



Raymond Cuts to the Chase

Regarding Erik Bojnansky's story about North Miami Beach ("[City in Chaos](#)," August 2018): Great article.

Raymond F. Marin
Aventura

Despotism 101: Lessons on Attacking the Messenger

BT readers Michael Rosen and Rachel Weiss are disappointed in Jack King's "[Big Ego, No Brains](#)" column (July 2018). Rosen expected "nothing but unbiased truth" (from an opinion column? Rosen even correctly identifies it as "commentary!"), and Weiss found King's views "disgusting" and representing "blatant disrespect [for] our POTUS."

Frankly, I would be the first to join Rosen and Weiss in recognizing King as having apparently

liberal political leanings. I do, too, and I'm not personally complaining. Then again, I wouldn't complain if King had apparently conservative leanings. He's entitled to his opinions, and I don't mind knowing what they are. Maybe I happen to agree, and maybe I don't. So? King didn't lie, as do Donald Trump and the Fox News crew. He just stated his opinions.

But these two *BT* readers are more incensed than just complaining that someone has political leanings that are different from theirs. Rosen names the problem: "[King] compares a lackluster president to the catastrophe and abuse of...the Holocaust." And quoting Weiss again, she is disturbed about what she experiences as "disrespect."

Good for Rosen, supporter/apologist that he is, for recognizing at least that Trump is "lackluster." He doesn't explain what he means or address the fact that Trump has no political perspective (or what his real agenda is). But there's a huge difference between the Donald Trump of 2014-2018 and the Nazi machine of the 1940s.

Beginning in 1933, what became the Nazis of the 1940s looked very much like the Trump movement of recent years. Those early Nazis didn't have concentration camps. They had rallies and marches, and they worked to whip up prejudice and hatred. They chose segments of the population and demonized them as the causes of all the problems the Germans were having. If I can make assumptions about people named Rosen and Weiss, it seems to me odd that they don't know that. They need to refresh themselves on Niemoller's poem: "First they came for the Socialists...."

Jack King said what he had to say. If you're a Trump supporter, you don't like it. Or you're embarrassed that King was right. If that's your problem, you go figure it out, and search your soul. You don't attack the messenger or try to discredit him as disrespectful, or producing "fake news."

That's Despotism 101. And anyone who imagines that the Second Amendment is intended to protect the public from the government should realize that the First Amendment, the one that comes before the Second Amendment, is there for the same reason.

Jack King, and the *BT*, provide an essential service at a time when people need to recognize that Trump is at best "lackluster," and that he isn't wearing any clothes. It's not politically correct,

in the eyes of people like Rachel Weiss, but it's vital to the survival of democracy.

Fred Jonas
Biscayne Park

Reprint Redux: The Biscayne Corridor's Sad Stagnation

Reading Ken Jett's Upper Eastside column "[Giddy for This Shorecrest Vision](#)" (May 2018), which was originally published in 2014, made me wonder if you guys are trying to enlighten loyal
Biscayne Times

readers as to how little improvement the Upper Eastside has seen since the questionable and dirtily politicized 35-foot height restriction was imposed in the MiMo Historic District.

If that's the case, I would suggest you republish Shane M. Graber's column "Give Us Five More Feet," which was originally published in June 2016.

This acute article clearly predicts and explains the real causes of the sad stagnation we are witnessing today in our part of the Biscayne Corridor.

Jorge Sanchez
Palm Grove

He Won't Rewrite History

Written by BT Readers
September 2018

Editor's note: We received the following letter long ago from local historian Seth Bramson, who is well known for his books on the history of local municipalities. The letter's length kept exceeding publication constraints, but we held on to it, hoping to use it one day. With this month's "Community News" story on one of the shortest chapters in the history of Aventura city government (see page 38), that day has arrived.

This is a thank you to John Dorschner for a well-written, even-handed, and factually presented article ("[The Lens of History](#)," November 2016) on my book on Aventura's history, *From Marshes and Mangroves to Cityscapes and High-Rises*

Sometimes "stuff happens," and of the 26 books I have written and which have been published so far, only two were decided against by a city manager, and, yes, I am currently working on eight more books simultaneously, including two biographies, the history of Miami Beach High School, the history of Greater Miami during World War II, and the remaining four all Henry Flagler or transportation-related.

Although the Miami Beach city manager canceled my contract, I neither took legal action nor made any negative comments; the same with the Aventura city manager.

Dorschner noted that the Aventura book is positive regarding the city's history. And it is. But certain unhappy events, such as the murder of the speedboat king, Don Aronow, and the lawsuit referred to in the book's epilogue [brought against the city by fired charter school principal Katherine Murphy] and noted by Dorschner, had to be included in a history book, for they a part of the city's history.

In regard to Miami Beach, I was contracted to write a history, not a fluff piece. Both the mayor and manager were very clear that they wanted a complete history of the city, and that is what they were given. As a historian and the senior collector of Florida East Coast Railway, Florida transportation memorabilia, Miami memorabilia, and Floridiana in America, I write *only* facts and truth.

Unfortunately, some may be unhappy with those facts and that truth; but, for example, the fact and truth is that Julia Tuttle never, ever sent orange blossoms to Mr. Flagler to get him to

extend the railroad to Biscayne Bay.

That fable was debunked as early as 1913 in a promotional booklet issued by the then-incorporated Village of Coconut Grove, in which they clearly stated that the story is wonderfully romantic but it is simply not true, the facts being simple: Mr. Flagler extended the railroad to what, three months later, in July of 1896, would become Miami because Mr. and Mrs. Brickell gave him half of their land south of the (Miami) River and Mrs. Tuttle gave him half of her land north of the river plus fifty acres for shops and yards. That was why the railroad was extended, not because Julia Tuttle “sent him some orange blossoms.”

Another factual item is that I did not look for a publisher [for the book on Aventura’s history] for three years. It was my great good fortune to have gotten to know Al Barg and Jeff Weisberg, publishers of the stunningly beautiful national parks photo books when they were the photographers at Miami Jewish Health System. That cordiality led to a great friendship, and in discussing the book, they expressed an interest in publishing it.

Once Myrna Mason (the daughter of the late Eugene Lebowitz, who in Pittsburgh and in the original purchase of what would become Aventura, was the partner of Harry Soffer, Don’s father) became interested in seeing the book published, she stepped in, guaranteed the purchase of the first 500 copies, and the rest, as they say, is history.

Seth H. Bramson
Miami Shores

Corrections

The August 2018 cover story “City in Chaos” incorrectly reported that former North Miami Beach mayor George Vallejo used \$13,237 from the Floridians For Progress political committee for personal expenses. The money was drawn from Vallejo’s 2015 re-election campaign account.

Letters September 2018

Written by BT Readers
September 2018

The story also should have included an explanation from lobbyist and consultant Keith Donner that the Infusionsoft subscription charged to his credit card and used by Vallejo was actually Donner's personal account.

A corrected version of the story is available at BiscayneTimes.com.

In the "Community News" story "[New Kids on the Block](#)" (August 2018), Miami Shores Councilman Steve Zelkowitz was misidentified. He is managing shareholder of the Miami office of the law firm GrayRobinson.