

It's Miller-Mueller Time: November 8 @ 5 p.m.

It was going on 5 p.m., two days after the mid-term elections, when I settled in and leaned back against the sign post in the pedestrian triangle in front of the historic Chatham County Courthouse. I was checking the white balance and ISO on my camera, preparing to capture a digital documentation of this unfolding historic moment, when from the base of the Confederate Soldier monument I heard a familiar voice shouting my name. It was my across-the-street neighbor, Candace, holding a large sign and sporting a T shirt that read: "*It's Mueller Time.*"

I'm not sure everyone caught the significance of the shirt as I did. As a native Wisconsinite, I got the message immediately. Wisconsin, "America's Dairy Land," is known for milk and cheese. But with its large German heritage, it is also known for brats and BEER! Just like that newsworthy newly appointed Supreme Court magistrate, Wisconsinites also like their beer. The Milwaukee Brewers play baseball in Miller Park where Miller High Life is the beer of choice. I grew up learning the marketing motto of the Miller Brewing Company: "It's Miller Time. If you've got the time, we've got the beer, Miller beer." I also learned early on that in Wisconsin the name Mueller is more often than not pronounced like Miller. So Candace's T shirt spoke volumes to me.

As folks streamed into the courthouse circle to add their signs and voices to the quickly burgeoning rally, vehicular traffic slowed to a crawl. A grid-locked driver near me shouted out, "What's going on here." How does one answer a simple question to a complex matter in 10-15 seconds? "Well, it's Mueller Time across America," I said with a smile. "Yesterday the President had the Attorney General fired and replaced him with a less than competent crony who has publicly declared his opposition to the Robert Mueller investigation into Russian meddling in our elections. So here today, and in communities around the country, folks

concerned about the investigation being circumvented are showing up and speaking out.”

As my captive audience saw a break in traffic, he sped off with a wave and what sounded like a sincere “Thank you.” Hopefully he appreciated not only the brevity of the content, but also the honesty and civility of this brief encounter by strangers. As the crowd swelled and the late afternoon traffic increased, there was a genuine feeling of camaraderie between the demonstrators and the drivers. The sound of horns blaring and sight of hands waving from open windows as cars and trucks circled the Courthouse like a giant merry-go-round was a rare moment of community togetherness.

I recall only one “hiccup” during that brief hour in which the crowd (approaching 200 in number) gathered peacefully and respectfully to demonstrate their concern for upholding of the constitution, the rule of law and the dangers of autocracy in undermining democratic principles. As the folks assembled in front of the Courthouse one irate citizen stood at the traffic circle and shouted out, “Look at them. They're crazy. They're all crazy!” And then, addressing “them” from across both the physical and ideological divide that separates the American populace into hostile tribes, he railed, “If you don't like it, then why don't you leave? Just get out! It's time for you to get out of the county!”

The sign that Candace held during the hour-long rally was a hopeful and defiant response to such a declaration: “*Mueller Aint Going Anywhere.*” But beyond that, the “Protect Mueller – Nobody is Above the Law” rallies held at over 1000 locations across the land were also a sign that the majority of US citizens aren't going anywhere either. They aren't about to abandon ship at a time when democracy is on the rocks and the ideal of government **of, by and for** the People (all the People) is in peril of going under. Whatever has become or will yet become

of the Mueller investigations, this remains an all-hands-on-deck time in the nation's history to repair the breach and keep the good ship Democracy afloat.

~ Gary Simpson