

# Freedom's View

A Commentary on Government from Atop the Capitol

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## ST. VALENTINE'S DAY: A LOOK BACK

### The World Is a Beautiful Place . . .

January 17, 1968

SAN FRANCISCO ~ Lawrence Ferlinghetti

The world is a beautiful place  
to be born into  
if you don't mind happiness  
not always being  
so very much fun  
if you don't mind a touch of hell  
now and then  
just when everything is fine  
because even in heaven  
they don't sing  
all the time

The world is a beautiful place  
to be born into  
if you don't mind some people dying  
all the time  
or maybe only starving  
some of the time  
which isn't half bad  
if it isn't you

Oh the world is a beautiful place  
to be born into  
if you don't much mind  
a few dead minds  
in the higher places  
or a bomb or two  
now and then

in your upturned faces  
or such other improprieties  
as our Name Brand society  
is prey to

with its men of distinction  
and its men of extinction  
and its priests  
and other patrolmen

and its various segregations  
and congressional investigations  
and other constipations  
that our fool flesh  
is heir to

Yes the world is the best place of all  
for a lot of such things as  
making the fun scene  
and making the love scene  
and making the sad scene  
and singing low songs and having  
inspirations  
and walking around  
looking at everything  
and smelling flowers  
and goosing statues  
and even thinking  
and kissing people and  
making babies and wearing pants  
and waving hats and  
dancing  
and going swimming in rivers  
on picnics  
in the middle of the summer  
and just generally  
'living it up'  
Yes  
but then right in the middle of it  
comes the smiling  
mortician



### Al Capone, "America's Most Wanted Man," Has Bugsy Moran's Gang Leaders Murdered

February 14, 1929

CHICAGO, IL (UPI)

The ongoing struggle for control of the bootlegging, prostitution, and gambling rackets appears to have been won by Al Capone's gang. Two gangsters, dressed as Chicago cops, interrupted a meeting of top leaders of George "Bugsy" Moran's gang in a garage on the North Side. The fake police lined the seven men up facing a brick wall. As near as can be determined, two other men armed with Tommy guns entered and, together with the phony cops, murdered their rivals. This latest horror is galvanizing public opinion, which is clamoring for the government to *finally* take vigorous action to end the gang warfare that has terrorized this city for five long years.

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VALENTINE CONTINUED PAGE 2

# ST. VALENTINE'S DAY: A REAL IMPOSITION

VALENTINE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



For considerably more than five long years, assailants using AR-15 rifles, the Tommy gun's descendent, have wreaked death and destruction on this nation. More often than not, the targets are young people in their schools. Now it has happened again in upscale Parkland, FL. The photo above bespeaks some of the terror felt by parents and children. It also suggests something more - and vital.

~ ~ ~

A Valentine's Day locket hangs on her neck chain, but that's not all she is celebrating today. Earlier, she visited her church where, as is customary on Ash Wednesday, a pastor or priest took ashes and, as the sign of the cross was made on her forehead, said: "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you will return." And so she began her observance of Lent, a 40-day time of introspection and self-examination for Christians.

The ritual is saying this: "Since you will die one day (and no one can know that time) *today* is a good day to 'repent' . . . to 'turn back around' from distracting pursuits that are not loving to yourself or others . . . and to take up once again your journey toward that Love which is *both* the path *and* the destination: here and hereafter."

The source of the ashes "imposed" on her forehead is instructive. They are from the burning of the palms that were waved with such an easy optimism on last year's Palm Sunday observance. "An easy optimism," since before the next Sunday rolled around after that first Palm Sunday, the recently-hailed Jesus would be executed as an enemy of the Roman Empire for advocating an allegiance to a different sort of kingdom. "My kingdom," said Jesus, "doesn't consist of what you see around you. If it did, my followers would fight so that I wouldn't be handed over to the (Jewish authorities.) But I'm not that kind of king, not the world's kind of king."

So on this Valentine's day, this mother's journey toward Love involved a kiss to her daughter's forehead and ashes placed upon her own. With a renewed awareness of the fleetingness of her own life, she began, perhaps again, turning back around from the "improprieties as our Name Brand society is prey to."

She was getting ready to greet her daughter whose school day would soon end, when she heard the news: an active shooter was at her daughter's

<sup>1</sup> "The Gospel of John," Chapter 18, Verse 36 (*The Message*, a translation and paraphrase.)

school. Knowing all-too-well the suffering that accompanies Love, she went to the school and got to embrace her daughter - one of the fortunate ones not killed or injured, except in her soul. Parents of seventeen others couldn't provide that welcome.

The 1929 St. Valentine's Day Massacre prompted an aroused Chicago citizenry to *demand* that their elected officials put an end to the violence on that city's streets. It was successful.

What might finally arouse and turn us back around from the addictive "impropriety" of allowing such Name Brand weapons designed for the battlefield to be available without so much as a background check?

In the language of the 4<sup>th</sup> step of 12-Step addiction recovery, making "a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves" is surely a place to begin. Ashes imposed on the forehead invite us to do just that sort of soul-searching. (The other 11 steps would be useful as well.<sup>2</sup>) If your self-examination leads you to take action, *consider not voting Republican*.<sup>3</sup> (See footnote.) **Like us, not a one of those 17 kid's morticians are smiling.**

<sup>2</sup> [www.recovery.org/topics/alcoholics-anonymous-12-step](http://www.recovery.org/topics/alcoholics-anonymous-12-step)

<sup>3</sup> See Paul Waldman's article in the February 15 *Washington Post*. He writes that the GOP, alone as a party, has decided "it will stop any and all efforts to address gun violence, no matter how reasonable they are and no matter how much of the public favors them, even something like universal back-ground checks that is supported by more than 90 percent of Americans. So if you vote for Republicans, you are voting to make sure we do absolutely nothing about this problem . . ." **Please read!**