



Written by [Ralph R. Reiland](#) on April 6, 2017

“Imagine,” Part II: Peace, Love, and Violent Fantasies

With more spook and snoop accusations surfacing nearly every day related to supposed Russkie moles penetrating Trump’s inner circle, followed each night by a string of Trump-phobic hosts on MSNBC breathlessly and jubilantly focusing on every potential pothole that might be damaging enough to undermine Donald Trump on his way to trying to make America bang-up spectacular again, I’m starting to feel like I’m in a spy thriller instead of just getting a straight shot of the news.



The cumulative impact of the resulting state of heightened anxiety, fright, polarization, and repetitious demonizing has some people afraid to talk. One friend of mine, educated, esthetic and generally unruffled, is looking for a condo in Toronto’s Queen Street art district. Another says it’s not safe to be negative about Trump on the phone or safe to participate in protests.

“They shot one dissenter four times in the back, they poisoned another one, twice, and one dissident fell out the window of his fourth-story apartment,” she said. “They call it ‘Putin them out the window.’ ”

All the incidents she mentioned occurred in Russia and she lives in Pittsburgh in an untroubled cul-de-sac. Call me pollyannaish but I think she’ll be safe this summer sitting on her porch talking about how Republican politicians, after nearly a decade of bellyaching about Obamacare, weren’t ready with replacement legislation when it was their turn at bat, and safe even if she sits all day in her old wicker rocker and complains to neighbors about how much of the tab taxpayers will be forced to pick up for Donald Trump’s weekend jaunts to Mar-a-Lago.

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At higher and more lettered levels, too, there’s high disapproval about Trump and resulting fear that’s turning into chilling conclusions.

In the March 2 issue of the *London Review of Books*, contributing editor Adam Shatz, based in New York, writes that he was “recently on the phone with a woman in her seventies who asked why someone couldn’t ‘put a contract on ...’ I interrupted her; better not to say it.”

Shatz goes on to describe the extended reach and depth of the anti-Trump hostility: “Talk of violence, civil war, and secession is in the air in the blue states today. Many, perhaps most of us who live in coastal cities have found ourselves having criminal thoughts and violent fantasies since 9 November.”

Some of the criminal thoughts and slam-bang fantasies, says Shatz, “involve Trump and Steve Bannon; others involve white supremacists like Richard Spencer and Milo Yiannopoulo; still others involve the fabled white working class that is supposed to have voted for Trump (the reality is more complicated than that, I know) which most of us have found it easier to hate than persuade. (I’m as guilty as the next person.) These feelings provide a measure of psychological release, but they are also difficult to manage. Living with bile and rage is not pleasant; it eats away at the soul, when the adrenaline subsides.”



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What happened to peace, love and little donuts, Gandhian pacifism and the gentle people in San Francisco with flowers in their hair? As Shatz comments regarding Trump and the liberal meltdowns and the emerging violent fantasies on the Left, “If he had a sense of irony, he might draw a perverse pleasure from the fact that he has provoked otherwise pacific people into dreaming of violence — and dreaming that violence is their only resort against him.”

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