



IN COURT AGAIN FOR RICHARDSON GROVE

We're back in State Court again, me and Richardson Grove and a lot of others. At the Eureka Courthouse. Where the guy with the gun is there to motion me to take off my hat, as usual. I comply and hold it over my heart as a gesture of respect, or is it submission? I've been taught to give a little fart at the majesty of the law when I stand, but the courtroom is packed, mostly with friends of the Grove. The Judge is Kelly S. Neel presiding. She hasn't got a wig or black robes. Nobody was waving a beaker of incense in the air either. It was almost like TV in fact with a Judge who was a listener not a lecturer like last time.

At issue is the tortuous path Caltrans has taken by issuing an "addendum" to try to cure the defects of its 2010 EIR. Among the many technical violations of CEQA these maneuvers resulted in unanalyzed changes to the project as well as short circuiting any opportunity for public comment to the "addendum". Caltrans refused to re-open public comment to the changes which violates the purpose of CEQA which is to fully inform the public of the impacts to the environment of the project

Last time it was the Federal Court, a civil place with no armed bailiffs, but plenty of legal arrogance. The Judge there, Alsup, is still thinking. Wondering about in the effects of increased truck traffic. CalTrans says there won't be any. Just 40 ton trucks and Trump's 40 ton tanks rolling through – or is that Newsom's infantry? This is a partnership with the Federal Defense Highway, after all, a gimmick that Eisenhower introduced almost 70 years ago to make sure the feds can get the troops in and the resources out.

Our lawyer, the legendary Sharon Duggan, gave a 45 minute rap on the inadequacies of CalTrans' approach, particularly why the "Last Soviet Republic" refused to re-open public comment.

Duggan was mesmerizing and no one was more mesmerized than the judge, who hung on every word. "Cut and fill, Count the Trees, Root zones, Fish habitat, Endangered birds, Cumulative impact, ... incisive analysis, marshalling of data. ..." A concert quality performance.

The poor CalTrans lawyer. After that riveting presentation we were all, including the judge, comfortably exhausted. Now this new performer could hardly even raise a yawn as she unrolled her litany to the points raised: *Not Significant, Not Significant, Not Significant...* Their lawyer argued that it was just semantics that CalTrans' called their additions an "Addendum". There would have been less confusion if the word "Revision" had been used. In fact, that was still too confusing. How about "Modification"?

The judge was losing interest. She had taken notes all through Duggan's presentation and now she was playing with her pencil. After all, how many times did she want to hear CalTrans lawyer intone "*Not Significant.*" She had a full docket and gave the Hurry Up sign. That worked. The CalTrans lawyer actually had very little to say and our lawyer had said it all. The judge had no questions, anxious to get on with her day, but she just had to ask the CalTrans people one little question: What Harm would it have done for CalTrans to call for public input? Her tone was innocent but the question offered hope. And, in environmental struggles like protecting Richardson Grove, Hope was our most important projection: Hope and Time.

Paul Encimer

Thanks as always to Barbara Kennedy



No Wall, No Deportations, No Borders, No Nations!

When President Donald Trump claimed in his State of the Union Address that "*wealthy politicians and donors push for open borders, while living their lives behind walls and gates and guards,*" it was his latest of countless efforts to accuse Democrats and liberals of being "**soft**" on migration.

Like the entirety of Trump's speech, this claim was misleading and outright false on many levels.

The notion, for example, that "**liberal elites**" support open borders while a billionaire president defends the working class from the migrant "**threat**" is outrageous. Among the many problems with the argument is that it ignores – or rather, intentionally obscures – the fact that the U.S. working class itself is composed in significant part by millions of migrants.

Far from immigrants being outsiders who endanger the working class of this country, they are part of its fabric – far more so than Donald Trump, who was born wealthy, ever was.

But Trump's main argument, that there are those on the liberal end of Washington's political class who advocate for free migration across borders, is simply a lie.

The Democratic Party has repeatedly and expressly condemned open borders in word and supported border militarization in deed. In fact, Stacey Abrams Democratic Gubernatorial candidate from Georgia in her anointed response to Trump's state-of-the-union distanced herself from the position immediately after Trump's speech in the Democratic response, asserting that "*compassionate treatment is not the same as open borders*" and promising that "Democrats stand ready to effectively secure our ports and borders."

A **genuine** call for open borders is virtually absent from the debate between the White House and Capitol Hill, where the question has been not *whether* to militarize the border, but merely how many billions of dollars should be devoted to "*border security,*" or what specific physical infrastructure it should buy. But open borders is more than an epithet for the right to attack its opponents with. It is a legitimate position, and the left should take it up as the only humane one.

For decades, critics of globalization have pointed out that the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, World Trade Organization – institutions that are shaped and dominated by the United States – have helped create a world where capital moves freely, while human beings are stuck at borders. Numerous "**free trade**" agreements have accelerated this trend.

As asylum seekers at the border confront metal barriers, surveillance drones and armed guards barring their entry, trucks, trains and boats bring a high volume of shipping containers into the United States each day. Ports of entry have perfected clearing these goods through customs efficiently, and policy makers have regulated (and deregulated) international commerce to make the process as easy as possible.

If only the people migrating from Central America and elsewhere were commodities instead of human beings, they would enter the United States painlessly, be handled with care by workers who are experts at transferring goods quickly and carefully, and then transported overnight to all corners of the country through extensive commercial distribution networks.

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Record Floods Latest Blow To Agriculture:

A wide swath of the Farm Belt across Iowa, Nebraska, South Dakota and several other states have been devastated by record flooding. Early estimates of lost crops and livestock are approaching \$1 billion in Nebraska alone. With more flooding expected, damages are expected to climb much higher for the region.

As river levels rose, spilling over levees and swallowing up townships, farmers watched helplessly as the waters consumed not only their fields, but their stockpiles of grain, the one thing that can stand between them and financial ruin.

"*I've never seen anything like this in my life,*" said Tom Geisler, a farmer in Winslow, Nebraska, who said he lost two full storage bins of corn. "*We had been depending on the income from our livestock, but now all of our feed is gone, so that is going to be even more difficult. We haven't been making any money from our grain farming because of trade issues and low prices.*"

The pain does not end there. As the waters began to recede in parts of Nebraska, the damage to the rural roads, bridges and rail lines was just beginning to emerge. This infrastructure is critical for the U.S. agricultural sector to move products from farms to processing plants and shipping hubs.

The damage to roads means it will be harder for trucks to deliver seed to farmers for the coming planting season, but in some areas, the flooding on fields will render them all-but-impossible to use.

The deluge is the latest blow for the Farm Belt, which has faced several crises in the last five years, as farm incomes have fallen by more than 50 percent due to a global grain glut. President Donald Trump's trade policies cut off exports of soybeans and other products, making the situation worse.

Soybeans were the single most valuable U.S. agricultural export crop and until the trade war, China bought \$12 billion worth a year from American farmers. But Chinese tariffs have almost halted the trade, leaving farmers with crops they are struggling to sell for a profit.

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The Russian man who 'saved the world'

Stanislav Petrov, a former Soviet military officer that averted a nuclear war over a false missile warning at the height of the Cold War, has died at 77.

Petrov was on night duty at the Soviet military's early warning facility outside Moscow on Sept. 26, 1983, when an alarm went off, signaling the launch of several U.S. intercontinental ballistic missiles. The 44-year-old lieutenant colonel had to quickly determine whether the attack was real. He chose to consider it a false alarm, which it was.

The incident was particularly harrowing as it happened at one of the tensest periods of the Cold War when the Soviet Union appeared to genuinely fear a surprise U.S. nuclear attack.

In 2015 Petrov recalled the excruciating moments at the secret Serpukhov-15 control center when the fate of the world was in his hands.

"*I realized that I had to make some kind of decision, and I was only 50/50,*"

"*It was this quiet situation and suddenly the roar of the siren breaks in and the command post lights up with the word 'LAUNCH,'*" Within minutes of the first alarm, the siren sounded again, warning of a second U.S. missile launch. Soon, the system was reporting that five missiles had been launched.

Petrov recalled standing up as the alarm siren blared and seeing that the others were all looking at him in confusion.

"*My team was close to panic and it hit me that if panic sets in then it's all over,*"

Petrov told his commander that the system was giving false information. He was not at all certain, but he was driven by the fact that Soviet ground radar could not confirm a launch. The radar system picked up incoming missiles only well after any launch, but he knew it to be more reliable than the satellites.

The false alarm was later determined to have been caused by a malfunction of the satellite, which mistook the reflection of the sun off high clouds for a missile launch.

Petrov was not rewarded for his actions. In fact, he received a reprimand for failing to correctly fill the duty log and retired from the military the following year.

Although his commanding officer did not support Petrov at the time, he was the one who revealed the incident after the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991. If Col. Gen. Yury Votintsev had not spoken out, Petrov said he himself "would have forgotten about it like a bad dream."

After his story was told, Petrov has received accolades, international awards and became known as "**the man who saved the world.**"

-Vladimir Isachenkov