



We Owe Them All

Ensign Ott, US Navy

### Why All The Shouting

I am a veteran of the United States Navy...and...I am a victim.

Whether you read this or not will not alter the fact that *you* are a victim as well.

Trust me, the flame inside me to serve you, to protect Freedom, Equality, and Fairness for one and for all, still burns brightly inside my soul.

And if there were a discrete enemy that I could take up arms against, I would gladly throw all I have, including my own life, into destroying that enemy for *you*. For *me*. For all of us and our posterity.

Our enemy is *propaganda*, wielded by the very worst among us, plain and simple.

And, despite my fervent desire to act for you, to protect and to serve you, I cannot destroy, I cannot vanquish, I cannot obliterate this enemy for you.

You and I *are* well and truly victims.

But I am no longer a *defenseless* victim. I realize that propaganda is my, and our, true enemy. And NOT my fellow citizens, even as badly infected as they presently are by it.

So infected, in fact, that many of us, TOO many of us, are walking zombies, oblivious to the truth and completely unwilling to even seek or consider it.

What, you ask, are the mighty weapons I have found to help fight the good fight? To vanquish this darkest of threats to our collective lives well-lived?

The entire arsenal needed to promote and protect Freedom, Equality, and Fairness - the very pillars of democracy - can be summed in one singular word...

### *UNDERSTANDING.*

All of us have just a very few issues, maybe only one or two, that get us very frustrated or angry. Abortion rights. Gun controls. Economic inequality. Deficit spending. Racism. Immigration. These are just some examples.

But unfortunately for us and our political community, which we also call *democracy*, these issues and many more are currently submerged in OCEANS of propaganda.

Why all the shouting? Because it is our EMOTIONAL reaction to issues that *controls* how we see our neighbors, our communities, our country, our world, and how we vote at the ballot box.

For the issues that get us EACH most upset, EACH of us must take up the effort to fully understand those issues - to ferret out pro and con, good and bad, for and against.

Why is the effort to *understand* so vital?

Because the worst among us use the tools of propaganda, amplified by the megaphones of our political parties, bought-and-paid-for media outlets and the algorithms of the Internet, to manipulate us. They use propaganda aimed at leveraging our emotions to control us...to drive our behaviors.

We are being driven like cattle to slaughter! And if we are being driven somewhere, and we are, should we not make damn well sure that where we are being driven IS WHERE WE ACTUALLY WANT TO GO? WE need to understand the issues - pro AND con, good AND bad, for AND against. We NEED to understand WHY WE are so angry and frustrated about a particular issue. Just as importantly, we NEED to understand WHY OTHERS are so angry and frustrated with our views!

You will NOT like the truth as much as you liked the propaganda. But that does not change the fact that the truth is the truth and must be dealt with accordingly.

Propaganda tells you what you WANT to hear...that every problem is someone else's fault. No need for you to think or fix things because some smiling, glad-handing ass will fix it all for you! Oh, and please ignore the bastards pulling the levers behind the curtain!

The truth tells you things that you often do NOT want to hear...that we are all at fault for everything, at least to some perhaps very subtle degree. The truth will tell you that we have to be responsible to ourselves and to each other. We can fix *anything*. But we have to actually think and act. *We simply cannot afford to ignore the man in the mirror.*

When we have taken the few hours needed each month to push through the propaganda for the few issues important to each of us, to fully understand pro and con, good and bad, for and against, our perspectives will change, markedly for the better.

First, each one of us will almost certainly realize that at least one of our most closely held or longest held beliefs, born out of ignorance, very likely a false construct of the propaganda, was absolute bullshit.

Second, we will come to understand that our neighbors down the street very likely are not the goose-stepping nazi racist pricks nor the baby-eating commie socialist assholes that the oceans of propaganda had promised. We will realize and embrace that we actually share huge vistas of similar viewpoints, mutual interests and goals.

In fact we will come to understand and embrace an absolute, fundamental truth...that this world is NOT US versus THEM. This world is just US.

US versus THEM is absolutely a false construct of the propaganda...this world...is just US.

Finally, we will come to embrace reality...that the solutions to complex issues are in themselves complex. There are something close to 340 million people in the United States; there are about 8 billion people on the planet!

SIMPLY ALWAYS YES or SIMPLY ALWAYS NO? REALLY? SERIOUSLY?

What are required to resolve complex issues ARE complex solutions. Sometimes YES and sometimes NO with *many* agreed rules on when the answer is YES or when the answer is NO.

Think of our complex rules for traffic. Speed limits, lane markings, traffic signs, parking restrictions, licensing requirements, safety standards - there are thousands and thousands of legal statutes, rules and regulations!

WHY???

Because every day millions of vehicles take to our streets trying to get from place to place, without any prior planning or coordination. Our traffic laws allow us to secure the blessings of free and independent travel for each and every one of us, each and every day, PRECISELY because they are complex.

Just imagine if our traffic regulations were to get politicized, submerged in oceans of propaganda!

Suddenly half the cars are painted BLUE, half are RED!

The drivers would be furious at all times, of course, fists pumping in the air, shouting:

"You goose-stepping racist Nazi prick, get out of my way!!!"

"You pinko commie socialist baby-eating bastard, you ain't going nowhere!!!"

For generations, veterans have offered their lives so that you might live...in the warm and comforting quilt formed of, and by, Freedom, Equality, and Fairness.

As I have said, I am a veteran of the United States Navy. Consequently I swore an oath to defend the Constitution of the United States, against all enemies, foreign and domestic. But I, and all of us veterans, didn't and don't offer our lives just for words on an old piece of parchment.

We who serve recognize that our Constitution, and dozens of like-minded documents around the world, were created by people, people like you and me, who toiled to forge admittedly imperfect *frameworks* that they hoped and prayed might, maybe, secure the blessings of Freedom, Equality, and Fairness for themselves and their posterity.

And it is solely for Freedom, Equality, and Fairness, *in tandem and in concert*, that we offer our last full measure of devotion...

So if you still question your responsibilities, to yourself and to the rest of us, I invite you to visit one of the dozens and dozens of national cemeteries scattered across our vast country.

Go! Go, damn you! Walk amongst those headstones there!

As far as the eye can see, in every direction, stand simple, unassuming monuments to people, who fought for, and sometimes even died for, Freedom, Equality, and Fairness. All manner of people mind you - tall and short, thick and thin, with all manner of hair, eyes, and color of skin. And in the face of that vast sacrifice I DEFY YOU to say to yourself, and to the rest of us, that you simply can't be bothered...to give a few hours each month...to promote and protect...Freedom, Equality, and Fairness!

You and I are well and truly victims.

I am no longer a defenseless victim. YOU are no longer defenseless either!

*Not any more.* Now you precisely know the enemy...AND how to effectively fight it.

Now what say *you* to that man in the mirror?

*"If not YOU, then WHO...if not NOW...then WHEN?"*

*About the author:*

*Michael James Ott is 63 years of age and retired. He is dedicating most of his remaining life to promoting and protecting Freedom, Equality, and Fairness. In his civilian career, Michael travelled, lived, and worked around the world with fiber optic technologies as an engineer, engineering manager, and business manager for telecom supply companies. Before this he was an officer serving in the United States Navy onboard nuclear ballistic missile submarines. Email him at michaelott4836@gmail.com.*