

The Great American Divorce

A short story to save America from it's Second Civil War

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In the Spring of 1869, Nathan Bedford Forrest stood at water's edge on the East bank of the Mississippi River just south of Memphis. Forrest was gazing east across a flat fallow field of light brown corn stalk stumps. He was standing in DeSoto County at the precipice of the mighty Mississippi Delta outspreading flat and wide. He imagined in his mind's eye vast fields of cotton spread so far that one's naked eye could not see as far as the cotton grows in the Delta. At the far off horizon of the cotton fields that he's imagining, Bedford's sight blends the sky and the fields into a soft white haze of eternity.

The Mississippi Delta is as flat and black as the cast iron skillet Mexicans use to make tortillas. The tortillas are used to wrap the famed hot tamales Mexicans brought to this land that would eventually be as well-loved in the Delta as it's famous fried catfish in a spicy cornmeal.

Gazing across the land, Bedford knew the Delta's black dirt is the richest soil in the world, a result of thousands of years of the overflowing big muddy river of black sandy-loam every Spring. The Great Mississippi River flooded every April and May as warmer weather melted away feet upon feet of winter ice and snow up North.

As northern snows melted, thirty-one states drained their rushing rivers down into the Great Mississippi River Valley. In this brown heavy fast-flowing water were the sentiments of top soil from the North country of Canada, Wyoming, North Dakota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Minnesota and even Upstate New York.

The rich black top soil from the north consisted of sandy loam and mulch from decomposed trees, plants and animals over centuries of the cycle of life. "This dirt is as valuable as gold", Bedford thought to himself. Even today, in the summer of 2020, there is an average of 75 feet of pure 100% black sandy loam top soil spread across the Delta like a defeated boxer spread out across the canvass after being beaten down and knocked out flat. When you stand on a

cotton plantation facing miles and miles of cotton, it looks like an expansive field of white snow in winter.

The Mexicans migrated into the Delta in the late 19th Century to pick cotton that many former enslaved Blacks had abandoned. The summer heat and humidity was a double punch to Black peoples' humanity they gladly gave up after centuries of brutal bondage and degradation.

In the 1870s, many Black people moved north but many more went west into Oklahoma and Kansas joining the Five Great Tribes of Native Americans. They were the Choctaws, Chickasaws, Creeks, Cherokees and the Seminoles forcibly removed from these rich lands in the 1830's by the Indian Removal Act promulgated by US President Andrew Jackson and violently administered by the US Army. They were removed to secure the richest dirt in the world for the burgeoning and violent American Manifest Destiny.

Mexicans, Lebanese, Chinese and Italians, too, rushed into the Delta to work the cotton farms now screaming loudly for strong backs and hungry stomachs determined to pick cotton. They figured that this new world would hopefully give them a new lease on life from their woefully faltering states in their old worlds. It did.

That Spring of 1869 brought more than just hope to the elite planters of the Delta. It brought them a celebratory joy because just that past Christmas Eve in 1868, President Andrew Johnson pardoned every former Confederate General from treason. Their long four-year nightmare of being tried, found guilty and hung on a hastily constructed platform in Southern town-squares was over. The traitors against the United States of America that caused 750,000 dead American boys and men were now free to go about the business of growing white gold — the cotton that soon would be crowned King-again in the Delta.

Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest was famous. A handsome and dashing man with haunting eyes, long jet-black hair and curly facial hair that made him look both handsome and scary at the same time. The ladies loved his intense eyes staring through you like he owned you and everything around you. He walked upright, slow and with an air of invincibility. You could feel his over-confident leadership qualities just watching him walk or stare inside you.

Born in 1821 in Bedford County, Tennessee Forrest joined the Confederate Army at the out break of Civil War as an enlisted private. He excelled on the battle field not afraid to charge into battle with lead flying around his head. He rose quickly through the ranks to lead his troops into numerous battles where he

displayed his bravery and combat skills on his horse fighting to victory over Union troops. He swiftly became a General. His men loved his fighting spirit. So skilled as a warrior on horseback, soldiers under his command nick-named him "The Wizard in the Saddle". Today, he is a revered Civil War hero in the South with numerous statues honoring him and scores of schools, streets and buildings named after him.

He was also infamous and ruthless. On April 12, 1864, he led his troops to massacre over 300 Black soldiers at the Battle of Fort Pillow 40 miles up river from Memphis. The soldiers were US Colored Troops of the 6th US Regiment of Colored Heavy Artillery and the 2nd Colored Light Artillery. He shot them dead while on their knees begging for their lives after they surrendered. When they ran from the carnage into the Mississippi River to avoid their slaughter he ordered his troops to shoot them in their fleeing backs. The brown river ran red with the Black soldiers blood. Other Black people were nailed to trees in crucifixion style and slashed with the sabers of Confederate officers until they bled to death. He placed other Black soldiers in wooden water barrels and nailed shut the tops than setting the barrels on fire soaked in lamp oil and pushed them out in the river to burn alive - the Black soldiers inside. Achilles Clark, a confederate soldier under Forrest's command, wrote to his sister after the battle of Fort Pillow:

*The slaughter was awful. Words cannot describe the scene.
The poor deluded negroes would run up to our men fall
upon their knees and with uplifted hands and scream
for mercy, but they were ordered to their feet and shot dead.
The white men fared better. The negroes' fort turned
out to be a slaughter pen. Blood, human blood stood about in
pools and brains could be seen gathered up in any quantity.*

After the war, debate raged in Washington, DC as to what to do with those commanding officers of the Confederacy that led their countrymen to treason against the United States. During years of debate concerning a full pardon by Congress, Nathan Bedford Forrest, now a free man, helped to found the Ku Klux Klan in Pulaski, Tennessee in 1866, then became its Grand Wizard. Over the next century, the KKK would organize itself into a secret White supremacist army of murderers, rapists, and terrorists to Blacks, Jews and any other suspect group that the KKK came to hate.

Had those Confederate officers been tried, convicted and publicly hung for treason in their home town-squares, it is most likely that the KKK would have never been formed. Today, they march through towns like Charlottesville, Virginia protecting statues to Confederate generals that local citizens want to

remove throughout the South. They have been revived again under the leadership of President Donald John Trump. The spirit of Nathan Bedford Forrest is still alive and well in the American South and in many rural communities in Northern states. He's still a hero to half of America.

But back then, in 1869, the pardon from his war “crimes against humanity” was full, legal and celebrated by virtually all White men, women and children in the defeated Confederate States of America. From Virginia to Texas and every small town and hamlet in the American South, Forrest was a hero in the South's heart, mind and daily activities. As he looked across vast fields of black top soil that even smelled rich, his vision of a new South where cotton would be King again and it's labor provided by Black Americans would make defeated Confederates rich once more and restore glory and pride to their way of life. That way of life returned after the Civil War to suppress African American aspirations for freedom, equality and justice. Bedford's KKK took America back to pre-Civil War sensibilities, degradation and exploitation - with violence. Forrest's vision looking across those cotton fields in The Delta was realized.

Thus began another 100 years of White supremacist terror against Black American citizens for the promotion of a White South holding onto its violent past, its heritage of Southern Pride. In the past half century, the South's White citizens have voted overwhelmingly for the racist rhetoric and policies embodied in the Republican Party. From Barry Goldwater to Richard Nixon to Ronald Reagan to Donald Trump, the Party has espoused hateful slogans and racist political ads to turn out White voters against African Americans' quest for justice and freedom. Today, they suppress the vote to assure their victory at the polls to maintain two Americas - one White in the South, mid-West and the Great Plains West and one in the urban North and West Coast that embraces diversity and African American aspirations.

In September of 2020, two months before the election with Donald John Trump trailing badly in the polls, Trump and his allies were talking up a *Sturm and Drang* if Trump lost. One of his top confidantes and convicted felon Roger Stone said that Trump should declare martial law and not leave the White House if he lost the election. Trump's HHS Assistant Secretary, Michael Caputo, called on Trump militiamen supporters to stock up on ammunition and guns for the impending blood bath on the horizon. He said, “Guerrilla warfare training must be stepped up to prevent Biden from entering the White House and we need to buy up as many guns and munitions as possible right away.”

But, the dreams, hopes and glorious aspirations of the old racist South came crashing down on them when Donald John Trump lost his re-election on November 3rd of 2020. President Donald John Trump became the modern-day

Grand Wizard Nathan Bedford Forrest. His defeat was a devastating blow to their southern, racist and violent way of life.

Trump announced on the night of his resounding defeat by Biden that the election was rigged by mail-in ballots cast by non-US Black and Brown residents and Whites who voted two or three times in battleground states of Pennsylvania, Michigan, Florida, North Carolina and Arizona. With those states voting for Biden, Trump lost the Electoral College in a landslide of 340 to 198. Although no independent monitors of the election found any vote tampering, fraud or over-voting, Trump declared himself the winner on election night and told America that he refuses to leave the White House on January 20, 2021. He declared himself the winner.

Now a constitutional, political, economic, health care and paramilitary crisis has captured the Great American Empire dragging it into the swamp of Trump's presidency.

During the months of November through Christmas, Trump hunkered down in the White House surrounded by fully armed White militia-men from as far away as Wyoming and Oregon and as close as the Eastern Shores of Maryland and Virginia. Men, women and teenagers as young as 16 came by the thousands to DC paid for by Trump's businesses and organized by his son-in-law Jared Kushner and his son, Donald, Jr. Kushner, always impeccably dressed in a dark suit, white shirt and conservative tie, now donned military dress and hunting cameo with an AR-15 hung across his shoulder and a SIG Sauer M-17 handgun strapped to his waist. He wore a cameo baseball hat embossed with words "America is Great!"

Both of Trump's sons also wore military fatigues arming themselves with an array of weaponry, communication equipment and patches of American flags displayed on every corner of their uniforms. Never mind that none of the Trump family members served in the military and looked ridiculous in military fatigues. Each time Trump addressed the media, his son's and Kushner were by his side standing defiantly like sentries with weapons and hand grenades strapped to their waist belts appearing to protect the President.

Trump's wife, Melania, left the White House the day after Trump's loss and settled into their Mara Largo mansion in Florida. Trump won Florida by 5 percentage points, 52-47 with Kanye West receiving 1% of the vote. After spending a few weeks in Mara Largo, Melania moved to Argentina for Thanksgiving where the Trumps have set up their new business operations in Buenos Aires.

Melania moved into an old, historic, newly-renovated grand mansion in the Tortugas Country Club known for very wealthy residents from all over the world including Princes from Saudi Arabia and other Middle Eastern oil countries as well as Russian oligarch billionaires. The country club is known for its perfectly manicured polo fields, mansions surrounded by high gated fences covered with purple, red and white bougainvillea and around the clock armed security everywhere. Several known Nazi collaborators lived there after the collapse of Nazi rule in World War II. Ivanka Trump is setting up her family's businesses there with Melania opening up a fashion house in Buenos Aires. Each of the Trump family members have elaborate cottages on the 22 acre land area around the Trump mansion highly fortified.

As the weather turned cold in December, Trump's Militia-Men, dubbed TM2 Rangers, stood sentry around the White House in 12-hour shifts seven days per week. The Trump operation and very wealthy donors contributed millions of dollars housing the TM2 Rangers in the Trump hotel just blocks from the White House. They lived in 5-Star luxury many of whom had never experienced such a lavish lifestyle coming from White working class communities.

In the hotel, food, drink and service flowed freely keeping spirits high among the protectors of the President — his personal army of mercenaries. Many of them had served numerous tours of military duty in Iraq and Afghanistan and were very well trained in military tactics, strategy, warfare and killing. Avid hunters all, they made clear to the media in interviews that they were there protecting not only the President, but their Second Amendment rights and their way of life. Often they would say they were protecting America's greatness by refusing to allow "Biden's left-wing Socialists, Mexicans and Black Lives Matter" members from invading their communities in the suburbs.

With Trump defiantly refusing to leave the White House on January 20, America was thrown into political, military and constitutional crises. The COVID-19 pandemic only became worse in the cold months after the election. Among the face mask-less TM2, their members contracted COVID-19 with many of them being sent to DC hospitals and several of them dying. George Washington, Georgetown and Howard hospitals made a startling announcement in mid-December stating that they would not take in any TM2 mercenaries suffering from COVID-19 because they willfully and purposely refused to wear face masks while partying in the Trump hotel. Videos showed them drinking and partying every night without face masks. The hospitals said TM2 were risking the lives of their hospital staff who threatened to go on strike if any Trump militia came to the hospital with COVID-19. US Attorney General William Barr sued the hospitals. The case is still working its way through the legal labyrinth.

Trump declared a State of Emergency in DC and initiated Martial Law allowing his own supporters to drive into DC in large F-350 Ford pick-up trucks and SUVs armed with every weapon imaginable.

Thousands of pro-Trump supporters flooded into DC every other day demonstrating their show of force for Trump's defiance. They protested support of Trump on the White House lawns and interiors and across from the White House in Lafayette Square Park. DC police permitted anti-Trump protestors to demonstrate on alternative days to keep the opposing forces separate. Anti-Trump protestors chanted "No justice, no peace", "Black Lives Matter" and "Stop Fascist Trump" while occupying 24-7 Black Lives Matter Plaza near Lafayette Square.

Often protestors from both sides clashed at H and 16th Streets, NW dubbed the DMZ by the media. The intensity of confrontations were turning more and more violent across country.

By the end of December, 8 pro-Trump protestors had been killed in numerous shoot-outs while 36 anti-Trump protestors had been killed, the local DC NAACP office bombed and the MLK memorial was blown up in the middle of the night. That night, four Howard University Black students were killed in the blast while visiting the memorial. Security cameras video tape showed a bomber threw a projectile from behind a wall of MLK quotes at 2:00 AM in the morning. The bomber has not been apprehended. Three students were instantly killed, the fourth died three days later at George Washington Hospital just a few blocks away. Remembrances of the bombing of the Birmingham 16th Street Baptist Church in 1963 by the KKK killing four little girls cried across newspaper front pages for the next two weeks. America seemed to be heading into a Second Civil War.

The Congress stayed in deadlock. The Republicans lost several Senate seats with the Senate locked into a 50-50 tie with Democrats but Trump's Vice President Mike Pence would reliably cast his votes for the Republicans and Trump as the deciding vote in a stale mate.

Battle lines were drawn even more intensely when Trump nominated his choice to fill the Supreme Court seat vacated by the passing of Ruth Bader Ginsburg. The Republican lead Senate ignored its own rule in 2016 to not permit a Supreme Court nominee be voted on during a lame duck session of transition. Around the clock demonstrations at the Supreme Court Building and at every federal courthouse in America turned violent. Some police departments shut down their operations organized by striking police officers urged by their union,

the Fraternal Order of Police. Twelve police were killed in December trying to prevent demonstrators occupying federal courthouses in numerous cities.

The Democrats lost a few seats in the House but they had little power because the Republican Senate thwarted any Democratic solution to the crises. The Trump Supreme Court refused to intervene in a domestic political dispute. The country was locked into a deadly battle becoming even more violent as Inauguration Day approached on January 20 and the President and his supporters refused to leave the White House while hunkering down into a zero-sum equation that could ignite carnage if US authorities tried to take-over the White House.

Throughout America demonstrations for and against Trump intensified in urban centers and rural communities. Police clashed with anti-Trump protestors in every major city with protestors and police alike being killed. Bombings of synagogues, Black churches and ACLU offices were frequent. White men and women flying American and Confederate flags in pick-up truck caravans are a daily occurrence on the nightly news. COVID-19 has claimed over 350,000 lives and unemployment inched up weekly to 20%.

Secret White House tapes revealed that President Trump, VP Pence and their inner circle committed to a plan early on in the pandemic to allow herd immunity to solve the COVID-19 pandemic. That means that they purposely refused to create a mask-wearing, social-distancing and lockdown strategy to stop the virus. Instead, they foresaw herd immunity of 330 million Americans infecting 230 million and killing 2.7 million Americans over the run of the virus. Americans were dying unnecessarily while Trump and Pence knew the horrible extent of the virus's wrath. Most of those dying were Black, Brown and Native American peoples who voted for the Democrats.

It seemed clear to all that the American Empire was collapsing not from an outside adversary but from internal strife fueled by a 400 year obsession with race and racism promulgated by White Supremacy. One author in the summer of 2020 portended the collapse of the United States saying the racism was the "American poison" that would be its death knell. Author Eduardo Porter's book *America Poison: How Racial Hostility Destroyed Our Promise* examines how American racism has destroyed our social compact, eroded America's standing in the world, damaged the lives of every American now coming to a breaking point and a social, economic and political meltdown with Donald John Trump leading the charge.

Still, Trump and his allies and sons stayed holed up in the White House spewing daily invectives about Blacks, Mexicans, Muslims and Marxists trying to take

over the country. Trump is convinced that he and he only can save America from itself. Many of his White House support staff had left the White House with only the US Secret Service remaining on the outside to prevent demonstrators from breaching the fence line while TM2 stood ready to shoot anyone coming close to the White House now known as **Fort Trump on the Potomac**.

America's fate was growing worse as the White House was in lock-down and the Congress in dead-lock. Nearly a third of California has burned with wildfires still out of control and over 2 million people homeless. The pandemic now raging as hot as the wildfires, California's unemployment rate topped 25%. Crime now moved from the urban centers into the suburbs not yet burned out. Everyone was armed in California with the police refusing to patrol streets since most people seemed to have numerous guns and patrolled their own homes and communities with vigilante squads roaming the streets in cars and pick-up trucks.

Hurricanes intensified in Florida and the Gulf Coast. New Orleans, Biloxi, Tampa, Houston and Corpus Christi have stayed flooded since October. The sea levels have risen 3-5 feet with flooding now a permanent fact of life along the coast with millions of people fleeing but with no work and no place to live. Still the pandemic worsens in homeless shelters now occupied by middle class Americans. Over ten million people began migrating North from Southern and South West states as the flooding, heat, tornadoes and endless hurricanes ravaged those states. It was estimated that two million people were living in their cars and trucks.

Climate change is now climate disaster with millions of Americans displaced, homeless, hungry, destitute and very angry. Donald John Trump and Mitch McConnell continue to say climate change is a hoax and the weather will change someday soon. Most Americans think it will change soon, but for the worse.

Still the Republican led South refuses to offer Americans medical relief in the form of advanced Medicare-for-All that the Democratic House passed months ago. Senate Majority Leader McConnell refuses to bring the Democratic led medical relief bill to a vote. McConnell refuses to hold hearings on a new three trillion dollar relief package for the unemployed.

America now is on the verge of becoming a third world country. Rapid lawlessness has come to quiet hamlets in the suburbs, inner cities are dead with shuttered stores, shops and banks, and the Mississippi Valley has been ripped apart with bigger, stronger more destructive tornadoes. Unemployment in those areas is topping 30%.

China, Russia and Middle East states such as Bahrain, the UAE, Egypt and Saudi Arabia have pledged aid in the form of food, medicine and pre-fab shelters. Even Iran and Cuba pledged to send medical equipment and personnel but Trump refused to take their support. The world is looking upon the US as a failed state on the verge of collapse. South Africa, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, and Rwanda offered to take thousands of America Blacks who wanted to repatriate to back to Africa.

The cold weather has come. The skies have darkened earlier each day. The snows are getting more severe and deeper and the cold colder. Homelessness has skyrocketed. As the climate worsens, the poor get hotter in the summer and get colder in the winter. Washington, DC is paralyzed in its response.

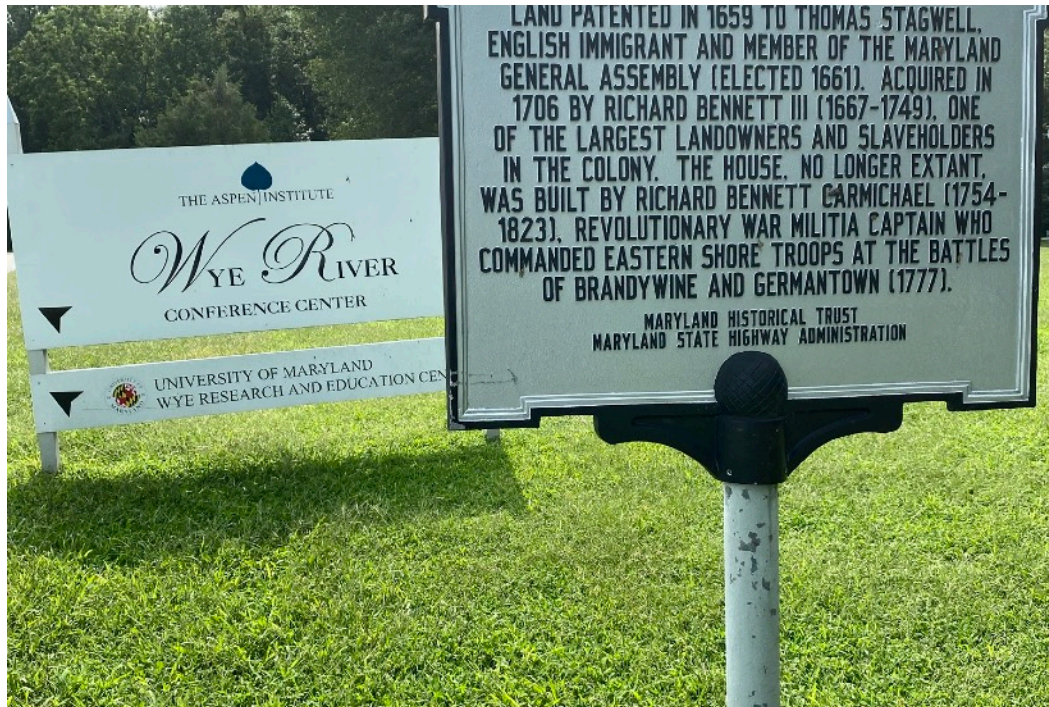
Yet, just after Christmas, in two small airports on the Eastern Shore of Maryland in Queen Anne's and Talbot Counties, a fluttering of activity unseen heretofore was stirring. Private jets were landing every 30 minutes. Helicopters were landing each hour coming in from airports in Baltimore and Washington, DC. A long bevy of Black SUVs and limos were lining up across the airport parking lots with dozens of Maryland State Trooper cars and personnel mobilized. Talbot and Queen Anne's counties sheriff department officers were directing traffic in and around the airports. Something important was afoot.

Between December 27 and January 4, 2020, a quiet group of American scholars, retired military brass, corporate CEOs, Members of Congress and arts, sports and cultural icons arrived to meet at the Aspen Institute on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. They were there to devise and advocate an exit strategy from the rapidly imploding crisis.

The irony of meeting at the Aspen Institute was that it was being held on property that was once owned by some of America's largest slave owners. These American leaders were there to discuss a country torn apart by racism. This poetic twist of fate was not lost on the participants. The setting was appropriate for the dialogue about the crisis leading into a Second American Civil War. The First American Civil War fought over slavery left 750,000 dead. The second one being fought over racism could be worse.

Aspen Institute, a leading retreat for the world's top thinkers, is located far into the flat countryside just an hour outside of Washington, DC and Baltimore. The Institute sits on the sites of the former tobacco plantations of Stagwell and Wye. William Paca, Edward Lloyd, Richard Bennett and Thomas Stagwell enslaved hundreds of people of African descent on these properties for over 200 years. The first Civil War was fought to end slavery on these very lands, but the

second civil war was pending over the fact that the South and White supremacy is still fighting the first civil war. The land on which the Aspen Institute sits is now suffering its own “chords of mystical history”.



The Aspen Institute on former Slave Labor Camps

Ninety of America’s most successful and respected leaders were invited. The gravity of this crisis was such that eighty-seven attended, even under the pressure of COVID-19. Health and safety was paramount, operationalized and respected by all.

COVID-19 medical staff and epidemiologists from John Hopkins University and the University of Maryland Medical School in Baltimore were on site to direct medical safety. Dozens of SEIU members of hospital staffs were there to provide medical assistance and house-cleaning support. MASH-units had been set up on the land by the Maryland National Guard with a State of Emergency in the two counties was ordered by Republican Governor Larry Hogan offering everything the special guests needed to be safe, comfortable and productive. Governor Hogan and the Maryland State Police set up a mobile command center with full housing, hospital and kitchens for the Governor’s top staff and aids to live at the compound for weeks, if necessary. A first-rate mobile military

operation compound led by retired Vietnam War US Rangers was erected in three days.

Something big, very big was happening on Maryland's pristine countryside where deer, rabbits, Osprey, American Bald Eagles and Black Eyed-Susan wild flowers usually have the corn and soybean fields, old oaks, loblollies, rivers and streams to themselves.

One by one, the big black SUVs rolled up to the Aspen Institute Conference Center far out of sight of Washington, DC. But this was not just any typical conference center. This was a space and place that the CIA, FBI and top-secret US officials and Pentagon brass have used for decades as their safe-house for America's secret meetings and personnel. Little Ethan Gonzales, the Cuban refugee that caused an international crisis, was holed-up here. Israeli-Palestinian negotiations have occurred here numerous times. And all manner of US intelligence planning and plotting occur here far from the wandering eyes and yapping tongues of Washington, DC.

They came quietly and they are well known. Security was very heavy.

Familiar one-name personalities like Oprah, LeBron, Common, and Beyonce headlined the arts and cultural elite along with film makers Steven Spielberg, Ken Burns, Ryan Coogler, Stanley Nelson and Ava DuVernay. Military brass included Army and Marine Corps Generals David Petraeus, Colin Powell, Jim Mathis, John Kelly, and Navy Admirals Mike Mullen and Andrew Zinni. UN Ambassador Susan Rice along with former Defense Secretaries Leon Panetta and Chuck Hagel attended. Tech tycoons included Bill Gates, Tim Cook, Ginni Rometty, Tom Steyer, Ted Leonsis, Anne Wojcicki, Amy Hood, Sheryl Sandberg, and Steve Case were there, too.

Some of America's top African American legal minds attended: Eric Holder, Loretta Lynch, Benjamin Crump, Sherrilyn Ifill, Eleanor Holmes Norton, and Deval Patrick as well as former Baltimore mayor Kurt Smoke.

Academics included historians Jon Meacham, Eddie Glaude, David McCullough, Eduardo Porter, Henry Louis Gates, Taylor Branch, Drew Gilpin Faust, Stephen L. Carter, Isabella Wilkerson, Kimberle W. Crenshaw, John H. McWhorter and Jelani Cobb. Financiers included Warren Buffet, David Rubinstein, Mike Bloomberg, Jeff Bezos, and Steve Ballmer. Hollywood's Tom Hanks, Denzel Washington, Will and Jada Pinkett Smith, Danny Glover, and Reese Witherspoon attended as well.

Governors Larry Hogan, Gavin Newsome, Andrew Cuomo and Jay Inslee attended as well as big city mayors like Muriel Bowser, Eric Garcetti, Lori Lightfoot, Mitch Landrieu and Keisha Lance Bottom. There were numerous retired Members of Congress including some current Members who were Republicans and did not want to be identified.

Serena Williams, Colin Kaepernick, Karim Abdul Jabbar and Bill Russell represented American sports. Unfortunately, the MLB has been slow to respond to a worldwide demand for social justice and racial equity. One commentator suggested that the MLB is still locked into its glory days of 1947 with Jackie Robinson Day every year at the ball park. But 2020 is not 1947.

Former Presidents George Bush, Barack (and Michelle) Obama, and Jimmy Carter were present as well as former presidential candidates Andrew Wang, Cory Booker and Jeb Bush. But what seemed to get most people excited about these American giants were the comedians present: Jerry Seinfeld, Chris Rock, Eddie Murphy, Samantha Bee, Michelle Chou, Michael Che and Colin Jost and, of course, Dave Chapelle. A poignant, humorist twist of logic about today's comedy rings true noted Chapelle: "In the past we used to listen to politicians and laugh at comedians. Today, we listen to comedians and laugh at politicians." **So true.**

The billionaires in the group pledged any amount of money necessary to prevent the collapse of the country. They paid for the entire week of meetings including all airfare and transportation, housing, food and drink. Retired US Secret Service leaders, agents and uniformed officers organized the logistics and security.

Never before had such a luminous group of Americans gathered in one center, under one roof for an extended week-long dialogue on what to do to save America. The New Times, Washington Post, CNN, NPR, ABC, CBS, MSNBC, ACJ and LA Times were invited to report only if and when some action items were agreed upon by the illustrious gathering and announced publicly.

After four days of non-stop debate, ideas and suggestions and an array of sophisticated proposals forwarded by the best and the brightest of America, there were no concrete plans to end the strife, heal the land and its people. They were in a deadlock. There seemed no way forward and no way out. America seemed to be heading into a train wreck causing a Second American Civil War.

On the fifth day together, the participants were in their dinner meeting for the evening. Dinner was in the highly coveted *American Eagle Ballroom* that seats

120 people. One never forgets a meal or visit in that ballroom. They were seated in round tables of eight. The ballroom walls are rich-colored cedar woods panels expertly crafted with darkly stained pine wood crown molding. On the walls were portraits of all our past presidents. Low hanging crystal chandeliers with hundreds of softly lit small lights adorn above each table. Table cloths were a rich gold weave of linen with a candelabra in the center. Full service China and wine glasses made for a luxurious meal each evening these elite guests dined among themselves. There was no head table, how could one have a head table with the most respected Americans dining together?



The Aspen Institute's American Eagle Ballroom

Then, on the fifth night with energies running low on ideas and on the wane, one young African American public historian and award-winning writer offered an idea that rocked the group uncomfortably but caught the imagination of them all. His name was Thomas N. Costas. The proposal was simple yet profound. He stood before the gathering during an open dialogue session and said somberly:

To avoid a very costly, bloody, destructive Second America Civil War, which by all measures would collapse the American Empire, we must come to grips that we made a mistake in 1865.

There he gave a long pause glaring intensely at each of his colleagues.

It's time we tell the truth about ourselves and agree that we should become two separate countries and end the experiment of our social compact with such diametrically opposed political and cultural philosophies. In short, we must divide ourselves into the United States of America (USA) and the Confederate States of America (CSA).

Attendees sat stunned at his incredulous words.

His proposal went on to argue that we must come to understand that we have two irreconcilable social, political and cultural philosophies within one body politic and it is tearing us apart. He argued, "Let us decide for the sake of our children and our children's children and the American people, that we can no longer get along and, in the words of Congressman John Lewis, let us separate from one another 'Without anger or apology.' Let us have an amicable divorce."

The room of over 80 of America's top thinkers and doers sat stunningly silent for a long 2-3 minutes. A room full of the most articulate and opinionated Americans sat still, pondering these words and looking around to see what they might perceive others thinking.

Costas did not take a seat but moved gingerly among the tables of celebrities, inviting them into his mind with his stare into their eyes as if he had more to say. He did.

He walked quietly, slowly with an air of super-confidence through the *best and the brightest of America* like a Cheetah walks in the Serengeti surveying his environment for the taking.

Silence ruled.

As he walked to the table with the military brass and two former presidents, he then said in a most somber tone resting his right hand on the shoulder of President Jimmy Carter: "Let me extract words from my most favorite President, present company excluded, that you will recognize: 'With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive to finish the work we are in; to bind the wounds and to

care for him who shall have borne the battle' and now my words, let us agree to part company and to support each other's needs."

He went on...After 349 years of a White supremacist history and culture

based on a false notion that we are one-people, let us admit that a country born of violence, dependent on violence and one that glorifies violence..., why do we think that we can avoid violence if it is baked into our origins and our DNA? Violence is our character and we must rid ourselves of the causes of violence or we shall all perish as fools, so said Dr. King."

"Please let me remind you," he went on, "A month before the election, one of President Trump's top supporters and confidantes, Roger Stone, told the world on a talk radio show that the President should declare Martial Law if he loses the election. In addition, he said Trump needs to stay in office for 12 more years by any means necessary to make America great. That very same week, at a non-face-mask rally in Nevada, Trump was complimenting one of his biggest fundraisers, the founder of the Ultimate Fighting Commission, the UFC, saying that people told him that the UFC would never make it because the sport was too violent. Trump went on to say, 'Too violent? They don't know the American people. We are a violent people.'" The Trump base of support loves their guns, loves shooting animals and people, loves the 2nd Amendment and will do anything to protect their violent, male-toxicity-way-of-life and death. Let us be honest with one another."

"We are now in a situation where if we try to remove the President from the White House on January 20, a violent civil war will be unleashed on American soil. The whole wide world is watching and many of them in glee thinking that the 'chickens have finally come home to roost' in violence-loving America with overtones of the killings of JFK, MLK, Malcolm X and RFK. I do not want two Americas. But I also do not want one America dying from consuming its own poison of racism. Let the South be all it can be. Let the South be its racist-self. But do not let it take down the entire country."

He went on, "No one loves New Orleans and Birmingham and Houston and Atlanta more than me, excluding the present company of those cities' mayors. But I am tired and exhausted and finished with trying to convince the citizens of Louisiana, Georgia, Alabama and Texas that I too, am an American. Let them have their guns and their Confederate flags and their language that offends and cheapens me and my loved ones. We are exhausted after 400 years of trying to be good Americans and the most patriotic Americans only to be shot down by police and seen as 'super-predators!'"

“If we were two separate countries, would I still travel to New Orleans? Yes. Would I still go to Houston? Yes. I just may need to carry my passport if checked at the border.”

“In fact, as a visitor from another country bringing with me money to spend on their economy and helping their revenue base, I just might be treated better than if I lived there. And consider this, if the people in the CSA do not have to fight states in the North with their ideas about gun control and integration, maybe, just maybe, those in the CSA would be less hostile to me and end fighting the first Civil War and our perpetual cultural wars. Maybe we just might get along much better if we are not forced to get along. Let us divorce ourselves into Red states and Blue states. **Let’s plan the Great America Divorce.**”

“I propose we craft a plan to be implemented over a 2-5 year period where Americans who live in Upstate New York or Michigan, Pennsylvania or Wisconsin who wish to live in the Confederate States of America be given every opportunity with US government support to move to the newly formed CSA fully compensated to start a new life in their newly adopted country. And those Americans living in the South or the mid-west or Great Plains states who wish to stay in the USA be given full compensation to move to the USA. And let us welcome those new residents with open arms ‘without anger or apology.’”

The participants began to stir. Colin Powell stood up and was the first to speak, “Why are you giving up on the better side of America? Why not continue to work with our brethren in the South to bring them into a better America? God knows it took me decades in the Army to win them over but eventually I did.”

Before he could answer, Oprah stood to speak; “Colin, why do we have to work so hard just to be accepted as Americans? God knows that if you weren’t you and me me, we could end up like Breonna Taylor or Amaud Arbery.”

A round of applause went up for Oprah’s remarks.

Next stood LeBron James. He spoke very softly saying, “I hate to agree with my friend making this startling suggestion, but I must. Let the Red States ignore reality. Let them laugh at science. Let them sleep with their guns. We in the USA, the Blue States, let us enact laws and policies that will,” and he turned to look at Andrew Wang and nod at him saying, “Guarantee a living wage for all Blue State Americans at \$21 an hour or a guaranteed income, let us pass universal health care, let us guarantee child care and early pre-K education for all and free community college and free college if graduates give three years service to our country. Let us ban handguns and military style weapons, period,

full stop! Let us build a peace economy and stop spending our tax dollars on a war economy. Let's defund violence and refund peace!"

The room boomed with applause.

Next stood up Dave Chapelle, "I support what my brother King James just said. And if I need to be taxed at a higher rate, then so be it." More applause.

Then Tom Hanks raised his hand and said, "Count me in, me too."

Then the billionaires chimed in with "Me2, Me2, and Me2." More applause but louder yet.

Still standing, LeBron then said, "And let's stop training police to be killers and train them to be PEACE OFFICERS, not police officers. Let's make sure our police forces are at least 50% plus women and end the male-toxicity that has festered in our police culture. We need peace officers who respond to calls for help to give help, not make the situation worse." The participants rose to their feet applauding LeBron.

Next up, historian Jon Meacham spoke. "There is plenty of precedent for this kind of separation in history. Do I have to remind us that we have a NC and SC, a North Dakota and a South Dakota and a Virginia and a West Virginia. These separate states came about because genuine Americans chose to separate themselves into different states due to political differences but once they did, they could better work together.

"Of course, there are those failed states that separated but engaged in lengthy and violent hostilities such as North and South Korea, North and South Vietnam, North and South Sudan. In most recent history, let us look at Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia. They dissolved as a result of civil wars and are now ten independent countries such as Bosnia, Croatia, Slovenia, Slovakia and smaller territories doing quite well separately."

"We can learn from these histories. We can learn to separate amicably, without violence and with a commitment to work together just as we do with Canada and Mexico. History teaches us that this is a doable solution to our current crisis and stalemate. I think the question is: do we have the political will to divorce ourselves peacefully and with a vision to cooperate thereafter?"

Then historian Drew Gilpin Faust stood to speak. She said, "I agree with my esteemed colleague of history - Professor Meacham. But there are some big

practical questions, do we turn our back on the people and institutions in Atlanta, Houston and New Orleans and leave them at the mercy of the CSA? What happens to all the HBCUs in the South? What happens to all the majority Black communities and business districts? Do we expect Atlanta to pack up and move to Philadelphia? Do we expect Houston, one of the most diverse cities in America, to just pack-up and move to Chicago? Are we severing our moral imperative graven in stone on the Supreme Court building “Equal Justice for All” and ignoring the essence of the Constitution that all Americans want and deserve “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.” Will people of color, the poor, and immigrants be left at the racist whims of the Confederate States of America? Are we going backward?”

From a back table, rose former AG Eric Holder. “Let me try to answer that critically important question. Nancy Pelosi becomes President on January 20 if Trump and Pence do not vacate the White House, she then is the Commander in Chief and has authority over the military, the National Guard and all federal agencies including the FBI and Justice. Then the CSA will have to negotiate or they get nothing. And what we will negotiate are protections for former USA citizens in those cities for as long if they remain there and while they transition to leave the CSA.

These arguments and dialogues went on and on through the evening to 1:45am in the morning. Wye Conference Center staff were dutifully taking notes and recording everything for history. Nearing the end of an exhausted and extended dinner debate, the gathering decided to retire and meet again for a brunch at 11:00 AM rather than breakfast.

On the next day, an executive summary was presented to the group and a series of recommendations. They included selecting a delegation of seven of the participants to talk to President Trump to negotiate him leaving the White House in exchange for him becoming the president of the CSA. The details of the 2-5 year transition of losing nearly a half of the USA to the CSA would be worked out in negotiations. The seven selected to offer this peaceful solution to the impending civil war would be led by Republic Governor of Maryland Larry Hogan and Beyonce. The other five representatives would be Tom Hanks, Serena Williams, General Colin Powell, David Rubinstein and Mayor Mitch Landrieu.

The solution to avert a violent civil war, remove the President and Vice President from the White House was set. The gathering went back to their rooms to rest for a final evening dinner together.

Further details of the talks between the confab's representatives and the White House were worked out at brunch. Committees were set up by conference staff. A media team was prepared to organize a statement the next day led by LeBron James, Reese Witherspoon and Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton.

On that last night of the confab about 9:00 PM, as their last supper together was coming to a close, two brown colored vans pulled to the front of the conference center marked with colorful flowers painted across the van. In bold, yellow and white script with colorful flowers spread across the lettering, read "Flowers by Emily." Inside the van was a hundred flower arrangements neatly stacked on levels of shelving so not to harm the fresh flowers organized into small bouquets. They were all the same but different in color, species of flowers and design. Each was a gift to the participants. The van drivers began to unload the flowers gently onto a cart wheeling it into the lobby for distribution to the dinner guests as they left the ballroom.

When the first van of flower arrangements were unloaded, the drivers of the vans entered the empty van and slowly drove the van to the corner of the circle in front of the conference center seemingly to park the van out of the way of the waiting black SUV's and limos. The drivers got out of the van, and spoke to each other briefly pointing to a corner of the parking lot. They then re-entered the van and drove toward the parking lot apparently heading to park the van to be out of the way of the waiting transportation. Except they did not stop but kept driving slowly away.

Once they reached a winding country road, the brown van stopped along the woods edge. The drivers exited the van quickly and entered a black sedan with a search light on the side door appearing like an unmarked police car with a man inside wearing a Maryland State Trooper's uniform. This person had been sitting by the road side all day presumably as a Maryland State Police lookout, but was actually part a conspiracy. They entered the sedan and sped off from the Wye Conference Center. As their red taillights disappeared into the dark countryside, a massive explosion shook the earth and rocked the road they drove on and bent the trees and ripped the leaves off the branches all around them. A bright light and flash lit up the sky behind them seen in their rear view mirror and lit up the trees and corn fields for a quick second in front of them.

In the second flower van, in front of the conference center at the entrance of the ballroom, a bomb in that van went off more powerful than the bomb that Timothy McVeigh exploded at the federal building in Oklahoma City in 1995. The bomb was embedded in the floor boards of the van. It was a three ton compact mix of ammonium nitrate fertilizer and fuel oil. The bomb completely

leveled the conference center killing everyone inside in a massive ball of fire, collapsed walls and roof and fired-smoke that sucked the air out of everyone's lungs instantly. Nothing but smoldering rubble, billowing smoke and fires scattered a hundred yards away survived.

Seventy-five miles to the west, Nathan Bedford Forrest lives in the form of Donald John Trump - in the White House.

Are we witnessing before our very eyes the end of the American Empire?

How did we get to this point?

In the last 50 years, as our economic system of predatory capitalism has lower the standard of living for most Americans including the mythical "middle class." The middle class did swell into prosperity after the Second World War fueled by the great American highway system, the proliferation of automobile ownership, the GI Bill and burgeoning suburbs that left out Black Americans. At the same time, official US governmental policies of Jim Crow and redlining disinvested in segregated Black communities which created the modern American ghetto where Black Americans were stuck in a spiral-downward social construct. These blighted communities were targeted by a militarization of police aimed at controlling Black Americans and exploding the school-to-prison pipeline and mass incarceration. From LBJ to Bill Clinton and his wife Hilary running for president in 2016 characterized the Black man as a "super-predator" to be hunted down and locked up. Race was at the center of this equation.

But, just as devastating was, the slow decline of the White middle class that continued to cling to the belief system that capitalism meant freedom and any other system meant communism and an end to their freedom while at the same time the rich were getting richer, the middle class moving down in most social indicators and becoming further and further in debt by the subliminal advertising urge to buy more stuff, bigger cars, bigger homes and bigger backyard grills.

More and more billionaires where being made each year while more poor ended in prison and the middle class deeper in debt. The stock market hit record highs year after year making more and more millionaires. Wealth disparities widened. Today, medium White household wealth is \$171,000, ten times higher than medium Black household wealth at \$17,500. In gentrified urban centers in America like Washington, DC, White household wealth is \$284,000 - 81 times higher than Black household wealth at \$3500. What's wrong with this picture?

By the turn of the 21st Century, American was falling further and further behind in most social health indicators and quality of life indexes. Health care,

education, retirement and savings, social safety nets and happiness indicators were now trailing even some developing countries like Cuba and the Dominican Republic yet further behind than most Western European democracies. As Eduardo Porter says in his new book *American Poison*:

The US is rapidly falling behind other industrial nations in nearly every indicator of social health. Its race problem is largely to blame. Racial animus has stunted the development of nearly every American institution crucial for a healthy society including organized labor, public education and the social safety net. Not only has race hostility infected interactions between black and white Americans but the disease has poisoned relationships between minority groups, fostering an untenable fear and antagonism toward anyone who is the 'other'".

Donald John Trump employed this fearful poison to higher levels in 2016 running for president whipping up racist tropes against the Central Park Five, President Obama's birth history, calling all Mexicans rapists and murders and banning all Muslims from entering the US. In 2015, only 7% of Americans believed that immigration was a problem. After Trump's ranting antics placing it front and center, over 53% began to worry about immigrants in 2017.

In 2016, Trump won 2,584 counties which generated only 36% of America's GDP in the Red States. Hillary Clinton won 472 counties that generated 64% of America's GDP in the Blue States. Says Porter, "This lopsided pattern can be made to fit the view that the 'us' who were left behind by progress voted the smug beneficiaries of America's prosperity out of power." In other words, the racists in the Red Republican states took control using racial animosity to capture power. At the same time, some of the poorest majority White counties in states like West Virginia voted to oust the Obama policies of added health care benefits with the Affordable Care Act because they believed the spewing racial hatred and animosity by Trump. White Americans voted for the racism of Trump only to end their own health care improvements. Does that make any sense?

The counties Trump won in 2020 were all counties who became poorer and poorer under the Trump administration. Why would they vote for Trump if they were worse off than four years ago? Racism. American poison. They hate people of color. Trump feeds their addiction to poison.

It does make sense if racism is what Whites were voting for.

Do we think the above bombing scenario a shocking end? Well, just consider, if White supremacists would bomb a church killing four little girls in Sunday School in Birmingham and then shoot and kill at point-blank nine people

in a Bible study in Charleston, then we know how evilly poisonous racism and White supremacy is.

It's a sickness baked into our DNA. It's an American poison running through our system. Coupled with a religious verve for guns and the 2nd Amendment, it is like Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee leader H. Rap Brown said in 1967, just a few miles south from where the Wye Center in Cambridge, Maryland is located, "Violence is as American as apple pie" and directed at people of color from our founding to today. And like Trump said in 2020, "We Americans love violence." The US has more guns by far than any country in the world. We possess 393,300,00 guns. No country comes even close to those numbers.

Every American was shocked at what happened last night on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. But not all were shocked at the location. The Eastern Shore of Maryland is often dubbed as *Maryland's Mississippi* and its Member of Congress, Andy Harris, is a 100% Trump supporter. The Shore, as we locals like to call it, tried to succeed two times from Maryland to join the Confederacy during the Civil War. For centuries, its old, tobacco-growing, slave-owning elite only began to modernize in the 1950s when the Chesapeake Bay Bridge connected western shore civilization to this old *Slaveocracy* on Maryland's eastern side of the Chesapeake Bay. Major civil rights battles were hard fought on The Shore during the fifties and sixties where five Black Americans had been lynched and are now memorialized in the Peace and Justice Center in Montgomery, Alabama.

The end of the American Empire seems all but done. Virtually everyone within the walls of the Wye Center were killed instantly, including all of the highly talented conference center staff, popular media personalities and reporters, brave police officers and former Secret Service agents volunteering to protect these super-stars and some of the best and brightest medical personnel as well as hard-working, dedicated wait staff, chefs and assistants. The Wye Center was leveled. Smoldering in hatred. All dead.

Several police officers and chauffeurs far enough away from the blast were not killed but blown back by the blast badly injured. Immediately after the blast burned everything as flat at the Delta in Mississippi, 911 calls rang out. The calls were picked-up quickly by the news media in DC and Baltimore routinely monitoring emergency calls. Shock waves rolled across America, and indeed, the world, crying out that America's intellectual, political, and cultural elite were dead, killed, murdered and annihilated by a bomb planted at a dinner meeting where they were attempting to bring peace to the land. Like MLK and RFK, "why do the good always seem to die young?" was a constant refrain by commentators.

That evening on all radio, TV and internet feeds the news of the murders crushed the spirits and outraged tens of millions of people around the world.

The next day, most people did not go to work, if they even had work due to the pandemic and climate disruptions, but sat glued to their TV sets watching analytics of the disastrous bomb site unfold in front of their eyes with report after report on theories about who planted the bomb. Everyone in America had somebody in that conference center that they loved and admired, now dead. The country was in a mournful shock! Anger was seething. Everybody would know forever exactly where they were when they heard the news of the Wye bombing like the Twin Towers on 9-11 or the assassinations of JFK, MLK and RFK. So horrific this crime no one will ever forget - or forgive.

Later that night a woman, from Wise County in southwest Virginia, called the FBI hotline to say that she thought her husband was one of the bombers. She said that days ago her husband and his friends were in the car garage talking about plans to bomb a YMCA in the Maryland countryside. She heard them say the "Y" and she thought YMCA but did not know about the Wye Center until she saw the bombing site on the news. She said she knew that her husband and friends had been drinking and bragging about blowing up anti-Trump-Hollywood-stars and a few days earlier she saw them assembling barrels of liquid fuel oil into a van.

When she heard that her favorite actor Tom Hanks was in the Wye Center and killed in the explosion, she had to tell someone what she knew. She loved Tom Hanks in all of his movies like *Forrest Gump* (Yes, Forrest Gump's mom named him after Nathan Bedford Forrest) and, especially, *Philadelphia* and *Mr. Roger's Neighborhood*. She adored Tom Hanks. She grieved terribly at the news. She thought he was so special to have overcome COVID-19.

That evening, the FBI and Virginia State Police came to her house with search warrants and found what they believed were vats of fuel oil, traces of ammonium nitrate fertilizer, guns, ammunition, Confederate and pro-Trump flags. The manhunt was on for her husband and associates. TV coverage was wall-to-wall, 24-7.

Someone told a CNN reporter, the rumor leaked out, that the bombers were pro-Trump White supremacists in West Virginia harboring Confederate flags similar to the KKK bombers of the four little girls in Birmingham in 1963 and the Confederate flag waving Dylan Roof of the Charleston Nine in 2015. Now they were being associated with Minneapolis police officer Derrick Chauvin who

kneeled on George Floyd's neck lynching him for the world to see what White supremacy in action looked like for a long, long eight minutes and forty-six seconds.

By noon the next day, over a million Americans drove, walked, marched or rood the Metro into DC to confront the White House and their motley band of TM2 Rangers blaming Trump's palace guard for the atrocities. A million or more protestors completely overwhelmed the Trump's White House militia. Not a shot was fired. The TM2 dropped their weapons and ran from the White House area. They, too, were listening to the news and figured out that one of their own bombed America's beloved icons.

The US Secret Service could not, and perhaps did not try to, stop the protestors from breeching the White House perimeter. They entered the White House and dragged Trump and his meager body guards out of the White House and down Pennsylvania Ave. to the US Capitol where DC police, the DC National Guard, Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Democratic Members of Congress waited to receive them. Being pulled along the street with Trump was his blond media mouthpiece, Kayleigh McEnany, whose hair now seemed a bit ruffled and walking lopsided with only one of her high-heeled shoes on her right foot. She, too, defended the White supremacists in Charlottesville in 2017 as "some fine people." As the demonstrators marched them to the west steps of the US Capitol, they chanted "Lock them up! Lock them up!." The US Capitol Police took them into custody, escorted them into paddy-wagons and drove them to police lock-up.

The Trump's were roughed up but not beaten nor hurt. The crowd presented the Trump's to the authorities who promised to give them a fair trial, investigate the bombing and find the dastardly culprits.

Melania and Ivanka were watching on TV from Buenos Aires in their luxurious mansion resting comfortably in a huge air conditioned living room with a raging fireplace crackling as their Latino servants were bringing them the best of Argentinian cuisines of locro, empanadas, asado and mate with their famous arroz con leche and pastelitos desserts. Safe in Argentina from extradition, they were enjoying themselves and their new lifestyle with their bank accounts fully-flushed with millions long since transferred into safe and hidden Argentinian bank accounts. They didn't even think twice about Donald John Trump, Eric and Donald. Jr. They were living in South American luxury.

Throughout America, in small towns and big cities, protests continued and sometimes turned to looting and burning with protestors chanting "No justice,

no peace,” “Black Lives Matter” and “Hang White supremacists, Hang the Trumps!”

Nathan Bedford Forrest has now come home to roost, after all.

This is not the end. It’s just the beginning. Will America collapse or be back to fight another day for peace, justice and a land that lives up to the ideals written, ironically by a slaver, into the US Constitution - “Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness”?

Well..., I’ll go with Thomas Jefferson’s words and his inner sense of decency. I’m the eternal optimist like my mentor Antonio Gramsci who once cautioned, “Have pessimism of the mind, yet optimism of the will.” A daunting maxim for people of color. How else could a people so scorned and degraded for over 350 years rise to overcome White supremacy showing the world the true colors of Black excellence and genius, love, faith, hope and the American way of life?

I’m reminded of scripture in Psalm 30:5 which always gives me solace and inspiration:

*No matter how dark the night,
No matter how severe the storm,
No matter the flow of weeping tears,
If only we hold on to hope and have faith,
Joy will cometh, in the morning.*

Stay tuned to your news dial. And march and vote like your country depends on it.

*“We gonna be alright,
We gonna be alright,
Ya hear me, ya feel me,
We gonna be alright.”*

Kendrick Lamar, 2015

The end is not yet written.

-Bernie Demczuk
GivernyWest on the Choptank
The Eastern Shore of Maryland
September 11, 2020
202.251.1975

