

THREE THINGS: SHIT GOT REAL WITH FAMILY AND COVID-19

[Check the byline, thanks. /~Rayne]

I spent last night crying off and on all evening.

Right now some parent or parents are experiencing the nightmare I have hoped and still hope I won't have to face.

A chemical engineering student at a state university died Sunday. He was only weeks away from graduating – just like my younger adult child at another state university.

This didn't fucking have to happen. This bright promise didn't have to be swept away in this human-made disaster. Don't tell me this was natural, not when that narcissistic wretch in the White House treated the governor of my state like crap this week after her persistent pleading for federal assistance. Not after he failed from the time he was first told of this potential pandemic threat in December.

This death is on that miserable wretch's head, and on the head of every GOP senator who looked the other way after Trump abused his power and solicited a quid pro quo. He did it again to our governor after the GOP senate gave him a permission slip instead of removing his unethical, greedy ass from office.

The horror isn't over, either. There's no telling how many more parents will face this same nightmare because one man just plain failed to do his job in a big and repeated way, because roughly 20 senators are spineless if not equally incompetent and corrupt.

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You can guess what preoccupied my time last evening when I wasn't crying. Text messages and

phone calls were flying furiously between my house and my two kids' homes downstate.

A capital city newspaper reported a 65-year-old man was confirmed with COVID-19. Nothing remarkable about this story on the face of it; so far he's a living statistic.

But to this family this particular story is important. The man lives three miles from from my older adult child. Some of the folks who work with my older child live in the same neighborhood development. While the company for which my child works will implement screening body temperature at the door today, it's a couple weeks late and pretty useless for asymptomatic cases. It would have been useless on this man up until he became sick, three days before Michigan's Stay Home order took effect.

The patient developed symptoms on March 21 and has been sick since then. Before he developed symptoms he had been shopping at Sam's Club, Costco, Meijer – three of the most popular grocery stores in the area. My child and their spouse shop at the latter two stores.

My younger college-student child had planned to go to Costco yesterday.

You might think, "Whoa, big spacious stores, no big deal," right? But a study from China found two COVID-19 cases in Wenzhou traced shared one common trait – both patients had shopped in the same mall on *two different floors*. They had a low-intensity indirect transmission without prolonged contact.

COVID-19 appears nearly as bad as measles in terms of transmission. It's spread mainly by exhalation of asymptomatic/pre-symptomatic people as well as those with symptoms. A recent frequently-cited study showed the virus can hang in the air, active, for three hours. This weekend's story about a church choir which observed all the social distancing rules – apart from staying home – illustrates how easily this virus spreads in the air in closed spaces.

The 65-year-old patient said he doesn't know where he was infected. "I don't go to a lot of parties or hang around with a lot of different people," he told the reporter, "I probably caught it from a public place." But he did go to the grocery stores and he visited a rehabilitation facility in Ann Arbor to drop off supplies for a family member. The rehab facility was likely not a source since no known COVID-19 case arising from the facility was mentioned in the article.

Kudos to this gent for wanting to share his situation with the public. He's been quite sick; he admitted, "I can't imagine anyone with a compromised immune system, I can't imagine them going through this...My lack of taking it seriously, versus wearing a mask or gloves or both probably contributed to me getting this. I kind of regret it now."

So now we wait and wonder whether anyone who works with my older child has a community acquired infection from their neighbor.

And we wonder and wait to see if my older child along with their spouse has been infected, too.

Just stay the fuck at home. Don't put yourself in this situation where you, too, must wait and wonder. You don't need any more stress than that wretch in the White House has forced on us.

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Speaking of that wretch, after comparing notes with Marcy this past week, I have a theory about the White House's abuses of power denying or obstructing aid to certain states under emergency declarations.

See if you can spot what I think has happened in the context of a table Marcy prepared; I added a few more columns to it.

Disaster Declarations by State and Total Cases on Approval (with Senate races and properties noted)

Date	State	Governor	Governor's Party	Cases at Declaration	Senator for Re-election?	Senator	Senator's Party	Trump Sites?
March 22	New York	Andrew Cuomo	Democratic	7102	No			Y.
March 22	California	Gavin Newsom	Democratic	1536	No			Y
March 22	Washington	Jay Inslee	Democratic	1793	No			N
March 24	Louisiana	John Bel Edwards	Democratic	1388	Yes	Bill Cassidy	Republican	N
March 24	Iowa	Kim Reynolds	Republican	124	Yes	Joni Ernst	Republican	N
March 25	North Carolina	Roy Cooper	Democratic	504	Yes	Thom Tillis	Republican	Y
March 25	Florida	Ron DeSantis	Republican	1682	No			Y
March 25	Texas	Greg Abbott	Republican	974	Yes	John Cornyn	Republican	N
March 26	Missouri	Mike Parson	Republican	502	No			N
March 26	Maryland	Larry Hogan	Republican	580	No			N
March 26	Illinois	JB Pritzker	Democratic	2538	Yes	Dick Durbin	Democratic	Y
March 26	Tribal Governments				No			N
March 26	New Jersey	Phil Murphy	Democratic	6876				Y
March 28	Michigan	Gretchen Whitmer	Democratic	3657	Yes	Gary Peters	Democratic	N

It's not just that "the woman in Michigan" was mean to poor baby Trump. Her state has a very tight senate race and no Trump hotel, golf course, or Trump organization business within its borders.

One thing I didn't add but makes sense to me about the tribal governments' federal emergency declaration: Marth McSally's Senate seat. What do you think?

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This pandemic crisis has pushed our system past its limits, exposing all the cracks in a hyper-capitalist system. I know I'm probably preaching to the choir in saying that, or at least if you're a regular here you're unsurprised to see that I've written this.

But how quickly people have been pushed to their personal breaking point hasn't really been plumbed. I've written before over the last few years that nearly 50% of Americans haven't had \$400-600 cash for emergencies, that rent across the country was beyond what minimum wage workers were paid, and health care insurance let alone health care was simply out of reach even with the Affordable Care Act.

The emergency is here, and any time now the dam is going to break. One-time checks from the government will come too late for many. Read this thread by Yashar Ali explaining one

person's crisis:

1. I've never had a hard time sleeping. But the past three nights I have slept a total of 3 hours. I'm writing this so I can sleep.

I am very angry. And I've realized during that having the space to be angry is a privilege because many people are too busy being terrified.

– Yashar Ali □ (@yashar) March 30, 2020

Some of us can't afford to help; we know this from the data and anecdotes we've seen. But those of us who can very much need to right now. Find a local soup kitchen or food pantry and make a donation of cash because people may already be experiencing food insecurity. Hunt down charitable programs delivering meals to children, elderly, and even groceries for hospital workers. As hard as we're expecting health care folks to work, they may not have time to shop for themselves.

The U.S. didn't become a great nation based solely on personal greed but by what Alexis de Toqueville called our "self-interest rightly understood." The diminishment of investment in our country through a combination of taxes and giving to ensure we all do well is why country is falling, why we now find ourselves in this mortal mess. Take immediate corrective action and help others if you can with cash.

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Keep in mind as we go forward this is both a shared national crisis, and an intensely personal crisis. The odds are stacked against any of us getting through the next 12 months without losing someone we know, like, love, and without someone within our personal spheres suffering hardship.

This is an open thread. Bring it here, back up the truck and dump it in comments.