



A Preemptive Eulogy for the American Attention Span

Capuchin

At 7:30 am this morning police broke down the door at 1492 Colonial ave after responding to a call from a concerned neighbor. Inside they found the unconscious body of the American Attention Span stretched out across the living room sofa. Medical experts from Bob Jones University were called in but potent combinations of prayer and diet soda proved unsuccessful in reviving the patient. Given the doctor's grim prognosis and the lack of good news coming from Libya, we at the ChimpanZine thought we'd get the drop on the competition and offer a preemptive eulogy for this beloved, if neglected citizen of our great nation. We do this so that the American Attention Span may be remembered in her past glory, not just the emaciated, unkempt shadow of her final years.

No one observing the Attention Span in the second half of the twentieth century could have anticipated her demise. Fed on a constant diet of propaganda, she helped sustain our fear and hatred for the Soviets over a fifty year conflict. Unfortunately, these same plentiful empty calories caused the Attention Span to become bloated and misshapen, obscuring the past achievements of organized labor and the working class.

True to his prophetic nature Ronald Reagan saw the need for a shorter, leaner American Attention Span. He ordered a rigorous exercise regime on the News Cycle, with quiet orders to the media to increase the speed and duration yearly. The Attention Span's ensuing breathlessness explains why she failed to remind the Baby Boomers of their forgotten ideals or point out the glaring hypocrisy of a "fiscally conservative" government running up massive debt with military spending.

Already on the ropes the American Attention Span was hit with the devastating one-two combination of Grenada and the Gulf War v1.0. Over too quickly to care about and fought by "volunteers", these conflicts sent the clear message to the American people that wars could be won without a robust Attention Span. Not only that but in Iraq, the US fought Saddam Hussein, who only recently in the Iran-Iraq war had been an ally. The Attention Span was not simply vestigial but an active source of confusion among the general population. Understandably, she fell into a deep depression. Friends and family should have recognized the Monica Lewinsky scandal as a cry for help, a plea for attention at any cost but most were too titillated to sound the alarm. The stage was set, our protagonist vulnerable.

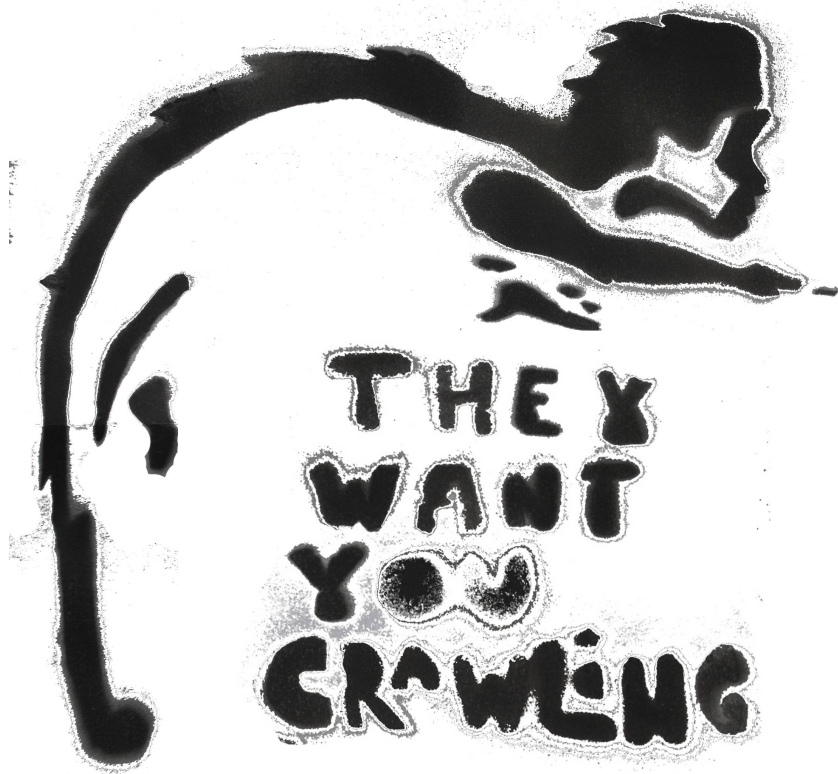
The subsequent eight years are Act IV in the Shakespearean tragedy of the American Attention Span and politics, accordingly, became increasingly reliant on the Attention Span's weakening responses. False pretexts for war, dubious connections to discredited fossil fuel companies

and lobbyists, evidence of past insider trading, legalized torture and illegal wiretapping, extraordinary rendition, the dismissal of US Attorneys, the Plame Affair, Hurricane Katrina, Blackwater, the list grew and grew, but any scandal, travesty, hypocrisy or indignity not big enough to topple a public figure outright might as well have never happened.

At this time a few people realized that while pedaling ever harder on the News Cycle the Attention Span had all but quit eating, underfed by underfunded public schools. They attempted to complain but not enough of them were upper class, white, hetero men and nothing was done. Loved ones, finally starting to worry about the condition of Attention Span hoped for some respite after 2008 but they were grievously disappointed. Upon election Barack Obama immediately became responsible for the huge debt of two wars, and a recession brought about by irresponsible deregulation during the last two administrations. Blaming Bush Jr. became the mark of a sore winner, and the Democrats manfully rose to the challenge by ignoring the American Attention Span as she lay gasping on the floor and charging off into moderate failure.

Now the Tea Party holds its seances to co-author a new version of history with the Founding Patriarchs. The Texas Text Book Commission uses their market share to force

feed this "history" to a whole nation of children. The children pop their Ritalin to get through their sanitized reading assignments. The parents drink their Red Bull to make it through another day at the office. They drink their vodka to go to sleep. They drink both when they want to party. The American Attention Span lies on her couch, eyes rolled back in her head, glutted and starved on the images flickering across the television twenty-four frames a second.



bodies

their bodies are not bodies of water but
bodies of steam
swollen up inside slick plastic skins
hidden under years of cosmetic
accumulation
swaying back and forth to stay balanced
on the shifting tectonic plates of
fashion
not bodies of water but bodies of steam

MOVE YOUR MONEY ACTION DAY



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PROVIDED**

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Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship Social Justice Committee**

**I'M
SMART**

**I EAT
TRASH**



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You
Thinking
About?

We Want to
Know!

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