

I. Birth Story-What it is and what it means to us.

Everyone needs a birth story; it is a key component of one's identity. Without a sense of where and from whom we came from we cannot fully understand who we are in the world and function effectively in it.

In order to productively move forward *in the present* we must have a concrete idea of our birth story, or where and from whom we came from. In turn, in order to effectively predict and control our *future* we must also be clear of our identity...we must know where we've been to get to where we are going. For instance, an adopted child may not be aware of any of their family's medical or genealogical history. They may end up relying on other institutions or groups (such as the community, government, educational system, or the church) to influence them in their life, not having the firm ground of a solid birth story to stand on. They may spend a great deal of time, money, and energy searching for and/or finding their birth parents in order to more completely learn their story and understand their place and function in the world, even if their journey as an adoptee has been a loving one. Identity is a vacuum that must be filled, without it one is rudderless.

Countries also have birth stories, as do organizations and groups, and the continuity and grounded-ness of these stories are just as critical to the success of larger groups as they are to individuals.

II. Who Gets to Tell Our Birth Story (and why is that important, anyway)? Why is Birther-ism So Effective?

Unfortunately, we now have a president who is actively *stealing* our American identity-our birth story-and attempting to shift the paradigm of what we, as Americans, think America is (hint: not "great) all while he plans a bleak future for us, one none of us elected; not even the people who elected him.

Let's be honest here, the man has a track record of re-writing history for himself *and others*. We all saw his first political action, one of "birther-ism", years ago and were forced to observe that to the extent people believe him is the extent to which he projects his twisted vision and lies (remember the "American carnage" speech?)...he is encouraged to weave fiction by his mass's willful ignorance, wherein the ignorance acts as his permission to "run wild" with all of his ridiculous lies to and the deceit of the American people.

And he always goes back to birth, doesn't he? His first political act was to make our President, Barak Obama, "show his papers." He does this **because he knows how powerfully unsettling it is to upend and steal birth stories. Our national birth story is ripe for the picking because it is not deeply acknowledged.**

III. What is America's Bona Fide Birth Story? The convenient birth story vs. the real one.

The MAGA-co-opted birth story goes like this: Genius, courageous, maverick white men fought to make a new nation where freedom and happiness were paramount. In this new land equality is important, and *individuals matter so much they determine the way they are governed, one vote at a time*. In this land people can *write and fight* their way through strategic literacy and aristocratic relationships to greater freedom and unending possessions.

And this origin story feels good, until it doesn't. The story *doesn't* feel good when we remember that our economic strength was built on the backs of people treated as less-than-human, that our greatest resources were originally stolen and squatted on, that a big part of the American legacy is thievery and brutality, that these genius men were also hypocrites, *that the thing that was spilled most in Boston was not tea, but the blood of brown people*. The REAL American birth story is ugly and complicated, as most birth stories are.

This, in part, **explains why the MAGA folks don't care about hypocrisy**, because they embrace the simplified, dumbed-down version of our birth story unconsciously and ignore the reality that great men kept slaves. It's the part that somehow still feels good but feels bad when we take a really good look. **But who wants to really look? Or feel bad? Not Trump**, and not his supporters either. **And he promises they won't have to feel bad because he's holding this whole story (birth to present) in his oversimplified and racist rhetoric full of fear mongering.**

The MAGA-Americans did not like the bona fide American birth story (it's too icky and complicated) and tried to revert to their half-baked, feel-good version. **Historical-revisionism-by-omission**, you could call it. They chose not to acknowledge the facts that the birth of our country included rich white guys who glad-handed kings, grabbed resources, and imperialized a most valuable tract of land, thereby enslaving "less thans" to build a world power: One they, "the Founding Fathers", could take all of the credit for. It sounded tidier to say it was genius, maverick men who built a nation that promoted freedom.

IV. **What does MAGA mean in relation to America's Birth Story? Equating the American Birth Story to Trump's Birth Story**

The "Make America Great Again" slogan Trump uses is not about the 1950's or any other imaginary, lovely, booming time when America was "great". This time of greatness never truly existed in measurable reality, it is his vehicle for his theft of America's identity. The "Again" is a powerful cue by Trump that **he knows/owns** America's birth story. This origin of a once grand, pure, and powerful nation he alludes to in his over-simplified slogan is one that makes people feel "great." To claim ownership of the American birth story even more, he also claims to *personify* the "American Dream" as his own personal story: businessman who, with supposedly no help or advantage, made his own way and built a veritable empire! With very little research, anyone can discover that most of HIS origin story consists mostly of lies and exaggeration (more like a mirage built on white privilege, unpaid bills and employees, countless bankruptcies and pointless lawsuits, paid-off porno stars, and undeserved inheritance) but the important thing to note is that *the people who support him blindly believe it and all of his other lies wholeheartedly*. Why? How? There is a reason for this, it is because he is personifying *****something else that is true***** of the American birth story, and it is powerful because it is typically unnamed.

Note***This is compelling, but I can't find what this "something else" is. It creates interest, like we are being let in on a secret, but I missed it...I moved this thought to the end of this paragraph, rather than before it, because I think what you were trying to do was illustrate his manipulation of his followers

V. Why Trump's Words Feel True

His followers love him for what he says and does and how he does it. The stories he tells, even if they are blatantly untrue and inconsistent moment to moment, make them feel "great." He makes them feel tethered, like they belong and are part of a plan that makes sense to them. Except it doesn't fully make sense because...

they forgot something.

The American birth story he tells *is true*, but it is **not** complete. It is simple to comprehend, but not historically accurate. It is not connected to the truth of America as it has grown. And we are nearly grown up, but not there yet. It is, if you will, a convenient truth.

He promises to keep them feeling "righteous" and "outraged" and "afraid of brown people" because this is very distracting from *feeling and seeing the truth*.

His latest action even says "his" nation won't have to practice diversity training or read history books that feel yucky to them.* The Trump loyalists would rather call brown people 'antifa' and rioters and think of them as not part of "us", even though **these are our fellow countrymen protesting peacefully in the vast majority of cases.**

His supporters, who are following the "maga" story line, are missing something big. Something wonderful.

VI. The Reality

What else has happened in our story, this United States of America, as we've traversed from birth to now, as we've grown up?

We noticed, listened, and acted on the truth that:

- **All men of all colors are created equal, and so we emancipated slaves**
- **Women are equal and deserve to vote and to have their physical autonomy codified**
- **The rights of all citizens, including new ones, were to be respected and protected**
- **If people had not been historically respected and protected we would do what is needed to level the playing field**
- **Individual states are important, but Unity is more important, and makes us stronger as a nation**
- **Our country's immigrants are the best of us, that their inclusion makes us safer. They fight for the American way**

- **The vote belongs to everyone here, and that human rights belongs to everyone**
- **We are strong and powerful enough to intervene and help other nations to rebuild, protect human rights, and become democracies**

VII. Why Do Trumps Supporters Claim They Are Not Racist and Why Are They OK with Hypocrisy?

Nearly all of us have celebrated the tens of thousands of “pulling oneself up by one’s bootstraps” success stories — even and especially — in the stories of people of color or other oppressed folks. We admire the genuine American experiences of the oppressed standing toe-to-toe with oppressors and *everyone improving because of this*.

We also rejoiced in stories of protests. It’s what we are made of and made from. We believe the power of Rosa Parks, the courageous intelligence of John Lewis, and the brilliance and tenacity of RBG, just to name a few. We love us an underdog story, every time, and we hate us a bully... right?!

We’ve appreciated and admired the stories of immigrants fighting to be here and making a great life. These stories make us feel so good: “See what they’ve done! They did it themselves! America is the best!”

And this is also why most MAGA-ites claim incredulously that they are “not racist”. They enjoy these stories and feel a part of them somehow, because it is an *American* story, and they have co-opted that American “out of the ashes” story as their own. Until, inevitably, they don’t. When these people begin to feel separated from these stories or stolen from, in that immigrants are “taking what is meant for them”, that’s where 45 slithers in...

These folks, if asked, didn’t identify as “white” per se, but as “Americans”. However, it was clear by words and deeds that they thought, deep down, that Americans = white people, therefore America = them. Some of these self-identified “real Americans” started getting the inkling that they *hadn’t really* pulled themselves up by any bootstraps, *they had privilege, WHITE PRIVILEGE*. They gave this privilege a prettier name, calling it “white heritage”, avoiding altogether what it really is... wholesale racism.

Other Americans saw that it was better, felt better, and was decidedly *more American to fight for the underdog*; to recognize the inalienable rights of each *person* (as stated in the Constitution). *These people* stood alongside brown people during the struggle for civil rights, and, in more recent times, to protest for women’s personhood and bodily autonomy, and BLM. *These people* fought and continue to fight for America to grow into the principles it was born to live. WE THE PEOPLE.

This vague “Make America Great Again” plan he tirelessly references is the same weapon he uses to divide people: those who are Americans (the ones who think America needs to be great again), and those who are not Americans (the ones who for any number of reasons disagree with

or oppose him). And his theft and weapon work well in unison for his own agenda: to get re-elected and retain power for the sake of power, pride, cronyism, and prestige. He has divided states against each other for medical supplies, mayors against governors, and citizens against citizens. Why? Because its working *for him*; not for us as a country, not for the citizens of this country, and most definitely not for the United States of America as a world leader. Next to nothing he has done during his presidency has “made America great” in the least.

VIII. Is Capitalism Intrinsic to America’s Birth Story? Is “Survival of the Fittest” the American Way?

Somewhere along the way Americans started to feel disenfranchised and were ripe to be gathered up into T-rump’s America. Over time, minority population proportions in the US had skewed, causing these disenfranchised people to no longer feel that they were the majority. These folks who identified as Americans (white) didn’t feel “in charge” anymore. They felt that the great opportunities, the great American success stories, were no longer available to them. And they were mainly correct: many opportunities did dry up. Not *just* because our citizenship grew, and not *just* because of affirmative action and social safety nets, this explanation is too simple. To get to the real answer, you had to look at our economic system. The complicated truth is that: **Opportunities shrank mostly because of a wild and woolly capitalistic economy that — by its very nature— benefits an ever-shrinking number of people**, and our once-unifying American birth motto, “we the people”, was systematically replaced with the capitalist-fueled “Survival of the Fittest!” as our unspoken symbolic national motto. Capitalism as an economic system in America was birthed at the same time as our precious country; greed and exploitation for its own sake, in essence killing to survive.

We thought we relegated it to “that was how things were back then” thinking, (echoing Trump’s “again”) but it appears that this monster (Capitalism) we created alongside our nation has gotten out of control, wreaking havoc and building another (also true) narrative. How many of us even question if America *is* capitalist by nature? How else can you explain how some refuse to wear masks that protect others (SOTF) or fight like the devil to keep semi-automatic rifles around (SOTF again)?

The fact that Capitalism and democracy are both an undeniable part of our identity and birth story...*that* is America’s greatness: this yin and yang relationship creates challenge and solves it, evolving us in each generation and growing us toward adulthood as a nation. The words in place in the Constitution are principles to evolve by, not get stuck by. The Constitution, by design, is a living document. The men who did the lovely deeds (and dastardly ones) wrote into this living legacy a path toward greater enlightenment. Free press, freedom of speech, freedom, freedom, freedom. *They did not write in ‘riches, riches, riches,’ or ‘winning, winning, winning.’*

They founded a country on ideals, or at least wanted to. And if we want to be genuinely proud Americans, maybe we can focus here first.

IX. What is the remedy?

Know the birth story and the genuine complexity of it. *Understand that the greatness that is America was built on a foundation of many things, yet has continued because of inclusion, protest, and a continuous fight for freedom. We have **remained** great because of endless heroes, including flawed ones.* Understand, too, that capitalism was born and has grown right alongside the child we call America. Is capitalism American? Probably not. Is it what made America great? Not necessarily, but it has made America rich and it *is* a part of our birth story: Survival of the fittest, winning, and greed. We need to own this concept and move on.

I propose now that the stories of heroes *are the continuity of America as much, if not more so, than the economic power of America.* America's soul has always been more heroic than capitalist.

X. How can Joe Biden Gain Authorship of Our Story at a Deep Level and Profoundly Upend 45's Most Mesmerizing Talking Points?

A leader like Joe Biden, a middle-class man who converses with kings, and yes, even full of foibles, is a bona fide American hero to me. Not because he used his privilege to win, but because he has recognized and has tried to champion everyone else's heroism, cheering for the underdog, while using his privilege to serve them.

He has worked within a capitalistic system to create a safety-net to serve the citizens, he grows and improves his awareness at every turn, and he wields the power of his nation as a statesman among allies, not a gangster among thieves.

This is the America I want, and one I want to grow old in. I prefer we acknowledge our messy birth story and embrace the difficulties as we raise another generation of heroes: true American citizens, including immigrants and freedom-seekers still to arrive on our shores.

We are at a crossroads in the story of America and we **MUST** know where we *really* came from to know what to do right here, right now.

We can believe the thief-in-chief when he implies that being a capitalist country is the most important part of our birth story (and he is the bright and shiny poster boy of said capitalism), or we can believe that we are a land of individual heroes who live by principle *also* within the constructs of conscious capitalism. A collective. A land where a "regular Joe" can rise to the highest place in the land because he knows us and is willing to guide us through this difficult growing up time.

A place he safeguards for a long succession of outstanding (and deeply varied) Americans who will come afterward.

[*NY Times article](#)

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