

"Balanced" Indeed!

We are blessed to have among us in recent years, we yokels, a man so all-wise, so all-understanding that he sits in judgement for us, telling us what to think and how to understand and what is appropriate for occasions of special sorrow and remembrance.

He feels his "obligations" acutely, does Roy Neachum. So acutely that for ^{this} day of special national sorrow, when he was offended by what he refers to as ^{the} "further sanctifications," he "felt obliged to throw in a balancing word."

"Word?" It ^{is} ~~was~~ many words, more than a full newspaper column of them. And most of those "balancing" words were about himself. ^{For} that he finds almost any occasion ^{is} appropriate.

Where he was, ^{that day} what he was doing and at what great personal cost and sacrifice, how essential he was in it - he alone.

Not why ~~or~~ what was so special about that occasion. ^{Not} that it ^{turned} ~~ruined~~ the world around, not that we have not ^{been} the same since then. Not why so many Americans still feel it so painfully and with such sorrow. Not, of course, what it has meant. Personalization is not as easy with mature consideration.

After all, it was ^{only} the most subversive of possible crimes in a country like ours. Nothing like that is worthy of his ^{thought} or mention. What is important and gets his attention, after almost half a column on what he did that day "30 Years" ago, ^{as} ~~is~~ his great ~~thoughts~~ thoughts and indispensable, "balanced" and wise opinions and judgments. Like:

"I have never been caught up in the Kennedy myth."

"I was not smitten" just because "I had come to know ^{his} his wife," which means he saw ^{her} her a few times.

"Mr. Kennedy smelled", or as Doctor Johnson would have told him, bad usage. ^{He} ~~He~~ did not mean "smelled."

"The Kennedys talked the game without really knowing how to score."

^{of a single one.} This means to score with him. Not with any accomplishments, of which he makes no mention. Preventing World War III in October 1962 was not a ~~score~~ "score." Nor was

the first halting, dangerous steps toward detente in the world that could blow itself up at any minute. After all, all he did at the risk of his political future was end the poisoning of the air we all breathe (words he used in his American University speech of June, 1963) by all those atomic and nuclear tests in that air. No "score" in the value and judgement of this great man who is careful that we not have a chance to forget how great he is and all the great he knew by never failing to find an occasion, like November 22, to remind us.

Returning culture to our White House and removing the curse from the world, at least temporarily, that was no real "score."

Certainly earning the love and respect of the people wasn't, and he did that.

"Stories of his sleeping around... had diminished the man in my mind," ^{Meachum} he says.

He voted for Nixon instead, he says, "because President Eisenhower was not running again." He does not say what is the fact, that he could not run again.

"Balancing," ^{MacArthur's} his word, consists in not having the same opinion of Eisenhower, whose sleeping with other than his wife to the knowledge of the troops he led in battle when they could do no such thing, was so very well known, so unhidden, so open.

So ^{MacArthur} he preferred Nixon, the man whose anti-American activities when he ran the misnamed "UnAmerican Activities Committee" of the House were any international scandal and a national disgrace.

This was of no meaning at all and thus, "I was never a candidate for the Kennedy ^{by} handwagon."

Equating those affairs with it, he tells us he "had no patience with smutty humor."

It was not that with Eisenhower or the multitude of others of whom he could ^a have said how they lived was "smutty humor."

Putting those ~~who~~ like "The Hollywood Ten" in jail and denying them their livelihood and careers, that famous Nixon accomplishment that got his vote, that was hardly "smutty".

"It should be remembered that Lyndon B. Johnson brought the nation's ^{social} laws into the 20th century," he tells us. Not that ^{reaction to} (the ass assassination had anything to do with that. Not

when it could have cost him the election that he stood with Dr. ^Martin Luther King, Jr., and called for his release from ~~jail~~ jail. Not that he compelled the admission of blacks to state ~~universities~~ ^{universities}, like in Alabama. Not that he began the effort to change the nation's social laws, ^{McCarthy's} his words, they are "social," with such great political risks and certainly not when as the influential majority leader Lyndon Johnson did nothing to get those laws, introduced in the Kennedy administration, enacted.

^{Kennedy's} His brother's "manners" toward Johnson were "snotty." And Johnson's ^{brother} ~~brother~~ were not? ^{Calling} ~~Calling~~ him "that little son-of-a-bitch" was better than being "snotty"?

One way only that "struck me as unnecessarily cruel," he says.

While others think of all that terrible crime cost us; all that has changed since then, and not for the better; all ~~that~~ the endless failures ^{of} of governments that crime made possible; he marks the sorrowful occasion by using it for all those words, mostly to puff himself up, without finding a decent ^{or} ~~word~~ one to say about the man whose assassination the day marks. While saying so much that is the exact opposite.

That is his concept of "a balancing word."

His wise, ^{mar}ture, thinking and caring way of remembering one of the greatest national tragedies in our history.

How fortunate ^{ate} ~~we~~ ^{that} ~~we~~ yoked ~~are~~ the he deigned to live among us and to teach us what is right and what is wrong, what real "manners" are, what is good and what is bad and who is and who is not.

His "balancing word" comes close to telling us that the assassination should become a national celebration, a joyous occasion.

For giving us the blessing of ~~Watergate~~ Watergate? A quadrupled national debt? All those goodies ~~like~~ like the export of so many of the best jobs and industries? All those empty factories? All the people for whom there are no jobs?

"Balancing" is hardly the word for it!

BUT it is his word.

Harold Weisberg

F. Dent
12/8/93

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Harold Weisberg writes from Frederick.