

## Old Echoes Die Hard, if Ever.

Written by Alex Baer

Friday, 31 August 2012 19:57 - Last Updated Friday, 31 August 2012 20:05

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The older the echo, the louder the cry.

And then, there were the waves and waves of echoing cries crashing out in torrents from the tightly-choreographed GOP amateur hour and presidential auditions in Tampa, where everyone's dance steps are painstakingly mapped out in lockstep, on the planks of that sprawling, *unbrawling* floor.

It is an unusual *Tampa-tantrum*, this gathering, but one bearing many old echoes.

Peculiar, it was, not having George W. Bush, the previous Republican occupier of the White House, slide on by to cut some conversational brush with us, and remind us how fine those eight years were. But, the taint of epic disaster lingers among those echoes, so -- please: *No reason to drop by.*

Instead, Dubya was home relaxing, while a hurricane bashed and raged around outside, throwing New Orleans trickier, fleeing dance steps all the time -- so, in a sense, it *was* just like old times, after all.

And, on the stage, the same old lies crashed and flowed against and into the audience in a fine spray shed from angry and churned-up waters: It was the same man, but different -- wealthy since conception, helped along in business by family, hoping to outdo old dad, armed with all the same policies, advisers, and staffers. All ready to deal us the same old cards, snapped fresh, from the bottom of the deck. Just like before.

A different deck would be used, of course, for the select few.

And, it was cheering and applause for babblers of nonsense, the words delivered in that silvery, know-nothing tongue that makes the faithful quiver unknowingly at that swan song of their own demise, the masses feeling faint, reeling from being promised so much *Up*, even as so much *D own*

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was already plotted and inked.

And, the winds howled, and sheets of water fell, and many people partied on champagne in one spot, while many more in another tried to not swallow storm surge and drown.

Champagne was not the only thing the unharmed group was swallowing, nor was it immediately apparent they were not also dangerously harmed, too.

\* \* \* \* \*

They say information is doubling every two years, although it may be down to every two months or hours, by now. History is repeating, it seems, even faster than that -- with the inability to question or reason doubling faster still.

\* \* \* \* \*

Some echoes go so very deep, they may never stop reverberating against the years. Take the American Dream, the old one almost everyone used to have, back when a certain moral sense or code of some minimal rightness floated without question alongside optimism, pride, and a deep, abiding feeling of being squarely on track.

Imagine: One generation had plowed through two immense challenges, the Great Depression, and then, the Second World War. Those twin tragedies seemed to spawn in survivors a solid sense, a deep feeling that said, *We're all in this together.*

From that feeling and that code, and doing both for and by ourselves, as well as our neighbors, labor unions expanded, production tried to keep pace with its consumers, and the middle class was born.

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More often than not, a wage earner could keep a job at the same company for decades, earning enough to provide a house, appliances, furniture, a car, utilities, food, clothing, medical care, all incidentals, and college for each of the 2-point-3 children in each home. Sometimes, there was even enough left for vacations, retirement, maybe even a small boat, or a small place at the lake for summer escapes.

Back then, that moral code even seeped into corporations, driven by people who had, themselves, personally, all of them, *been in this thing together*. Their sense of profit was balanced by the urge to be good citizens, too. It's likely they instinctively knew by being good citizens, they would grow enough consumers to help keep themselves in business, and keep the money-go-round keep spinning smoothly.

The beginning of the death of such notions -- along with the beginning of the death of unions, the middle class, and the Dream itself -- was long off. The president who would begin the descent into uninformed selfishness was, for the moment, still putting Bonzo to bed.

\* \* \* \* \*

The opening salvo of the corporate state on its own people, was PATCO, of course, and the salvos have yet to let up, shift, or stop. You can still hear them shelling the population, up on the stage, in Tampa, while reciting the mantra of the Reagan era: *Greed is good, greed is god, I've got mine, so screw you.*

Many of these old echoes have recombined with new Teabagger chants: *We built this!* and *Let someone else pay!*

It is an inconvenient truth for Republicans today that all Americans, from many yesterdays, helped in that national effort of building.

Once, we *were* all in this together, and we *all* built the bridges, highways, schools, hospitals, power plants, utility lines, airports, seaports, and infrastructure of all kinds that allowed the country to bloom and grow.

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That infrastructure building all Americans did was an investment that allowed everything else to grow and be built, and it grew a great nation. Now, the only investment we make is decades of historically deep tax cuts for the wealthy -- for the job creators who should have by now buried us alive in jobs, based on all the breaks they have had.

But, we are no longer all in this together. We are in this alone, and we know it. That fear of being summarily dragged from the Hall of Plenty -- like someone who dared to ask a question in a Republican Town Hall Meeting, who was then shouted down, muffled, muzzled, and strong-armed out the door -- is keeping us all quiet.

That fear keeps us from walking away from unfair employment, or voting up a long-delayed union strike, or calling the boss out for illegal practices, for fear of the no-job-death-sentence that, standing alone as we are, we would experience one by one, and very much alone.

Now, we ask no questions, keep quiet, remember when and where to mindlessly cheer, and do our best to remain unaware what it is we have been led to accept from people we have dared call our leaders.

We even dare wonder, some of us, how it was that German democracy so readily slipped into fascism without struggle, knowing full well that such a thing could *never* happen *here*.

Instead of people shaking their spellbound heads and asking aloud, one by one at first, and then as a group, "*What is this nonsense you want us to accept?*" we have the echo of stressful times upon us again, paired with the echo of silences from all the questions we are

***not***

asking -- this time,

***not***

asking them

*in English.*

From Tampa, the storm seems very far off -- unless you know which echoes to listen for.

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*Where the ruminations grow:*

[http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/29/opinion/invitation-to-a-dialogue-the-corporate-citizen.html?  
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