



SPARTACUS NO. 76

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Opinions & desperate obfuscation by Guy H. Lillian III

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The day of the Trump/Kamala debate began with the roar of a launch from Cape Canaveral, ten miles or so to the north. It was still night; like the Polaris Dawn flight the day before, this Falcon 9 left early. I missed seeing the usual focused flame again, just caught its reflection in the canal out back.

I was worried all day, despite knowing that the villain in this contest, Donald Trump, is a charlatan and a *poseur*. In 2016 he had prevailed thanks to two objectively meaningless advantages: not being a politico but a performer, he was both familiar and popular, something new, and two, America still gives homage to an obsolete brand of federalism through the Electoral College. He lost the popular contest by 3,000,000 votes, but eked out victory in a few crucial states. Over his term he proved himself ignorant and contemptuous of the office. He behaved reprehensively and was turned out in 2020 by a seasoned pro and a better man.

A bit *too* seasoned, it turned out. Joe Biden's presidency was rich with competence and wise moves, but the wisest of all was his decision, after the catastrophic early debate with Trump, to face reality. He had sounded not only old but addled and found himself in danger of handing his country to a proven degenerate and criminal. It was time to retire.

The effect in American politics was immediate and explosive. *Joy*. ~~Someone called the moment the Second Coming of Barack Obama.~~ Democrats turned their campaign – starting with their convention – around on its heels. What had been defensiveness of Joe Biden's age became celebration of Kamala Harris' youthful energy. Her attitude of hope and the change implicit in her very candidacy blossomed throughout the party. Her pick of the little-known Tim Walz for the vice presidency was hailed as brilliant, as the onetime high school teacher showed his natural charm, wit and approachability – a stark contrast to J.D. Vance's ineptitude and offensiveness, especially towards women.

-In the first presidential stakes since *Dobbs*, with female ~~suburban~~-voters energized as never before, you'd think even a neophyte politician would be trying to schmooze the voting bloc, not further piss

them off. Instead, the author of *Hillbilly Elegy* introduced rank ~~idiocy into the campaign~~. Immigration is the only real issue to resonate for Trump, but like the economy the edge on the problem has been dulled of late. Vance, probably hoping to rejuvenate it, brought up the absurd rumor that Haitian migrants had invaded Springfield Ohio and busied themselves devouring local pets. ~~diy tv~~

That lunacy became the signature of this election, for Trump himself picked up the deranged gossip and repeated it in the debate against Kamala. All he's accomplished is to motivate some of his MAGA muttonheads to flood Springfield with bomb threats. *Now* who's addled, Donnie J?

Since then, knock wood, the contest has veered consistently in Kamala's favor. But the antique Electoral College is still around, and Trump will still command a third of the voters even with Puff



and Fido on the menu, so no guarantees or even predictions. Just that most dangerous yet most affirmative of feelings – *hope*.

Cover illo by the great Ramona Fradon “*I don’t need a ‘protector!’*”

Health update. As September ’24 whooshes to a close, I had yet another medical appointment – an evaluation for physical therapy. You may recall that my last experience with PT was unfortunate; I missed so many appointments they “fired” me. This time could be even more problematical. A four-week session, four visits a week, a 20-30 drive to get to the clinic, and Rosie will have to drive me.

Nevertheless, I’m more optimistic than this implies, thanks to Krishna, the charming Indian tech who evaluated me. < half my age, far < than half my size, she was well over 2 X my hopefulness. At 75, she said, I was probably past the time of a young man’s heart attack. (Sounds iffy to me, but what do I know?) I improved my ability to perform simple tasks like standing up every time I tried it. She seemed to think my Parks is a mild case – and if she does, who am I to argue?

I’ll still have to learn to deal with it for the rest of my days, and that means stop mourning the stuff I can no longer do = like wander the French Quarter for hours on Mardi Gras, hike around cons all day and party-hop all night, chase greased pigs through mud flats – and celebrate what I can. Good idea under any circumstances. She handed me off to a lovely lady named Genevieve who presented me with an initial exercise to do at home. I’m supposed to SHOUT OUT numbers. ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR ... See? I can do that.

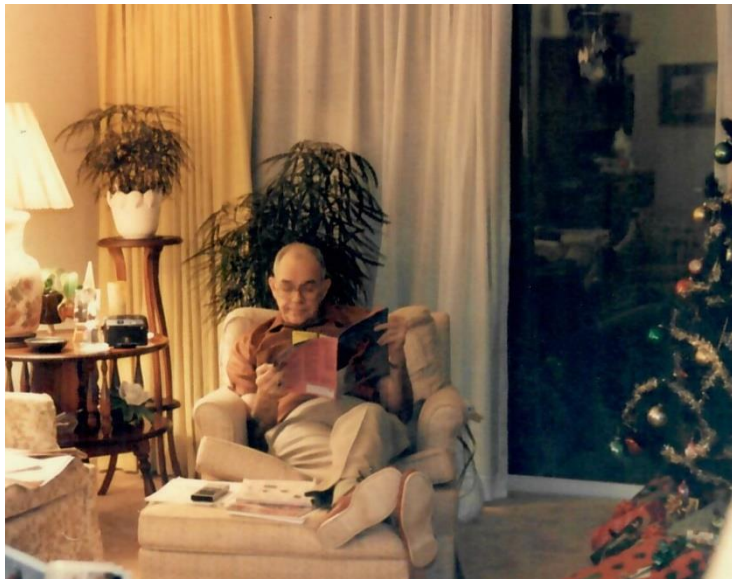
Hurricane Helene trashed the Big Bend region of this state and worked her wicked will on the whole southeast. Big storm, *bad* storm. The only good thing I can say about Helene is that she stayed away from Merritt Island. The trees out front suffered a little excitement and the canal out back rose to cover our neighbors’ docks. 1390 Holly Avenue, Merritt Island Florida merely got its windows washed. While our compatriots to the northwest drowned. Big storm, *bad* storm.

Launch! It’s always an aesthetic boost to exit our back door, look between the trees of the houses across the canal and watch a rocket launch from Canaveral. But it’s especially cool when you know the beast is manned, and *especially* especially cool when one of the crew is Russian. Such was the case with the Falcon 9 Rosie and I watched needle its way into the blue yonder earlier this week. Space is one area in which we and the Russians still cooperate, Putin’s Ukrainian obscenity be damned. It’s heartening to know it’s still possible.

Debate II. This *Spartacus* begins with a debate in the 2024 election and closes with another. The encounter between Tim Walz and JD Vance was lightweight and less aggressive on Walz’ part than I’d’ve liked – but apparently he was effective. Perhaps cordiality is its own reward. I suppose we shall see.



So you want Guy Lillian, huh?
Well, here's all 3 of him!



And if a fourth Guy turns up,
remember ...

**I WAS A VICTIM OF
CIRUMSTANCES!**