

Time to act like Canadians

by Scott Taylor

The current president of the United States has said a free press is the enemy of the people. Let that sink in. He has also called for journalists to be assaulted and labels every story that doesn't flatter him as fake news. Journalists were in physical danger inside the Republican National Convention.

Now someone has walked into a newspaper in Annapolis, Maryland and shot five people dead. Five people who woke up that morning, kissed loved one goodbye, and went to work. Just like any other day.

A short time later, journalists in Washington asked the president what thoughts he had on the massacre, but he refused to comment. It should be noted that he's on Twitter moments after a brown person kills someone anywhere in the world, but for employees of a newspaper not far from the White House, he gave a thumbs up. Now let THAT sink in.

I'm admittedly angry as I write this, both because of the senseless loss of life and the roots from which this anger has grown. It's a dangerous time to be a reporter in the United States. I remember when it was a dangerous time to be a reporter in the Congo or Vietnam or anywhere people were shooting other people in a lawless society.

That's the United States now and the credit all goes to Donald Trump and his mob from the far right who have said all along that they want to tear the establishment down and build a new world order. Well, friends, the new world order they envision is one of hatred, divisiveness, racism and exclusion.

That's why it's so important that we Canadians remain, well, Canadian because you can see the cracks between us starting to form. It's not that they haven't always been there, but we have for the most part treated each other's contrasting viewpoints with civility. We might have moaned and complained, regardless of who was running the country, but we never hated that PM's supporters.

The closest I've come to American-style political venom was during the Quebec referendums. I was a maudit Anglais, a bloke, and a few other things we can't print in this family newspaper, but when it was over, it was over. Yes, it took some time to heal for both sides, but before too long French and English were sitting side-by-side sipping beverages and wondering where it all went wrong for the Habs. There were some die-hards, of course, but they were the true minority.

Now, however, thanks in large part to fringe media such as the failed Sun News TV experiment (What did ?We are unapologetically Canadian! even mean?) and Ezra Levant's Rebel Media, the word liberal is becoming a slur.

Hate organizations are becoming more prominent and vocal, and public discourse more offensive.

As Canadians, we must rise above that and remember that whatever happens south of the border, we live in a beautiful, vibrant, friendly country that is the envy of much of the world. Nothing will ever be perfect, but we have it pretty good.

The future is going to be tough for everyone, everywhere. The best way to overcome that is to hold Canadian values dear, to help others when they're down, to offer to lend a hand, and to share the occasional beer. We'll get much further together than we will apart.

This lesson has been tried and true for 151 years. Now is not the time to ignore it.