



War In An Impatient Age

BY KELLY HERTZ

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Americans were hypnotized last week by a news story they're now already forgetting. It was the one about the ex-cop in California who vented his homicidal rage at police officers and their families. The man was finally hunted down in a park, where he and his storyline died in a blaze of tantalizing video that even threatened for a time to upstage the State of the Union address.

In this age of non-stop headlines on cable television and social media, that's how "news" works sometimes. Life occasionally seems to be about short-form plotlines attached to sensational headlines that are instantly transfixing and just as instantly disposable.

Headlines are also a major component of a book I've been reading: "December 1941" by Don Shirley. As the title implies, the tome examines that momentous month when Pearl Harbor was attacked and this country was dragged into World War II. Each chapter covers one day as Shirley examines the headlines and broadcasts of our lives as we lurched from what passed for peace to all-out war.

There are myriad underlying subplots in this book, and one of them includes watching this stunned nation steel itself for the long, grim slog of war — especially given our terrible start. Beginning on the morning of Dec. 7, 1941, we were instantly on the defensive as the Japanese scored a succession of victories across the Pacific in places we had no idea even existed (including Pearl Harbor) but were crucial to our defense. That Christmas, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, visiting Franklin Roosevelt at the White House, warned that the war news would remain bleak for many months to come until America's industrial might could turn the tide. Churchill, as ever, was blunt and prescient.

However, that kind of frank talk seems insanely impractical by modern political standards. Due in part to those aforementioned unblinking news cycles, such long-haul thinking is a rare thing in our instantaneous, distracted universe.

Here, I recall the 1991 Gulf War, which was our first war fought in the cable-news age. I was glued to CNN when the U.S. began bombing Baghdad, and thereafter, I watched that war unfold day and night. I grew terribly anxious, even depressed, with the daily ups and downs. And I wasn't alone: Psychologists across the country reported many cases of people similarly afflicted as they were enslaved to the drama playing out on their television screens. The ordeal sometimes seemed interminable; in fact, it was just six weeks of being torn from

one incident to the next, wondering where it all would lead.

Contrast that to December of 1941. America endured a sneak attack, after which we were immediately and literally losing ground, although it was only the first round of a much longer bout.

It forces me to wonder if Americans now would have that same stomach for a long fight. Would we have the will and the patience to see things through?

Back in World War II, how would we have reacted to the unblinking marathon television coverage (if, of course, television had been in every home) of the disaster at Pearl Harbor? How would instant polls have graded President Roosevelt's declaration of war on Dec. 8 or his handling of the war crisis? How would we have reacted to the relentless drumbeat of dire news from across the Pacific (or from the Russian front, for that matter)? How would cable news television have amped up our already strained attitudes toward Japanese-Americans?

Far more importantly, what would such media coverage have done to our resolve to wage a war in which our freedom and our destiny genuinely were at stake?

Home-front morale is an important aspect of any war effort, which is why so much was done through propaganda efforts to cultivate it and mobilize it during the tough days of World War II.

Now, this age of instant media and disposable breaking news makes such long-term nursing of public opinion far more difficult. We are now more panicky, more impatient and quicker to judge, possibly making our collective morale that much more fragile and public policy that much more sensitive to criticism and knee-jerk political strategies.

"December 1941" offers an intriguing look at this nation's first bleak days at war — a breathtaking contrast to where we would be 3 1/2 long years later. Those years were a story of national dedication, perseverance, grim sacrifice and, ultimately, a new greatness.

Could we muster the focus and steadfast determination now to endure such a long march?

That's a compelling question — and perhaps an odd one considering we have been at war in Afghanistan for more than 11 years. But this has been a far different kind of war, with different standards for victory. Unfortunately, we may also be a much different kind of people now than those who understood so long ago what had to be done in our darkest hour. And Lord help us if that's the case.

You can follow Kelly Hertz on Twitter at twitter.com/kelly_hertz



Kelly HERTZ

Rush To The Defense? Not So Fast

BY LEONARD PITTS JR.

Tribune Media Services

Dear David from Georgia:
I want to thank you for the email you sent last week. It made me laugh out loud.

It seems you were unhappy I took a shot at Rush Limbaugh a few days back (*Press & Dakotan*, Feb. 4). Limbaugh had argued that John Lewis might have avoided having his skull fractured by Alabama state troopers while protesting for voting rights in Selma, Ala., 48 years ago, if only he'd been armed. I suggested, tongue in cheek, that Limbaugh would have given the same advice to Rosa Parks, who famously refused to surrender her seat to a white man on a Montgomery, Ala., bus.

Which moved you to write: "If Rush Limbaugh were on that bus that day, like so many of us, he would have insisted that Ms. Parks REMAIN seated. ... Rush doesn't need me to defend him from your silly assumption, but I just like to bring it to your attention that just because Rush is WHITE doesn't mean he is not a gentleman!"

Ahem.
David, Rush Limbaugh is the man who once said the NFL "all too often looks like a game between the Bloods and the Crips" and told a black caller to "take that bone out of your nose and call me back." So the idea that, in Alabama, in 1955, as a black woman was committing an illegal act of civil disobedience, this particular white man would have done what 14 other white passengers did not is, well, rather fanciful.

But then, it's seductively easy to imagine yourself or your hero on the right side of history once that history has been vindicated. So of course "Rush" would have stood up for Rosa Parks. Of course "Rush" would have defended Jews who were turned away while fleeing the Holocaust. Of course "Rush" would have supported women agitating for the right to vote. Of course he would've defended human rights. Wouldn't we all?

Actually, no. Not then, and not now.
As it happens, David, your email appeared the same week as news out of Flint, Mich., about Tonya Battle, an

African-American nurse who is suing her employer, the Hurley Medical Center. Battle, an employee since 1988, was working in the neonatal intensive-care unit when, she says, a baby's father approached her at the infant's bedside, asked for her supervisor and then told said supervisor he didn't want any black people involved in his child's care.

So, of course, the hospital stood up for its 25-year employee, right?

No. According to her suit, a note was posted on the assignment clipboard saying, "No African American nurse to take care of baby." The hospital, naturally, has declined comment.

David, this is ultimately not about "Rush." He is a rich blowhard and therefore, unexceptional. No, this is about the implicit, albeit unstated, "of course" that comes too easily to you and frankly, to many of us, when we contemplate how we would have responded to the moral crimes of the past.

There is to it an unearned smugness that insults the very real courage of those like Medgar Evers, Viola Liuzzo and James Zwerg, who did take the morally correct stand at hazard of life and limb. It is easy to "stand up" for the right thing when doing so requires only paying lip service 50 years after the fact, something at which Limbaugh and his brethren have become scarily adept.

But the need for real courage, for willingness to stand up for human dignity, did not end in 1955, something to which our gay, Muslim and immigrant friends — and Tonya Battle — would surely testify. So there is something starkly fatuous in your vision of "Rush" defending Rosa Parks. No, sir. We know where he would have stood then because we know where he stands now.

Perhaps you find comfort in your delusion. But some of us realize we live in an era where bigotry has its own talk show and cable network. Can we find comfort in delusions like yours?

Of course not.

Leonard Pitts is a columnist for the *Miami Herald*, 1 Herald Plaza, Miami, Fla., 33132. Readers may contact him via e-mail at lpitts@miamiherald.com.

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There is definitely SOMETHING WRONG with this! Why should we in Yankton be paying \$3.729 a gallon for regular gas when in Rapid City they are charging \$3.089 a gallon? Can we say "price gouging"?

I think this is ridiculous! We are encouraged to "shop Yankton." Well, maybe the people who own businesses in Yankton should honor those people from Yankton who live here!

THE PRESS & DAKOTAN

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OPINION | WE SAY

Filling In



THUMBS UP to Yankton County Register of Deeds Brian Hunhoff, who is working to catch the county up on its legal notices. It was learned recently that legal notices for Yankton County Commission proceedings had not been sent to official county newspapers (of which the *Press & Dakotan* is one) since last fall, which is technically in violation of the law. With County Auditor Paula Jones out on medical leave, Hunhoff (who is a former county commissioner) began the process of going through the tapes and videos to record the information and get them issued. The public has a right to know these details, and Hunhoff championed such openness as a commissioner. We salute his commitment in this situation.

Highway Hazards



THUMBS DOWN to the news that traffic fatalities rose 5 percent across the nation in 2012. The same upward trend was found in South Dakota, which saw 23 more people die on state roads compared to the previous year. The national hike in fatalities during 2012 followed a seven-year period of decline. During that stretch, the number of annual traffic deaths reached its lowest level in more than six decades. The statistics bring into question whether 2012 was a one-year aberration at the state and national level, or is it the start of an upward trend that needs to be addressed? If the latter, with stricter laws or with better driving habits?

Glass Class



THUMBS UP to a South Dakota Public Television documentary, "Light Of The Prairie: Stained Glass in South Dakota." The documentary features stained glass from the Christ Episcopal Church in Yankton and from St. Agnes Catholic Church in Vermillion. The one-hour production travels throughout the state, touching on the history and culture of stained glass windows with expert and humanities scholar Dr. Barbara Johnson of Aberdeen. Stained glass windows can be found in homes, churches, courthouse, schools, and even barns as a way to tell of a connection to God, the homestead experience or life on the Great Plains. The documentary brings attention to an art form that often goes unappreciated.

Off And Running



THUMBS DOWN to the inevitable realization that the 2014 (and in some cases 2016) state and congressional races are already under way. The fact has been driven home by the speculation of who is — and isn't — running for office. In South Dakota, the focus is on former Republican governor Mike Rounds, former Democratic congresswoman Stephanie Herseth Sandlin and current Democratic U.S. Sen. Tim Johnson and his son, U.S. Attorney Brendan

Johnson. In Nebraska, the talk has ratcheted up with U.S. Sen. Mike Johanns' announcement that the Republican won't run for a second term in 2014. One of the major questions has become: What is the political future of Nebraska Gov. Dave Heineman? Is a Senate race in the GOP governor's future? Will former GOP lieutenant governor Rick Sheehy, who recently resigned, try to make a political comeback? Stay tuned as these and other names emerge amidst the political jockeying.

ONLINE OPINION

The results of the most recent Internet poll on the *Press & Dakotan's* Web site are as follows:

LATEST RESULTS:

Should South Dakota join in the federal Medicaid expansion?	
Yes	48%
No	43%
Not sure	9%
TOTAL VOTES CAST	482
<i>The Press & Dakotan Internet poll is not a scientific survey and reflects the opinions only of those who choose to participate. The results should not be construed as an accurate representation or scientific measurement of public opinion.</i>	

CURRENT QUESTION:

Do you support the discontinuation of Saturday first-class postal delivery?

To vote in the *Press & Dakotan's* Internet poll, log on to our website at www.yankton.net.

TODAY IN HISTORY

By The Associated Press

Today is Friday, Feb. 22, the 53rd day of 2013. There are 312 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On Feb. 22, 1732 (New Style date), the first president of the United States, George Washington, was born in Westmoreland County in the Virginia Colony.

On this date: In 1784, a U.S. merchant ship, the *Empress of China*, left New York for the Far East to trade goods with China.

In 1862, Jefferson Davis, already the provisional president of the Confederacy, was inaugurated for a six-year term following his election in November 1861.

In 1865, Tennessee adopted a new constitution which included the abolition of slavery.

In 1909, the Great White Fleet, a naval task force sent on a round-the-world voyage by President Theodore Roosevelt, returned after more than a year at sea.

In 1924, President Calvin Coolidge delivered the first radio broadcast from the White House as he addressed the country over 42 stations.

In 1935, it became illegal for airplanes to fly over the White House.

In 1943, Pan Am Flight 9035, a Boeing 314 flying boat, crashed while attempting to land in Lisbon, Portugal. Twenty-five people were killed; 14 survived, including actress-singer Jane Froman.

In 1959, the inaugural Daytona 500 race was held; although Johnny Beauchamp was initially declared the winner, the victory was later awarded to Lee Petty.

In 1967, more than 25,000 U.S. and South Vietnamese troops launched Operation Junction City, aimed at smashing a Vietcong stronghold near the Cambodian border. (Although the communists were driven out, they later returned.)

In 1973, the United States and China agreed to establish liaison offices.

In 1980, the "Miracle on Ice" took place in Lake Placid, N.Y., as the United States Olympic hockey team upset the Soviets, 4-3. (The U.S. team went on to win the gold medal.)

In 1993, the U.N. Security Council unanimously approved creation of an international war crimes tribunal to punish those responsible for atrocities in the former Yugoslavia.

Ten years ago: Jessica Santillan, the

teenager who'd survived a botched heart-lung transplant long enough to get a second set of donated organs, died two days after the second transplant at Duke University Medical Center in North Carolina.

Five years ago: Turkish troops crossed into northern Iraq in their first major ground incursion against Kurdish rebel bases in nearly a decade. Singer-actress Jennifer Lopez gave birth to twins, a girl and a boy. Civil rights activist Johnnie Carr died in Montgomery, Ala., at age 97.

One year ago: Primed for a fight, Mitt Romney and Rick Santorum swapped accusations about health care, spending earmarks and federal bailouts in the 20th debate of the roller-coaster race for the Republican presidential nomination, held in Mesa, Ariz. Two Marine Corps helicopters collided over a remote section of the California desert during a nighttime exercise, killing seven Marines. A jury in Charlottesville, Va., found University of Virginia lacrosse player George Huguely V guilty of second-degree murder in the death of his ex-girlfriend and lacrosse player Yeardeley Love in May 2010.

Today's Birthdays: Announcer Don Pardo is 95. Actor Paul Dooley is 85. Hollywood "ghost singer" Marni Nixon is 83. Movie director Jonathan Demme is 69. Actor John Ashton is 65. Actress Miou-Miou is 63. Actress Julie Walters is 63. Basketball Hall of Famer Julius Erving is 63. Actress Ellen Greene is 62. Former Sen. Bill Frist, R-Tenn., is 61. White House adviser David Axelrod is 58. Actor Kyle MacLachlan is 54. World Golf Hall of Famer Vijay Singh is 50. Actress-comedian Rachel Dratch is 47. Actor Paul Lieberstein (TV: "The Office") is 46. Actress Jeri Ryan is 45. Actor Thomas Jane is 44. Actress Tamara Mello is 43. Actress-singer Lea Salonga is 42. Actor Jose Solano is 42. International Tennis Hall-of-Famer Michael Chang is 41. Rock musician Scott Phillips is 40. Actress Drew Barrymore is 38. Actress Liza Huber is 38. Singer James Blunt is 36. Rock singer Tom Higgenson (Plain White T's) is 34. Actor Zach Roerig (TV: "The Vampire Diaries") is 28. Actor Daniel E. Smith is 23.

Thought for Today: "It is infinitely better to have a few good men than many indifferent ones." — President George Washington (1732-1799).

FROM THE BIBLE

The one who hears the word and understands it, he indeed bears fruit and yields ... a hundredfold. Matthew 13:23. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis

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Published Daily

Monday-Saturday

Periodicals postage

paid at Yankton,

South Dakota, under

the act of March 3,

1979.

Weekly *Dakotan*

established June 6,

1861. *Yankton Daily*

Press and Dakotan

established April 26,

1875.

Postmaster: Send

address changes to

Yankton Daily Press

& *Dakotan*, 319 Wal-

nut, Yankton, SD

57078.

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The *Yankton Daily*

Press & Dakotan is a

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ated Press, the Inland

Daily Press Association

and the South

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