nixon who came before him, President Tweet-a-lee-dee (or is it Tweet-a-lee-dum?) brayed across our great land that he was, "The President of law and order." He has even gone so far as to tweet that tired old Nixon phrase: "Moral majority." Sometimes called the "Silent majority" back in the days when our National Guard was gunning down four protesting students at Kent State University (May 1970) we are compelled to ask who really knows if they are moral and why are they silent? Like sheep being led off to slaughter, perhaps they are willfully meek or just plain dumb. Apathy is the fuel that accelerates the rotting of America, and I submit to you that there is nothing moral about that.

Donald J Trump is a bonifide wannabe dictator now who is forever overstepping his bounds just to see how far he can push it before anyone opposes him. Endlessly hounded by the Democratic majority House of Representatives, he is endlessly exonerated by the Republican controlled Senate which is a boot licking cabal of cowards unlike any that has ever come before it. This political body is now headed up by Mitch McConnell who has bestowed the title of "Grim Reaper" upon himself, as if

that's something to be admired. McConnell is a man that more fittingly resembles the Galapagos Tortoise in appearance and behavior: slow, plodding, and ever at the ready to retreat into his hard impenetrable shell at the slightest sign of danger. Unless we want to see the fall of our American empire in the next four years, they all have to be voted out of office. The theory has been afloat that Trump will refuse to leave the White House when he loses, but worry not, the outspoken retired generals still have enough supporters to escort him kicking and screaming from the premises and stuff him into a waiting vehicle at the edge of Lafayette Park to be driven down Black Lives Matter Plaza and out past the Washington D.C. city limit signs. Wouldn't that be a sight to see?

Absolution for Our Original Sin

On August 20th, 1619 20 black slaves arrived in Jamestown, Virginia to be auctioned off to the colonists. In chains and shackles, they were brought to the North American Continent against their will, for who would will a fate such as this upon themselves? This was America's original sin and a sin for which we all, each and every one of us belonging to each and every race, are still paying. Life was hard and back breaking during these times and few could afford wages for hired help. It was far easier and much more profitable to simply rationalize that these men and women were sub-human and therefore more like beasts of burden than themselves. That probably helped to make the bad taste in their mouths dissolve. Slavery would survive as an institution in America for another 244 years until our 16th President, Abraham Lincoln abolished it with the Emancipation Proclamation. Although abolished on paper, in the mindset of the economically and socially more privileged white race the notion that black people are somehow more inferior and therefore subhuman still persists to this very day.

In his watershed work *The Chaneyville Incident* (1981) author David Bradley examines ad nauseam the convoluted laws that existed by which slaves could achieve their freedom prior to 1863. Bradley didn't pull his punches in explaining that with high quality male slaves selling for prices as high as \$1,500 and females for \$1,000, a virtual fortune in the 1800's, that many masters took it upon themselves to impregnate their viably fertile female slaves and rake in the profits themselves.

Then came the Civil War which was a war heretofore like no other. It was often said that the war pitted brother against brother; a romantic notion that was rarely true. The central driving issue behind the conflict was the widening fork in two divergent ideologies. The majority of a misguided southern general white population was protecting the honor of a planter aristocracy that comprised less than five-percent of the south's overall population and their "rights" to own slaves. The 11 Confederate states held an estimated 9,000,000 people, of which 3,000,000 were black slaves belonging to less than 600,000 "masters." The gap between rich and poor was clearly defined in the south, and one has to wonder why the poorer class fought so vigorously and valiantly to protect the upper class. This is especially true when you consider that any master holding 20 or more slaves was exempt from military service. Simply put, the north, especially its new president Abraham Lincoln, was perceived as handing them an ul-

timatum, and rebels don't like to be told what to do. While the rebels may have fought valiantly, they also fought on the wrong side of history.

With the Union victory the black man of 1865 had more freedom than the black man of 1965. But those rights were quickly infringed upon with the advent of the Ku Klux Klan, the adoption of the Jim Crow laws within state legislatures that proliferated during the 1870's and 1890's and were unjustly upheld by the Supreme Court in 1896 when the concept of "separate but equal" came into being. This concept, otherwise known as segregation, was upheld, and blacks were definitely separate, but they were never equal. Blacks were consistently and institutionally repressed, especially in the former southern states of the Confederacy. The most commonly utilized vehicle employed to instill fear and keep blacks from reaching for anything remotely resembling justice was the lynching. The Museum of Lynching that opened in Montgomery, Alabama in April of 2018 commemorates the lost lives of 4,400 blacks between the years 1877 and 1950. And, that's just the ones' that can be documented. It a sobering place and a startling reminder of just how pervasive and evil racism is in our society.

The first real cracks in segregation occurred in the early 1960's with the converging rise of Doctor Martin Luther King, the inauguration of our 36th President John Fitzgerald Kennedy, and the burgeoning popularity of television. Kennedy was forced to champion the entrance of James Meredith into the University of Mississippi in 1962 and then famously sent in the National Guard when Alabama Governor George Wallace tried to block (literally) the entrance of black students into the University of Alabama on June 11th, 1963. On August 28th of the same year Doctor Martin King led 200,000 demonstrators in the March on Washington with television news capturing the whole event for all of America to see. Television also showed us "Bloody Sunday," occurring on March 7th, 1965 in graphic sickening detail when 600 peaceful black protestors crossed the Edmund Pettus Bridge in an attempt to begin the Selma, Alabama to Montgomery, Alabama March to draw attention to being denied their right to vote even after the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act spearheaded by 37th U.S. President Lyndon Baines Johnson (LBJ). Upon exiting the bridge and crossing the county line they were viciously attacked by state troopers and militia groups. Organizer Jimmie Lee Johnson was killed while revered U.S. Congressman John Lewis sustained severe head injuries and nearly died. Martin Luther King returned to the same site on March 25th, 1965 and completed the March which took 5 days to traverse 54 miles. On August 6th, 1965 LBJ signed the Voting Rights Act. King was assassinated by James Earl Ray on April 4th, 1968.

It was always the same story for blacks in America – two steps forward and one step back. Although finally given the right to vote, at least on paper, they were discouraged from doing so through various forms of voter suppression, voter intimidation, a labyrinth of voter identification laws, and other such shenanigans. Then the worst of the worst in the form of the 1994 Crime Bill that was 356 pages long and provided for the addition of 100,000 new police. A thinly veiled mass incarceration ploy to ensnare black men, it laid riven black families, particularly in America's inner cities, and an entire generation of black sons and daughters grew up without their fathers.

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And so it went, on and on until the day that Derek Chauvin kneeled on George Floyd's neck while nonchalantly keeping his hand in his pocket as if to indicate that this was just another day at the office. Callous. Completely callous, but from where does such callousness come? Here is the wellspring from which the repressive uncaring mentality draws nourishment: Dominance. Might makes right. The ability to persecute others simply because you can. Bullying. Intimidation. Oppression. Meanness. Masochism. Bludgeoning the spirit of another human being for your own personal gain. Coercion of others to accept your rules. Denial of freedom of speech and freedom of expression. Torture. Murder. None of these belong within the family of man if we truly believe that all the races can be on an equal footing and treated equally.

In the case of the black race in America, it is time for our white race dominated government to issue an apology. This is just the first step, but it is the most necessary one because we should never underestimate the power of an apology. Several national governments, Australia of note, have issued formal apologies to indigenous peoples who were bludgeoned with various atrocities as these nations carved out an existence, and a system of taxation to maintain their existence. The dynamic was always the same; the white races took from the non-white races and furthermore demonized them as a rationale for their actions. Once they got everything they wanted from the beginning, a case of remorseful conscientiousness set in. An apology was a small price to pay for a clean conscious, and any monetary restitution was simply out of the question. But that won't fly in America. The black race wasn't simply oppressed on their own soil, which for sure would have been bad enough, they were transported here against their will and then oppressed. Monetary reparations are in order. The bill has come due and the government would be well advised to cough it up. There's always waffling on that account, always an attempt to welsh on the payment with offers of low interest loans and college incentive packages; anything but hand over the cash. I know this, when someone owes me money, I don't want to barter with them, which is just a passive aggressive form of swindling – I want my money.

Einstein wrote that, "No problem can ever be resolved from the same consciousness that created it." Additionally, any problem not recognized can ever be solved by those that refuse to admit to its existence. So here it is in all its repulsiveness: I am a racist. I wish that I weren't, but I have no doubt that I am. I apologize for that fact, but unfortunately, I am unable to change that fact. I like to think I've evolved, but that thinking wafts away whenever a black person cuts me off in traffic or cuts in front of me in line. Then those words, those thoughts, that ugliness wells up in me and I have to bite my lip. This racism is illogical, and the only explanation that I have for it is that it was inherent in my upbringing. The ultimate cop out, I know – blame it on the parents, but therein lies the key to snuffing out racism; the fact that I am a parent and if I commit to not teaching racism to the children it will die with me. This admission still doesn't solve the problem of why some people feel that they are superior to other people. It's the concept of the "other" versus the "us." Anyone different than us must be less than us is a logic that keeps this whole heinous mess going.

Whenever the discussion of equality and unalienable human rights come up The Declaration of Independence is sure to get wheeled out. It

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is, to be sure, a masterfully written document with a high degree of high minded idealism – for white people. When Thomas Jefferson, a slave owner who was to become our 3rd President sat down in 1776 to write these immortal words it's very doubtful that he thought of black people as his equal, if he considered them at all. That was the tenor of the times. We can admire his words, but let's not kid ourselves, because they were self-serving in the extreme. Contrary to popular notion, and a penchant for popular quotation, the Declaration is not the law of the land, the U.S. Constitution (1787) is. James Madison, a tiny man but an intellectual giant, and also a slave owner who was to become our 4th President is primarily responsible for penning this document. The Constitution contains 4,543 words (including signatures) which I only mention because it's disturbing to me at least that this document, not any longer than an average short story in a college literary magazine, mostly goes unread. Although everyone thinks they know what is in it, in actuality, they rarely have a clue. Entire law office libraries contain books that are devoted to interpretations as to what it really means, and arguments abound depending upon whose axe needs to be ground. The wording of this document never gets stricken, amendments get written to make some words ineffective if not meaningless, and some amendments get written to repeal previous amendments. It's as if, if we were to change a single word the entire nation will fall apart. But words matter, especially these words housed in Section 2 Article 3 which deals with divvying up the population to determine the makeup of The House of Representatives: "...which shall be determined by adding to the whole number of free persons, including those bound to service for a term of years and excluding Indians not taxed, three fifths of all other persons." What our founding fathers were coyly saying is that other persons, namely black slaves, equated to 3/5ths of a white man when it came to counting for something in America, and it should be noted that they didn't count the Indians for anything. Imagine that you are a young black person interested in our history to the point that you actually were to read the most important document in our history; well at least it's what everyone swears to defend. Imagine how you would feel when you came across this passage. Words matter. If the Confederate flag can come down, if the Confederate statues can come down, then why not have these words stricken? It would be a start.

From domination to emancipation to segregation to incarceration to reparations, it has been a long difficult road for the black race here in America. But the time is now at hand to let freedom truly ring, to let equality become a reality. What's going on in America? We are having our national comeuppance and it might not be smooth and it definitely isn't pretty, but it is absolutely necessary if we truly wish to hold on to our lofty status as the land of the free and the home of the brave. Can I get an amen to that?

This is Their Time

The baby boomers have stepped aside hanging their heads in disappointment at the fact that we said we were going to be the ones to change the world, and then we didn't. Just because we had rolled around in the mud at Woodstock a half century ago doesn't give us the right to run the

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country anymore. We had our chance and we blew it. Generation X – please, they sold out for their first BMW and the bondage of a thirty year mortgage. Nothing’s going to happen with any of them as they are currently embroiled in mid-life crisis’s or hopelessly addicted to soul sucking mind numbing opioids. It’s time for a new generation to be taking over at this dawn of a bright new day, and for the first time in a very long time, anything seems possible. All hail Generation Me, the Millennials, and the most recently, Generation Z. This is their time.

Equal rights, equal educational opportunity, free medical care, maintaining a women’s right to choose, legalization of marijuana, meaningful jobs, a livable wage, fair housing opportunity, addressing climate change, embracing renewable and sustainable energy, repairing infrastructure, building a better future for future generations – if it had to come to this to get what’s really important on the table, then so be it. What’s fair is no longer being pushed aside for what makes a lucky few extraordinarily rich. Finally America can live up to the premise of liberty and justice for all. Finally we can become that shining city on a hill. The kids are making it happen for all the world to see. This is their time! This is their time!! This is their time!!!

America is a bonifide enlightened nation now. To all those beautiful young people out there marching in the streets, taking a knee, and participating in dead-ins; your cause is just and right and long overdue. Go with Godspeed. It’s comforting to see that most are wearing their face masks to keep Covid 19 at bay, or to at least slow the rate of its transmission. These kids are not unintelligent; they know the risks and have decided to brave them for the sake of justice and the promise of a better future. They seem to instinctively know, that with the right priorities impressed upon the national psyche, that their futures could be very bright, so bright, in fact, that most are wearing their shades. On behalf of the few that aren’t – hey Colin, can you lend them a pair of yours’?