

## Dudley Do-Right goes off script

Our neighbor to the North has been the butt of jokes and been stereotyped for years, and to Canadians' credit they have chuckled and turned the other cheek and then turned it again like some incredible cultural revolving door. From the antics of cartoon character Dudley Do-Right to Nelson Eddie and Jeanette McDonald serenade to the 1995 Michael Moore (yes, THAT Michael Moore) film 'Canadian Bacon' our friends have suffered for their *sufferability* at our hands, we their knee-jerk, prone-to-action Yank brethren to the South.

Good-naturedness lives in their DNA and manifests itself by their continuing show of civility and friendliness under fire...and we aren't the only ones who have noticed it. Back in the late 60s and early 70s American backpackers heading for Europe would sew Maple Leaf patches onto their rucksacks to mask their true identity (and to signal their disagreement with the U.S.' position on Vietnam). We understood it then, as did thousands of our draft age young men who fled conscription and made their way to the refuge of Canada's shores. Some of us thought their journey was justified while others screamed 'good riddance!' Those *Canucks* (a term of endearment these days) have been berated for being too nice, too clean and too orderly and way too law-abiding... that is until their Prime Minister dropped the hammer on them this month.

Having fumed in silence while vaccine mandates, masking, social distancing and other measures were imposed on them early on in the pandemic, the average winter-loving, hockey aficionado and all-round politenik had reached his breaking point. Dudley Do Right was dead. It was time to channel Snidley Whiplash and show their power-crazed Prime Minister they were mad as Hell and weren't going to take it anymore. So, to the cabs of their Big Macks and Kenilworths hundreds of them went, armed with Maple Leaf flags and 'Stop the mandates' signs, ready to take to the road to Ottawa to beard the lion in his den.

Like pilgrims on their way to Medjugorje they were imbued with faith, faith that their government would listen to them and perhaps just perhaps in the spirit of true Canadian civility even relent. Unfortunately, the truckers had succumbed to their own national PR. The man who would be king, son of an activist former PM, had other plans. He would show those 'renegade lawbreakers and terrorists' HE had the chutzpah to defy him and that he was no cartoon character clad in a red tunic. HE was a law and order PM who never let a good crisis go to waste, especially when it could help burnish his image as a tough guy (like our own President who's busy rattling his own saber over Russia).

Tough guys, not Casper Milktoast-styled leaders were in vogue, and lockdowns and vaccine mandates proved their power was sustainable, so it was no leap of faith for Justin T. to believe that clamping down on trucker protests was going to play well throughout the land. First, he admonished them to do the right thing for their country. Then came threats of fines and jail time. Finally, Monsieur le PM invoked The Emergencies Act (*Loi sur les mesures d'urgence*) a law passed by their Parliament in 1988 which authorizes the federal government to take extraordinary temporary measures to respond to public welfare emergencies, public order emergencies, international emergencies and war emergencies.

It was checkmate (or *truckmate*). Whatever you call it, Trudeau proved once again that while ordinary power corrupts, absolute power corrupts absolutely, even in good old amiable Canada. The inimitable Canadian 'eh' had finally given way to "What? Are you kidding me?" The peaceable 18-wheel jockeys were now labeled as enemies of the state for exercising their right to protest, despite Section 2 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms protection which guarantees the freedom of expression, freedom of association, and the freedom of peaceful assembly (similar to our First Amendment to the Constitution). While the film 'Canadian Bacon' may have been an exaggeration, we laughed because it contained a kernel of truth. What's happening now in real time on the ground is no laughing matter. It's time for us who haven't as yet been pariah'ed by our government to show our solidarity with our Canadian brothers and sisters.

Locate some Canadian Maple syrup and pour a river of it over some Bannock. Before you dig in, clear your throat and sing their national anthem: "O Canada! Our home and native land! True patriot love in all of us command. With glowing hearts we see thee rise, the True North strong and free! From far and wide. O Canada, we stand on guard for thee. God keep our land glorious and free! O Canada, we stand on guard for thee. O Canada, we stand on guard for thee."

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