



From Tyranny to Trump: Who Are 'The People'?

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So – what do I feel passionate about?









OK, what do I *really* feel passionate about?

Ignorance, craziness, and hatred.

That is to say, I am like 100% of all humans, since no one thinks *they* are the ones who are ignorant, crazy, or hateful.

Today's talk will be a little different...



So why am I here –
as in, why am I here?

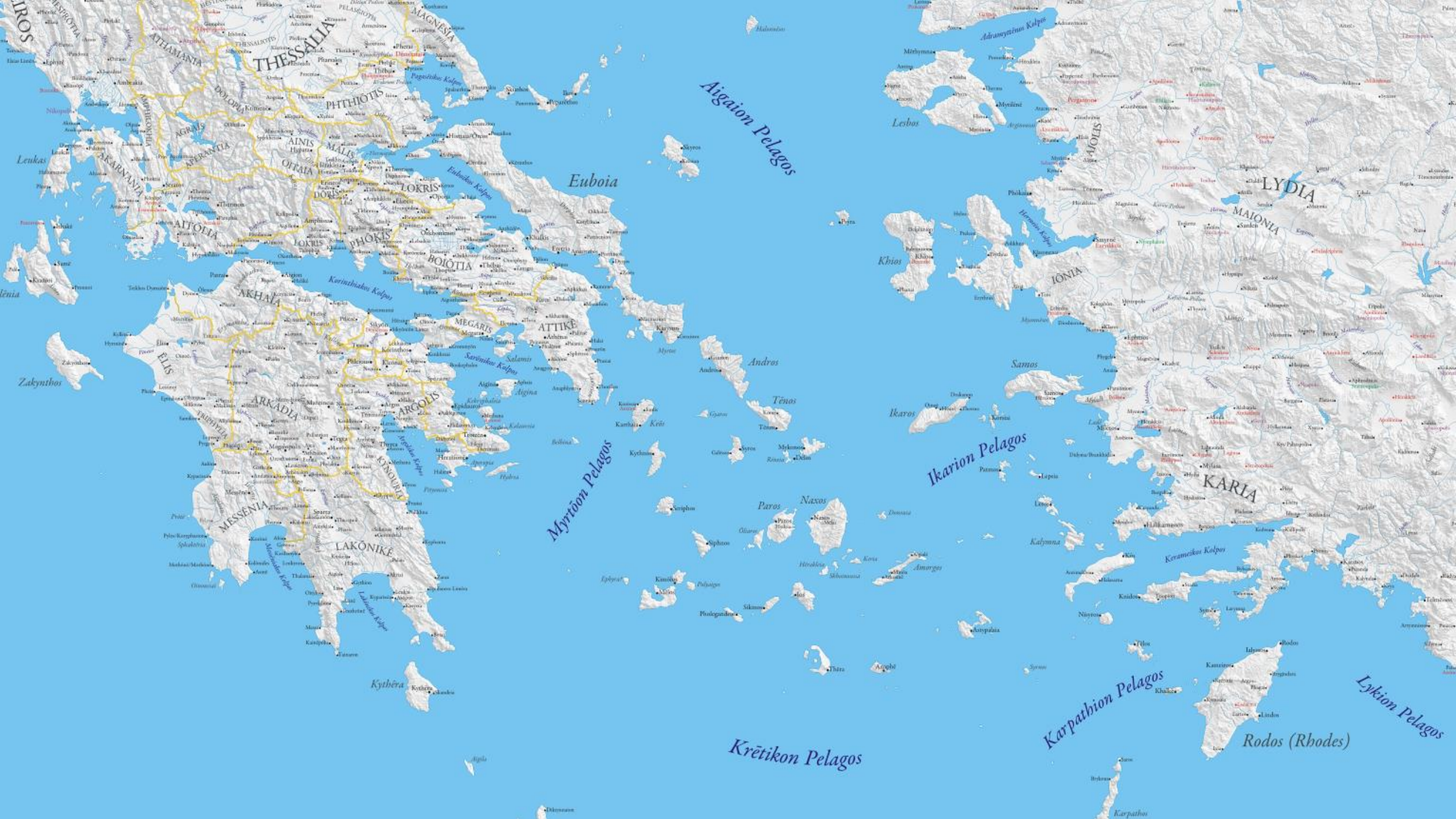


Tyranny and Democracy: Flip Sides of the Same Coin?



The Phenomenon of Ancient Greek 'Tyranny'

- Time frame: 7th and 6th centuries BC
- Institutional context: the Greek *polis*-system



The Phenomenon of Ancient Greek 'Tyranny'

- Time frame: 7th and 6th centuries BC
- Institutional context: the Greek *polis*-system
- Deep discontent among the people, oppressed by the aristocratic elite
- Rise of a populist 'tyrant'

But who are 'The People' in this case?

- Free citizen men (no slaves, no women, no foreigners)
- Citizen military: tyrants have the support of the 'army'
- Not the entire citizen-body: 'the people' are in opposition to the aristocratic elite
- But tyrants themselves inevitably came from the aristocratic classes

The Tale of Kypselos of Corinth (657-627 BC)

Herodotos 5.92b-f, written two centuries later

The government of Corinth was once an oligarchy: one clan – the Bacchiadai, who intermarried only amongst themselves – were in power there. Amphion, a member of this clan, had a lame daughter, Labda, whom none of the Bacchiadai was willing to marry. So she was taken by Eëtion, the son of Echekrates, a man from the village of Petra... Having no children by Labda or any other wife, Eëtion went to Delphi to ask about his chance of an heir...

*... and the moment he entered the shrine the Priestess
addressed him in these words:*

*“Eëtion, worthy of honour, no man honours you. Labda
is with child, and her child will be a millstone which will
fall upon the rulers and will bring justice to Corinth.”*

The prophecy, though addressed to Eëtion, reached the ears of the Bacchiadai..., and they resolved to make away with Eëtion's child as soon as it should be born.

The moment, therefore, that Labda was brought to bed they sent ten of their number to the village where Eëtion lived, to kill the baby...

Labda, who had no idea why they had come, gave the baby to one of them to hold, and as soon as she put it into the man's arms, it smiled at him, and he, seeing it smile, was touched, and could not bring himself to kill it...

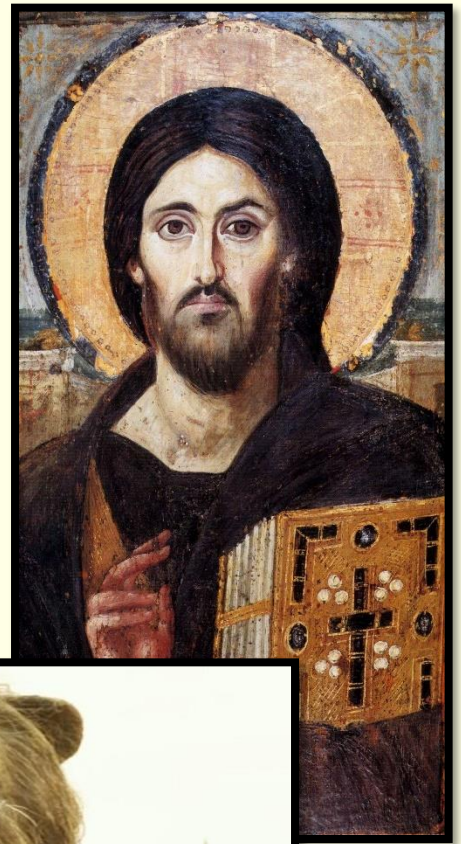
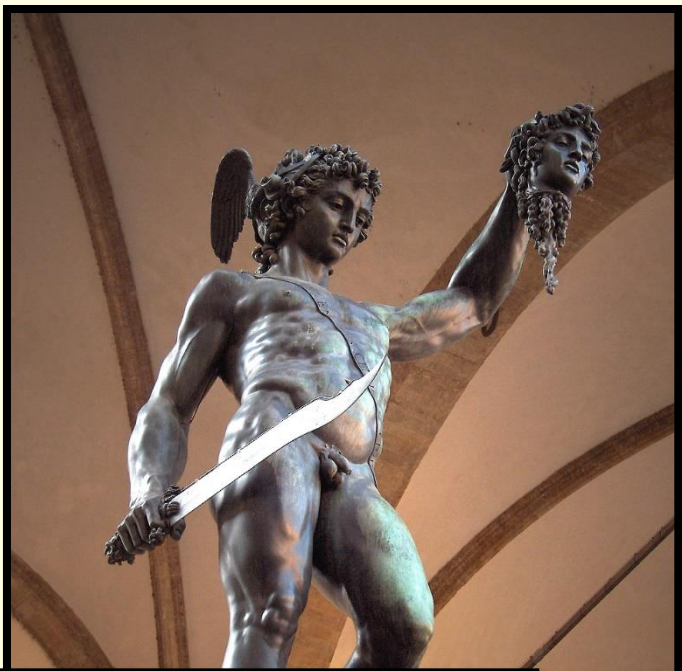
... so he passed it on to his neighbour who, in his turn, passed it on again until all ten had had it in their arms, and not one could bring himself to kill it. So they gave the baby back to its mother and went out of the room.

Close by the door they stopped and began to argue with each other...

Labda, who had been standing close behind the door, heard everything that the men were saying, and in fear lest the second time they got hold of her baby, they might actually destroy it, she hid it in a chest (kypselē), which was the most unlikely place she could think of...

One day, after he had grown to maturity, Kypselos happened to consult the oracle, and its prophecy went like this:

“Fortunate is he who steps down into my house, Kypselos, son of Eëtion, lord of famous Corinth...” Such was the prophecy that induced Kypselos to seize power: many of the Corinthians he drove into exile, many he deprived of their property, and still more, by a long way, of their lives. He ruled in Corinth for thirty years, died in the height of prosperity and was succeeded by his son Periander.

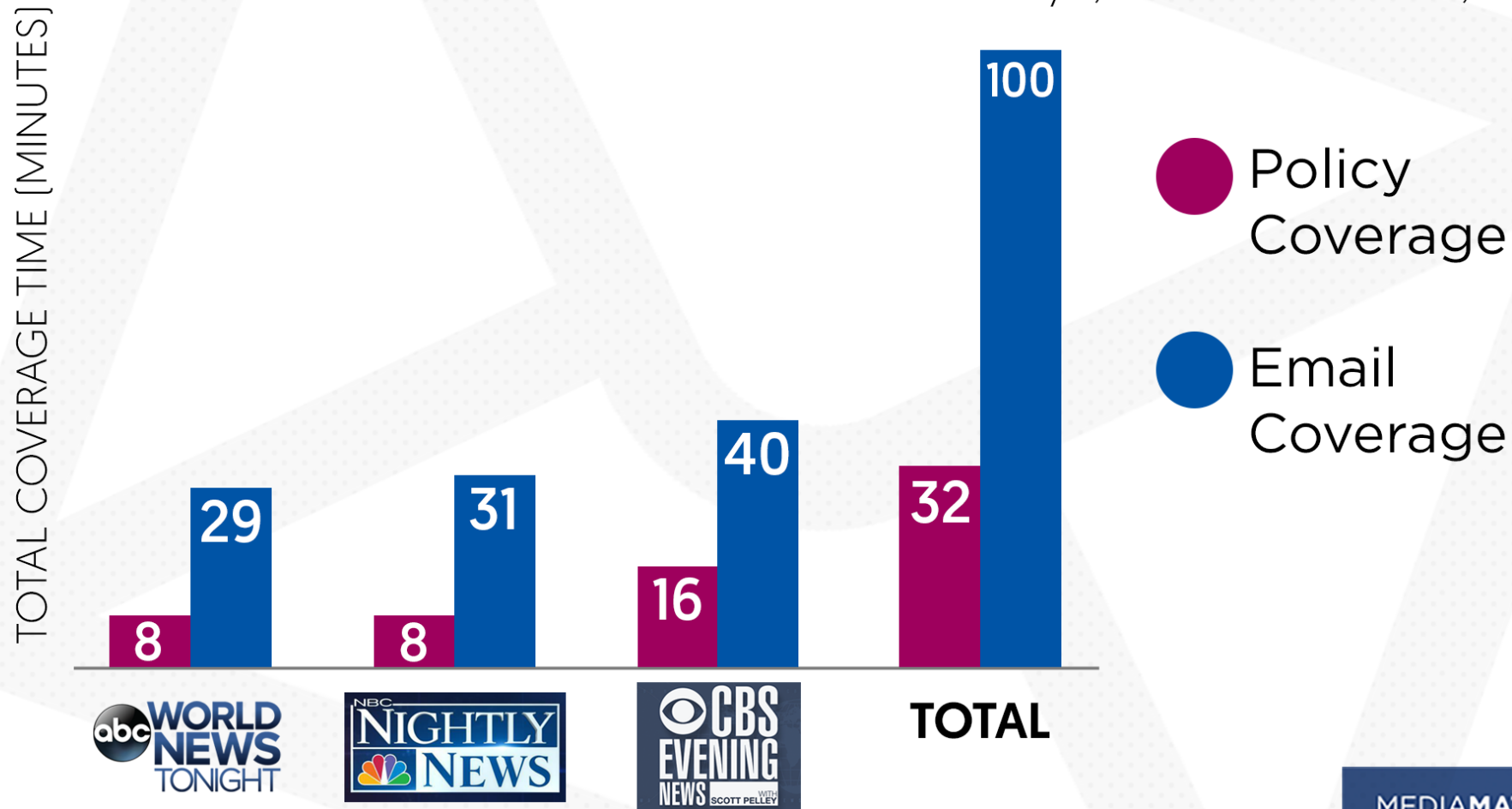


The Press Shapes History?

The Greek text of Herodotos has 465 words on Kypselos' birth story, and only 94 on what he actually did.

Coverage Of Policy Issues vs. Hillary Clinton's Emails On The Broadcast Evening News Shows

January 1, 2016 - October 21, 2016



SOURCE: Andrew Tyndall

MEDIAMATTERS
FOR AMERICA

Step 1 to Tyranny

- Deny that you are actually a member of the elite and try to make yourself appear to be one of 'the people'.

Another Tyrant's Tale: Peisistratos of Athens (546-528 BC)

Herodotos 1.60, written a century later

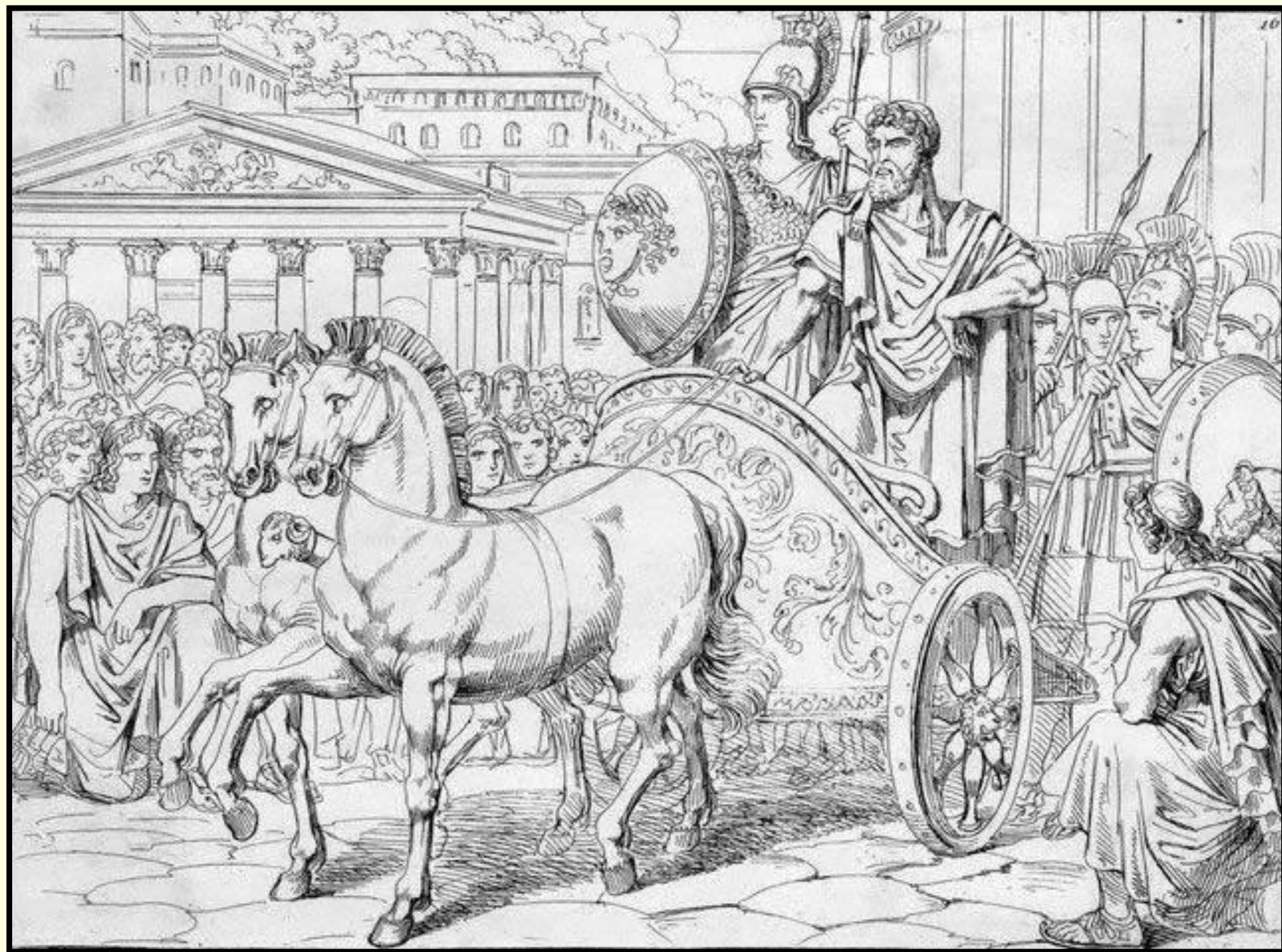
Not long afterwards the two parties under Megakles and Lykourgos agreed to combine, and drove Peisistratos out, so that in this first phase of his tyranny he lost his power before it had really taken root. His rivals, however, falling foul of one another once again, Megakles found himself so harassed that he made overtures to Peisistratos and promised to restore him to power if he would consent to marry his daughter.

Peisistratos agreed to the terms which Megakles proposed, and then, to bring about his return to power, they devised between them what seems to me the silliest trick which history has to record. The Greeks have never been simpletons; for centuries past they have been distinguished from other nations by superior wits; and of all Greeks the Athenians are allowed to be the most intelligent: yet it was at the Athenians' expense that this ridiculous trick was played...

Phye-Athena

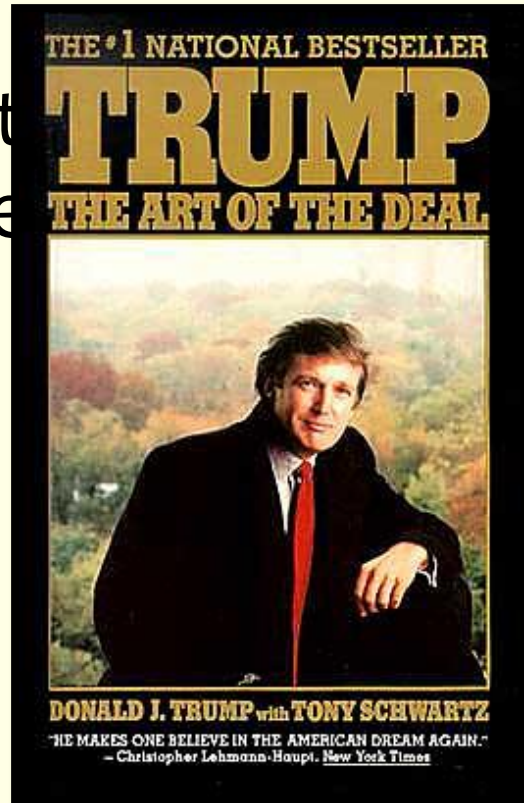






Step 2 to Tyranny

- Lies and misrepresentation: ‘alternative facts’ and ‘truthful hyperbole’
- You may be a populist but it doesn't mean you have to *respect* the people



Oxford English Dictionary's word of the year (2016):

Post-truth: circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping political debate or public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief.

Example (Glasgow Herald, 15 Nov. 2016): 'Social media...has become a post-truth nether world in which readers willingly participate in their own deception because it feels good.'



‘Don’t take ~~Trump~~ Peisistratos *literally*,
take him *symbolically*.’

Anthony Scaramucci





The Athenian Democracy in the 5th Century BC

Classical Athenian Democracy

- Direct, not representative
- Very few elected officials (elections are elitist)
- Most offices filled by a system of lottery on an annual basis
- Virtually all public decisions made by the citizen assembly
- The Canadian (and even more the American) system would seem intolerably elitist to an ancient Athenian

And who are 'The People' in this case?

- Free citizen men (did I say that already?)
- Both rich and poor, aristocratic and non-aristocratic
- The less wealthy – and less-educated – classes outnumbered the old aristocratic clans
- But throughout most of the 5th century, leadership (formal or informal) still exercised mostly by the latter
- Until we come to the time of the Peloponnesian War (431-404 BC) ...



Kleon

Kleon, the son of Kleainetos, was remarkable among the Athenians for the violence of his character, and at this time he exercised far the greatest influence over the people.

Thucydides 3.36 (427 BC)

Athens, 427 BCE: the debate over Mytilene



Next day, there was a sudden change of feeling and people began to think how cruel and how unprecedented such a decision was – to destroy not only the guilty, but the entire population of a state...

Various opinions were expressed on both sides, and Kleon, the son of Kleainetos, spoke again. It was he who had been responsible for passing the original motion for putting the Mytileneans to death.

Paranoia: 'What you do not realize is that your empire is a tyranny exercised over subjects who do not like it and who are always plotting against you.'

Illogic: 'We should realize that a polis is better off with bad laws, so long as they remain fixed, than with good laws that are constantly being altered.'

Anti-elitism: 'Lack of learning combined with sound common sense is more helpful than the kind of cleverness that gets out of hand; as a general rule states are better governed by the man in the street than by intellectuals.'



Step 3 to Tyranny

- Consolidate your power by appealing to what is the most base in humans – fear, ignorance, envy, greed, and hatred
- Anger, hatred, and fear are easier emotions to stir up in a crowd than are emotions of empathy and compassion

Scapegoating

- The danger of ‘out-groups’
 - The Jews in Europe throughout much of their history
 - The Mexicans
 - The Moslems (‘you have to take out their families!’)
- Threats to our fortunes, our values, and our lives

‘As for compassion, it is proper to feel it in the case of people who are like ourselves, not in the case of those who must always and inevitably be our enemies.’

Kleon in the Mytilene debate
(Thucydides 3.40)

Athens, 425 BC: Spartan envoys offer peace

The Athenian place of
assembly and the
speaker's platform



Athens, 425 BC: Spartan envoys offer peace

The Spartan delegates asked for a committee to be appointed with whom they could discuss each point separately and so in a calm atmosphere try to find a basis for agreement. This was enough to bring Kleon down on them in full force. He said that he had always known that there was nothing upright in their intentions, and now the fact was proved by their unwillingness to say a word to the whole people and their preference for dealing with a small committee. No, if their intentions were sincere, then let them speak out in front of everyone.

Thucydides 4.22

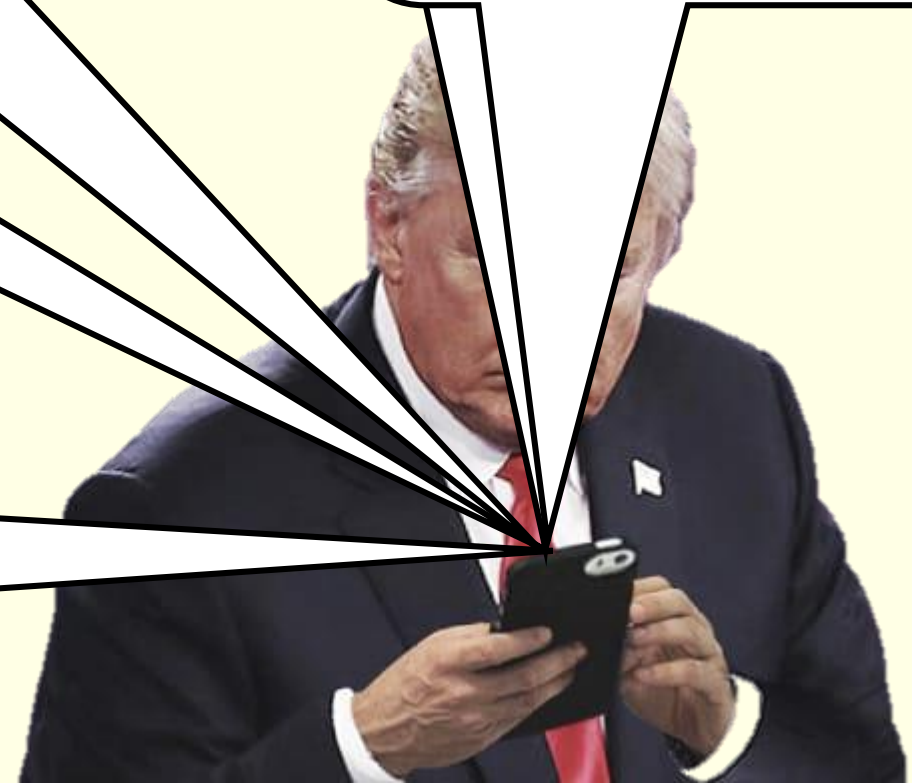
Just heard Foreign
of North Korea
U.N. If he echoes
of Little Rocket Man, they
won't be around much
longer!

Trade between China and
North Korea grew almost
40% in the first quarter. So
much for China working
with us - but we had to give
it a try!

We have a MASSIVE trade
deficit with Germany, p
they pay FAR LESS than
they should on NATO
military. Very bad for U
This will change

Canada has made business
for our dairy
Wisconsin and
states very dif
not stand for

Israel, Saudi Arabia and the
Middle East were great.
Trying hard for PEACE.
Doing well. Heading to
Vatican & Pope, then #G7
and #NATO.



The People as the *Vulgus*, 'the Mob':
Some Uncomfortable Thoughts?

Kleon the 'Vulgarian'?

While Pericles was champion of the people (demos) the constitution was not in too bad a state, but after his death (429 BC) it became much worse. It was then that the people first took a champion (prostates) who was not of good repute among the better sort, whereas previously it was always men of the better sort who were popular leaders. After Pericles' death, the distinguished were championed by Nikias, and the people by Kleon.

Aristotle *The Athenian Constitution* 28.1

Kleon stripped the speaker's platform of its decorum, since he was the first to raise his voice to raucous levels during his public speeches, pull his cloak open, slap his thigh, and pace around while speaking. In other words, he conditioned Athens' politicians to regard proper behaviour with indifference and disdain...

Plutarch *Nikias* 8

Kleon the 'Vulgarian'?

- Not a member of any of the 'old families'
- '*Nouveau riche*' owner of a tannery
- Hiking up his tunic and slapping his thighs during speeches





So what's so uncomfortable about that?

- Is this the same old elitist class snobbery of the ancient aristocrats?
- And is the new elitism that of education?
- Is it fair for us, as educated supporters of democracy, to dismiss allegedly ignorant supporters of democracy by using terms such as 'demagoguery' or 'populism'?

Everyone in this room is
a member of that elite,
by the way – we are all
educated people who
seek to educate
ourselves further

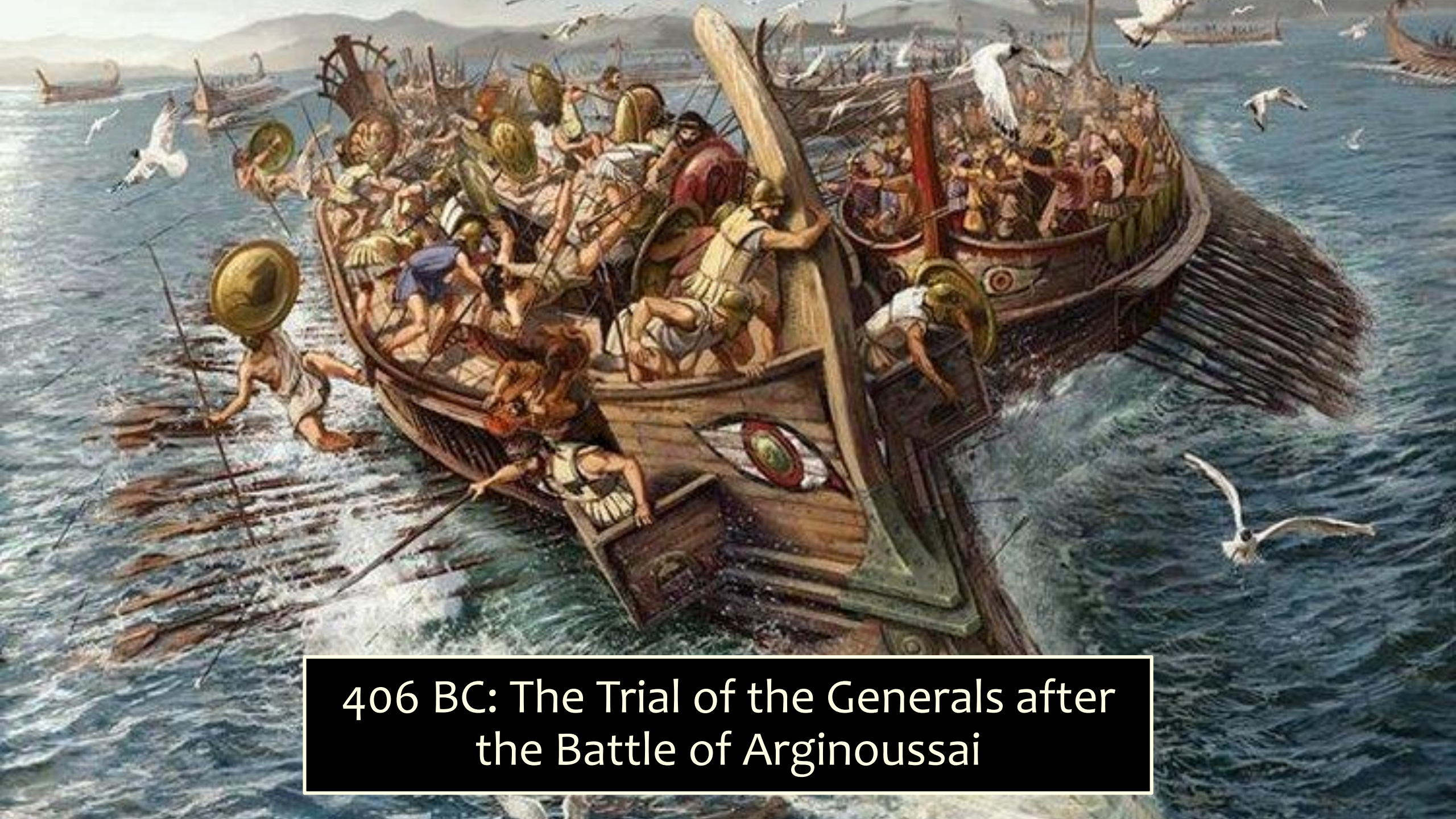


But the problem is...

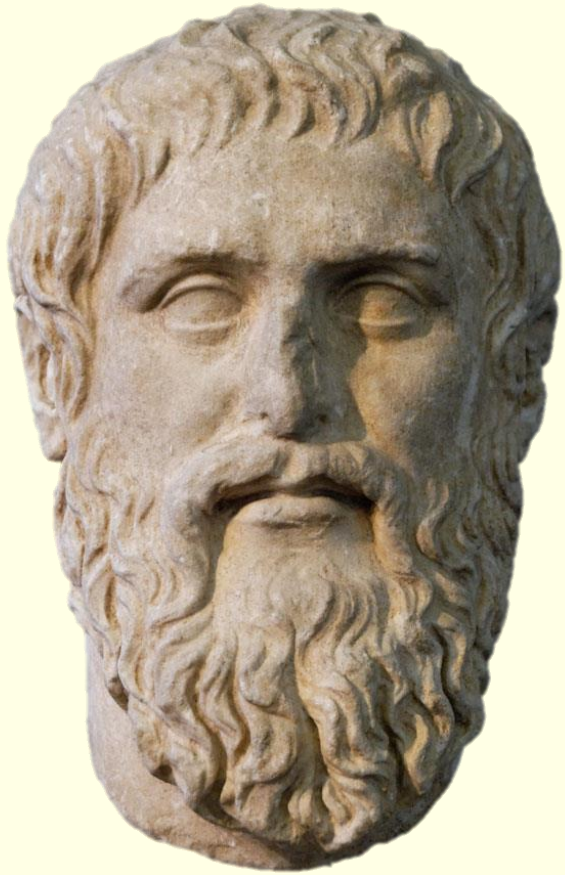
- Democracies *have* been responsible at times for ignorant – and devastating – decisions
- Back to 5th-century Athens...

415 BC: The Sicilian Expedition

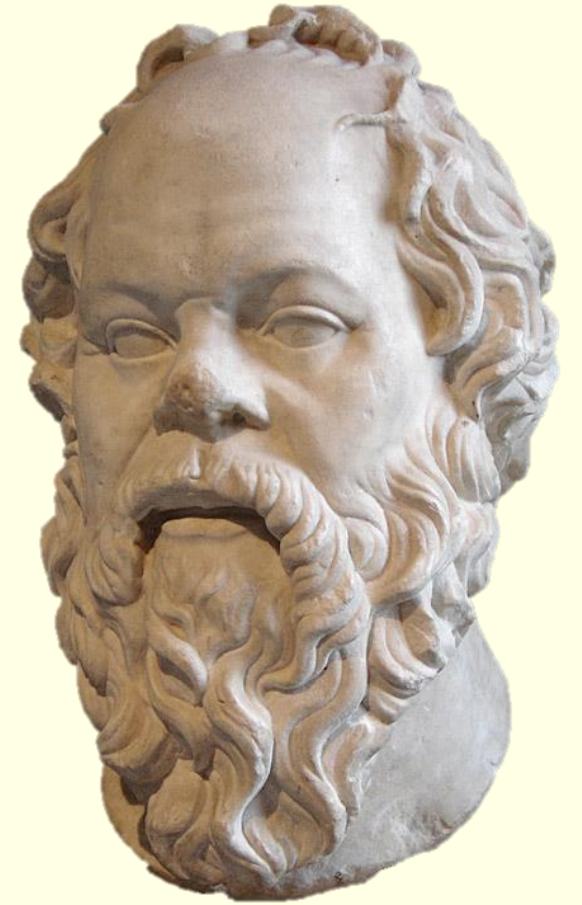




406 BC: The Trial of the Generals after
the Battle of Arginoussai



This is why Socrates
and Plato were
against democracy...
and explicitly linked it
to tyranny.





Socrates: 'Well, what is the nature of tyranny? It's obvious, I suppose, that it arises out of democracy. An excessive desire for liberty at the expense of everything else is what undermines democracy and leads to the demand for tyranny.'

Plato Republic 562

And that is why the Athenian democracy killed Socrates



The Death of Socrates
Jacques-Louis David
1787

A close-up photograph of Donald Trump speaking at a podium. He is wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and blue tie. His right hand is raised, pointing his index finger upwards. He has a serious expression on his face. The background is a solid blue color. The text "Political Humour and Intolerance" is overlaid in white, sans-serif font across the center of the image.

Political Humour and Intolerance



 **MSNBC**

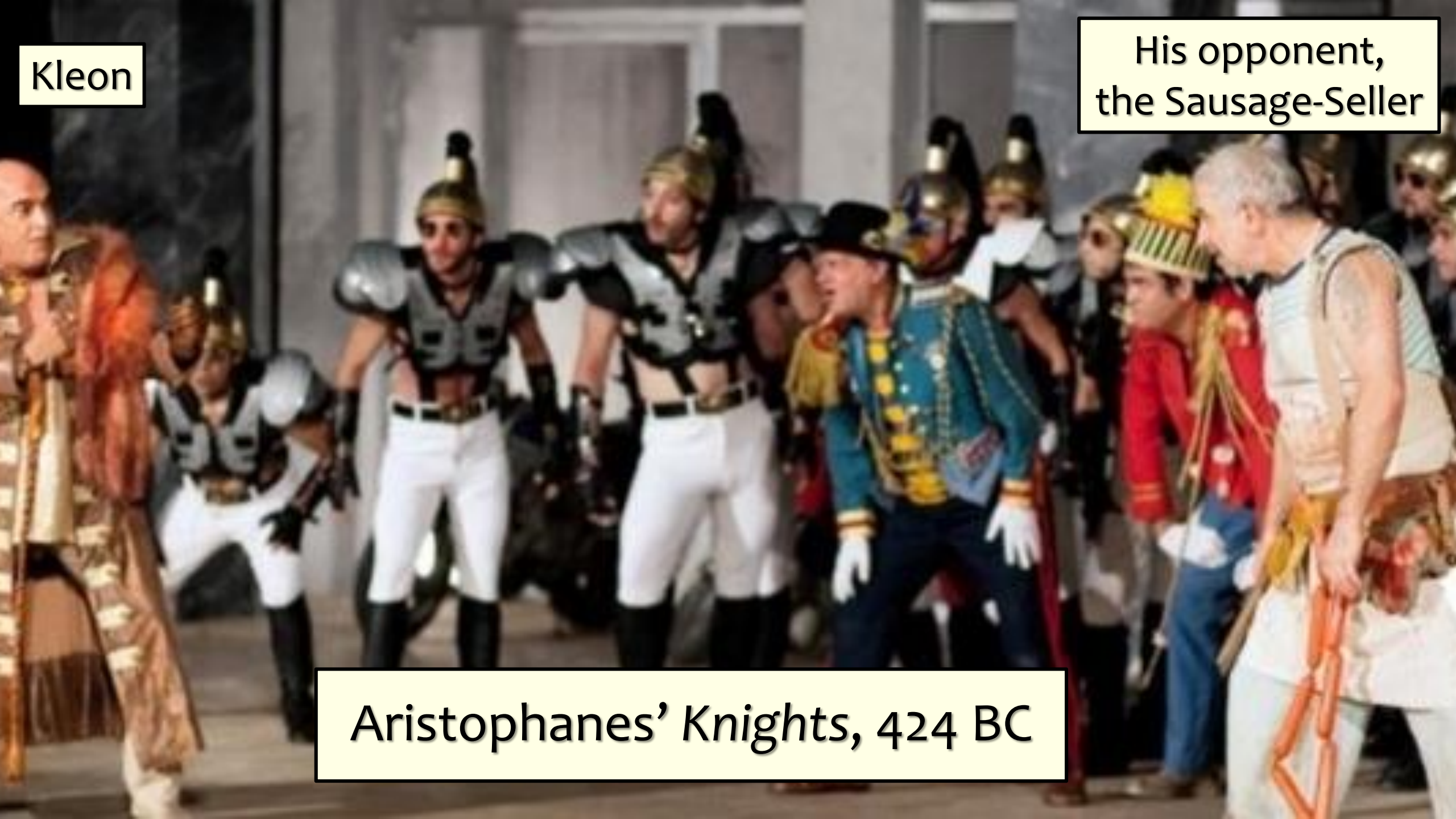
★ **THE PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE** ★

© NBC

Kleon

His opponent,
the Sausage-Seller

Aristophanes' *Knights*, 424 BC



Kleon

His opponent,
the Sausage-Seller

Demos ('Thepeople'):
befuddled and ignorant,
happy with freebies and
flattery

The Chorus of Knights
(Athenian cavalry, ergo upper classes):

*The people's power's a glorious thing;
all nations fear him like a king.
Yet he's an easy one to cheat,
a prey to flattery and deceit.
He sides agawp with every speaker;
there's none who has convictions weaker.
If he has got a brain, I'd say
it always is on holiday.*



Trump's Comic Nemeses

Jon Stewart



John Oliver



Alec Baldwin



Just tried watching Saturday
Night Live – unwatchable!
totally biased, not funny and
the Baldwin impersonation
just can't get any worse!
Sad...




Release your tax
returns and I'll stop.
Ha.

But somehow this just isn't so funny anymore...





A photograph of Donald Trump from the chest up, wearing a dark blue suit, white shirt, and blue striped tie. He has his hands raised in the air, palms facing forward, with a surprised or defensive expression on his face. The background is dark and out of focus.

*Like so many bullies,
Trump has skin of gossamer.*

Graydon Carter, Vanity Fair

Lawsuits, Threats, Lies, and Intimidation

Kleon

429, lawsuit against political opponent Pericles (failed military expedition)

426, lawsuit against comic playwright Aristophanes (slandering the people)

424, threatened Aristophanes with lawsuit (passing himself off as a citizen)

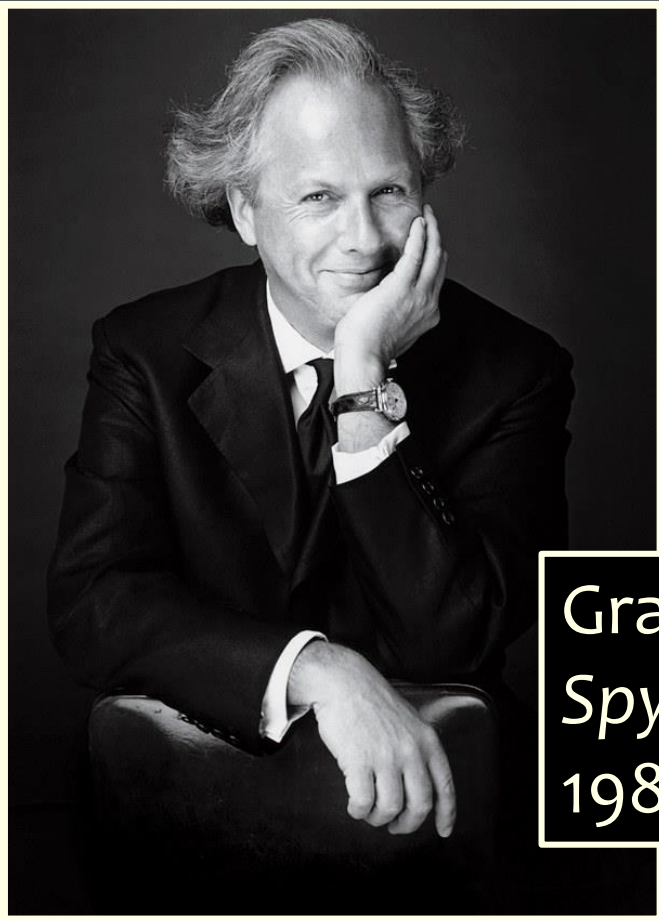
Trump

Past 30 years, Trump and/or companies involved in 3,500 lawsuits (plaintiffs in 1,900)

2015, Trump sues Scotland (the Aberdeen Bay Wind Farm and his golf course).

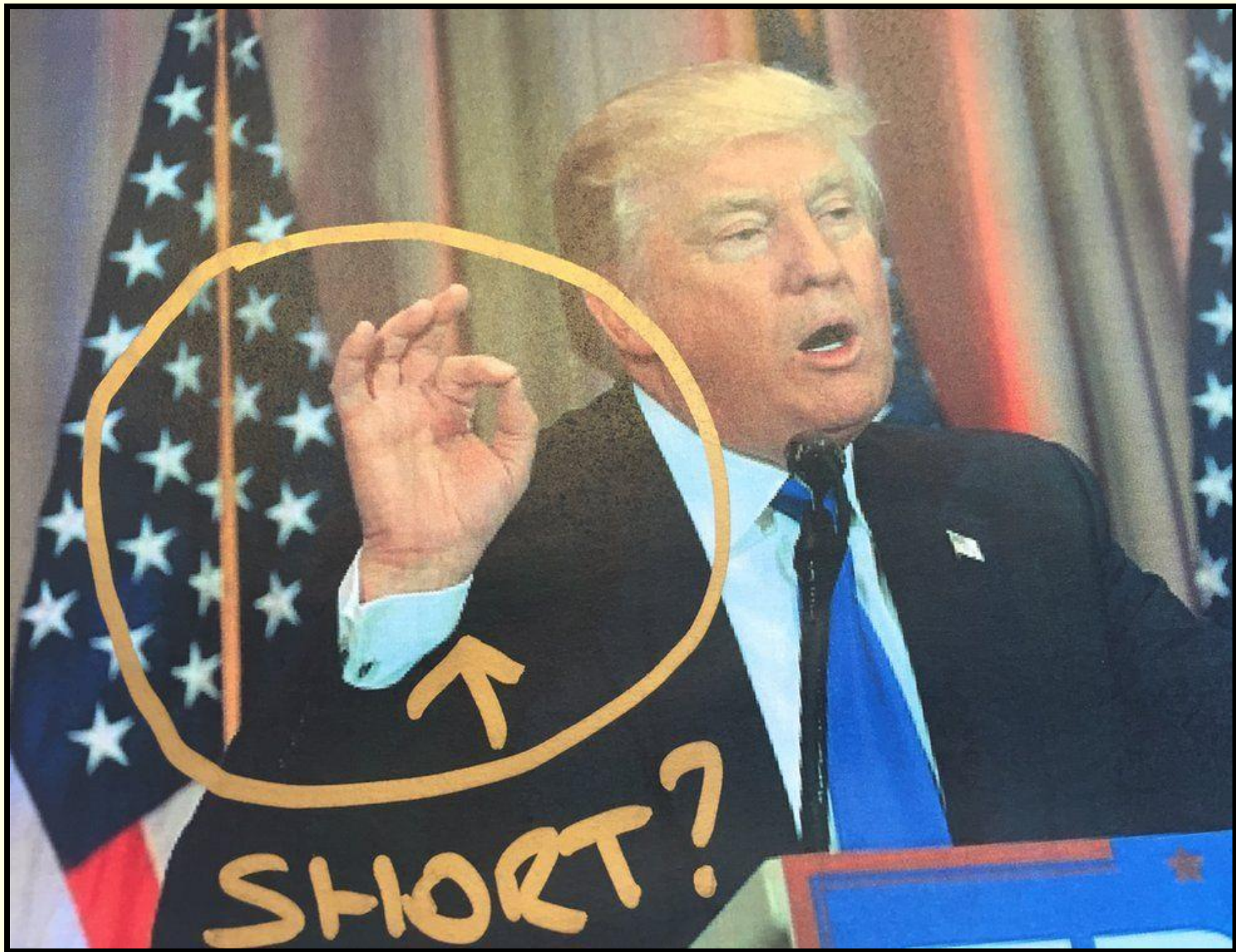
Birther movement (Barack Obama passing himself off as native-born American)

Trump the 'Short-Fingered Vulgarian'



Graydon Carter,
Spy magazine,
1988





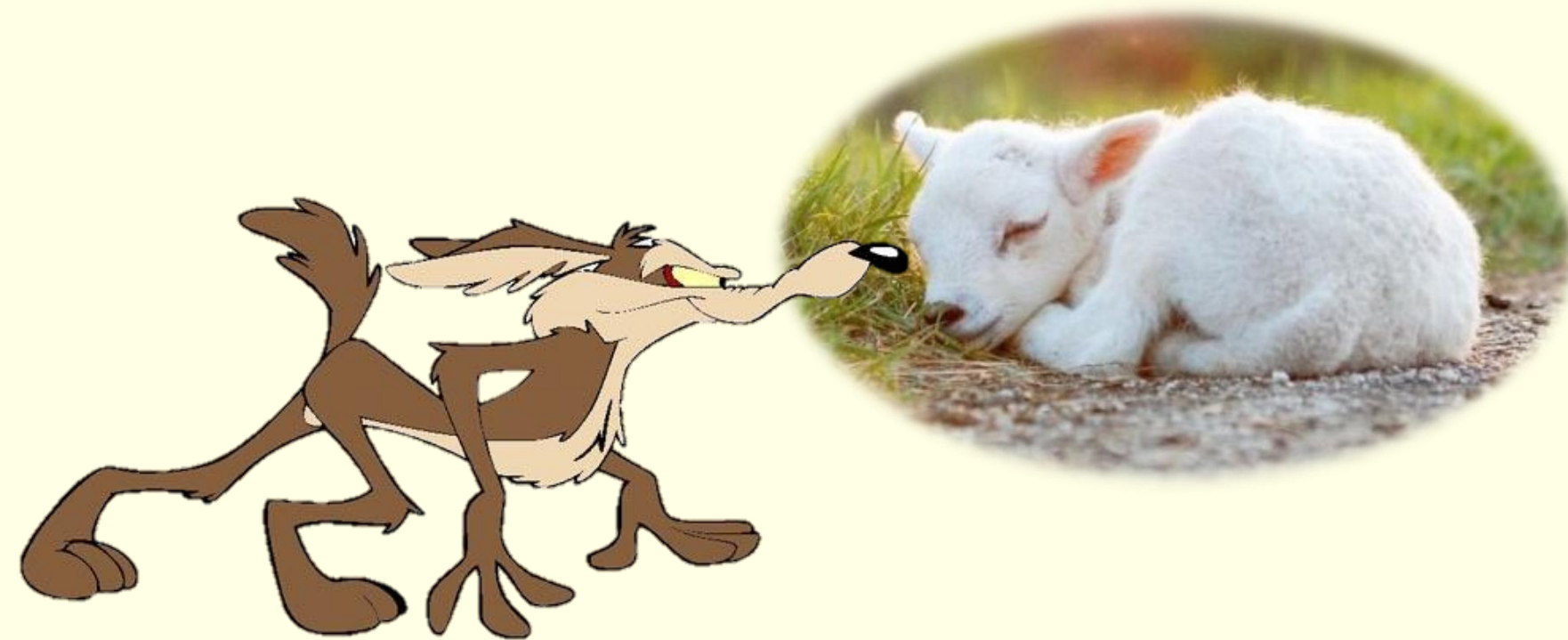


The Democratic System?



*Democracy is two coyotes and a lamb
voting on what to have for lunch.*

John Wenders, 1998



The Democratic System?

- Ancient democracy
 - Not premised on 'human rights'
 - Ancient Athenian citizens a minority in their own state
- Modern democracies –
 - Charters and bills of rights to prevent the majority tyrannising over the minority
 - Bicameral decision-making also helps
 - But still...

8 November 2016

Clinton

65,844,954

(48.2% of the popular vote)

Electoral college vote: 227

Trump

62,979,879

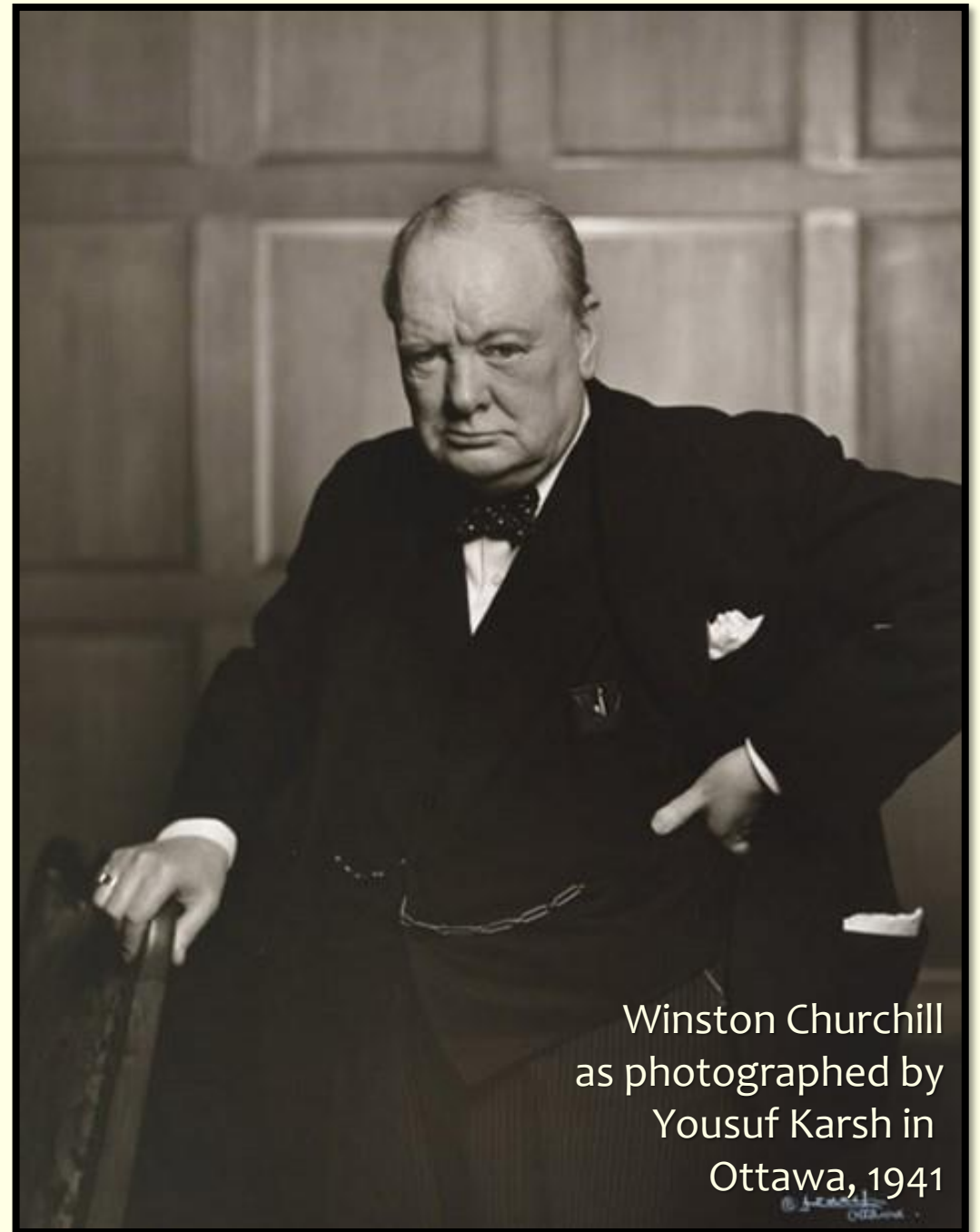
(46.1% of the popular vote)

Electoral college vote: 304

The ancient Athenians would have
been outraged at such
an elitist thwarting
of the people's will.

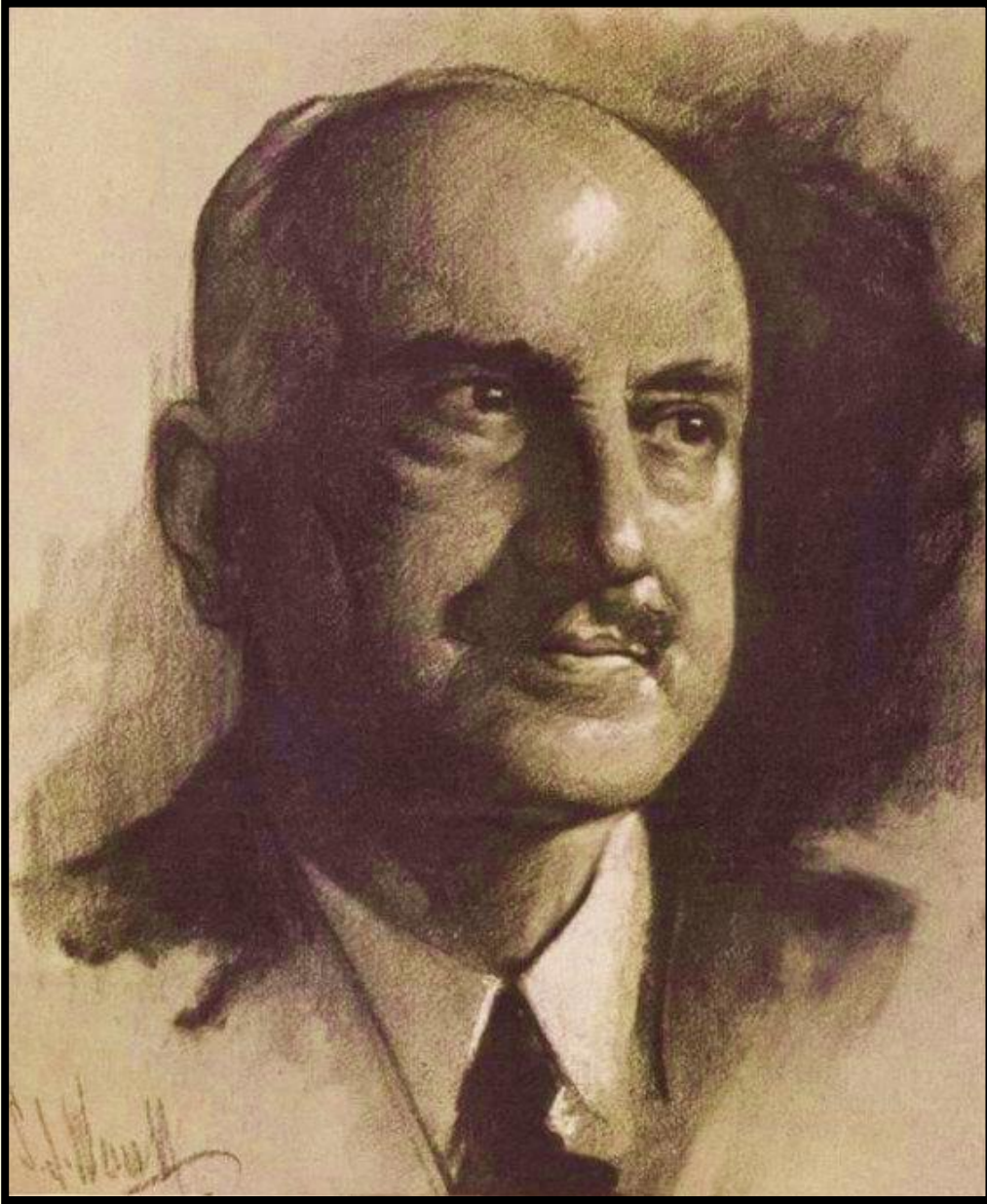
*Democracy is the worst form
of government.
Except for all the others.*

Winston Churchill,
British House of Commons,
11 November 1947



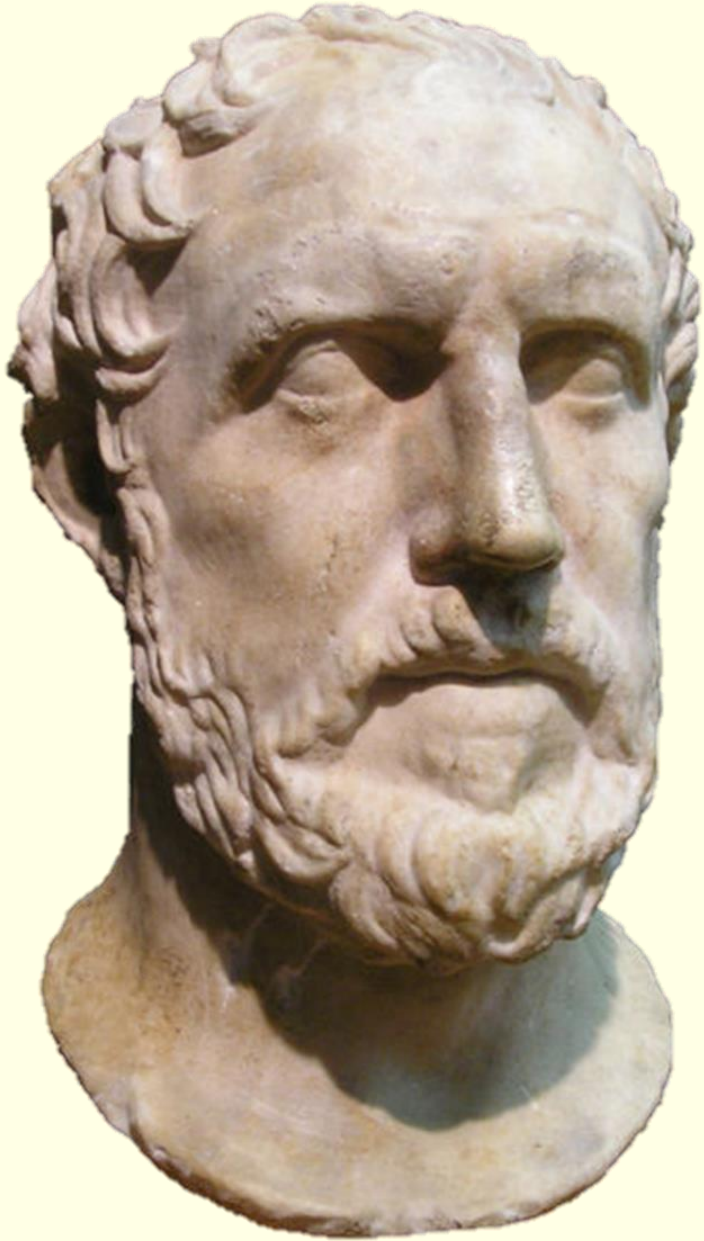
Winston Churchill
as photographed by
Yousuf Karsh in
Ottawa, 1941

So back to the question of why am I here?



*Those who cannot
remember the past are
doomed to repeat it.*

George Santayana
The Life of Reason
1905-1906

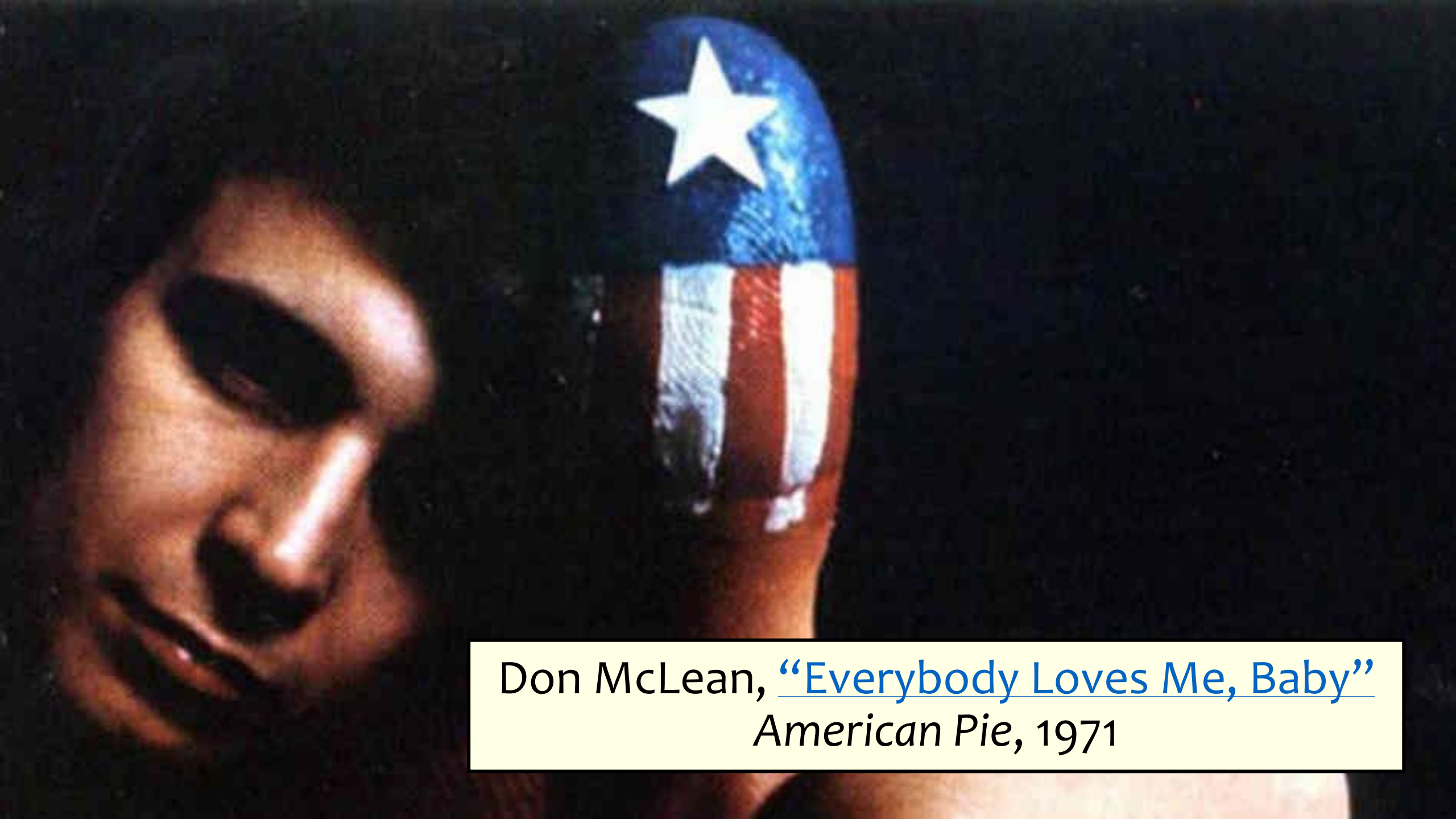


It will be enough for me if these words of mine are judged useful by those who want to understand clearly the events which happened in the past and which (human nature being what it is) will, at some time or other and in much the same ways, be repeated in the future. My work is not a piece of writing designed to meet the taste of an immediate public, but was done to last for ever.

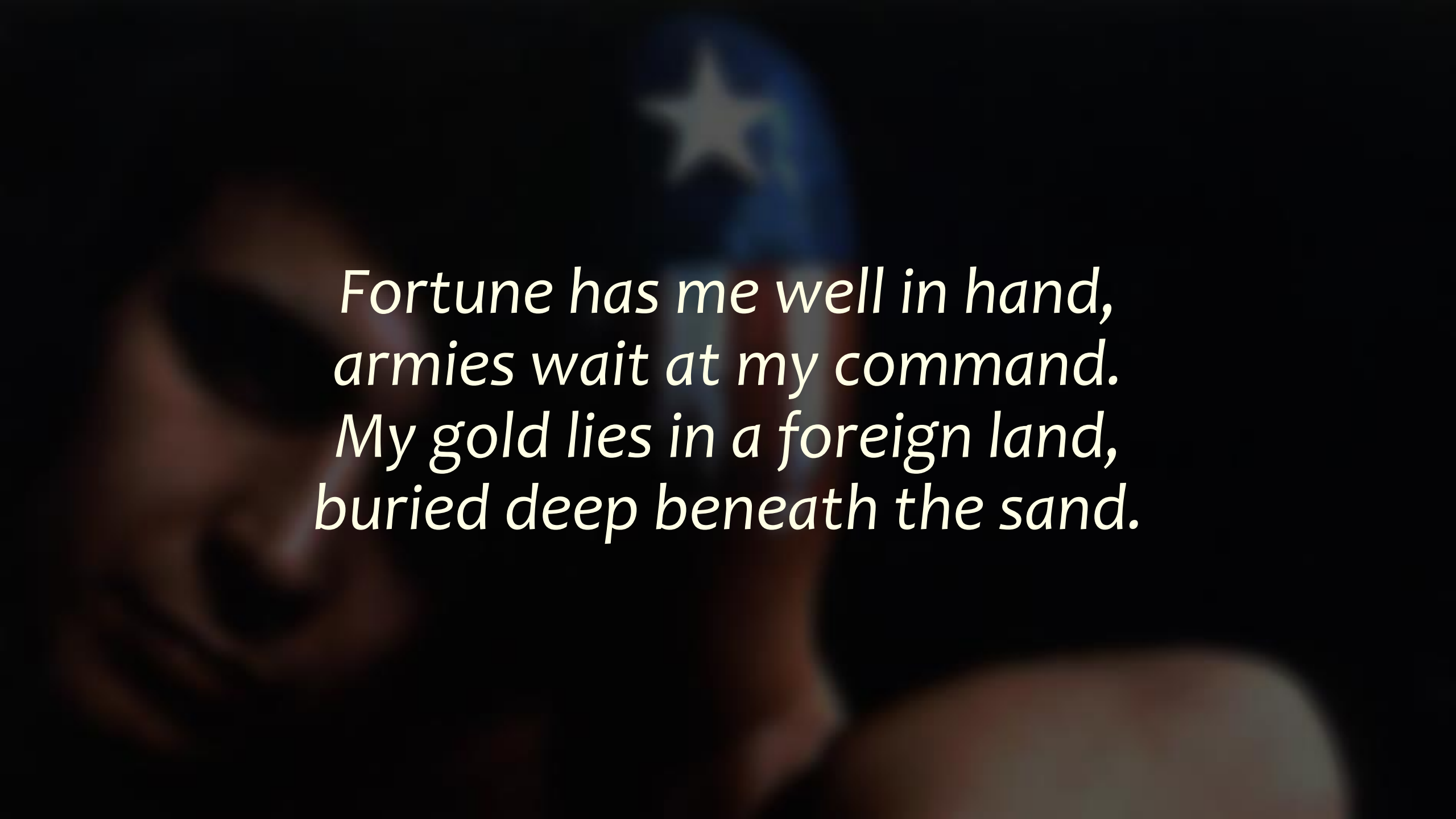
Thucydides 1.22
(on the Peloponnesian War)

CNN EXCLUSIVE

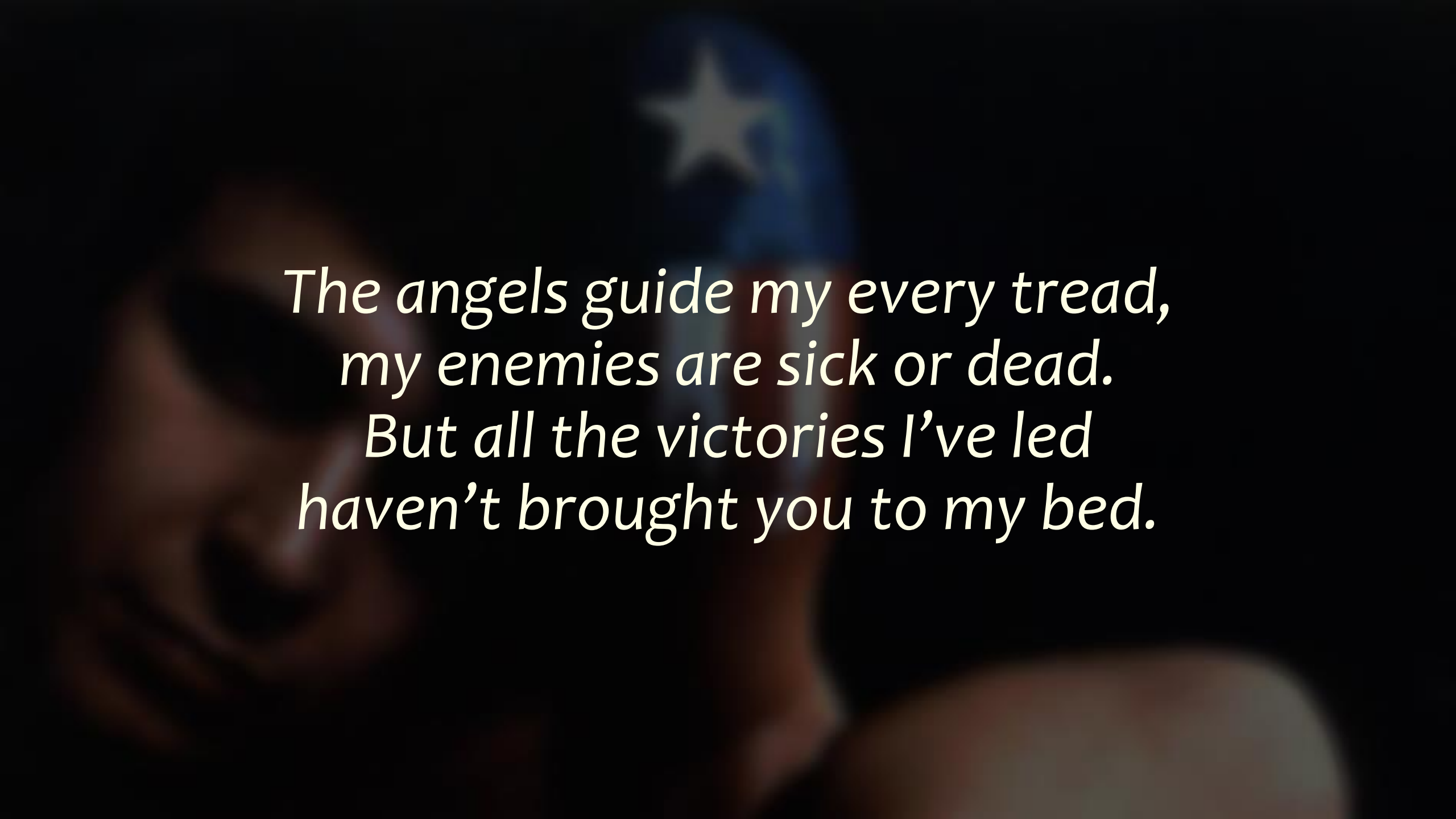
Donald Trump, [“Everybody Loves Me”](#)
CNN Interview with Anderson Cooper, 8 July 2015



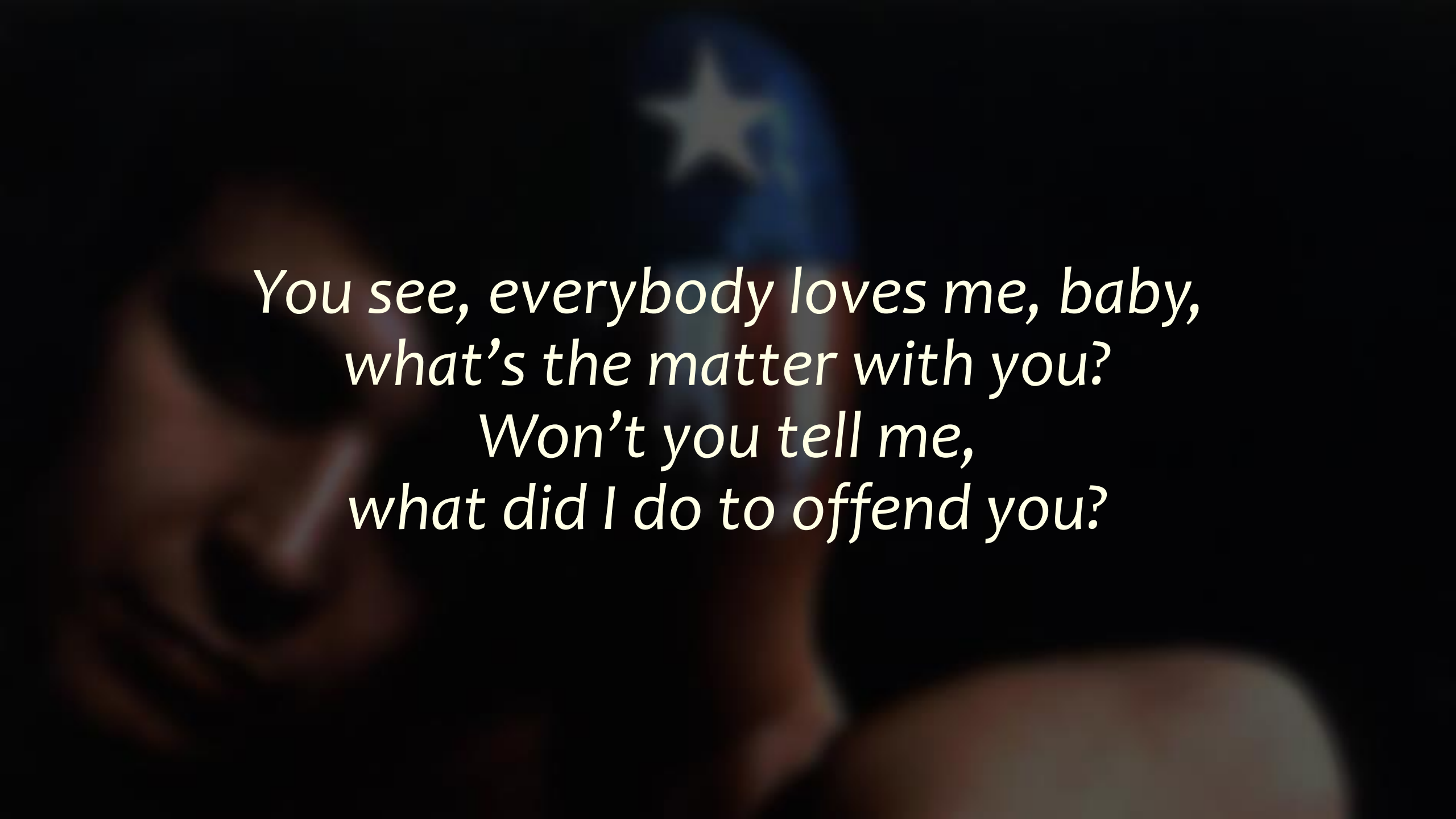
Don McLean, [“Everybody Loves Me, Baby”](#)
American Pie, 1971



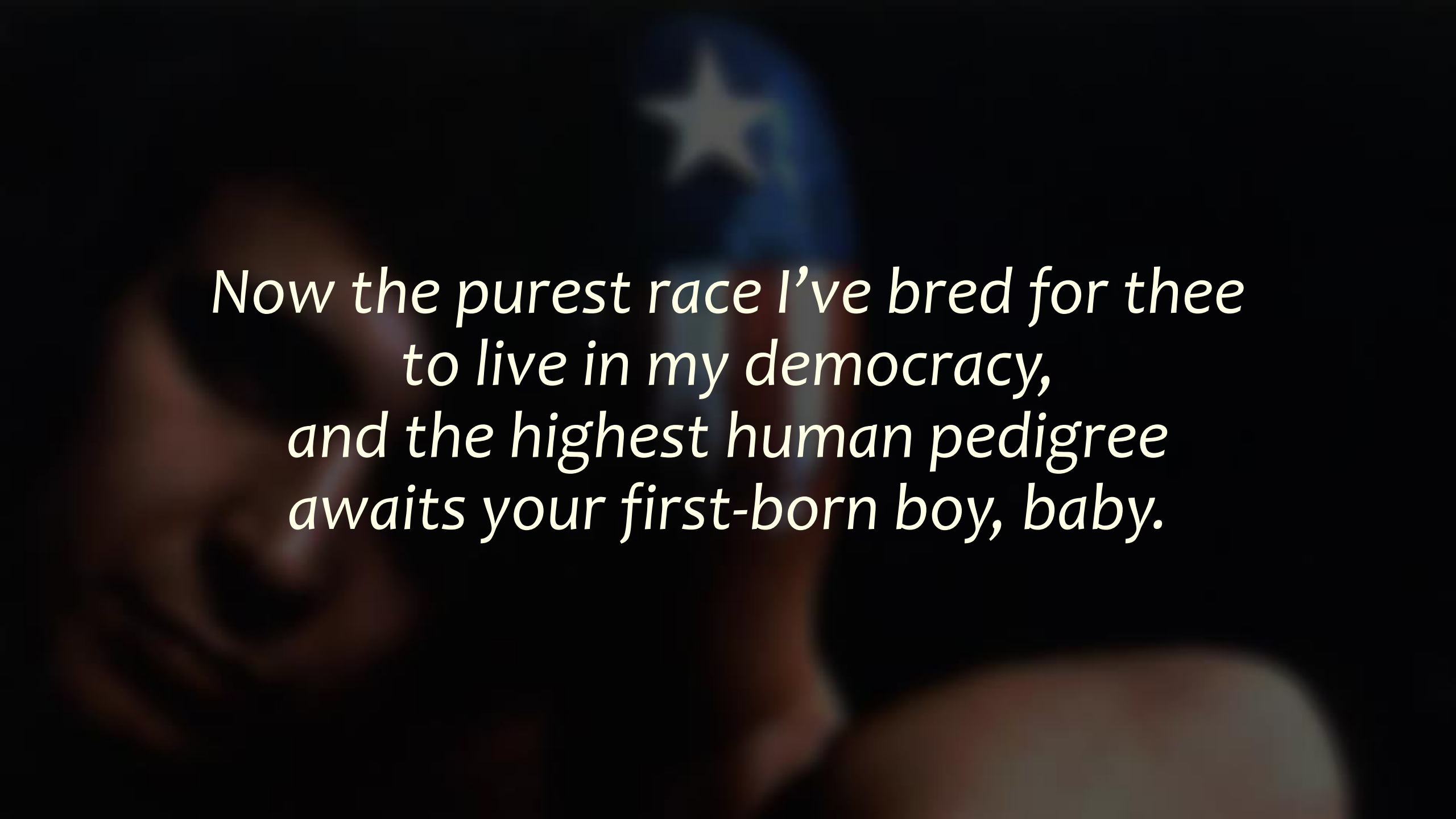
*Fortune has me well in hand,
armies wait at my command.
My gold lies in a foreign land,
buried deep beneath the sand.*



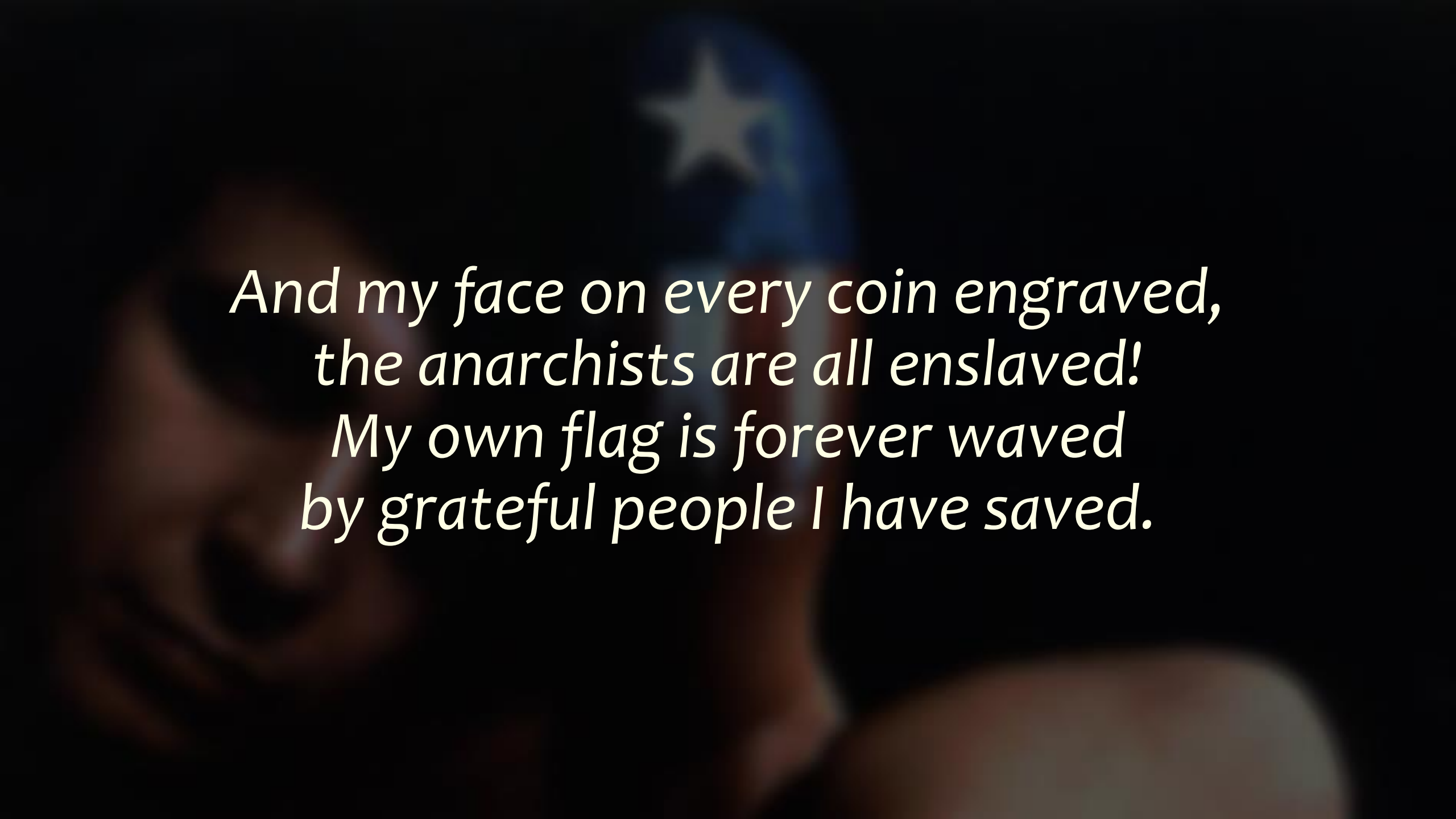
*The angels guide my every tread,
my enemies are sick or dead.
But all the victories I've led
haven't brought you to my bed.*

The background is a dark, out-of-focus image. On the left side, there is a faint, blurry outline of a person's face, possibly a woman, looking towards the right. Overlaid on this is a circular graphic element that resembles the stars and stripes of the American flag, with a white star on a blue background in the upper center and red and white stripes below it.

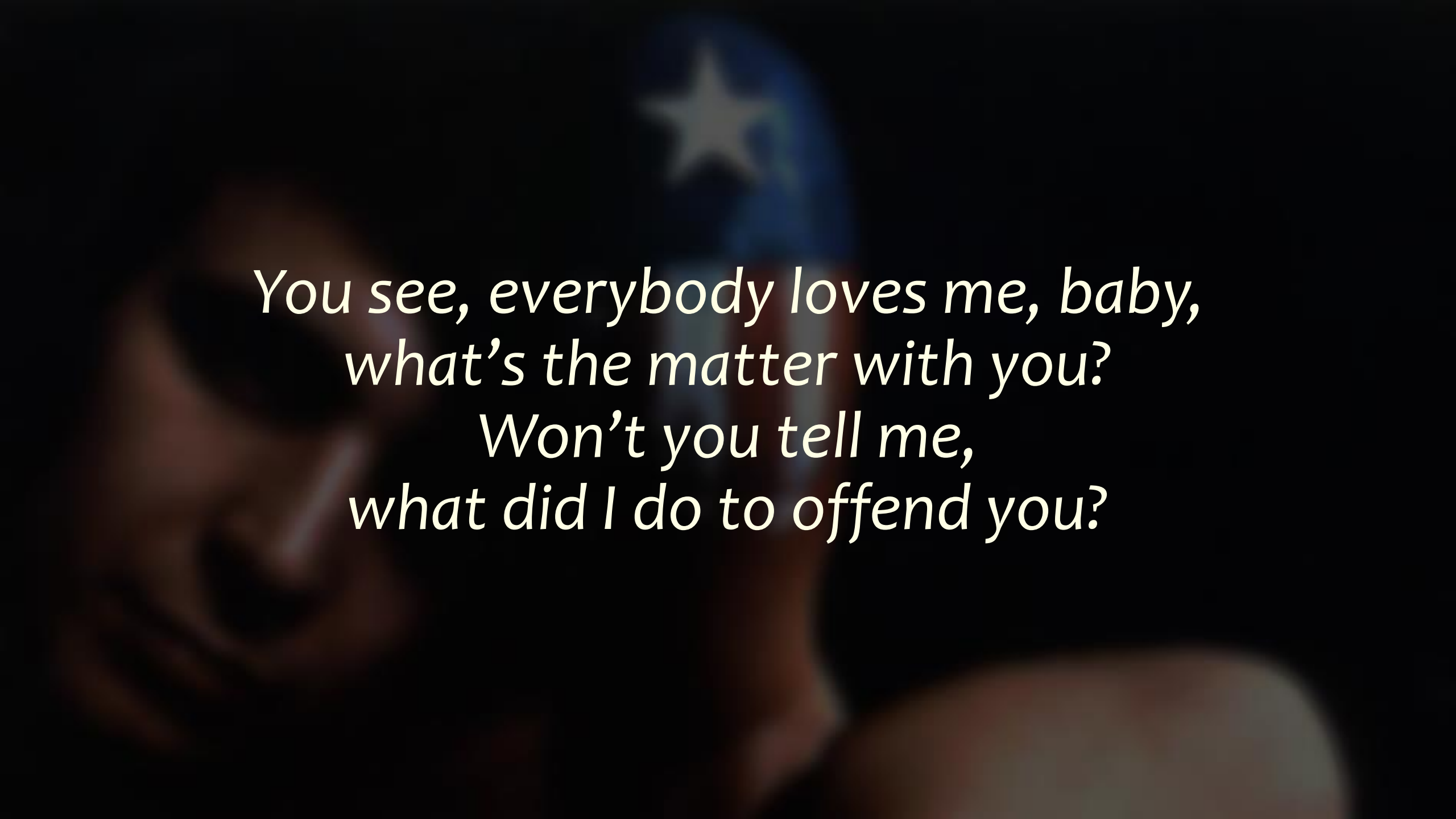
*You see, everybody loves me, baby,
what's the matter with you?
Won't you tell me,
what did I do to offend you?*



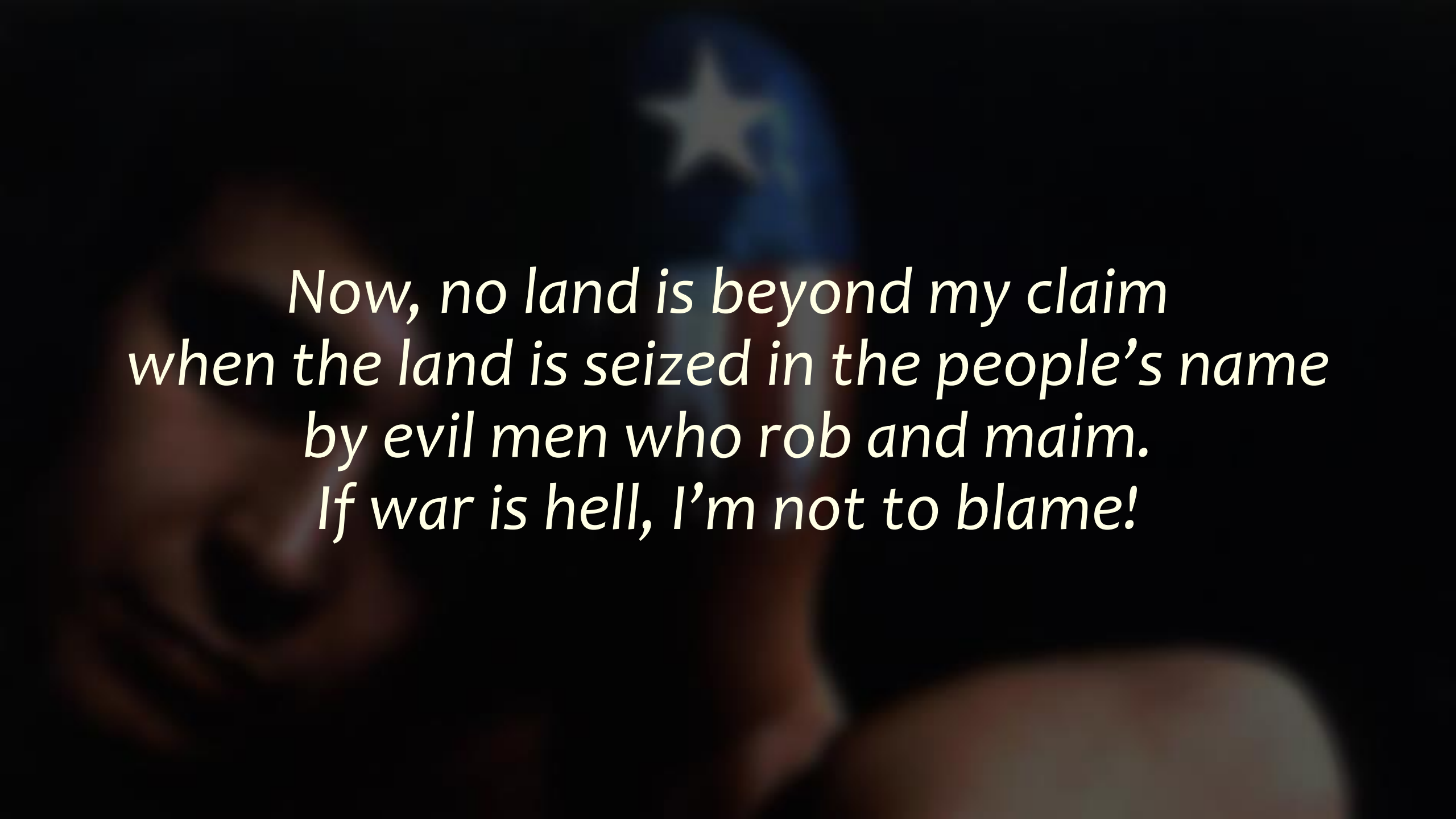
*Now the purest race I've bred for thee
to live in my democracy,
and the highest human pedigree
awaits your first-born boy, baby.*



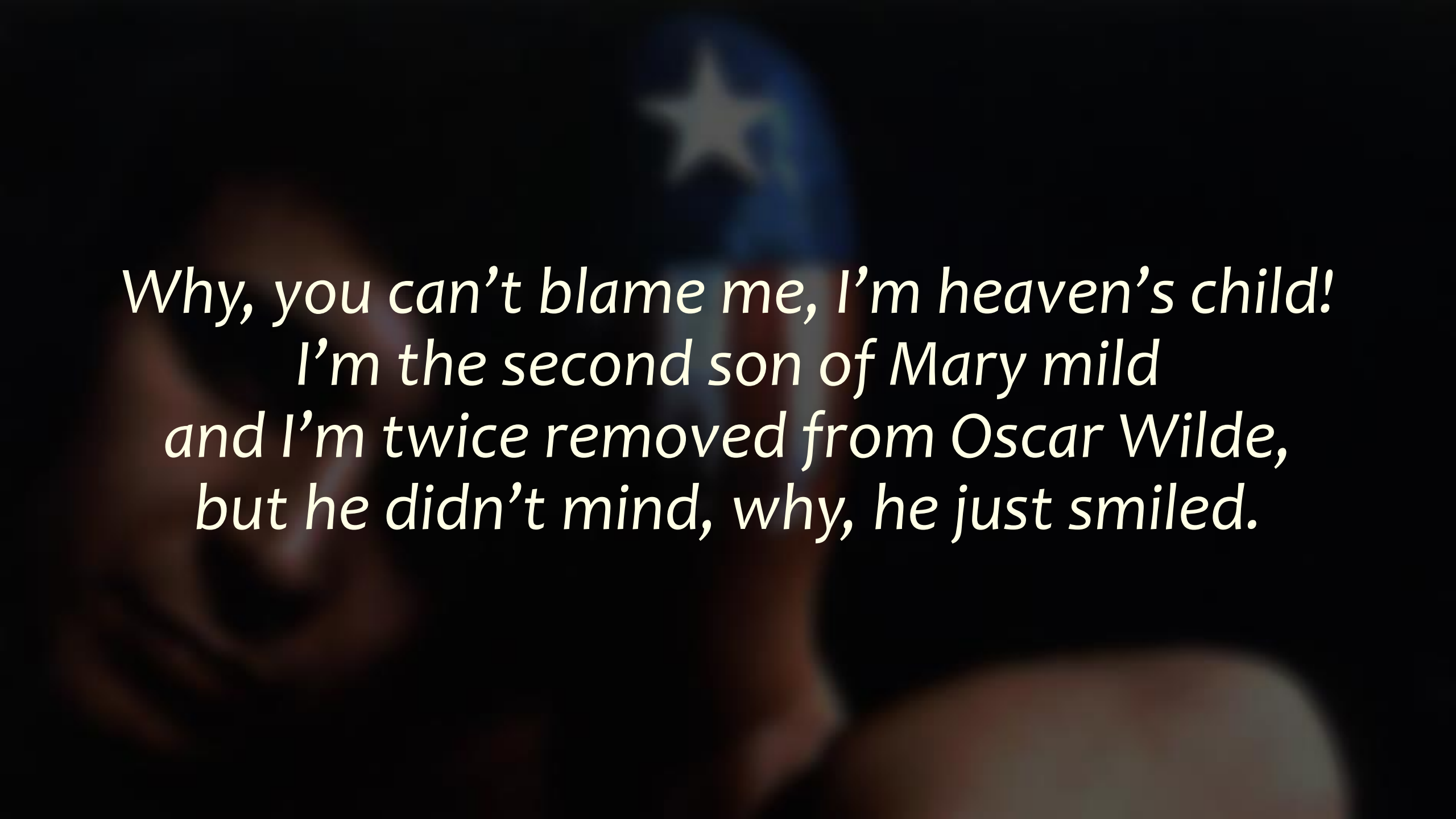
*And my face on every coin engraved,
the anarchists are all enslaved!
My own flag is forever waved
by grateful people I have saved.*

The background is a dark, out-of-focus image. On the left side, there is a faint, blurry outline of a person's face, possibly a woman, looking towards the right. Overlaid on this is a semi-transparent American flag, with the stars and stripes visible. The text is centered in the middle of the image.

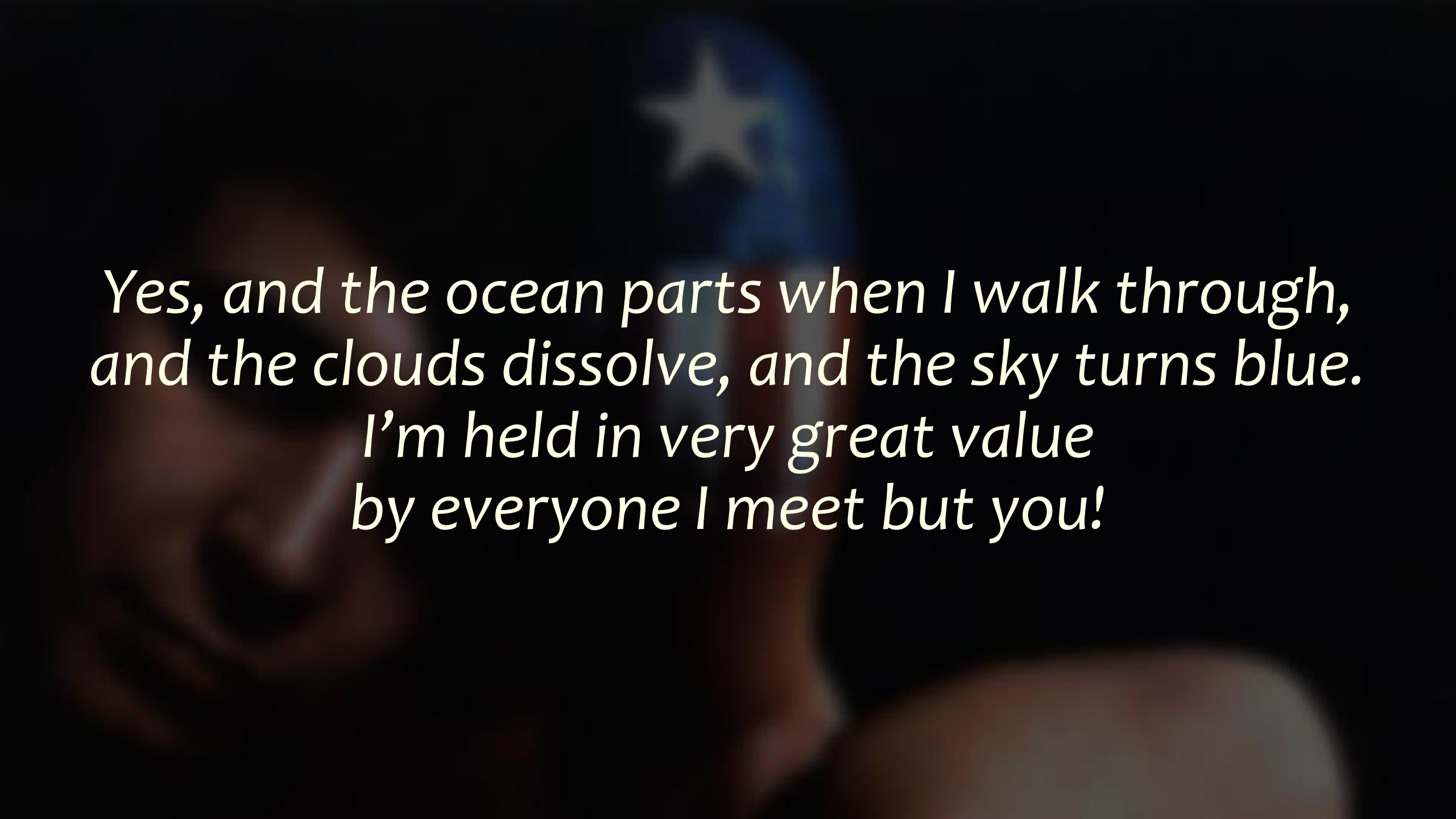
*You see, everybody loves me, baby,
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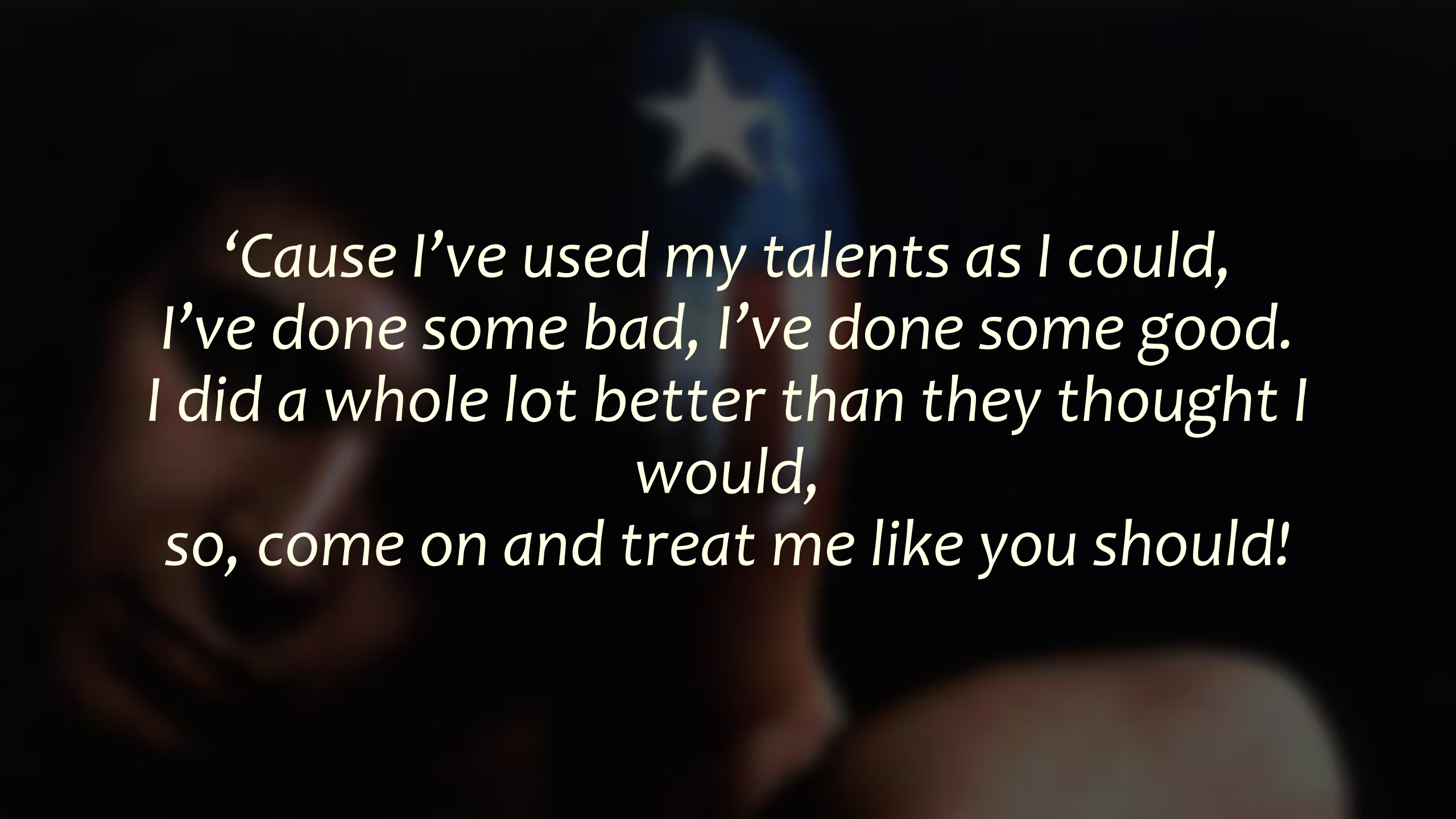
*Now, no land is beyond my claim
when the land is seized in the people's name
by evil men who rob and maim.
If war is hell, I'm not to blame!*



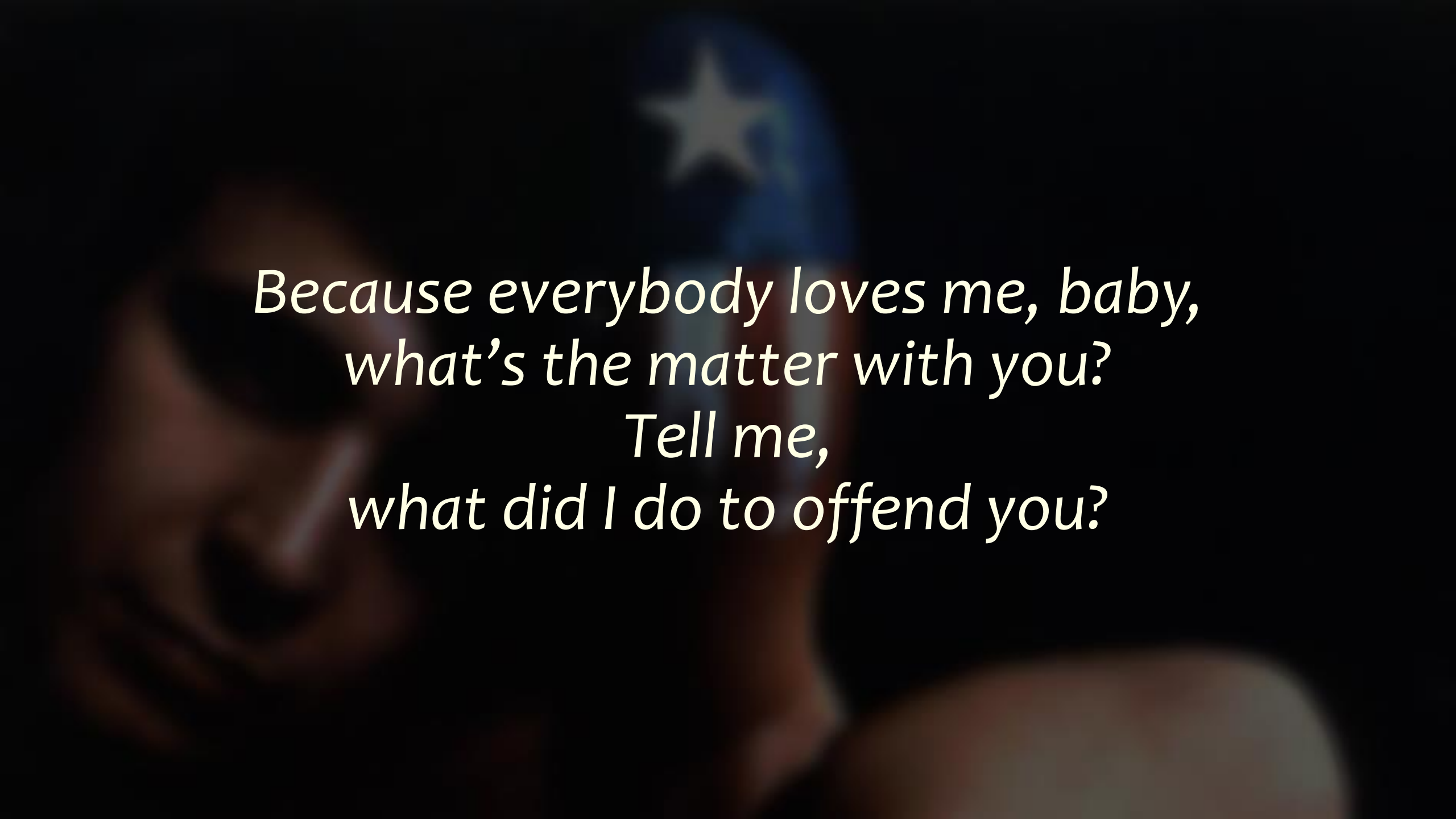
*Why, you can't blame me, I'm heaven's child!
I'm the second son of Mary mild
and I'm twice removed from Oscar Wilde,
but he didn't mind, why, he just smiled.*



*Yes, and the ocean parts when I walk through,
and the clouds dissolve, and the sky turns blue.
I'm held in very great value
by everyone I meet but you!*



*‘Cause I’ve used my talents as I could,
I’ve done some bad, I’ve done some good.
I did a whole lot better than they thought I
would,
so, come on and treat me like you should!*

The background is a dark, blurred image of a person's face, likely a woman, with a soft focus. Overlaid on the face is a faint, circular American flag motif, featuring a white star on a blue field in the upper center and red and white stripes below it. The text is centered and written in a white, italicized serif font.

*Because everybody loves me, baby,
what's the matter with you?
Tell me,
what did I do to offend you?*

Classification of Officers by Generaloberst Kurt von Hammerstein-Equord

Officers	Industrious	Lazy
Clever		
Stupid		

Oxford English Dictionary definitions of 'trump' (a biased selection):

- A trifle; *pl.* goods of small value, 'trumpery'
- One who proclaims or summons loudly like a trumpet
- An obstruction, a hindrance
- To get up or devise in an unscrupulous way
- To forge, fabricate, invent ('trumped-up')
- To give forth a trumpet-like sound; *spec.* to break wind audibly (*slang* or *vulgar*).