**[Really Dad? Land of the Free](https://www.ctworkerscomplaw.com/really-dad-land-of-the-free/)**

Posted on [**December 13, 2016**](https://www.ctworkerscomplaw.com/really-dad-land-of-the-free/) by [**Robert Lloyd**](https://www.ctworkerscomplaw.com/author/robtechnetcomputing-com/)

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***Michaela***

When I walked into school the morning after Donald Trump was announced the President-elect, it was for lack of better words, a crap show. After wading through the hallways of quicksand that seemed to weigh down my peers, I entered the classroom of one of my teachers whom I respect immensely. I sat down in my seat across the room from her, shocked to see that she was crying. She sat like a child, grasping tissues and shaking as the sobs rippled through her body. Then I looked up at the smart board in the front of the classroom. On it, in bold font, was a quote from Shakespeare’s Julius Caesar. I interpreted it to be an ominous message from a despondent Cassius, who was contemplating his own suicide as a means to escape Caesar’s tyranny.

Really, dad? Why all the hysteria? The problem is not Donald Trump or Hillary Clinton, or any of the polarized demographic/social classifications that the media has created to separate us: Hispanics, African Americans, educated whites, uneducated whites, pro-life, pro-choice, gay, straight, pro-guns, anti-guns. The problem in America is that all of these categories have been emphasized so much by the media that we forget we are all Americans. The media loves to stick these labels on us that by definition separate us rather than focusing on things that bring us together as Americans.

However you may have arrived in America, you live in the “Land of the Free.” Americans are blessed to live in a nation as promising and successful as this one. So whether or not your candidate won, we have to embrace the results and be grateful to live in a country where this democratic process is alive. Sure, Donald Trump may not be the most attractive presidential candidate, but the fact of the matter is, in a nation of nearly 325 million people, it is impossible to satisfy everyone.

I am 16 years old. But I know when the day comes and I am the role model, standing in front of a room of children looking for any glimmer of hope in my eyes, I will give it to them. I will not cry because the candidate that I believed was “less corrupt” did not win. I will always be grateful to live in a nation that gets to decide its own fate, even when it is unexpected and disappointing. And the lesson that Julius Caesar will help me teach is: “Now bid me run and I will strive with things impossible.” So please, hold your head up, say the Pledge of Allegiance, and believe it.

***Michael***

How do I explain this election to Michaela? How is it that the same throngs of middle Americans who voted for President Obama twice just elected a candidate whose campaign was built on promises to undo all of his predecessor’s accomplishments? How was it that a real estate mogul who builds penthouses and exotic golf courses was embraced by a basket of unemployed rust-belters who could afford neither his rent nor his greens fees? How could a crotch-grabbing, Muslim hating, tax-evading, race-mongering bully, who picked a fight with the Pope, get elected to the highest office in the land?

Because when they listened carefully, above the din of his vulgar, homophobic, xenophobic, Islamaphobic vitriol, they heard what they wanted to hear: a promise for change. Even if they were afraid to articulate it in public, enough people living in the right electoral swathes of the country wanted the American Dream to work for them again, even if the details of his plan were scant. So these people went into the polling booths, held their noses, and voted for change, terrified about what that change might look like.

Where do we go from here? I would suggest that we do not go where many of our institutions of higher learning have gone. Hampshire College has decided not to fly American flags over their campus because, in the words of the college spokesman, for some of the students, “the flag is a powerful symbol of fear they’ve felt all their lives because they grew up as people of color, never feeling safe.”

Following the election, classes in colleges across the country were cancelled so that grieving students and faculty could come to terms with …oh yeah, the results of an election. If only the wounded veterans who sacrificed arms and legs and their sanity to ensure our blessings of liberty could receive the same immediate mental health treatment afforded to the whining students who have the luxury of nurturing their petty grievances.

I would also suggest we do not go where the media has gone and appears to be going.

Until election night, the Republican candidate was never perceived as a direct threat to the ascendancy of the heir apparent, the one who had been anointed by the media, and for whom the election was a mere formality. Only a homogenous group of liberal, self-inflated elitists could have insulated themselves so fully from the foul mood among so many Americans. For a day after the election, there was much hand-wringing and soul searching, but now the media is back to casting aspersions and finger pointing.

Perhaps the media and other malcontents like Whoopi Goldberg and Smiley Virus (both of whom are still residents of these United States last I checked) should adopt the more conciliatory tone modeled by our current commander-in-chief in accepting and honoring the sanctity of our democratic process.

Despite the freaks at the fringes of both sides of the political spectrum, this is still the best country in the world to call your home. I was reminded of this at a Thanksgiving road race when the National Anthem was being piped out of the speaker with almost no accompaniment. Suddenly the canned recording malfunctioned, and there was one awkward beat of silence. Then 500 voices came alive together, spontaneously. “Oh say does that star spangled banner yet wave, O’er the land of the free and the home of the brave.” We looked at one another feeling something I am pretty sure none of us had felt in this election cycle. United.