

Some things are hard to write, which is why this has been simmering on the back burner of my mind for a number of weeks now. Unfortunately, with the midterm election only eight weeks out, it would be irresponsible for me not to comment on an issue that remains misunderstood regarding the Trump presidency and why it represents such a threat to the near future. For some people it will be hard to read without being motivated to anger, because it's about anger and how anger can be manipulated. It's seeded with personal experiences and concerns in part when to believe what you see and hear as opposed to relying on sources that other people represent as credible. And it's complex, including many facets that have come together in just such a way to make now such a pivotal moment in history, so I ask you to bear with me. In particular, if you feel that there's some truth to what I'm writing that applies to you, then I beseech you to give me a chance and read to the end, because I believe the best hope for our country and our democratic way of life is in your hands.

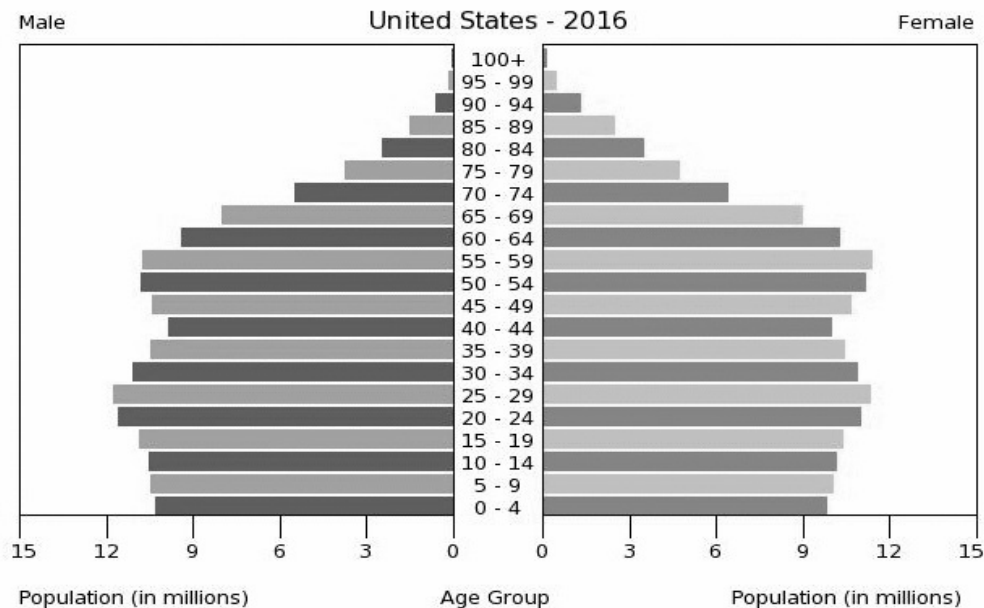
Many reading this aren't going to have any reference point for the following, but I've caught the undercurrent of it several times in the last decade precisely because I'm a middle-aged white man that doesn't come across as particularly liberal. One example was five years ago at a friend's Independence Day party. His stepdad, out of the blue, started talking about how there's going to be a revolution. His face got all red and he was at the point of seething with rage, really, talking about how bad things are as he looks out over the field whistfully as if poor people are getting ready to come seize his property. I didn't know this guy from Sam, or vice versa, but at the time I was thinking, *I see this guy's giant pickup truck and get the sense that he's wealthy, what can he possibly be so angry about?* This was five years into the Obama presidency, and the economy was doing great, but it was clear that his anger stemmed from the idea of poor people, or minorities, stepping on his lawn or coming to take his stuff. My feeling in 2018 on this issue is the same as 2013. White people have it pretty darned good in this country. Most all of us of whatever race have it pretty good thanks to sacrifices made by some and enlightened choices by others, a great many of them older white men, and most people have the opportunity to improve themselves and future generations. Why would anyone want to jeopardize this by fueling hateful talk of conflict and revolution; especially someone who has so much?

I got the same speech from another friend, a white guy of around 70, two years later. This decent, mild-mannered, respect-worthy guy started telling me, bordering on shaking with anger, that we're headed for a revolution. Without my bringing it up, he also interjected that Fox News is stupid, and that he doesn't watch it. His unsolicited knock on Fox News suggests to me that he knows on some level that the angry, white revolutionary spirit that Fox News nurtures somehow informs his rage, even though he doesn't watch it. Still, my question for him is the same, as he talks about armed groups of Americans fighting and killing one another, though clearly he's making the case to me that it's the fault of others who are somehow outsiders to us. What is the source of your rage that you feel justified in speaking to me so, as though I'm on the naive or ignorantly uninformed side? I can say here that when we justify harming others, such as killing them and taking their possessions, because we convince ourselves that they're going to harm us, that is the very nature of evil. Once you're operating with this mindset, it becomes difficult to see the lines that separate fear, self defense and greed. Family first can become a mantra of murder, and it just happens to be the opposite of Jesus' teaching and the accompanying lessons.

Admittedly, these are only two examples, but we tend to best remember details of the most vivid examples, which will factor in later in this letter. But I've heard snippets of these conversations more times than I could remember, and the whiter, older and male-er you are, and the angrier you seem, the more likely you are to have heard them yourself. For instance, we were lingering and waiting for people to get up from a table at an open-seating restaurant, and when another group of white people walked up and swiped it, and older white friend erupted, "That's just like an Obama supporter!" And just tonight, when I interrupted a woman's *God is coming* speech to say that she's hastening it by voting a maniac for President, the first justification out of her mouth was, "Muslim's are taking over this country." So I invited the last one. But it isn't a mere minority of Trump's base that espouse these reactionary fears and invitations to violence. The majority of whites in this age group share this mindset to varying degrees.

I've been asked, *what is the nature of this coming conflict?* which these people perceive themselves to be preemptively preparing to fight in self defense. *Is it what versus black, liberal versus conservative, old versus young, white versus Muslim, rich versus poor?* Depending who you hear it from, it's fair to answer *all of the above*. I often think people don't even know who their perceived enemies are, but they know they're out there. It isn't hard to imagine a person who starts out hating Muslims, despite not knowing any, ending up responsible for their crippled neighbor or homosexual dentist being put to death. It has happened that way in the past.

A fair response from some would be that this kind of blind anger could describe numerous older white men throughout history. *Stay off my lawn you damned kids!* I'm not suggesting that it's necessarily a bad thing on its own. Older, more conservative voters have likely tempered the liberal impulses of the young and impetuous over the years in positive ways that I won't begin to explore here. But there are some factors that make today unique in bringing about a sudden shift in policy that's detrimental in a number of ways. If you take a standard population pyramid with steady growth, it's always biggest on the bottom. With steady growth more babies are born than generations before, and in any particular year the bottom of the graph, age 0-9 is the widest bar. Then there's a gradual narrowing as every next decade is measured from youngest to oldest, thus the term *pyramid*. Here's the United States population graph in 2016.



The pyramid aspect of it is thrown off by an excessive bulge toward the top. If you just eyeball it, there are an additional 22 million-or-so Americans between the ages of 45 and 69 than you would find had the United States population grown steadily, and not surprisingly this group of voters was most likely to vote for Donald Trump. This anomaly alone could account for the 2016 election result.

While population generally is a necessary element in the equation, it is only one factor of what amounts to a much larger concern. The second is a question of how we accumulate information. So-called conservative talk radio started to become a force in politics in the early nineties, where like-thinking individuals could go to hear alternative versions of the news. As a young, conservative-leaning disputant of Bill Clinton who spent a lot of time on the road, I can remember listening to some G. Gordon Liddy and Rush Limbaugh, though I became bored with it long before I soured on George Bush and the Iraq War. Part of their sales technique is to imply that basic news outlets are in actuality deceptive liberal propaganda machines. While I could see through that even as a Bush voter initially, people who chose to believe in an alternate reality now had the opportunity to have their belief continually reinforced. News is *fake news* if real news outlets are producing it. Taking advantage of this general vibe, Fox News launched in 1996 to 17 million cable subscribers, and as of 2015 approximately 95 million US households have access. So as opposed to simply hearing a voice on the radio, people now have the option of viewing this alternative version of the news, engineered to reinforce its own messaging, 24/7.

It's necessary to point out here that while Fox News is producing an alternative version of the news, as a network it still has to produce news that has basis in fact. For instance, if there is a prison riot in Lucasville, Fox News may find it profitable to show it in a way that inflames race-based fears. It could show violent pictures of prisoners raging and wielding improvised weapons, taking hostages and torturing guards. It could revisit the issue on each successive program of a particular news day, or multiple days, showing the same footage or alternating between shots so that it doesn't appear too repetitive, while the Fox News commentators engage in discussions on violence in society. Perhaps they splice in Donald Trump making a compassionate, intelligent comment, condemning the violence and supporting the victims, while omitting other tweets and commentary. Maybe interview a guard who was tortured on a later date. Another news source, perhaps CBS, might simply report the same story as basic news, one story among a dozen others. CBS might even devote a segment on 60 Minutes somewhere down the line, but on CBS News, it was a newsworthy event and the facts were reported. On Fox News the same story is made into a reason to conclude that these animals who have been locked down need to be locked down even harder. *And they get three square meals a day for just sitting around!* And Fox News and conservative outlets can fulfill their own prophecies by angrily bemoaning, *Why isn't this being talked about?*, reinforcing the idea that the rest of the news world is hiding something.

But Fox News is still somewhat limited to reporting the events that happen, whatever lens they may use. There has to actually be a Lucasville prison riot to report, though I would hope that a person reading my fictitious, but arguably realistic, example can see how if you limited yourself to this particular view of the world, you might tend to become more and more angry. If you've read this far and have found yourself being described, then ask yourself how would it make you feel if you saw this presented as I've described. Maybe you don't watch Fox News or listen to

any conservative radio, but your peers tend to be your age group or otherwise like minded, so many of them have seen these stories intentionally engineered to play upon their anger. When the sentiments are coming at you from different sides, from people you enjoy and respect, and it's a fact that innocent people have died, it's understandable that it starts to seem like it's everywhere. It feels like something worth being angry about, and the encouragement for your anger is coming from multiple sides. And sometimes, especially when you get older and find your strength and beauty waning, it feels better to be angry than powerless. *I demand the truth in Benghazi!* F.B.I. investigations be damned, Fox News just keeps fanning the flames.

Continuing on this point, people conditioned to believe that actual news is fake news are going to be more likely to be taken in by actual fake news, and that's where the internet comes in. Anyone who sends and receives email as part of their personal life has some sense of the stories that are passed around the internet, because we've all received them, though we don't all see them the same way. And it's morphed from emails into Facebook postings and the like. Much of it passes itself off as news, whether in the form of an article, an opinion piece like this letter I'm writing now, a public service announcement or a dire warning. While there are election campaign laws that govern the distribution of false material on the internet, the reality is that it's the wild west when it comes to truth, and we're all limited by our own consciences when it comes to deciding what's true and what to distribute to others.

There was a time when I received the kind of emails intended to enrage the senses concerning topics like those covered by the would-be revolutionaries in my earlier paragraphs; Obama is secretly a Muslim terrorist, Muslims are taking over the world, videos of a white man being beaten mercilessly by a group of African-American kids, conspiracies to take our guns, etc. And I've learned that you never have to ask to be taken off of a list like that. All you need do is send evidence that the video or news story is fake, and in my experience the sender will take you off of his or her list. I have numerous friends and family all along the political spectrum, and it was only a decade or so ago when it was generally accepted on both sides of the aisle that you could use a website like Snopes.com to dispute the facts of an article. My impression is that it's not true anymore. While my letters still reach conservative friends, who might occasionally comment, I've come to believe that politically-opposed friends who used to send me their material have cut me out of their loop. They may want to debate the merits of their argument, but they don't want to be told that the bases for their beliefs are factually inaccurate.

This link in my chain of causation is not a novel observation but more of a generally-accepted fact. A person disagreeing with my concerns regarding the Donald Trump presidency and the white provocateurs to civil war it represents would likely point out, *Everyone does this!* In their opinion, everyone is insulated in a belief system where they only read news they agree with. I have to acknowledge this position without getting into a separate discussion, but my experience is that the people angry enough to be threatening revolution, and supporting the political segment that nurtures the belief, are more vulnerable to it. The *fake news* preconditioning is definitely a factor, because it necessarily impugns any source that might generally be accepted as real. Sources typically sought and relied upon for decades such as scientists, F.B.I. Directors and network news stations are all liars acting on secret agendas if they claim to have facts that refute your belief system.

So, similar to the above example with the prison riot, imagine that an article goes around showing Muslim men all appearing to be in their 20s and 30s, mostly bearded, with mostly dirty, drab clothing. The byline sounds like it might be a legitimate news source, though it's something most people reading this will never have heard of, and the title is, *The REAL Muslim immigrants!* Will it ultimately matter to those instantly angered if the picture is from a different country, and a different time? The impression permanently planted, or reinforced, in the mind of the reader is that immigrants aren't families seeking refuge, but young men sent to commit acts of terrorism. Then when they see a conservative news outlet presenting a verifiable story about illegal immigrants committing crimes, their fear is verified, whether or not illegal immigrants are more or less likely to commit crimes than anyone else. I just typed *are illegal immigrants more likely to commit crimes* onto a standard search engine. The first link on the list that pops is an article from the *Conservative Review*, which vehemently answers yes. The *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*, the second and third links to pop up, both say no with the same degree of emphasis. All three are vague as to their data. Some people might choose to just jump to the *Conservative Review* and stop there, but it's hard for me to imagine what degree of general credibility it has established. For point of comparison, I'm well familiar with the other two sources, though I've never regularly read either of them. I understand the perceived liberal bias of the *New York Times*, but is the *Wall Street Journal* now fake news? It has always been widely regarded as conservative in the past.

When the F.B.I. concludes that Russia, a traditional adversary of freedom, democracy, Ronald Reagan and the United States, interfered in the election to swing the vote from Donald Trump to Hillary Clinton, it shouldn't be a surprise when the *Conservative Reviews* of the world jump to the conclusion that the F.B.I. investigation is somehow a product of a Deep State liberal machine. As few as ten years ago, the idea that the autocratic leader (that's today's polite way of saying despotic tyrant) of Russia would direct the manipulation of an American election would have been considered an act of war by conservatives. But when the F.B.I. concludes that it was so to get Donald Trump elected, even more reputable conservative sources insist upon skepticism. In a similar vein, when the F.B.I. concludes no deliberate wrongdoing on the part of Hillary Clinton with the Benghazi terrorist attack that left four Americans dead, these same sources ignore the results and continue to insist of further investigation. Type in *Hillary Clinton is a murderer*, and there's no end to the accusations. Drive around in the country all over Ohio, and you'll find people still have up yard signs that read, *Put her in jail!* They may be the fringe, but these are people who have decided that they will support one side, which is now the Republican party as led by President Trump, no matter what happens and no matter what evidence is presented to them, for or against. No F.B.I. investigation, no climate-change data, no drought or the effects thereof, no information from any source is going to change their minds, because any information that conflicts with their world view will be fake news in their minds. These may be a minority of Americans, and a minority of conservatives in many places, but many Republicans candidates and office holders have shaped themselves and their policies to attract these voters. And these voters are winning the day and pulling once moderate conservatives, and the rest of the country, down with them.

I'll make one more small point before moving on regarding the internet, and the disbursement of news generally, that heavily informs, or misinforms, this line of reasoning. You might have

recently read an article about an eight-year-old girl walking her daughter alone where the police were called, and the mother was investigated by child services. My understanding is that no wrongdoing was found, but the incident is now on the mother's permanent record, and that it could be a factor in the child being taken into custody by the state down the road. The person telling me about it said that people have gotten so stupid. I failed to ask him at the time if he believes that people used to really have it all figured out in the before time, and the modern era has now made them stupid.

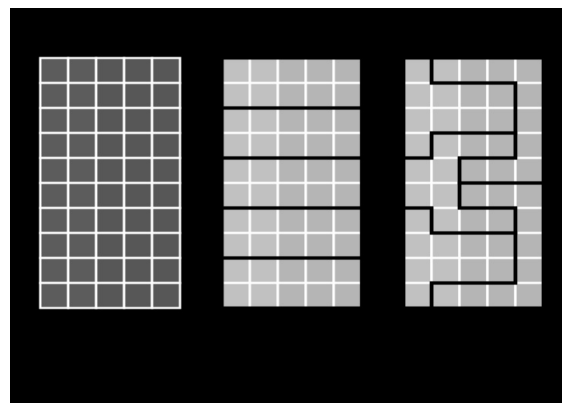
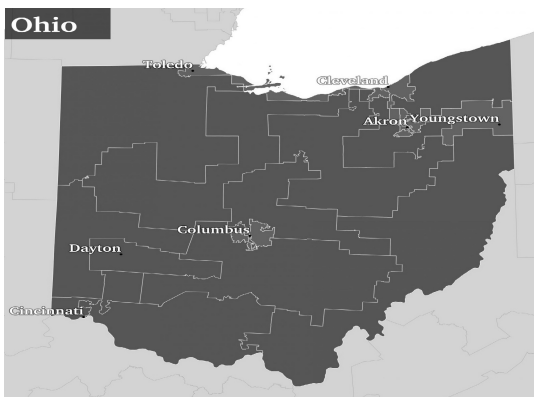
While it may not be the description I would use, I do agree with him that the neighbors calling the police was stupid. But the article well illustrates the point that the most ridiculous behaviors of people grow to seem like the norm once on the internet, and it reinforces the idea that this is happening everywhere. If you type in *8 year old walks dog alone*, eighteen of the first twenty links on the first page are reports from 18 different news programs or web sites, from Fox to CBS to CNN. Six of them are videos, and the first three of those are from Fox News programming, all on the same day. It also illustrates the reinforcement of the climate of fear, of crime, of the state meddling in people's private affairs, of neighbors getting in your business. There are 330 million people in the United States, but a non-incident in Wilmette, Illinois is national news. And my experience has been that the people who complain most about the environment of hysteria are the most afraid of crime and illegal immigration. People get to the point where they can't tell what's real and what isn't, so they call for walls to be built between countries (like North Korea or ancient imperial Rome or China) and support trade wars without having an understanding of the economic impacts.

And this gets to the third and final leg of this analysis, where the rule of law breaks down. When we choose to believe that the law exists only to protect people who share our belief system, or we believe that the law illegitimately protects the people who don't, then it becomes easier to break the law and declare moral impunity. If lawlessness goes unaddressed, then those who break the law and get away with it reinforce this emerging reality, both in their own minds and in the public consciousness. The people who angrily threaten violence become emboldened, and those who believe in the public trust, in acting within the law for the common good, become marginalized.

There has been no more perfect display of lawlessness than when Anonin Scalia died in February of 2016, almost a full nine months before the upcoming November election. Article II, Section II of the Constitution empowered the President of the United States to nominate and, with advice and consent of the Senate, appoint a new Supreme Court justice to replace Scalia. But the Senate refused to do their duty under the law. Within an hour of Scalia's death, Senate President Mitch McConnell held a press conference and declared, "The American people should have a voice in the selection of their next Supreme Court Justice. Therefore, this vacancy should not be filled until we have a new president." Only the Constitution doesn't leave this choice up to the American people, but to the President, which was Barack Obama, and Obama dutifully nominated Merrick Garland, widely considered to be a political moderate. So-called conservatives praised this direct affront to Constitutional law, and, in a massive dereliction of duty, Obama and the Democrats simply backed down, gambling that Hillary Clinton would be elected. And since no one else will say it, I'll write it here. They were afraid. Obama and the

Democrats were afraid to make a strong stand because they feared the violence and upheaval that could follow. This isn't the rule of law. This is mob rule, which is historically what happens when a strong-man dictator takes over. This is 38% of the country saying to the other 62%, *we have the guns, and we parade them around with the open carry that we voted for ourselves, a step at a time, and if you don't give us our way, there will be blood.* That's what lawlessness is, when fear of Muslim immigrants (Muslims make up 1.1% of the U.S. population) and minorities, and young people, and homosexuals and transsexuals, convinces the few that they're above the law. They believe that they are above the law, and unless a balance is restored, they will continue moving us from the America we've known the last several decades to something much more like the autocratic government in Russia now.

Our democracy has functioned so that we historically govern from the center with notable exceptions being awful times of division such as the Reconstruction period following the U.S. Civil War. Despite our relative prosperity, which has been high during my entire lifetime, we've been trending toward polarization since the mid 1990s, and a major factor in this polarization is gerrymandering. Because many people don't really understand what gerrymandering is, I've included two maps, one being the Ohio Congressional Map and the other a more generic map explaining how population can be divided. The Ohio map lines were drawn by the Republicans who held the majority in 2011. In 2012 Barack Obama won 50% of the vote to Romney's 47%. Yet that same year, because the districts were drawn to block Democrat-leaning precincts together, Democrats won only 4 of Ohio's 16 Congressional seats. The graphic to the right gives a simpler example of how this works. 60% of the blocks in the right example are voting blue. If the districts were drawn as in the middle example, all five districts would vote blue. That would be arguably unfair, giving the red blocks no Congressional representatives even though they're 40% of the voters. If instead the precincts are divided up in a way that packs all the blue blocks together, as the right-hand example, then the result is also unfair, as 40% of voters now get 60% representation.



As you can see from the actual Ohio Congressional map, the district lines can be drawn in a way that's much more complex, and the result is much more egregious. With a roughly 50/50 split between Republicans and Democrats, the 16 Ohio Congressional seats should be split 8 to 8 or perhaps 9 to 7, which is very close to the actual split prior to the 2011 redistricting. 12 to 4 is an absurd result, with the majority of Ohio's major universities blocked off with liberal-leaning urban voters, black and white, while the rest is stacked so that the other twelve districts have a

majority of precincts that vote Republican. If you were on the blue side, you'd say, *We're being cheated. This isn't anything close to one man one vote.* And you would be right. An additional detriment to a democratic system, in addition to the votes of one side being marginalized, is that both sides are pushed to extremes. The districts are drawn so that a Democrat is very unlikely to win in 12 of them, and it's impossible for a Republican to win in the other four. The red candidates are trying to out extreme the other red candidates, and the blue candidates are doing the same. The complexity of political thought is lost, and compromise becomes very difficult. The result has been that moderate Republicans have stepped away, and the President can openly deride a dedicated public servant like John McCain and the new right laughs about it. 38% of Americans effectively bully everyone else into accepting this new style of governance. *If you don't vote for Balderson, then you must be for Nancy Pelosi, you fink!!* They got their President, and the momentum of this shift appears to be that they'll be able to keep changing the laws, or ignoring them, until they have the same unchallengeable position that Vladimir Putin currently enjoys; the same Vladimir Putin that helped to orchestrate the election of Donald Trump, despite Trump losing the popular vote by 3 million ballots. Fear based governance. Make people believe that they're afraid of your opponents and Muslim infiltrators when in fact they're afraid of this new right and the unpredictable nature of their leader and their governance.

We can hope there's a light at the end of the tunnel with gerrymandering in Ohio. Voters passed an Ohio Constitutional Amendment to redistrict with a bipartisan board that is to follow guidelines that should reduce gerrymandering. My question to Ohioans, and the rest of the country, is this: What are you going to do if Trump remains President, and Congress remains in the hands of the new right, and they say, *Yeah, that's an interesting idea, but we're going to doing what WE want. This world we live in is too dangerous for us to be bound by laws. Maybe we'll redistrict later, if we feel like it.* They already said f—k you to their Constitutional responsibility. Why wouldn't they say no to this, when it means a three to four seat shift in Ohio and how many other states? Obama didn't have the guts to stand up to them. Too many Republican moderates have simply given up and walked off the job.

So I have to ask the older white men who are telling me that there's going to be a war, or a civil war, or a revolution, as though it's a threat, veiled or otherwise, is this what you intended? Are you so infuriated that the law, our Constitutional democracy, is no longer working for you that you're willing to back a repudiation of that law, of the things that great men and women fought and died for? To anyone who would angrily bring up to me, or to others, that Muslims or blacks, illegal immigrants or minorities, etc., are taking over this country, what's your end game? Do you intend to instigate Americans killing one another, or some kind of general purge where groups of people are putting people who believe differently in camps or prisons, or maybe deported to an island somewhere? Because that's what it sounds like. When you engage in these discussions with people who are more like minded, what is it that you ultimately want to see happen if not mass killings?

You tell me, shaking with rage, that there's going to be a revolution. Who do you envision fighting it? The people I've heard this from so far are in their forties or older. Is it going to be you, going from house to house, clearing people out, and shooting those who don't comply; who don't peacefully relinquish their property and come along quietly? I have to assume that you

don't think it's going to happen tomorrow. This assumption is made despite so-called conservatives electing the man we all knew was most likely to throw kindling on this fire because he said he would do it, and has in fact done just as he said he would. He's broken nation's word and walked away from treaties, ratcheting up tension and making the world less safe. He's walked us back from years of modest progress combating climate change, practically assuring that future incidences of drought, starvation and extreme weather will be both more frequent and more severe. This, apparently, is what roughly 38% of Americans want, as his approval rating continues to hover at that point, with the majority of those being whites my age or older. When you come to me talking about revolution, it sounds like a threat or an invitation. Am I reading this correctly?

Envision this. A young white man is holding a pistol and shoots a Muslim man in the back of the head. It shouldn't be too hard, given all the talk I'm hearing. My son is fourteen. Is that who you're setting up to do this purging and killing? Is that, ultimately, the plan not so far down the road? I've raised my children to be brave, to play contact sports, to engage in conversations with both other kids and adults without fear. They are all independent and enjoy camping, climbing and hiking in the woods. But I haven't taught them to fight the way I did, and my strong preference is that they never have to take up arms against anyone. Even at this late hour in our history that is an achievable goal, and if it's achievable then it's the one we should all feel compelled to work toward if we believe it to be our duty, our Commandment, to love our neighbors as ourselves and to do unto others as we would have them do to us.

While this letter primarily concerns mostly older white folks I've known who keep adding fuel to the fire in attempting to ignite a war between races, you can apply other subjects to the general analysis. Global warming is a greater example. If you're seventy, and you aren't especially focused on the future well being of those significantly younger than you are, it's easier to ignore the people who study the climate as their occupations and say you don't believe in global warming. If you aren't involved in the lives of your children's children, what impetus do you have to really worry about future conflict that might be caused by mass drought and starvation, and the global unrest that is likely to result? If you believe that Muslims are taking over America, maybe you even see a long-term advantage to other people dying. The articles your peers read on the internet say it's a hoax, an invention of the deep state to control you, and ultimately your right to drive an oversized pickup truck could be in peril, so what personal impetus is there for you to believe it? And the discussions you have with peers confirm that the public education system has gone into the toilet. You wouldn't vote to give them another penny to waste. Sure, you and practically all your friends attended taxpayer-financed public schools, *but things were different then*. But it might change the analysis when you regularly babysit your grandchildren and come to their football and softball games, and you know they can't afford private school and want them to have a public education that's competitive with other first-world nations. It might appear differently to you if you can picture their children living in a world where millions are starving to death because the water is no longer evaporating from the now much deeper oceans as it once did, and now there isn't enough to irrigate or even share, though it could have been much different. Donald Trump of course has made his best efforts to pull the United States out of environmental treaties, and he's put a climate-change denier in charge of the Environmental Protection Agency and put an advocate of for-profit schools in charge of the

Department of Education. If you aren't specifically worried about any future Americans, because your life isn't about them, then it's easier to focus on making sure your last penny stays in your bank account until the end. Because providing decent public education isn't free, and protecting the environment for the future does require some sacrifices now.

Some people do want civil war. That can't be helped, and Americans are entitled to express their opinions. It is human nature that many, I've always said roughly one third, will default to might makes right, whether out of fear for self or simply basic greed. Join the strongest side, get your crumbs from the table where the weak side is devoured. But most of us don't want it to be this way. Most of us want to live in a world of laws, where we can at least hold as an aspiration that treating our neighbors as ourselves is the path to making the world most like God intended, or whatever you might consider to be the highest ideal of man. Everyone is your neighbor, as Jesus clearly taught in the story of the Good Samaritan, and it applies to other nations and other races as well as the people you perceive to believe the way you believe. If you only love those who repay you with like-mindedness, what good is there in that?

If you see even a whit of yourself in the people I call upon in this letter for self examination, and yet you've read this to the end, then you understand why I wrote in the first paragraph that the best hope for our country and our democratic way of life is in your hands. You may never agree with the Democrats. You may be permanently offended by transgender bathrooms and gay marriage and other new realities that seem to push the social envelope in what you find to be a distasteful way. You may be put off by the weak leadership of Obama, who was nothing less than a good man, by the way, and by the role that the Clinton campaign played in all of this. I can respect those opinions and others like them, even if I don't agree with them. But you can't keep voting for the people who imperil the futures of America's children. Trump and these Trumpite new rightists, the Baldersons, and the McConnells of the nation who will do absolutely anything to win, have to go. This trend can not be allowed to continue. It's not a blanket anti-Republican call but rather those that have embraced this new right reality. The Republican Party will survive whatever happens, and if it re-centers the Democratic Party will also re-center. We had the opportunity to grow up in a mostly peaceful and prosperous world. Let my children, and your grandchildren, or other people's children that aren't at the center of your life, do the same.

I understand what this is asking, the kind of frustration that I'm asking you to introduce to your belief system. If the intentions of the new right are temporarily thwarted, two more years pass, and little has improved, you're going to be frustrated with the notion that my message is exactly the same, but that will be a good thing. In the last twenty years little has changed, and that's a good thing for most Americans. Most of us are doing just fine, many are doing better, and few are doing worse. Certainly you'll need to be prepared for a continual barrage of articles and news from the Conservative Review about how Muslims and other minorities really are taking over the world this time, but at least give CBS, the Wall Street Journal, the F.B.I. and the scientific community a chance. I can't promise that you won't find yourself in a bathroom with a transgender person, but I am very confident that no one's going to come and take your stuff, other than a possible increase in tax rates that are almost certain to remain lower than they were in the 1980s and the previous four decades prior. Also the economy is going to crash again, like it did after the last tax cut, but I think most of us are expecting this. The trade war is only going

to exacerbate the inevitable. My prediction is 2021.

No one really knows what's going to happen in the future, but there has been a one-sided manipulation that has been going on for two decades now fueling anger in white people my age and older. It will continue. It has to fade out, and the sooner the better, for things to recenter. We all have to limit our votes to candidates we believe to be the morally acceptable choice under the circumstances. The failure of candidates who embrace this Trump reality, build that wall, fear of Muslim infiltrators and minorities, punish those who don't fall in line and privatize the public trust, will shift the Republican party toward that of Reagan, and the future of America's children will be better for it. Thank you for your patient reception.

Sincerely,
Bob Young