

# Exorcise the Right: Don't make your superior correspondents beg

## As Tears Go By

If there is one thing about the presidential elections in the United States that sets Phillippe and Jorge off like Fourth of July fireworks, it is the fact that today, barely over 50% of our eligible voters have actually voted in our presidential elections. At best this is maddeningly selfish and stupid, and at worst it should be criminal to not take advantage of an opportunity to guide the nation using the basic principal of a democracy and, arguably, our liberties.

To that end, here is a story that P&J have told before in this space, but still should resonate in everyone's soul. It certainly holds a special place in our memory.

Back in the early 2000s, Indonesians were given their first opportunity to vote for their president, among other local offices. Indonesia was then ruled by President Suharto, a soulless dictator who could teach Donald Trump a few tricks about aberrant, greedy behavior that enriched himself and his cronies. The Indonesians called Suharto's system "Kah-Kah-En": Corruption, Collusion and Nepotism. (Say hi Jared and Ivanka Kushner, and Donnie Jr. and Eric Trump.)

A year or two after the Indonesians' first vote, which ousted the abhorrent Suharto, a friend and colleague of Phillippe's from Jakarta came to Rhode Island to work on a project in which they were both involved. During one informal session of chit-chat, the talk turned to politics, with P and another of his American partners.

We told our Indonesian friend that just over 50% of our eligible voters had voted in the last presidential election. This fact was received by a man who had seen 98% of his fellow countrymen and women go to vote for the first time, often under the intimidating presence of Suharto's fully armed stormtroopers. That took more courage than we would hope none of us will ever have to muster, all in the name of the freedom they craved after years of unspeakable cruelty and poverty visited on them by a string of strong-arming martinets.

When we told our friend from Jakarta this, he started laughing. When we didn't join him, we told him in as serious a tone we could muster, that this was no joke, simply a fact. After looking at us in silent disbelief, he began crying. He was saddened to the core by this flagrant ignorance and rebellion against an opportunity that many Americans had fought for – and died for – in an egregious display of arrogance and disregard of the heart of our democracy. This after having proudly watched his fellow Indonesians stand up to gun-toting members of their military who had no qualms, and an impressive track record, of jailing or shooting their fellow citizens if so ordered.

For Phillippe and his American colleague, our friend's tears were a reaction that made them ashamed, embarrassed and deeply wounded, and that it made a man from the opposite side of the world break down and cry because of our lack of appreciation for what we take for granted, while Indonesians had celebrated their chance to have their voices heard and toppled a brutal tin pot authoritarian.

If this sounds overly dramatic, tough shit. And in that angry vein, if you don't vote in this year's election

that may define what our country stands for around the globe for years to come, go fuck yourself. You are nothing less than a traitor to the ideals on which this country was founded, and you are abhorrent to us. Selah.

## **The Not So Great Debate**

Although Phillipe & Jorge already voted, we dutifully watched the second Trump vs. Biden television event on Thursday, October 22. We have a difficult time calling it a debate since we are both old enough to recall the Nixon/Kennedy debates of 1960. While technically not “debates,” at least they were examples of intelligent discourse and well mannered comportment, compared to the World Wrestling Federation-level atmosphere we have come to expect from Trump events, which inevitably bring everyone involved down to the gutter.

Compared to the first meeting, this one was marked by controlled behavior on the part of the Orange Menace. Perhaps some of the improved behavior can be credited to moderator and former local WLNE Channel 6 reporter Kristen Welker, who kept things under control.

One other observation: While Trump is fond of comparing himself favorably to past Republican presidents Abraham Lincoln and Ronald Reagan, your superior correspondents feel a stronger comparison could be made between Trump and veteran game show host, Wink Martindale.

## **Please Stop**

While the “debates” have as much truth in their selling points as anything uttered by Donald Trump, P&J are having their minds numbed by television ads, which seem now to be limited to a handful of products and services: ambulance-chasing lawyers, insurance companies, fast food joints, hygiene products and last, but nowhere near least, pharmaceuticals (which we believe are even more necessary to ingest to be able to suffer watching 90 percent of the shows on TV).

P&J have to stifle screams whenever the obnoxious Flo from Progressive, Limu Emu or “Heavy Hitter” spots run. (A tip of the beret and sombrero to GEICO, which at least has a rolling number of different ads, some of them actually good. But bring back the Hump Day camel spot, pretty please.)

And we can be certain that our parents would have been appalled by ads for toilet paper and especially female products, which help with problems “down there,” not to mention the new ads for crooked penises. “Hey Dad! Whip it out and make sure your Johnson is still straight as an IRS accountant.” Have you no shame? Might P&J suggest that to acknowledge the way this country is heading, the airwaves be filled with more ads for assault rifles and Everclear whiskey, otherwise know as moonshine, which comes in at 90% alcohol (read: 180 proof) and can strip the paint off a Humvee?

So go out and get some quack doctor with a degree from a Mexican medical school to write you scripts for drugs you see on the boob tube, which may have the announced side effect of causing you to die, which we understand to be a health risk, or to which you are allergic, which actually makes P&J laugh out loud, because you need to try the drug before you know if you are allergic to it, and can bypass that death side effect before the drug’s verdict comes in.

Hail, Mammon!