
II. Can You See What's in Front of Your Face?

Hidden in Plain Sight

by R_____

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It was an unseasonably warm late winter day. I was just returning from a visit to relatives in Dutchess County, and the ride down along the Hudson River was aburst with signs of new life and incipient spring. I was not able to enjoy any of these bounties which nature provides, however; rather, as I sat in the rail coach, my mind was in a state of extreme agitation, and my physical state was overwhelmed by a palpable involuntary tension and restlessness.

I consider myself to be a person who takes a serious interest in the affairs of our nation and, to the extent possible, those of the rest of the world as well. Yet, it must be admitted here, that the recent inundation of stories in the news media, pertaining to the current controversies surrounding our President, is a subject to which I have not given the greatest scrutiny, and I have found much of the extreme political partisanship which seems to have come to characterize our culture extremely unpalatable.

It is perhaps this lack of attention, this apathy to exploring the nature of recent political happenings, which left me so thoroughly unprepared for the events which transpired during my just-concluded family visit.

Within what seems now to be only minutes upon arriving at my host's home, I learned—with some shock—of the extreme antagonism of my brother toward our President, expressed with a hostile vehemence that I would not earlier have thought possible. Then, over a span of not quite twenty-four hours, I was inundated with endless accusations and denunciations of the President's behavior, and these were accompanied by apparent evidence,—in the form of numerous news articles, statements from members of Congress,

and editorials from prestigious publications—all of the form that the Executive of our nation has committed unprecedented crimes. Despite my initial aversion to pursuing the matter, my brother continued to thrust one piece of evidence after another before me, and although I would not have tolerated such aggressiveness from a stranger, I did not wish to disappoint a blood sibling with an appearance of disinterest in a matter that he held to such importance.

As the hours passed, I read, I listened, I examined, and throughout all of the experience my brother kept interjecting with phrases that contained words such as *treason* and *impeachment*.

I must confess; I did not hold up well during the course of this ordeal. Most shocking,—and the reality of this only gradually dawned on me—I found that as my departure neared, much of what my antagonist had argued, I now found to be sensible. I was—and am—not convinced as to the entirety of all of his utterances, but the evidence he presented seemed to be supported by the facts, and I am now deeply troubled as to the state of affairs in our nation's capital. Is it possible that a foreign nation committed an *act of war* against America by intervening into our election, as so many members of Congress have alleged? Have those close to the President lied under oath, perhaps at his behest? Are members of the President's family involved in criminal activity? The longer I pondered these and other accusations, the more unsettled I became, and the possibility arose that—Yes!—these allegations might, after all, all be true. But how was I to know for certain?

Such was my disordered mental condition during the lengthy return rail trip. As I disembarked at Grand Central Terminal, the sights and sounds of the metropolis barely registered on my psyche, and without con-

sciously making a decision to do so, I found myself wandering along 42nd Street deep in thought, if one can term the anguished confusion gripping my mind as *thought*. At Bryant Park, the brilliant early crocuses grabbed my attention, but only fleetingly, and shortly I found myself standing in front of the Public Library. To enter, to go east, south, north, west—indecision and paralysis seemed to prevent any and all movement on my part.

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I heard a voice call my name. “R_____, R_____, over here!” I turned, and there, only a dozen or so feet away stood my close friend M_____. I call him a close friend, and indeed he has always struck me as a man of absolute integrity and remarkable intellectual insight, yet we had met only perhaps a half dozen times, and our total hours spent together could not possibly number more than twenty. For some reason a weight seemed to lift from off my spirit as he walked toward me.

He greeted me affably, with a warm smile, and we shook hands. “What are you doing here in mid-town?” he asked, knowing that I lived on the opposite shore of the East River. I explained that I had just arrived at Grand Central from an upstate trip, but as I tried to explain why I was currently standing in front of the Library, my speech was subverted by my mental agitation, and I stumbled over an explanation which seemed utterly incoherent even as I uttered the words.

M_____ looked at me with what seemed to be a mixture of interest and bemusement. After a brief moment of silence, he said, “Look here, my friend, it is a beautiful day. Why don’t we walk over to the park and you can tell me all about it?”

Within seconds we were moving. My friend led me over to the west side of Bryant Park, and soon we were seated on a bench near the statue of Benito Juárez.

“Tell me what is on your mind,” he said.

Slowly, and then with increasing rapidness, all of the discussions of the last day tumbled from my lips. Much of it, admittedly, was disjointed, and in one sense my narrative resembled a series of eruptions with little coherence between the individual crisis points I attempted to describe. At the end, I stopped more out of mental exhaustion than through any sense

of accomplishment of having told an intelligible narrative.

There then occurred a lull in our conversation which lasted at least a full sixty seconds. Finally, my friend spoke:

“There is much troubling in what you have said, but what concerns me more is your troubled state of mind. As to the issues you raise, I believe I can set your mind at ease, and if you agree to meet me tomorrow afternoon, I will provide you with material which should resolve all of your questions.

“There is, however, the matter of why you have fallen into such a deplorable condition. This, to me, is the greater issue. It bespeaks a weakness in your overall character, and a failure on your part to adequately develop the power that lies within your own mind. You are overwhelmed with masses of information—information which seemingly is factually true—but you have not discovered the means to process such *information*, to arrive at the truth when presented with an argument which seems convincing but is ultimately false.

“You have not yet learned to reason my friend; you are like Dante as he is just entering his fateful journey. I think I can help you, but I need to ponder these matters overnight.”

I was taken aback at this response, but his compassion, more than his words, lifted my spirits; for, in truth the meaning of his counsel was so obscure that it seemed as if he had been addressing me in a foreign tongue. Nevertheless, we agreed to meet the next day at the front entrance to the Metropolitan Museum.

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At home, in the evening, I pondered what my friend had said to me. In the hours since we had parted, my nervous condition had worsened, and the memory of his words seemed now to be mere gibberish. I found myself unable to sit still. Was I wrong about him? Was my faith in his good judgement misplaced? No! I knew him to be a trustworthy ally.

I sat in front of my computer and opened my e-mail program. Ten e-mails from my brother jumped off the screen. As I scanned them, I saw that they all contained links to a variety of articles. Almost mechanically, I began opening the links.

One article reported that fifty-eight Democratic Congressmen had signed on to support Rep. Al Green's Bill of Impeachment against the President. Another quoted Congresswoman Maxine Waters calling the President despicable and a racist. Several articles quoted members of Congress, such as Jackie Speier and Eric Swalwell, charging that Russia had committed an Act of War against the United States, and they stated, or implied, that the President has committed treason by failing to respond to the Russian attack.

Other articles took up the investigations of Special Prosecutor Robert Mueller, an individual that most of the news media seem to hold in high regard. One reported that on Oct. 5, 2017, George Papadopoulos, described as a foreign policy advisor to the President, pled guilty to making false statements to FBI agents relating to contacts he had with agents of the Russian government. Another article, from Dec. 1, 2017, stated that the former national security adviser to the President, Michael Flynn, had pled guilty to lying to the FBI about conversations with Russia's ambassador. Yet another article said that, on Oct. 27, 2017, Paul Manafort, the President's campaign manager, had been indicted on charges of conspiring against the United States, money laundering, and acting as an unregistered agent of a foreign principal.

The final article reported on the Feb. 16, 2018 indictment, by Special Prosecutor Mueller, of thirteen Russians and three Russian companies for conspiring to interfere in the 2016 U.S. election.

My head was spinning. What was I to make of all of this? These were not diatribes from the gutter; all of these articles were published by respected institutions: the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, CNN, the *Guardian*, and others.

I telephoned my friend. He did not seem in the slightest surprised to hear from me at such a late hour. The thought occurred that he had been expecting this call, as if he could see my thoughts. I began to speak, and I got out a few sentences, but he interrupted: "Not tonight," he said. "It is late. Calm yourself. You are caught in a mental trap, and it is bedeviling you. All of this worry and anguish you are suffering will be removed tomorrow. We shall meet, and we shall resolve all of this."

I protested and attempted to continue, but he hushed me and repeated: "Tomorrow."

The next day, thirty minutes after the scheduled time for our rendezvous, M_____ was nowhere in sight. The steps of the Museum were awash with a boisterous crowd of people—perhaps there for some special exhibition—and I feared I had lost him in the crowd. An exhaustion overcame me, and it seemed as if I had slipped from my previous agitated state into one of uncaring melancholy.

Suddenly, he was at my side. "Forgive me, my friend, I was detained at a meeting inside, and this is the first I could break away." His presence immediately lifted my spirits, and when he suggested that we get away from the noise and hub-bub on the Museum steps, I readily acquiesced.

We rounded the side of the Museum and entered Central Park. Walking in silence for ten minutes, neither of us seemed prepared to address the problem at hand. At last, he stopped. "This is a good place here," he said. "Its sunny, and the grass is dry. Let's sit down and begin. Maybe our friend here will provide a guiding spirit." He gestured with his hand, and I looked to my left and saw, only a few feet off, a towering statue of Alexander Hamilton. Despite my apprehension, I was forced to smile, because my friend had spoken to me of Hamilton's greatness several times in the past.

"I have brought you," he began, "three documents. I would like you to read all three, today if possible. After you have done so, we can discuss the matters which so trouble you. There is no point in having such a conversation today, because your mind is filled with nonsense and misinformation."

From out of a small valise he took several papers and handed them to me. I read the three titles:

- *Robert Mueller Is an Amoral Legal Assassin: He Will Do His Job If You Let Him*
- *The Mueller Dossier Revisited: How the British and Obama Diddled the United States*
- *Mueller Indictments of Russian Social Media Trolls Scam the American People*

"These are all authored by the eminent Mrs. Barbara Boyd, an acquaintance of mine. Study carefully what she presents. I know you to be a serious thinker, in your own way, and an honest thorough examination of what is presented in these reports should answer all of the questions you have.

“However” he interjected, “I fear that, unless we have a different type of conversation, here and now, the deeper implications of what Mrs. Boyd has composed will be lost on you.”

I was thoroughly mystified by the meaning of this last statement. I waited, but he clearly wanted me to say something. “Proceed,” I blurted.

He took in a deep breath of air, exhaled, glanced up at the face of Hamilton, and began.

“Your problem, my dear R_____, is that you don’t know how to think. No, No, please don’t be insulted, for the malady you suffer from has become near universal in our day and age. You are afflicted with the illnesses of *deduction* and *induction*. These are forms of a mental disease, and they have become commonplace under the current dictatorship of *information*. Our people, sadly, have lost the ability to reason, and they think information—compiled bottom-up from dirty facts—represents the truth.

“Consider Pasteur’s discovery in his work with tartaric acid, Beethoven’s magnificent development of the Bachian Fugue, and Kepler’s revolutionary insights into gravitation. Each of these was a discovery of something new, and each told us something truthful about our wondrous universe. These discoveries all violated accepted opinions—opinions based on facts that were believed in by the majority. True knowledge, the truth about anything, is never accomplished by starting with discrete facts and building up an amalgamation of evidence. One must begin with a universal idea, and test whether that idea, that hypothesis, is truthful.

“I can see, by your expression, that you are perplexed by what I am saying, but now I will say something which you shall probably find even more perplexing, and that is the following: If you wish to discover what is really going on with all of these attacks on the President, you must leave the realm of mathematical thinking.”

To say that I was stunned and bewildered by his monologue would scarcely do justice to my reaction. His meaning was entirely beyond my comprehension. All I could manage was, “I am sorry, but I really don’t follow what you are saying.”

“I suspected as much, but all I am trying to do here is to plant a seed in your mind. Consider Euclid. He presents his theorems and proofs in the most logical way. One fact after another, building a mathematical

lattice which seems unchallengeable. Yet, his system, like the fabled Tower of Babel, has a fatal flaw. All of his *proofs*, all of his logic are based on axioms, axioms which are taken on faith—beyond the worst fraud of the religious charlatan—and if you challenge and disprove one of his axioms, the whole edifice tumbles down.

“What you have read about the President, Robert Mueller, the Russians, and the rest all seems to present facts. But is that really all there is to this affair? Are there not underlying axiomatic aspects to this controversy that are not being discussed? Is there a different—a more truthful—narrative entirely than what Americans are spoon-fed in the news media?

“An obvious question to ask is *cui bono*, who benefits from this attempt to destroy the President? Motivation will begin to get you at the axiomatic issues involved.”

Suddenly, he jumped up. “I am sorry; I must go. Read the documents. We must meet one more time. I will e-mail you with a location for tomorrow.” And with that he was off.

I had not uttered a single word during any of this, nor when he strode off. His sudden departure was shocking and left me entirely unsettled. I didn’t know what to think. Any movement seemed purposeless, for where would I go and what would I do? I looked at the documents he had left with me, lay down in the grass and began to read.

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The next mid-day I made my way to the old Cooper Union, the site provided through an overnight email from M_____. The location seemed odd, for there was nothing within the range of visible sight that would appear to lend itself to the purpose of our meeting. This time I was tardy, and as I approached I saw that he had already arrived. We again exchanged greetings, and I asked, “Is this where we are meeting? There is nowhere to sit down.”

“No,” he said. “There is something that I would like you to see. Follow me.”

He led me past the square and north on 4th Avenue. Our pace was moderate, and, as in the day before, no words passed between us as we progressed. Along the route, which continued for several blocks, here and

there I spied a few buds on the trees, and the atmosphere seemed almost primaveral. Warmed by the bright sun, were it not for my impatience to continue our discourse, our ambulation would have been a thoroughly pleasant experience.

At 17th Street, my companion led me into the northern entrance to Union Square Park. There were couples and individuals occupying many of the table and chair arrangements, and we made our way around and through them, until M_____ stopped in front of the statue of Abraham Lincoln. He pointed up to the face of Lincoln and said, "This shall be our preamble. We will speak presently, but first . . . a moment. . . . Reflect on this man. Consider his mission. Ponder what drove him. A comprehension of Lincoln will begin to reveal the truth." His eyes were fixed upward as he uttered these words, and my gaze followed his.

He clapped me on the back and declared, "Come, let us find a place to sit." There were several empty tables in the immediate vicinity, but M_____ led me all the way down to the southern end of the park to where stood the equestrian statue of George Washington. He chose an empty table and we sat down.

"I chose this location," he began, "because the solution to your dilemma lies here. It will require seeing with more than just your eyes, but our present *environment* might spark the insight you seek.

"Now, answer me this: did you read the gifts I provided for you?"

"Yes. In fact, I went through them once in the afternoon, and then again, more attentively, late in evening."

"Good. What did you learn from them?"

I had been impatiently awaiting this opportunity to speak, but the wanderings up 4th Avenue and through the park had produced an effect such that, momentarily I was at a loss for words. "Well," I began, "as you know, I am not an especially *political* person, and there was so much information and so many individual people discussed who I am not familiar with, that it was all rather overwhelming."

"But surely," he prodded, "you must have reached some conclusions, or at the very least had some reaction to the contents. Start anywhere. Don't worry yourself about presenting a finished *analysis*. Just tell me what you think."

My lips tightened, my whole being seemed to compress into a coil, and I began:

"The first thing is that Robert Mueller seems to be a

completely untrustworthy and un-reputable man." M_____ nodded. "His role in 9-11 and in the LaRouche case speaks volumes, and his actions in the investigation of the President seem motivated by an antagonism that, really, should suffice to disqualify him. Also, individuals within the intelligence community, such as James Comey and John Brennan appear to be fatally corrupted." I continued, "Then there is the thankless work done by Ray McGovern and William Binney. I don't claim to understand all of the specific technicalities, but it is clear that they have proven that the entire foundation for the investigation is false. Perhaps the most startling parts of the reports were those that dealt with Christopher Steele." Here, M_____ smiled. "All evidence points to him being an outright liar and trickster. Just based on the evidence of his lies alone, the case against the President seems to be a complete fabrication."

"So," M_____ replied, "you did study the reports. Good. Very good. Excellent. And did this effort satisfy you? Did it adequately refute all of charges that were pressed upon you during your visit upstate?"

"Yes, completely."

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My friend seemed almost eerily calm. His hands were folded in his lap, and he was completely still, except for what seemed to be several, almost imperceptible, glances in the direction of Washington's statue.

Quietly, he began to speak: "You have made noteworthy progress, but I wonder if you discovered the tell-tale kernel of truth which is contained in what you have read, the one singularity which clarifies this whole affair. What you have presented so far can be represented thus: Your brother provided you with a series of facts. I presented another set of facts. You read both, you compared them, and you reached the conclusion that the reports I gave to you represented a more truthful rendition of these current affairs. This is good, as far as it goes, but it will not prevent you from making similar serious errors in the future. Your judgement is sound, but you are still operating in the realm of, at best, *inductive reasoning*. You take the facts as self-evident, and then you draw a conclusion from them.

“But there is something else to consider. There is one section, contained, within the reports, that you have not mentioned, and it is that content which redefines the entire species of what you are looking at. Do you know what it is?”

Involuntarily, I shook my head. “I am sorry but I cannot imagine what you are getting at.”

Suddenly, animation gripped him: “Look around, my friend; look around, the answer is right here.”

I glanced right and then left, but I said nothing, for all I saw were trees, tables, chairs and people conversing and eating.

M_____ pointed to the statue standing only feet away. “Do you know what that statue represents?” he asked.

“It is George Washington, on a horse.”

“Yes, but do you know what *event* it depicts?”

I admitted I didn’t.

“That is Washington, riding through the streets of Manhattan, on Nov. 25, 1783, the day that the British Army left New York. It is called Evacuation Day, the day of final triumph over the British Empire. Now! Let us finish this business! Do you remember, from your reading, the discussion of a man named Sir Richard Dearlove?”

“Yes, he was a British intelligence official, wasn’t he?”

“Not merely any official. He was the head of MI-6, the British equivalent of the CIA. And do you recall the name Robert Hannigan?” I nodded. “He was the head of GCHQ, the British version of the National Security Agency. Do you remember what the reports say about those two men and their relationships with Christopher Steele?”

“They were both helping him, I believe.”

“More than helping him. Sponsoring him, guiding him, manipulating all of his actions from the top. Dearlove has admitted that he advised Steele and aided in the creation of the notorious *dossier* upon which the entire investigation began. Think! This is the kernel which sheds light on the whole conspiracy. The entire tower of facts that have been used to accuse the President, facts now shown to be fraudulent, rests on a dossier created under the direction of high-echelon leaders

of British Intelligence. And then it was Hannigan’s GCHQ which passed these lies to the CIA in 2016. What this all shows is that the attack on the President originates from the highest level of the British establishment. And recall,” he added, “this is not the first time Sir Dearlove has done this. As head of MI-6, he also was responsible for an earlier *dodgy dossier* which led to the second Iraq war.

“Do you begin to understand?” he asked. “Do you see that we are dealing with principles which define what the truth is?”

“So you are saying that it is the British who are behind all of this?” I asked. “I know I read the material, and I cannot argue with what is presented, but why would they do this?”

He gestured again at Washington’s towering figure. “It is all here. It is right in front of you. Come, let us make our final stop.”

He arose, and I followed him down the path, along the east side of the park. After one block we stopped, at yet another statue.

“Read to me the inscription which is printed here,” he instructed.

The light was dim, but I read: *As soon as I heard of American independence, my heart was enlisted, 1776.* My eyes rose upward from the inscription, and I looked into the face of the Marquis de Lafayette.

“This statue,” M_____ observed, “was sculpted by Frédéric-Auguste Bartholdi, the same individual who designed the Statue of Liberty.”

We stood in silence. An inkling, a non-verbal provocation gripped me. A sense of unease—no, not unease, something else—more like an undefined idea, almost physical in its effect, seemed to be on the precipice of realization.

“My dear R_____, I must part from you now. My intention today is not to provide you with *answers*. If I have provoked you to pursue a method of investigation which will carry you to truthful insights, then I have succeeded. I wish you great joy in your efforts.”

He grabbed my hand, clasped it firmly, spun, and was gone from sight within seconds, leaving me, in the company of our dear French hero, to consider all that had transpired.