

The Enemy Is Not Each Other

On Trauma, Scapegoats, and the Machinery of Division



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[My friend Mark](#) has a metaphor that I think about a lot. If you lock someone in a cage with an angry pit bull, they'll likely need to kill it before it kills them. That's simply a requirement for survival. But assuming they live, it's worth asking: who built the cage? Who brought the pit bull? Who keeps breeding more pit bulls? Who profits from the ticket sales?

I keep coming back to this because it so perfectly captures what I'm watching happen to people all around me, including many I love.

Recently, I watched a dear friend - someone who carries the weight of generational trauma much like I do - put his tribe on a pedestal while casting others as existential threats. Like me, he is a descendant of Holocaust survivors, inheritors of that particular brand of ancestral memory that lives in your bones whether you want it to or not. My other grandfather was Menachem Begin's personal bodyguard for years. I understand Jewish pride, Jewish fear, and Jewish trauma in a very personal and profound way. Not as an outsider looking in, but as someone who heard the words "never again" from the time I was in the crib. I was told that a time to round up people would happen again and under no circumstances should I ever show my papers. In 2021, when vaccine mandates became a thing in many cities, including mine, alarm bells went off. I thought, "Grandma was right, but this time they're coming for everyone." I was blown away at the dissonance of my friends and neighbors who didn't see this. The 'othering' was back - just wearing different clothes. And now I was watching it happen inside my own community.

And now, a few years later, I was watching it happen to someone close to me.

But watching my buddy, someone who I admire for his intellect and reason, fall into the seductive comfort of group thinking was incredibly disturbing. The similarities in our background was one of the things that once connected us but was now becoming a wedge as we interpreted it differently. I saw the trauma we inherited as a tool to learn compassion, whereas he seems to have harnessed it into a means to create new scapegoats.

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This piece has been brewing for a while.

When Kanye West started [talking about Jewish power in 2022](#), a family friend reached out, worried that their teenager was listening to his music and wearing his fashion brand. They were disturbed about the ramifications of that. When I shared that with my inner circle, we had a different reaction - we weren't outraged, we were suspicious.

Was this possibly a signal of what was to come? Remember, Kanye is an artist, an influencer. That's his function. If you're someone like me that believes that much of what we see on the public stage is a [large social engineering program](#) (admittedly a leap too far for most), the idea of 'antisemitism' doesn't randomly get reinserted into the national conversation - it gets reintroduced when it's needed for something bigger. I wrote about Kanye and this idea in [my MKULTRA series](#), which is a whole other intriguing layer that I won't relitigate here.

Then the dots on the graph. October 7th shattered the cross-tribal coalition that was forming. The Gaza war turned every American into a conscript in someone else's conflict. People were expected to choose their colors the way they do in the Super Bowl.

More recently, in my hometown of a quarter century, Mamdani got elected and the loyalty tests intensified. "Don't you hate him because he's an antisemite?" I was asked again and again. When my reply was that antisemitism wasn't in the top 100 things I'm concerned about in the world today, I often got looks of amazement. For what it's worth, I don't really hate anybody. I've got serious issues with Mamdani but mostly because I think [he's an actor playing his part](#) in the larger controlled demolition. Then, the Epstein files drop and get immediately processed through the ethnic lens. The alternative media - who emerged as the so-called good guys over the last few years - seems to have fractured over Old Testament vs New Testament theology. Most recently, Iran gets bombed and the same old dialectic is in full swing.

This is where we are now. The Jewish question - and I use that phrase knowing full well what it evokes - is center stage in a way it hasn't been in my lifetime. Each event feeds the next. The temperature only goes one direction.

I wrote the first draft of this essay as a letter to him about eight months ago. I never sent it, largely because I became resigned to the fact that the brainwashing was so deep it was a fool's errand. I thought about publishing it a few times but between life and the topic being so fraught I never got around to finishing it. There's already enough people who don't talk to me because I tend to touch the third rail, so why give more fuel, haha. But now it's so obvious we're being psyoped into oblivion that I felt

like it was time to share some perspective that doesn't fit neatly into either camp of the schism.

Before I go further, I should say that I care a lot less about who the good guys and bad guys are than I do about understanding the game itself. The ideas matter to me regardless of who espouses them, with the full understanding that I may be being manipulated. Surety is one of the biggest weaknesses one can have in a perception war. My frame has shifted several times over the last few years, and like anyone else acting in good faith, as new information comes to light I expect it'll shift again. I share these ideas here really working through some of this out loud. Finding others going through a similar journey has been helpful - to compare notes, challenge assumptions, and try to see more clearly together.

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Trauma hijacks our capacity for nuance and our species often uses it to override our own intellect. It's one of the characteristics that makes us human.

When our pain feels existential - when it carries the echo of ancestors who didn't survive to tell their stories - we give ourselves permission to stop thinking critically. Our suffering, and those who came before, becomes a justification for abandoning everything we know about manipulation and power dynamics.

I get it. The Holocaust wasn't just history for families like ours. It was the shadow that shaped dinnertime conversations, the reason certain discussions happened in whispers, the fear that lived behind our grandparents' eyes.

As I grew older, I came to understand that nearly every group on this planet carries their own trauma. Persecution, displacement, violence, loss is the story of history across continents, races, and other creeds. And those in power - regardless of their own background - have become masters at weaponizing that pain.

They've figured out the formula: take legitimate grievances, amplify them through media and institutional messaging, then channel that energy toward each other

instead of toward the systems that actually benefit from our division. It's elegant, really. Diabolical and fucking evil, but elegant.

And the smartest people aren't immune. I'd argue that they're actually more vulnerable - I suspect because intelligence can provide better tools for rationalization. I've watched brilliant people, people who can dismantle propaganda in any other context, suddenly let their trauma do their thinking. Their intellect constructs elaborate justifications for inherited loyalty, to explain why this situation is different, why 'this time' the rules don't apply. The trap isn't in the stupidity of the response - it's in the sophistication of it. The cage-builders don't need us to be dumb. They just need us to be scared enough that our brains serve our fear rather than our freedom.

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One thing that seems very prevalent in this [schismogenesis](#) - in comment sections, in the fractures I'm watching across communities - is the disproportionate representation question.

Look around. The heads of the Federal Reserve, the major studios, the biggest investment firms - people have been talking about that for a while. But now it's even in electoral politics across multiple continents. Zelensky, leading one of the most consequential conflicts of our generation. And then - the president of Mexico. Yes, Mexico. What are the chances? There's also Javier Milei in Argentina - not Jewish, but his [first trip after being elected](#) was to pray at the Lubavitcher Rebbe's gravesite in New York. That's an interesting data point in its own right.

It's not antisemitic to observe this. It's impossible for anyone being intellectually honest not to. The question is whether what you're seeing is what it actually is - or what someone wants it to look like.

But here's what the rage-merchants want you to miss. The disproportionate representation is real - and that's precisely how the scapegoat mechanism works. A visible minority in financial and media institutions becomes the face people see when those institutions cause harm. Most people who don't know Jewish people personally

only encounter names like Epstein, Weinstein, Rothschild - and these become their entire frame of reference for an entire people.

To be clear - Soros, Fink, and others at the top should be held accountable for their actions. Anyone who's read anything I've written knows I believe these people have a boot on the neck of humanity. I'm not here to defend them.

But if you didn't grow up around Jewish people, and these visible names are all you know, combined with constant discourse linking "Israel" and "Zionist" to every grievance... I can see how it would be easy to form a caricature that has nothing to do with everyday Jewish life. That caricature is useful to the cage-builders. It keeps rage pointed at a visible minority instead of trying to understand the bigger picture. The deeper power structures operate in different kinds of darkness. Some - Jesuit orders, Fabian societies - most people have never heard of. Others operate in plain sight but under rules designed to ensure nothing said in the room can ever be attributed. Council on Foreign Relations, Trilateral Commission, The Bilderberg Group. You may know the names. You'll never know what was said. The Chatham House Rule isn't a footnote - it's the architecture. And then there are the lodges, which is a longer conversation.

This pattern disturbs me deeply. Jewish people are given visible positions in financial and media institutions, then blamed when those institutions harm people. It's the "court Jew" dynamic - [historically documented as Hofjude](#) in medieval European courts. Allowed into positions of financial power specifically so that when the system collapses or exploits populations, the rage gets directed at Jews rather than at the power structure itself. Jewish financiers fronted for Christian nobility in medieval Europe, then got massacred when debts came due. Jewish media executives front for corporate consolidation today, then get blamed for propaganda that serves military-industrial interests. It's a setup and it's been working for a very long time.

[Hannah Arendt wrote about this](#) - what she described as the appearance of power without its substance. Visible enough to blame, never protected enough to survive the backlash. She was writing about her own people.

The roots run deep. In 1891, before political Zionism was even founded, American Christian elites - including J.D. Rockefeller, J.P. Morgan, and the editors of the New York Times, Washington Post, and Chicago Tribune - [signed a petition urging the U.S. government to support Jewish immigration to Palestine](#). Most American Jewish communities opposed it. The scapegoat mechanism was being constructed by Christian financial elites, not by Jews. The infrastructure of scapegoating was being built before most Jewish communities even wanted it. That tells you who it was designed to serve - and who it was designed to use.

In [The Thinning](#), my recent piece about the Epstein files, I wrote about how even the disclosure of crimes at the highest levels gets immediately processed through the division machinery. One commenter on that piece demanded I search my own article for the word 'Jew' - as if its absence proved I was hiding something. That reaction wasn't unusual. It's all over social media. People collapse the entire network into ethnic identity, as if that's the framework that explains any of this.

The Epstein network runs through Rothschild banking, sure. But it also involves Peter Thiel's Palantir. And, DARPA, the same military-corporate apparatus that ran Operation Warp Speed. There are researchers [mapping Swiss banking dynasties and Templar financial networks](#) that predate any of this by centuries. The ethnic lens isn't the simple explanation that explains everything, it's merely misdirection.

The cabal doesn't care about Jewish safety any more than they care about Palestinian dignity or American prosperity. They care about maintaining a scapegoat class that can absorb public rage. Henry Kissinger and Dick Cheney didn't wake up debating Talmudic interpretation versus Christian theology. They woke up calculating which populations could be set against each other for maximum profit with minimum risk to their positions.

I refuse to hold my Jewish neighbors responsible for the actions of wealthy elites who share - or claim to share - some aspect of their background. That would be as absurd as holding all Catholics responsible for the heinous crimes of the Vatican. Or all Freemasons - most of whom are likely just looking for brotherhood and community - for whatever happens at the top of that pyramid. Most people in any of these groups

are just trying to live good lives, raise their families, and navigate the same pressures as the rest of us.

What unites the cage-builders isn't heritage - it's their shared interest in keeping the rest of us at each other's throats while they consolidate power across borders, above nations, beyond any tribal loyalty. And they've discovered something profound: if they can get us arguing about which ethnic or religious group is overrepresented in power, we'll never ask the only question that threatens them - why do so few people even ask where the real power sits, regardless of who appears to wield it? My research suggests the cage isn't Jewish. It isn't Christian. It isn't Muslim. It's supranational, recruits across bloodlines, and has always understood something that most secular analysts miss: that the most powerful control systems are spiritual ones.

Whoever controls the story of God controls the story of everything else. Naming that isn't scapegoating - it's refusing the misdirection.

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When violence erupts between groups, we're trained to ask cage questions. Who started it? Who's right? Which side are you on?

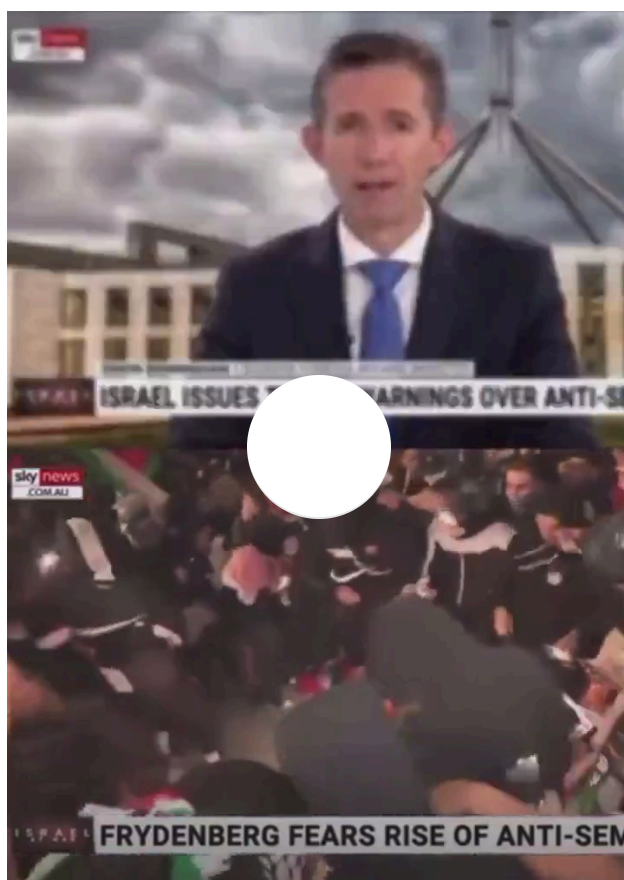
But the real questions - the ones that would threaten actual power - are different. Who benefits from this conflict continuing? Who profits when these groups remain enemies? What systems depend on this hatred for their survival?

The genius of the division machine is making those questions seem naive and conspiracy-minded, while the 'sophisticated' position is debating endlessly which group inside the cage deserves our support. Ring the bell, watch them salivate.

The reality is that all wars are banker wars - and I mean that quite literally. If you haven't seen the [documentary by that title](#), it's worth your time. The late Antony Sutton [documented this meticulously](#). The defense contractors, the investment firms, the intelligence agencies don't live in Gaza or Tel Aviv or Tehran. They count their returns regardless of who wins. Recognizing this doesn't require picking a side. It's as simple as identifying who benefits from the conflict continuing.

This isn't abstract. The infrastructure has a physical address - several, actually. The City of London, Vatican City, Washington DC, Brussels, Geneva - five nodes, each optimized for a specific function: finance, ideology, military force, regulation, diplomacy. [There are more too](#). I've [written about some of these jurisdictional anomalies before](#). I'm hardly the first, nor have I gone the deepest. [Derrick Broze's Pyramid of Power series](#) maps the interlocking structures in extraordinary detail. None of them answer to ordinary democratic accountability. Governments shift, leaders come and go. The architecture persists. That's not a bug, that's the design. I'm aware that sounds like a grand claim - and maybe it is. But anyone who has pulled on these threads long enough knows they keep leading to the same places.

Watch how stories roll out with eerie synchronization.



How do we watch news clips from supposedly 'competing' outlets and hear anchors using identical phrases - not just covering the same story, but the exact same words, in the exact same order - and not ask how that happens? It's the fear machine propagating itself and asking the sides to go to their respective corners.

The Inquisition blamed heretics. Pogroms blamed Jews. Post-9/11 hysteria blamed Muslims. The pandemic response created new categories of “dangerous” people based on medical choices. Anyone who zooms out can see it may have been different pit bulls but it’s the same mechanism at work. And, in fact, the same cage-builders.

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Before October 7th, 2023, I’d been part of lots of conversations happening across activist communities - medical freedom advocates, first amendment defenders, people questioning government overreach. Most of these were regular people who suddenly found themselves ostracized in their own families and communities for going against the public consensus. People shared stories of being excluded from work or Thanksgiving because of their vax status or position on lockdowns, and found a new community that seemed to span everything - class, race, religion, politics. The coalition was as diverse as anything I’d ever seen. Something fascinating, and dare I say beautiful, was emerging across typical party lines.

By October 8th? Pretty much gone.

People who had been skeptical of mainstream narratives for years suddenly embraced headlines from legacy media outlets they’d been mocking as ‘fake news’ just days before. The unity was replaced by the old familiar camps with the majority reverting back to their priors: Team Israel vs. Team Palestine, with anyone suggesting the situation might be more complex getting attacked from both sides.

Whether organic or orchestrated (you can guess where I stand), the most promising cross-tribal alliance I’ve ever witnessed was more or less shattered in 24 hours.

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I’ve been trying to articulate a framework that explains why this keeps working. After observing this for the past few years I think I found it. I call it the barbell effect. Picture a barbell - two heavy extremes connected by a fragile middle that gets crushed between them. In retrospect, it seems obvious. Once you see it, you might even recognize it everywhere.

Take the current dynamics around Jewish identity and Israel. On one end, Zionist extremists insist that all Jews are Israel, Israel is all Jews, and any criticism of Israeli policy is antisemitism. On the other end, anti-Israel extremists accept that exact conflation and use it to justify attacking Jews more generally. Both sides need the conflation to justify their worldview. Not only do they enforce it but they attack anyone who tries to maintain the distinction.

Regular Jewish people - the vast majority who have complex feelings about Israel, who can criticize policy while caring about safety - get squeezed from both sides. When your own extremists claim to speak for you, and your opponents accept that claim and attack you for it, maintaining your principled distinction starts to feel like suicide.

That's how the division machine eliminates the middle ground. And it isn't just political - it's epistemological. It doesn't just make certain positions uncomfortable to hold. It makes certain truths unspeakable.

The scapegoating doesn't stop at crushing the middle - it feeds on itself. Blame Jewish people for everything, and what happens? Antisemitism rises. And then what? That [antisemitism becomes the justification](#) for limiting speech, expanding surveillance, training law enforcement, locking down protections - all in the name of safety. The same system that points the finger uses the backlash to tighten its grip. It's a perfect loop: manufacture the hate, then use the hate to justify more control.

This pattern isn't unique to this conflict, it's the mechanism at work. Muslims get squeezed between Islamic extremists claiming to represent them and anti-Muslim extremists who accept that claim. White Americans get crushed between white supremacists and anti-racists who agree that whiteness is a monolith. The trans debate runs through the same machine with different inputs. Any group can be fed through this barbell. The mechanics of polarization are more or less the same every time.

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Understanding the barbell reveals something fundamental to the game. The extremes on opposing sides aren't actually opposed in their fundamental interest. They're

collaborating - unwittingly perhaps, but collaborating nonetheless - to eliminate the middle ground, to force everyone into the cage.

Of course I'm a human being and I have reactions to what I'm watching. What's been happening in Gaza sure looks like ethnic cleansing to me - and I feel the weight of that claim in my bones. But I also know I'm seeing a curated version of events, and I've learned that my emotional certainty is exactly what the division machine runs on. I can hold a position without letting it conscript me into a tribe. That's the whole point.

What I observe is a pattern: populations suffer, leaders exploit, systems profit.

Israeli civilians didn't design occupation policy. Most Palestinians alive today never had a vote in anything. Both populations are getting chewed up by leadership that stopped serving them a long time ago. Hamas has been terrible to its own people - diverting aid into tunnels, using civilians as leverage, rejecting every off-ramp that might have ended their suffering.

But it was Israel's betrayal that hit closest to home.

The nail in the coffin for me happened two years before 10/7, when [Israel became the first country to violate the Nuremberg code](#). Think about that for a moment. The state that exists because of Nuremberg turned its own citizens into pharmaceutical test subjects, traded their medical data, and made bodily autonomy conditional. The principles that came directly out of Jewish suffering - abandoned by the state that was built on that suffering. That should have been the alarm bell for everyone, but somehow it wasn't. The same leadership doesn't just sacrifice the other side - they betray their own. And if you think that's just leaders doing the best with the knowledge they had, I have a vaccine I'd like to sell you.

Netanyahu and Hamas may be enemies on the global stage, however, they've been partners in a system that requires both of them. In fact, [Israel actively supported Hamas's rise](#) as a counterweight to secular Palestinian nationalism under Arafat. [Former Israeli religious affairs official Avner Cohen put it bluntly](#): 'Hamas, to my great regret, is Israel's creation.' Create the enemy, then use that enemy to justify endless conflict. The U.S. did the same with Bin Laden, and Saddam. Same old playbook.

[In a video leaked to Israeli TV](#), Netanyahu described American support as “absurd,” noting that “America is something that can be easily moved.” He wasn’t confessing - he was boasting. He knows the support is manufactured. He uses it because the cage-builders don’t need us to think clearly. They need us to feel strongly and sort into camps. That’s how intelligent people end up rationalizing positions they’d recognize as manufactured in any other context.

I’m not above any of this, by the way. I carried the same programming for so much of my life. The trauma that shaped my family, the fear that felt like protection, the tribal thinking that felt like survival - I lived inside all of it. Bluntly, I’m still working my way out. But at some point I started to see how that trauma was being used - not to protect us, but to keep us in a cage we didn’t even know we were in. In the eight months since this started as a letter to a friend, I’ve only watched this build to the point where it’s part of the zeitgeist. Again, I don’t claim to be an expert on geopolitics but I do study patterns. [Like I asked about Epstein](#), why now?

What would dishonor my family’s survival is staying silent while the trauma they survived gets used to justify creating new victims. And for what it’s worth - the deeper I’ve gone into the history of the Holocaust itself over the last few years, the more I’ve learned that challenges everything I thought I knew. Not about the horror - that’s not in question, not ever. But about the rationale, the structure, the who and the why. That’s a longer conversation for another day.

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My exploration into social control has taught me this: we have far more in common with each other than with the systems exploiting our divisions.

The guy struggling to pay rent has more in common with another guy struggling to pay rent than either has with the billionaire who owns both their apartment buildings. It doesn’t matter what either of them looks like or who they pray to. The same goes for parents - a mom worried about her kid’s future has a lot more in common with other worried parents than with the politicians exploiting that fear for votes.

This doesn't mean pretending all perspectives are equally valid or ignoring real injustices. It means refusing to let those injustices be weaponized to make us hate each other. It means developing the spiritual maturity to hold multiple truths simultaneously.

Yes, hatred of Jewish people - what they call 'antisemitism,' a word I think is as preposterous as calling someone who opposes an experimental gene therapy anti-vaxxer, but the weaponization of language is another essay entirely - is real and dangerous. Yes, Palestinian suffering is real and unjust. Yes, most people in all groups just want safety and dignity for their families. And yes, the systems profiting from our division want us to believe we have to choose sides.

We don't.

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So many people - too many in my opinion - choose fire because it feels like power. When you're scared, when you're watching injustice unfold in real time, burning something down feels like doing something. But fire is their product. The entire infrastructure is built around making you angry at your neighbor - because angry people are predictable. They buy weapons, support wars, accept surveillance, abandon every principle they held the day before.

Perhaps the hardest thing to do isn't choosing the bigger fire, or the 'right' fire, or even the 'righteous' fire. I choose water over fire. I don't say that because I think it makes me a good person, but because I know fire is what they're selling. My bet is refusing to burn at all. At least on topics like this.

This isn't pacifism. This isn't naivety. This is recognizing that every moment you spend hating your neighbor is a moment you're not threatening the people who put you both in this position. Water finds its way around obstacles because water is strategic. Fire just burns whatever fuel they provide.

I think about all of us, carrying our ancestors' wounds, trying to make sense of a world that seems designed to keep us afraid, angry, and separate. But I also think about what

becomes possible when we refuse to play that game. When we insist on seeing each other's humanity even when we disagree about solutions. When we direct our anger toward systems rather than scapegoats.

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I'm angry. I want to be clear about that. But where I point that anger is what matters.

Can we stay furious at the cage-builders without turning on whoever's in the cage with us? Can we hold the idea that threats are both real and manufactured at the same time? That our neighbors' fears are valid even when someone's exploiting them? That violence creates victims and beneficiaries - and they're almost never the same people?

The division machine has one weakness: it needs us to play along. Every time we refuse their dialectic - every time we look up instead of sideways - the whole thing gets fragile. They work so hard to keep us looking at each other because they know the moment we look up, the whole game falls apart.

I don't know what the reaction to this will be. I imagine both sides of the barbell might get upset. If they do, then I'm probably doing something right.

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Josh, you have articulated this about as well as I can imagine. I don't know how many conversations I've had with others where I'm trying to tell them that what is being reported in the news is just kabuki theater - that we are watching marionettes being controlled by higher forces out of view. They call me a conspiracy theorist and call it "implausible". I have no answer. Now I have one: read Josh Stylman's article on Trauma and Scapegoats. Nice piece of work. Keep 'em coming.

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