Twitter Thread by Seth Cotlar



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The 90's called and it would like it's sneering depictions of "pathetic right wing rubes" back. I know it makes a certain segment of the educated classes (of which I'm a member) feel good about themselves to read paragraphs like this, but it's lazy political analysis.

That crowd was comprised of scores (if not hundreds) of well off business owners as well as highly skilled paramilitary warriors (many of whom were trained by our own government) who came very close to achieving their goal. Their gauche affection for Olive Garden is irrelevant.

This is the article. I share the author's revulsion at what this mob did. But this is not a time for ribald humor at the expense of people who erected a gallows upon which it appears they intended to hang the Vice President and probably others. https://t.co/qGIuAUBgUi

Every violent political upheaval is messy and chaotic and disorganized and comprised of people who are far from paragons of wisdom and rational thought. Wednesday's uprising was not uniquely pathetic...to think it was is just to invert a celebratory American exceptionalism.

I can guarantee you, none of the people of color in the Capitol building, especially the officers who bravely fended off this mob, mistook them for a second as bumbling rubes.

There's a long history of white liberals and centrists taking joy in laughing at depictions of bumbling "racist hicks," like this depiction from Tarantino's Django Unchained. The KKK in the 19th century, I assure you, was not something to laugh at. https://t.co/IsbV8NPf4I

> Why could we not hear it? I can think of no better way to explain it than this terrible scene from the 2012 film, Django Unchained. A scene that asks the audience to chuckle about how silly and dumb those KKK hicks are. https://t.co/gHOoSb3mgr
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> — Seth Cotlar (@SethCotlar) March 7, 2020

The KKK is certainly something to revile...but the impulse to make fun of them for being dumb or incompetent erases the real terror they wrought in the South for decades. It's a way certain white people convince themselves that *those other

people* were the REAL racists.

The article reminded me of this description of a 1770 mob: "A motley rabble of saucy boys, Negroes, & mulattos, Irish teagues & outlandish jack tars...shouting & hazing & threatening life...whistling, screaming, & rending an Indian yell... throwing every species of rubbish."

That was how John Adams sneeringly described the "rabble" who got into the conflict with soldiers on the streets of Boston that became the event we came to call "The Boston Massacre."

That "rabble" was the collection of people who successfully carried out the event we now call "The American Revolution." They were just as prone to conspiracy theories and outlandish beliefs and practices as Wednesday's crowd. Just the 18th century version of those.

I'm not trying to cancel satire or anything. I'm just trying to warn against a predictable script that people in my demographic (including myself) can easily fall into, which feels like insight, but often overlooks far more than it exposes.

Adam Serwer just said this far better than I did. “The belief that only impoverished people engage in political violence—particularly right-wing political violence—is a misconception often cultivated by the very elites who benefit from that violence.” https://t.co/1mfuj8PQ51