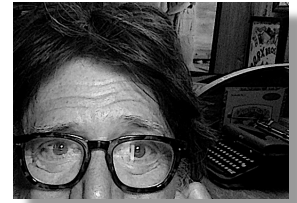


WE QUIT!

Old White Guys Submit Letter of Resignation

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I was corresponding (the COVIDays version of meeting for coffee) with a couple of old friends. These are friends who are old in the sense that we have been friends for a long time and in the sense that we are senior citizens. In fact, we were having this particular conversation on the occasion of one of these friends recently having experienced what he is calling a “small stroke.” The man is a trooper. He is one of my role models for how to face adversity. During his treatment for cancer many years ago, I sat with him and phoned him and sent him the most ridiculous greeting cards I could find, while he crawled up to the very edge of death and looked into that abyss.

In our conversation, me and these two buddies, the subject of ice cream came up. I was quite courageous when asked my preferred flavor of ice cream. “Embarrassingly,” I wrote, “the answer is vanilla. I cringe to say this but if I can’t be honest with you guys, who then?” So I came clean: I am an old white guy, no wait, an *American* old white guy who, when given a wide range of choices, most likely orders vanilla ice cream.

One thing the three of us old white friends have in common is that we are dyed-in-the-wool Democrats - in so many ways, totally at odds with the cliché of entitled old white guys who have been running this country from its inception.

Being as I have a sort pin-ball consciousness and I was pretty sure that none of the three of us wanted to just keep talking about our friend’s stroke, I came up with an idea, a little project for the three of us. And just as Arlo Guthrie really wanted to talk with us about the draft and not Alice’s Restaurant, this idea is what I really want to talk with you about, dear reader.

I suggested that the three of us collaborate to write a letter of resignation from old white guys, that we take it upon ourselves to acknowledge that in this nation, we have had more than a fair chance to make it all work, and that we have not done well. Even when it appears that we have done something great, if you look

closer, beneath that good thing are any number of disgusting things. So I suggested that we three write, “Old White Guys Submit Resignation Letter.” Here was my pitch.

If we imagine American old white guys as one organism (sadly, not that much of a stretch), the three of us would be the tiny part of that brain that has enough insight and perspective to write such a letter, the tiny part in which the remnants of a respectable standard of ethics can still be found.

Imagine now that we conspire to stay awake one night when the rest of the old white guy brain sleeps. Shhhh - let’s be sure it is snoozing soundly.

Get the paper, official old white guy letterhead, and the best fountain pen we can find... and while Trumpublicans, the Point-Missers and the Clueless dream of riches, power and war, we compose our letter. We resign. We admit to all of our shortcomings, our insatiable greed, our misogyny, our inexplicable racism, our deceptions, our despicable intentions. We confess it all. And before the evil geniuses and morons wake up, we fold our letter neatly, put it in an official old white guy linen envelope, put a stamp on it and mail it.

Now imagine the Old-White-Guy-Organism’s surprise when, in a couple of days (maybe 3 or 4 days) HE discovers he’s out of a job, that, in fact, HE RESIGNED. Keep in mind that we are part of the same bat-shit crazy brain and that our old white guy signature is as legal as the most poisonous among the rest of them.

And so our nation is saved by the three of us, well no, our nation is saved by a minority of brain matter that decided to stay up late one night and cause some trouble.

And finally -- imagine that as the Old-White-Guy-Brain totally freaks out and begins to melt like The Wicked Witch of the West, we three sit in the janitor’s closet, laughing our ethical asses off.

Thom Rutledge is a writer who identifies as Texan but has lived in Nashville, Tennessee for the past 40 years. Usually he writes self-helpful things, like Embracing Fear, The Self-Forgiveness Handbook, and The Greater Possibilities, but occasionally something like this slips out.