

Dear Editor NYT:

Since reading the obituary of Anthony Acevedo, who died at age 93 on Feb 11, 2018 (NYT March 16), I knew I had to find a way to tell his remarkable story of bravery and suffering rape, torture and starvation in the “Berga camp, a part of the Buchenwald complex”; and to leave a written record for posterity of the suffering he and hundreds of other prisoners suffered. His diary, which he hid at obvious risk of immediately being shot if discovered, survived. He bequeathed it in 2010 to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC.” Mr. Acevedo appears to be the first Mexican-American registered in the museum’s database. He served in the US Army as a medic during the Battle of the Bulge. Born in California, July 1924, he attended a segregated school until he was thirteen. His father was an engineer, his mother a homemaker who died when he was two years old. When his father and stepmother were deported because they lacked the proper immigration papers, Anthony and his five siblings left for the state of Durango, Mexico, where his father had found success as the director of public works. When war broke out, Anthony, a DACA child before there was such a term, was recruited to serve in the Army. He was welcomed across the border without visa, and even if his motive was partially to get away from his allegedly abusive father, he volunteered to serve the country of his birth (as so many DACA youths today have served in our wars now only to be caught in the grips of our partisan politics, ironically to fund a wall to keep undocumented Mexicans out). The obituary shows Mr. Acevedo as a slim youth in uniform alongside a substantial elderly gentleman wearing a medal around his neck (which I cannot identify). After his discharge and physical recovery he hoped to attend medical school, but he never did. He like, his father became an engineer, worked for military contractors (Rockwell, McConnell Douglas and Hughes Aircraft) and contributed to the country of his birth... Mr. Acevedo’s son said he suffered from night terrors and other symptoms of chronic PTSD for many years and died in a VA Hospital. “He had faith that he’d make it and that hopefully one day people would see what the men (not himself) went through”.

Donald Trump has said, indeed repeatedly promised during his campaign and until today, to build an actual wall, that can be seen, not only a virtual electronic wall with hundreds more agents to patrol the wall and still more ICE agents to route out illegals. He has suspended DACA exceptions, but only for a limited time (which is soon up), and seeks to send a million other young people back to wait their turn in line in Mexico. He is holding

all of them them hostage, human bargaining chips, unless the Democrats (Chuck Schumer) agree that we, not Mexico, must pay for the wall. When Schumer did agree to the tune of his requested 23.5 billion, but negotiated for more secure guarantees that included a path to citizenship. Trump demurred and blamed the Democrats (Schumer) for abandoning DACA (and I guess the other million at risk of deportation). When he grudgingly signed the 1.5 Trillion budget, at the urging of General Mattis to secure many hundreds of billions to re-arm and upgrade our military but only 1.5Billion for the wall he attempted to save face by boasting that he would make it really go far (Isn't that what a prudent businessman /president should do for his stockholders or in Trump's case his family/ and we constituents who elected him?) As reported and photographed (NYT, March 13,2018), President Trump, inspecting models for his "big beautiful border wall" remains publicly committed to his view that "Without a wall we don't have a country".

Ann Coulter, was interviewed and as reported by Frank Bruni (NYT, March 30,2018) was an early and avid Trump supporter. She acknowledged in his interview "when he came down that (Trump Tower) escalator and ranted about Mexican rapists I swooned". (What are we to make of that statement?) In the interview she thinks his voters "absolutely do not care who pays for it". (The Great Wall of China stretched three thousand miles and failed to protect the reigning emperors because the Mongolian foreigners bribed the guards where they couldn't tunnel in and over time the wall crumbled.) But do we need to belabor the argument that there are more effective practical measures to secure our borders that are humane and beneficial to both Mexico and ourselves?

Ann Coulter, who predicted Trump's victory when others discounted his chances because of his total lack of government experience, boastful crude manners and showmanship and salesmanship-think his foreign made neckties and imported steaks. She and his supporters wanted someone exactly like him. It turned out that because of savvy Republican gerrymandering and because of his natural instincts to "attack, attack, if they hit me, I hit back ten times harder", he surprised himself and was elected. Coulter now sees Trump retreating from his bullyboy tactics and failing at negotiating (We'll see how North Korea goes, but that is not the subject of this essay.) She warns him that Trumpers will turn against him if he doesn't provide a wall. Period- a physical un-scalable ten- foot high wall, with many

hundreds of guards without empathy for the harm they must know they are causing. Coulter urges Trump who once, famously or infamously depending on your point of view and sense of humor, said during his campaign at a rally in Iowa (Jan 23, 2016).“ I could shoot a person on Fifth Avenue. I Could Stand In the Middle Of Fifth Avenue And Shoot Somebody And I Wouldn't Lose Any Voters" (but did he mean in front of Trump Tower?) And as reported (NYT, Oct 7, 2016) he said, "I'm automatically attracted to beautiful women. I just start kissing them, it's like a magnet. Just kiss. I don't even wait. And when you're a star, they let you do it. You can do anything; he said in a 2005 conversation caught on tape... "Grab 'em by the p... " Ten years later, as President (Nov 28, 2017) he apologized, "I said it, I was wrong and I apologize". Is this the man Ann Coulter "swooned over" because he wanted to build a wall to keep out rapists?

Ann Coulter insists Trump needs to be, the incorrect vulgarian who made those statements or his base will turn against him. She is now highly critical of him but thinks he may recover if he is the Trump who ceases-absolutely ceases- to try and have it both ways. He can't please the New York Times or the Washington Post or the society circles he so much enjoyed for so many years before he became a Republican. So he attacks them and the security apparatus we all need to protect us as flawed and harboring deep bias against him, again and again ten times harder as he promised he would. Shakespeare's Hamlet said it best, "Me thinks he protests too much."

To summarize: For many voters like me who did not support or vote for Trump, character counts, empathy counts and a willingness to enlist to serve your country counts. Mr. Acevedo did not bear arms, but he did bear bodies tended to their wounds, provided them succor, honored them in deed and gave them a voice in their deaths. When our military needed recruits they invited him to cross the border, welcomed him over it. Yes of course that was then and he wasn't a poor farm worker and he wasn't threatening anyone's job-all of the arguments used to turn away the vast majority of Mexicans who are overwhelmingly "good people". (My wife and I have vacationed in Mexico each winter for over twenty years and will continue to do so in in the state of Guerrero, which is now on a watch list warning Americans to be cautious about traveling there.) In voting we can make choices that reflect our core values not exclusively our pragmatic and economic interests. Ann Coulter is not speaking to me or to the majority of Americans who did not vote for Trump. Being a smart, as he repeatedly

reminds us, rich boastful entertainer doesn't cut it for me. Anthony Acevedo and people of his character do. Too bad he couldn't go to medical school.

PS: As I was about to submit this piece to the NYT Editors-just now- I read President Trumps Easter Greetings (Why no Passover Greetings to his Jewish son-in-law and daughter who converted to Judaism and takes it seriously?) There are Jews and Synagogues in Red States who may well have voted for him. Just for the record President Obama conducted Seders in the White House for the eight years he was in office. George Washington traveled by carriage over rutted roads to deliver letters to two synagogues, one in Rhode Island (1790) and one and one in Georgia (1789) to welcome them as citizens and acknowledging their struggle for freedom after learning of their experiences of religious intolerance that deprived them of their "invaluable rights (as) free citizens under the newly established Constitution with its "Bill of Right". (See "Washington a Life" by Ron Chernow.)

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