

THREE THINGS: LOADS OF BRICKS, WHITE CHICKS, MADE-UP SCHTICK

[NB: I want to make sure you take note of the
byline. Thanks. /~Rayne]

Especially after last night this one's been
really bugging me so I'll lay it out here first.

~ 3 ~

Why was riot gear more important than personal
protective gear for the nation's health care
system *back in March*? This has bothered the hell
out of me since I looked at the purchase orders
and dates.

31-JAN-2020 – Trump declared a public
health emergency under the Public Health
Service Act

13-MAR-2020 – Trump issued two national
emergency declarations under both the
Stafford Act and the National Emergencies
Act (NEA)

17-MAR-2020 – Federal purchase order from
Veterans Affairs signed for POLICE
PROTECTION EQUIPMENT FOR WASHINGTON D.C. VA
POLICE IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19 OUTBREAK

18-MAR-2020 – Trump invoked emergency
powers via Executive Order under the
Defense Production Act

19-MAR-2020 – Trump named the Federal
Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as the
lead agency in the COVID-19 emergency
response efforts (designation previously
held by the Department of Health and Human
Services (HHS))

19-MAR-2020 – California issued Stay Home
order

21-MAR-2020 – Illinois, New Jersey issued Stay Home orders

22-MAR-2020 – New York, Ohio issued Stay Home orders

23-MAR-2020 – CT, LA, MI, OR, WA issued Stay Home orders

23-MAR-2020 – Federal purchase order from Veterans Affairs signed for POLICE GEAR, DISPOSABLE CUFFS, GAS MASKS, BALLISTIC HELMETS, RIOT GLOVES

06-APR-2020 – FEMA seized orders of N95 masks

16-APR-2020 – FEMA seized orders of N95 masks

21-APR-2020 – FEMA seized orders of N95 masks

Why did the federal government seize private orders of N95 masks in April when it could have been ordering them instead of riot gear in March?

The government clearly had COVID-19 in mind because it's spelled out in the order for POLICE PROTECTION EQUIPMENT entered Tuesday 17-MAR-2020 after the first national emergency declaration – the order uses PRESIDENTIAL ISSUED EMERGENCY DECLARATION, OR A MAJOR DISASTER DECLARATION as its emergency acquisition justification.

But why not order personal protective equipment for health care roles instead?

Why were they planning for riots in March, which is clear from the order for RIOT GLOVES on 23-MAR-2020?

They could predict rioting but not mass deaths from contagion?

Something really smells here.

I'd hate to think the White House used its power to acquire riot gear in order to pull off last night's double-header campaign stunt-voter suppression gig.

Because that's what this POS was.

Hard to imagine any other @POTUS having the guts to walk out of the White House like this: @realDonaldTrump
pic.twitter.com/R9Da6W7Hhb

– Scott Walker (@ScottWalker) June 2, 2020

Still can't wrap my head around the U.S. Park Police and National Guard using tear gas and flash bang grenades on peaceful protesters to clear a path to St. John's Episcopal Church in D.C. last evening so Trump could have an unauthorized photo-op in front of the church.

I don't ever want to hear that Christians support Trump because he protects their religious freedoms when he just crapped all over them, especially if it turns out the White House planned for this months ago instead of working constructively to stem COVID-19.

~ 2 ~

The press has been traumatized by police assaults on them as they covered the protests over the last several days. In my opinion this is deliberate; it keeps the media from investigating what were the triggering events moving police toward violence against peaceful if angry protesters, launching property damage which further triggered police abuse. Protesters repeatedly caught on camera white people, some times in clusters, taking active roles in beginning property damage.

Colonizer nitwit having her Neiman Marxist moment.

It's like exciting vacation for these people. After all the harm they cause, they always go back to the safety of their gentrified neighborhoods, never lifting a finger to help our struggling communities.
pic.twitter.com/LYoaJaSLGQ

– Selena Adera (@Selena_Adera) May 31, 2020

There are videos of black protesters trying to stop white people – too often dressed in black, acting in teams – who were the original actors causing property damage.

A group of white people showed up in Oakland armed with hammers and started destroying shit as people of color looked on confused and asked why they're tearing shit up.

pic.twitter.com/BbptUluzcg

– BlackAzizaNANSi (@Freeyourmindkid) May 30, 2020

...

A group of Black men in Minneapolis attempt to prevent a group of White men from further vandalizing a building, and demands that they apologize for making Black people look bad.

pic.twitter.com/ZlPv9J0uEa

– BlackAzizaNANSi (@Freeyourmindkid) May 31, 2020

They ignore the pleas of black people to stop the damage.

A black woman confronts a two white women who are spray painting BLM on a building and asks them to stop because Black people will be blamed.

pic.twitter.com/tzQnjHRent

– BlackAzizaNANSi (@Freeyourmindkid) May 31, 2020

There are several videos in which piles of bricks are pointed out by black protesters –

bricks where no construction is apparent, left on sidewalks or in the middle of the street. One video shows white persons dressed in black removing barricades around the bricks. An academic noted on Twitter that any images of brick piles documented in Fayetteville, AR were there because brick walkways are constantly under repair. But at least a couple images show bricks piled on asphalt street surface or concrete sidewalk, with no obvious construction or repair work in progress.

Yet another video circulating shows a black-clad white man handing out what is believed to be cash to black persons and pointing them to construction materials for the purposes of a temporary barricade. Wish the person recording the video had asked questions of their subjects.

There are some other disturbing signs about the content shared about white people allegedly involved in the property damage. This one may be a fake – there’s nothing in local news about this person.

This is Olivia Hull, born in Cedar Springs, lives in Detroit with 2 of her kids, took a bus to Gr Rapids with other rioters last night...Supposedly paid \$200 each to riot, given lead pipes and these instructions. " #MakeHerFamous pic.twitter.com/p6MV3fBWj0

– [SafeWord: Apples] (@SafeWordApples)
June 1, 2020

There are claims in the thread about this person I can’t validate because I don’t use Facebook. Something about this is synthetic. Claims made attributing the source of support behind some of these vandals are clearly false and have been debunked.

The police have done themselves no favors, failing to arrest many of these vandals – in some cases simply watching them. Note how black protesters make this white vandal stop and drag

them to police who are watching, doing nothing until forced to do so.

A white agitator begins to take a hammer to the sidewalk and a group of Black Lives Matters protesters detains him and gives him over to law enforcement. Notice how one of the Black men who helped detain him is almost arrested himself. pic.twitter.com/ZkNBaskkTi

– [BlackAzizaNANSi](#)
(@Freeyourmindkid) June 1, 2020

Police have also de-legitimized themselves by failing their duty to protect and serve, instead attacking citizens who are exercising their First Amendment rights.

What @kcpolice did today was UNFORGIVABLE and UNFORGETTABLE pic.twitter.com/WSmVqeSfIE

– shadow clone wesly!*++
(@weslyinfinity) June 1, 2020

Something isn't right here, whatsoever. It looks systemic – rather like COINTELPRO and yet potentially manufactured at another remove – and the media needs to stop licking their wounds and get digging.

The press also needs to ask itself why this was not the face of this week's civil rights protests in the wake of George Floyd's murder-by-cop.

The is Atlanta right now. Worth a million words. #GeorgeFloydprotest pic.twitter.com/08S5X0nvAD

– Joshua Potash (@JoshuaPotash) May 29, 2020

Meanwhile, this man on the left:



continues to work on Trump's and the GOP's agenda:

I want everyone to understand what the Senate is doing right now.

Senators are not responding to COVID-19 or passing critically needed police reform. Instead, @senatemajldr McConnell is holding a vote to confirm Trump's 197th lifetime federal judge. This is still his priority.

pic.twitter.com/h3luPa1Fo2

– Vanita Gupta (@vanitaguptaCR) June 1, 2020

deliberately ignoring this reality.

106,732

U.S. COVID-19 DEATH TOLL, JUNE 2, 2020 - 2:00 PM ET VIA WIKIPEDIA

Nearly a thousand more Americans

have died since yesterday morning.

~ 0 ~

One last thing: if you have time for a reading assignment, I recommend Anne Applebaum's essay in The Atlantic, History Will Judge the Complicit. I'm so pissed off at Trump for making me miss John McCain right now.

This is an open thread. Bring it.

105,746

Apart from having to hide in the bunker this evening, how convenient for you, Bronx Colors user, that the media has been under fire for two days and unable to hold you accountable.

How convenient for you the media and public have changed the subject to this country's original sin, racism.

So convenient it's almost as if the distraction was organized.

So convenient the riot gear purchased by the feds earlier this year may have found a good use, depending on how it was distributed when received.*

What a pity personal protection equipment for the entire American health care system hadn't been ordered at the same time the riot gear was purchased. We'll chalk that up to another one of your gross failings.

The dust will eventually settle on the streets, the tear gas will drift away, the arrested will pay bail and head home.

And the subject will return to your gross failings because they continue to mount every day. We'll grant you that much: your malignant neglect of your role as president to protect and defend the Constitution and the people who live

within its reach is greater than that of any American president in history and grows apace.

~~105,746~~
105,773

U.S. COVID-19 DEATH TOLL, JUNE 1, 2020 - 8:00 AM ET VIA WIKIPEDIA

You owe this many Americans and their surviving family and friends an apology, at a minimum, for having failed so wretchedly handling the COVID-19 pandemic. Nearly all of these deaths could have been avoided had you gotten off your ass and done what was needed in January after China and WHO announced the risk of pandemic.

Being a malignant narcissist, though, I'm sure this will only make you feel like a victim.

You'd be better off staying in your bunker, whether below the White House or on one of your goddamned golfcourses. It would cost this country fewer lives if you spent the rest of your term at one of your resorts, tooling around in a taxpayer-rented golf cart, chasing a little white ball.

* Links to purchase orders:

Order signed 23-MAR-2020, \$25,963.10, for POLICE GEAR, DISPOSABLE CUFFS, GAS MASKS, BALLISTIC HELMETS, RIOT GLOVES

<https://beta.sam.gov/awards/89062523%2BAWARD?key>

words=%09%2036C26220P0825%20&sort=-
relevance&index=&is_active=true&page=1

Order signed 17-MAR-2020, \$63,333.96, for POLICE
PROTECTION EQUIPMENT FOR WASHINGTON D.C. VA
POLICE IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19 OUTBREAK.

[https://beta.sam.gov/awards/89176706%2BAWARD?key
words=%09%2036C24520P0413%20&sort=-
relevance&index=&is_active=true&page=1](https://beta.sam.gov/awards/89176706%2BAWARD?key
words=%09%2036C24520P0413%20&sort=-
relevance&index=&is_active=true&page=1)

*NB: 105,773 – U.S. death toll from COVID-19,
June 1, 2020 8:00 a.m. ET via Wikipedia's
COVID-19 pandemic data page.*

ASSAULTS ON FREE SPEECH AND THE CITIES WE DIDN'T SEE

Last night I thread a series of tweets
documenting law enforcement abuses including
attacks on journalists in different cities
across the country during protests against
police brutality.

I collected more than a half dozen reports from
Minneapolis alone of attacks on journalists from
different news organizations. This number
doesn't represent the entire number of
journalists attacked in that one city.

Those attacked included:

Michael Anthony Adams, journalist, VICE
Tom Aviles, photojournalist, CBS affiliate
WCCO
Jennifer Brooks, columnist, Star Tribune
Julio-Cesar Chavez, cameraman, Reuters and
Rodney Seward, security advisor, Reuters
Carolyn Cole, photographer, Los Angeles
Times
Molly Hennessy-Fiske, journalist Los
Angeles Times

John Marschitz, sound engineer, CBS
(national)
Unidentified team member with Omar Jimenez,
CNN
Unidentified camera person (reported by CNN
but doesn't appear to be on their team)
Nina Svanberg, journalist, Express-Sweden
Linda Tirado, freelance photographer
Ali Velshi, correspondent, MSNBC (and his
team including Morgan Chesky and Richard
Lui)

It's not clear from Jennifer Brooks' tweets from
May 28 that her identity was clear to the police
vehicle indiscriminately spraying tear gas out
of a window toward the crowd.

Linda Tirado lost the sight in her left eye
after being hit with a rubber bullet in the
face.

I don't have any tweets from Louisville KY but
I've read that there was at least one more
incident yesterday involving a member of the
press. If you have anything about this and other
police attacks on media not listed here, please
share in comments.

Los Angeles was at least as bad as Minneapolis
in terms of attacks on journalists.

These aren't random accidents. This is a clear
pattern of behavior.

Law enforcement across the country is attacking
the exercise of the First Amendment.

They aren't doing this relying on qualified
immunity; their attacks on members of the press
are violations of the Constitution where the
identity of the media is clear, where law
enforcement has made zero effort to validate the
identity of the media persons they attacked.

Law enforcement are doing this with qualified
impunity – assumed but not granted by voters.

Ignoring the rule of law which is the foundation
of law enforcement's existence means law
enforcement has de-legitimized itself.

They are criminal gangs when they break the law and fail to protect and serve the public's interest by attacking media which informs the public.

It's absolutely essential that elected officials and the public demand accountability from law enforcement for their attacks on media during protests this week, before law enforcement becomes even more unaccountable for a broader range of failures to protect and serve the public

~ ~ ~

While Twitter has been awash with reports of police abusing protesters and the press – which interestingly failed to stop many white instigators engaging in property damage across the country – there were three cities I noted which did not devolve into riots while observing protests of police brutality.

They were Santa Cruz, California and Flint, Michigan.

I'll let these tweets speak for themselves.

Powerful image of the protest in Santa Cruz this morning. Mayor Justin Cummings and Police Chief Andrew Mills took a knee in solidarity. (□: Shmuel Thaler.)
pic.twitter.com/EQ36VNIKtC

– Heather Knight (@hknightstf) May 30, 2020

Law enforcement's decisions about how to engage with demonstrators can make all the difference.

Flint, Michigan→ The County Sheriff joined a group of largely Black protesters in their march for justice.
#GeorgeFloydProtests
pic.twitter.com/IhJcX0bcFg

– Kristen Clarke (@KristenClarkeJD) May 31, 2020

There weren't reports in my timeline of property damage and rioting in either of these cities last night.

There also weren't reports in these two cities of white agents provocateur escalating tensions by damaging property as there were in every city where police abused protesters.

It'd be nice to know if there is a more direct link between police brutality during protests and the appearance of white agitators.

This is an open thread.

NEGOTIATING A NEW ROUTINE IN THE TIME OF PANDEMIC

My youngest has now emerged from quarantine within quarantine (henceforth QwQ) in our household. They were restricted for two weeks inside our house once they came home from college after having health problems during finals week.

This meant open windows and masks worn during the most mundane conversations – on my part, slapping on a mask before yelling that dinner was ready, and on their part slapping on a mask before picking up their dinner tray outside their door.

I can tell you two weeks of room service, three meals a day and occasional snacks, delivered outside the bedroom door or placed on the deck table outside is no fun for either the cook or the eater.

But now that they've emerged from their confinement suite we have to negotiate a new routine within the household. I've had to remind somebody a couple times they no longer have QwQ

room service.

We also have to negotiate new approaches for an adult child living at home with parents, unable to go about living as young people did before this pandemic forced Stay Home orders.

How does one date when one can't leave the house? How does one conduct one-on-one dialog with a romantic interest while across the room from one's parents?

Awkwardly.

This past Friday was a dinner date. I was warned in advance this was a regular event before QwQ. We'd been discussing options to plan dinner later in the day – the adult child told me I didn't need to plan for them because they were going to have dinner with their romantic partner.

Okay...you may imagine my eyebrows in my hairline.

Apparently these two lovebirds have been cooking together on Friday nights since they can't go to restaurants. This time they can't even meet in person to cook in the same kitchen, but cook together they would.

"Are you going to Zoom a meeting? Will you need a tripod set up in the kitchen?" I'd asked.

These are not exactly the kinds of details for which one designs and builds a kitchen, but here we are, thinking about methods to retrofit my kitchen into a Food TV network set for two.

No extra work needed this time; just a set of headphones with mic and their cell phone along with full use of the kitchen.

In other words, get out of the way, mother.

Not exactly easy since the kitchen is at one end of the family great room and my office is in the middle of the same space. Which means while I am poking around online and moderating comments here, my spawn is cooking away while engaged in discussion with their romantic partner.

The really awkward part: partner can hear me, I can't hear them, and my adult child isn't prefacing questions to me or to their partner so that we can't tell who the question is aimed at before we both answer.

And then after dinner is done and the adult child flees with a prepared plate in one hand and the phone in the other, I'm left with the dirty dishes and other cooking detritus.

As I said, we have to negotiate a new routine within the household. Looks like I need to find something to do every Friday night in the garage, the basement, or the garden. And it looks like the adult child needs to clean the kitchen before taking off for the private part of the date.

~ ~ ~

Another aspect of pandemic life in a multi-generational household I hadn't anticipated: the late night snack attack.

I dozed off while reading in my lounge chair sometime around 11:00 p.m. last evening, rousing in a heart-stopping fashion when someone banged LOUDLY on my front door. Stumbling toward the door I realized I had no mask with me, couldn't open the door safely, flailed around in a groggy state, heart pounding, wondering if the lights in the driveway were the police or some other authority figure.

The lights began to back out of the drive as I turned on the porch lights and opened the door slowly. The vehicle pulled away just as I noticed a fast food bag on my porch.

What the hell? Did I get a neighbor's midnight meal by accident? I looked up and down the street and could see no lights on, no one looking for their – at this point I checked the slip on the bag without touching it – burgers and fries.

The tumblers of awareness clicked into place.

Yelling for my adult child to come down and

handle the fast food delivery was nearly as annoying as being jolted awake. They couldn't hear me with their headphones on while gaming online, requiring yet more pounding on another door.

"Oh – the meal was 45 minutes early, sorry about that," they said. "How do you want me to handle this?" they asked.

"Good gods, you ordered food with packaging you would have to decontaminate and you didn't plan ahead for that?"

Much scowling and hand washing ensued, sprinkled with questions and feedback about the delivery service and tipping and how to handle future food deliveries.

Yes, we have to negotiate yet another new routine within the household.

~ ~ ~

I felt really old after the fire drill of late night food delivery by way of app. It never occurred to me to have french fries delivered to my doorstep.

Sure, I've joked for years now about a business plan for drone-based app-ordered deliveries of chocolate and alcohol and condoms. I didn't imagine we'd still use cars for deliveries like this, or that orders would be so mundane instead of pricier upscale items.

But then I didn't imagine business models relying on a permanent underclass ferrying products instead of flying machines.

I also didn't imagine an adult child of mine would become so inured to such exploitative business models that they saw delivery of a milkshake or burger as entirely normal and acceptable.

Perhaps the profits are greater in the density of a college town and this now-former student had become too accustomed to a different norm at university, especially since friends also worked

for delivery firms. But we're at the edge of suburbia in what many Americans might consider a small town. This shouldn't be the norm without green transportation.

Some of the negotiations we need to have are about the ethics of our expectations both in the time of pandemic and in the years ahead during a new normal.

Imagine as this pandemic pushes us deeper into an economic depression how easy it will be to exploit increasingly desperate people. We're privileged to be able to think about this – we need to use this privilege for good, beginning with greater consciousness about our spending choices and making more donations to local food pantries.

And someone here may be learning how to cook those late night french fries at home, alone or perhaps with their partner or gaming opponents online.

I might even be able to sleep in my armchair through that.

This is an open thread.

**ALL COVID-19 IS LOCAL,
BBQ EDITION**



*Burnt Ends from LC's BBQ in Kansas City
(photo by stu_spivak CC BY-SA 2.0)*

Here in metro KC, our five county area that straddles the MO/KS border and the Missouri River did a relatively good job of shutting down, even in the face of state-level idiocy in both Topeka and Jefferson City. School buildings were closed, large gatherings were cancelled, and when the two states finally caught up and issued state-wide orders, it meant fairly little around here because metro KC had already done much of what was prescribed. It hasn't all been easy, of course, but folks adjusted and life has gone on.

Now, though, things just got real.

From this morning's featured story on the KC Star's website (with emphasis added):

Arthur Bryant's Barbecue lucked out with a hefty contract two months ago, securing 1,200 cases of brisket at a price of \$2.45 per pound. As the pandemic began, meat prices actually dropped and the restaurant snagged another 400 cases at \$1.75 per pound, said owner Jerry Rauschelbach.

He said those purchases mean Arthur Bryant's will be set for the next several months. But they also show how fast the market has moved: brisket was selling for more than \$6 per pound this week, he said.

At that price, menu prices would soar by the time the meat is trimmed, smoked and

served.

“If I didn’t have brisket and I had to pay \$6 a pound, I would take brisket and burnt ends off my menu,” he said.

“There’s just no way I could consciously serve sandwiches at 20 bucks. There’s just no way.”

For the uninitiated, a brisket is a big slab of meat with two parts – the flat and the point. The point takes longer to cook properly, so the two parts are either split and cooked separately, or they are cooked together until the flat is done and then the point goes back into the pit. It has more connective tissue that needs longer time to break down, and when done right you get a dark “bark” on the surface of the meat and some of the most tender and flavorful deliciousness on the inside. They’re generally cut in cubes and served either on a plate or a sandwich and when done right, they are spectacular.

There’s a lot of folklore around BBQ and who invented different styles or cooking methods or what kind of sauce to use, and damn near every little thing about putting meat over a fire. The origin of selling burnt ends is not folklore or in doubt: they were invented at Arthur Bryant’s. The point of the brisket was seen for years as waste when you trimmed and cooked the brisket flat for sandwich slices, and the counterman at Bryant’s would cut the point in chunks and set it up on the counter for customers to nibble on while waiting to get to the front to order their food. (Note: Bryant’s has also been legendary for its lines.) Eventually they realized “Hey, we could sell this stuff!” and so they did. And then so did everyone else in town. [Time suck warning: that link goes to a 30 minute video that will introduce you not just to burnt ends, but to a good chuck of KC’s best BBQ joints as well.]

So I’ll say it again: things are getting real in KC when Arthur Bryant’s is even *contemplating*

having to take burnt ends off the menu.

I do not want to dismiss what's happening in hospitals and prisons and nursing homes. That's as real as real gets. I know a lot of folks in a meatpacking town in southeast Kansas where a cluster of cases has emerged. Things got real there, really quickly, once that hit. What I am saying here is that KC takes its BBQ seriously – as seriously as the pope takes communion – and this nugget about Arthur Bryant's BBQ is a very KC-specific cultural sign of just how deeply this pandemic is hitting. We can deal with closing our school buildings and postponing our April elections until June and even closing our church buildings, but burnt ends going off the menu of Arthur Bryant's (even temporarily) would truly be a sign of the apocalypse.

But if BBQ is the way Kansas City identifies the the apocalypse, it's also how KC identifies hope.

For several years, Jim White has been active in Operation BBQ Relief. which was founded in KC by a bunch of folks in the competition BBQ world. Over the last 9 years, OBR has expanded across the country, and their crews of volunteers have taken their cookers to areas hit by natural disasters, to feed both those hit by the disaster and the emergency workers who come in trying to deal with it. When I sent Jim, Marcy, Bmaz, and some others a link to the KC Star piece, Jim replied with a link to an April 8 press release about OBR and their newest project, Operation Restaurant Relief:

In addition to deploying their trademark effort of providing hot barbecue meals to those affected by natural disasters, Operation BBQ Relief launched a new program called Operation Restaurant Relief with great success last week in Kansas City.

The new initiative revives closed restaurants by utilizing their kitchens to provide free meals to those in need

and those on the front lines. As part of the effort, the restaurants will rehire laid off workers to comply with the program and receive a stipend for their participation from Operation BBQ Relief.

Jim could tell you a lot more about OBR, but he's got a very important matter to attend to at the moment* so unless/until he shows up in the comments, let me direct you to their website at the link above. He did share with me his impression that OBR is doing "pretty amazing work for a group that is populated with folks who lean to the more conservative side of things – sometimes very conservative. They are slowly learning empathy." This sounded familiar, and sure enough, Jim wrote in more depth about this kind of empathy after he worked on a OBR mission in Wilmington, NC.

That's another thing about BBQ. Here in KC, despite having a long and ugly history when it comes to race, BBQ is one of those things that does better when it comes to crossing racial divides, in part because some of the most respected historic BBQ joints around here are African American. Even if someone's favorite 'cue doesn't come from Bryant's or Gates or LC's, these places get a lot of respect. Arthur Bryant's and the original location of the Gates chain are in areas of KC that a fair number of white folk would never dream of entering – but they'll go there happily to get their BBQ fix if that's their favorite. Put it this way: BBQ lovers have very firm opinions about color and argue a lot about color, but they're usually talking about the smoke ring when you cut the meat open or the overall doneness of what you've prepared, not the color of the cook's skin or anyone else's. And when people share a disaster response cooking line with folks who don't look like themselves, it changes the way people see each other – that's the empathy part.

Back in the day, I waited tables and washed dishes, so I know what restaurant life is like from the worker's point of view. If you've got

some money and are looking for a charity out there doing great COVID-19 work on the non-medical front, you could do a lot worse than Operation BBQ Relief and their restaurant relief program.

And if you're a praying kind of person, you might pray that burnt ends do not disappear from the menu of Arthur Bryant's.

Ever.

* Marcy, knowing what happens when BBQ lovers start talking BBQ, interrupted our email discussion before it could really get going, with the observation that this subject "would be a lovely post if any one of you had access to a blog." Since I brought up the subject, I agreed I could write it up. Jim, for his part, begged off: "The BBQ site I hang out on is having a virtual cookoff. We had two weeks to submit an entry and I forgot to load up on interesting stuff to cook and submit. But we got a spaghetti squash in our CSA basket yesterday and I have some chicken breast and sweet peppers around. Gonna roast the squash and a bunch of veggies on the grill with the chicken and then make pasta sauce to go on it with the chicken."

Jim may hold various heretical BBQ notions, but those words above comes from the heart of a true BBQ person. When your plans go awry (or you forget to follow them), you make do with what you've got – and that menu sounds delicious.

MY CORONA

Okay, at nearly 350 Comments, Jim White's excellent post, "PREPARING FOR THE INEVITABLE CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 OUTBREAK", is getting a little long in the comment tooth. So, I am going to add a new post, even if a short one, to allow

continuous commentary on this subject that is of such import and interest.

To set the scene, I have had a touch of walking pneumonia for the last, give or take, 10 days. I finally listened to Mrs. bmaz and went to the doctor early last week and got some prescriptions, most importantly steroids and antibiotics. Things are improving, albeit it slowly.

There is a new wrinkle though! Very late Friday night, actually very early Saturday morning, our daughter flew in and is home now. Why, you ask? Well, about eight days ago, she was in Italy for a week and flew out of Milan (a Level 3 containment area) to return to Boston, where she works. Her employer said "Lol, take two weeks off before coming into work again". So, she came home to visit.

She is asymptomatic to date other than some sniffles and sore throat, which is not uncommon for her generally. No temperature. But she is considering getting tested anyway. Turns out there was literally no real capacity for testing in Arizona until...today. Apparently. The state DHS announced they could start today, but there are no good instructions on how to do it, or if you will get billed thousands of dollars for doing so. It is maddening. The woman who runs the DHS effort here is not bad, this appears to be caused by the lack of competent interaction by the federal government. Will she get tested? We don't know. Should she even worry about it? We don't know that either. And trying to talk to somebody about it is impossible, I can seriously get US Senators and Representatives on the phone easier.

We shall see. Thankfully we have a big enough house that we can mostly keep a distance. But there has to be a better way to respond to this than what the Trump Administration has engendered.

So, for all things Corona, have at it some more. You folks have engaged in marvelous discussion

so far, keep it up.

SUPER BOWL LIV: WHO WILL PARTY WITH THE LOMBARDI

Super Bowl Sunday this year is a special day? How so you ask?

How's this for a calendrical trifecta: Sunday is Super Bowl Sunday. And it's Groundhog Day. And it's a rare eight-digit palindrome when written as 02/02/2020 – the only one of its kind this century.

A palindrome, as you might know, is a sequence that reads the same forward as it does backward.

Apparently the only palindrome in recent memory. But also Groundhog Day too (when will that inanity give way)? If you want to add some other calendar stuff on, 2020 is also a leap year.

We will get to the last NFL game of the season in a minute, but first a couple of quick things.

First, in the middle of the night last night, there was a stunning Women's Final in the Australian Open. Barely 21 year old American Sophia Kenin, who slayed media darling Coco Gauff in the fourth round, and then world number one Ash Barty in the semi-finals, in straight sets, was also victorious over two time Grand Slam champion Garbine Muguruza. And she did it with quite a bit of aplomb. Lost the first set, and then took over. Kenin may be around a while, get used to the name. And, if you can catch a replay of the match, do it. The announcers universally thought a star was being born, and they might well be right. It was something.

While Kenin was a breath of fresh air early this morning (the Aussies are in a far different time zone), last night was the first Lakers game after the tragic death of Kobe Bryant, his daughter Gigi, John Altobelli, Keri Altobelli and Alyssa Altobelli, Christina Mauser, Sarah Chester and Payton Chester and pilot Ara Zobayan. The Staples Center was purple and blue, and, given the obvious emotional difficulty, it was all beautiful. LA and the Lakers got it right. The videos are out there, take a look. The tributes, music, and sometimes combination (the cello guy during the video tribute was spectacular).

Okay, on to the Super Bowl we go. There are, as always, a lot of weird "proposition bets". I don't really get into that, but here are a bunch of, um, interesting ones. The current overall Vegas line is vacillating between 1 – 1.5 points, with that historically slim line in favor of Kansas City.

So, what's the deal? Lol, I dunno. But, in the long run, balance and defense wins. KC has the more explosive offense, but that is partially because they have had to rely on it, and Mahomes, so often to climb out of holes. On the other hand, they have been able to do so, and especially impressively so in the playoffs. The 49ers are different though. The SF defense starts with that they basically only rush the front four to create the havoc they do. Nick Bosa, Dee Ford, DeForest Buckner and Arik Armstead are relentless and really good. and with Richard Sherman and Mosely patrolling the secondary, the Niners are extremely solid.

The Chfs, however, while having a winning defense are nowhere near as consistently solid as SF. Frank Clark is not a beloved character in the NFL, but he is extremely good as a pressure point. Chris Jones and Tyrann Mathieu are first team all pro worthy types in the secondary. Honeybadger was here in Arizona his first few years and, when healthy, which he is now, he is a big play game changer of special talent. And

as good of a player as he really is, he has grown up to be an even better person. This is a great piece in the WaPo on Tyrann:

For all the new plans and pieces, Kansas City's defensive transformation began with the player teammates still love to call the Honey Badger. Mathieu is a storm of calculated mayhem, a worker bee who wakes up at 5:45 each morning and a heat-seeking missile who can line up or strike from anywhere on the field. He has changed the Chiefs in elemental ways with his all-pro performance and his mere presence.

"He's a special person," Chiefs General Manager Brett Veach said. "It's really hard to explain the power someone like that has unless you're actually in the building. . . . You have to get talent. You have to build a deep roster. You need corners, and you need rushers. Until you get a catalyst, it's hard. You need that one guy that will make everything go. He's certainly that guy. To have him on our team has meant everything to us."

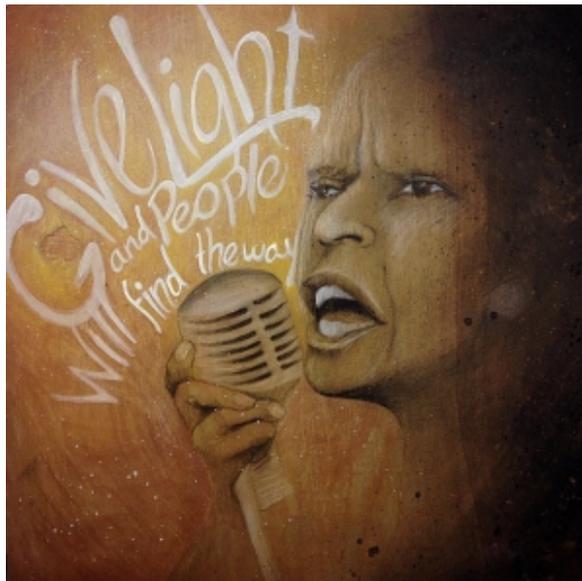
Again, what do I think? First off, what I think is beyond irrelevant anywhere but here. Secondly, I am a dope. So, given those caveats, here we go. Honeybadger can sit and snipe on Jimmy G enough, or the Niners O-Line gives Jimmy G the time that San Francisco's D-Line does not afford Mahomes. I have no real idea, but with betting no real money, I think...think...The balance on the Niners is better and wins. No, I do not feel good about that pick.

As a parting note, today's music is Heart playing Stairway To Heaven at the Kennedy Center for the remaining members of Zep, assorted dignitaries and President and First Lady Barack and Michelle Obama. To say it is stunning is a gigantic understatement. I had never seen it before last night, when I stumbled on it by

accident. WOW. Shared it with numerous friends and the universal reaction was still WOW. It is that good, especially when the choir/chorale kicks in. It is soooo good. Check it out. I was almost lifetime tired of Stairway to Heaven before I saw this, and was immediately mesmerized. Yeah, it is that incredible. And if you want full screen, just click to embiggen it.

Rock and roll, and enjoy the Super Bowl!

JOHN LEWIS WAS NOT ALWAYS OLD



“Ode to Ella Baker” by Lisa McLymont
(Attribution-NoDerivs 2.0 Generic (CC BY-ND 2.0))

A few weeks ago, John Lewis put out a press release announcing to all that he is undergoing treatment for stage 4 pancreatic cancer. He later sent out a tweet, lifting up one of the best lines in that press statement:

I have been in some kind of fight – for freedom, equality, basic human rights – for nearly my entire life. I have never

faced a fight quite like the one I have now.

Lewis' summary of his life is not hyperbole. He is the last living member of the Big Six, the speakers at the 1963 March on Washington for civil rights, and now is a senior member of Congress. But it's important to remember that John Lewis was not always old. He was just 23 when he spoke on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial as the president of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) – an organization he co-founded three years earlier at age 20 – and at 21 was one of the original Freedom Riders.

Let me repeat it again: John Lewis was not always old. He has always been a fighter for civil rights, but he has not always been old.

In 2005, historian David McCullough noted how we as a society perceive great leaders in a speech about the Founders:

We tend to see them—Adams, Jefferson, Thomas Paine, Benjamin Rush, George Washington—as figures in a costume pageant; that is often the way they're portrayed. And we tend to see them as much older than they were because we're seeing them in the portraits by Gilbert Stuart and others when they were truly the Founding Fathers—when they were president or chief justice of the Supreme Court and their hair, if it hadn't turned white, was powdered white. We see the awkward teeth. We see the elder statesmen.

At the time of the Revolution, they were all young. It was a young man's—young woman's cause. George Washington took command of the Continental Army in the summer of 1775 at the age of 43. He was the oldest of them. Adams was 40. Jefferson was all of 33 when he wrote the Declaration of Independence.

Benjamin Rush—who was the leader of the antislavery movement at the time, who introduced the elective system into higher education in this country, who was the first to urge the humane treatment of patients in mental hospitals—was 30 years old when he signed the Declaration of Independence. Furthermore, none of them had any prior experience in revolutions; they weren't experienced revolutionaries who'd come in to take part in this biggest of all events. They were winging it. They were improvising.

This is not unique to the American Founders. Historians of social change who pay attention to the leaders of these movements often see the same thing. For example . . .

- When Martin Luther King, Jr. led the Montgomery Bus boycott in 1955, he was just shy of 25 years old. When he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, he was 35, and when he was assassinated on the balcony of a Memphis hotel, he was only 39.
- When Thurgood Marshall argued on behalf of racial justice in *Shelley v. Kramer* before SCOTUS in 1948 – six years before he did the same in *Brown v. Board of Education* – Marshall was 40 years old. He won both cases, the former striking down restricted housing covenants and the latter doing away with the

pernicious “separate but equal” doctrine that was at the heart of Jim Crow.

- When Walter Sisulu, Oliver Tambo, and Nelson Mandela co-founded the ANC Youth League in 1944, they were 31, 26, and 25 years old respectively.
- When Dr. Paul Volberding and nurse Cliff Morrison pushed against incredible medical and social prejudices to organize the nation’s first AIDS unit at San Francisco General Hospital in 1983 as the AIDS crisis continued to spiral out of control, they were 33 and 31 respectively.
- When Gavin Newsom (then mayor of San Francisco) ordered the San Francisco clerk’s office to issue marriage licenses for couples regardless of the genders involved on February 14, 2004, he was 36.
- When Upton Sinclair published *The Jungle*, exposing the ugly underside of the meatpacking industry and spurring social change with regard government oversight and regulation of food and drugs, he was 28.
- When anti-lynching crusader and journalist Ida B. Wells

published *Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its Phases* in 1892, she was 30.

- When Elizabeth Cady Stanton co-organized the Seneca Falls Conference on Women's Rights in 1848, she was 32.

It's not too much of a stretch to say that the leaders of social change movements are more likely to be young than to be old.

After Lewis made his announcement, Marcy tweeted out her reactions to the news, including this:

Say a prayer—or whatever you do instead—to give John Lewis strength for this fight. But also commit to raise up a young moral leader who has inspired you. We can't rely on 80 and 90 year olds to lead us in the troubled days going forward.

I've been chewing on that tweet for the better part of a month.

What immediately went through my head upon reading that tweet was the name Ella Baker, one of the less well-known leaders in the civil rights movement. In a story for the Tavis Smiley Show on PRI about the founding of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), John Lewis tells of Ella's powerful role:

Martin Luther King, Jr. was so impressed by the actions of the students [and their non-violent lunchcounter sit-ins], says Lewis, that he asked a young woman by the name of Ella Baker to organize a conference, inviting students from 58 colleges and universities.

"More than 300 people showed up at Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina, where SNCC was born," said Lewis. "It was Easter weekend, 1960."

Baker, considered by many as an unsung hero of the civil rights movement, was a “brilliant” radical who spurred on the creation of SNCC as an independent organization, says Lewis.

“She was a fiery speaker, and she would tell us to ‘organize, organize; agitate, agitate! Do what you think is right. Go for it!’ Dr. King wanted her to make SNCC the youth arm of his organization. But Ella Baker said we should be independent ... and have our own organization.”

While the SNCC was deeply inspired by Dr. King and the SCLC, or the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the students in the organization didn’t always see eye-to-eye with SCLC leadership.

“We had a lot of young women, and SNCC didn’t like the idea of the male chauvinism that existed in the SCLC,” says Lewis. “The SCLC was dominated by primarily black Baptist Ministers. And these young women did all the work and they had been the head of their local organizations.”

I’m not sure where Smiley got the phrasing about Ella Baker being “a young woman” when this all happened, as she was 55 years old in 1960 and King was only 30. But Ella did exactly what Marcy was talking about in that tweet. When she saw an opening to act, she helped raise up hundreds of young moral leaders, and she helped them most by encouraging them to act out of their own gifts and strengths and not by tying themselves to the approaches of older leaders.

Which brings me to Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. In the days following the massacre at MSD, the students there took matters into their own hands, rather than waiting for their elders to act. These are kids who grew up entirely in

the post-Columbine High School shooting world, where active shooter drills were a regular part of school life. (I'm old: the only drills we had were "duck and cover" for a nuclear attack and "head for the hallway or basement" for tornadoes.) With each new shooting, they saw the same script written by the elders play out each time – thoughts and prayers for the victims, debate over gun laws, and nothing changes. They saw it happen around the Pulse nightclub shooting in Orlando a year and a half earlier. Talk, talk, talk and nothing changes.

This time, it wasn't the elders running the show, however. It was Emma Gonzales, live on every cable network, who called BS on the NRA and the legislators who were intimidated by them. It was Cameron Kasky who gathered and organized his classmates to make this a movement. It was David Hogg and a dozen others, a hundred others, who did interviews, organized demonstrations, and the 1001 other things to give their work power. They reached out to other teens affected by gun violence, especially teens of color, to amplify the common message demanding change. They became a force to be reckoned with, not only in Tallahassee where they actually got gun laws changed, but in DC and around the country.

Behind these students, though, were their teachers. These are the folks who nourished the gifts of research and organization, of public speaking and political organizing in these young people. There were parents and other adults, who took their cues from the teens and did the things that you need someone over 21 to do, like sign rental bus agreements, for example. It is clear, though, that the moral leaders are the teens, with the elders in supporting roles.

Then there's Greta Thunberg, relentlessly pushing the elders in seats of power to take action on the climate emergency gripping our planet. Her messages are always a version of "This is not about me and my knowledge; it's about the scientists and their knowledge – and

they say we are going to burn the planet down if things don't change fast." She points to data, and forces her hearers to look at it. She may have gotten attention early on because of her youth ("O look at that cute little girl, doing cute little things and trying to get politicians to act"), but being a cute little girl doing cute little things doesn't get you seat at the table at Davos. No, she got her seat at the tables of the powerful by being the young person who said over and over and over again that the emperors, the presidents, the corporate titans, and the powers of the planet aren't wearing any clothes.

Just like young John Lewis.

The other part of Greta's "It's not about me" messaging is that she has sought out and nurtured other young people around the world, who have been organizing in their communities while she was at work in Sweden. She met Lakota activist Tokata Iron Eyes, who invited her to Standing Rock to see the work they are doing. Thunberg not only accepted, but eagerly lent her support to their work, not least of which came because of her larger media profile. When she spoke at Davos, it was as part of a panel of other young climate activists from Puerto Rico, southern Africa, and Canada.

Like the MSD students, Greta has passion for her activism, a data-driven focus that she hope can break through the cynicism and self-centeredness of world leaders, and a skill at building alliances with other like minded folks. And like the MSD students, people with power are listening – and are beginning to want to hear more. While Steve Mnuchen (following the lead of Donald Trump) mocked Thunberg for her youth, another world leader had a different reaction:

Angela Merkel, though, spoke warmly about the work of the new generation of climate activists.

"The impatience of our young people is something that we should tap," the

German chancellor said. In a special address to the WEF, Merkel called for more international cooperation to tackle climate change.

“I am totally convinced that the price of inaction will be far higher than the price of action,” she declared.

Over the last month, I’ve been looking at and interacting with the teenagers in my life a little bit differently, a little more intentionally, thanks in part to Marcy’s tweet. You see, one of those teens may just be another John Lewis, and I’d dearly love to be another Ella Baker.

CHRISTMAS EVE REMEMBRANCES

Yeargh, I bollixed this up. Meant to post this several hours ago, and told Marcy I was going to, but instead had a giant nap on the couch with an overly large puppy right beside.

We deal with a lot of hard subjects here on this blog, and do so daily, if not sometimes hourly. The people, you, are what makes it worth it. Thank you. Every year we are separated from some. Sometimes we know, sometimes we only know because they are conspicuously no longer around.

This year, one we know is gone is John Casper (early on known as Boo Radley). Another soul we knew from not just Emptywheel, but even before. There are undoubtedly others that we are not so aware of, but who have filled our comments with intellect and passion over time.

So, on this Christmas Eve, thank you to all here, from not just me, but Marcy, Jim White,

Rayne, Ed Walker, Roving Reporter Rosalind and Quinn Norton. And thank you to those that have been here and left us. There are too many of the latter. This time of remembrance started in 2011 with our fellow contributor, Mary Beth Perdue, who literally passed on a long ago Christmas Eve. It has kind of been a tradition to go back to that as an honorarium to all friends gone, and so here we go:

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all are. Things often get a tad scarce this time of year, but we would like to say Hi, Happy Holidays, Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, Mele Kalikimaka and any other greeting applicable. Thank you for being here with us.

It has been a couple of years...I think...since we have done the remembrance section at this time of year. Many of you are old-timers going back to when we were at TNH, even before the FDL years, but so many are new and really do not know the history. We have been at this a good long while now. The years float by, but the people are what stick.

In that regard, I want to return to thanking those that contributed much, but are now gone. If you are new here, you never would have known the names of Mary, Bob Schacht, Mad Dog, Free Patriot, Skdadl and a host of others that were

not only our blog friends, but that we often met and knew in real life too.

They are gone, but not forgotten heading into this Christmas Eve. But this always, at least for me, Marcy too, comes back into focus on this date because of our friend and beloved colleague, Mary Perdue. Mary passed away on Christmas Eve 2011. She, like all the others, was the best of what this blog had, and has, to offer. So, in memory of all who are gone, but never forgotten, here is the original *in memorium* for Mary.

You all, each and every one, rock. Thank you for being here and supporting us. Happy Holidays everyone:

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The internet is a strange and wonderful thing. Just about everyone and everything in the world is on it, even though it is nothing but data in the form of binary computer code traversing by random electrons. Yet thought is crystalized, and friendships born and nurtured, through commonality of interest and purpose. And so it is here at Emptywheel, where many of us have been together since the days at The Next Hurrah, through years at Firedoglake, and now at our new home. Just because it germinates via the net does nothing to detract from the sense of community, friendship and admiration for each other gained over time.



With profound sadness, I report we have lost a true friend, and one of our longest tenured contributors, Mary. Mary Beth Perdue left us on Christmas Eve, December 24, 2011.

Mary Beth Perdue, 52, of Robards, KY, formally of Newburgh, passed away at her home.

She graduated Order of Coif from

University of Kentucky Law School and from University of Evansville with an accounting degree. She was a member of the Indiana Bar Association. She was in house counsel at Mid-Central Land Services, Inc. and served as an attorney for firms in Indiana and Kentucky. She owned and operated the Horse and Hound (a pet supply store) in Newburgh. Mary was a lover of all animals with a special place in her heart for horses, dogs and cats. She was involved in numerous equestrian sports and organizations.

Here at Emptywheel, she was just Mary; and she was so much more than a simple obituary can convey. She was funny, kind, and, most of all, razor sharp in analysis of extremely complex issues surrounding torture, indefinite detention, international human rights, illegal wiretapping and executive branch overreach. Mary had a steel trap index in her mind for even obscure torture and rendition cases and facts. To the day she died, Mary was one of the very few people commenting in America that remembered, and would never miss a chance to point out, how the children and extended families of Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and Aafia Siddiqui were used and/or disappeared by the US as pawns in our immoral torture in the name of the so called "war on terror". Mary's dissection of Jack Goldsmith terrorist detention policy, complete with with a comparison to the Ox Bow Incident, was a thing of passion and beauty.

One of Mary's favorite, and most important, hobby horses was the seminal case of *Ex Parte Milligan*, on which she beat the drum loudly long before the critical 2008 decision in *Boumediene v. Bush* and the 2009 release of the torture memos. She was, as usual, right. Here she is taking John Yoo apart at the seams over his intellectual duplicity regarding *Ex Parte Milligan*. And then there was Mary's three part opus on the history and meaning of *Ex Parte*

Milligan (Parts One, Two and Three), which is one of the best primers anywhere on the case that has finally come back into renewed significance in the critical issues of the war on terror. Mary played a part in keeping that significance alive, and in the discussion mix, until it took hold again.

Mary did not talk much about her real life family and work, and as another still practicing attorney, I can fully understand the maintenance of that separation. It is quite likely, like me, that her friends and family had little idea of the true depth and importance of her knowledge and dedication to the interests she expressed here, both in front page posts authored, and in her consistent critical contribution in the discussion comments. But, make no mistake, Mary was not just an invaluable contributor, and affected not just me and Marcy, but key players in the larger discussion. I know for a fact, because I talk to the different people and discussed it with them; Mary's posts and comments were seen and known by actors from the ACLU, to EFF, to other think tanks and attorneys in the field. She left a mark.

As I said at the start of this post, the internet is a curious, if compelling and wonderful place; in all the furiously teeming milieu of people and issues, it is easy for one voice to not be missed for a brief time. All of us take time away every now and then, and Mary was no exception; often being scarce for a period due to pressing duties with work and her beloved horses and land.

I had not talked to Mary since a few days before Christmas. With the rush of the holidays, and a busy work schedule for me in January I have been a tad scarce myself and I had not particularly noticed Mary's absence. A little over a week ago, I emailed her some irresistibly cute pictures of the one of a kind racehorse Rachel Alexandra and her new foal. Mary loved Rachel Alexandra. Realizing she had not responded to that catnip, I checked yesterday and found the

terrible news. There are a lot of things Mary might be too busy with real life to respond to, but not that. And so life became a little less full and enjoyable. Mary's family has indicated:

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to a local humane society or other animal rescue.

And that would indeed be Mary, and fit her, to a tee. Here is a secure link to do so for the national Humane Society; but by all means, if so inclined, give to your local chapter and let them know it is for Mary.

Emptywheel will not be the same without Mary Beth Perdue, but her work and memory will live in our hearts, minds and archives as a testament to who and what she was and stood for. We shall close with the picture Mary never got the opportunity to see, but would have been the epitome of the horses, animals and children which she truly loved, Rachel Alexandra and foal.

Vaya con dios Mary, you will be missed.



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Cheers to all, and to all a good night and wonderful Christmas Day.

A BILLIONAIRE'S OPPORTUNITY COST

It's a holiday week – posts here may be slower than usual. Our team of contributors are traveling or preparing for guests and feasts, or just plain in need of a break after the last two weeks.

Here's something to talk about to launch this open thread: Michael Bloomberg and the opportunity cost of running for the presidency.

Many Democrats are angry with yet another billionaire popping into the primary race. If they sincerely cared about this country's welfare they would do better things with their money, like fund media outlets so they don't become husks siphoned dry by vampiric private equity firms (motives of which may not merely be sucking down loose cash).

But this is a problem Democrats have that Republicans don't – they don't think like people born to capital or who've acquired the separation from society wealth provides.

Take Michael Bloomberg (please, bah-doom-tish!). He already owns a media company. He doesn't believe he owes the media ecosystem anything further if it doesn't have his name on it and make a butt load of cash.

He's worth \$54 billion dollars, though, and *not* running for office has a steep opportunity cost.

Investopedia defines opportunity cost as “the benefit that is missed or given up when an investor, individual or business chooses one alternative over another.”

For Bloomberg, the risk of losing as much as 2% of his accumulated capital to a wealth tax must have looked so likely he felt he had to throw his name in the ring.

The \$37 million he spent this past week on advertising was chump change. You see, if Bloomberg was liquid and invested in guaranteed income funds paying 3%, he'd make \$1.62 billion a year just sitting there breathing.

He could spend 2% of his wealth – \$1.08 billion – over the course of the next year leading up to the election, a burn rate of around \$3.08 million a day, and possibly shape tax policy dialog on the left and the right while potentially winning the election against Trump.

And then he'd be able to influence tax policy to his benefit, making up for the money he spent campaigning.

Of course Bloomberg would throw his hat in the ring. It's the same reason Starbucks' Howard Schultz got into the ring.

What it tells me is that 2% isn't a steep enough rate to tax these super wealthy assholes into thinking about something besides protecting their own assets.

This is an open thread. Feel free to share your favorite Thanksgiving Day recipes while you're bashing billionaires.