

# Nice Goin', Gigi!: The gov's daily briefings tell it like it is

## Permanent Press

While Phillipe and Jorge have been critical of Governor Gigi Raimondo in the past for her imperious attitude, we must give her tons of credit for how she has handled the coronavirus pandemic here in Little Rhody through her daily press conferences. And while time-consuming, we urge her to continue her daily briefings because they do provide a sense that everything is going to be alright — eventually — and a little bit of hope goes a long way these days.

Gigi has exhibited a deft mix of recognition and gratitude for those on the front lines, with a thinly veiled threat to everyone else of, "Get with the program or we will come to your home or business, smash all the windows and burn it to the ground." (Slight exaggeration, admittedly.) But that "speak softly but carry a big stick" approach is just the ticket for those who are not taking the COVID-19 pandemic precautions seriously.

There is a bizarre sense of third-world life with the use of the National Guard and other government agencies screening anyone getting off a plane, train or bus. P&J have flown into places like Sri Lanka during its civil war, and Indonesia, at any time, where you had better be on best behavior or you will be paying a visit to the local filthy hoosegow for an indeterminate time. This is brought home quite vividly when you see armed guards patrolling the airline terminal, or the route to the airport lined with teenagers with machine guns in pillboxes that conjure up countless war movies. (Although P&J do perversely love the idea that anyone in a car with New York plates is going to be pulled over and grilled. Sorry, folks, but this *our* state.)

So keep those daily press conferences coming, Gigi. It is definitely tough love these days, but it's the only language the public understands.

## Sign of the Times

As effective and compelling as Governor Raimondo's televised briefings have been, it is difficult to watch them and not focus on the sign-language interpreters standing next to her.

Urinal columnist "Pinky" Patinkin did an excellent piece on interpreter Arkady Belozovsky, who remarkably is deaf himself. It showed not only the skills Belozovsky employs, but also the creativity he uses in overcoming this seemingly impossible task.

But for P&J's money, the hardest working man in sign language showbiz is Belozovsky's colleague, whose name we were unable to discover, who is most often employed, and identifiable by his distinctive goatee and ponytail, and puts out an effort of which James Brown would have been proud.

Since many of the press conferences last close to an hour, our ponytailed friend goes through a workout that would kill a normal human being. But it is fascinating trying to identify the signs that correspond to what Gigi is saying. Suffice it to say we are not doing so well in that regard.

So we tip our beret and sombrero to these incredible interpreters, especially since P&J often find it hard enough to speak English intelligently on occasion, never mind sign.

## **Heroes**

With all this COVID-19 horror surrounding us, there are plenty of heroes among those who go out every day to work. Grocery store and pharmacy workers immediately come to mind as well as the truck drivers who bring supplies to everyone. And of course, all the nurses and other health service workers. P&J would also like to single out Dr. Fauci on a national level and here in the Biggest Little, RI's health director, Dr. Nicole Alexander-Scott. They all have served with distinction.