

My Trump Rally Experience

November 4, 2019

I attended my first (and last) Trump Rally last night, probably at risk of losing all my liberal pals because of my selfish curiosity to see what it's actually like inside a wasp's nest and to try out my photo-journalistic skills at what would surely be a historic event.

I was surprised to find Trumpers incredibly warm, welcoming and friendly. I had heard from a Good Source (you know who you are) that Trumpers were rabid, hateful, glassy-eyed walking dead...or something similar.

Guards, cops (the entire force according to one of 'em), and ushers all treated me with the utmost respect and practically invited me to join the press in the pit and made sure I understood I could wander the place at will. Cool!

Then, it occurred to me: they thought I WAS press! But, if that was the case, wouldn't they be shouting obscenities and throwing spitballs? But, maybe that'd only be the case with MAGA hats....had they known I wasn't one of the flock, I doubt I'd have made it to the bathroom in one piece.

At any rate, I had free reign of the place, so settled in to enjoy the spectacle.

The REAL press was behind a little wall, working hard on phones and computers, cameramen setting things up on the risers (I always find a press pit so exciting). Coming in and out were some folks you might recognize (peruse descriptions on photos)... or not. Sadly, my favorite journalist remained in DC and broke my heart. I shoulda seen that coming....

When the principles began appearing to rile up the MAGAs a coupla hours before Trump showed, things began to shift ever so subtly. Things got hotter, and noisier, and ruder. Trump's entourage began to infiltrate the floor, some wandering among the crowd, pressing flesh, signing red hats and flashing too-white teeth at everyone like deranged carnivores...or, maybe it was just my imagination.

Anyway, I decided to move up close and secured a spot in the crowd about 10 feet from the stage. A cute little guy with a MAGA hat seemed to need friends because he engaged me. Seems he's running for State House in some tiny town in West Virginia and wanted to take a selfie with Trump in the background to use in his campaign ads. Say what?

Soon enough, all the rev-up music began and the place was humming like that wasp nest I mentioned. Then, all of a sudden freakin' Lee Greenwood comes out singing "God Bless the USA". And, that's when things went to hell in a hand-basket. And, it was nothing like the hell Trump told everyone he sent Baghdadi to.

All the hellish biggies were there: Moscow Mitch (Grandpa Mitch, according to the signature on my WV friend's MAGA hat), Alternative Facts Barbie, Bevin, Rand Paul, Mark Meadows { shudder },

loathsome James Comer, Bubonic Plague Andy Barr, Scary As Hell Brad Pascale (Trump's 2020 campaign manager)...et al.

Things went exactly as expected the rally for Bevin was actually for Trump. But, hey. It's all about him. And, nobody BUT him.

I finished shooting the prez and decided to get out of there. The woman behind me was livid that I wasn't behind HER and kept jostling me to blur my photos. (I know...I don't get it, either). But, I retired back to the press pit and while looking for familiar faces, I missed what would have been my best shot of the night.

Trump started his usual trashing of the press...y'know when he makes that ugly sweeping motion with his arm, pointing toward the back of the room?.... the crowd roared, turned en masse and started snarling and drooling like a pack of rabid vampire bats (apologies to bats), pumping fists, screaming obscenities at the top of their lungs. It was the ugliest thing I've ever seen, especially toward the body of folks just doing their jobs, who made Trump possible for them. But, once again....they stepped in it.

That was my departure point. I just couldn't take anymore. Outside, the vendors were cheerfully gearing up for the crowd to come and I made the long walk back to my car.

No regrets and another interesting.... adventure under my belt. I even got to meet Baby Trump in front of the courthouse. But, enough is just enough. Whew. Beware the friendliest MAGA Hats. They'll eat you as soon as look at you once the Koolaid starts flowing.