

THREE THINGS: IN THE DEBRIS FIELD AFTER HEALTH CARE 'FREEDOM' ACT

I still don't have enough caffeine in my system and it's nearly noon here. An entire pot of java may do the trick. As I rouse and read the hot takes after the failure of H.R. 1628 last night, a few thoughts stick with me.

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All the think pieces – most written by white men lauding John McCain's maverick move by departing from the party line – are evidence 'the show' worked.

McCain called it that when asked before the vote last night which way he was going. "Watch the show," he said.

Meanwhile, the two women senators who have been firm all along they couldn't vote for a bill causing damage to their constituents receive far fewer plaudits from the same mostly-white-male pundit class. Murkowski had been threatened by the Interior Secretary at Trump's request. I haven't heard for certain, but I'll bet Collins received threats as well, probably from Trump-supporting constituents.

McCain won't get those kinds of threats. He made his point last night about the power he wields within GOP Senate caucus as the final A/B switch on legislation. But the GOP Senate already knew this.

What McCain did was give the GOP a face-saving way to vote for a piece of shit they didn't want to pass, without the repercussions Collins and Murkowski (and at varying times, Heller and Capito) have faced for rejecting a POS bill.

This is why they waited until the last goddamned minute to draft a meager eight-pages, slapping in some egregious stuff to ensure Collins and

Murkowski couldn't vote, adding the 20% annual premium increase as a coup de grace.

Because McCain would do the maverick kabuki for them, slap on his mask and robes, make big gestures and kill the bill for them.

And it worked not only because all the white male pundit class got suckered by their usual privileged blindness, but the white male Tweeter-in-Chief bought it, hook, line, sinker. He blamed all the Democrats and three GOP senators. All the other senators are off the hook.

Bonus: McCain's legacy is salvaged with the patriarchal punditry.

Great 'show', maverick.

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Scaramucci is nothing more than a highly-animated automaton on a stage; nothing he says is real. Why? Because the *real* communications are being run out of house by Steve Bannon, and likely in violation of federal law.

What is it and to whom is Bannon really communicating for the White House?

This operation may be in violation of the Antideficiency Act, but is it also in violation of the Presidential Records Act? What about any other regulations regarding FOIA?

Don't believe me about Scaramucci's role? Take a look at your news feed and point to any announcement about his firing or resignation. You know damned well had a communications director acted like he has under *any* other previous administration he'd have been walked out the White House's fence.

p.s. Some say Scaramucci's lowering discourse. Come the fuck on. He talks the way all of Wall Street's white males do. The misogynist crack about Sarah Huckabee Sanders' appearance? Par for the course.

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Recommended lunch hour read for you: a book review by Andrew Bacevich in *London Review of Books* on *The General v. the President: MacArthur and Truman at the Brink of Nuclear War* by H.W. Brands. Bacevich's background here.

Putting this book on my shopping list after this review, given how much power Trump has given and is likely to give to the military, breaking with civilian control.

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That's it for now. I'm stewing on something else but it'll be dedicated and not an open thread like this one. Hasta pasta.