

MY DREAM BECOMES REAL

Stewart Hendrickson

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I wrote a piece last May – [*I Had a Dream*](#) – in which I described a dream of impending disaster, where I was on the ocean in a boat, in the middle of a raging storm. The boat was going down and there was nothing we could do to save the boat or ourselves. It was a metaphor for climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic, and other potential disasters, where we are past the point of no return – there is nothing we can do to mitigate an impending disaster.

Today, as I write this, fires are burning all along the West Coast from California to Washington. The air quality index here today in Ballard, where I live, is 240 – health alert: *“everyone may experience more serious health effects if they are exposed for 24 hours.”* Friday, I closed all my windows and only ventured outside for ten minutes. I smelled a faint whiff of smoke in bed all last night. Today, Sunday, everything is closed, nobody outside, and there is a feeling of impending doom as we wait for a change in wind to blow this stuff away, hopefully by Monday or Tuesday.

We have been through this kind of thing for the past few years, although nothing this bad. This year’s fire season is breaking all-time records. Along with stronger, more-frequent hurricanes, record heat waves, and more-rapid-melting ice caps in Antarctica, we are truly experiencing the onset (in real time) of climate change. Is it too late to do anything to mitigate this? Maybe so. But with no political will to change anything, we may be heading past the point of no return.

All of this is occurring in the midst of a pandemic, which could have been controlled in its early stages last February or even March. But again, there was no political will to do anything, and we are now one of the worst countries in dealing with this problem. If everyone took extreme measures to block transmission and do proper testing, we could stop this virus cold in just a few weeks ([NY Times Op-Ed](#), August 7, Michael Osterholm and Neel Kashkari). Again, there is no will or even a consensus on how to solve this problem.

Racism and white nationalism is now raging rampant, reaching a boiling point with recent police brutality and killing of black people. This all began after emancipation and during reconstruction. The Klu Klux Klan, established at that time, began a long, slow movement of white nationalism that is, in some aspects, even stronger today. Political chaos, a drift toward authoritarian rule, inequality, and a congress unable or unwilling to do anything, contributes to all the above-mentioned problems.

Maybe I will feel better when I can open all the windows, breathe clean, fresh air, and go outside for a long walk. Right now it seems like doomsday. If we can repair our dysfunctional government, achieve a consensus on these problems, establish a democracy where every vote counts, and work together to solve these problems, there is still hope. But time is running out.

Thank you for bearing with me. Peace.

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