

PURIM SHPIEL 2017



THE ELECTION INSURRECTION

By Rabbi Peter Schweitzer



Purim is the Jewish holiday of merriment that celebrates the deliverance of the Jewish people from the ancient Persian Empire. It is commemorated annually with the reading of the Book of Esther – the Megillah – that will take place this year on the evening of March 11.

The story recounts a nefarious plot by the evil Haman, the vizier to King Ahaseurus, who schemes to destroy the Jewish people. But Haman's plans are thwarted by Queen Esther, who has infiltrated the Royal Court as a replacement to the King's self-respecting wife Vashti who refused to display her beauty before the king and his princes wearing only her royal crown. Esther receives secret communiqués from her cousin Mordecai, but she is really an independent operator who must fulfill her mission to protect the Jews using only her own resources.

Starting in the 1400s, new versions of the story, known as Purim shpiels, emerged side by side with the traditional one. These popular re-tellings have taken on a life of their own as satiric parodies of current events and political leaders. It didn't hurt the appeal to include risqué references and bawdy language.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

THE FAMILY

King Donald – An intensely insecure man who disguises his own self-contempt and inferiority complex with narcissistic boasting about his sexual prowess, delusional claims of greatness, name-calling, bullying, and retaliatory lashing out at anybody and everybody, especially people of color, women, the disabled, Mexicans and Muslims. He is a talented scam artist with no credibility, a constant liar, a provocateur and rabble-rouser. He has a short attention span, no intellectual curiosity, a limited vocabulary, and a tendency to speak in repetitive outbursts.

King Donald's Wife – A rotating role, currently occupied by wife #3, **Queen Melania** Born in Slovenia and modeled for fashion houses in Milan and Paris. Relocated to New York City in 1996 and reportedly paid over \$20K for modeling jobs before she had legal permission to work in the country. She met Donald at a Fashion Week party in New York City in September 1998. He had not ascended to the throne yet, but was still a mere real estate mogul and self-promoting reality television personality. Donald attended the fashion event with another date and Melania initially refused to give him her phone number. Sad! What a failure! Finally, in 2005, they were married.

*The two prior queens, after being fired from the job, took up membership in the privileged and exclusive Ex-Wives Club. They are supported by a Greek Choir known as **Class Action Suit**, comprised of four voices -- **Grievance, Allegation, Claimant, and Anonymous** -- who represent just a few of the women who have accused King Donald of groping or ogling them.*

The Children

Mannequin – A socialite, business mogul, daddy's girl. Played by **Sheina Punim** aka **Ivanka** **"I never had a sense of entitlement" Trump**

The Son-in-law – A role made famous by Rob "Meathead" Reiner, son-in-law to America's most lovable bigot, Archie Bunker. Reiner was not available for the part as he is too busy leading protests every weekend. The role is now played by Machievellian Trump whisperer and confidant, **Jared the Inscrutable**.

The Two Crown Princes – aka The Emolument Boys. **Namesake** is played by, **Donald Jr.** and the **Role of Eric** is played by **Eric**.

The Other Two Children – **Tiffany** and **Barron**, have occasional face time, but no speaking parts.

FORCES OF EVIL

Puppetmaster – A strongman, spy-chief, land-grabber, and occasional male calendar model – **Vladimir Putin**

Evil Incarnate – **Steve Bannon**

Devil's Advocate – A conservative alt-right provocateur who favors ambition, ruthlessness, and the single-minded pursuit of power – **Ann Coulter**

Junior Troll and Automaton – Liar, bigot and self-hating Jew, **Stephen Miller**, who popularized the line, said with a raised straight right arm, “The powers of the president are very substantial and will not be questioned.”

Political Operatives -- Foreign agent and “I Love Ukraine” lobbyist, **Paul Manafort**, and Gangster Wannabee, **Cory Lewandowski**

Creepy Guy – Transphobe, misogynist, and washed up alt-right pedophiliac, **Milo Yiannopoulos**

Shapeshifter – A female monster in the form of a bird with a human face. She steals food from her victims while they are eating. Originally a wind spirit, who now twists her words in the wind. She spouts alternative facts and once famously said, “We’re putting conundrums on top of hypotheticals on top of conjecture here.” **Kellyanne Conway**

A Deer Caught in the Headlights – Played by passive-aggressive, White House Press Secretary, **Sean Spicer**, who is an anxious wreck because he is constantly critiqued by the king. He self-medicates throughout the day by chewing on and then swallowing pack after pack of Orbit cinnamon gum.

THE TEN SUBSERVIENTS

In the original story, Haman had his 10 sons and all ended up hanging from the gallows.

In our story, King Donald has his 10 powerless subservients who can all expect a similar fate.

#1 Scary – An unctuous, snake in the grass, who bides his time while ready to pounce. **Mike Pence**

#2 Milquetoast – The chief of staff. **Reince Priebus**

#3 Oily – **Rex Tillerson**, who is drowning in black gold

#4 Forgetful – Aka **Scapegoat**, **General Michael Flynn**, who couldn't recall discussing sanctions with the Russian ambassador and will probably have an even harder time recalling who instructed him to have those conversations.

#5 Spineless – **Paul Ryan**

#6 Artful Dodge – **Mitch McConnell**

#7 Dopey – **Rick Perry**

#8 Sleepy – **Ben Carson**

#9 Squinty – **Jeff Beauregard Sessions**

#10 Submissive – **Betsy DeVos**, who briefly gave us hope when she resisted the rescinding of rules to protect transgender students, but went along in the end because she lacked the integrity to stand up to Trump and Jeff Sessions and submit her resignation.

THE ORIGINAL JEWISH DEFENSE LEAGUE AKA THE FIFTH COLUMN

These roles were originally established to acclaim by Mordecai, son of Jair, of the tribe of Benjamin, and his orphaned cousin, Esther, aka Hadassah, who he raised as a daughter, sponsored in the local beauty pageant, and then charged her with confronting the King and Evil Haman in order to save the day.

Mordecai – Civil rights icon **Congressman John Lewis**, who famously said, “I will not bow down to him, I will sit down in spite of him!”

Esther – Singer, songwriter, **Beyoncé**, role model for female empowerment and self-confidence, who once said, “I had a choice to stand still or move forward. To let things happen or to make things happen. Every day I wake up I make a choice not to let the world decide for me. I decide for me.” Which, apparently, includes getting pregnant with twins with someone other than the king.

THE REARGUARD

The Grownups – Defense Secretary **James Mad Dog Mattis** and Lt. Gen. **H.R. McMaster**, **National Security Adviser**, but the question remains whether they’ll still be told to sit at the children’s table.

Thorn-in-the-side – America’s favorite irascible contrarian and genuine war hero, **Senator John McCain**

Wisecrack – Outspoken critic and smack talker, **Senator Lindsay Graham**

Renegades – **Senators Susan Collins (Maine) and Lisa Murkowski (Alaska)**

BRAVE LEADERS AND COURAGEOUS EXEMPLARS OF THE FOURTH ESTATE

Reporters, commentators, and talk show hosts who have called out the king’s spokespeople and even the king himself on their falsehoods.

Chuck Todd of NBC’s Meet the Press, who said to Kellyanne Conway: “.... Alternative facts? Alternative facts? Four of the five facts he uttered were just not true. Look, alternative facts are not facts. They’re falsehoods.”

Peter Alexander of NBC, who said to King Donald: “... why should the American people trust you ... when you’re providing information that’s not accurate?”

Additional cast members include **Jake Tapper**, of CNN, who said, “That’s a lovely spin, Kellyanne...but how about the president’s statements that are false?” and **April Ryan** of American Urban Radio Network, who slapped away Donald’s suggestion that she set up a meeting for him with her “friends” at the Congressional Black Caucus by saying, “No, no, no. I’m just a reporter.”

Special Cameo appearance from the singing group “**Liar, Liar, Pants on Fire,**” whose members are the **Anchors, Reporters and Wise Commentators of MSNBC – Rachel Maddow, Chris Hayes, Chris Matthews, Lawrence O’Donnell, Ari Melber, Steve Kornacki, Joy Reid, Eugene Robinson, and Howard Dean**, just to name a few.

THE CIRCUIT RIDERS

An ever-growing group of unflappable, undeterred real judges who have granted injunctions against the so-called president and his Muslim travel ban. More of these judges will undoubtedly be called to service in the months to come.

Cast members so far include:

U.S. District Judges Leonie Brinkema (Virginia), **Ann Donnelly** (Brooklyn), **Allison Burroughs** and **Judith Dein** (Boston)

Federal Judge James Robart, Western District of Washington

Judges from the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals: **Judge William Canby**, **Judge Richard Clifton**, and **Judge Michelle Friedland**

Additional cast members include:

Tenacious investigators at the **FBI**, tech savvy spooks at the **CIA**, and, especially noteworthy, the dozens upon dozens of lawyers of the **ACLU** who are primed for action at any time of day, as evidenced by the large bold type on the Agency’s homepage: “**HE DISCRIMINATED - WE SUED. The ACLU Will Never Back Down. Stand With Us.**”

ORDINARY PEOPLE TO THE RESCUE

And finally, in this epic apocalyptic battle between good and evil, thousands upon thousands upon thousands of people world-wide have been cast in the role of demonstrators and protesters, ready at any moment to mobilize and pour on stage, to unleash the strength and dignity of their presence on the streets, in the halls of government, at town hall meetings, speaking truth to power and bending the arc of the moral universe towards justice.

SYNOPSIS

In the beginning, there was a descent into darkness, a journey of doom to gloom, from the escalator on high to the depths of hell below. This is not a tale of a shining city on a hill, whose beacon guides freedom-loving people everywhere, where pilgrims yearn to come. No, it is a sordid tale where innocent people are hunted and rounded up, where families are broken apart, where rights are trampled, and madness rules.

Our story begins with a clown-car of candidates, a ramped up campaign of hate and fear, an unleashing of vitriol and violence, miscalculations of an over-confident candidate who underestimated her opponent's appeal, all churned up by constant foreign interference and a last minute bombshell. The result was a rigged, stolen election and the crowing and crowning of King Donald. It is safe to say that he was just as stunned by the outcome, maybe even more upset at the upset than everyone else. For all his boasting that he was going to win, did he even believe his own words? Did he really want the job?

But there it was. A reality that was impervious to falsification. So now it was time, at least for King Donald and his alt-right retinue, to celebrate. He would throw himself the hugest enthronement party in the land that would be attended by more people than ever before. But the A-listers turned him down. And so did the B-listers. And all the way to the tongue twisters.

Now King Donald became incensed! He could not stand rejection. He threatened to sue, but whom? "I know," he said. "I'll do what I always do! I'll blame it on the lügenpresse, I mean the lying press." "I am the greatest," he proclaimed. "How dare they desert me at my crowning hour?! I will not let all this inferior Trump steak go to waste!"

And then he said, "I know what will get the tongues wagging, the eyeballs popping, the sycophants panting." He summoned his wife, Queen Melania, and he said, "Dance! Show them what you got, you Slovenian Seductress! Entertain my tycoons and billionaires! Perform for my despots and denizens of the swamp! And make sure you wear some of Ivanka's jewelry, which is getting harder and harder to find."

But Melania refused and gave him that icy Slavic stare. "I'm through with that, Donny," she said, "I am woman. Here me roar! I am staying put in New York where I just want to cash in on my fame and do homework with little Barron." Now King Donald could not take this rejection and he told everyone that he had fired Melania, but everyone really knew that this was another of his daily lies.

Meanwhile, King Donald kept busy signing whatever executive order was put in front of him, with his hugely, bigly, ginormous signature, never reading any of them, of course. He had no time for that. He was too busy planning the next beauty pageant to find wife number four. He loved judging beauty pageants and especially visiting the contestants in their undressing room.

Meanwhile, King Donald had surrounded himself by an understaffed but overly zealous coterie of self-serving advisors and bomb-throwing anarchists who would do all the work he didn't want to do which was essentially all of it. But these advisors were all power-hungry competitors, each

protecting their own turf, finding any opportunity to undo each other and grab more power. Leaks flowed with a torrent. Everyone was on edge. There was great confusion, chaos and conflict, and also much consternation. Rumors were flying. Plots were being plotted. It was like a circular firing squad on a hair trigger. Whose head would be on the chopping block next? Whose head would hang next from the gallows? When would the next shoe drop and whose would it be?

Meanwhile, the people were revolting. They had read all those executive orders. And they didn't like them. They didn't want to lose their health care. They didn't want to oppress women and minorities, and people of other faiths, and LGBTQ folks. They didn't want to build walls to keep people out. They didn't want to demonize the press. They didn't want guns to be in the hands of crazy people and children. They didn't want the sun to get hotter and the ozone layer to be destroyed and with it the whole earth. They didn't want to deconstruct the administrative state and civilization as we know it. So they got to work marching in the streets. And they aimed their fury at elected officials in town hall meetings. The press called out the lies and the lawyers worked overtime tying up new edicts in court and they took a page from Donald's own playbook, and they sued and they sued and they sued.

Meanwhile, King Donald was getting more agitated and paranoid, living in that great white house all alone, bouncing off the walls like a bright orange billiard ball. He imagined the worst. Would the Elders of Zion and the Jewish Fifth Column push back? Would all the ladies in pink hats overrun the White House? Would Goofy Elizabeth Warren and Crazy Bernie Sanders harangue him to death? Would Meryl Streep give another passionate speech? Would Tom Perez and Keith Ellison unite the Democrats with their new bromance? Would a special prosecutor get to the bottom of it all? Would Michelle Obama ride to the rescue? With Barack and Joe and Hillary and Bill close behind?

What about the generals? Would they pull off the first homeland military coup in the name of mom and apple pie? Would Vladimir get exasperated by Donald's erratic behavior and publish his taxes for him? Would Saturday Night Live figure out how the story ends and invent a finale starring Alec Baldwin, Kate McKinnon, and Melissa McCarthy, where reality imitates art and art imitates reality?

Meanwhile, King Donald was preoccupied with his declining ratings. He could no longer tell the difference between his own fake news and real fake news. He kept hearing the word impeachment whispered up and down the hallways. His aides and his children were jumping ship or getting fired, and he suspected that wife number four was up to no good herself. Most troubling, the people were protesting twenty-four seven. The crowds were getting bigger and stronger and louder and louder and making such a ruckus that he couldn't fall asleep.

So one night at three in the morning, still tossing and turning, he called one of his few remaining loyal aides and said, "Bring me my cell phone. I want to read my tweets. Maybe I'll send out some more. That always calms me down." But wouldn't you know it! He pushed the button to wake up his phone but it blinked back at him, "Low Battery! Low Battery!" He tried desperately to tweet, but the phone turned on him too. It flickered, it faded, it froze, it dimmed into darkness and died, and we never ever heard from King Donald again.

And that day there was a great celebration in the streets, and they called the day Poor-Him. And somebody came up with the idea of eating fruit-filled dough that are called hamentashen and have no apparent connection to the holiday, but what's a holiday without its own special food? And someone else came up with the idea of drinking excessive amounts of wine to forget this whole episode, but when you forget history it tends to repeat itself. So better to settle on moderate drinking, casual frolicking, and making yet another donation to the ACLU, Planned Parenthood, 350.org and the election campaigns of all the good defenders of decency, democracy, universal human rights and a sustainable planet.

And they all said, Loo y'hee. Let it be!

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