

TUCSON, THEN AND NOW

Tucson is rich in historical lore and recalls the greening of what was to become part of the new America ridding its symbol of the ferocious wild west of early Indian influence to a transition of a more civilized persona, as Arizona joined the others in state recognition. The tragedy of last Saturday seemed to tear the fabric of the civilized Arizona. It is not the Arizona I remember and love.

In a moment of the real America, led by Representative Gabrielle Giffords -an outdoor political connection to her constituents- she was apparently the target of a deranged youth who shot her at close range, and methodically went down the line of seated supporters, killing six and wounding at least 14, before two men and an elderly woman overpowered the gunmen in his attempt to reload. Giffords fights for her life, with some optimism despite the seriousness of her wounds, a shot to the head.

Subsequently, while answering questions about the event, although not those that tended to act on the ensuing investigation, Sheriff Clarence Dupnik seemed to infer that “radio and TV of political right” may have been an influence. An unfortunate comment with little evidence. Now the left in many stripes and patterns, liberal media of TV and papers as well as pundits and politicians have joined the crusade to seemingly blame Glenn Beck and Bill O’Reilly, et. al., – the ogre of Fox News. The irony can be argued that Giffords joined the Republican consensus relative to the reading of the Constitution and has always fought for a common consensus on both sides of the political spectrum.

Having spent 18 years in Tucson post-leaving military service in 1972, as an insurance agent and manager, a return to college to earn a teaching credential leading to a brief interlude at Pima Community college as an instructor, plus an initiation of a Public Access TV program called ‘A Trumpet for Freedom’ aimed at taking on all the controversies of politics, religion, immigration-the on-going Gulf War-a talk-show of give and take, gave me and others a perspective of Tucson and environs, especially the border problems exploited by something called ‘The Sanctuary Movement’ inciting Mexicans to cross the border with a religious umbrella, the forerunner of the mass immigration of today.

My 30 years of military service, in 3 wars, gives me some credence and experience in dealing with horrific moments of life and death, and I equate the Tucson lone wolf, perhaps psychotic and disturbed, as early information attests with the fanatic Muslim Major of infamous Fort Hood massacre, as well as the

Korean who methodically killed the crouching students in the melee of Virginia Tech.

Each had parents who perhaps ignored their son's behavior, attitude, cache of guns and irrational rants, medical and psychiatric evaluations which missed the signs. As a parent of six children, I assumed the responsibility for what they did or did not do, and they knew the consequences. As a military commander, I accepted the credit or blame for actions of my troops. In each event, there was a need for someone to rise to take on the gunner in the guise of those who commandeered the last aircraft on 9/11 in tragic, but heroic action. I would ask Sheriff Dupnik, where was the security for Representative Giffords' entourage since his suspect wisdom was an afterthought.

I have great trepidation of the post-mortems of this Administration- a need to come together- rather than to continue to fault the opposition. We had an election that argued for real hope and change. Where are the political leaders like Arthur Vandenburg who aided President Harry Truman as he took on the Soviets, the initiation of the Containment policy and NATO.....something like duty, honor and country. Mr President, you have asked for a coming together?