

OrionWorks Sonova Quark

Brought to you by Steven Vincent Johnson and Darlene P. Coltrain, mailing address: 6666 Odana Road, #213, Madison, WI 53719. Email Steve: orionworks@charter.net. Email Darlene: dpcoltrain@gmail.com Web: <http://OrionWorks.com>. All material is Copyrighted © by Steven Vincent Johnson and Darlene P. Coltrain unless otherwise specified. Quark is brought to you by *OrionWorks* with occasional help from **Grasshopper Press** when I feel an inspirational mood overtake me. Final layout is assembled in InDesign CS5. Printing done on a HP Color LaserJet Pro MFP M277dw. Some might be asking how do you pronounce "Sonova Quark"? There isn't one.

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Trump is What Trump Does Confessions of a Science Fiction Artist, A Special Edition

Abuse, Perpetuated

The subject of *misogyny* is being laid bare on a national level in ways certain individuals in our culture do not appreciate. It's a discussion on a national level that is long overdue. In my own case, recent revelations about the GOP nominee's past indiscretions with women brought personal memories of my own to the surface. Memories I had not thought about for some time. It's not just about *misogyny*. There is *misandry* (hatred of men), *racism*, *xenophobia*, *chauvinism*, *bigotry*, *casteism* (adherence to a caste system)... the list is endless.

As a child, living overseas in places like Japan, Taiwan and El Salvador I occasionally experienced what it was like to be targeted as an undesirable foreigner living in a country whose native language I was not proficient in. On occasion I was ridiculed or put on the defensive. I remember being confronted by a class mate who told me American cars were badly built. *The* car to possess in El Salvador if one was privileged enough to be a part of the 2% was a Mercedes-Benz. That's what the 2% flaunted while cruising the streets. The classmate who challenged me was likely a two-percenter himself. I knew Mercedes-Benz were top-notch cars and I had no bone to pick with such comparisons. Such challenges weren't difficult to walk away from, particularly when you realize the setup was nothing more than to make you feel cornered, personally insulted, or just plain stupid.

But occasionally, there had been times when it didn't feel so easy to walk away. Sometimes without you realizing it you get yourself unexpectedly caught up in a melee of sorts. Only later do you find yourself wondering, could I have avoided the mess. Couldn't I have read the signs more quickly and planned a more graceful escape? Could I have walked away? Did I have a choice? *A Choice*.

I was about twelve years old, in 6th grade, living in

the city of San Salvador, El Salvador. I was attending that bilingual school that many two-percenter's went to. School had been let out for about an hour. I was in the process of stowing away painting materials after having participated in an extracurricular art class when two Salvadorian girls, class mates of mine, entered the deserted classroom.

The two had never shown me the slightest interest in the past. They seemed to be in good spirits, laughing and joking. As they approached me I felt a twinge of excitement realizing two attractive girls had suddenly noticed me. *ME!* I liked being noticed by the sex I was attracted to. Did they find me interesting? Smart? Did they find me attractive? Turning around and acknowledging their presence I remember that I wanted to participate. I wanted to be a part of their happy group. I wanted to belong.

I attempted to engage in the process of joking and laughing about various matters. Very quickly, however, I began to realize that what I had initially thought was now a three-way conversation was in fact nothing more than a steady stream of ridicule and taunts aimed specifically at me. I was nothing more than a targeted object.

One seemed to be the ringleader while the other seemed to be backup support. As the taunting and ridicule continued I felt cornered and extremely uncomfortable. I just wanted to get out of the situation. I ceased interacting. I turned around and started to walk away. But they weren't finished with their target. My retreat only seemed to embolden them. They followed and continued their taunts. Suddenly they started pushing and hitting me from behind.

Being targeted in such a manner had never happened to me before. Never before in my life had I encountered *two girls* my age that were verbally ridiculing, taunting, and physically pushing me around. Now, *boys* my age taunting or physically pushing me around? Well, of course, I didn't like that

either, but at least I was familiar with that scenario. I had been taught you're not supposed to push or hit girls. What do you do if walking away only made it worse? I didn't know what to do. All I could feel at that moment was that I wasn't defending myself. I felt humiliated.

Even though I was now out in the more exposed expanse of a hallway I continued to feel cornered. I had finally become angry. I felt I had no choice but to stop, turn around and physically retaliate. I felt I needed to get back at them. I summoned up the meanest, angriest expression I could fix on my face. I raised my arms and made fists. Meanwhile, they continued their taunts. My new confrontational posture didn't seem to phase them. I pushed towards them, lunging out with my arms and clenched fists. It felt awkward. Hardly self-assuring. It didn't feel like what I had always fantasized a real fight would feel like, as seen on TV. There were no satisfying punching sounds. Nobody flew across the room or was rolled to the floor. All my arms and fists did was flay about. They barely connecting with anything except hands that pushed me away. My taunters quickly jumped back. Perhaps they were surprised that I was now physically defending myself. If so, my new offensive maneuver had not stopped their taunts. They just taunted from a safe distance. There was two of them and I was all alone in a deserted hallway with them. They seemed to take assurance from each other, feeding off of each other's behavior. I began to suspect physically striking back wouldn't work in my favor. I had no appetite to engage in an extended dedicated assault. The odds weren't in my favor. Suddenly another option entered my mind. In a fit of rage I blurted out that I was going to find the principal and report their egregious behavior. Suddenly, there was dead silence. In that silence I turned around and stomped away.

As I approached the exit gate the ringleader suddenly appeared in front of me. She was alone, and she looked frightened. I just wanted to ignore her and escape out of the school grounds as fast as I could with what little self-respect I had left. She blocked my escape and grabbed one of my arms. She started pleaded with me, "Please, don't tell anyone!". I remember fear in her voice. ... Please! "...Oh, Steve, baby... Please don't do it."

I can't forget those words, especially being called "*baby!*" It felt as if I had been instantly transformed into her boyfriend. It felt as if she had relinquished ownership of herself over to someone she had already acquired experience in carefully placating. In an instant it felt like I had acquired absolute power over her. I did not want it. It felt creepy. I yanked my arm away and ran out of the school grounds.

Nothing ever came of the incident. I never reported it. I felt too humiliated that I allowed myself to have been taken advantage in such a manner. I was just glad that the ringleader never bothered me again.

Only years later in my life did I begin to comprehend. My taunter who attempted to humiliate me, the ringleader who targeted all of her anger and rage at a naive, timid twelve year old second class foreigner. What had probably already happened. Without consent. Too young. Unprepared. *No choice.*

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Mr. Trump claims not to be proud of his rhetorical boasts of exploiting women. But he has shown no remorse for what continues to spew out of his mouth. None. Trump even allowed, or possibly privately encouraged his spouse to excuse his behavior. Melania seems to imply that it was all just harmless "*boy talk*". Other man-boys simply egged Trump on to lie about fictitious testosterone-laced exploits. What are us males, us *boys*, supposed to take from such an assessment? Was she suggesting that when we males get together and bond with one other there exists this danger embedded within our testosterone-laced physiology to behave so irresponsibly that we reduce ourselves to acting out in despicable ways towards half the population of the human race? Not only is Trump's callowness injuring women, he is lacerating the psyche of men as well. Trump fantasizes that he will rule America and Make it Great again with his firm hands... but a bunch of man-boys engaging in "*boy talk*" easily lead his sewer mouth? This is a presidential candidate who excuses his actions by claiming his boasting, his harmless little "locker room talk" was only meant to improve his standing (his sexual aka power ratings) with other men. This is a person who doesn't seem to understand nor care what motivated him to spew out all the recorded things he said on tape, what he has probably actually done repeatedly. Trump has repeatedly proven himself not capable of being able to handle one of the most horrible requests a president of the United States might some day be egged-on to ponder. Do I push the button?

It's likely Trump knows deep down that he is damaged goods, at least within the political arena. He doesn't care. I suspect his cross-hairs are already aiming for his next prey to conquer, Trump TV. There he will endeavor to rebuild his image. Tragically, there exists many followers in our land who are OK with the Faustian pact that they have made with him. They don't care that Trump is what Trump does. I suspect Trump is looking forward to an even greater sense of freedom and power where his subjects egg him on to say and do whatever his most beautiful hands dictate. Playing the prez? Boooreing! Fox news, you're going down! Resistance is futile. ☹

OTHER STUFF

I realize I'm probably preaching to the choir. This unprecedented election cycle has exhausted me. I need to take a brief TURBO break. I will c u all in December with the dawning of winter's solstice. In the meantime, **GO VOTE!** ☹