

The man or the movement?

Donald Trump was acquitted yesterday...for the second time. It was a sham trial with the prosecution focusing more on the very tragic and dramatic events of January 6th rather than on Mr. Trump's intent or his words. It was to be expected. We all knew it. Masters of diversion, the Dems shucked and jived (*def. acting evasively and using clever lies and impromptu storytelling that are designed to one-up an opponent*) their way through four days and probably a half million words of rhetorical fire-bombing in the hopes of leaving Donald Trump bleeding by the side of the road.

Their real purpose in impeaching Trump as everybody with half a brain knows was to destroy his chances of becoming the 47th President of the United States in 2024 by convincing their base and fence-sitting Republicans that he would be the death of our democracy. What utter bunkum. Their whole case revolved around supposition and not hard facts. They failed to prove the 'Brandenburg test' on incitement (the Brandenburg test was established in *Brandenburg v. Ohio*, 395 US 444 in 1969 and determined when inflammatory speech intending to advocate illegal action can be restricted or used to prosecute an individual).

The three determiners included: 1. the speech is "directed to inciting or producing imminent lawless action," 2. that that speech is "likely to incite or produce such action" and a third was added that a lawless action actually follows that speech. The Dems knew they wouldn't be able to prove any of the three so they chose to highlight the heinous nature of the event itself and then proceeded to demean and destroy the President's character (a familiar Democrat ploy that we have seen play out in other hearings like the Brett Kavanaugh Supreme Court Justice nomination hearing, to name just one). The impeachment managers pulled out all stops to further dramatize their case. They used video clips, doomsday rhetoric and voices that are usually only heard as intros to apocalyptic Hollywood films. Their performances were pretty uniform from lead prosecutor Jamie Ruskin (CongRep from MD) to Stacey Plaskett (CongRep from the U.S. Virgin Islands). All were experts at the art of word-tasting. Like wine connoisseurs that swirl their wine in their mouths before spitting it out, they did the same with their carefully-chosen derogatory diatribes. High drama, yes. High on substance, no.

Getting an impeachment manager slot is important to a Congressman's reputation. It increases their worth among their colleagues, burnishes their credentials for future committee assignments and helps to raise their media profile, not to mention enhances their ability to raise campaign donations, so it is was no surprise that überly-ambitious people like Joaquin Castro (TX), David Cicilline (RI), Madeleine Dean (PA), Eric Swalwell (CA) and Joe Neguse (CO) were added to the list. I tried to listen to them as if I were judging a figure-skating competition: points for innovative routine, points for style, points for technical execution and points for likeability. I must confess, though, that my objective judging gave way to a sickening feeling in the pit of my stomach. The venom they were spewing was so toxic that it could have penetrated even the sturdiest of hazmat suits. I had to throw in the towel, but I was back at it after a break because it was addictive in some sort of perverse masochistic way. I simply HAD to hear how extreme they were going to be in their *crucifixion on the Hill* of the man who represented the greatest clear and present danger to our democracy since the Civil War.

Then it was time for a motion on witness-calling. Oops. The Dems hadn't counted on the Rs' tactical move which was a willingness to call the 'Lady of the House,' Ms. Pelosi, and maybe even the new VP to the stand. A quick deal was made so they moved on to final arguments and a vote. Seven Republicans voted 'guilty' on the one count of impeachment. There were two surprises (for me at least) among the seven: Sen. Bill Cassidy of Louisiana and Sen. Richard Burr of North Carolina. The others are well-known RINOs: Susan Collins (Maine), Lisa Murkowski (Alaska), Mitt Romney (Utah), Ben Sasse (Nebraska) and Pat Toomey (Pennsylvania) and in my opinion ought to be primaried next time around.

When it was over and Donald Trump was acquitted, the media outlets immediately interviewed all the impeachment managers who characterized the trial as a defense of democracy...and as a victory for having 'told the truth' about the evil 45th President.

Was this the end of Trump? The demise of the now divided Republican Party? The dawning of a new American day? The Sunday morning shows happily took their bite of the apple and asked Republicans, "Are you through with Trump for good?" "Will the party re-form itself now that Trump's in the rear view mirror?" Pundits and pollsters offered up their two cents worth of DC wisdom, but everyone knew in their heart of hearts that Donald 'the cat' Trump had a few political lives left and that he would, eventually, be back.

Today's American media - especially the Left-wing media - cannot exist without a villain, and Donald Trump has proven himself to be the consummate Simon Legree. Traitor, liar, insurrectionist, woman-hater, cheater, he is Public Enemy No. 1 to 81 million Americans, but patriot and hope-in-waiting for many of the 74.2 million OTHER Americans who see him as a NEW American founding father of a NEW American movement - one they are still devoted to. That begs two questions. The first is, "Which is more important to the Conservative voter, the man or the movement?" and the second is, "Can an America First movement even continue without the likes of a Donald Trump or a man like him?"

Many never-Trumpers are betting on a collective rebuke of Trump by the bulk of Republicans and an eventual re-organization of the Party under a more 'acceptable' more 'civilized' candidate in the mold of a Mitt Romney, for example (we all know how that worked out, don't we). Others say that the movement, by its very nature, demands a disrupter, a straight-talker, a bold and unbowed, fearless Conservative to lead it and all Republicans to a 2022 and 2024 victory. I am of the opinion that unless Republicans embrace the latter model, they will continue to lose elections. While many oppose the Trump speaking style with all his bravado and brashness, the majority of Republicans support his goals and agree with his vision.

And while they may shake their heads from time to time about his unabashed self-appraisal and promotion, they are willing to give him a 'mulligan' because they know that such self-praise is his own personal energy source and listening to it is actually a small price to pay to achieve the success we all want. The stark contrast between Trump's and Biden's leadership will become more evident as time goes by and as we fall farther and farther from the tree of liberty. Republicans and Conservatives will come together, of that I'm sure, and when they do it will not be under a never-Trump banner.

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