

## MEDIATE THIS!

## AN UNCIVIL PLOT: USING RAGE TO BRING ABOUT CHANGE

BY STEVEN P. DINKIN

The National Conflict Resolution Center has received numerous inquiries regarding the appropriateness of using incivility as a tool to demonstrate opposition to public figures. We explore this issue today by using an example of a teenager who is planning to protest on the front lawn of a political leader by shouting personal insults over a bullhorn. In this example, the young man contends that harassing bad people constitutes free speech and is the most effective way to bring about change. Is this the best course of action?

Civility is easy to extol, especially with supplies running low. But it can be a hard thing to sell to a young person lured by scorn's instant rush of righteousness.

The visceral satisfaction of berating someone you detest explains why belligerence gratifies quickly and spreads fast. We're watching that happen now, and it's alarming. The odd thing is that few people think incivility is admirable. Like gorging on junk food, we know it's crude, but we can't seem to stop.

With outrage reaching spill-over levels, the struggle to stay calm has become exhausting. And a rationale familiar to preschool

teachers has become popular: The other guys did it first! If they won't listen to reason, menace might work.

Such downward spirals of ferocity keep mediators in business. So we know a lot about the costs of unfettered rage.

We specialize in resolving conflicts that have degenerated into stalemates. A tool we use to halt these wars of attrition is to ask each side the same two questions: What do you really want? And how do you envision getting it?

It would be difficult to persuade the teenager that civility is the right path to take in this fractious society. A stronger case is that, if he's intent on pursuing justice, civility is the smart path, because it's his best shot at being taken seriously and challenging the status quo.

In mediation, people who get caught up in anger lose their negotiating power. Vilifying an adversary with a personal attack is a boomerang tactic that inflicts the most damage on the attacker.

People who are in control of themselves exert more control over the process. They stay focused on their goals. They don't take the bait by lashing out at untruths or insults. And they don't give the opposition leverage



GETTY IMAGES

**This week's column explores the use of incivility as a tool to demonstrate opposition to public figures. It uses the fictitious example of a teenager who is planning a protest.**

by relinquishing their own dignity.

We could start a conversation with this young man by revisiting three iconic Americans who changed the course of U.S. history by being awesomely cool.

Two of our greatest presidents, George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, guided the nation to victory through two wars by show-

ing grace under pressure and staying above the partisan fray. Martin Luther King, Jr., a pioneer of civil disobedience, engaged his detractors with respect and compassion. His serenity won him global acclaim, and he used it to put us on the road to racial equality.

The teenager should keep in

mind that yelling over a bullhorn on someone's street may be free speech, but it also qualifies as disturbing the peace and could get him arrested. Meanwhile, the recipients of his vitriol (including the man's family and neighbors) will feel victimized and harden their hearts against his message.

So a mediator would express support to the teenager for taking principled action and suggest he consider a wiser strategy. He could organize a student letter-writing campaign inviting the political leader to an open dialogue in a town hall. The letters could be delivered to the leader's office, and copies could be circulated to the news media.

This experiment in effecting social change through civil discourse could open up new vistas for the young man and his friends. And if nothing else, it will give them compelling material for their college application essays.

Steven P. Dinkin is a professional mediator who has served as President of the San-Diego based National Conflict Resolution Center since 2003. **Do you have a conflict that needs a resolution?** Please share your story with The Mediator via email at [mediatethis@ncrconline.com](mailto:mediatethis@ncrconline.com) or as an online submission by visiting [www.ncrconline.com/MediateThis](http://www.ncrconline.com/MediateThis). All submissions will be kept anonymous.

## NOTEBOOKS

From Union-Tribune reporting staff

## BORDER: LUIS GOMEZ

## How to day trip to Tijuana like a pro

If San Diego Pride or Comic-Con is drawing you to the city, Mexico might just lure you a few miles south to Tijuana.

Getting there is the easy part — it's a trolley ride away that takes you directly to the border, in fact — but crossing over, getting around, or even getting back to the U.S. is a whole other story. Do you know what you're doing?

To get the scoop on how to take a day trip to Tijuana like a local, we spoke with Turista Libre founder Derrik Chinn about what travelers should and shouldn't do while visiting San Diego's sister city to the south.

## What to bring with you

**Passport:** Travelers headed into Mexico by foot will be required to carry a passport, but those crossing the border by vehicle will not be required to show a passport. However, all travelers coming from Mexico and into the U.S. will be required to show a valid visa or U.S. passport or other accepted forms of identification.

Those traveling in a bus or as part of a tour group will also be asked to show a passport when entering Mexico.

**Currency:** Mexico's currency is the "peso." Travelers can easily exchange currency from dollars to pesos at public kiosks on either side of the border, but it's not really necessary. Dollars are accepted just about everywhere in Tijuana.

Chinn says merchants will accept dollars for any purchases, but they'll likely give you back pesos in change. Because exchange rates fluctuate, travelers are encouraged to check an online calculator to get the latest rate.

## What not to bring with you

**Guns:** Firearms are illegal in Mexico, so don't bring them.

## How to cross the border

**By foot:** Pedestrian access to Tijuana — again, you need a passport to enter Mexico this way — is available at three entry points: Otay Mesa (off Highway 905), San Ysidro and San Ysidro's PedWest.

**By car:** Those traveling by vehicle may enter via the Otay Mesa port of entry or the San Ysidro port of entry.

All port of entries for non-commercial crossing are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

## How to get around

**Uber:** Chinn says travelers can use the same Uber app as in the U.S. to hail a ride in Tijuana. The Uber app will prompt users whether they want an English-speaking driver in Tijuana. Caveat: You can't use Uber to cross the border.

**Cab rides:** Chinn recommends travelers use Uber instead of hailing a cab. Because some cabs don't have a functioning meter, you would have to negotiate a price with the driver, he says.

**With your own vehicle:** If you're driving into Tijuana, Chinn recommends drivers buy Mexican car insurance. That can be purchased just about anywhere, even online, and can be as affordable as \$10 per day. If you get into an accident, he says, your car will be impounded.

## Crossing back into the U.S.

**Passports or valid visas:** Again, if you are crossing from Mexico to the U.S., you will be asked to show a current passport or a valid visa.

**Items allowed — and not allowed! — back in the U.S.:** Generally anything that is commercially packaged and unopened is allowed back in the U.S. Most fruits and vegetables from Mexico are not allowed in the U.S. Also banned are switchblade knives, sea turtle boots or any other items made out of endangered species.

**Alcohol and tobacco:** Up to 1 liter of alcohol per adult person 21 or older is allowed back in the U.S. duty-free. Up to one carton of cigarettes may be imported for those 18 or older. Agents will ask for proof of age.

**Check wait times:** Entry back into the U.S. can get extremely crowded. There are two ways to check the wait times for crossing the border — online at the U.S. Customs and Border Protection website, or through its mobile app.

## Mobile phones and data

**Roaming:** Using a mobile device to make calls or use data will require you to use Mexico's network, which means you'd be roaming. Chinn says all carriers offer per-day rates for roaming. Call your carrier or go to its website to check out its rates for Mexico.

**Free Wi-Fi:** Chinn says most restaurants and bars offer free Wi-Fi. Just ask nicely for the password.

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## THE READERS' REPRESENTATIVE: ADRIAN VORE

## Feedback form attracting comments

A little more than two months ago, the Union-Tribune began including a link to a feedback form at the bottom of stories online. It was meant for people who appeared in a story to give the paper their take on the article's fairness and accuracy.

The form asks for the person's email, first and last name, and the story's headline. The questions are:

Did the story accurately reflect your statements and point of view?

Do you feel the story accurately reflected other points of view?

Were there any factual errors in the story?

Would you like to speak with an editor or the readers' representative about your experience?

The form was a first for the U-T. After a reader fills it out, Managing Editor Lora Cicalo and the readers' rep receive an email with the comments.

So more than two months in, how is the form doing?

Use of it has increased. We receive about two to four emails a day with feedback.

The feedback, though, is overwhelmingly not from people who appeared in the story. The form is mainly used as a commenting tool. The reader might disagree with the angle of a story. Or the reader wants to weigh in on illegal immigration, or some other topic.

One reader didn't like the advice a story gave about how to survive an earthquake. Another person disputed what was the hottest temperature in the county one day during the recent heat wave. The reader said it was 115 in Valley Center and Pauma Valley. "We are always overlooked," she added.

However, the commenting by those not specifically involved in the story has value. One reader pointed out a mistake in a business column in which a professor's gender was incorrectly identified. The writer used the pronoun "he" on all references when it should have been "she."

Another said Jefferson Avenue does not exist in Oceanside. He's right; it should have been Jefferson Street.

A three-paragraph item about the downtown courthouse briefly being evacuated Monday said officials believed it was caused by a faulty fire alarm. A person who alluded to being with the fire alarm company wrote on the feedback form that a "staff member" — presumably from the county — accidentally activated the alarm.

A representative of the San Diego Black Police Officers Association gave feedback that clarified a story on a racial discrimination lawsuit by former San Diego officer.

I've received several emails about people actually in the stories who said they saw no problems in the articles. Mike Bender, a former Simi Valley police detective, appeared in an article last week about Craig Coley. Coley spent 39 years in prison for a crime he didn't commit.

Bender and Coley provided separate feedback. Both said the story was accurate, and Bender praised U-T reporter Pam Kragen for her reporting and writing.

The past two months have shown that some adjustments are needed. Most of the time I have trouble identifying the story. Readers rarely use the correct headline. One reader typed asterisks in the headline field. The exact headline would help tremendously.

Identifying when the story was published also has proved troublesome. Some stories appeared to be quite old. On Thursday, though, a date field was added to the form, and it seems it will be useful. One of the first feedback forms to arrive after the date-field addition showed the story was from January.

Although the feedback forms are being commonly used for general commenting, and they are providing some useful checks, they are intended to capture the thoughts on fairness and accuracy by those appearing in the story. The U-T would like to hear more from those who interacted with a reporter or editor in producing the news report.

## Sign in photo had obscenity

A picture on the front page July 3 prompted several angry emails and phone calls. The picture showed marchers July 2 at Chicano Park, where they were protesting immigration policies. Wording on one of the marcher's signs included a vulgarity at the bottom of the placard in small lettering.

Editors will scan pictures of events at which participants are holding signs to try to spot an obscenity, and then choose another photo if they detect one. The July 2 picture was checked, but obviously the word was missed. What made it worse was the sign appeared at the center of the four-column photo.

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## FROM THE ARCHIVES | LOOKING BACK OVER 150 YEARS

## JULY 15, 1969: MOUNTAIN VIEW PARK RIOT

The San Diego Union-Tribune will mark its 150th anniversary in 2018 by presenting a significant front page from the archives each day throughout the year.

## Tuesday, July 15, 1969

In July 1969, on the eve of the Apollo 11 mission to the moon, a confrontation between San Diego police and minority youth on a Sunday in Mountain View park led to days of racial unrest that left two men dead, scores under arrest and a dozen stores damaged by flames and looters.

Here are the first few paragraphs of the story:

## SHOTS, FIRES MARK NEW UNREST HERE

Roving Gangs in Area Directed By Citizen's Band Radio, Hahn Says

Violence flared anew last night in Southeast San Diego. A day of relative calm ended at dusk with a volley of sniper fire at a policeman. This was followed by a rash of arson fires, at least two burglaries and two armed robberies in the area and varied disturbances by roving gangs.

Police action included a raid on the Black Panther headquarters and 20 new arrests linked to violence in the area. This raised to 96 the number arrested since the trouble began Sunday evening.

A fire reported about 11:20 p.m. almost destroyed the Farmers Market at Euclid and Logan avenues. It apparently was started by

a gasoline bomb.

## HOME FIREBOMBED

Earlier, at about 9:50 p.m., a firebomb also was blamed for a blaze extinguished by firemen at the Thomas Beverly home at 6125 Newcastle Place.

There was no recurrence of the gun battles and lootings that marked Sunday's strife.

"There is considerable evidence that most of the actions Sunday night were highly organized," City Mgr. Walter Hahn said. "The gang that ran wild was using Citizen's Band radios to direct their activities."



Police Inspector William Gore said he also had evidence that some of the rioters were monitoring police radio calls, then relaying information to roving bands of followers via CB radio.

## TWO KILLED

Two people were killed on at least six were injured in the area Sunday night and early yesterday.

About 7:15 p.m., a patrolling officer reported he was being fired on in the 3200 block of Franklin Avenue by a sniper with a rifle. He was ordered by radio to leave the immediate area as other officers were dispatched to surround it.

As the night wore on, police said there were numerous incidents of rock throwing and of gasoline fireworks being thrown,

mostly into vacant lots to start grass fires.

Assessing the situation at a press conference late last night, Deputy Police Chief W.D. Morrison said:

"Things are pretty quiet right now, relatively speaking. It's been busier than a normal Monday but cool as compared to what we had Sunday night."

## 'CARAVANS SIGHTED'

Morrison said that after receiving two anonymous telephone threats that raiding parties planned to storm the downtown police headquarters patrolling officers encountered several "caravans" of agitators on city streets headed toward the station.

There were some fair-sized gangs headed this way but our men managed to break them up," he said.

Twelve officers raided the Black Panther headquarters at 2952 1/2 Imperial Ave. on a Municipal Court warrant about 9:45 last night and seized two rifles, a shotgun and some gas masks.

Inspector Ray Hoobler, who led the raid, said the door to the office was broken down when no one answered, but officers found the building unoccupied.

About the same time police arrested three men in a car nearby after finding a shotgun hidden under the hood and a pistol concealed in the passenger apartment.

In a mid-morning report yesterday on Sunday's violence, Hahn attributed the major trouble to "highly organized" gangs and vowed to protect law-abiding citizens in the area.

**ONLINE:** View this and other anniversary front pages online at [sandiegouniontribune.com/150-years](http://sandiegouniontribune.com/150-years).