

Mike Johnson and the Vegas Heebie-Jeebies



by Roger L. Simon

One of the things I've come to hate about Vegas hotels is that many, including the luxe Venetian, don't give you a coffee machine in your room.

This forces you when you get up in the morning to throw on some semblance of clothes and head down in the elevator to pick one version of the endless latte selections while staring blearily at those poor sods who had stayed up all night taking one last shot at the slot machines.

As they say, it's about the money.

This particular morning I opted for a trusty "Americano" for its maximum simplicity and maximum caffeine.

I had had one of those "longest days" yesterday that began somewhere around 5:30 a.m. helping our video crew get its equipment out of my room in time to get through the Republican

Jewish Coalition conference's, under the circumstances, heavy security that had everyone from the Metro Las Vegas Police to the Secret Service.

I believe I was wanded by security more and then heard more speeches that day than ever in my life, along the way stopping to interview Gov. Doug Burgum (R-N.D.), a presidential candidate for our [Presidential Roller Coaster](#) series, and Rep. Max Miller (R-Ohio), one of the only two Jewish congressmen and evidently a favorite of Donald Trump. (The latter transpired while waiting to interview Rep. Mike Johnson (R-La.), the new Speaker of the House. That never happened.)

Apropos, the Roller Coaster, it was originally intended to add a touch of levity amid the grim solemnity and numbing repetition of the forever presidential race, but this time I was afraid with war raging that it would be inappropriate.

Nevertheless, my DNA won out and I threw in a gag at the end. We'll see if it works.

The highlights of the long day were obviously former President Trump's speech, which I have written about earlier and was reminded once again why it's so absurd, not to say wasteful, that anyone is running against him, and what proved to be the first public event of our newly elected Speaker.

Mr. Johnson didn't disappoint.

Almost in the manner of a fairy tale—or was it divine intervention? (I hesitate to say so, but who knows.) —All the supposed chaos we were hearing about courtesy of the media drumbeat actually produced a rather extraordinary person.

Of course, we must withhold judgment until he puts his pronouncements into action, but this man is the most elegant and precise public political speaker I've heard in some time.

Given what we're used to hearing in today's Senate and House, his level of discourse almost shocks in that rhetorical precision. It's also desperately needed—and where better than

from the Speaker of the House?

I would like to say that the fact he's a graduate of Louisiana State University law school and not Harvard or Yale makes this all the more impressive, but that isn't true, at least no longer. These days an LSU grad is likely to be better educated than an Ivy.

The subject du jour was the war in the Middle East, and the 56th Speaker of the House didn't disappoint on that either, calling the actions of Hamas "demonic." He sees the war in biblical terms and is clearly a hundred percent supporter of Israel in their battle with the terrorists (not "militants," of course).

He stated emphatically that he's prepared to advocate, and hopefully legislate, all that was necessary for the Jewish state's victory.

He underscored the aforementioned importance that his first public event was speaking to the Republican Jewish Coalition conference, that he appeared, with everything moving so quickly, including his sudden election, literally on the spur of the moment.

He managed to do this humbly, which was also impressive.

It was easy to see his abhorrence for the rise in antisemitism on our campuses, a sentiment shared by the audience and the other speakers, but the Speaker added, "I don't give a pass to the administrators and professors. They know exactly what they're doing."

Indeed.

He also informed that longtime enemy of Israel, the [United Nations](#): "There will be a ceasefire only when Hamas ceases to be a threat to Israel."

The new Speaker put it theologically near his conclusion: "God is not done with America yet, and I know He's not done with

Israel.”

Is it too “old-time religion” to think or express oneself that way? The me of years ago would automatically have thought so, not so much now.

When Elon Musk plays God by opening his Starlink to Gaza, I say, pipe down.

We live in an era when the wisdom of the ages is crying out to us in a manner we “moderns” have long abjured or thought that we were beyond.

Pay attention.

As for Vegas, it can be fun to visit, but briefly. After a day or two, it usually gives me the heebie-jeebies, and it’s doing it now.

The next you’ll hear from me, I’ll be back in Tennessee.