**Constitutional Defense**

*Striking Back Against the Right Wing With Tongue-in-Cheek Sarcasm*

The Grouchy Historian
by Ed Asner and Ed Weinberger
336 pages
$26, Simon & Schuster, NY, 2017

'Twas the saying of an ancient sage that humor was the only test of gravity; and gravity of humor. For a subject which would not bear raillery was suspicious; and a jest which would not bear serious examination was certainly false wit. - Anthony Ashley Cooper, Third Earl of Shaftesbury: *Characteristics V.*

“The Grouchy Historian,” both humorously grave and gravely humorous, passes both tests with flying colors.

Ed Asner, the TV legend, with the help of Ed Weinberger, is the “Grouchy Historian,” “An Old-Time Lefty (who) defends our Constitution against right-wing hypocrites and nutjobs,” strikes back against the Right Wing’s thumping of the Constitution which they falsely claim mandates small government, less regulation and lower taxes on the rich than the rest of us. Using the Constitution is an excuse by Right-Wingers to do every terrible thing they want to do.

The Grouchy Historian, however, delivers his lines with a tongue-in-cheek sarcasm and hilarity that bespeaks the contribution of his co-author, Ed Weinberger, the comedy writer who worked for and with Dick Gregory, Johnny Carson and the TV sitcom “Taxi,” among others. The ideas may be Asner’s but the delivery is certainly Weinberger’s, and that is what makes this historical political screed not only enlightening but a totally enjoyable read.

This will be different from the usual book review, because I am going out on a limb and let the book review itself. *Res ipsa loquitur* seems more than appropriate. The chapter headings should tell the tale; for example:

4. Heckling the Right Wing: Their Top Ten Talking Points and My Top Ten Comebacks

5. God and the Constitution, Part I: Epistle to the Christian Right

11. Open Letter to Senator Ted Cruz Written in the Style of 1787

12. The Constitution According to Ben Carson, MD


18. The Emperor Has No Robes: Justice Antonin Scalia and Citizens United

19. Scarier Than Scalia: Introducing Justice Clarence Thomas

20. What in Hell Is a Strict Constructionist?

21. Anonymous Letter to Certain Members of the Supreme Court

Now, if that doesn’t make you want to read the book, just take my word that you will find it not only very humorous, but very informative.

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