



Waiting for a grown-up to occupy the White House

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August 20, 2017

This presidency is unconstitutional. The Constitution says you have to be at least 35 to serve in our highest office and our incumbent tantrum-in-a-suit is emotionally six years old.

Tuesday afternoon, Donald Trump held a press conference at which he undid whatever good he had accomplished the previous day when under duress he finally, finally came out and said “racism is evil,” and that the Ku Klux Klan, neo-Nazis and white supremacists were bad, “repugnant to everything we hold dear as Americans.” This had been an attempt to repair damage done by his equivocal and much criticized remarks on Saturday after the tragic events in Charlottesville.

On Tuesday, though, Trump’s evil little twin had returned, backpedaling, whining, reverting to the moral ambiguity of Saturday and tripling down. Glenn Thrush and Maggie Haberman at The New York Times artfully summed it up:

President Trump buoyed the white nationalist movement on Tuesday as no president has done in generations — equating activists protesting racism with the neo-Nazis and white supremacists who rampaged in Charlottesville, Virginia, over the weekend.

“Never has he gone as far in defending their actions as he did during a wild, street-corner shouting match of a news conference in the gilded lobby of Trump Tower, angrily asserting that so-called alt-left activists were just as responsible for the bloody confrontation as marchers brandishing swastikas, Confederate battle flags, anti-Semitic banners and ‘Trump/Pence’ signs.

Trump told the press that he had watched the Charlottesville protests “much more closely than you people” but also claimed he didn’t realize that David Duke was in attendance, even though on Saturday the notorious Ku Kluxer was strutting all over the airwaves. Impossible to miss. And the president said Friday night’s right-wing, torchlight parade across the University of Virginia campus consisted of “people protesting very quietly,” even though the demonstrators terrorized men and women, including clergy, worshipping in a nearby church and chanted “Jews will not replace us” and “Blood and Soil,” an infamous Nazi rallying cry.

Trump insisted, “Not all of those people were neo-Nazis, believe me. Not all of those people were white supremacists by any stretch.” But as comedian Chris Rock tweeted, “If 10 guys think it’s OK to hang with 1 Nazi then they just became 11 Nazis.”

President Trump attempted to give right- and left-wing protests equal weight, saying there was “blame on both sides” and “alt-left” groups also were “very, very violent.” But, The Times reports, such equivalence is ludicrous:

[O]verall, far-right extremist plots have been far more deadly than far-left plots (and Islamist plots eclipsed both) in the past 25 years, according to a breakdown of two terrorism databases by Alex Nowrasteh, an analyst at the libertarian Cato Institute.

“White nationalists; militia movements; anti-Muslim attackers; IRS building and abortion clinic bombers; and other right-wing groups were responsible for 12 times as many fatalities and 36 times as many injuries as communists; socialists; animal rights and environmental activists; anti-white- and Black Lives Matter-inspired attackers; and other left-wing groups.

The perpetually truth-challenged Trump also chose the occasion of Tuesday afternoon’s cyclonic presser to state several times that he had delayed saying what he wanted to say because facts matter, that, “Before I make a statement, I need the facts, so I don’t want to rush into a statement.” Really? This never seems to have stopped him before.

For sure I’m not the first to make this analogy, but doesn’t Donald Trump make you think of the little kid in “It’s a Good Life,” that classic *Twilight Zone* episode? Everyone in his family has to obey his slightest, infantile whim. If they don’t, hideous fates await.

The Republican party’s top command has been behaving like that family, almost all of them terrified of their childlike president for fear of his so-called base and his thundering tweets. On the weekend, after the vehicular homicide of Heather Heyer and injury of 19 others in that Charlottesville car attack, several GOP senators and congressmen briefly were vocal in condemning the violence, the white nationalism that triggered it and Trump’s mealy-mouthed “on many sides, on many sides” statement Saturday afternoon.

But on Monday, after Trump’s first revisioning of his Saturday statement, many of them came back around to him, terrified, perhaps, of being exiled to the cornfield. With any luck, Tuesday’s display of temperament, illogic and imprudence will force them to really mean it this time when they say this no longer can stand.

And yet there was newly crowned Republican National Committee spokesperson Kayleigh McEnany tweeting Tuesday afternoon: “President @realDonaldTrump once again denounced hate today. The GOP stands behind his message of love and inclusiveness!”

Get a grip. This president is a disgrace. And Republican leadership, so are you, if you do not finally stand up to the man and insist that this must end.

Tuesday’s Trump event was supposed to be about plans for improving our infrastructure, about building America back up.

But all Trump did was tear our country down.