

Resistance, actually

by James Como



Moral exhibitionism, self-righteous venting, potty talk, hitting and smashing – behaviors that when undertaken by children are called ‘acting out’ – these are all terrifically satisfying to, but also terribly distracting for, post-adolescent actors. Just so has #The Resistance been deceived. In their mutually orgiastic bacchanalia the Resisters do not see – cannot see – that, in fact, they were the (successfully) Resisted.

Self-persuasion (a small hairline away from self-delusion) is the most powerful persuasion in the world: it speaks to a deeply-rooted character (in this case, arrested, infantile, entitled, radical solipsism) that swallows an alternative reality whole. Put that in the context of unrelenting reinforcement propaganda and you get True Believers, especially when the clever among them not only project their wrong-doing onto the opposition but co-opt the grievances of that opposition so that, rather than hating themselves, *soi-*

disant Resistor can hate The Other. As they are wont to say, "haters gotta hate," and so they do. It becomes theological.

This paradigm of self-justification inevitably leads to license: vulgar tantrums intended to a/ abuse the adults, b/ make the Resistor feel good, because doing feels better than seething and very much better than accommodation with the adult world, c/ augment bonding and branding with their own, and d/ get their way – the point at which the sandbox rowdies become boulevard gangs roaming the back alleys of social media, the streets of broadcast news and late-night amusements, and the actual avenues of towns and cities: on this island, the flies will tolerate no other lord than their own. The sandbox writ large.

In fact, the rabid are writing their own demise. The rampant violation of the protocols of discourse, especially when dealing with the president of the republic, the proliferation of straw men and other fallacies, the abundance of downright lies, and the refusal to engage programmatically (policy debate, that is, policy and debate, are quite beyond the afflicted) – these will have two effects. The first is the re-writing of rules: like the use of the "nuclear option" in the Senate, some blades cut both ways, and will. The second effect is what the behavior does to people like me. Voting for president I wrote in the name of a Democrat (Jim Webb), but if the election were held today, I would – I've really been left no choice – Resist.