

AGE AND TREACHERY

BY

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"And a little child will lead them." Isaiah 11:6

It's not Biblical, but there's a proverb that youth and vitality are no match for age and treachery. It's a good saying, applicable more broadly as one's years pass. Its truth is evident by decades of mass murder on American youth.

If you figured *youth and vitality* represents the children being terrorized by ongoing mass shootings in the nation's schools, you'd be right. If you assigned the terrorist murders to *age and treachery*, you'd be wrong. The real treacherous oldies are the NRA executives—especially Wayne LaPierre—and the nation's leaders so firmly held in the NRA's pocket. Also culpable are all the adults who apparently don't care enough about the nation's children to do anything at all about this plague.

The Parkland slaughter is, however, an opportunity to prove the Bible right and proverb wrong in a big, visible way. The circumstances are right to not only prove youthful vigor overwhelming but to also relegate treacherous old folks to their proper places with soft food, sensible shoes, and elevator music.

2016 was a demographic turning point: the over 75-million Millennials aged 18-34 in 2016 exceeded the 74-million Boomers. Their proportion is growing as the Boomer's numbers diminish. But while there is power in numbers, those numbers have to be cohesive and coordinated.

Let me spell it out: Millennials, who have been the disproportionate casualties of the terrorism on schools and America more generally, could be a political force. They can rally and make noise, and generally demand attention. But Millennials tend not to vote. That's a problem because without that, in a democracy, numbers mean nothing.

A lot of issues do not depend on rancid populism—even in America. Racial issues including immigration, women's issues, economic disparity and displacement issues, health care, and gun-enabled mass murder are all worthy. But only one of these affects the single-largest demographic cohort uniformly, irrespective of race, sex/gender, and economic standing. Before but especially since Columbine, kids have been getting killed by whack-jobs with far too easy access to far too many (assault) weapons far too often. In the 19 years that have elapsed, 280 school age children have died and another 417 have been wounded in 213 school shootings in the United States. This is the real "American carnage."

It's time for Millennials to stand up and push back hard against those callous, old and treacherous leaders stealing from the future, allowing American youth to be calves to slaughter.

It doesn't have to be, but probably Democrats or independents have the opportunity to help make this the generationally transformational issue that Vietnam was for those now in power. Some experience young adults, probably fed up Gen Xers, need to make this *the* galvanizing political issue. Organization is what turns the power of numbers into power at the polls.

Not a lot pulls apathy out of people. Opportunity for gain is easy to fritter away in front of the game console. Anger dissipates. Fear, especially when combined with anger, is less distracted. That's the winning ticket.

There is a lot for Millennials to be angry about and nobody could reasonably hold it against them. But anger is not the answer... unless you harbor it, as you organize, scared that if you don't seize control from the Boomers that don't care about you, if you don't act—it could kill you.

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