

Freedom's View

A Commentary on Government from Atop the Capitol

Vol. 1 "All the other alternative facts you need to know" No. 23



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E PLURIBUS UNUM – WHAT IS NECESSARY

Armed Man Attacks Members of Republican Baseball Team

Gunman Killed; 5 Sent to Hospitals

June 14, 2017

ALEXANDRIA, VA ~ *Armed Freedom*

Although on the hot and humid side, today started out bright and beautiful.

"And what is so rare as a day in June?
Then, if ever, come perfect days;
Then Heaven tries the earth if it be in
tune,
And over it softly her warm ear lays:
Whether we look, or whether we
listen,
We hear life murmur, or see it glisten;
Every clod feels a stir of might,
An instinct within it that reaches and
towers,
And, groping blindly above it for light,
Climbs to a soul in grass and flowers;"¹

If, indeed, Heaven was trying the earth today, in this town at least it was charged with being egregiously out of tune. The blind groping for light amidst the darkened, moldy humus of our political discontent was stunned to immobility by the noise of violence, sirens of heroism, and the precise orders of surgeons in the O.R.

I took my stand atop the Capitol in the midst of political violence the likes of which this great nation had not seen before or since. In the following years



I have looked down on too many assassinations. Too much political violence. May it *never* return again.

While we do not yet know the twisted impulses and disordered thinking that led the shooter to act out his rage, apparently, he was fed up with President Trump.

Well, what else is new? So are we. But his act of political violence has *absolutely no place* in our political life. The shooter's action is just as abhorrent as any terrorist who seeks political ends through mindless violence.

Ever since the last presidential election began – was it 2015 or 2012? – we have been engaged in a process in which many of the 200 million of us "clods" – the eligible voters – felt our own stirring of might

and eventually cast our ballots. As rough and ornery as the process was - and now is – this is the way that we have always sought to help the nation climb to a soulful bloom.

In the immediate aftermath of the shooting, there were hands extended across the political aisles and prayers ascended without regard to party label. But as this day closes, fingers are already pointing at who is most responsible for "creating the climate" in which such violence could happen.

That, too, is part of the process, and so is our condemnation of it. So is our again pleading for each to own their own responsibility for vigorously entering into the fray, mindful of our unique responsibilities in doing so.

For we must not lose sight of what the gunman forgot: ours is a nation that seeks to bring one out of many: *e pluribus unum*. I stand upon a globe with that motto – *our* motto - engraved upon it. Freedom requires that we look beyond the narrow confines of our own self-interest to the many diverse interests of others. It requires living in the tension between our own agendas and respecting those of others. The gunman forgot that. But it is the reaching and towering instinct within us at our best: ours to remember.

¹ from *The Vision of Sir Launfal*, James Russell Lowell, 1848