

Tompkins Town Hall Remarks 6-6-25

Trump Train Is Headed Our Way

What Can You Do About the Threat To Science & Education, Free Speech and Other Constitutional Rights, the Rule of Law and the Local Economy

By Andrew Kreig, J.D., right, non-profit executive, journalist and author



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Introduction

It is easy to enjoy this magnificent setting, provided so graciously by our hosts Steve and Jeanne of the CRS Barn Studio. So many of us have fond memories at springtime of our reunions, now occurring elsewhere at Cornell-focused gatherings large and small.

But those of you here are concerned citizens, many involved in government and other public service. Many of you see the storm. Trumpism, MAGA extremism and dark forces. For decades, these have created threats both to this county and to the country. We must answer the call of history and protect what we inherited and will bequeath.

My name is Andrew Kreig. I'm a Cornell Class of 1970 history major who became a Washington-DC-based attorney who authored books on justice, presidential politics, and the news media. From 1996 to 2008 I was the president and CEO of the Wireless Communications Association, helping thought-leaders and members create a new platform of wireless Internet services. Since 2008, I have focused on legal reforms as a journalist and non-profit executive.

The Trump Train



During today's Town Hall, we describe the Trump Train. That's an image from Trump campaigns that uses images of MAGA cavalcades of cars, trucks, trains. Implied is that Trumpism is an unstoppable force.

At this point, it's clear this "Trump Train" is headed for a collision with Tompkins County. We know that because of the many threats against Cornell University, this county's largest employer, and against local officials who fail to comply with Trump Administration orders and policies. The situation here parallels that of many other universities and localities across the

nation. These threats are documented in an extensive collection of news clips and documents on the website www.TompkinsTownHall.com created to set the stage for this Town Hall.

We'll be seeing a version of the Trump Train up close on June 14 when our new president honors himself on his birthday. He is assembling a huge array of tanks and foot soldiers to march in his honor along Constitution Avenue in Washington, DC.

This parade has few if any real comparisons since our country typically holds large-scale military parades only to celebrate promptly recent victories in major wars-- but not dictator-style for trumped up anniversary or similar occasions. The parade will pass a block away from such government buildings as the headquarters of the Justice Department, the FBI, and the National Archives and Navy Memorial

Trump has changed the leadership of these institutions. He did this to control their agendas personally in ways that have never occurred previously.

My Purpose Today: My purpose today in my segment is to provide:

- Examples of Skullduggery
- Examples of Positive Action

Before that, let me sketch the details of the program. After this introduction our featured panel moderated by Tomkins County Legislator Deborah Dawson. I have known her since college. She is an accomplished attorney, county legislator and one of the most impressive people I've ever known. She will provide an in-depth look at how local civic leaders are reacting to threats that include \$1billion in loss of research funds to Cornell, the county's largest employer, as well as many other specific threats to officials and their constituents in the county.

Then comes the concluding and key part of this event, the Town Hall for your questions and comments.

Examples of Skullduggery.

OK, I promised you examples of skullduggery. Before that, let me start by saying each speaker is responsible only for his or her own content. None of what I'm about to say is known in advance or in any way attributable to any other speaker or participant here. But it's the kind of thing you need to hear about in for there to be any effective reform movement. Certainly, opponents of reform know about such things.

That said, we have:

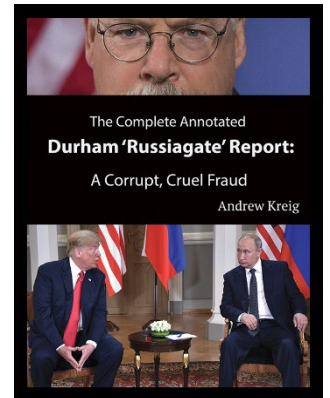
The recent Trump-ordered or inspired executive orders, summarized on the Tompkins Town Hall website. These include multiple jaw-dropping actions a day, including attacks on university research, university funding, political prosecutions of opponents, etc.

Musk-Trump Feud -.

Some of the skullduggery is highlighted by the power Trump gave to Elon Musk and his DOGE team to seize, potentially or in actuality, everyone's IRS, Society Security, VA and other data in an illegal manner for highly questionable purposes longer term.

Especially relevant here today is the Musk claim this week that he personally helped ensure Tromp/s reelection and the election of the House GOP majority to enact Trump's will. But the eruption of the Musk-Trump feuds this week, including over Musk's allegations of heightened Trump complicity in the Jeffrey Epstein scandals should give no one confidence. That's because these are both extremely dangerous, mentally disturbed individuals who are far more likely to reach another alliance than to help ordinary members of the public.

Russian Interference in U.S. Elections / Prosecution of Trump Political Enemies on Phony charges



Phony charges about "Russiagate" and intrigues designed to influence U.S. elections via criminal prosecutions is what my most recent book is about. You can see more about that after our program. I'll be at a table in the rear signing complimentary books for you. For now, I'd like to talk about a related intrigue, the world of hack publications purveying phony media smears timed for national U.S. elections.

Exhibit A in this is a series of National Enquirer 2016 stories published in tandem with the U.S. presidential election that year that ultimately pitted Republican nominee Donald Trump against Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton.

First, however, Trump had to win the Republican nomination against such leading rivals as GOP senators Ted Cruz and Marco Rubio. He did so while also softening up his potential rivals Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders, an Independent seeking the Democratic nomination.

Most of us have heard a lot about how the National Enquirer secretly helped Trump in 2016 by paying six-figure sums to his former sex partners Stormy Daniels and Karen McDougal to suppress their revelations. These payoffs figured prominently in the New York criminal trials that resulted in Trump's convictions last year for election-fraud-related crimes.

Far less known is how the National Enquirer featured hit jobs against Trump rivals. Looking out over this audience, I doubt if there are many Enquirer readers here. But if you care about meaningful elections you have to know what others are scheming to do. You cannot be engaged in a knife fight using boxing gloves, especially if your opponents have hooligans with guns standing by.

Let's look at some of these Enquirer covers from early 2016, not to examine the truth or falsity of the headlines and other allegations, but only to assess their potential impact on the voting public.

First, let's look at "What They're Hiding!" It suggests revelations on Rubio, Clinton, Sanders, Cruz, each looking very guilty indeed. The topics? "Gay Sex Arrest," "Rape Cover-up," "Child Sex Scandal," "Suicide Shocker." Again, I make no insinuations here that any such allegations are based on solid reporting, only that they're made and seen by millions upon millions of voters -- and never really rebutted.



Notice how each of these 2016 candidates looks extremely frightened, fearful and/or sinister – except one: Donald Trump. He is conspicuously taller and otherwise more attractive than the others. He bears a big friendly confident smile and the story inside suggests that he's got nothing really important to hide – unlike the others.

Let's note only briefly "Donald Trump's Revenge on Hillary and her Puppets" as part of a years-



long-smear against the Democratic front-runner. New York Times op-ed columnist David French, himself a conservative evangelical, noted in a Principles First lecture earlier this year that many of his fellow evangelicals have been taught to believe that "God Sent Trump" and, conversely, Trump's opponents like Clinton and Joe Biden are controlled by Satan and Satanic forces. Thus, descriptions in the Enquirer, local pulpits and elsewhere of Clinton exhibiting "a devilish smile" will



resonate strongly with many voters, while most voters will fail to understand the negative power of such words and images.

Let's examine more closely one of the most serious of these Enquirer-fueled cover stories, which Trump himself "trumpeted" in April 2016 at a campaign appearance when Texas Senator Ted Cruz was the last remaining rival at the end of the Republican primary season that year.

"Ted Cruz Father Linked to JFK Assassination," with the cover showing a blown-up photo showing accused JFK assassin Lee Harvey Oswald handing out pro-Castro leaflets during the summer of 1963 in New Orleans with a man the Enquirer identified as Rafael Cruz, a Cuban refugee who became the father of future Texas Republican, Ted Cruz.

There are some fascinating aspects of these allegations beyond the scope of today's talk. But for current purposes, focusing on election impacts (and the shortcomings of not just the tabloid media but the mainstream media that ignored the controversies except to report the allegations and Cruz denials), let's focus on a couple of clear-cut matters.

First, the purported collaboration between Oswald and the supposed Rafael Cruz focused on pro-Castro literature distribution on Aug. 16, 1963 outside the International Trade Mart in New Orleans. The key photo is still shot from a local TV news report by WDSU-TV, with Oswald wearing a tie at left-center. There was scant substantive evidence offered to support the cover-page headline that Cruz was linked to the "JFK Assassination," which occurred more than three months later in Dallas.

Curiously, however, the text of the story reports that the Enquirer hired a forensics expert who concluded that Cruz father and son alike each displayed the same sort of "insincere smile."

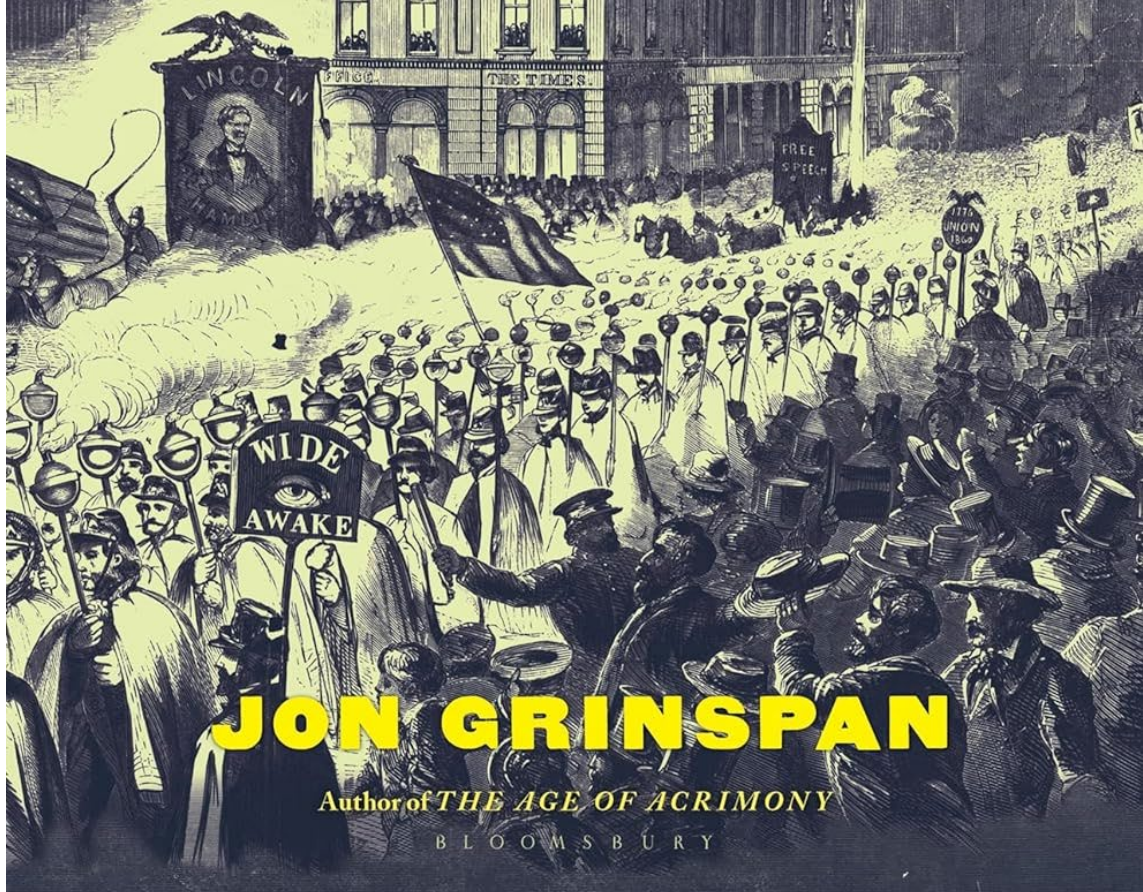
This is how the game is played, at least by some.

Examples of Positive Action

We share with you now an example of positive action that started in early 1860 when listeners to an anti-slavery speeches in Hartford Connecticut organized the Wide Awakes group. It really started when just 32 listeners to a presidential campaign speech by Abraham Lincoln, a number even smaller than we have here, were inspired to create a new group, calling themselves the Wide Awakes.

THE FORGOTTEN FORCE
THAT ELECTED LINCOLN AND SPURRED
THE CIVIL WAR

WIDE AWAKE



JON GRINSPAN

Author of *THE AGE OF ACRIMONY*

BLOOMSBURY

Among its successes was right across the Cayuga Lake in Seneca Falls, when the Wide Awakes marched to that historic site of the nation's first women's rights rally to recruit some of the surviving pioneers to a new cause. The story is recounted in "Wide Awake: The Forgotten Force That Elected Lincoln and Spurred the Civil War," an award-winning and otherwise impressive book published last year by Smithsonian historian Jon Grinspan.

Here is a [description](#) of the book's message:

Wide Awake: The forgotten Force that Elected Lincoln and Spurred the civil War. At the start of the 1860 Presidential campaign, a handful of fired up young northerners organized a unit to defend anti-slavery speakers from frequent attacks.

The groups called themselves "The Wide Awakes and soon hundreds of thousands of young White and Black men and a number of women were organizing boisterous, uniformed torchlit parades of their own.

These Wide Awakes – mostly working class men in their twenties – became one of the largest, most spectacular, most effective political movements in our history.

In a lesson worth remembered today, an estimated 500,000 of them powered the surprise presidential victory of Abraham Lincoln. That enabled his administration to save the Union, overturn slavery and pass the Civil War civil rights constitutional amendments that are just as much a part of our constitutional heritage than far better work known world of The Founders. They were fearless, uniformed, enthusiastic and capable, withstanding death threats from armed opponents and organizing chapters in virtually every county in what remained as the Union during the Civil War.

Beautiful Scene

We began by noting this beautiful scene outside, where the dense, dark and stormy clouds so often hovering over the lake evolve to the kind of brightness we can see this evening, which is especially inspiring if we recall The Wide Awakes!

Looking ahead to the main part of our program, the Town Hall, let's seek each other's ideas of what's to be done to make life better. If we can't march in formation like the Wide Awakes, what can we do that's equivalent?

We now provide the core of the program, expertise on Tompkins County – and your own Town Hall questions, concerns and solutions!

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