

Freedom's View

A Commentary on Government from Atop the Capitol

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TRUMP LAYS AN EGG UPON LEARNING HE *ISN'T* THE COCK OF THE WALK

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WASHINGTON, DC ~ Truly, this Administration just keeps getting better and better, doesn't it? Upon being told by Reince Priebus in an early morning meeting that Mr. Trump "wasn't even close" to being the biggest cock of the walk in Washington, the President threw one of his characteristic fits, threatening Priebus with job loss as Chief of Staff for saying so.

I don't know who his sources are, but that's what Nat, the 15-foot tall blue rooster on top of the newly renovated East Wing of the National Gallery of Art, tells me. As you can tell from the photo, it's difficult for me to actually *see* Nat from where I stand: but we have our ways. Believe me! (*Ahem, sorry 'bout that!*)

Although we have yet to fact-check it with Ancestry.com, Nat tells me that, yes, he *is* a distant relation of the American Patriot Nathan Hale. (Nat's also a long-time Washington Nats fan, too! A confusing but true fact!)

Most who teach history worship at the Temple of Tediux Maximus, so you may have dozed off during the lecture on Nathan Hale. He was Connecticut's Revolutionary War soldier who spied on those lousy British, was captured by them, and said at his hanging in 1776: "I regret that I have but one life to lose for my country." Talk about a cock of the walk!



Having slimed the Brits of old, know that Nat is a *good, modern Brit* who once hung out in London's Trafalgar Square. When the Mayor of London removed Nat's covering, MSN UK headlined, "Boris Johnson unveils giant cock in Trafalgar Square." Ah, may there *always* be an England!

As to the gathering of intelligence in defense of liberty, Nat *owns* Constitution Avenue. He has a clear view all the way down to the Vietnam Veterans' War Memorial, where the names of 58,307 patriotic men and women who gave their lives in that sad war's misguided attempt to defend liberty are forever engraved. Defenders of liberty are needed *now!*

I'm telling you all this because Trump and his crowd are entirely too cocky in their understanding and application of *power*. So far, their use of power is to *dominate*: call that using *power-over*. They seem clueless about using power to *collaborate*: call that *power-with*.

These days, I find myself longing for the Isaiah-inspired invitations of

President Lyndon Johnson: "Come, let us reason together." And then there's the more vigorous determination of Theodore Roosevelt to "speak softly and carry a big stick." Mr. Trump's style is more "Twitter loudly, use threatening public put-downs, and make others fear your shtick."

That's the difference, respectively, between *power-with* and *power-over*. The President is a master of the latter. This was apparent even in how he chose to fire Acting Attorney General Sally Yates. He *may* have had the right to fire her for *insubordination*, which is a refusal to obey orders and is a term known to every employee.

But notice two things about *how* Mr. Trump exercised his power as her boss. First, he said she had *betrayed* the Department of Justice, yet her position *required* that she refuse to enforce an order she believed to be contrary to law. Just doing her job, she betrayed no one but Mr. Trump's insufferably inflated, self-righteous ego. Second, due to be replaced in just days at the helm of the DOJ by someone else, Trump could have privately given her hell and, had she still objected, given her the option to resign. Instead, *he publically and unjustly insulted her integrity and fired her on the spot*. This is yet another example of the man exercising his *power over a woman*, this time without grabbing her genitals. Hardly an improvement.

ALLOW ME TO USE MY POWER TO PERSUADE YOU

(Academic, a professor and the brother of Armed Freedom, suggested this teach-in)

In spite of all you've just read . . . and of what you're yet to read below . . . I usually prefer a more demure use of the English tongue. But if you've ever had occasion to write something more sophisticated than a grocery list, you're keenly aware that when you are already into a serviceable metaphor, it seems a shame not to drive it completely into the ground, praying earnestly while down on your knees that doing so will not cause it to fail. You've been warned.

Nat is a Cockney, a native of London's East End. He says all over England a male rooster is known as a cockerel. In the Middle Ages, the cockerel was often employed as an important symbol of regeneration, awakening and strength. Further, its crowing is even prophetic: it heralds the dawn before most of us know it's even coming.

I know what you're thinking, but DON'T DO IT! *The last thing* we need is to see a bunch of folks wearing hats like this:



Trump's use of cocky, *power-over* tactics is quite sufficient, thank you. The cockerel will announce the dawning of True American Greatness when he observes the use of *power-with*, collaborative political activities.

It is principally through *that* way of exercising power that outcomes are produced which are *both effective and just for all parties concerned*. It's part of what makes America great.

As you may already know, my job up here is simply to observe what our government is doing, and shout out loudly only when it is actually in the process of undermining our country's foundational values and practices. Otherwise, I leave the normal, noisy wrangling over specific policies to the parties themselves.

The problem is that the not-so-highly-evolved egos of too many politicians instinctively and routinely lead them to opt for *power-over* solutions. *That* can strike hard at those foundations.

A case in point is the Republican Party's insistence on dismantling affordable healthcare *before* having anything to put in its place. They're like that ignorant fellow sawing off a tree limb while sitting on the wrong side of it. But others, burdened down Americans, are sitting *next* to them. Their highly partisan behavior makes those folks fall down into a medical limbo that lies somewhere between ObamaCare and TrumpDon't.

The GOP's no-to-everything, know-nothing ideologues are set to *replace* Obamacare rather than to *repair* it. *Their power-over tactics will hurt millions of American people*. That's not a partisan issue so much as it is a foundational one. We all would do well to address it as such.

Did you notice that in the foregoing column, I demurely omitted any phallic metaphors? *Well it's relapse time!* A final way of driving home the point that *power-over* solutions should be *more a condiment than a main dish* is to tell you a story. It's a cockamamie story Nat once told me about using *power-with* methods to find a solution to a vexing problem affecting many.

One day a Scottish Sergeant Major walks up to the town's chemist (a pharmacist to us Yanks) and he pulls out of his coat pocket a very much overused, nearly shredded condom. It's a dreadful sight. "How much t' replace an' how much t' repair?" the Sergeant Major asks in his thick brogue. "50 pence to replace and 25 pence to repair," says the bemused chemist. "Very well," replies the Sergeant Major. Saluting the chemist smartly, he says, "I shall return upon the 'morrow!" He leaves. The next day the Sergeant Major again walks up to the chemist, salutes and announces, "The regiment says, 'Repair!"

So remember that story or, more tastefully, just the point it seeks to illustrate. The next time any of our elected officials in the Administration or up on Capitol Hill start using *power-over* tactics, see if they really need to do so. Sometimes yes. Far more often, no.

Got to run. Nat and I have a date tonight. Ciao!

~ Armed Freedom