

# WELCOME PACKET FOR THE RESISTANCE



*E PLURIBUS UNUM*  
OUT OF MANY, ONE

## PART ONE

So here we are. America is under attack. Maybe you've known, or maybe you kinda knew but didn't believe it, or maybe you had no idea but now you do. It doesn't matter. What matters is that you're here, and you're ready to do your part. Welcome to the fight.

This is overwhelming. It's scary. It's sad. It's enraging. I know. But luckily (for all of us), America doesn't need you to save it by yourself. You're part of a vast, powerful, and diverse community. We have lots of different talents, resources, and strengths. We can do this together. You just need to do your part. That's the good news. If you do your part, if we each do our parts, we can save America.

That's also the bad news. The machine that is being built to destroy our country is marching forward, strong and getting stronger. We are at a point in time when we can stop it in its tracks, but only if we do our part. If we don't, things won't be looking too good for America.

There's only one person standing in the way of us setting things right: ourselves. It's up to us. No one else is coming to save us.

The fight ahead of us is straightforward, but straightforward doesn't mean easy. Lucky for us, we're Americans, not American's, and hard work never got in the way of us doing what we want. Think back to our Founders. Their task was to tell the King to piss off because we can govern ourselves, thank you very much. Straightforward; not easy. Their next task was also straightforward: found a nation where the government is a tool that serves the people, instead of one where the people are tools to serve the government. It was hard, but they did it. They managed to found a nation built on principles of mutual respect for individual equality and freedom all while establishing safeguards against the forces of tyranny that they knew would always be in the wings, waiting for the right time to swoop in. (Yes, their "equality" and "freedom" were only for wealthy white men, but more on this below.)

So here we are, at that moment in history, the moment our Founders knew could always come, that moment when wannabe tyrants and kings are doing their best to take over the government so they can turn We the People into tools to serve their interests.

That is never going to happen.

We know who we are and what we're about. Too many lives have been dedicated, too much blood has been shed over the centuries to get this beautiful and flawed nation of ours to where it is. This isn't our first rodeo. We've defeated tyrants and kings before. It's time to do what we do best.

## **1. IDENTIFY THE PROBLEM**

It's hard to fix a problem if you don't know what the problem is, so let's say it plainly: we have wannabe tyrants who are doing everything in their power to take over our United States

of America. They are well funded, they are organized, and they are ruthless. But here's the thing: they can't win as long as we all work together. They just don't have the numbers. We are far more powerful than they are, as long as we all work together, as long as each of us does our part.

## **THE WANNABE TYRANT COUP**

Very wealthy, very powerful people are doing their best to take over our United States of America. Their plan is to turn the government into something that serves them and then turn We the People into things that serve their government.<sup>1</sup> This is not the doing of just one person. In the movies there is sometimes a supervillain mastermind with some evil plot. Stop the supervillain, stop the evil. (Of course, in these movies there is usually also a superhero who does the stopping—but more on this later.) Fortunately or unfortunately, we are not in a movie, and this is not a drill. The evil we are fighting is not the work of one person; it is the work of a coalition of people who believe it will be better to destroy our United States of America and replace it with a country where the government becomes a tool that serves their interests and We the People are turned into tools that serve their government.

The rallying cry for this coalition of people is “Make America Great Again!” But what exactly does that mean? They have made their answer clear: America was great when wealthy white men were in charge and when they could use violence to keep everyone else in their place. Well the problem with this is that it is profoundly anti-American. In fact, it's about as treasonously anti-American as you can get. The Constitution of our United States has been forged in blood over centuries to safeguard equality and freedom, precisely so no one could swoop in and say “America is now owned by us.”

So we have this MAGA coalition doing everything they can to transform our nation from one where We the People get to

determine for ourselves the type of government we want to one where the government will force us all to serve the interests of wealthy white men. There was, in fact, a time when this was the name of the game in America. We fought a whole Civil War about it, actually. So let's call things by their proper names: the MAGA coalition is neo-Confederate.<sup>2</sup>

MAGA wants to take the America that won the Civil War and flip it upside down and inside out to turn it into a Confederate-futurist dream. Think of Wakanda's evil twin, run by rich Confederate tyrants. And let's be clear: neo-Confederate doesn't mean "good for white folks"; neo-Confederate means "good for some rich white men". It's the oldest trick in the white supremacist American playbook, and the wannabe tyrants are hoping it will still work: tell poor white folks that they're better than people of color, then they'll feel special and not care that the rich white folks are eating their lunch.<sup>3</sup> And of course in a Confederate utopia women's jobs are supporting their husbands in the home, which means that women don't really need academic development, economic power, or reproductive freedom.<sup>4</sup>

## **WE THE PEOPLE**

It would be one thing if We the People decided we'd had enough of the American project and wanted to build a white supremacist dream instead. But we didn't. In fact, the vast majority of America is against this hostile neo-Confederate takeover. This is not surprising, given that over the centuries we've managed to shepherd America from a place where "We the People" meant "wealthy white men" to a place where "We the People" really did begin to mean We the People.

This is an important point we need to really, really understand. Yes, the language of America's founding was problematic: the Founders talked about fighting to protect their freedom and equality as they simultaneously talked about fighting to protect their rights to enslave other people.<sup>5</sup> But there was something

special about that first part, the part about freedom and equality. It was that part that rang true and deep and real and lit a fire around the world and continues to light fires to this day.

The Constitution was reimagined after the Civil War to expand the “We” in the We the People. We abolished slavery.<sup>6</sup> We established birthright citizenship.<sup>7</sup> We established a right to vote regardless of race.<sup>8</sup> But there were still problems. Women were not included in We the People until the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>9</sup> And of course Jim Crow existed. It was a cute way for white supremacy to say “Hey! We’re treating everyone as equal under law. Separate but equal!”<sup>10</sup> It took decades and millions of people fighting to reimagine U.S. law yet again to move us past that.<sup>11</sup> And these are just a few examples. The fight is ongoing. The force of progress continues. It wasn’t until sixty years ago that poor folks (even white ones) had a constitutional right to vote.<sup>12</sup> The constitutional right to marry regardless of your partner’s race is only sixty years old;<sup>13</sup> the constitutional right to marry regardless of your partner’s sex is only ten years old.<sup>14</sup>

Martin Luther King famously said that the arc of the moral universe is long, but bends toward justice.<sup>15</sup> We can debate whether that’s true or not, but what we can’t debate is that America has been moving toward greater inclusion so that more and more Americans can meaningfully participate in their own government. Another thing that is not up for debate is that there have always been powerful and wealthy forces that have wanted none of that. And that’s the point: our America has come a long way since its founding. We took the Founder’s ball and ran with it, and every single step of progress has been hard-fought. We took their beautiful words of “We the People” and made them flesh in the actions of millions over centuries to help American government begin to become, in Lincoln’s words, of the people, by the people, for the people.<sup>16</sup>

So yes, language of resistance is useful at this point in time. Resist. Resist. Resist. But never forget that underneath it all, we

are the force of progress, we are the soul of our nation, and it is the neo-Confederate wannabe tyrants who are doing everything in their power to resist this progress. Sadly for them, we've come too far and it's cost us too much to let them undo all this work. America is ours. The Confederacy lost.

## **2. FIX THE PROBLEM**

Ok, so that's the problem. How do we fix it? The solution is straightforward. All we need to do is make it impossible for the wannabe tyrants to continue their attempted coup. If each of us does our part, and if we all work together, we can stop them in their tracks. They simply don't have the numbers to force us into submission. At least not yet. And this is the important part: we are at a critical moment. If we act now, act together, and act decisively, we can stop them in their tracks and save America. If we don't, their coup will continue. If we do nothing, they will finish transforming our government into a machine that serves them by controlling us.

## **UNITED, WE STAND. DIVIDED, WE FALL.**

We are not in a movie. There is no supervillain with a mastermind plan to do evil deeds. There is no way to stop that one person and have the evil plans stopped with him. Instead, we have a coalition of people hell bent on destroying America to build some neo-Confederate dream.

There is also no superhero coming to save us. In America we love our heroes, but it is easy to misunderstand heroic people as superhuman saviors who swoop in to do all the work of saving, and after they're done saving, we ordinary folks build monuments to them and honor them, and then we get to go back to business as usual. But that's not actually the way it works. That's not the way heroes work. That's not the way America works.<sup>17</sup>

Consider two of our greatest heroes: George Washington

and Martin Luther King. First, they were not superhuman. In fact, they were very human, warts and all. But that doesn't detract from their heroism; in fact, it makes the heroism all the more valuable: they did all they did as human beings. This is an uncomfortable truth. If they are superhuman, we ordinary humans are a little bit off the hook; but if they too were simply human, what do their sacrifices demand of us?

Second, their heroism was not swooping in to save us from a supervillain; their heroism was stepping up to do their part among a community of people who were all stepping up to do their part. Washington and King were very smart and capable people. They were living in very difficult times. They could have done a million things to weasel out of the call to serve their country. They could have lived a million lives other than the ones they chose to live. But they didn't. They chose lives that we now call heroic. They, of course, didn't think of themselves as heroes. They just thought they were doing their part.

And this is the key. They *were* simply doing their part. And they were doing their part alongside many, many others who were doing their part. It probably would have been nice for them to have been born at a different time when things were more calm. But they weren't. They were born into an all-hands-on-deck moment of history where they heard the call and stepped up to do their part.

We are in a moment like that now. It is an all-hands-on-deck moment to save America. Are you a George Washington? Are you a Martin Luther King? Maybe. Maybe not. It doesn't matter. What I do know is that you are a you, and I need you, just like you need me, just like we all need one another to step up and do our part. If there are Washingtons and Kings among us, they will emerge, I am sure, but the play is not to sit back and wait for them to swoop in to save the day for us.

America is in danger. America is us. This is the time to ask

what we can do for one another, not what someone else can do for us.

Superhero movies might not capture the moment very well right now, but there's one movie that does. Remember that net scene at the end of *Finding Nemo*? When the fishing boat traps all the fish and begins to pull in the net, the fish panic and start swimming for their lives as the machinery slowly, inescapably reels them in closer and closer, the net getting tighter and tighter. The fish are literally giving it all they have, leaving nothing on the table, fighting for their lives. And it is hopeless. All that energy is useless against the powerful machine reeling them inevitably into their doom.

Until.

Nemo, the hero, and also quite possibly the weakest of the bunch, realizes that all is not lost as long as they each do their part and all work together. In a panicked frenzy, each fish is pulling in a different direction, and all the energy is wasted. But when all the fish channel that very same energy, that very same effort, and all pull in the same direction, together, against the machine, the machine can't control them anymore. As one, they overwhelmed the system. As one, they broke the machine. E pluribus unum.

This is where we are today. The wannabe tyrants have a big scary machine, this is true. But we can overwhelm it. We can break it. They cannot take our America from us if we each do our part and all work together. United, we stand. Divided, we fall.

### **THREE PILLARS OF RESISTANCE**

So here we are. Here you are. Here I am. What's your part? What's my part? How do we work together?

The first thing to understand is that the only wrong play is not doing anything at all. Remember the fish in the net. If you



do nothing, you are helping the bad guys. The good news is that there is lots each of us can do. We are all different. We have different aptitudes, abilities, and resources. Some of us may be able to contribute a lot. Some of us may be able to contribute a little. But every little bit counts. Don't forget the Revolutionary War could not have been won without countless people not in the front lines doing daily small things to support the cause. Don't forget the Civil Rights movement depended on countless people not in the front lines doing daily small things to support the cause. Don't forget Nemo had a lucky fin. The only bad move is doing nothing.

America is ours to lose. We have numbers and we have power, we just need to each do our part and all work together.

This is now your mantra: have I made a wannabe tyrant's life more difficult today? If the answer is "Not yet", go do something. Don't go to sleep until you do.

To wreck their machine, all we need to do is throw some wrenches in it. There are three large buckets of wrenches to draw from: elections, good trouble, and preparedness. Yes our system is broken, but there is important work that needs doing within it. That's elections. But because the system is broken, there is important work that needs to happen outside. That's good trouble. And because this fight is more of a marathon than a sprint, we need to be prepared for whatever comes down the pike.

We all have different combinations of time, talent, and treasure to bring to the fight. Your specific mission may become apparent right away. Maybe your skillset and experience smacks you in the face and tells you that you need to step up in a particular place. Maybe you're faced with big fat silence and confusion instead. It's ok. Remember that the only bad move is doing nothing. Pick something on the to do list and do it. It's all hands on deck. A day without you doing something, anything, to

make a wannabe tyrant's life more difficult is a day they move a little closer to destroying our home.

## **I. ELECTIONS**

Elections are a fight within the system. Think of this as playing within the rules of the game. The rules are laws. The game is politics. Our Founders knew tyranny would be a constant danger to avert, so they devised a system of government that incorporated a separation of powers, a set of checks and balances. We learned this in grade school. It's fundamental American Constitutional stuff. Unfortunately, the wannabe tyrants are doing their best to disregard the Constitution and do away with this separation of powers and system of checks and balances.<sup>18</sup> The wannabe tyrants are doing their best to concentrate authority in the executive branch so that we will look an awful lot more like a dictatorship than a democracy.<sup>19</sup>

Ordinarily, if the executive branch wanted to take over the whole government, the other branches of government would step in to stop them. But these are not ordinary times. The Republican party decided along the way that it was the party of MAGA and the neo-Confederacy.<sup>20</sup> Let that sink in for a minute. Poor Honest Abe is turning over in his grave. The party of Lincoln is now the party of the Confederacy. The Republican party also controls Congress as well as a majority of the Supreme Court. This means that the President's moves to take over the government, instead of being met with forceful opposition by the other two branches, are being helped along by Republicans in Congress and the Supreme Court. This means that the checks and balances that were built into our government by our Founders to prevent tyranny are not working because the Republican party has decided America is better off being razed and rebuilt as a country by and for the wannabe tyrants. If politics is a game, this is like a player breaking all the rules, and the refs either look the other way or change the rules to allow the player to do whatever they want.

So what do we do when the government is failing at its job, and when governmental officials are failing at their job, and the people who are supposed to hold these people accountable have decided they're not gonna? Within the rules of the game, it comes down to elections. Elections are the ultimate check on authority because elections are the voice of We the People. This is why elections are such an important pillar. There are thousands of elections around the country, big ones and little ones. Yes, the federal government is under massive assault, but much of the destruction being done by the wannabe tyrants is actually being done at local levels. There are baby MAGA neo-Confederate wannabe tyrants all over the country in state and local governments, from big seats like governorships to little seats like school boards.<sup>21</sup> All over the country, there are people trying to do away with laws that protect We the People and pass laws that hurt us to help themselves.

Why are they doing this? Because they can. Only two out of three people who can vote actually do so.<sup>22</sup> That means that in 2024, around ninety million people who could have voted, didn't. And that's presidential elections. Only two out of three of *those* voters come out at midterm time.<sup>23</sup> In 2022, when Republicans took control of Congress, around 110 million people who could have voted, did not. This is unacceptable.

So here is your first task: get educated about your elections, and when it is time to vote, vote.

I don't want to hear about how your vote won't make that much difference. If that's what you're saying, go back and reread the bit about Nemo's lucky fin. Get educated. Vote. Your country needs you. I need you. You need me. So let's vote.

There are other ways to be involved politically. You can give money to political causes. You can run for office. You can teach citizenship classes.

And there is a very important piece along with all of this:

holding your elected representatives accountable. You may be lucky and have elected representatives who have been working nonstop since the election to do what they can to save America. But there are an awful lot of elected officials who have either done very little or have decided they're on the side of the wannabe tyrants. Do you know what camp your elected officials fall into? Do you even know who your elected officials are? No shame if not. Many of us don't. As Maya Angelou said, do your best until you know better, then do better. Now you know better. Go do better.

The elected folks in power are accountable to you. Do they know that? Perhaps they need a reminder. Let them know. Have you seen all the town halls where traitor deadbeat representatives are getting yelled at in *Republican* areas? Yes, there are some die hard MAGA neo-Confederate elected officials out there interested in selling you out to the highest bidder, but many—maybe most—are garden variety cowards. They're just scared of what will happen if they go against the flow. Well in your neck of the woods, the flow is yours, so what they should be scared of is not being reelected. If they feel that threat, they may well reconsider their blind allegiance to the MAGA cult.<sup>24</sup>

## II. GOOD TROUBLE

Our Constitution established rules to make sure that elections determine what our government looks like. But our Constitution is under attack, and the wannabe tyrants are doing everything they can to flip things around so the government will determine what our elections look like. They have been doing this by dumping obscene amounts of money into buying elections<sup>25</sup> and by doing everything they can to make it harder for We the People to vote.<sup>26</sup>

Now that MAGA neo-Confederates control much of the federal government, they are doing everything they can to sabotage as much of the machinery of our democracy as they can, as quickly as they can, before the next elections take place.

Never forget that the MAGA coalition lost the 2020 election fair and square, and they have never accepted that.<sup>27</sup> Never forget that on January 6, 2021, a bunch of MAGA traitors stormed the U.S. Capitol, trying to overturn the election.<sup>28</sup> Never forget that the MAGA coalition is perfectly willing to resort to treason and respects no laws. Never forget that the MAGA coalition cares only about burning our United States to the ground so they can build their newfangled Confederacy on its grave.

So elections are an important pillar, a fundamental, essential, necessary pillar of our fight for America, but it is not the only pillar. It can't be. We the People need to also engage in direct action. We need to mobilize immediately in massive, powerful, united civil resistance to bring the wannabe tyrant machinery to a grinding halt.

How do we do that? By causing what John Lewis called "good trouble".<sup>29</sup> John Lewis was a Civil Rights icon, marching alongside MLK and thousands of others during some of the scariest moments of the movement. Never forget how evil Jim Crow was. Jim Crow said that even if people were legally equal, people would never be socially equal because people were unequal by nature.<sup>30</sup> Never forget that Jim Crow was law, constitutional law, right up until it wasn't.<sup>31</sup>

During the Civil Rights movement, millions of Americans did their part to fight for the crazy idea that the Constitution is not a word game for white supremacists to play, for the crazy idea that the Constitution protects actual freedom and actual equality because We the People are actually equal. The Civil Rights movement is a masterclass in direct action, civil resistance, and good trouble. When Rosa Parks peacefully sat at the front of the bus, she had no permission to do so.<sup>32</sup> She was breaking a law. That's not what she was supposed to do. She was supposed to know her place and stay in it. But she didn't. She caused trouble. Good trouble. Necessary trouble. When John Lewis and 600 others were peacefully marching across

the bridge in Selma, Georgia, they were told by the police to stop what they were doing and go home, but the marchers kept peacefully marching.<sup>33</sup> All they wanted to do was to march from Selma to Montgomery (that's 54 miles) to protest the Georgia state troopers' killing of a 26 year old man who was trying to protect his mother as the police were beating her.<sup>34</sup> The police told them they were not allowed to do that. They were supposed to know their place and stay in it. But they didn't. They caused trouble. Good trouble. Necessary trouble.

The neo-Confederate MAGA wannabe tyrants want you to know that you have a place and that you better stay in it. As they run around torching as much of our government as they can, as quickly as they can, the wannabe tyrants are trying their best to also appear as powerful and intimidating as possible. They want you to think that they are an inevitable, invincible force. They have taken over parts of government that are supposed to keep us safe and turned them into a little army of masked unaccountable thugs whose job is to terrorize us and let us know that we better stay in our place or else. They said they were going after the "worst of the worst", bringing them to justice, but now that they have disappeared countless mothers, children, and everyday people simply trying to do their work,<sup>35</sup> now that they have disappeared people to other countries,<sup>36</sup> now that they are racing to build as many for-profit concentration camps all over the country as they can, as quickly as they can,<sup>37</sup> and now that they openly brag about how inhumane these concentration camps are,<sup>38</sup> their message is very clear: stay in your place or you might be next.

But we are Americans, not American'ts, and we've never been too good about knowing our place when our place isn't on top. We have an especially hard time when the people telling us to stay in our place are people whose salary we pay. It seems the people running the government are a little confused. Let's help them out of that confusion.

We the People are not staying in the place the wannabe tyrants want us staying in. Millions of Americans all over are stepping up, causing good trouble, necessary trouble. Consider the ordinary Americans stepping up to stand in the face of masked kidnappers to protect their neighbors from getting disappeared.<sup>39</sup> Consider the ordinary Americans stepping up to be heard as they shout truth in the face of lies.<sup>40</sup>

The wannabe tyrants in positions of power right now are fraudsters and conmen.<sup>41</sup> Some of them are even convicted felons.<sup>42</sup> But they are not stupid. They know how cons work. They know how important it is not to flinch when you bluff.

And it's getting hard for them. Not too long ago millions and millions of Americans took to the streets to express a simple idea: in America we have no kings.<sup>43</sup> That massive amount of energy was palpable, and is only getting larger. This energy, this soul of We the People, is moving and evolving. It is finding its voice, its hands, its path. As it does, We the People become unavoidable, We the People become inevitable, and We the People become unstoppable.<sup>44</sup>

It's a scary proposition if you're a wannabe tyrant.

They're trying their best not to flinch.

So this is your next task: cause good trouble. Do something you're not supposed to do because they're expecting you to leave things alone and mind your own business. There are so many ways to cause good trouble.<sup>45</sup> What to do? We are all different. We have different combinations of time, talent, and treasure. Maybe you are someone who can join a local civil resistance group and train in nonviolent action so that you can keep your poise even in the face of masked thugs hell bent on scaring you. Maybe you are someone who can donate to legal funds to help people arrested as we fight the good fight. Maybe you get together with neighbors and make signs for the next protest. Maybe you create works of art that inspire and challenge. Maybe you speak truth

to people who don't wanna hear it. It doesn't matter. The only wrong play is no play at all.

Never forget that the evils of Nazi Germany were only possible because millions of ordinary people went about their lives, minding their own business, not causing trouble.<sup>46</sup> The evils of Nazi Germany were not the result of supervillains; they were the result of ordinary people allowing themselves to become parts of an evil system. The evils of Nazi Germany would never have happened if ordinary people had simply refused to be used for evil.

Rosa Parks and John Lewis are heroes, but not everyone can afford to be arrested, and being arrested is not the only way to be a hero. Causing good trouble can simply mean not allowing yourself to be used as a cog in the evil machine.<sup>47</sup> The wannabe tyrants want their plans to be secret, but secrets are hard to keep if people refuse to keep them. Consider the heroes who are speaking to the press, brave folks in the government causing good trouble by making sure we all know exactly what is happening in the dark corners where the wannabe tyrants want to hide.<sup>48</sup> Wannabe tyrants want to be loved, feared, and respected; but it's hard to get that when people tell you to your face that you're a loser and a fraud. Consider the heroes who are loudly refusing to respect the wannabe tyrants, brave folks causing trouble by reminding us all that respect in America is earned, never given.<sup>49</sup>

The task is straightforward: make a wannabe tyrant's life harder today. You're not supposed to do that. You're supposed to mind your own business and worry about your own things. You're supposed to be scared and/or believe you are powerless and/or believe nothing will ever change. But you didn't sign up for the fight to do what the wannabe tyrants want you to do; you signed up to do your part. So do your part. Cause good trouble.



### III. PREPAREDNESS

Wannabe tyrants benefit from crises. Crises can be natural disasters, financial crises, medical crises, or violent attacks. It doesn't matter. When crises emerge, wannabe tyrants will do their best to use tragedy, fear, and chaos as excuses to take even more power for themselves and away from us.<sup>50</sup> This is why we need to be prepared. We need to be prepared to take care of ourselves and one another no matter what crisis emerges, and we need to be prepared for the wannabe tyrants to use any crisis they can for their benefit.

The federal government is supposed to exist to protect and serve We the People. The federal government, after all, only exists because we give it the money to do so. So it is the federal government's job to prepare. The federal government is supposed to prevent crises where it can, and if crises do arise, it is the federal government's job to serve as a base of support. But the wannabe tyrants have taken our federal government and gutted these protect and serve functions, shifting the money that pays for those services over to programs that help themselves.<sup>51</sup> The wannabe tyrants are taking our money and rights and hoping we will be too distracted or scared to do anything about it.

Consider public education. There is nothing more important to prepare for the future than to have a solid education. If you have the money, you can pay for your kids' education by putting them in private schools or by homeschooling them. But if you don't? You depend entirely on public education, in other words, you depend on education paid for by the government, in other words, you depend on education paid for by all of us. And education isn't the only protect and serve function public schools provide. What if you can't afford to eat every day? Public schools provide food for hungry kids. This is a good thing. This is something to be proud of. In the U.S., 83% of kids go to public schools.<sup>52</sup> Over half of kids receive food assistance.<sup>53</sup>

So it would seem that money that came from our pockets to support food and education for kids who need it is money well spent. But the wannabe tyrants have decided to destroy the Department of Education and gut food assistance programs.<sup>54</sup> They've even decided to destroy educational programming like PBS Kids and NPR.<sup>55</sup> They're not stupid. They know that educated kids are not going to swallow their neo-Confederate MAGA bullshit. So what is a wannabe tyrant to do? Start telling the truth? Of course not. The wannabe tyrants have decided to destroy truth so people won't know they're lying.<sup>56</sup>

The same plan is being followed all over the federal government. How do we use our tax dollars to prepare for uncertainties in natural disasters, for example? Just this year, there were catastrophic fires in Los Angeles and floods in Texas. It's in times like these when our federal government is supposed to step in with FEMA and help these communities out. But in their obsession with destroying anything that helps us unless it enriches them, the wannabe tyrants have largely gutted FEMA (and NOAA), and the bits they haven't gutted, they've tried to turn into parts of their masked kidnapping police.<sup>57</sup> So our money, the money that is supposed to be paying for the federal government to protect and serve our communities, is instead being used to pay for the federal government to terrorize us as the wannabe tyrants stuff their pockets.

The federal government has no responsibility more basic or sacred than that of protecting the physical security of We the People. We have been very fortunate in the United States to have had no foreign terror attacks on U.S. soil since 2001. This is not luck. This is due to the tireless work of thousands of government employees over decades. But on January 6, 2021, America was attacked. The U.S. Capitol was stormed. The attack did not come from foreign terror organizations. The attack came from neo-Confederate MAGA traitors right here at home.<sup>58</sup> In the largest law enforcement operation in U.S. history, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Department of Justice worked

together to hold over 1,000 violent traitors accountable for their part in an attempt to overthrow the democratically elected U.S. government.<sup>59</sup> But when the neo-Confederate MAGA wannabe tyrants entered the White House this January, one of the first things they did was light a match to all that work. They put an incompetent wife beating white supremacist in charge of the Pentagon,<sup>60</sup> a Russian asset in charge of national intelligence,<sup>61</sup> a conspiracy theorist in charge of the FBI,<sup>62</sup> a kid with no experience in charge of protecting us from terrorism,<sup>63</sup> and they pardoned the January 6 traitors—in fact, some of those traitors now have government jobs working for the wannabe tyrants.<sup>64</sup>

The wannabe tyrants are doing everything they can to destroy the parts of the federal government designed to help We the People prevent and respond to crises. We cannot afford to be naïve. We need to prepare. If a crisis emerges, we need to be ready so we take care of one another and don't fall apart. The wannabe tyrants don't want you to prepare. The wannabe tyrants want you to be unprepared because if you're unprepared, you're vulnerable. And if you're vulnerable, you are easier to control.

A century ago, in what came to be known as the Red Summer, violent mobs throughout the United States murdered hundreds of black persons.<sup>65</sup> This happened at a time when white supremacy was alive and well in the White House, and it happened at a time when law enforcement, instead of protecting and serving the vulnerable, too often stood by and did nothing or stepped in on the side of the mob. This even happened in Washington D.C., but in D.C., the story played out a little differently. In D.C., the community prepared, armed itself, and defended itself from the violent mob. The D.C. community was not naïve, they knew what was possible. They prepared for what was possible, not for what they hoped. Their preparedness saved lives.

Preparedness is about acknowledging that security is the most fundamental thing and taking responsibility for our own security instead of hoping someone else will provide it for us.

The Founders understood this. This is why the Declaration of Independence cites inalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. This is why the Constitution names the right of the people to be secure in their persons, and the right of the people to keep and bear arms.

We Americans are no strangers to the idea of preparedness. We love our zombie apocalypse movies. But consider something less extreme: what if the grid where you live goes down for a few days? Natural disaster, intentional attack, it doesn't really matter. The question is whether in a moment of crisis you and yours are secure and able to look around to see who might need a hand, or whether in that moment of crisis you will be caught unprepared. Do you have the food and water you'd need? Medicine? Personal defense equipment? Do you have firearms? If so, do you train with them? Do you have an emergency communications plan for friends and family? It's these practical things that can make all the difference. We each need to prepare so in a crisis we can all work together.<sup>66</sup>

If a prepared community faces a natural disaster, the community will be ready to do what needs doing and demonstrate to the wannabe tyrants that they are not the type of community that breaks under crisis. If a prepared community faces a violent attack, the community will be ready to do what needs doing and demonstrate to the attackers that it is not actually in their interest to pick on this particular community. It is simply not worth it to mess with a community prepared to defend itself.

So this is your third task: prepare.

If we are prepared, we cannot be ambushed by happenstance or design. If we are prepared, we cannot be duped into allowing the wannabe tyrants to use tragedy as a tool for their machine. The wannabe tyrants are betting on our unpreparedness. They are betting that we will not succeed in elections, and that we will not cause enough good trouble, because we are not prepared to

do what it really takes to save America. They are betting we will be distracted or scared. They are betting that when crisis happens, we will not know what to do, we will be brought to our knees, and we will have no choice but to let them do what they want.

But if we are prepared, we can move forward into an uncertain future knowing that we don't need certainty. We only need one another.

## **LET'S GET TO WORK**

We know the problem: neo-Confederate MAGA wannabe tyrants are trying to destroy America. They can't stand the fact that America has finally begun to become a country where We the People means We the People. They want to go back to a time when We the People meant only wealthy white men and when wealthy white men had the right to use violence to keep everyone else in their place. These wannabe tyrants are doing everything they can to destroy the government that is supposed to protect and serve We the People and turn it into a government that will protect and serve them. This new government they are building as quickly as they can is stealing our money so they can make themselves even richer and more powerful. Their end game is a government that has become a tool of control and violence to keep us in our place, and to the wannabe tyrants our place is clear: serving them.

We know how to solve this problem: we each do our part, we all work together, we break their machine. Individually and together, our guiding question, our mantra, is simple: have I made a wannabe tyrant's life harder today? The wannabe tyrants are moving as quickly as they can to build their governmental machine.

To make their life harder all we need to do is throw wrenches in their plans. There are three large buckets of wrenches we can draw from: elections, good trouble, and preparedness.

*Elections.* The wannabe tyrants are betting on us losing faith in the vote and rolling over to let them do what they want to us. They are wrong. Elections, especially local elections, are important battlegrounds. So we will each get educated on issues and candidates, we will vote when the time comes, and if our elected officials betray our trust, we will hold them accountable.

*Good trouble.* The wannabe tyrants are betting on us being too distracted or scared to get in their way. They are betting on us staying in our place, on us being unwilling to get uncomfortable. They are wrong. We will each find ways of causing good trouble. We are all different. We can do different things, afford different things. This diversity is our strength. So every single day we will cause good trouble. Millions of little ripples of little troubles become a tidal wave of unstoppable trouble.

*Preparedness.* The wannabe tyrants are betting on us being unprepared for the fight that lies ahead. They are betting that we are incapable of doing the work it takes to do our part. They are betting that when crisis arises, we will fold and scatter and fall because we are weak. They are wrong. So we prepare. We will make sure that each of us is strong and ready, so that all of us will be strong and ready.

I know this is a lot. I know this can be overwhelming and scary. But you don't need to save America by yourself. Remember Nemo. We don't need a Superman; we just need each other. This is old American wisdom: united, we stand; divided, we fall. The only wrong move is no move. America is not on the side of the wannabe tyrants. America is us. America is ours. We the People are vast. We the People are powerful. America needs us. The Constitution needs us. When We the People hear the call, We the People are unstoppable.

E pluribus unum.

MMXXV.

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