

Checking In, and Save the Date 12/15/2024

Friends,

I have been remiss.

Like so many of us, I've been reeling from the events of last Tuesday. For several days after, I absolutely refused to engage the news at all. Ten days later, I still can't bring myself to read the Times newsletter that usually starts my morning. There's too much danger there of entering a "how could they???" spiral that would wreck my sleep and my peace of mind. I'm simply too old (at 33 ☹) to engage in that sort of wallowing anymore.

But, a good friend of mine left a message a few days ago saying "you're the smartest person I know, and I don't know what to think, so I'm calling you."

I make no claims to exceptional intelligence. I try to keep myself informed by reliable sources, and I try, too, to keep a balanced perspective, recognizing that my Wyoming upbringing and roots juxtaposed with my "back east" education and early career require (privilege?) me to consider the world, political and otherwise, from often contradictory points of view. And I am often wrong—too often—but I hope I always own my errors, and try to do better the next time.

I haven't called back yet. I am an indolent correspondent in the best of times, especially via telephone (phone calls always seem to demand a time commitment I can never find today—maybe tomorrow??), but in this case, I really don't know what to think. Consequently, I have also failed to communicate with you

all. The words of hope and pragmatism the situation seems to call for feel too much like wishful thinking, and the other words are too angry and profane to feel appropriate.

Finally today, after allowing myself to submerge too long in "what if" scenarios courtesy of The Atlantic, I sent him, and send you, some snippets of thoughts:

We may well be monumentally screwed-and that's a we that includes women, children, educators, health care workers, LGBTQs, non-whites, non-Christians, immigrants (documented and otherwise), Palestinians, Jews, Ukrainians, the environment, and the larger US and world order in general. My concern isn't limited to myself. And, though I'm struggling right now to feel compassion about it, I strongly suspect that those ardent believers as well as those who said "well, he can't be THAT bad can he?" will find out just how bad he can be, to their very great sorrow.

It will depend on how much damage these greedy, corrupt, self-serving idiots can do before people realize what's happening. It's somewhat reassuring but also monumentally frustrating that people are already saying, "oh, no, I didn't want him to do THAT!"

To this I can only say—When people tell you who they are, you should listen. Nothing that has happened so far has strayed from the intentions publicly expressed by the campaign. It's exactly as promised, despite people like our own reprehensible Cynthia Lummis blithely claiming, "He likes to goad you. You can't take him seriously when he's talking about stuff like this." Can't we, Senator? Can't we? Let's hope that this is just goading, but something tells me it's more than that, in which case, let's hope that this deepening sense of buyer's remorse from his voters makes a big difference, sooner rather than later.

As I said before, I'm trying to get on with my life without letting the fear and rage overtake me. Robert Hubbell has helped (many thanks, Lynette, for sharing him with me). I particularly recommend Let's Take It Slow from a few days ago.

I also recommend, as he does, blocking out the asinine 20/20 hindsight armchair quarterbacking in which most of the legacy media is engaging. I served on the canvas board for Big Horn County, which required me, among other things, to participate in an audit of randomly selected ballots from every precinct in BHC to verify that what the machine read is what the voter marked. Here's my takeaway from that experience—all those talking heads claiming to know “what went wrong” or “what these results mean” are actually talking out of their uninformed asses. A ballot reflects the intention and wishes of an individual voter. If you believe for a second that there's some sweeping “they” who all meant the same thing with their votes, then I have some oceanfront property in Wyoming to sell you. In the limited sample we reviewed, I saw every combination of votes—Harris/Barasso/Cameron, Trump/Morrow/Hagemann, etc.—you can imagine. Clearly, people meant all kinds of different things.

It's foolishly arrogant and deeply unhelpful for anyone to claim they know the secret of what Americans wanted. It is likewise preposterous to claim that an election this close (especially considering that the electoral college is perpetually stacked against Democrats—in a fairly apportioned electoral college, California would have 216 electoral votes to Wyoming's 3!) represents some kind of sweeping mandate. Joe Biden won by 7 million votes in 2020, and the election was characterized as incredibly close. Four years later, Kamala Harris loses by less than 3 million votes, and it's a landslide? What?!?!

An election decided by 150,000 voters across six out of 50

states is NOT a landslide. Nope.

Anyway.

I'm trying to go on with my life, and perhaps now, like so many times before, I am wrong. I hope so. If not, I fear, at least, that things will get worse before they get better—quite possibly, much worse.

But, taking advice from Hubbell that seems worth following, I am trying to be better about checking in with those who are likewise shaken and disheartened, and about taking solace in and strengthening those relationships that matter, with those people who imagine and strive for a country and a world that are greater than anything that they would like to make happen “again”—in short, with people like you.

I am, in particular, hoping to see many of you at our BHC/Big Horn Basin Dems and R-Allies Holiday party on the afternoon of December 15. Stay tuned for more details, but please save the date! There's enormous power in connecting with people who share our commitment, our compassion, and our conscientious humanity.

I'll close this with words from Robert Hubbell:

“This weekend, even if it is too soon to talk about our hopes for ultimate victory, it is not too soon to acknowledge that the mere act of enduring serves as a bridge to the next generation. If our task is to keep the flame alive so that the next generation can succeed, then we are repaying the gift that was bestowed on us.”

I hope you all are well, and I hope that it gets better. In the meantime, keep the flame alive.

See you on the 15th!

Here for good,

Erik

—

A. Erik Good (he/him)

Chair

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