

## Memory, Through the Looking Glass

Written by Alex Baer

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You might remember President Obama saying he wanted to look forward, not back. You may also remember Speaker Pelosi telling all of us that impeachment was off the table.

Memory is a most peculiar thing.

Those forgive-and-forget statements grow more stunning with time. This is especially true now that Obama's Attorney General, Eric Holder, has in effect crashed any hopes of holding Bush administration officials accountable for torture and other abuses and crimes.

Holder has said no one would be prosecuted in the deaths of two prisoners held in CIA custody. The chief lawyer of the U.S. government has said the lack of prosecution is not from moral acceptance but is symptomatic of the record being "not sufficient to obtain and sustain a conviction."

In today's world, all of these memorable statements are considered *free passes for Republicans*. Without punishment -- or even castigation and rebuke -- Republicans will continue to feel entitled to pursue whatever goals they like, in whatever manner they enjoy.

You may, at this point, remember when the American government was very interested in "sending messages," as it was called -- perhaps caring less than should be done about convictions, but in showing some clear sense of right and wrong, and some sense of civilized and acceptable decorum.

With luck and effort, we will all remember, accurately, here and around the world, one more day when American justice and laws failed to prevail -- as was so clearly the case when an election count was stopped and a president installed.

Messages are sent regardless, especially when a nation so vast and powerful chooses to send none.

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Today, the messages Democrats send to Republicans sound more like ineffectual adults trying to rein-in a throbbing herd of sugar-overdosed, out-of-control children at a massive birthday party. It is an odd contest or play to observe, like something that should be named, *Who Moved My Country's Moral Code?*, or, perhaps, *The Red Troglodytes Versus The Blue Jellyfish*.

Had the political positions been reversed, there would be no forgive-and-forget. Instead, Republicans would have scrambled every resource, leaving no path un-bulldozed by subpoenas and writs, working every angle to legally crucify any Democrat who came with a thousand miles of taking any of the many dubious actions Dubya & Company so lightly took.

And yet, forgive-and-forget is the Democratic counsel -- even given the treatment Republicans gave Bill Clinton, a center-right politician more like them than not.

Clinton, you'll remember, tried working with Republicans the entire way, in his day, and was repaid for his efforts in spades by Republicans, following his dalliance and lie.

You may also remember the bumper sticker of an era: *When Clinton lied, no one died*.

It is an astonishing thing to ponder, and then really come to hold and to know, in this country of such grand promise and ideals: *A quickie in the Oval Office will get you impeached. But, a landslide of deceptions, deaths, tortures, thefts, untold suffering and costs -- that will get you a free pass.*

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There always seems to be room for interpretation and doubt when trying to ascertain and understand Democrats and their actions. Are these everyday folk seeking to always take the high road, the other cheek constantly turned, or are these strong, morally-certain persons inexplicably seeking some spineless superhighway? Something more? Less?

There is room for speculation on the motivations, actions, and goals with Democrats; with Republicans, there is none: *Win at all costs, no matter what, and no matter how.*

\* \* \* \* \*

Obama has himself tried an even-handed and open-hearted approach with Republicans, and they have shut him down, have shut him out as much as they can, instead going for a deep and historic gridlock over any possible action, and in every possible way.

You'll remember, too, Senate minority leader, Mitch McConnell's vow: "The single most important thing we want to achieve is for President Obama to be a one-term president." If a Democrat had said such a thing about Dubya, it would have been considered treasonous.

You'll also notice that this *single* most important Republican thing had nothing to do with the People's business or needs -- nor has it, nor will it.  
*Not ever.*

You'll remember the 33 showboat votes taken by House Republicans, at considerable cost in money and time, to repeal the Affordable Care Act that tries to help Americans with their health care.

You may remember Republicans offered no alternate answer to Americans, aside from folding their linked arms, and repeating the word, "no," *ad nauseam.*

You may even remember that not even *ONE* jobs bills found its way onto the Republican floor --

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despite all the unanimous GOP howling, posing, Obama-bashing, and campaign promising that was endlessly done.

And yet, here is Bill Clinton, stumping for Obama, saying our president is "still committed to constructive cooperation" with Republicans.

It is an odd, uncomfortable, sometimes painful, and certainly memorable time to be an American -- to be alive in this country, in this era, in this phase of human evolutionary development:

Here is a former president who was *boned* so very hard by Republicans over so very little, and after doing Republicans so many favors, assuring us all now that our current president -- who has had to endure so very much from Republicans, and so very often -- *will continue to reach out to them nonetheless.*

Who are the adults in the room and who are the children? Who are the victors and the vanquished? Who are the Troglodytes and who are the Jellyfish?

It shouldn't be, but it is, very often hard to tell.

At least, you might come to remember it that way, *someday.*