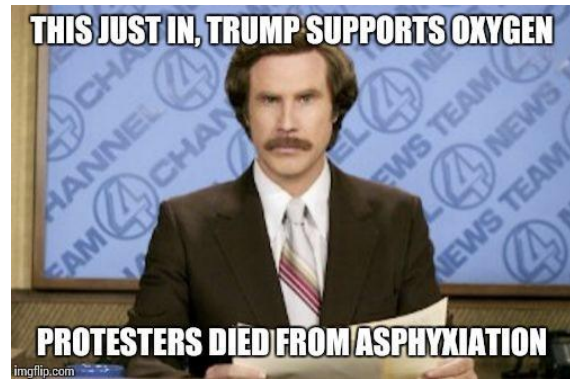


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Canceling half of America

Steve Bakke  December 9 , 2024



Cancel culture lives! While looking forward to Thanksgiving, I came across posts and articles reminding me that not everyone is thankful. And by gosh, for some folks, Trump supporting relatives and friends would soon pay a price.

I was shocked by the volume of comments declaring this presidential election to be one of those rare events that warrants ending, or adjusting, relationships with family and friends. That includes revising Thanksgiving guest lists.

I shouldn't have been surprised. In recent years, Trump supporters and voters have been singled out for "special attention." For example:

- "Is anyone archiving these Trump sycophants.....?"- That was from AOC. "Yes" answered the "Trump Accountability Project." They gathered information on Trump financial supporters, voters, employees, RNC members, appointees, etc.
- "We need a Truth and Reconciliation Commission." (think "Re-education Ministry," as in "1984.") – from Clinton Secretary of Labor, Robert Reich.

Thankfully, those reactions tailed off. However, after Trump's recent victory, social media is again loading up with suggestions for punishing half the U.S. population. And those "experts on everything," i.e. celebrities, are prominently stepping up like this:

- Mark Hamill declared election day as "a day that will live in infamy," comparing Trump's victory to Pearl Harbor.
- Sharon Stone pointed out that the U.S. "is in adolescence," "uneducated," "naïve."
- Joy Reid declared, "Our Thanksgiving, our choice.....Make your own dinner, Maga."

If you are a puzzled and angry anti-Trump voter, don't frustrate yourself over-analyzing Trump voters. Trump supporters don't reside in a foggy netherworld. They haven't been put under a mysterious spell. They don't swoon in the presence of a cult leader. And they are aware of Trump's many flaws. Trump supporters didn't have to approve of style or personality traits in order to be thankful for policies and accomplishments.

From the perspective of a few years ago, it's difficult for conservatives to look past phony dossiers, smashed computer hard drives, and very real "lawfare." And it's frustrating how baked into politics is the tendency to see only the goodness of one's own political leaders and just the evil horrors of the other's. Self-righteousness is a common human flaw.

I'll stipulate that President-elect Trump hasn't ever offered a bouquet of fresh daisies as a friendly gesture to political opponents. I've had enough of his hyperbole and ad hominem attacks. And assigning derogatory nicknames is silly and unhelpful.

However, years of withering abuse coming at Trump and his supporters has been stifling as well. It was also hard to ignore. For example, NBC presidential historian Michael Beschloss described an imagined dystopian 2022 election result to Chris Hayes on MSNBC: "We're on the edge of a brutal authoritarian system.....a historian will say what was at stake tonight and this week.....whether our children will be arrested and conceivably killed."

The following appeared in The Guardian, "[when civil war develops] judges will be assassinated, democrats and moderate republicans will be jailed.....black churches and synagogues bombed, pedestrians picked off by snipers....."

The most outrageous of all must be "The Handmaid's Tale," a dystopian depiction in a book, movie and cable TV series. It openly imagines what could happen if conservatives were in control of our government. Fertile women are subjected to child-bearing slavery, serving barren ruling class women. Handmaids are subjected to cruel discipline and hideous punishment such as stoning, removal of eyes, and genital mutilation.

Those fictitious predictions contributed significantly to societal fear and irrational emotions. Many now fear those with whom they disagree and have been led to believe punishment is warranted. There's so much imagined fear that , for some, "canceling" half of America is the best answer.

We should all make it clear to friends and relatives that our relationships are not contingent upon how we vote. More important, we should never be afraid of having our ideas challenged, nor be afraid of challenging political and philosophical opponents. It requires listening and understanding.....and sometimes arguing. Peace in America will come with more discussion, not less.

You and I could be on someone's "cancellation" list. Let's make our message, "I hope you don't! While I may disagree with you, it doesn't mean I dislike you or have angry feelings. We have our own opinions. Let's make every effort to demonstrate mutual respect."