Twitter Thread by Nate McMurray



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Open Letter: Our democracy is at risk. Progressivism can save us.

We're in trouble. We have been for a long time. Hopefully, Georgia goes well and tomorrow is just noise. But what if neither happens? We can't continue to pretend it's all a joke. So what do we do?

First off, we need to ask how we get here?

America defeated Fascism (totalitarian rule enforced though a violent commitment to a national or racial or identity) embodied in the Nazi Party. We are not a perfect nation. We too are a nation stained by hate, apartheid . . .

slavery, Jim Crowe casteism. But there have been great moments. Defeating the Nazis was one of those moments. FDR was our leader. Like America, he wasn't perfect. He turned away Jewish refugees. Like his counterparts in Erurope, he was also slow to recognize the Nazis as...

the danger they would become. But when economic and moral calamity threatened certain doom for all, he rose to the moment. He chose well. He led without fear. He made a promise to America. Fight this evil, and we will create a "New Deal." Healthcare. A social safety...

net. Our soldiers carried government issued commemorative coins into Germany memorializing these sacred promises that they fought for. Sadly, not every one of these promises was fulfilled, but FDR helped rebuild America, literally. Those trails in our state parks? Many of our...

bridges and roads? Your social security check? Thank FDR. Then came Truman. Imperfect too, but genuinely committed to fighting facism, poverty, and inequality. Soon there was JFK, charming and flawed, yet again. But he had a vision for America as a global leader, reaching...

destiny and space itself. His successor, Johnson, was more committed to progressivism. Born as poor as the dirt in the Texas Hill country where he lived, he rivaled FDR himself with his longing for a "Great Society" based on equality, care, the common good. With the aid of the...

military when necessary, we passed broad, bold reforms—civil rights legislation—under LBJ, not incremental steps, taken lightly as not to offend. Then the story changes. Nixon made Americans lose faith in government. Corporations left, blaming high taxes and unions, but really...

seeking higher profit by working in concert with corrupt politicians. Democrats, sadly, validated the fake story that American sloth was to blame. Today, we Democrats love Jimmy Carter. He did bring a genuine belief in the goodness of his fellow men to the White House. Labeled...

...country fool, he was one of the most intelligent men to ever serve (literally a nuclear scientist). But his policies belie some of his image. Conservative by nature, he began to worry about the size of the federal deficit. He pushed privatization to replace parts of the...

social safety net created in the progressive decades before. He refused to support national health insurance initiatives, and emphasized volunteerism and self help. Unions felt abandoned, as Carter sided with the business community on even modest labor law renforns. AFL-CIO...

Chief George Meany described the era as, “an attack by every anti-union group in America to kill the labor movement.”

What was the result of this right pivot? Reagan. Domestically, smiles, deficits, tax cuts. Bush. War. Waste. More decline for the middle class. Clinton.

President Clinton's tenure was characterized by free-wheeling capitalism and financial deregulation beyond that of even Reagan. Among his biggest legislative achievements was the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act, which repealed the Glass-Steagall Act, a cornerstone of FDR’s...

Depression-era reforms. He also signed the Commodity Futures Modernization Act, which exempted credit-default swaps from regulation. Pile on top of that “Workfare” programs that demonized poor families, and his relentless advocacy for free trade and NAFTA, the death knell for...

communities like ours. Let’s be honest. There was also cult of personality that infiltrated the Democratic Party. Anything but unquestioned allegiance to the Clintons and their sphere of influence was seen as blasphemous. Even Obama was first vilified. Worse, there was a...

disrespect for the truth that many on our side tried to justify. I’m afraid it broke norms and let the complete debauchery we see today leak in. Bush 2 was a disaster. War. More decline. Obama was much better. Still, the damage had been done, and our party had been changed.

We had embraced neo-liberal (Republican-light) positions that were nothing like the legacy of FDR. We seemed embarrassed of the optimism and hope for change of the sixties, the period of our last truly progressive Democratic President, Johnson.

Remember those old hippy pics of Clinton? How bad did they try to hide all that and replace it with sunglasses and saxophones—“Dead Head sticker on a Cadillac; Don’t look back; baby never look back.” They said there was a boom, but a boom for whom? Middle America rusted...

and decayed, and large swaths of our cities were bleak, lifeless economic zones . . . as Clinton talked about super predators and was picking fights with Sista Soulja. Now, as we face this great threat, some fear that the progressive wing of party is to blame. Is it?

Looking back, how is that possible? Does it not seem more likely that we lost faith in our own message, our own values? That we ceded the space, made even the hint populism awkward, and sacrificed our role as defenders of the working man to Trump of all people? If you don't...

believe your own message, no one will believe you either. And if you drop what is most valuable to you in the street, someone will pick it up, sell it, use it against you. I believe turning our back on working people gave us Trump and that Trump, like the Nazis, is a new...

dangerous threat. Comparisons to Hitler and Trump are not irresponsible. They are warranted and necessary. Has he killed millions? No. But can you honestly say if it served his selfish interests he wouldn't? You may have been slow to feel it, but we are experiencing a slow...

motion coup, motivated by lies, avarice, and confusion, not unlike what happened in Germany in the 1930s. Hopefully it will fail and this is a false alarm. But instead of just hoping, we need to prepare and understand the threat. Like Hitler in Germany, Trump rose with the...

with the support of powerful elites who wanted to combat what they saw as the rise of the left. He was serving them, but (with lies and deceit) caste himself as the champion of the rural people and the working man. The Nazis never had more than 30% of the popular vote...

Hitler used violent street gangs—overweight men from beer halls—to intimidate and harass, making it seem like his power was greater than it really was. In a country that venerated the police and the military, many of these men, in the their day jobs, were associated...

associated with such organizations. With the power of intimidation and the lure of ambition, the Nazis preyed upon greedy politicians willing to scapegoat minorities and undermine the mechanisms of popular rule for their own careers and personal gain. Soon, there was no . . .

way to vote them out. No one could remove them. They had taken control. Ladies gentlemen, there are white nationalist gangs in the streets of our cities, having parties sponsored by local politicians. A message of unification with such ugliness is a message of appeasement...

There should be no safe harbor for hate. Do I think a violent response is the answer? No. I would never advocate for violence. But we need to use all other forms of power to fight this imminent threat to our country. When I was in Asia, I witnessed poplar movements to unseat...

in democratically elected leaders who had become corrupt. But in those nations there was a general consensus about right and wrong, good and evil, the common good. Here we have a fractured society. A mass protest may actually turn into mass violence and martial law, giving...

Trump more control. Thus, I’m not sure that mass protest is the answer at this point. At the very least, we must demand resolute opposition by our Democratic leadership. Not showboating and grandstanding, we need concerted and merciless opposition. We must use every legal...

mechanism, including prosecution and confinement of seditious leaders, before we have nothing to fight back with. Tell your representatives. Contact them. All of them.
And when this is over, and hopefully it is over soon, we need to rebuild our country, restore trust...

in the social contract, the American dream, the common good. I use the word common as our founding fathers used it. I’m not talking about communism. That’s a straw man tactic used to undermine progressives. I’m talking about not being the only developed country in the world...

where we don’t have universal healthcare coverage. I’m talking about not accepting that its supposedly “fair” for one citizen (e.g., Jeff Bezos) to make more in one hour then one of his employees can make in 1,000 lifetimes. I’m talking about remembering all Americans are...

stakeholders, have value, deserve a future, respect, safety. Look in the mirror. Look at our roots. It’s time we revitalized our party so we can fight this new facism, this new threat. Now.