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# COMMON SENSE II

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*Capitalizing on the familiarity and influence of Thomas Paine’s “Common Sense” pamphlets that provided American colonists with exposure to the conversation of great thinkers in the pre-Revolutionary period, this paper assumes the name COMMON SENSE II. Similarly, today’s series of pamphlets strives to give a direct response to great political events and ideas of our time.*

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February 2021

Moving On Issue

Vol. 16 Issue 2

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## One Woman’s Perspective

*By Pam Troje*

I’ve thought a lot about the past administration and the impeachment trial. At first, I was encouraged that seven senators voted to convict Trump. I now realize that these seven and the speech now Minority Leader McConnell gave fell so short that in the end it was meaningless. It didn’t change a thing. While the insurrection was underway, House Minority Leader McCarthy told Trump he should do something to call the mob off, and Trump did nothing. Then McCarthy went down to Mar-a-Lago to beg forgiveness and to “kiss the ring.”



<https://angrymedia-tions.files.wordpress.com/2015/10/8fa02094-2790-4a8a-b5b7-850c6c4c3274.jpg>

We can’t smooth that over or compromise or unify while they do nothing. People were going to be tortured and killed; 140 law enforcement officers were injured and at least five died. For the impeachment verdict McConnell told his conference to vote their consciences. Seven did just that, and now they’re being censured by their parties back home. Most of the others voted for acquittal because of the technicality that Trump by then was out of office. McConnell is the one who refused



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to hold the trial while Trump was still in office. What duplicity!

During the 2016 campaign, Trump boasted that he

could shoot someone on Fifth Avenue and get away with it. So far, he was right. His inciting a riot and insurgency on the Capitol and refusing to acknowledge he lost the election is similar. He encouraged a mob to gather on January 6<sup>th</sup>; then he revved them up with a fiery speech. He saw the

mob carrying baseball bats and flags the insurrectionists had brought with them into the Capitol. They had listened to him before, so he was confident they would again. They did. He pointed the way. He could have done something to stop it as evidenced that they left when he told them to. He knew what would happen. He always knows every little thing that affects him. Then to add to the insult, he told them, “We love you. You are special.”

I realize now that I had wanted it to be different, but Trump’s cabal had their chance and blew it. Their greed, fear mongering, and incompetency caused their loss of power. I hope America has learned and that there will be a bigger price to pay.

## The Soul of American Democracy

*By Bob Passi*

It all depended on a box: a box that contained the official Electoral College voting results. That box represented the final nail in the coffin of the hopes of Donald Trump to foist an illusory reality on this nation, with the pretense of the victory in an election that he insisted had been rigged to appear that he had lost.

If the Senate staff had not had the foresight to take the electoral ballots to safety just moments before the mob reached the Senate floor, we would now in all likelihood be living in a very different nation. Without that electoral proof, which surely would have disappeared or have been destroyed, the entire election would be considered questionable from Trump’s perspective. With his Presidential powers he could have found a way to continue in office for another four years, thus ending democracy, ruling with a vengeance against his enemies, and imposing his dystopian vision on the nation and on the world.

In effect, he would have snatched victory out of the jaws of defeat and changed the history of the

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nation, the world, and the planet.

If not for those young staffers, who put the fate of the nation above their own safety while everyone else was taking care of themselves by responding in fear and following their survival instincts, all would have been lost, and even then it was done just in time.

This was Trump's last gasp effort to steal the election after all his other machinations over many months had failed. This was like the last Hail Mary pass with time running out in the game. If it had succeeded, he would have declared victory and praised those who stormed the Capitol as true patriots.



<https://orinococontributor.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/5f67167720302706cd3b02c6.jpeg>

After all his earlier attempts to claim an electoral victory by any means available, it is impossible not to assign accountability to

him in his final effort to claim victory.

The bigger question is how did we ever get to this place, this place of being so close to losing our democracy? We need to go back to the beginnings of this nation when the nation was being formed by declaring its independence from England, which was done in a great part because as a colony we were being exploited by England for the wealth we could produce for the English aristocracy and the Crown.



<https://goobrava.files.wordpress.com/2014/03/8-ways-americas-headed-back-to-the-robbert-baron-era-e1341514037309.jpg?w=512&h=288>

However, a growing American aristocracy of the wealthy and well-connected wanted very much to replace the English aristocracy with an American aristocracy. Their wealth, education, and connections gave them the sense that they were entitled to leadership roles, which included access to the growing wealth of the new nation. So, although the Revolutionary War was fought for the ideals of democracy, individual freedom, and self-determination, the movers and shakers were also devising plans to assert their leadership and dominance.

It was only when a popular cry to abolish slavery became a national issue that things changed, even-

tually leading to the Civil War. The Civil War crushed the Southern aristocracy and the plantation system based on a workforce of slaves. We forget that the Northern aristocracy remained alive, exerting their economic coercion on their own workers. With Lincoln's assassination and the scuttling of Reconstruction, a version of the Southern aristocracy survived as well, especially in the Senate.



<https://deconceptos.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/concepto-de-new-deal.jpg>

After that, the American economic aristocracy was once again dominant until their lust for more wealth led to an economic breakdown and the Great Depression.

Finally, there were no options left to save a democratic society except to attend to the needs of the ordinary citizens of the nation, and FDR'S New Deal was born.

The response of the American economic aristocracy was complete shock as it became clear that their entitled position in the nation was under attack and being significantly weakened. Who were these upstarts who thought they could run a nation without the knowledge and expertise and experience of that aristocracy?

They began to devise a strategy to regain power. Outside threats and potential wars were always a good means to distract the people while, behind the scenes, the aristocracy continued to increase their power. First, they began to conflate capitalism with democracy, suggesting that only with a healthy, dominant capitalistic economy could democracy be possible. The other element of this attack was to continue the ongoing competition with and demonization of any alternate economic ideology such as communism or even socialism.

With the election of Kennedy, it looked as if there might be the beginnings of a resurgence of the more democratizing forces within the society. This worried that American aristocracy that was just beginning its dominant ways again, chipping away at the New Deal changes.

Then things changed radically with within a five year period the assassination of the two Kennedys and Martin Luther King, Jr., the three leaders of the democratizing forces. Along with losing their leaders, many Americans were deeply concerned about the direction of the



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war in Vietnam. The society was in turmoil.

The frustrations grew, resulting in the confrontations during the Democratic National Convention in Chicago in 1968 with the cries of “law and order” and the police riot during the convention.



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This played into the hands of that American aristocracy of wealth and power. Claiming to be on the side of “law and order,”

Nixon won the election, and the direction of the nation changed. Enough of this democracy thing; it was time for control. Manipulation became the watchword and economics was to be the tool.

Soon the two parties were seduced by the power of the big money. The Republican Party was already there, and the Democratic Party began its slow slide away from supporting issues that would help all Americans toward pleasing the American aristocrats and their money.

So more and more of the American electorate were being orphaned in the political process with neither party offering them a real home—only a place of servitude.

This process continued apace while more of the previous Democratic voters began to shift toward the Republican Party. Those disenchanted middle Americans were becoming easy targets for the Republican propaganda with their manipulative wedge issues that were splitting the electorate into warring groups.



<https://purnabydesi.gr01.files.wordpress.com/2013/06/tea->

By the time we reached the 2016 election, the disenchantment was becoming rampant. Earlier the Republicans had seen how to exploit those disaffected voters. The Tea Party was formed and began to woo the more radical elements of these voters, giving them a voice and some measure of empowerment, which those groups gladly accepted.



<https://2.bp.blogspot.com/-BcNOu7oEH14/>

The only Democratic candidate who spoke to those disenchanted voters was Bernie Sanders.

A fateful decision was made by the DNC and the Clinton campaign when they decided to kill the Sanders campaign, which left all those energized voters orphaned, again having to choose between

the lesser of the two evils, both of which supported the dominance of that American aristocracy of wealth and power. Their disaffection was clearly evident in that election. It was an overwhelming judgement against that fateful choice to scuttle the voice of the Sanders campaign. Not only did Hillary lose, but she did not even have any coattails. The loss was across the board. What had months earlier been a nearly defunct Republican Party now swept the nation, winning on the national and state levels and turning the American map red, keeping the American aristocracy fully in dominant control.

In the interim, the progressive wing of the Democratic Party, led by Bernie Sanders, continued to speak to an abandoned electorate who were looking for some real leadership.

The 2020 election became a continuation of the questionable 2016 choices by the Democratic leadership that finally accepted a centrist, Joe Biden, as their candidate. Trump’s propaganda left the false perception that Biden had barely defeated Trump and with no clear mandate, again with practically no coattails. Meanwhile, we were also facing enormous challenges with the ravages of a pandemic barely under control and a planet in crisis due to climate change that represented another existential threat to all human life. On top of that is the existential threat to democracy, the very heart and soul of this nation.



<https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/>

We are now at the moment of truth. The Democratic Party must become the party off FDR and real solutions like FDR’s New Deal. We must be relentless in rejecting all who would subvert the principles of democracy. We must reunify the nation under the banner of **democracy**.

If the Democratic Party continues to promote policies that serve the people and not just the 1%, policies that deal with the real needs of the people and not concerns of profit first, if it pursues policies that give people a better future for themselves and their families, then the Democrats will preside over a reunification of the nation and find the strength and political will to confront the looming crises with a renewed American Spirit.

“We have met the enemy and he is us,” as the Pogo quote goes. Now it is time to rededicate ourselves to a nation that will redeem itself and give hope to all for meaningful change. Democracy waits patiently in the wings for us to save its soul and invite it back as the centerpiece of a great American nation.



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# Fear Is the Mind Killer

By Gary Burt

Unbelievably, some people still believe the COVID-19 virus is a liberal hoax!



[https://www.coverersleague.com/images/Screenshot\\_2is\\_a\\_hoax.jpg](https://www.coverersleague.com/images/Screenshot_2is_a_hoax.jpg)

For your information, I had the virus in early October. It was worse than any flu I've ever had, and I've had a

number of them. I don't know what the doctors gave me, but I was only in the hospital in Duluth for 3 1/2 days. I did deal with some fatigue after I was released.

Unlike my experience, one of my younger brothers was so sick they had him under sedation and on a respirator for two or three weeks and weren't certain he'd live. When he finally came out of it, his kidney function had decreased to 20% of normal, there was water around his lungs, and his heart was also affected. He was also dealing with COPD damage to his lungs from years of working in the mines. He could walk only with help. Apparently, the virus exacerbates all the physical issues a person has.

Last Thursday, while sitting on the edge of his bed in a Fargo nursing home, he just slumped over and died. It may have been for the best, because he had no desire to live as he was.

Do I think the virus is real? What do you think?



<https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/d7/Fear-Effect-Logo.png>

Will the vaccinations help? I hope so. Given my physical issues, I've already gotten the first shot.

The thing that bothers me most about claims like the ones Gary Kohls, Limbaugh, Trump, and others make is no one ever says they might be wrong. In essence, all these claims are meant to frighten and control people, much as what the Nazis did. They have just created a different "enemy" for people to fear.

As with everything else, fear is the real enemy, not people who are "different," which is what ALL fear-based personalities are preaching. Anyone who challenges a dogmatic or demagogic thinker is automatically defined as being "different" and many times ends up being ostracized by those who buy into the "dogma."

Instead of preaching and teaching fear, we should be teaching kids—and adults—how to think critically and to act assertively. This should start early in schools and continue in whatever classrooms are available. To me, that would limit or eliminate most, if not all, of the fear kids and others are socialized to believe. I believe this would also limit or eliminate the actions that fear creates, such as what is being exhibited by authoritarian or white supremacist leaders and followers.

I have no problem when people are concerned about real issues, situations, and threats. But no one helps who supports anyone being afraid of anything. Fear is THE mind killer for ALL of us.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS: GET INVOLVED AND GET IT DONE!

<u>Event</u>	<u>Date /Time</u>	<u>Location</u>
DFL Headquarters Open (326-6296)	Closed	DFL Headquarters
Itasca Progressive Caucus (259-4490)	Suspended	DFL Headquarters
DFL Central Committee Meets	4th Monday	Zoom
DFL Social Club & Lunch	Suspended	DFL Headquarters
DFL Pot Luck (Open to the Public)	Suspended	DFL Headquarters
Working Families Alliance	Suspended	Dutchroom
Earth Circle	Suspended	GR Public Library
Circles of Support	Suspended	811 NE 4th St. GR
Haven: A Place for All	Suspended	Kiesler Center
Deadline for <i>Common Sense II</i>	March 12, 2021	conray@arvig.net

# Black History Month

By Nancy Rudd

As Democrats, we would be remiss if this issue of *Common Sense II* did not have an article on Black History Month.



<http://c2016.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2018/02/Black-History-Month-1024x576.jpg>

With Republicans moving farther to the right and seeming to embrace white supremacy and fear of people of color,

Democrats must stand even more than we traditionally have for equality for all people. We aren't different races; we are the human race.

Black History Month didn't begin as such. Historian Carter G. Woodson and the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History announced in 1926 that the second week of February would be Negro History Week. This week was chosen because it coincided with the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass. Celebrations were encouraged nationwide to honor the contributions of black people.

In 1976 President Ford proclaimed the month of February as Black History Month. He wanted everyone in the United States to "seize the opportunity to honor the too often neglected accomplishment



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of Black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history." Every President since then has designated February as Black History

Month. This month of recognition of African-Americans grew out of the civil rights movement of the 1960s. Canada and the United Kingdom also celebrate it.

This February, Black Lives Matter and Stacey Abrams each have been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. BLM was nominated for the peaceful protests that happened around the world after the murder of George Floyd by police officers in Minneapolis. Abrams was nominated for her peaceful furtherance of civil rights by organizing people to register over 100,000 Georgians to

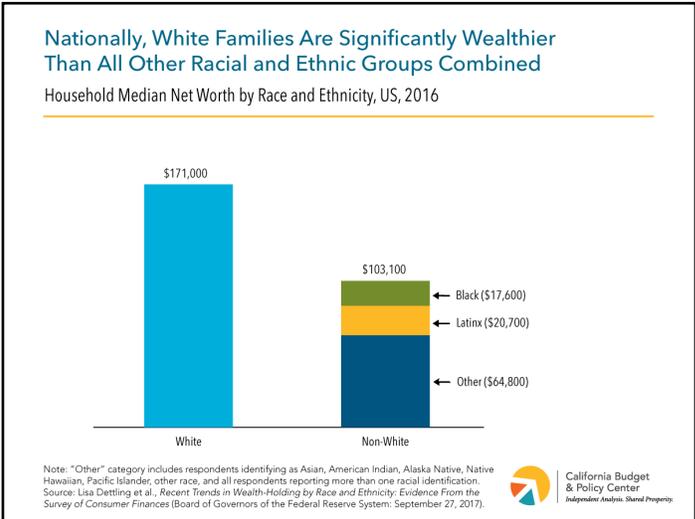


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vote.

Recognition of the contributions of people from all sectors of our society is an important step in promoting equality. Too many of us are unaware of the important contributions African-Americans have made to our lives. The movie, *Hidden Figures*, educated us about how three black women (no less!) were instrumental in NASA's space program, but many others remain anonymous to the general public.

Dr. Shirley Jackson, an MIT physicist, invented the touchtone phone, the portable fax, caller ID, call waiting, and the fiber optic cable. Earlier, Lewis Latimer worked with Thomas Edison to develop the carbon filament of the light bulb, which made the light bulb last longer. He also designed an improved railroad car bathroom and the early air conditioning unit. The first home security system was invented by Marie Van Brittan Brown which laid the groundwork for modern closed-circuit television security. Otis Boykin, after losing his mother to heart failure, improved the circuitry in pacemakers; he also developed IBM computers, burglar proof cash registers, and chemical air filters. Charles Drew, MD, worked with the Red Cross on blood transfusions and blood banks. Although Marian Croak holds over 135 patents, she is best known for VoIP or voice-over Internet protocol. There are many, many more such as Phillip Emeagwali, who was forced to drop out of school at the age of 14 and who invented the first fast computer. He is known as Africa's Bill Gates. That computer, developed in 1989, performed 3.1 billion calculations per second.



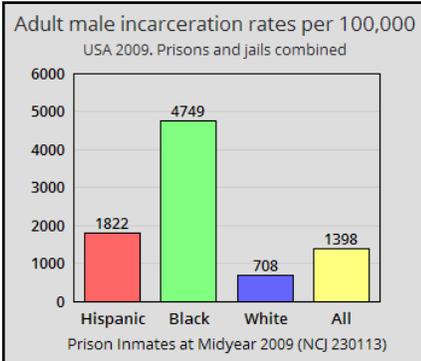
<https://calbudgetcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Nationally-White-Families-Are-Significantly-Wealthier-Than-All-Other-Racial-and->

These accomplished people persevered and succeeded in spite of the systemic racism in this country. The result of that racism is that statistically black workers earn 82.5 cents on the dollar compared with white workers. Whites are 10 times wealthier than

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black families. Home ownership, which is the major source of wealth, for blacks is only 40% of the rate for whites. This is a percentage that has stayed the same since 1968. Incarceration for blacks is six times higher than for whites. This doesn't even address the racism in the number of blacks who are harmed or killed by police officers. More and more we hear of incidents that probably have



<https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/6c/>

been common forever. A case in point is the nine year-old of Buffalo, New York, whose mother asked for a mental health workers when police arrived at an incident. They refused and instead pushed the child down, handcuffed her, and used pepper spray. When she cried when she was pepper sprayed in her eyes, the woman police office told her she was acting like a child. "I am a child," she replied.

This summer the whole country became even more aware of the injustices that occur on a daily basis. How do blacks keep up the fight for true equality and acceptance when it has been going on for so long? How do we help in the fight? Giving up is not an option for any of us.

Black History Month exists to remind us not just



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of black accomplishments but also of the racism that exists in our society. So how do we, Democrats in northern Minnesota who don't often encounter blacks,

celebrate Black History Month in a meaningful way? We can read and educate ourselves about racism. Search the Internet for information about Black Wall Street in 1921, for example. We can also learn about President Biden's executive order promoting racial equality. If not those, read "The Hill We Climb," the poem Amanda Gorman read at the inauguration. Then, read it again. Knowledge is power; power effects progress.

## The American Dream

By Valerie Conner

As we awaken from the nightmare of the past four years, we must decide how we deal with that past before we can truly greet the new day. I heard it said that our dreams are the way our brains sort out the past day and prepare us for the next. On one hand we need to examine the causes and consequences of the Trump phenomena lest it returns. On the other hand we must confront that nightmare for our own psychic healing.



<https://voicesofglass.files.wordpress.com/2012/03/>

Most of us have always believed and all of us greatly



<https://blogsmedia.lse.ac.uk/blogs.dir/58/files/2020/10/Minnesota-featured.jpg>

desire to believe that this country is special and has great potential to attain our humanitarian aspirations: that our best years are ahead of us.

These past four years have been exhausting. Trump intentionally and unrelentingly inundated us with drama, division, diversion, and misdeeds instead of truly governing. That coupled with the results of unaddressed crises such as the pandemic and climate change and a faltering economy has exhausted us.

A restless sleep means that the next day will not be as productive as it should be. That is where we find ourselves as a nation. We must first mend the torn fabric of our society before we can move on. That means we must have a 9/11 type commission to examine the insurrection attempted on January 6<sup>th</sup>; we must continue to investigate the shady dealings of Trump, his administration, his businesses, and his family. Facing all that will be hard on us as we desperately wish to move on, but it is necessary for us to start clean.

Fortunately, the Biden Administration is proving to be calmer, giving us the opportunity to recuperate and progress. The obvious competency and honorable intentions are healing but only if we recognize why we had the nightmare and that it is possible to sleep more easily in the future. As we reaccustom ourselves to good government, we can begin to relax and let go of the anxiety we've endured and wake up to better days ahead.



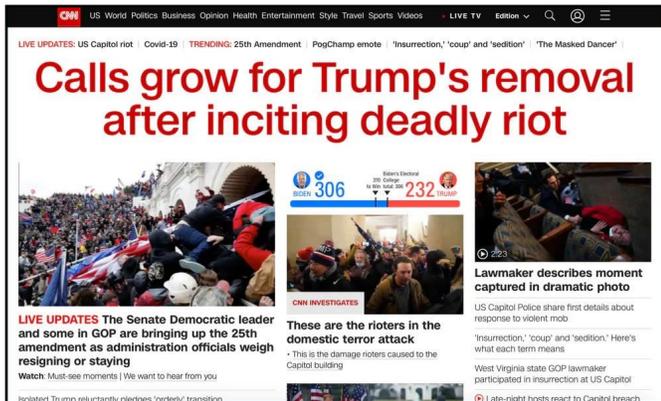
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# The Nightmare in D.C.

By Vicki Andrews

The second impeachment trial of Donald Trump was riveting. I didn't really want to watch it, but I couldn't turn away. I didn't believe that there would be enough Republican support to determine guilt; that is a sad commentary on our country and the influence Trump has over his party. In my opinion, Trump is basically a bully; he lacks empathy and compassion for others. Many books will be written during the coming years on the effects of and damage caused by the Trump Presidency and on the insurrection that ensued.

One of the benefits of the second impeachment



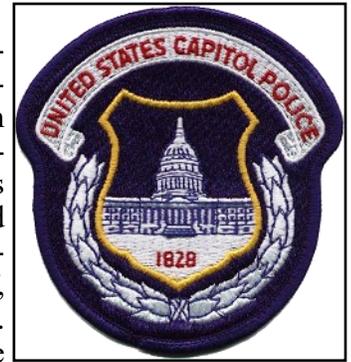
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was that it showed in graphic detail the horrendous nightmare of the attack on the Capitol on January 6, 2021 and even more of the impact and influence Trump had on his followers, especially the ones who joined in the insurrection. I cannot imagine that anyone watching the initial video of the insurrection followed by the presentation put together for the impeachment trial could really believe Trump wasn't responsible for what happened and that his intentions were anything but dishonorable and dangerous. Unfortunately, many of his loyal followers may see him as the inspiration for the event, but most will believe it was for a righteous and cause and that he should be hailed as a hero, because he was just trying to save our country and protect the election.

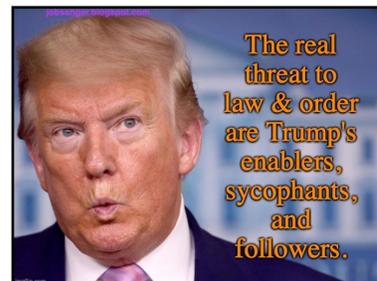
When I think back to the horrendous scenes of the insurrection, I am filled with overwhelming sorrow. The hate-filled and angry faces of the rioters, the glee when they broke down doors, and the satisfaction they had in destruction, the threats of murder, and the fear in the faces of legislators and their staff hiding from the mob fearing for their lives will never be forgotten—should never be forgotten.

I may have been especially affected by the horror

of that day, as I have spent many days in Washington, D.C. and many hours at the Capitol and in various office buildings protesting—peacefully—the wars our country was perpetrating on Iraq and Afghanistan. Even though we may have been a nuisance, we were always treated with respect and consideration by the legislators, their office staff, and the Capitol police. To think of those people being so disrespected and endangered by the rioters was incredibly sad, especially when I think of Donald Trump, who had promised them he would be there with them, sitting back in the White House, gleefully watching the damage, destruction, and fear his people were causing in his name and at his request. Even at the height of the devastation, many of his people were still believing that he was there with them, as he had promised he would be.



[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/65/Patch\\_of\\_the\\_United\\_States\\_Capitol\\_Police.png](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/65/Patch_of_the_United_States_Capitol_Police.png)



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I'm not sure I understand why so many ordinary people have become so obsessed and enthralled with Donald Trump and why many see him as the savior of our country, but, again, I'm sure books will be written in the fu-

ture to attempt to explain it. For now, we must focus on learning to understand each other and attempt to bring about more compassion and more empathy and learning to work together to build a kinder, gentler more humane country, "one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

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