Twitter Thread by Shauna M. Ahern



Shauna M. Ahern
@shauna_m_ahern



Yesterday was traumatic, for so many people. Horrifying, awful trauma — to both watch the Capitol building teeming with people who wanted to besmirch it and take selfies on the Senate floor and to watch these people walk away free.

(Long thread coming.)

Yesterday was the culmination — so far — of four horrible years that have stolen away the lives of so many. And for so many others, it has stolen our feeling of safety in the world. And our brains.

If you survived a traumatic childhood, this all felt familiar from the beginning. Living through this administration has triggered millions of people. And it has felt, again, like what we learned from our childhoods did not matter.

Here are the dynamics of an abusive household — aka, our country.

Abuser. That guy is a narcissistic bully, intent on only telling the story that matters to him.

Only in an abusive family would someone who claims he won in a landslide — when the facts make it utterly clear that is not true — be allowed to continue spewing these lies.

Fear of recrimination causes everyone to fall in line. Most everyone has been cowering, refusing to deal with this directly.

Those who speak out are shamed and treated shabbily for telling the truth.

No one is allowed to tell the truth. People who have warned us about this are called crackpots. The media generally has stuck to its usual rules — both sides must be represented — instead of saying outright, immediately, that this man is lying, doing damage.

And so, he is allowed to continue.

Appease the abuser. Everything revolves around the abuser. And since he is narcissistic and needs constant pleasing because of his desperate insecurity and fears about himself, he keeps getting louder and louder, more delusional,

thundering through people's brains.

Enable the abuser. People who work with him agree with him and want to be near his power. Some of them are as delusional as he is. When they have left the White House, they have mostly stayed silent. Or returned.

People who are resigning from his administration today? They're trying to cover their own asses and pretend they weren't part of this. Some are saying, "Oh, he has changed lately." Bullshit. He was always like this. It's uncomfortable for you now.

Acts of violence to keep the family in line. And those who are under the thumb of this bully? Some have been killed. Some have been put in cages. Some have been stripped of their jobs. Some are hungry without knowing where food for their families is coming.

Those who are suffering are meant to be examples for the rest of us. Play by the rules you were taught long ago — white men should be in charge; the 1950s were less confusing, so let's go backwards — or you will suffer the same fate as those people.

The ones who mirror the abuser. And in every abusive family, there is someone who goes along with the abuser, who enforces the rules for them. They eventually become the mouthpiece for the abuser. Josh Hawley and Ted Cruz come to mind here.

Gaslighting. Calling for a special commission to investigate an entirely fair and legal election? It was loud, ugly behavior intent on pleasing the abusive father. Lies. Confounding lies in the face of all the facts.

Grandstanding lies incited people to riot.

More enabling. And when the riot occurs, the police open the gates, take selfies with the terrorists, hold their hand as they make their way down the stairs, and let them go free.

After the attempted coup, enablers say, "I understand.They haven't been given a fair election."

More abuse. Yesterday, even though Senators and Representatives had been locked away in secure rooms while people ransacked their offices and tore down signs, they decided to come back to finish the job they were elected to do. In the midst of trauma, they persisted.

And yet, for the egos of certain representatives who wanted to ensure that the insurrectionists voted for them in upcoming elections, the same egregious behavior of the morning continued.

After being in lockdown and terrorized, lawmakers who wanted to persist in the law were required to stay up until 3 am, hearing one spurious argument after another, debating idiocy for the sake of pleasing the abusive father.

So much abuse happens in the dark hours of the night.

Move on. Don’t discuss it. And today? No accountability. Congress went home. No investigations of the police and why they did not stop this. Move on. Don’t discuss it.

That guy is still president, even though he has been inciting these ignorant people for two months now. Or four years.

This is the classic response of abusive parents. Pretend it never happened.

No change. Even though this is all crystal clear, no question — that guy has to go and now — nothing will happen. Don’t make waves. We don’t have precedent. It will all be over soon.

It won’t be over soon. This is going to continue — the lies, the incitement, the delight at people carrying flags with his name. This is not going away.

This is more than one abusive family. This is not just a single abusive family for the past four years.

Multiply the trauma of being raised in this time by hundreds of years to feel the weight of generational trauma of being born Black in this country.

Watch these yahoos walk away, free, and know you would have been shot dead on the Capitol steps, if you had been there.

Or if you had been Indigenous.

Or an immigrant, or the child of an immigrant.

Or LGBTQA, where you have to hide yourself for fear of being beaten or killed.

Or disabled, since you tried to protest terrible decisions in Congress and were arrested in your wheelchair.

You share your story and most people don’t want to listen. And even if you have the courage to share your trauma, people doubt you. They say everything is not about race, so quit playing that card. They say “Everything is better now.” They say, “Come on. It isn’t that bad.”

Why? Because having to deal with someone else’s pain is hard. It requires enormous emotional work. And nothing much in this culture has prepared us for this work. We’re told to smile and get along and keep in line or that abusive parent will be mad. Duck your head and pretend.

And the cycle continues, year after year, life after life, generation after generation.

What is the solution? Deal with this directly. Make sure that abusers’ stories for ego strokes are not allowed to go on. Condemn them. Right away. Stop them.

And listen to the stories of those who have been suffering. Stop coming in with logical fallacies or lies you have read somewhere else. When entire swaths of people tell you that this country has been causing them suffering for hundreds of

years, believe them.

Do the work. Listen. Stop pretending.

Stop pretending.

This country is sick. We've been abused and we are abusive. We need to start healing.

That only starts when we tell the truth.

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