

THE PATRIOT
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Mr. Chief Justice and may it please the court, I, Tom B. will give you some background.

I was a freshman in high school when Noah Wright came to Krushemville as a sophomore. His father opened the town's only health clinic. Noah arrived in mid-September, a few weeks after school began. He hated our impoverished little town, but made the best of it in the short time he was there.

Noah was a good athlete and the smartest kid in town by far. He saw how backward many of the kids were and how poor most of the teachers were, so he organized the few willing smart kids into a tutoring club. At first, only a few kids came for tutoring. But after about a month those kids' grades improved so much that many other kids began showing up. That was when Max Krushem sprang into action. Incidentally, I was one of the kids that needed tutoring but I was part of the Krushem gang and too ashamed of my ignorance, so I never showed up.

You all know Max Krushem as Max Rush. A few years later, his father changed the family's last name because it sounded crude and un-American, but he died before he could change the town's name. Max was a bully; his father practically owned the town. But Max was also a natural leader. He always told us that loyalty was the best virtue in a friend. It was strange; Max didn't have friends, only followers, and the loyalty he meant was loyalty to him. Whatever commands Max issued became law in the school because all the kids knew that the father of any kid who didn't kowtow to Max would lose his job. Max's influence extended to the teachers and the principal. He never showed any interest in school, never showed much academic ability, never showed his tests papers to anyone, was never asked questions in class and never volunteered, but he had the highest average in the school.

Noah, who was always independent, became popular with the success of the tutoring club and his success as an athlete. Max couldn't abide that. He was really good at finding people's weaknesses and he seemed to relish that ability. He began poking fun of the tutors and the kids who were tutored, assigning well-chosen, demeaning nicknames to each. As we all now know, Max is a genius at nicknames. To ensure his success at shutting down the tutoring club, Max didn't stop at nicknames. He also threatened the tutors. But Noah didn't seem frightened at all and that really bothered Max. So he played one of the oldest tricks in the books. During gym class he got one of the boys in his gang to get down on hands and knees right behind Noah and then he pushed Noah backwards. Noah fell over the kid and hit the ground hard. For the briefest second Noah's eyes looked like Satan himself, but an instant later the look disappeared and Noah's normally placid face returned. I'll never forget that demonic look because I was the boy who was on his hands and knees. Max laughed and so did many of the kids, but I was too scared to laugh because I had seen Noah's look.

Noah never said a word to Max – he simply got up and shook the dirt off his clothes as if he had fallen on his own by accident. For the rest of the period, Noah neither looked at nor away from

Max, acting as if nothing had happened. It was weird. But a few days later in gym when the teachers' eyes were turned away, without the slightest warning, Noah punched Max in the stomach so hard that Max doubled over and collapsed on the ground. It was scary silent – for a minute or so it looked like Max couldn't breathe and then his eyes teared over. Once Max caught his breath, Noah helped him back to his feet as if they were best of friends. It was all done so smoothly it made me think of one of those jail yard scenes in the movies where some inmate stabs another and then disappears in the crowd, though Noah didn't disappear. Max missed the next few days of school.

Max never again tried anything physical with Noah, but the story does not end there. As the holiday season approached, Max discovered two things about Noah – first, Noah openly opposed the Vietnam War in the days it was gearing up, and second, Noah never attended religious services. Max announced these facts at every opportunity, never tiring of it. From that time on, he nicknamed Noah 'Judas Rosenberg' and never again called him by his name. Max's speech was something like, "Here comes Judas Rosenberg. He betrays God and his country. He is not a devout Sheepian like the rest of us. He thinks he is too high and mighty for all of us, even too high and mighty for God. Send him back to where he came from. Send him back. Send him back." And Max got a lot of the kids, including me, to chant with him.

This speech with its chant, repeated ad nauseam, had the desired impact. Everyone turned against Noah or was afraid to be seen near him. The tutorial club disbanded. It didn't matter that Noah had helped so many of the kids. And, when word got around to the adults, not only was Noah persona non grata, his family was as well.

The week before school ended, Noah once again caught Max off guard in gym class, punching him even harder in the stomach than before. And again Noah knelt down with seeming compassion to help Max up. I'll never forget what he said, even though it didn't register with me for years. "Max, you can't tolerate anyone who accomplishes anything noteworthy. You will attempt to sabotage anyone that gets things done. You are a cosmically jealous egotist and you court and foment chaos because you are spiritually sterile."

That summer, after the school year ended, Noah's father shut down the clinic, which had helped so many folks and the family left town. Max never returned to the school. He transferred to a Prep School, went on to college and avoided the Vietnam War draft with a series of trumped up medical excuses.

Three more years passed and I graduated from High School. I was at the time an ignorant patriot, son of a career soldier, so when my country called I enlisted in the Air Force. I arrived in Vietnam during the Tet Offensive. I had no idea anything could possibly be so terrible. Bullets that found so many marks whizzed by me scores of times. It was as if I stayed dry under a storm cloud, while all the bloody raindrops and hailstones fell around me. I don't know how I survived. It was a miracle. God was clearly with me. Many friends died right in front of my eyes. And when we returned from that hellhole we were not honored, but abused by protestors, who spit on us, and worse. I am not evil; I hope I am a good man. To this day I tremble when I go to sleep because of the nightmares.

I was saved by falling in love with a dove. She helped me ask, "What was this war that I volunteered for? What are all wars about?" And she helped me seek out answers. My enlightenment and conversion took more than a decade. Where I had been illiterate and ignorant before, now I read, now I became informed, and now I learned. I learned that soldiers are not all bad nor are they all good. They are people like everyone else, but placed in very difficult circumstances. I learned that some of our wars were poorly thought out and some could not easily be justified.

But I am still a proud Sheepian and Patriot. I still fervently believe in God and my country. So when President Max Rush showed us that our nation is under siege, I knew my country was calling me again and that once again it was my duty to answer the call to help save our nation. When our President, our great leader, proved that Noah Wright, his opponent in the upcoming election, an amoral atheist, was a threat to our very way of life, to our culture, to our freedom, and to our God, it became imperative on me to act. President Rush pointed the way by calling out, "Put him down! Put him down! Put him down!" Therefore, in so acting, as terrible as my deed may seem, I feel in my core that I have preserved this country from a terrible fate, I am proud of what I did and I would do it again.

And that is why, your honors of the high court, I appeal to you to render a verdict of not guilty of the crime of assassination, for it was a righteous execution.

Postscript: A month passed before the High Court's decision was announced. Six members of the High Court, each of whom is a Structured Constitutionalist and a devout Sheepian, announced the majority decision. "The accused, who is clearly a fine man of good conscience, a patriot, and a devout Sheepian, is hereby exonerated of the crime of assassination based on our structured interpretation of the Constitution that God and Country are more precious than and assume primacy over any individual life that presents a threat to the righteous American Way."

Dissenting Opinion: This decision is antithetical to every principle of a democracy. It is unfortunate that even some of the most highly intelligent people, including the majority of the court, are authoritarians, prone by nature and reinforced by nurture to follow egotists with undeveloped, infantile souls who rate humankind as suited only to adulate and obey them. No amount of education as an adult can overcome our genetics and the imprinted lessons of early childhood.