





Sara Greenberger Rafferty

via Patton Oswalt on Facebook:

“This is a long entry, sorry.

It’s also WAY more emotional than factual, so feel free to shoot holes all through it. But be aware of how cognizant I was of its whimsical framework when I started writing.

So, sixteen days into the reality of Donald Trump being our President-elect, and I’m reading New Yorker and Jacobin and Slate and NY Times articles, trying to make sense of just what the fuck happened, and how the fuck do we go forward. The Democratic Party is in shards on the floor right now. I think we’re going to have eight years of Trump and his clean-shaven looters scraping out the carcass of the country before fucking off and blaming it on progressives and lesbians and PC and rap music.

There’s been a VERY disturbing spike, in my Twitter mentions and Facebook inbox and Facebook mentions from pro-Trump people. The spike itself isn’t disturbing. I was regularly dinged by people on the other side of the cultural playground. I always figured, live and let live.

The disturbing part is how many of these people (when I check their Twitter or Facebook profiles) fancy themselves comedians. And the ones who insist they’re comedians, that THEY’RE funny, all send messages which are the same variation of, “Your career is OVER. No one wants to hear YOUR kind of comedy anymore. You or ANY of your friends.”

Over and over and over.

Fuck you, funnyman. It’s OUR turn now.

So many alt-righters (or just people on the right) are failed or frustrated comedians. Just as so many far, far left wingers are. Comedy is too PC! It’s not PC enough! It’s racist! It shames white men! IT DOESN’T FIT TO MY STANDARDS, SO THEREFORE I MUST DESTROY IT!

Being funny isn’t something everyone is born with, and even the ones born with it have to work and evolve and have humility while they do so. For the untalented but still entitled, there’s a gut full of envy to carry around when they see other people getting laughs where they can’t.

And then I flashed back to an essay I read by Clive James about the doomed polymath Egon Friedell, who committed suicide in Vienna the day of the Nazi Anschluss. Two SA men came to his apartment to arrest him. All over the city, Jews were being beaten in the street, businesses burned and looted. Egon was one of the leading lights in Viennese culture -- historian, philosopher, cabaret performer. Think of an Austrian Stephen Fry.

Egon threw himself from his window as the SA men battered down his door, screaming, “Watch out! Get out of the way!” to the pedestrians as he plummeted.

I think -- I’m guessing, I know -- that Egon sensed something even MORE sinister behind the Nazi uprising. Something fueled not by nationalism or racial pride but by bog-standard showbiz envy.

I’m going to let Clive James take over here -- he writes so much better and clearer than I ever will:

“Horrific evidence suggest that the Austrian Nazis, when their armbands were still in their pockets, put the café talk high on their long list of Jewish intellectual pursuits to be trampled out of existence when the great day came. The future firebrands and executioners had been listening in for years, probably inflamed as much by sincere disapproval as by thick-witted jealousy. After a single orgiastic day of violence in March 1938 there was no-one left who had anything to say worth hearing. Hugo Sperber,

already worn out from too many years living on thin pickings, was thrown to the ground and kicked until he fell silent for good. Fritz Grunbaum, one of the stars of the “Simplicissimus” cabaret, was arrested within hours of the takeover, shipped to Dachau, and beaten to death. Whether in Austria or Germany, it has never been the fault of the Jews that they were so slow to realize the catch of the assimilationist ideal: the more indispensable to culture they became, the more they were resented. Hitler needed no telling that there were a lot of brilliant Jews from whom German-speaking culture had gained lustre. That was what he was afraid of: of a bacillus being called clever, and the phosphorescence of decay being hailed as illumination.

For him, as for every racial hygienist, the whole thing was a medical problem, and the last thing he was likely to contemplate was that the medical problem might lie within himself. He didn’t know he was sick. He thought he was well. Convinced racists think they are healthy: their conscience can’t be appealed to, they have no better self that might repudiate the lesser one. And they bend all the powers of human reason to the unreasonable, without reservation. For the Jewish intelligentsia, cultivated to the fingertips, it was very hard to grasp the irrationality they were dealing with -- the irrationality counting down the hours until it could deal with them. Even in Auschwitz, some of the enslaved musicians must have thought that Schubert’s writing for strings would melt Dr. Mengele’s heart, as it had always melted theirs. And it did melt his heart. It just didn’t change his mind. Similarly, there were probably crytpo-Nazi kibitzers who laughed at the running commentary of Hugo Sperber as he played cards. But that was exactly why they wanted him dead. They wanted THEIR jokes to be the funny ones, and they got their wish.”

You catch that part about Hugo Sperber, holding an audience in the cafe?

(Listening in to Hugo Sperber’s running commentary in the café while he played cards...flash forward 68 years...reading comedians Live Tweeting the debates. Chuckling, but full of envy at the likes and RTs)

All over Vienna during the Anschluss there’s seemingly mindless, unorganized looting and attacks -- yet two SA men are SPECIFICALLY sent to Egon Friedell’s apartment? Who sanctioned that? Someone gave specific orders. An envious, frustrated someone, I’m guessing. Someone who sat in the audience at one of his shows, entertained but resentful of the laughter surrounding them, in the wormy, jealous darkness.

I am terrified for what may or may not happen Saturday, January 21st.

Be safe, everyone.

Take care, comedians.”

Sara Greenberger Rafferty has exhibited widely since 2001, including solo exhibitions at The Kitchen, New York, MoMA PS1, New York, Eli Marsh Gallery at Amherst College, Massachusetts, The Suburban, Chicago, and a commissioned sculpture for the Public Art Fund. In 2014, she participated in the Whitney Biennial, the Hammer Biennial, and had solo exhibitions in Portland, Oregon, Riga, Latvia, and New York. In 2015, her work was included in exhibitions at the Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, the Atlanta Contemporary Art Center in Georgia, and Galerie Andreas Huber in Vienna. In 2016, she presented her 4th solo exhibition at Rachel Uffner Gallery and is working on a traveling museum show, *Gloves Off*, to open in 2017.

Rafferty has participated in group shows at venues such as the Aspen Art Museum, Colorado, Neuberger Museum of Art, Purchase, New York, Gagosian Gallery, New York, and The Jewish Museum, New York. She is included in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art and Whitney Museum of American Art, among others. Rafferty teaches full-time at Hampshire College and lives and works in Brooklyn, NY.