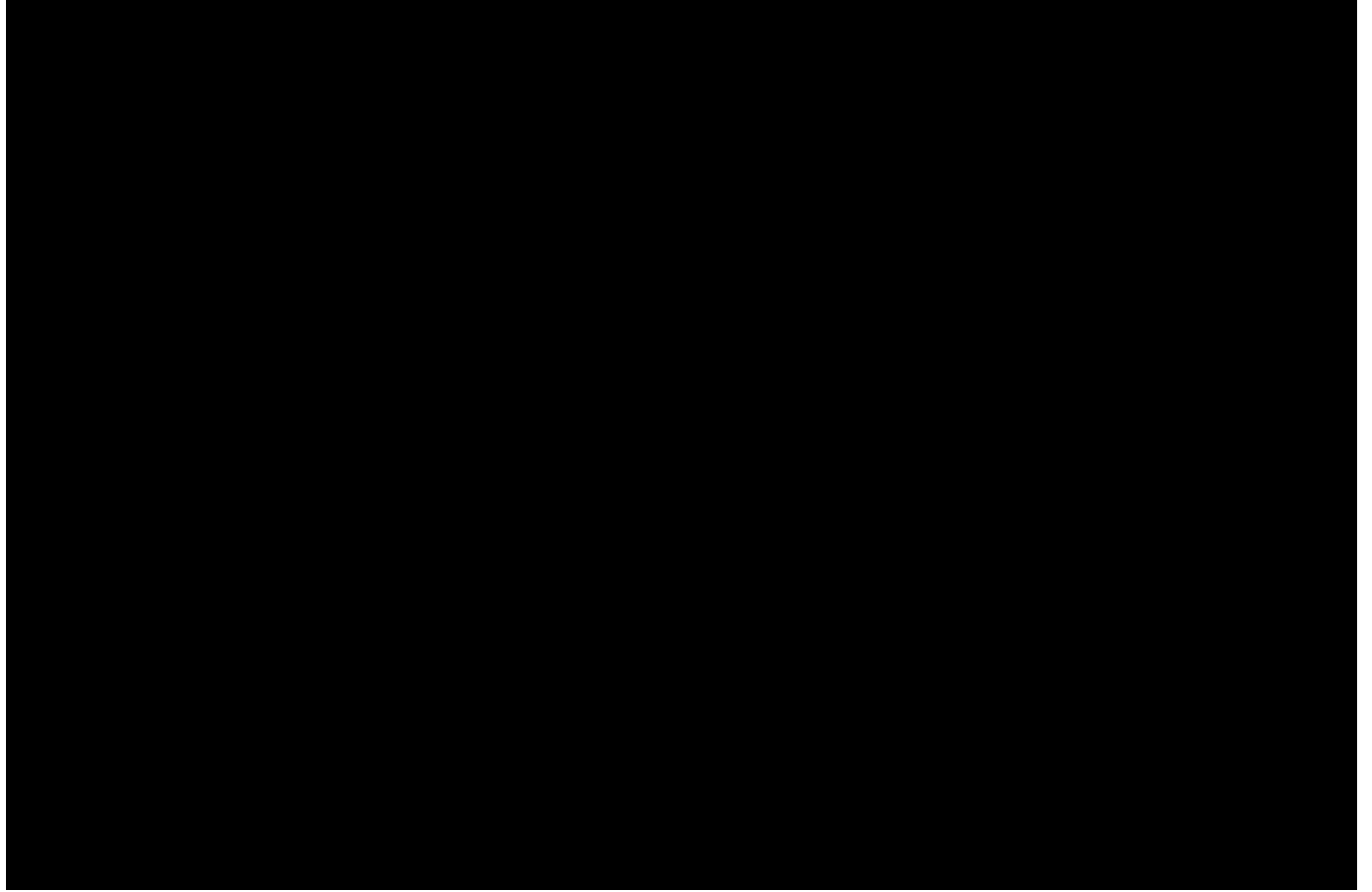


Progressively: A Morphology of Crisis Containment



by James Como

Try to recall some of your more vexatious living room debates. These may have been about any of the great issues – war, sexual fungibility, the concept of nationhood, the corruptions of elected officials – or about the inflammatory quarrels in some families or gossip among neighbors.

A painful exercise, such remembering, not least because the pattern that emerges from these ‘debates’ is so achingly predictable: a pattern of dishonesty, that is, of fraudulence for the sake of avoidance. It plays out as in this example:

1. Hunter Biden’s laptop and his various corruptions? I haven’t heard of those.

2. Oh, yes, I did hear about all that but I don't believe it. I mean, really, the *New York Post* and *Fox News*?
3. You know, it's probably true, now that I've heard people talking, but what does it matter?
4. Oh, I know, it does matter, all that money and selling of favors, not to mention the personal corruption and the lies that go with the denials, including the suborning of perjury by scores of former national security officials. But the other side has done worse
5. Oh, right. Hunter Biden. But that's old news. Let's just move on.

To summarize:

1. *Ignorance.*
2. *Disbelief.*
3. *Trivialization.*
4. *Distraction.*
5. *Irrelevance.*

Of course we know that to weave this tapestry it takes (Hillary was right this one time) a village: press, pundits, professors; bureaucrats and a bobble-headed citizenry that reacts Tourette-like to the prevailing dog whistles and well-rehearsed cues.

And of course, the paradigm is versatile: applicable to almost any quarrel, on all sides. Truth be told, though, it's hard for someone on the Right to pull it off. After all, given the megaphones and echo chambers of the Left it's virtually impossible to plead *ignorance* of any charge (true or false) made by what William Buckley once dubbed The Hive.

Still, I have found the paradigm useful as an accusatory tool, starting with a paraphrase of Ronald Reagan's "there you go again," followed by a description of what's to come. I've even, in mid-discourse, predicted it, to the stammering

frustration of my interlocutor.

Keep in mind, though, that the order matters: it's progressive.