

The Trumpification of Revenge
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Our Judeo-Christian faiths tell us that "vengeance is the Lord's," one of those religious admonitions usually violated more than observed. Jesus enlarged that issue by urging "turning the other cheek," again, a rule rarely obeyed in our long human history.

But in modern Western Civilization, rule of law has replaced personal or clan vendetta. We trust to the courts for redress, and have become accustomed to seeking justice rather than vengeance. However, in some, their "id" (the bully) is stronger than their "better angels." In our current president, it is called "counterpunching." Trump lets no insult go unpunished.

We have seen this practice from the beginning of Donald Trump's public life. His enthusiastic followers delighted in his TV persona who barked "you're fired" on his Apprentice program. He has continued to delight his "base" throughout his presidency by firing a stream of people trying to serve him. He lied when he took a pledge to support the Constitution. His "id" demands loyalty to him, and those who fail to knuckle under are not only dismissed, but humiliated. Vengeance is his, he thinks.

Looking back in history, we can see how revenge has been the guiding principle of clans and extended families. Feuds begin with a personal quarrel between two men that then continues for decades among their respective families, often with the original offense forgotten. The Scottish clans were infamous for extended feuds and vengeance, travelling from Scotland to the Scots-Irish living in backwoods mountain communities in America. The Hatfield and McCoy murderous feud went on for generations. Shakespeare provides us with the tragedy of such a mindless feud in his play Romeo and Juliet, in which young lovers die because of the folly of their families.

Sicily, Italy's backwater, gave birth to the Mafia, a secret, lawless criminal gang that operated on a code of vengeance. This Mafia code dominated the New York underworld, where corruption of officials and intimidation of enemies was rampant. Anybody disloyal to the head of the cult was called a "rat," a vermin to be exterminated. This term is used by President Trump to describe his "enemies," along with "scumbag," "crooked," and "loser."

Senator Susan Collins tried to explain her decision to find Trump not guilty of his very obvious crimes of abuse of power by saying that she was sure he had learned his lesson and did not need to be removed from office.

Mitch Romney was the only Republican not afraid of this bully, knowing full well that Trump would be unchastened by being impeached. He knew Trump would call Romney a "loser," insult him, and announce efforts to kick him out of the Republican Party (he cannot do this). Romney has a conscience. He obeyed the oath he took. Senator Collins and the rest of her Republican senators were intimidated by the bully.

Knowing no shame, the day after his fake exoneration (a trial with neither witnesses nor documents), Trump began his campaign of revenge firing Lt. Col. Alexander Vindman, who had testified under subpoena that the President had committed a serious abuse of power. Trump fired both Vindman and his twin brother, "perp-marching" both out of the Whitehouse.

Like a "godfather," Trump appointed an attorney general who lied when being confirmed by Congress. Attorney General Barr has proven himself Trump's attorney, not the independent head of the Justice Department. The Justice Department is now going after every perceived enemy, from FBI "scumbags" to Democratic Congressmen and women who dared to impeach Trump, and his political rival in the upcoming election. His revenge list includes former people who once served him and the legally-protected "whistle blower," whom he calls a rat.

This throwback to the dark past of vendettas sees himself as a Mafia Don, presiding over a code of loyalty to him, not the elected President who took an oath to protect the Constitution.

This behavior is not just offensive to Democrats; it also offends more Republicans than just Romney. The list of former Republicans grows daily, including women voters who detest bullies. They will weigh in to remove this throwback of a darker past.

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