

ADVENT WEEK 4: THE END OF STOLLEN TIME

[NB: check the byline, thanks. /~Rayne]

Our rooms were bugged, our phones were tapped, and our lawyer's rooms were broken into and their files stolen. We finally had to hire armed guards with pistols to be able to maintain our records. It was hard to believe we weren't in Russia.

– Jimmy Hoffa, Hoffa: The Real Story (1975)

While browsing for reading material related to stolen items, I ran across this excerpt. I'm adding the above book to my To Be Read list just because of that excerpt.

In retrospect, stealing documents seems very much a thing of a certain time – like the Pentagon Papers (1969-1971) and the attempted photocopying of DNC documents at the Watergate hotel (1972).

When were the Teamsters' lawyers' files stolen? Was it during the Kennedy admin during the prosecution of Hoffa, or the Nixon administration? I don't recall much about organized labor history during that period having been just a kid at the time. When it came to news I was more preoccupied with the Vietnam war, civil rights, and space exploration. I feel now like I missed something important that shaped the psyche of Donald Trump and his cohort.

Donald's father Fred Trump was eight years older than Jimmy Hoffa. Roger Stone, who is six years younger than Donald, cut his ratfucking teeth on Nixon's campaign. It's not far fetched to imagine Trump's brain molded by the means, methods, and events used when he was in his twenties.

Should we have been surprised that Trump continued to use the same means and methods throughout his career like stealing classified documents when we'd long heard about his eavesdropping via phone systems in his condo and resort developments?

Perhaps the problem has been the reaction to his use of DARVO, chronically accusing the targets of his animus of that which he has done. Too much time and energy has been spent trying to defend against his accusations instead of taking those accusations as an indicator of Trump's misdeeds. In other words,

Trump loudly claimed the election was stolen = Trump was stealing it.

Trump loudly claimed documents were his = Trump had stolen them.

Unfortunately the media isn't conditioned to assume the reverse; instead the media parrots the false claims, amplifying them to the detriment of the ones most harmed by Trump's theft/attempted theft.

The media still hasn't digested the fact one of its own – Fox News – engaged in defamatory false news as part of Trump's DARVO-driven model. If Fox News is reporting something about Trump as straight news, shouldn't the rest of the media ratchet up their skepticism? Isn't the dispersion of falsehoods news itself deserving coverage when it can shape an entire government, and not merely ignored because Fox is the competition?

Has common sense in journalism been stolen along with classified documents?

How should we the media consuming public address this as we head into another presidential election year? We have only days before the season begins in earnest.

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I was reminded this week of Murphy's Law:
Anything that can go wrong will go wrong..

Guess who was exposed to COVID on December 21, four days before Christmas? Two days before a family gathering?

Before I could attempt another batch of stollen?

I've tested negative so far but I had to wear a mask during the gathering with family. Climate change was a blessing; it was warm enough for me to eat my dinner outside on the deck while the family ate indoors.

Perhaps I'll be fortunate and not actually develop COVID. I got the latest vaccine the week before Thanksgiving and I've continued to wear an N95 mask whenever I'm out in shared public spaces.

But a friend I saw on Thursday had likewise been masked up as they traveled on Sunday December 17 and still got COVID.

More of you travelers need to wear masks, that's all there is to it. One person alone in an airport the size of O'Hare can't fend off the virus when everyone else refuses to take any precautions.

Anyhow, a test first thing tomorrow morning will dictate what happens the rest of Christmas Day. A visit with a family member who is alone and afflicted with cancer hinges on this test.

If Murphy wants to press the point about shit happening, tomorrow morning here will be the time and place.

Perhaps I didn't need to go looking for material about things stolen. The holiday has been stolen from many of us thanks to the ongoing pandemic too many people want to pretend ended.

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And now to things stolen.

This was not a raging success. It was close, but not quite. Somehow I missed the perfect time to add the alcohol-imbued dried fruits to the dough and they ended up drifting toward the outside of the loaf. Next time I'll roll the dough out,

sprinkle it with the fruits, roll up the dough as I would for cinnamon rolls, and let the fruit form a swirl. The technique was fine in the previous mango-pineapple version.

I also did a boo-boo and failed to remove the loaves when they reached 180F-185F degrees internal temperature, not 190F. My new digital thermometer might also be a little touchy and read a bit lower than the actual temp. Whatever the case, these loaves weren't quite as moist as I would have liked.



Not a winner of the stollen election, but this entrant will make an excellent French toast on Christmas morning just hours from now. The mixture of cranberries, figs, apricots, and apples with the cardamom-scented bread will be tasty – no advance experimentation necessary to know.

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Here we are, the advent season has now ended in Eastern and Central time zones; only a handful of hours separate all of us from the Christmas holiday.

We've already passed through the darkest night this past week – damn it, I just realized I was exposed to COVID on the winter solstice, how dark indeed. But days are now longer already, the dark of night shorter by minutes as each date passes.

What fruit-laden baked good won the stollen election in your opinion as we counted down the

remaining days of the season? What did you bake or eat which made the holidays brighter for you and yours? Share in this open thread below.

Merry Christmas to you and yours, hope your holiday season is restful and restorative.