

**W**AS driving toward a busy intersection when my cellphone rang. As I picked it up, I made a sudden, mindless lane change, cutting off the driver behind me. When the light turned red, I was forced to stop. In a flash, the guy in the vehicle I had just cut off came charging out of his car, fists balled. I have no idea what came over me, but I knew that I'd screwed up and the angry man was right.

I stuck my head out the window, looked up at him and said, "Sir, I am so sorry. I should not have cut you off. I was irresponsible. Can you please forgive me?"

He was a big guy and was shaking with rage. But my words got past his indignation enough to slow him down.

"I'm really sorry," I said again.

Now he's almost at my open window. Close enough to punch me in the face. But instead he seems confused. "What did you say?"

I looked up into his eyes and very clearly said, "Sir, I was wrong and stupid. I cannot believe I drove so recklessly. I'm usually careful. Can you please forgive me?"

He unballled his fists, put his right hand on top of the car's roof, leaned in and said, "Man, you gotta be more careful! My wife got slammed against her seat belt!"

"Oh, shit," I said. "That's awful. I cannot believe I did that!"

His face changed and the whole feeling of the moment shifted. "Drive safe!" he said, and got back into his car.

The light changed and I very carefully drove to my appointment, shaking from adrenaline and humbled by the experience.

I did not know it at the time, but it turns out that sincere humility and asking for forgiveness can be a potent path to defusing rage. Both those qualities—humility and asking for forgiveness—were in very short supply during the presidential campaign. And our country now needs a huge injection of both to survive the months ahead.

Psychotherapists are reporting they've never seen so much stress and fear connected to politics. Friendships and even marriages have been put at risk because of the campaign. People have lost sleep and many have dropped off of social media because of all the rage spitting across their computer screens.

Trump's rhetoric of slamming Muslims as terrorists and Mexicans as rapists, to name just a few egregious examples, lifted a metaphorical rock off the poisonous secret culture of hatred and violence that had always been there, but was kept in check by societal pressure and the absence of a viable national "leader." Trump cried havoc and let loose the beasts of people's previously tamped-down rage.

### "A Bloodbath"

Just as the campaign was reaching its final days, an FBI anti-terrorist arrest in the small city of Garden City, Kansas, sent a chilling warning to anyone who might have been paying attention: Not only has a river of rage overflowed into our country, but for some people, that rage is the ultimate intoxicant. And they want more. One of the alleged plotters declared: "The only good Muslim

is a dead Muslim. If you're a Muslim, I'm going to enjoy shooting you in the head." Those words were secretly recorded as the men prepared to bomb an apartment house full of Somali refugees. The FBI busted them after an eight-month investigation.

"Many Kansans may find it as startling as I do that such things could happen here," said Tom Beall, the Acting U.S. Attorney for Kansas.

Unlike Beall, I wasn't surprised one bit. I've been reporting on and studying terrorism in all its forms for half a century. It can happen anywhere, and no crazy radical Islamist hoping for 72 virgins in heaven is required, as the Kansas investigation has shown.

In fact, as that case demonstrates, we are now confronted by the very real prospect of organized, racist, politically motivated terror aimed at Muslims and others who are perceived by some as not being truly "American." That attitude, that threat—which was amped up by the Trump campaign—comes from a very small number of heavily armed people. They are white, native-born, self-described Christians eager to make their mark in blood. Despite what they would like the world to believe, however, they are not representative of white Christians, the NRA, or most Trump supporters. Though they are small in number, they must be taken

seriously, and that probably means court-ordered surveillance.

For some, Trump's presidential campaign became a heroic narrative for the return of an America in which men like them could be happy again. Some of them were rejected by the military. Some served and suffered PTSD, which went untreated, forcing them into painful private spaces where alcohol and opioids often join depression. Others never got it together for anything, did not qualify for military service, lost out in the business world, and sought group identification with anyone who would accept them. Over the past eight years, these very angry men have felt

further marginalized by a society that increasingly is run by people who don't look like them, talk like them, or believe as they do.

Some of them are victims of a historic paradigm shift away from the values they were taught, and the economy they believed would take care of them. For many, globalization spells calamity. Their good jobs were exported and replaced by nothing, or work that pays a fraction of their former job. Their disconnect from the romanticized American "good life" of endless consumption, their inability to stay ahead of their bills, and their frustration at finding work in an increasingly tech-driven economy, all combined to make them easy pickings for a movement headed by someone with charisma who looks and sounds a little bit like them, making them feel a part of something strong. Trump told everyone he had the answer for what was broken in their lives, and that he would be their shield against having a president with a vagina or being overrun by ISIS at home.

Feeding on people's fears, Trump pledged he would block all Muslims from entering the U.S. and punish women who get abortions. His large rallies, made up almost exclusively of white people (most of them men), screamed their approval.

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