

Metamorphosis: The Unmaking of a President

A Modern Parable

by Kevin Annett

Donald Trump awoke one morning to discover that he had been transformed into an illegal immigrant.

He lay still on the dirt floor of a shack that was crowded with others like him. Raising his hand, he was shocked to see that it was gnarled and brown.

“Look, *el cabron* is finally awake!” barked a voice in Spanish, to a chorus of laughter.

“What is all this?” Donald said, and received another surprise: he spoke Spanish, too.

His question evoked more laughter.

Donald sat up slowly and tried to see through the dim light. Ten bedraggled brown people stared back at him. A thin, sickly woman crouched in one corner, nursing a baby.

Outside the shack he could hear men shouting and the sound of a truck starting up. An old man nudged him in the side and muttered,

“Come on, Mateo, let’s go.”

“My name isn’t Mateo!” he shouted angrily. “Don’t you know who I am?”

The lean faces stared at him in confusion.

“Who are you people anyway? And how the fuck did I get here?”

The old man stared at Donald with bleary eyes and shook his head.

“Just ignore him, Pepe. He’s gone *loco*,” someone said.

The door to the shack swung open.

“Alright, everybody out, now!” yelled a young guy, pointing a shotgun at them.

Donald stared at the man in confusion as the gun holder turned on him.

“What’s wrong with you, asshole? Get up now or you’re dead!”

“It’s okay, we’re coming,” exclaimed the old man Pepe, coaxing Donald to his feet.

The blazing sunlight blinded him at first as he stumbled alongside his benefactor. One by one the people were loaded onto the truck, accompanied by two large, grizzly men holding pistols.

“Don’t worry, Mateo,” muttered Pepe. “There’ll be help once we’re over the border.”

“But I’m hungry now,” Donald complained. “Isn’t there any food here?”

One of the armed men shoved him into the back of the truck.

“I don’t belong here!” Donald moaned. “I need help. I need my fucking cellphone! Where are all my people?”

“Right here, Mateo,” said the old man, gesturing to the others.

This can’t be happening, Donald thought as the truck bumped along a dirt road. This has got to be a nightmare. I’m really still fast asleep in Mar-a-Lago and soon I’ll wake up and get it on and have a nice breakfast. And then I’ll be off to New York for that big interview ...

“Here, Mateo,” interrupted Pepe, offering him a bag.

“What’s that?”

“I was saving it for later, but you can have it.”

Donald unwrapped the offering to find a half-eaten, wormy apple. He wrinkled his face and handed it back to Pepe. But another man grabbed it first.

“Hey, screw you, Alejandro!” yelled Pepe as the man shoved the fruit in his mouth and laughed uproariously. “You stupid fat fuck, it was for him!”

The old man sighed.

“Sorry Mateo. There’s always one greedy bastard trying to grab everything for himself.”

Donald felt offended at the remark, but he let it slide.

“I wish Pancho Villa would come back,” continued Pepe.

“Villa, hell! He was just another bandido,” said a young man. “Emiliano Zapata was the man! He divided up the land and gave it to all us peasants! Just like the Zapatistas!”

“Quiet, son,” admonished Pepe. “If they think you’re one of them, the Federales will kill you.”

“Oh, fuck them!” replied the youth. “My Dad fought alongside Commandante Marcos in Chiapas! They weren’t afraid of anybody! Marcos said whatever a worker makes belongs to him. Whatever a farmer grows is his! Whoever doesn’t work doesn’t get to eat!”

The breastfeeding woman nodded and stared at Donald, who avoided her gaze.

Just then came the sound of a helicopter in the distance.

“Oh Jesus,” muttered Pepe.

Soon the noise of the chopper blades grew louder and became deafening. People began screaming as the truck suddenly jolted off the road and tore across the open desert.

“Get down!” one of the gunmen yelled as bullets struck the ground all around them.

Donald clung to the floorboards as other bodies fell on top of him. The breastfeeding woman dropped next to him, crushing the baby under her as she screamed for help. The truck swerved again and came to a shrieking halt, throwing everyone to the front.

“Get out, everybody, and go and hide!” came a voice from up front.

People stumbled over and crushed each other to escape. Donald rolled out of harm’s way and fell onto the hot sand as the others ran towards a wooded valley. But several bodies in the truck lay unmoving, including the woman and her baby.

“Give me a hand, Mateo,” called out Pepe weakly. “I think my arm’s broken.”

Donald stared at the old man briefly. Then when more shots rang out, he quickly turned and hurried after the others. Soon the escapees were huddled and concealed under a rocky cliff, guarded by the two gunmen.

“Sounds like Eduardo didn’t make it,” one of them said after more shots rang out.

“Fucking Federales!”

“No, it’s good. The cops will be too busy looting the truck to follow us right away.”

Donald trailed after the refugees as they trudged north through thick underbrush, towards the American border. They kept moving even though they had evaded their pursuers. As they walked, Donald approached one of the gunman.

“Listen, amigo. I can get you ten thousand dollars if you get me out of this.”

The gunman stared at him in confusion and then burst into laughter.

“Who, *you?*” he exclaimed.

“I may look poor but I’m not,” Donald continued in his best board room voice. “I’m really a billionaire from America. I even used to be the President!”

The gunman struck him hard across the face with the revolver.

“You shut the fuck up, you lying pile of shit!” he yelled as Donald crumpled. “Now get up and keep moving! You try bullshitting me again and I’ll kill you!”

Donald stumbled forward, his hand cradling his bloodied, throbbing jaw. Some of the others had heard what he’d said to the gunman and began jokingly calling him *El Jefe*.

By nightfall they were close to the border, sticking to the underbrush for protection. Donald’s assailant made them all stop.

“Listen, we’re going to cross the river in the dark,” he barked, gesturing with his pistol. “There’ll be a truck on the other side to get you. If you try escaping once we’re across, I’ll shoot you myself.”

As they prepared for the crossing, the young Zapatista approached Donald.

“Name’s Jorge,” he said, extending his hand.

Donald glared at him suspiciously.

“Do you know what happened to old Pepe?” Jorge asked.

“No, I never saw him after the crash,” he replied quickly. Then he continued,

“Look, Jorge, maybe you can help me. I need protection.”

“Don’t we all.”

“I’m serious. Ten thousand dollars if you get me out of this.”

“How am I supposed to do that?” Jorge barked. “I’ve got nothing, man, and I’m sure as hell not going to risk my ass for your sorry one. Besides, what makes you more important than the rest of us?”

“I bet you wouldn’t be saying that if I had the money on me.”

Jorge stared at him coldly.

“You really are a fucking *jefe*, aren’t you? You think you can buy anybody.”

The young man stood up from where he had been kneeling and straightened his back.

“*We don’t want money. We don’t want power. We want a new world,*” Jorge declared.

“Ever hear of that?”

Donald shook his head, scowling.

“It’s our Zapatista slogan. It’s written all over the poorest parts of our country. You better think about that.”

Donald did not think about it. The only thing he pondered was what he would do once they got into the States. All he needed was a phone.

The Rio Grande was not as wide or as deep as he figured it would be. One of the gunmen led the way, striding confidently into the water. He obviously had been this way before.

The other goon flashed his light back and forth, keeping an eye on all the refugees.

None of them tried escaping. Soon they were all clustered together on Texas soil.

“Where is Marta?” one of the men said as they waited in the tall grass.

“If you mean the woman with the baby, I think they’re both dead,” said Donald tritely.

The man gaped at him and began to quietly cry.

“Well, they were likely trampled to death by all of you!” Donald shot back. “What do you think’s going to happen when it’s every man for himself?”

The others seemed to stare at him ironically.

As the group waited for a signal to flash at them through the dark, Donald approached Jorge for another attempt. The young man sat by himself staring at the stars.

“There’s another one,” Jorge commented, nodding at the eternal black. “You ever count meteors, *Jefe?*”

“No, never had the time,” Donald replied, sitting down next to him. “Always too busy.”

“Our Mayan people say the one soul of our ancestors is up there,” Jorge said. “They say you may kill some of us, even all of us, but our soul as a people can never get killed.”

“Why’s that?”

“Because it’s not from here.”

“Who knows?” Donald shrugged. “All I know is that a man has got to make his own way in the world and get successful however he can.”

“How can he if he’s born into shit and gets crushed when he tries getting out of it?”

“I’ve given you a way out,” replied Donald. “My offer of ten thousand still stands.”

Jorge said nothing.

“So, is that why you’re all doing this, taking this risk?” Donald asked him. “To get out?”

“There is no getting out for us, not in this fucked up system. But even a dollar an hour in America is better than a dollar a day down here.”

“That’s the old line,” Donald snapped. “I think illegal immigration’s part of the Deep State’s plot to flood America with foreigners.”

Jorge chuckled and shook his head.

“Nobody recruited me to go north, man. Just my empty belly. Every one of these people were poor farmers who lost their land to some big *jefe* corporation. Now if they do get over the border, they’ll work all the shit jobs that the gringos don’t want but get hated for it. And they’ll live like slaves in America until the day they’re deported back here because they didn’t have enough money to pay off the right people.”



Morning was dawning when the signal finally came. Slowly the group began to creep through the grass to the beckoning light. But then suddenly lights appeared everywhere, along with sirens and harsh voices in English. The journey was over.

The gun men were held briefly by the U.S. border patrol and then let go after the usual payoffs. The refugees were bussed to Harlingen and then crowded into prison cells, where they were given the first food they'd had in over two days. Donald had never been in a jail cell before.

The metal door finally swung open and a heavy-set man in a suit entered.

"I understand they call you Mateo," said the man with a heavy Texas drawl. "You got another name, hombre?"

"You wouldn't believe me if I told you."

"That a fact?"

The Texan stared at him with cold, grey eyes.

"You speak English real good, Mateo. How come? You a mule?"

"I don't know what that is," said Donald wearily. "Look, can I make a phone call?"

"Who to? Your *mamasita*?"

"No, to my lawyer in New York."

"Well now, I didn't know wetbacks like you had fancy lawyers," smiled the Texan.

"Unless you're working for one of them big drug cartels."

"Are you kidding?" spouted Donald. "Me, work for those amateurs?"

The official gave him a long stare and said,

“Well Mister Mateo, or whoever the hell you are. I’m sorry to say you won’t be shipped home with all your friends. We’ll be holding you for a spell.”

“Where, here?”

“No, in a federal facility. Sort of like our Lone Star version of Guantanamo.”

“Then I do want to see a lawyer, right now!” exclaimed Donald.

“I’m afraid I can’t allow that, Matt.”

“But I’m a U.S. citizen!”

The Texan gave him a smile and shook his head. Then he left.

It was a long bus ride to the federal prison, sitting among the other shackled prisoners. Donald spent most of the time pondering how to get free. He was so engrossed that he didn’t notice the tall, blonde, long-haired man watching him from across the aisle.

“Don’t sweat it, brother,” he said to Donald gently. “You’ve got to rely on prayer where you are heading. God will answer your wish if you ask him from your heart.”

Unaccustomed as he was to praying, Donald tried it briefly, even though it felt like he was just talking to himself. He gave up after a while.

But things changed later. After the ordeal of being booked and processed in the new prison, strip searched and blasted with firehoses, then roughed up and beaten and threatened with rape by surly prison guards, Donald felt helpless and hopeless. There was nothing left for him to do but to try the prayer angle again.

And so, that night as he lay in his cold prison cell, Donald Trump asked God with a pleading heart to save him by letting him awaken with his old appearance. And he sweetened the request by making the Almighty a conditional promise that he would go to church more often and tithe it generously if the Lord came through for him.

Sure enough, the next morning Donald opened his eyes feeling strangely reassured. He jumped up and stared into the cracked mirror in his cell. Success! His chubby blonde and pale demeanor had returned! He was himself again!

It looks like even heaven has its price, Donald chuckled to himself.

Like all his endeavors, Donald Trump's win that day would have normally resulted in his quick release from jail and return like a triumphant Job to family, riches, and power.

But, unknown to him, heaven did not have a price as much as an ironic sense of humor.

For why else would God have placed Donald that morning at the same prison table as the group of black brothers whose homes and jobs had been destroyed to construct yet another Trump Tower?

As one of the cons observed at Donald's funeral that week: It just goes to show you.



