

Reign of Terror, Once Removed

One of the dangers of listening to talk radio, especially a conservative station, is the glimpses into the parallel Earths that occasionally intersect it. Most of these I've adjusted to. I no longer expect even nods to objectivity from Paul Harvey's "News and Comment," and fully realize that reasoned discussion is as rare as William Shatner's subtle acting. Despite that considerable acclimation, I wasn't prepared for the first and only Pat Buchanan for President advertisement I heard.

I knew that he was running and had that Reform Party money to finance a campaign, but I never expected to hear such a blatantly isolationist advertisement for a national candidate. I had hoped that the days when an appeal to voters based on the diminishing use of English was considered reasonable even on whatever Twilight Zone dimension Buchanan comes from were past. If Pat wants to defend the King's English, I think it faces more danger from the Bush clan than anywhere else at this point. I suppose I should count my blessings; at least the ad didn't refer to any ethnic groups as "uppity."

I should also be happy that even Buchanan's campaign doesn't seem to believe that this tack is workable. The message asked voters to "send a message" to Washington, not to actually believe that Pat was electable. I suppose that asking voters to send a message to Washington that continuing to subsidize the Reform Party treasury would have been too blatant.

Actually, I hope that's Pat's plan. It's not a bad one tactically keep enough fringe voters going to the polls every 4 years to keep his coffers full and make running for President his full time job. The innovation is to use fear of the new as motivation to keep an appropriately-sized support group around. A literal reign of terror.

Running for president is much better than being president. All you do is keep saying that the guy in charge is screwed up and that it's all because of the immigrants. No culpability for mistakes, dinners in nice places, occasional TV appearances. It's a good gig.

I'd like to believe that's Pat's goal, because it means that I don't have to believe he's as intolerant and ignorant as he appears. There has never been a point in American history when English was spoken exclusively in this country, and influxes of immigrants have been continuous. I'd like to believe that no one can rise to national prominence without knowing these things.

Of course, staying nationally prominent based on deluding those who are that ignorant is not much better.