

THE RANT AND RAVE GAZETTE

A Music Newsletter

Issue 20

Welcome to the twentieth issue of the Rant. NOTE: the most recent issue comes up first with past issues following. Cheers!

THE HOKEY POKEY

“YOU PUT YOUR LEFT HAND IN -----”



"Yeah, I've got the drill"

Conspiracy theories have run rampant over the last couple of decades. Baseless or not, they've taken up a huge amount of the public's attention - attention that might have been better directed towards more pressing and dangerous issues.

You see, while our focus was taken up by the continuous stream of media fueled conspiracy chatter, some very real corporate chatter was taking place in the boardrooms of our multinational corporations. The movement towards consolidation of power and money that began at the end of the second world war was, after all, rapidly approaching its end game, and the final moves, both economic and political, had to be put in place.

I, for one, don't remember being invited to any of these pow wows. In fact, as run of the mill citizens, I'm pretty sure the only role we've played this entire time is the one of the iconic frogs in the slowly warming water, happily paddling around as the temperature rises to slowly poach them. My guess is by now those frogs are damn near ready for the dining room table. All that's really left to do at this point is serve 'em up and wait to see who shows up for dinner.

Now you're probably wondering what all this has to do with music. Well, Does SPOTIFY ring a bell?

What follows is a recent article I wrote for a local newspaper. If you have the time then ...

THE NEW KINGS

by Paul Lucas

"Democracy is dead. Long live the Kings."

The current threat to our democratic system is a powerful one and it stretches the imagination to believe that it is simply coming from a groundswelling of the great unwashed and a gaggle of self-serving, narcissistic politicians. The sustained effort and the timing displayed over the last decade indicates a great deal of coordinated organization, planning and finance. So who's behind this sorry mess? The Chinese? The Russians?

Well, while both are no doubt revelling in the possible collapse of our democratic system, I believe the enemies to democracy are all around us. We do, in fact, know who they are, because we have watched them slowly acquire and consolidate their power over the last seventy-five years. Eisenhower's 1961 warning about the unbridled power of the military industrial complex implicitly included the hundreds of corporations that were an integral part of the war effort. Those corporations, I'm afraid, remained unbridled, and now we are reaping the reward.

Ironically, these new power brokers sprang from the same democratically supported, free market system that has always sustained us - a system that, until recently, they supported. Through mergers, acquisitions and political wrangling, however, they have managed to become the mega-corporations we see today. Run by the uber rich, this new class deals in billions in personal wealth, not millions. To believe that this much money in these bare few hands does not directly translate to political power is simply pollyanna-ish, and it is here where the problem lies.

The concentration of corporate wealth has many roots. A couple of these immediately come to mind: The first being the lack of enforcement of American anti-trust legislation resulting from challenges of the Chicago School in the 1960s and 70s; and the second, the 2010 Citizens United's successful challenge in the U.S. Supreme Court, allowing corporations the right to donate unlimited funds to their candidates of choice - a decision that could be seen as the final nail in the coffin of a free and equal democracy.

The result was, essentially, a corporate run America. But make no mistake. Corporations care not one whit for nationality. They have only one allegiance and that is to their brand and their bottom line. They have their own political structure that serves that end and it is most certainly NOT a democracy.

People in business, from my experience, tend to have a low opinion of government. What they see is an inefficient body that does little more than impose rules and regulations that impede progress. Even if they agree with some of those regulations, the method of administering and ruling on those regulations is seen as stumbling and inconsistent.

And they may be right. Compared to the successful corporation, the government is deadly inefficient. Few corporations would succeed if run like a democratic government. That's why corporations are essentially dictatorships. Any requirement to see the needs of the many, any requirement to provide security, social services and the like, is seen only in relation to the bottom line. The question of morality rarely comes up except as it relates to the success of the corporation.

Is it any wonder, then, that corporations are drawn to autocracies like magnet to steel. They have an inherent kinship. I suspect that when the concentration of money and power reached a critical mass these mega corporations started asking themselves,

"Why are we bothering to support democratic governments that do little except get in our way? We have the power, why not elect an autocrat and get on with it?"

After all, to the mega corporation, it looks like a match made in heaven - the final solution - two brothers in arms - together at last.

With the exception of the Elon Musks, Jeff Bezos' and Bill Gates' of the world, we rarely see the faces of power. They are not in the public eye, nor do they care to be. The scope of the power they wield is unlike anything we have experienced, although it does have the whiff of the divine right of kings. If these folks want to impact civilization, like the elephant, all they have to do is sit down. At this turning point in history, they may have chosen to sit down on democracy in favour of autocracy - a system that better serves their needs - a system where elected bodies and the judiciary are subject to the whims of kings and queens. Time will tell.

LITTLE GEMS

ADVICE THAT WAS WORTH ITS WEIGHT IN GOLD



"All the lessons in the world; All the workshops in creation; All of the information since the beginning of time - NONE of this holds a candle to the power of your DESIRE."

THATS ALL FOR NOW FOLKS! SEE YOU NEXT TIME