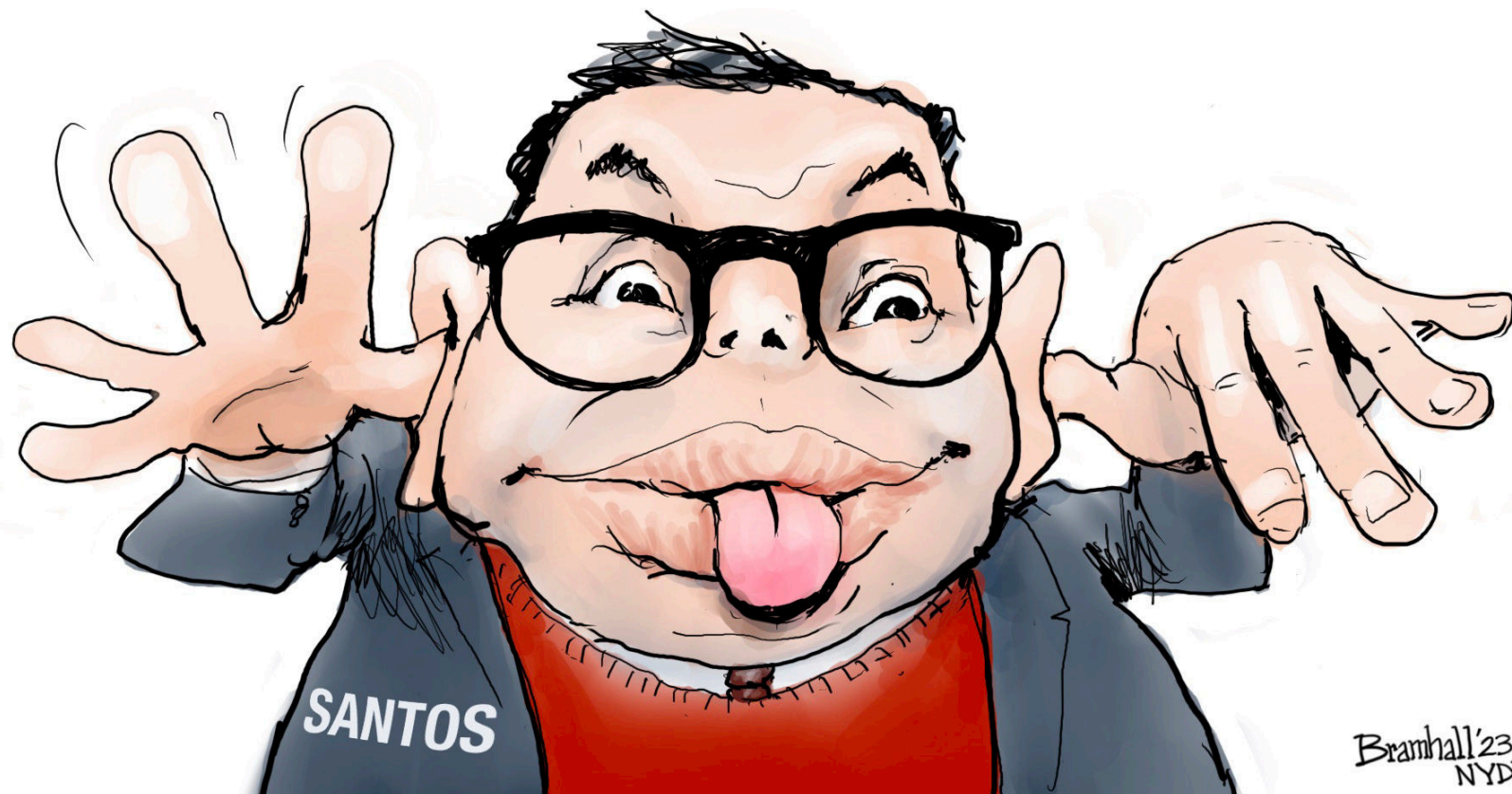


BRAMHALL'S WORLD

VOTES TO EXPEL 213 NAYS, 179 YEAS, 1 NYAH-NYAH-NYAH



Being the scapegoat from the hatred of others

The events of Oct. 7 in Israel were horrific, barbaric and wrong.

Of this fact there should be no debate. How can there be? The murder of innocents, of women, children and the elderly is not something that should even attempt to be justified.

The condemnation of this act can exist along with feelings of anger about how the Israeli government has treated Palestinians. We can express support and pain for the innocents who will die in Gaza due to the retaliatory bombings. This too is warranted. But you cannot downplay what happened that Saturday morning.

But too many are, and that has unleashed a level of antisemitism that I have never seen, and it is imperative we take a clear stand against it. As a New Yorker, the Jewish community is an integral part of my life and my city and I see how many of them are struggling now: their very identity under siege. As a minority, I know how it feels when your faith assigns to you a criminality that makes you less deserving of dignity and safety in the eyes of some.

I grew up in Bombay (now Mumbai) and witnessed the Hindu-Muslim riots of 1992 and 1993 when I was 10 years old. These riots waged for weeks and hundreds were killed, a large majority of them Muslims.

During these riots, there were nights we

BE OUR GUEST

BY FARAAZ AHMED

had to leave our home to hide because we were fearful of mobs coming to target us because we were Muslim. On the nights we stayed, my father would take my cricket bat to use as a weapon as he stood guard in front of our apartment building while my mother put a pouch of hot chili powder by the front door to throw at the rioters' eyes in case they broke through and came for her children. Schools were closed for weeks; the whole city essentially shut down. These riots were an anti-Muslim pogrom sanctioned by those in power in the state.

But you know what made those events even worse? More than the terror of leaving our home to hide out, more than the look of helplessness my parents had about not being able to protect their kids? What made it worse is that no one ever spoke up for us. Even after the riots had calmed down, no teacher or neighbor, nor parent of a friend or anyone who wasn't Muslim said something that showed compassion, understanding or support for what we went through. Their silence seemed to imply that our suffering was justified or even invited. It made me feel utterly alone in my own city.

This feeling is what I imagine a lot of

Jews are feeling right now and the rest of us shouldn't stand for that. We cannot ignore the feeling of terrifying loneliness that comes when others think of you as unworthy of the humanity we all share. When a community feels abandoned by its neighbors and fellow citizens. I, for one, will not do so.

Empathizing with Jewish suffering does not preclude you from empathizing with Palestinians, who are also suffering because of the sins of others. Muslims in the West like myself had a small taste of what that feels like. I moved to the U.S. as an 18-year-old to attend Columbia University a few weeks before 9/11. What I

and other Muslims had to deal with in the years following that event chipped away at our dignity and made many of us feel alone.

Forget that we had nothing to do with the horrific events of that day, nor did we condone them. Yet we paid a price and continue to do so. A price that pales in

comparison to what the people of Palestine are paying. So I know how imperative it is for us to speak up for them and make sure they are not forgotten, that their agony and terror is not swept away. But this cannot come at the cost of dehumanizing and ignoring the safety of

Jews. If it does, then our motivations can rightfully be questioned. If it does, then our efforts for the Palestinians are for naught.

As a Muslim, an immigrant, a New Yorker, and a father, my heart breaks for Palestinians being bombed, just as it also does for those Israelis that were murdered. I can weep for a dead child being pulled out of the rubble in

Gaza and also pray for one that has been kidnapped from Israel. I can advocate for peace and also shut down any action that even borders on antisemitism. My humanity is not limited, I can do both.

Ahmed lives in New York City with his wife and two sons.

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