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## Managing Trump's Anger, And Mine



By Marty Kaplan



SCOTT EISEN VIA GETTY IMAGES

Donald Trump needs help with anger management. So do I.

At a Saturday rally in a hot New Hampshire gym, Trump called Hillary Clinton “unstable,” “unbalanced” and “totally unhinged.” “She is,” he said, “a horrible, horrible human being.”

That made me want to do to Trump what he wanted to do when “a very little guy” — bigger billionaire Mike Bloomberg — questioned his sanity: “I was going to hit this guy so hard his head would spin, he wouldn’t know what the hell happened.”

Of course that’s what Trump wants me to do: Descend to his level.

In theory, I know how to manage that. Take deep breaths. Remind myself it’s Trump who’s unhinged. A marker of his disorder is projective identification — splitting off his own derangement and attributing it to other people. The “horrible, horrible human being” is the Donald nailing the Donald.

Sometimes this works. My fury subsides, along with my fear he’ll be elected. If I see what a sociopath he is, surely enough other Americans see it to fire him in November.

No wonder Trump is preemptively depicting himself not as a loser, but as the victim of a rigged election. You know he won’t go away quietly. Nor will his base, whose fire he has recklessly stoked. I can’t believe he’d give a gracious concession speech, a call to come together and support the one president our nation has. He’s more likely to summon a retributive movement — a fifth column of Trumpistas.

This is the obligatory moment for me to say something empathic about his supporters. Their anger, as even Clinton has said, is understandable. They’ve been left behind by an economy that hasn’t worked for them; they don’t recognize the America they once knew; they’re fearful of what the future holds for their families.

Those are legitimate fears, and their anger at how Washington has stiffed them, like the anger of Bernie Sanders' supporters at the corrupt campaign finance system, is warranted. What's not warranted is the scapegoating, racism, misogyny, xenophobia and violence that Trump ignites in them. What's indefensible is the permission that the nicest, least rabid of Trump's rally-goers give to the rabble whose rage Trump has uncorked.

Until last week, when the *New York Times* ran an uncensored video compilation of Trump supporters at his rallies, I didn't understand how horrifying his crowds are. That's because the *Times*, like almost all TV news, bleeps profanity and hate speech; because the Trump campaign traps cameras and correspondents in a press pen, preventing them from covering the crowd; and because, until three *Times* reporters — Erica Berenstein, Nick Corasaniti and Ashley Parker — pointed it out, I didn't realize what enablers the courteous people at his rallies turn out to be.

The *Times*' brand is civil discourse. The box at the top of its front page says, "All the News That's Fit to Print." It's why the paper's nickname is "the Gray Lady": the *Times* won't run content that's not safe for work or for grandma. But now, in a good way, the Gray Lady is a tramp. To give us a true feel for Trump's rallies, the paper has lifted its ban on obscenity to report content that's not safe for America.

Those three reporters managed to escape the press pen and shoot on cellphones. The three-minute compilation is full of f-bombs — I counted 10, not including T-shirts. You can imagine their targets: F Muslims. F Islam. F [n-word]. F "those dirty beaners." F political correctness. F Hillary Clinton (and "hang her" and "kill her").

There's also a "*Seig Heil*."

You may think you already know how crude Trump's rallies are, but actually hearing that language in a news story is a thunderclap. The video will depress and frighten you, but you have to watch it.

Critics say the reporters edited unrepresentative footage into a hit job. The reporters dispute that; they've seen this behavior at Trump rallies throughout the campaign and around the country. Critics say this happens at Democratic rallies, too, but that's false; it's not an everyone-does-it thing. Vicious catcalling from the crowd, the reporters note, is "inextricably bound up with the Trump show itself."

Also unique to the Trump show is the complicity of the "polite, well mannered" people in the crowd, who "seldom express disapproval" of the ugly. At the video's end Trump says, "This is a movement like people have never seen before." But the safe space he's made for haters and their fellow travelers reminded many online commenters of another movement, born in Berlin in the 1930s, and of the Good Germans who failed to fight it.

Anger can be righteous, not sick. On Sunday, CNN media reporter Brian Stelter ended his show with an essay about Trump's dangerous, baseless claim that the election will be rigged. Stelter is a steady, unflappable pro, but as the essay went on, as he called out conservative figures like Sean Hannity for not challenging Trump, you could see him simmering. He closed, sharply, with this: "Right now it is the Republican candidate for president who is trying to delegitimize our democratic process without proof. It is unpatriotic for any interviewer, for any journalist, to help him."

Wow: unpatriotic. Angry, and apt.

*This is a crosspost of my column in the Jewish Journal, where you can reach me if you'd like at [martyk@jewishjournal.com](mailto:martyk@jewishjournal.com).*

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