

Townhall

The Many Differences Between 'Obama-Caesar' and 'Trump-Caesar'

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Over Father's Day weekend, on Friday and Sunday nights, Trump-supporting protesters crashed the New York Public Theater's Trump-centric adaptation of *Julius Caesar*, demanding an end to "the normalization of political violence."

By now, it is well known that the Central Park production features a persona that is the spitting image of Donald Trump in the role of Caesar being set upon and brutally murdered—stabbed to death—by his enemies.

But, the play's defenders insist, a 2012 production of *Julius Caesar* featured a *Barack Obama* persona as Caesar—and yet there wasn't a whimper of protest.

A prominent Fake News and virulent anti-Trump publication, the *Washington Post*, leads with [the headline](#), "Delta pulled funding from a Trump-esque 'Julius Caesar'—but not from an Obama-like version in 2012." *The Wrap*, [while referring](#) to a recent exchange between Obama supporter Bill Maher and Alex Marlow, editor-in-chief for *Breitbart*, was incredulous over the fact that neither man knew about the Obama-esque Caesar.

The Wire rhetorically asks: "So how angry did liberals get over that production? Not even a little bit."

I have been suspicious. After all, virtually every criticism of Obama, however race-neutral, was transformed by his administration and the president's fellow partisans into a "racist" attack. Obama had most of the so-called "mainstream media" covering for him at every move. How, I wondered, could a character in a contemporized version of *Julius Caesar*, a dead-ringer for Obama, be mocked, bloodied, and assassinated without provoking howls of "racism" and the like?

For that matter, how is it that most people, including and especially his biggest admirers, like Bill Maher, are evidently unaware, five years out, that this play even occurred?

I had two questions:

(1) That “Obama-Caesar” was depicted by a tall black man does not mean that he was a genuine likeness of Obama (unless you believe that all tall black men look alike). Was the character *really* a spitting image of the 44th POTUS?

(2) Was “Obama-Caesar” mocked, ridiculed, humiliated, and then stabbed bloody as was his Trump counterpart?

Unless both of these questions are answered in the affirmative, the analogy that leftists are trying to draw between these two *Caesar* productions is a *false* analogy and their argument fallacious.

Surely enough, Rob Melrose, *the director* of the 2012 “Obama-esque” *Julius Caesar* play, [confirmed my suspicions](#)—even though, given his praise of the 2017 production and his condescension toward the play’s Trump-supporting critics, this was certainly not his intention.

To my first question, Melrose writes:

“Our Obama-inspired production...didn’t have any gestures that tipped our hand to say ‘this is definitely Obama.’” In glaring contrast, “the Trump connections are more *overt*” in the 2017 Public Theater’s production (emphasis added). Trump-Caesar “wears an overly long red tie” and “Calpurnia [Caesar’s third and final wife] speaks with a Slovenian accent [.]”

Melrose notes that there is significantly more comic relief in Trump-Caesar than was present in his own version. “There is also much more humor and satire in the Public Theater production.” He commends the director, Oskar Eustis, “for finding so many genuinely funny moments” in a play from which it is difficult to mine humor, for “Caesar usually is not a very funny play [.]”

These “funny moments” include more than a fair share that are reserved for...mocking the President. Melrose, however, dismisses this fact with a shrug, claiming that “Eustis is hardly the first person to make fun of the president.”

To my second question, Melrose admits that, unlike in *his* version, when his ambiguously “Obama-Caesar” meets his untimely demise, “the moment of this latest Caesar’s [Trump-Caesar] is shocking and horrific.”

So, Melrose’s Caesar was deliberately meant *not* to be an exact likeness of Obama. It was meant to leave enough distance between Obama and Caesar so that audience members *could* miss the connection. Eustis’s Caesar, though, is meant to leave no doubts in anyone’s minds that the character is Trump.

Melrose’s Caesar is not mocked and ridiculed throughout the performance, as is Eustis’s Caesar.

Melrose’s Caesar is not assassinated in a “shocking and horrific” manner. Eustis’s Caesar is.

There is, however, another reason why there was no public outcry in 2012.

“In 2012, the produce of The Acting Company, was very concerned that this production was going to get us into trouble, and she really didn’t want us talking too much to the press about the concept,” Melrose says.

There was no public outcry, hardly any media attention at all paid to Melrose’s version of *Julius Caesar*, for the production company made a conscious decision *to keep it a secret* of sorts.

There is one other fundamental moral difference between the 2012 and 2017 productions.

The political landscape was such in 2012 that Melrose believed it plausible that—I’m not making this up—those affiliated with the Tea Party, “Birtherism,” *Mitch McConnell’s GOP*, and/or—wait for it—*the Cato Institute* could be “so passionate about their beliefs and find the current situation so dire that they would resort to assassinating the president [.]”

In reality, of course, no one from any of these groups ever so much as threatened Obama or any or his supporters. Tea Party rallies looked like Memorial Day and Fourth of July parades, with participants leaving public areas cleaner than they found them.

The reality in the Trump-era couldn’t be more different. For well over a year, beginning well before Trump even received his party’s nomination, leftist thugs, many of whom were financed by leftist billionaires like George Soros and coordinated by Democrat Party operatives, have been crashing Trump’s rallies and attacking his supporters. With the rise of the leftist terrorist organization “Antifa” (“antifascist”) and its affiliates, this climate of violence against all things Trump and Republican has only intensified, culminating very recently in the attempted murder of dozens of Republican congressmen.

When the slaughter of Trump-Caesar is read against the backdrop of the larger political climate, it is understandable, even justifiable, that people should view Oskar Eustis and the New York Public Theater as indulging the left’s fantasies of President Trump’s murder.

In other words, as I suspected, the analogy between these two productions of *Julius Caesar* is a false analogy.