

# THE UNAPOLOGETIC TRUTH

A new vision to reclaim our lives

## BEAVER TALES

It is amazing what the slightest change in perspective can do for your understanding of where you are and how to navigate a difficult and sometimes seemingly impossible situation. There is a tract of land centered on the Powow River that is one of the very last completely wild and untamed parts of Amesbury. It is from the Newton Road bridge near the Water Treatment plant to the Woodsom Farm swimming hole for dogs. This is a black diamond stretch of the river; not for beginners and not for those afraid of getting their noses and kayaks dirty.

Sometimes you need to get further away from civilization. Often times, designated "open space" is not nearly good enough, and is often littered with unpleasanties such as dog crap and face masks which seem to be found as often as the aforementioned. Trash seems to be everywhere these days, but I digress.

This stretch of river has some impossibly narrow channels; sharp turns; beaver dams; several hazardous offramps that lead to dead ends, confusion, and bewilderment; and an endless series of downed trees completely blocking the main artery.

In the middle you feel like you could be in Northern Maine away from everything, instead of a short walk to homes and businesses. There are breathtaking sites and moments. There is nothing quite like seeing a heron flying a few feet in front of your face down the river, as was the case one particular time. I turned a sharp corner and saw it take flight almost on top of me, taking my breath away. That amazing moment will be etched in my mind forever.

It's lovely to see playful beavers swimming and poking in and out of the river beside you. It is also incredible getting a close view of a beaver damn, gaining a true appreciation for these amazingly skilled civil engineers of nature.

The beavers and trees defeated me the first time I attempted this ride. Never being through this stretch, I underestimated the challenge. Coming from the Farm side, my goal was to reach the Newton Road bridge, which seemed simple enough and not that long. After about the fourth time balancing on yet another tree in the middle of the river and hitting multiple dead ends, it was time for a new plan and vantage point. In short, I had

become too tunnel visioned and missed the tiny clues that would have allowed for a still tough but clearer passage.

Mother nature has an amazing ability to quickly slap you around and put you in your place when you let your guard down and your ego gets over inflated. Yet nature also reminds us of what is possible, and the importance of keeping your long-term vision on the forest and not the individual trees. When lost in the thicket of the wild, moving over by just a couple of feet can give you a totally different perspective that helps you find your way.

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In the human world, as with parts of the Powow River, things are clogged up by various impediments. Things are certainly not running fluidly right now. Still, it is all a matter of perspective. The impediments are just challenges that can be overcome. Some are actually blessings in disguise that can be used to our advantage. Take for example the beaver damn. It completely disrupts the smooth flow of the river, causing water to spill out in every direction. But what is water? Water is energy and the beaver damn that is causing water to spill out over the river's edges is spreading energy all around, creating fertile soil and a whole new wetland habitat of new life.

Our society is clogged by massive impediments. Absolutely nothing seems to be running smoothly at the moment. Yet, fertile soil is being created outside the edges of the mainstream of society, as energy flows out of the center to a wider variety of individuals. More and more people are getting filled with this energy of life that is being disbursed every which way by the massive clogs in the establishment thinking. Almost without even knowing it, a much wider group of people are becoming activists for the first time. The growing failures of the ruling class is forcing a wider variety of people to look for solutions. Our society will be much better off for it.

Absolutely anything is possible. We just need to break out of our groupthink and tunneled vision view of how things can and must be. At the end of the day, the Democratic and Republican parties are just run by people. Ordinary and flawed people. There are no natural laws that say our politics has to be specifically defined the way it is now.

The wild river of life is unpredictable. What a constant adventure it is trying to get through the various challenges with your vessel. If you arrive at a major roadblock, don't view it as the end, view it as a challenge to be overcome. Still, you'll have a much better chance of getting through by attacking from different angles to find the way. If you doggedly stick to it, you may come out wet, scratched, and with a case of poison ivy, but what an amazing and exhilarating ride.

## RUNNING FOR MAYOR AS AN OUTSIDER

What can be done to ensure greater engagement at the local level, where so many of the actual important decisions are made that impact people's day to day lives? Bread and butter issues that have huge impacts such as roads and infrastructure; safe and clean neighborhoods; small business and economic development; education and schools; property tax rates, environmental stewardship; etc. are largely determined at the local level. Citizens have endless opportunities to get engaged and speak publicly on these issues yet it's so hard to get folks to voice opinions, run for office, or even simply to vote.

In the last preliminary mayoral vote in Amesbury in the fall of 2019—an election that had huge implications for the community, including the biggest public development project in recent town history—a total of 15%, **15%!!!** of registered voters voted. In a small town (sorry, city) such as Amesbury with 17,000 people, there is simply no way to make meaningful change via office with that level of engagement from the general public.

I put 100% of my heart and soul into that last election, going door to door in 100-degree July and August days and spending all my free time getting the word out about the election—including the critical elementary school vote—and spending a sizeable amount of my own money sending out mailers, brochures, etc. Still, the only thing that truly hit me on a deep level was that 15% number. Despite all the rightful complaining in town about our taxes, roads, school conditions, etc., only 15% of people bothered to take ten minutes out of their life to go to the high school and vote.

I don't regret running though. I don't regret it for one second for many reasons. It was a great experience for my kids, as the effort has provided endless fodder for

fantastic family dinner conversations. Although I lost in the vote, I know that many of the ideas from my outsider campaign have resonated across Amesbury and perhaps beyond. Running was something that needed to be done for many reasons. For example, 100% of the establishment in town was completely behind the Woodsom Farm school vote. The other two candidates backed by the Republican and Democratic wings in town both supported the vote. Somebody needed to represent the 49% of people who voted against the school move.



*Fitting campaign sign/slogan for the times, don't you think? More people who don't play the standard political games need to be elected.*

I was approached by the current camp running the show in town after the school vote and was asked to join with them. I told them to stick it where the sun don't shine. I don't want anything to do with the current rubber stamp group in charge. Any group that would so cynically play both sides on the school vote issue (I wish I had a dollar for every citizen who told me before the school vote that they believed Cassandra Gove was against the school move to Woodsom Farm and would vote against it) like seasoned politicians.....I want nothing to do with that path, vibe, and mojo. I'd rather stay on the sidelines than sell out and play the game. Too many genuinely good people in town have had their hearts broken on this issue. For many, the school debacle was the final nail in the coffin of their faith in Amesbury.

I ran for mayor once against an entrenched Democratic administration and this last time against an entrenched Republican administration. In other words, taking on both warring groups in town that define our politics. The first time I ran in 2011 there was a feeling that the existing mayor was untouchable; that he could be mayor for as long as he wanted. He certainly acted that way, which is ultimately what motivated me to pull papers. That administration oozed arrogance.

Still, beyond the principled idea of running to throw arrogance back in its face, some typically bad management and decision-making was going on. That

mayor simply wanted to gloss over the fact that Amesbury had the third highest tax rate out of the 352 communities in Massachusetts, blaming the housing crash, when all communities were dealing with the housing crash. Similar to the recent school debacle, that administration rammed through a major public works plan with stats and figures that obviously did not add up, costing taxpayers greatly.

We need more people running for local and state office. In fact, we need lots more, especially independents and newcomers. If you have any thoughts at all about running, do it. You won't regret it. In the end, you'll regret *not* doing it.

The image of change for me is like knocking over a heavy appliance such as an industrial-sized refrigerator. You don't push it over with one single effort. You start by slowly getting momentum going so that it is simply not standing still. Once it starts slowly rocking you need to keep rocking it back and forth until suddenly the momentum gets big enough that you are able to tip that sucker over. The hardest part is always that initial push and getting that first small rocking action. After spending all that effort finally getting it going, the last thing you want to do is to stop. You see the progress building and you see that if you keep pushing and don't let up, eventually that immovable object will tip over. What's really nice is that usually people will offer to lend a hand when they see a strenuous effort in the works.

It seems the vast majority of people are not happy with the state of our politics. There are essentially two paths that can be taken. There will be those that believe reform needs to occur within the system, i.e., within the existing Democratic and Republican parties. And there will be those who believe real change for the better can only occur from the outside via a route such as a new viable third political party to force change from the outside. Which is the better route? The answer ultimately is both!! If you cannot fathom the idea of ever having something other than our current two-party system but you are seriously concerned about the direction of our society, then work like hell to make needed reform within the system. However, the key is you need to focus your efforts on reforming your own political party, not the other political party. If you are a progressive who rightly feels the Democratic Party has been completely taken over by corporate forces and pays lip service to working people, don't get sucked into the fruitless game of blaming all the world's problems on those evil Republicans. Focus on making sure your own Democratic Party actually develops a real grassroots network to build up a true people's party. Conversely, if you are a Libertarian or Conservative who rightly believes that the Republican establishment ultimately could care

less about real family values or freedom of speech and thought, stop focusing all your energy calling out those "snowflake" Democrats and focus your energy on making sure the Republican Party actually works to ensure we maintain our first amendment rights fully.

**CITIZENSHIP IN A REPUBLIC:** TITLE OF A SPEECH BY THEODORE ROOSEVELT IN 1910:  
"THE CREDIT BELONGS TO THE MAN WHO IS ACTUALLY IN THE ARENA, WHOSE FACE IS MARRED BY DUST AND SWEAT AND BLOOD; WHO STRIVES VALIANTLY; WHO ERRS, WHO COMES SHORT AGAIN AND AGAIN, BECAUSE THERE IS NO EFFORT WITHOUT ERROR AND SHORTCOMING; BUT WHO DOES ACTUALLY STRIVE TO DO THE DEEDS; WHO KNOWS GREAT ENTHUSIASMS, THE GREAT DEVOTIONS; WHO SPENDS HIMSELF IN A WORTHY CAUSE; WHO AT THE BEST KNOWS IN THE END THE TRIUMPH OF HIGH ACHIEVEMENT, AND WHO AT THE WORST, IF HE FAILS, AT LEAST FAILS WHILE DARING GREATLY, SO THAT HIS PLACE SHALL NEVER BE WITH THOSE COLD AND TIMID SOULS WHO NEITHER KNOW VICTORY NOR DEFEAT"

However, there are many who have completely lost faith in reform via either established political parties and believe more radical efforts are needed. There are more registered independent voters than registered Democrats or Republicans. Even in a heavily Democratic state such as Massachusetts, Democrats are in the minority and yet the state is under one party Democratic control. There is a huge untapped reserve of voters who want to see a new route taken. If all the various existing third parties and independent entities joined forces and created a compelling enough vision and action plan such as the one laid out in Issue #5, an unstoppable new force could be generated that puts us on a better path in record time.

## THE STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS AND OUR LOCALITIES

When I moved to Massachusetts and this region circa 2004, three things made me immediately fall in love with Amesbury when looking to choose a town to settle down in: neighborhood schools; a beautifully built and walkable



downtown; and excellent recreation opportunities via various open space areas.

Looking more broadly to the state as a whole after 15 plus years living here, I have come to realize a few important things. First, the biggest asset of this state is its history, reflected in its various historical buildings and neighborhoods, best exemplified by compact and closely knit neighborhoods. It is impossible to artificially recreate the type of character seen in Massachusetts, as well as other parts of New England. The other big asset is the collection of world class institutions of higher education that is unmatched anywhere else. It is a natural job creator and attractor of talent that other regions of the country simply cannot compete with.

While these natural advantages are great to have, it has also helped make Massachusetts in a sense; idiot-proof. These huge advantages have helped this state overcome other shortcomings, including a ruling class that has a level of corruption, secrecy, and general level of political atrophy that is not tolerated elsewhere. Closely related is the infamous “Masshole” attitude that is quite bizarrely celebrated in some circles here. It is worn as almost a badge of honor to be, well, an asshole. There are absolutely many warm and friendly people in these parts, but I bet the vast majority of people in Massachusetts are willing to acknowledge how strikingly different the attitude of people is when traveling to other parts of the country compared to the greater Boston metro area. It is not just the general attitude, but for a state that prides itself on being supposedly progressive, there is a striking lack of willingness to try new things and hear new voices.

The vast majority are good people here, but the pressures are high to slip into that go-go mentality in the greater Boston area, making it easy to miss the little things and perhaps easy to miss the genuine needs of our fellow neighbors. A very inconvenient fact about Massachusetts is that this state has one of the highest wealth gaps in the nation between the rich and upper middle-class vs the poor and working class.

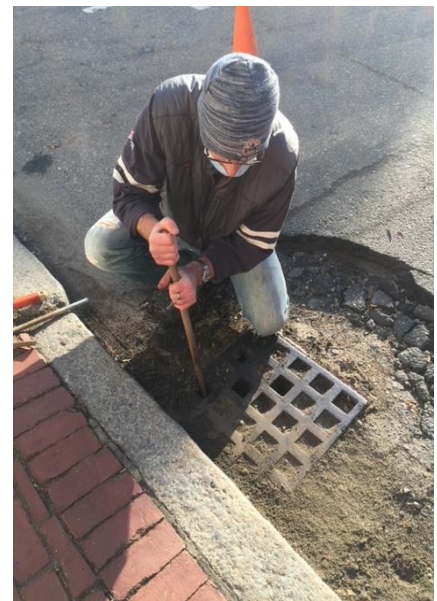
I've lived in several states and in other regions people are genuinely eager to strike up conversation and make friendships whereas here, people tend to keep more to themselves and it can be a bit of a zombie land experience, especially if you are not a life-long resident.

The thing is these idiot-proof advantages are fading. The shine of Massachusetts is coming off and this state can no longer afford to ignore the deeper trends that threaten to cause Massachusetts to slip into a deeper hole.

Currently, 35 states have a lower unemployment rate than Massachusetts. Since the pandemic began, this state has consistently been near the bottom of the list, including a month of being dead last in the country last summer in

terms of unemployment. More blue-collar regions of the country long ago suffered the brutal effects from globalization and the hollowing out of our country's leadership and principals. Those negative forces are coming hard and fast now for more white-collar places such as greater metro Boston. We have likely reached a tipping point in terms of the cost of higher education. Impacts from Covid have accelerated some troubling trends and you are now seeing it in the data. College enrollment is starting to plummet, with good reason. The cost of college has become way too high. Throw in all the insane and suffocating rules and regulations, some of it coming from Covid, plus the crushing of true debate and learning on campuses by our fear-driven cancel culture and it's simply not worth the various costs to pursue the higher education route that this region's economy is built on. The delicate balance of the high cost of living and the reliance on higher education and the type of jobs these degrees and institutions churn out for this region could switch in a relatively quick fashion into an albatross. Local, national, and global economic forces are rapidly changing in a way that will make it downright destructive for Massachusetts to continue skating along with business as usual, including, and, perhaps principally, its political scene.

Beyond the evidence of the unemployment rate, it is becoming increasingly difficult for small businesses to survive because of the high costs of this region and conflicting and burdensome rules and regulations imposed by an out-of-touch leadership class.



The consequences of *Downtown Amesbury Infrastructure Protest* the state's housing pinch will become more and more of a problem. There are only so many times a Biden-like presidency can bail out the state with federal funds to cover up the corrupt handling of this state's finances. Debt is simply becoming too much. Look at the state of financing of our public transit system for example.

In terms of this state's best asset, we see example after example of bad planning decisions that are quickly eroding the state's superb history and natural beauty. Look no further than locally, but you see it in every town

you drive through. In Newburyport, the community's beautiful downtown is under assault by corporate drones and a laissez faire attitude by too many in the general public. Some are valiantly putting up the good fight, but these warriors need more assistance to help slay the robotic mindset. There have been several recent examples of beloved business institutions being taken advantage of and ultimately forced out. On a more structural level, there is a growing war and now full-on assault by large landholders and their allies and minions to dismantle the historical protections that had caused Newburyport's rebirth in the first place.

Fighting climate change and communities taking back local control are one in the same. Well, here we are, as Newburyport is clearly at a crossroads, with the community's local control completely under siege. When people stand up to powerful entities, the fake nice façade comes off and their true colors show when the pressures get turned up. It is all so unbelievably predictable. We now see who truly is in control behind the scenes in Newburyport. It is great to see efforts such as Extinction Rebellion gaining a foothold locally. Perhaps Extinction Rebellion could expand their protests by helping lead boycotts of these corporate institutions in Newburyport.



*Downtown Amesbury Infrastructure/Trash Protest*

Newburyport certainly is not alone in this predicament. The souls of community after community in this beautiful region are slowly being choked to death by cookie cutter and oversized homes crowding out historic homes and neighborhoods; strip-mall mentality of commercial building design/placement; and the general hollowing out of town centers by a toxic convenience crowd mentality. All of these forces are being driven by profit and the quick buck at the expense of the greater good of the community.

Amesbury is a perfect example of the hollowing out trend. Yes, efforts have been made to maintain the charm of downtown; however, the longer-term trend is clear, aided by deliberate leadership decision-making. With one horrible decision, not only is Amesbury abandoning a classic and wonderful neighborhood elementary school location in easy walking distance, the new school location defaces and irretrievably harms the community's most beloved open space. There is so much collateral damage and other negative impacts from this decision that an entire newsletter issue could be focused on this single short-sighted decision. It could be a planning degree case study warning. Still, no one should be surprised, as this is the way the community operates. It won't be long before there is a major push by the convenience crowd to move Town Hall, the library, police station, and fire department out of downtown.

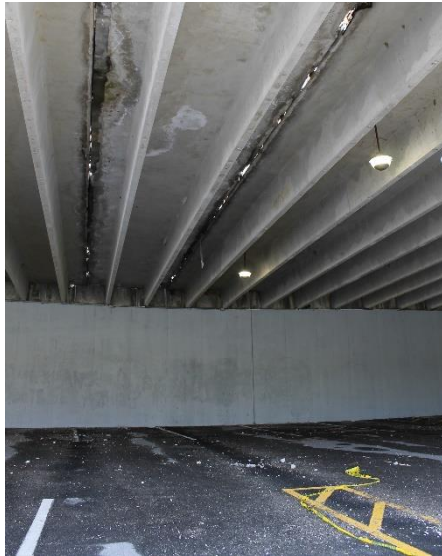


*Classic case of neglected infrastructure in downtown Amesbury*

The downtown Lower Millyard neighborhood is criminally neglected. Ten years ago, Amesbury was in the middle of "debating" moving the DPW to an overpriced location on the outskirts of town. All the usual games were played by our politicians and leaders to sell the plan to the public, including wild and greatly exaggerated claims of redevelopment the move would spur—almost none of which has come to fruition. I tried to push the idea that this would be the perfect location for a District Improvement Financing (DIF) program. In short, a DIF would provide taxpayer cover and assurance by forcing a real plan with actual redevelopment guarantees to be implemented. Of course, what we got were just promises that many people knew would not actually become reality. The taxpayer ended up footing the bill, a handful of powerful private interests in town made out very well, but the overall plan collapsed and like Groundhog Day, the town recently completed yet another fruitless "visioning" process to figure out what we want to do with the Lower Millyard.



Amesbury does have an amazing collection of dedicated individuals who have fought the good fight for a long time, but all too often have been ignored and completely underappreciated. Many of these individuals have been long time members of entities such as the Planning Board. Our political class in town flat out does not trust the Planning Board, has no real understanding of the role of the Planning Board and the results in town are clear. There was zero effort to work with the Planning Board and individuals aligned with this type of thinking when it mattered for the new elementary school. The school project would have turned out infinitely better for the town if the old boys and town leaders engaged with the Planning Board when it mattered. As was warned in the last mayoral election in 2019, Amesbury can't hide anymore from the obvious discord in visioning and leadership, which is holding back the town. Sure enough, the split in the police department has spilled into the open and there has been an exodus of town employees. It is difficult to keep track of the constant turnover in school personnel.



*Crumbling infrastructure forcing the closure of prime downtown parking deck*

Coming back full circle on this article, there is zero excuse for the lack of transparency in this state, especially coming from the Statehouse. None. Once again, there was another vote recently and chance for Massachusetts to join the other states in the country by providing an acceptable level of Statehouse transparency that the public rightly should have. Once again our state leaders gave us the finger. Massachusetts has had structural advantages over other states that have allowed it to get by with a completely decayed and totally complacent style of politics. In a post Covid world, these natural advantages are going to rapidly deteriorate for Massachusetts. It's time to demand more, much more from ourselves and our leadership before it is too late.

No segment of society is immune from the coming carnage, even the most well-to-do. The destruction and hollowing out of rural and blue-collar America that has already occurred is now rapidly coming for more white-

collar and prosperous regions of our country, driven by a toxic combination of corporate greed and a "take things for granted" attitude of the general population.

## THE EQUALITY RUSE

The eyes truly are a window into a person's soul, as the famous saying goes. What I see more and more when looking into people's eyes is sludge: a glossing over and bewildering state of affairs, like how the hell did I get to this point? Where is all that milk and honey I was promised by mainstream society if I work hard and follow all the rules?

Women especially have been sold a bill of goods. You see this particularly in white-collar corporate America. The ruse is not the issue that women are oppressed in certain ways. This certainly is the case. No, the ruse is that the road to freedom and equality for women is via the corporate rat race that is constantly being peddled by our rulers. The constant push to prove that women can do it all and that the way to judge whether or not there is equality in society is via things such as the share of women in corporate board rooms, or in management positions in corporate offices, etc. At the end of the day, who benefits from this narrative? As always, it is our tiny ruling class that gets greater numbers of ordinary people fighting amongst themselves and fighting over a limited number of positions that of course so many people now must pursue because once you go down that road of accumulating enough college debt and your personal identity becomes more and more associated with and indistinguishable from your "career path," you really have no choice but to join this dead-end path that ultimately leads to unhappiness for so many, both women and men.

You can see it all around with our mothers, sisters, daughters, wives, and friends. It is sad to see the stresses in their eyes. The betrayal of motherhood and the betrayal of dreams for more spiritually fulfilling jobs, careers, and lifestyles is bubbling to the surface. So, congratulations to the women of the world. By all of us following the definition of equality by the establishment, women are rapidly gaining equality to men. The problem and what is not discussed nearly enough is that this narrow vision of equality is leading to equality in things such as alcoholism, suicide, and heart disease, which have typically been more of an issue for men but is increasingly now becoming issues for women. Yay for equality!

I want my daughters to grow up to be strong, empowered women. I am guiding them the best way I can possibly think of to prepare them for the coldness, but also beauty of this world. I am trying to instill in them a level of true confidence and self-love that will enable them to carve out a path to true happiness as an adult. This may or may

not involve some sort of corporate office job if they choose that this is what they want, but if it does it will be set in a framework of a bigger picture vision of a balanced life. First and foremost, my daughters are learning not to take shit from anyone, not from any man or other women. I hope more than anything that they end up following their hearts in life and not be pressured by peers or the mainstream to do what is expected of them or what is perceived to be done by everyone. Every soul has a blueprint it wants to follow, the reason it was put on this earth. For my daughters, as well as my sons, my job is to help them figure out their unique blueprint that is different for everyone which, if they follow, will lead them to a life overflowing with purpose and true contentment. So many have been deceived by our rulers to follow a soulless dead-end path.

QUICK BLURB: GOOGLE SEARCH THE NAME "STEVEN DONZIGER." WE HAVE REACHED THE POINT WHERE PRIVATE CORPORATIONS LITERALLY HAVE TAKEN OVER OUR COURT SYSTEM AND ARE PROSECUTING INDIVIDUALS. HE IS AMERICA'S FIRST CORPORATE POLITICAL PRISONER BUT WON'T BE THE LAST. IN THIS CASE, CHEVRON HAS ORDERED DONVIGER'S HOUSE ARREST FOR EXPOSING THE COMPANY'S ILLEGAL DUMPING OF TOXIC WASTE IN THE AMAZON THAT HAS DEVASTATED THE INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES OF ECUADOR.

Really, this article is about how both men and women have been deceived. For both my daughters and my sons, I hope they ultimately focus on making sure first and foremost they are strong and filled with true confidence of who they really are as individuals. Next is finding a life partner who will be their best friend to help create a nurturing life and family. The big thing though is to get on with it. Don't sit back and spend your precious years from aged 18 to 30 jumping from corporate job to corporate job trying to find a perfect fit and of course make enough money to not only pay off ridiculously high college loans, but also to afford an unrealistically perfect home directly after leaving mommy and daddy's house. No way am I going to coddle my children to stick around the nest for years and years after school in order to "find themselves" and/or "establish their career". Just get out there living and learning about the real world by getting into it. If that means sharing a dump apartment with a bunch of people to start with, so be it.

Then comes working like hell to gain the financing and resources needed after the important family framework is first established. Establishing yourself in the corporate job world first and foremost and then hoping everything else works itself out in your life is fraught with danger and risk. It is now basically accepted as the standard correct route that people should delay having children until they are in their 30s. Via this route, by the time people decide to start a family, so many are already burned out from 6 or so years of higher education and then ten or so years trying to establish themselves to the level of middle management so that they can have that nice house and big new SUV before the first child is born. Kids are hard work. They take a ton of your time and energy. They are also miracles and the most wonderful experiences in the world. And yet we have a couple generations now of people in their mid-30s and often times later who are just getting around to finding true long-term partners and having children. But you can see it in their eyes. The biggest thing you see is stress and anxiety of how the hell they are going to juggle having kids within the framework of the relentless demands of our corporate American system. In this way, children subconsciously become a burden to too many already burned-out 30 somethings. If people are lucky, a couple of weeks of time off are allowed to enjoy the miracle of life, then it's time to send the child to daycare so that mommy and daddy can return to cubicle life to deal with endless emails, spreadsheets, and charts. Wow, what a time to be alive. Don't worry about being truly informed and engaged members of society or finding honest friends and true-life partners. Don't be bogged down by starting a family or pursuing real passions. Those can all wait. Actually, no they can't.

## 1956

I feel very blessed to be a first-generation American. The stories that engulfed me as a child no doubt have had a profound impact on my life and outlook as an adult for the better. My family's background is one filled with hardships, but also of overcoming and defiance. The stories of struggle are real and impactful, but ultimately I like to focus on the triumph of rising and refusal to capitulate.

My mother's birth in a bomb shelter during World War II foreshadowed a life full of roadblocks, but also resolve. Her family's ordeals of Russian troops arriving unannounced on occasion to the village to rape, pillage, and kill introduced the feelings of true terror, but also bravery. Her years-long separation from her father, brother, and sister by the Iron Curtain wall during her formative early teen years embedded feelings of sadness and longing, but also faith.

My father's family's decision to refuse to join the local communist party (as everyone was expected to) when he was a child unleashed furious forces of backlash and oppression against the family. This decision by my grandfather was too much for the family to handle in some regard, as it led to episodes of serious beatings for my father, as well as the crushing of dreams for him. Still, I am here to tell my father and the spirit of my grandfather wherever it is that I am forever grateful for the decision not to capitulate and join the Party. The pain and suffering that that decision of defiance brought on was not in vain. I am also grateful for the decision the family made to send my still high-school aged father away alone to try and make a bold escape beyond the Iron Curtain. He, along with my godfather and countless other young Hungarian restless souls made the daring decision to cross rivers, climb endless lines of barbed wire, and tiptoe through minefields guarded by machine-gun toting soldiers stationed conveniently in look-out towers.

Some, such as my 16-year-old uncle made it across and even managed to grace newspaper covers upon arrival in New York City as great examples of freedom fighters against the evil empire known as the Soviet Union on the very day of the start of the inspiring 1956 uprising of the Hungarian nation. The 1956 Hungarian Revolution was a classic David vs Goliath story; David just needed a longer time to triumph, as the Soviet Union not surprisingly brutally crushed the revolution via the usual tools of empire such as tanks and nooses. Nevertheless, the spirit of the 1956 uprising inspired countless freedom seekers around the world and absolutely was a key building block to the eventual collapse of the Soviet Union and Iron Curtain.

Others, such as my father and godfather had a longer journey before eventually arriving to the United States, as they were captured and placed in internment camps in Serbia, as well as other various Eastern Bloc nations. My father understandably does not like talking about his experience in these camps too often.

My father and I have a complex relationship. We are both stubborn as mules, which can lead to, let's just say explosive situations. Hungarians are known for being stubborn, angry, brutally honest to a fault sometimes, and have a penchant for gossip and holding grudges. The Hungarians, however, are also known for being extremely hardworking and will have your back no matter what if considered part of the fervent clan. You could do a whole

lot worse than having a Hungarian in a fox hole next to you when the chips are down, and things get serious. They will also feed you unbelievable amounts of delicious food if you come to visit and will booze it up with you via the biggest sized shot glasses you have ever seen while enthusiastically telling various tales. What this all equates to me is passion, buckets and buckets full of passion.

My father's best piece of advice he ever gave me was to "never put off until tomorrow what you can do today, because you never know what tomorrow may bring." How so unbelievably true. Oh, and his stressing of the importance of trust. Because if you can't trust someone, honestly, what good are they to you?

The energy that immigrants bring and have brought throughout the history of our great nation has been absolutely critical to the success of the American experiment. Immigrants bring important reminders via first-hand experience of not only how brutal life can be in other parts of the world, but also how quickly basic freedoms and things that many of us take for granted can be lost at a moment's notice.

So many of us in America do not fully appreciate how close the forces of oppression are at our doorsteps. These forces are knocking louder and louder and are starting to gather the battering rams to try and fully knock down our doors and implement a complete corporate-controlled fascist police state existence in America.

This is something that too many American citizens are sleepwalking through and falsely believe that these types of forces only exist in "those other" regions of the world, such as existing and former communist countries. Those who have lived in full-scaled oppressive countries or those who have studied and reported on it are warning us that the tell-tale signs are building up all around us in America.

If you dig deep enough, we all have such stories in our lineage of true oppression, fear, but also of overcoming and triumph. Some have just experienced it personally a little closer than others, but everyone can find these types of hardship stories in our pasts. In short, so much of the complaining many of us engage in on a day-to-day basis over mundane things such as restaurant wait times or slow internet speeds is in fact a slap in the face of our legacies. It's time to honor the suffering and struggle of those that came before us by fighting for those in our past as much as fighting for ourselves and our future.

"THE TIME IS ALWAYS RIGHT TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT." DR.  
MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

REAL FREEDOM AND TRUTH ARE ONLY FOUND IN THE UNDERGROUND