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In honor of black trans women

by Rev. Irene Monroe
contributing writer

Transgender rights have been on the chopping block since the Trump 2.0 administration took office. Push-back, however, has been equally fierce across the country in Trump's attempt to erase our trans and non-binary communities from the social fabric of American life. Our trans and non-binary communities have clapped back in political and artistic ways.

For 2025 Women's History Month, I honor two black transwomen- Rita Hester and Giselle Kristina Byrd. I honor Hester for her life and legacy and Byrd for her historic appointment.

On November 20, 2024, the 25th Anniversary of Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR), The Theater Offensive (TTO) received a special citation from City Councilor

At-Large Julia Mejia.

"The Theater of Offensive in Recognition of uplifting LGBTQ+ voices and fostering inclusion through the power of art since 1989, creating liberating works by, for, and about queer and trans people of color, dismantling oppression and inspiring communities...the Boston Council extends its best wishes for continued success," it states.

"This is historic," I told Giselle Byrd. The award, however, came as a total surprise to Byrd. "It was overwhelming, to be honest," Byrd told me, the new executive director at TTO. "To receive this recognition from Councilor Mejia is a reminder that queer and trans artists are not

see MONROE, page 4



New Family Equality CEO Wants to "Double Down" on Impact for LGBTQ+ Families

by Dana Rudolph | drudolph@mombian.com
contributing writer

For Darra Gordon, her new role as CEO of Family Equality, the national organization for LGBTQ+ families, is "more of a calling than a choice." She and her wife Nicole are raising three children, one of whom identifies as nonbinary. The work of Family Equality is therefore "incredibly, deeply personal to me," she said in an interview.

"I love being a parent," she shared. "It was always a lifelong dream. I did not envision a world ever where I was not. I'm so grateful and I feel so privileged to be able to have formed a family and be able to raise a fam-

see MOMBIAN, page 2



Darra Gordon. Photo by Liz Farrell Photography.



The madness of King Don What comes after the straitjacket?

by Richard J. Rosendall | rrosendall@starpower.net
contributing writer

Some comics are known for their transgressive humor. With Donald Trump we have a transgressive presidency. He violates another law or norm nearly every time he opens his mouth.

I have toyed for years with writing a piece called "We deserve a better class of mobster," but I didn't want to encourage anyone. My penchant for wisecracks aside, I'm not sure I want a better mobster.

Trump thinks he is a law unto himself. The very laws of the universe, he seems convinced, alter themselves at his whim.

He signed an executive order declaring English America's official language, as if it's a miracle we survived 249 years without such a directive. I live in the nation's capital, where foreign languages are overheard all the time, and I never have any problem communicating with people. I joked with Cesar, the bilingual manager at my local McDonald's, that if the feds come to arrest him, I will interpose myself between him and them.

Let's just say: *El presidente está loco.*

Trump is the perfect social media

see ROSENDALL, page 7

Judge hopes to rule this week on Trump order banning transgender people from military service

By Michael Kunzelman
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A federal judge said Wednesday that she hopes to rule this week on whether to block President Donald Trump's administration from banning transgender people

from serving in the U.S. military.

At the end of a daylong hearing in Washington, D.C., U.S. District Judge Ana Reyes said it is her "strong hope" that she will issue a decision next Tuesday or Wednesday. Reyes acknowledged that her ruling probably won't be the "last stop in this train's journey,"

given the near-certainty of an appeal.

"I just have to do the best I can with the evidence in front of me," she said.

Reyes spent most of Wednesday's hearing peppering a government attorney with questions about a new

see TRANS MILITARY, page 3

NOTICE FROM THE CITY OF BOSTON

City Council Declares Boston a Sanctuary City for Transgender and LGBTQIA2s+ Residents

The Council adopted a resolution declaring Boston a sanctuary city for transgender individuals and all members of the LGBTQIA2s+ community. The resolution passed, securing a 12-1

vote.

The move reinforces Boston's commitment to being a safe and welcoming city for all, regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation. As home to the

largest LGBTQIA2s+ population in Massachusetts and the 10th largest in the United States, Boston continues to

see SANCTUARY, page 3



"Thank you, Madame Chair."

Representative Sarah McBride's response when the Chair for the House Foreign Affairs subcommittee, Keith Self, referred to her as "Representative from Delaware Mr. McBride." Sarah may have been willing to move on, but Rep. Bill Keating from Massachusetts interjected: "Mr. Chairman, have you no decency?" He added, "You will not continue it with me unless you introduce a duly elected representative the right way." With that, the hearing came to an end.

more in Billy Masters on page 6!

Photo by Ike Hayman, House Creative Services, via Wikimedia Commons.

Mombian

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ily." She loves seeing the world through her children's eyes, she said, adding, "They are their own unique individuals, and so we get to step back and see them flourish and grow, go through their challenges, and support them and love them unconditionally."

In her professional life, before coming to Family Equality, Gordon was deputy president and COO of GLAAD, the LGBTQ+ media advocacy organization. She previously spent over 15 years at Hetrick-Martin Institute, the nation's oldest and largest LGBTQ+ youth service organization. "Being in this work for so long, I know this moment that I'm stepping into, and the work is just critical for families," she said.

Family Equality's wide-ranging work began in 1979 when a group of gay dads came together at the National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights. In 1995, the organization held the first Family Week gathering of LGBTQ+ parents and their children in Provincetown, Mass., an event that now attracts hundreds of families each year. It opened a Washington, DC office and hired its first policy staff position in 2001, and later partnered with other organizations to submit amicus briefs to the

U.S. Supreme Court, highlighting the stories of children with LGBTQ+ parents and of LGBTQ+ youth. These were cited in the landmark marriage equality decisions Windsor (2013) and Obergefell (2015). In 2018, Family Equality merged with Path2Parenthood, a provider of LGBTQ+ family-building education. When the COVID pandemic hit in 2020, the organization created virtual events to connect and inform LGBTQ+ families, and many of those offerings continue today.

Gordon is ready to come on board. "Building innovative strategies, building operational excellence, a deep commitment to social justice—I've dedicated my career to that and to protecting and preserving our community's rights to celebrate, respect, and be connected. It's the right organization, I'm at the right point in my career, and the time is now to do this," she stated.

The time is, however, a troubling one, as the federal government and numerous states and local communities are enacting or considering anti-LGBTQ+ laws and policies. While she is only into her second week with Family Equality and still "digging in," Gordon said that some of the biggest challenges she sees right now are "sustaining the protections" that LGBTQ+ families have achieved and ensuring that LGBTQ+ people who are forming and building families can find support and resources.

"Four million LGBTQ+ millennials are planning to expand their families in the upcoming years," she explained, adding that having gone through it herself, she knows "there are extreme financial, social, and legal obligations." She wants to make sure that Family Equality is supporting community members, especially the most marginalized ones, as they form and grow their families.

The organization will also continue its efforts to share the stories of LGBTQ+ families. "Storytelling is very powerful," Gordon said, noting that her time at GLAAD helped her "understand firsthand the value of what storytelling can do."

All of this work is part of "building a movement," she said, because, "We can't do it alone." Within the partnerships and collaborations that she foresees, however, she wants "to focus on those things that Family Equality very uniquely brings to the table as a movement leader."

"Where we will really lean into and focus is the family," she said. On the policy side, she affirmed, "Protecting marriage equality is critical and one of our priorities." The organization is also working on state legislation centered on "establishing clearer, more efficient pathways" to parentage. Even in the current climate, "that is one of the areas that we're seeing progress," and Family Equality has been engaged with current

and recent efforts in Connecticut, Michigan, New Mexico, New York, and Vermont, among other states. Beyond helping to enact legislation, it is trying to "get the word out for families to understand and know their legal rights and protections and what they need to do."

Overall, she asserted, "My vision is to double down on our impact, build the capacity, the reach, of the organization to support more families, create more protections, and be there for more families."

Even now, her message to other LGBTQ+ parents is, "You're not alone. There are so many folks out there looking to form their families or raising their families." She advised, "Seek out community. Seek out support," and "know your rights and your resources." And she extended an invitation: "Come and get involved with us. We've got community events, we've got resources for the diverse landscape of families today and what that means, so be part of the community and join us for this journey. It's an incredible one."

Disclosure: This reporter serves as an unpaid, volunteer member of Family Equality's Communications Committee.

Dana Rudolph is the founder and publisher of Mombian (mombian.com), a two-time GLAAD Media Award-winning blog for LGBTQ+ parents plus a searchable database of 1,700+ LGBTQ+ family books.



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Trans Military

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Defense Department policy that presumptively disqualifies people with gender dysphoria from military service.

Gender dysphoria is the distress that a person feels because their assigned gender and gender identity don't match. The medical condition has been linked to depression and suicidal thoughts.

The new policy stems from a Jan. 27 executive order by President Donald Trump that claims the sexual identity of transgender service members "conflicts with a soldier's commitment to an honorable, truthful, and disciplined lifestyle, even in one's personal life."

Roughly 2,000 transgender people serve in the military, but they represent less than 1% of the total number of active-duty service members.

Reyes frequently sounded skeptical of the administration's motives and rationale as she challenged Justice Department attorney Jason Manion to defend the order and policy. She called it a "Don't Tell" policy, a reference to the military's outdated "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy against

LGBTQ+ service members.

"They have to essentially be in hiding while in service," Reyes said of transgender troops.

The judge said the Defense Department has spent roughly \$5.2 million annually over the past decade to provide medical care to treat gender dysphoria — a minuscule percentage of the military's multi-billion dollar budget. As a point of comparison, Reyes noted that the military spends around \$42 million per year on medication treating erectile dysfunction.

"It's not even a rounding error, right?" she asked. "If it's a cost per service member, it does matter," Manion said.

The plaintiffs who sued to block Trump's order include an Army Reserves platoon leader from Pennsylvania, an Army major who was awarded a Bronze Star for service in Afghanistan and a Sailor of the Year award winner serving in the Navy. Their attorneys contend that Trump's order violates transgender people's rights to equal protection under the Fifth Amendment.

Government lawyers argue that military officials have broad discretion to decide how to assign and deploy servicemembers without judicial interference.

Sanctuary

Continued from page 1

lead the way in advocating for the rights of its diverse residents.

The city's rich history with the LGBTQIA2S+ community is rooted in both resilience and progress. Boston was the birthplace of the internationally recognized Transgender Day of Remembrance, which honors the lives of Black transgender women such as Rita Hester, Monique Thomas, and Channele Pickett, whose tragic deaths sparked a movement to raise awareness about the disproportionate violence faced by transgender individuals, particularly transgender people of color.

In light of ongoing attacks on LGBTQIA2S+ rights across the country, this resolution comes as a vital statement of defiance against policies that undermine access to essential gender-affirming health care, reproductive services, HIV preven-

tion, and other protections. Since January 2025, various executive orders have posed significant public health risks to LGBTQIA2S+ individuals, threatening their well-being and access to care.

By declaring itself a sanctuary city for transgender individuals and the broader LGBTQIA2S+ community, Boston reaffirms its belief that all people, regardless of their identity, deserve safety, respect, and the full enjoyment of their human rights.

The City of Boston has officially declared itself a Sanctuary City for members of the LGBTQIA2S+ community, with a specific commitment to protecting transgender and gender-diverse individuals. Taxpayer-funded agencies will not comply with federal efforts to strip resources that safeguard their rights. Boston will not cooperate with federal or state policies that harm transgender and gender-diverse people and remains dedicated to ensuring their access to healthcare, housing, education, and employment without fear of discrimination.

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Monroe

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only a highly valuable reflection of society, but we can help create the world that we wish to inhabit."

The new girl on the block

Under Bryd's leadership, TTO is entering a new era of LGBTQ+ theater, emphasizing people of color, and her lived experiences shape the mission. "While traditionally marginalized voices are being silenced, and trans women of color, like myself, suffer an epidemic of violence, TTO centers those creative voices 365 days a year," Bryd shared at a press conference in 2024. Since 2024, Bryd has been the ED at TTO in Boston and is the first black trans woman to head a major regional theater company in the country.

Since 2024, Bryd has been the ED at TTO in Boston and is the first black trans woman to head a major regional theater company in the country. As a trans woman, Bryd recognizes the torch that is passed on to her and the black and brown transcestors' shoulders—past and present—she stands on, like Marsha P. Johnson, Sylvia Rivera, and those whose lives have been cut short due to violence like Rita Hester. "With my appointment, I was becoming the first Black trans woman to lead a significant American theatre company, something my

ancestors and transcestors fought for in their lifetimes, but did not get the chance to see their dream fulfilled," she wrote in *Out Magazine*. "I now carry their torch."

The Danger of a Single Story

Bryd brings a unique perspective critical to social justice, inclusion, and storytelling as a black Southern trans woman. She encourages artists to explore outside the box and flip the script on white queer cis-gendered conventions that both straight and LGBTQ+ theatergoers have become accustomed to expect. Trans representation at TTO is essential to Bryd. She wants TTO to be a welcoming space for trans and non-binary artists to explore their stories—a diversity of realistic portrayals.

Hester's story is a one-dimensional narrative that fits the dominant trope about black trans women. Bryd is working to change that through art. Hester's story shows the politics of memory, what gets remembered, told, and canonized for what and whose purpose as an international icon. The tragedy is cemented in our public understanding of Hester. In telling her story, however, we cannot skip over her death and its significance.

Cold case

After twenty-five years, Hester's murder is still an unsolved cold case like most transgender murders. On November 28, 1998, Hester was found dead in her first-floor apartment with twenty stab wounds to her chest, just two days before her 35th birthday. Hester's murder kicked off the "Remembering Our Dead" web project that became the catalyst for the annual International Transgender Day of Remembrance on November 20.

Rita's murder occurred in an era when the "trans panic defense"—a defendant melodramatically pleads temporary insanity for killing—was a legal strategy. According to Trans Murder Monitoring, a research project by TGEU that tracks the murders of trans and gender-diverse people globally, 320 transgender people were murdered, beaten, or shot between October 1, 2022, and September 30, 2023. They were predominantly black trans women, an alarming trend HRC has tracked for decades.

Violence against Black trans women has been depicted as "a pandemic within a pandemic."

They are killed disproportionately because of socioeconomic factors due to "transmisogynoir"—the intersections of anti-black violence, cissexism, and transphobia. Transmisogynoir contributes to black trans women disproportionately battling/unemployment, poverty, housing insecurity, suicide, HIV/AIDS, health care disparities, sexual assault, police brutality, incarceration, and a life expectancy between 33-35 years.

Honoring Herstory

Boston is finding many ways to honor Hester's life. Her life and legacy are memorialized in "Rita's Spotlight," a mural in Allston installed in 2022.

In 2024, TTO honored TDOR in community with Hester's family sharing reflections on Rita's life and artistry, and posthumously awarded Hester their Legends Award. Hester's nephew, Taufiqul Chowdhury, received the award on her behalf. Taufiqul shared he imagined Hester becoming a famous poet or TV star. He told *The Advocate* in 2023, "I wish that she could have lived long enough for me to see her perform. She was educated, and she loved to write. So who knows, maybe she'd [have written] something and could have gotten published."

A week before her death, Hester wrote her last poem. "It's a little foreboding and not out of pain or sorry. You come to understand there is some sense she needed to get this out and put on paper," Taufiqul told me. "And I am super thankful that she did because the words I now have hanging up in my home like a shrine." The poem "Look to me, my family" is on Hester's mural.

Trans rising

Hester's poem will likely find artistic expression in TTO's advocacy promoting trans visibility, amplifying their voices—past and present. I asked Bryd what's the importance of TTO and LGBTQ+ artistic creativity in light of Trump's executive orders rolling back protections for transgender people and terminating DEI programs. In an open letter to the community on TTO's website, Bryd clapped back.

"We will not cower in the face of what's to come. Instead, we will stand even more boldly on our promise to present liberating art by, for, and about Queer and Trans People of Color."

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billy masters

I recently came across a map of Europe which allegedly showed where the population of each country thinks the best-looking men come from. About 92% of Europe thinks Italian men are the hottest. Interestingly enough, Italians think the Swedes are the hottest. The country with the healthiest self-esteem is Greece, which thinks the hottest men come from within its own borders. Outside of European countries, only Brazil made a dent. If I had a nickel for every Brazilian who made a dent. Which leads to our next story.

What this map didn't address was how old these hot men were. I was discussing vacation destinations with a friend and mentioned Ibiza. He quickly said, "Don't you think you're too old for Ibiza?" Am I a hundred? Considering the Phoenicians went there in 654BC, I'm a veritable teenager! Then I suggested Sitges, to which my friend quipped, "You don't have enough money." Apparently I'm old and poor. That wasn't always the case. I recall a trip to Monte Carlo about 20 years ago. Sure, I was younger, but definitely poorer. That didn't stop a lad I met with Prince Albert from knocking on my hotel room door at 2AM. I'm just saying that maybe I'm part of a metric that cannot be easily measured. Or it might simply have been proximity—I was staying next door to the palace!

Some things can be measured—like cognitive abilities. **Wendy Williams** is on the brink of getting a new evaluation with the hopes of quashing her conservatorship and regaining control of her life...and her assets. Make no mistake, her situation is all about money. If she was Wendy from the projects, nobody would be locking her up and controlling her assets. She could be a complete mess and not a single person would care. Her conservatorship began when Wells Fargo petitioned the court. Yes, they were allegedly looking out for her best interests. But don't people have the right to squander their cash and make bad decisions? If not, I should be locked away!

Then there's **Lady Gaga**. She says in 2020, she had "psychosis" and adds "I was not deeply in touch with reality." Did anyone lock her up? Well, she kinda locked herself up. Back in 2011, she directed the music video for "Marry the Night", which showed her being wheeled into a mental institution on a gurney. She called it "autobiographical". In the video, she tells the doctor evaluating her, "I'm gonna be a star." He thinks she's delusional. And yet...

People make drastic decisions when it comes to their mental health. Some sleep with strangers connected to royalty (see above), while some simply escape. Take **Rosie O'Donnell**. She's one of the few people who threatened to leave the country if Trump got elected to actually follow through. Strike that—so did **Ellen DeGeneres**. Maybe it's a lesbian thing. Or a comedienne thing. "Although I was never someone who thought I would move to another country, that's what I decided would be the best for myself and my 12-year-old child." She made this revelation on TikTok—which I'm sure my friend would say she's far too old for!

Last week, The Kennedy Center released a very long list of performances that have been cancelled at their venue along with the reasons the show did not go on. I found the various reasons quite curious—flood, fire, theatre repair, and artist illness, alongside the typical low ticket sales or no reason listed. Which begs the question—are these artists protesting the current administration, or trying to avoid some sort of curse?

The Kennedy curse continued for **Vice President JD Vance and Mrs. Vance**. They were at the center to see the National Symphony Orchestra when people in the audience broke out in boos. Watching the video of this fracas, I must admit I was completely flummoxed. JD Vance went to the symphony?

You may have heard that the Sundance Film Festival's contract with the City of Sundance expires in a couple of years, and the festival is entertaining bids to move. That's fine by me, as long as they change the name. You surely cannot have the Sundance Film Festival in Salt Lake City. But what about if it were in another state entirely? That's what **Robert Redford** and other festival execs are pondering in light of a proposed bill that would ban Pride flags in schools and other state buildings in Utah. Festival leaders

claim that Sundance is a "vibrant, inviting and inclusive festival". So, I decided to help them out and provide a few options. Didya know that there are cities called Sundance in New Mexico and Wyoming? There's also two Sundances in our 51st state—Canada. One in Alberta, and one in Manitoba, which is a ghost town. I smell a winner (or whatever one smells in a ghost town).

A new production of Shakespeare's "Othello" is breaking all kinds of Broadway records due to stars **Denzel Washington and Jake Gyllenhaal**. And yet, again, I am perplexed. The marquee shows Denzel's name before Jake's—as befits the actor playing the title role. But the photo above the names shows Jake on the left with Denzel's name directly below. Couldn't someone find a single photo with Denzel on the left?

You know whose name is soon to be leaving Broadway? **Nicole Scherzinger**, who will fade into the "Sunset Blvd" on July 13th—about a month after she loses the Tony Award (just a hunch). But she won't be gone for long. She's slated to make her Carnegie Hall debut on October 8th, in a concert that will likely begin with "As If We Never Said Goodbye" (again, just a hunch).

Where her name will not appear is back in London's West End, where she had aspirations of helming a new production of "Evita". Several names had been bandied about for this **Jamie Lloyd** production (the same chap who directed the "Sunset Blvd" revival). **Ariana DeBose** was the main contender, but she pulled out due to previous commitments. The lackluster **Rachel Zegler** will star, and Lloyd claims she will "blow the roof off the London Palladium". Since she was unable to blow off anything in the film remake of "West Side Story", I remain skeptical.

They say it's not over until the fat lady sings. If there's one thing **Donatella Versace** is not, it's fat. And yet, she's announced that she's stepping down as the creative director of Versace. While she will remain with the company as an "ambassador", she will be replaced by **Dario Vitale**, previously a designer with Miu Miu.

CBS recently debuted their new soap opera, "Beyond the Gates". While most viewers have complained about the bad writing, cheap sets, and ridiculous scenarios, it actually has something going for it—ratings from the first two weeks were up 78% from its predecessor, "The Talk". It actually tied in the ratings with "General Hospital".

We have time for a brief "Ask Billy". *Josh in Maine asks, "Is it true that John Whaite is doing gay porn?"*

In case you don't know (or can't remember that far back), Whaite was a contestant (and eventual winner) of "The Great British Bake Off" in 2012 while he was a law student. Back then, he was allegedly working for a "top law firm" (I'll be the judge of that). He eventually gave it all up to become a full-time chef—which included a number of TV gigs. In 2021, he was on "Strictly Come Dancing" with a male pro **Johannes Radebe**—the first time the show featured a same-sex couple in competition. Alas, he fell in love with Radebe, which caused a schism with Whaite's long-term partner, **Paul Atkins**. He also revealed that during that time, he had several "drunken fondles and experiments with various soap stars and celebrities". Nonetheless, John and Paul got married last year in NYC after being together for over 15 years. They started a gourmet brownie company called "Ruff Puff", while Whaite also started his OnlyFans page, with a promise to deliver "the side of me you haven't seen...yet." He plans to include lots of content—"from solo play to collabs, it's all here." In explaining his two ventures, he said, "One sells brownies and cookies while the other is a meatier enterprise." You can preview some of his wares on BillyMasters.com.

When baking helps develop great arms, it's definitely time for me to head into the kitchen and end yet another column. I can see it now—"Whisking to the Oldies". Oh, **Richard Simmons** would be so proud. However, I'm simply too overbooked to start a new venture at the moment. First things first—finding a vacation spot where I'm not too old, too poor, but the men are too hot to care. I'm sure I'll run some ideas by you on www.BillyMasters.com—the site that's clothing optional. Should you want to take that option with moi, send some photographic evidence to Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before my loaf rises. Until next time, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible.



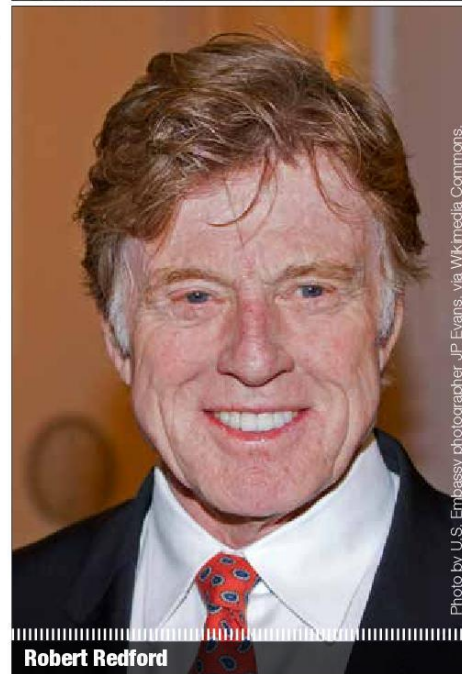
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Lady Gaga

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Robert Redford

Photo by U.S. Embassy photographer JP Evans, via Wikimedia Commons.

Rosendall

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victim, awash in aggressive ignorance, idiotic conspiracy theories, recklessness, greed, and obsession with revenge – all of which he sells as the path to restoring our national greatness. When it has the effect of diminishing us instead, he blames everyone but himself.

The real question is not what's wrong with him, but how so many of our fellow citizens could be so full of rage that his *modus operandi* has worked for him for so long.

The public reaction to his rapid demolition of a thriving economy suggests that his thuggish charm may be wearing off at long last.

Nor is it just the economy. Virtually everything he says and does is destructive. For someone who benefited from his opponent being considered too old, he is going out of his way to

convince us that he is our crazy uncle.

He alienates our strategic allies. He wants to buy Greenland and annex Canada. He advocates the ethnic cleansing of Gaza, which is a war crime, in order to build a resort. He treats pesky reporters as enemies of the state, blacklists law firms when he disapproves of their clients, calls his political opponents traitors and peaceful protesters terrorists. He doubles down on every stupid thing he does, like his trade war, because he can never admit to being wrong.

Trump recently told reporters that Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer – who lost members of his family in the Holocaust – is no longer Jewish, but Palestinian. Who put Trump in charge of deciding who is Jewish? More to the point, if Trump cared about antisemitism he would not have dinner with people such as Nick Fuentes and Ye who talk like Nazis, nor draw to himself people such as JD Vance and Elon Musk who admire Germany's Nazi-adjacent

AfD party.

The divider-in-chief recently tried to start a scandal over transgenic laboratory mice, which has to do with genetics, not gender. If we're going to have a fit over anything with "trans" in front of it, everything from transportation to transistors will be in trouble. Don't tell Donald, but even Tesla cars have transmissions. There's a region of Moldova called Transnistria that borders on Ukraine; I hear they have good wines. Maybe he'll slap a tariff on them.

Incidentally, I once imagined setting up a service called Slap-o-Grams, which you could have delivered to people who annoyed you to tell them they deserved a good slapping without actually being violent. I am not litigious, but if you steal this idea and make a success of it, I think you should at least buy me lunch.

With no other leader can you so readily anticipate his wreckage. It is as if Trump were inspired by Shelley's poem "Ozymandias" about

the ruins of an ancient pharaoh:

*"My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings;
Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal Wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away."*

The trouble is, the wreckage is not just to Donald's imagined statues, but to our constitutional republic. That is why we must resist.

So what is our positive message? A good summation comes from Senator Pastor Raphael Warnock of Georgia. He talks of America's covenant: *E pluribus unum*. Out of many, one. Yes. We must carry on the ever-challenging work of making ourselves one people.

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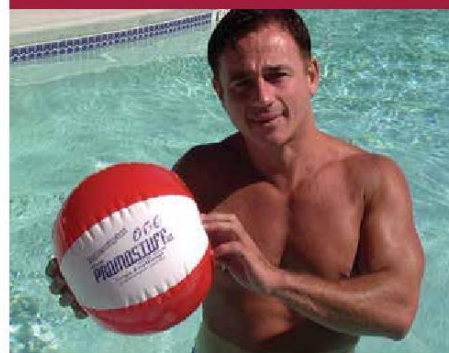
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