



Unacceptable Times: Adam Stone's Facebook Accounting of the 2016 Presidential Election is ©2016 by Adam Stone and Crooked Tree House Press. All rights reserved.

Titles in Javanese Text, body text in High Tower Text.

Cover designed by Adam Stone using a word cloud generator of words Donald Trump has said on Twitter between January 2015 and November 2016.

# **Unacceptable Times**



This book was accidentally conceived on November 8th, 2016, as Adam Stone was at work and idly posting about how unapocalyptic and boring Election Day was. It was just a countdown to the election. Once the electorate votes began being released, he started following Politico's blog (<http://www.politico.com/2016-election/results/map/president>) and when he noticed a significant change in the numbers, he posted something he found relevant to his Facebook.

Some of the posts have been edited or omitted. Some because he didn't like them, some because making a flipbook of David Bowie's "I'm Afraid Of Americans" seemed a little grandiose for this project.



## Forty-Eight Hours Until The Polls Close

While on break tonight, I told my coworker how there were a series of crazy things going on in the square. There was one guy loudly threatening an invisible person. Also, the fairly calm guy who sleeps by The Harvard Square elevator was saying to another person “If you come near me, I will put you in the hospital. I’m serious. Go away.” To which the other guy, said “Why you mad, though?”

Well, on her way home, my coworker texted me that they were forcibly removing someone from the square on a stretcher. I’m guessing it was the guy who was threatening an invisible person because while I was in The World’s Worst CVS, picking up a drink, waiting in a fifteen person line because they only had two registers open that accept cash, and none of us wanted to pay with credit cards, the Why You Mad Though Guy ran full force into the locked side door of the CVS, let out a primal scream, and then briskly walked out the actual exit, carrying two giant bottles of Era Plus detergent.

Three employees, one of them yelling to the cashier: “Call the police!” trailed in his wake.

Two of the three employees stayed in the store. About three minutes later, the third returned. And a minute after him, Why You Mad Though Guy literally hopped into the store, placed the bottles just on the threshold of the store, did a deep curtsy and shouted “MAY YOU ALL HAVE A GREAT EVENING.”

I need to start bringing drinks and a cooler from home.

## Twenty-Four Hours Until The Polls Close

**Random Loiterer:** What are you wearing for the election tomorrow?

**Me:** I already voted.

**RL:** Who for?

**Me:** Myself. Voting for other people is unethical.

**RL:** I meant which candidate did you vote for.

**Me:** Oh.

Silence.

**RL:** Are you going to tell me?

**Me:** Am I going to tell you what?

## Twenty Hours Until The Polls Close

Left my headphones at work, and the TV in this pizza place is on. I don't know what's worse, the nonstop political ad commercials or this slightly off-key warbling of "Yesterday" on The Voice. Ugh.

## Six Hours Until The Polls Close

Six hours before the first results come in and, looking out the window, I see no one on fire, no large, leathery winged reptiles with laser eyes scanning the horizon.

Further updates as warranted.

## Three Hours Until The Polls Close

It's unseasonably warm but not prophecy hot. You can go outside without a jacket and people will head nod at you but if you're wearing shorts and a t-shirt, the trees will throw acorns at you.

The UPS guy is wearing short sleeves but long pants. He has a box I need to sign my name for. It should be the books we ordered for a comics related class. A story about an obituary writer who keeps dying over and over, and how his life would be if each time he died he...didn't die.

He dies in the end, of course. Everybody does.

But the box is not full of books or spiders or the type of demons we were told to expect this election day. It's full of regret. Moist, hot...humid is, I guess, the proper word. Humid regret. The smell of musty cardboard.

The phone rings.

Three hours before the election results start to come in.

Nothing is a portend.

I'm sure everything will be fine.

## Two Hours Until Polls Close

Tone Deaf Beatles Guy is in the square sort-of-singing “Don’t Let Me Down”. I’ve never heard him play anything other than “Puff The Magic Dragon”, “Yesterday”, “All We Need Is Love”, and the worst cover of Jeff Buckley’s cover of Leonard Cohen’s “Hallelujah”.

Surely, him learning a new song is a the sign of an apocalypse.  
Nah.

If he sang in-tune, it might be a sign of The Apocalypse. Maybe this is a regular part of his repertoire that I have somehow managed not to hear over the last decade.

As the song comes to a close, he bridges it into “Hallelujah”.

Ahhhh, terrible familiarity.

The square is mostly empty. Not in a disconcerting way. In a nice day in autumn way. I’d like to think the people not voting are at parks.

There is a place by the elevator where one of the more stable homeless people sleeps. Today, there is a guy there selling paintings. All the paintings are of the same marshy channel of a harbor. Some are in daylight, some are at night. Some of the nights there is no moon. Some nights, a full moon. Nothing inbetween. Always the same marsh. Over a dozen portraits of the same channel.

I can smell it.

I turn around and watch someone put a dollar in Tone Deaf Beatles Guy’s guitar case.

I turn around and watch people ignore Tone Deaf Beatles Guy, and continue with their lives.

I turn around and watch someone shake their head at Tone Deaf Beatles Guy.

I see the same marsh at different points of nothing interesting happening.

I can smell it.

## One Hour Until The Polls Close

The square is dead. Night arrives with advanced reservations and doesn't bother waiting to be seated, just plops itself down everywhere.

## Ten Minutes After The Polls Close

My coworker has gone home. For the first time in hours, loiterers come in.

**Random Loiterer:** I saw in your window that you do subscriptions.

**Me:** Spiel spiel spiel. 20% off. Spiel spiel spiel. Preorder. Spiel spiel spiel. Comics or trades or toys as long as preordered. Spiel spiel spiel. Form.

**RL:** Cool! And there's no shipping charge?

**Me:** Umm. Well, there is if we have to ship things to you, but we put the comics in drawers for you, and ask you to come pick them up.

**RL:** Well, I don't live around here.

**Me:** Ah. Your best bet may be to ask around at your local comic shops for the best deal. Depending how much you order, shipping could totally invalidate the discount.

**RL:** What if I just waited for a year, and you just shipped every—

**Me:** We DON'T do that. It would have to be weekly. You're better off asking at your local store.

**RL:** It would just be one big box every—

**Me:** WE DO NOT AND WILL NOT DO THAT. We don't have the space.

RL looks around.

**RL:** Ok, I guess I see that. Could I take one of these forms any way?

**Me:** Of course.

**RL:** And can I take a picture of your store?

**Me:** Sure.

**RL:** You're so much nicer than the lady at the polling place.

**Me:** You're not allowed to take pictures at the polling place.

**RL:** I just wanted people to see how I voted.

Silence.

**Me:** I thought you weren't from around here.

**RL:** Oh, I am from around here but I don't read comics. My dad reads comics and I was going to set up a subscription for him as a birthday present.

**Me:** I see. That's not a great idea.

**RL:** That's what the lady said about taking the picture! Word for word!

**Me:** You voted Trump, right?

**RL:** Of course.

A dark void opens up in the floor and swallows one of us.

I'm not sure which one of us.

## Thirty Minutes After The Polls Close

Someone outside is screaming.

But it might be in celebration.



## Trump: 19, Clinton: 3

You think “It doesn’t matter yet. That’s the way we knew it was going to be. It was always going to start with them in the lead.”

A dog yips in the background.

Still, though. That nineteen represents a large amount of people who think a racist, xenophobic, homophobic, misogynist, economic failure of a trust fund baby who repeatedly says *Fuck everyone but me. I am the only person in the world who matters but trust me, looking out for me means looking out for me. I mean looking out for you. The check is in the mail. I won’t come on your face. I’d never cheat on you. This is a heat rash. I’m allergic to latex and it just doesn’t feel the same. You know I’d never hurt you, though, right? Maybe a little on your face. I’m honest. Not like those crooked non-white non-millionaires. I won’t come in your eyes though. Ok, maybe one of them. I’m honest. I could come in both your eyes and you’d still love me.* This man has enough people who believe in him that he isn’t completely shut out. That’s disheartening.

I wish I could believe it was an issue of education or class, and that people are either stupid or entitled.

But, let’s be real, most actually entitled white people recognize that speech and might say it themselves, but won’t trust another person who says it. And most people not given access to a common education know what bullshit smells like.

Any number over zero is not stupidity. It is not privilege. It is, pure and simple, hate. It is either hate of people who look different. People who look so different that you’re willing to put your faith in someone who clearly has never had anything in common with you other than your skin color and maybe your filthy fucken mouth. Or hatred of a woman (and I get it

she's untrustworthy...I agree...but he is precisely the same type of untrustworthy but in a more egregious manner...there is no negative quality of her actions or beliefs that he does not share. What she is willing to bomb, he is eager to nuke, what she is willing to appropriate, he is eager to steal, murder and claim he invented). Any number more than zero is unacceptable.

These are definitely unacceptable times.

## Trump: 24, Clinton: 3

You have to do something else to occupy your mind.

The rolling has stopped. The upstairs people have gone home.

*Why not go home?* you think. Why not allow yourself to get distracted by something frivolous. *How bad*, you don't think, *could it possibly get if you don't pay attention?*

**Clinton: 44, Trump: 31**

Don't breathe or this will all disappear.

**Trump: 51, Clinton: 44**

You have friends in every state that disappoints you.

## Trump: 60, Clinton: 48

Yesterday you were looking at this same map. It was monochromatic. It was not a chessboard. It was not Risk. It was, *When you have time, how would you like to move across this country. There is a wedding. There is a birthday. There is a friend you've been away from too long. There is a thing you've always wanted to see, and you will eventually die so why not see it before you do. Why not see this map as highways and rivers and tourist attractions and memories?*

You are not thinking of deviating your path now. You are not that petty. You are not that afraid.

Maybe that's wrong.

You are not that type of afraid. You know that a place is more than just its color during an election. There are Trump supporters in your city, in your neighborhood, on your train ride to work, in your store, in your family. You are no more afraid of a state than your own family.

Are you afraid of your own family?

## Trump: 121, Clinton: 97

Trump loses New York, his home state. A state that elected Clinton as Senator but called her *carpetbagger*.

Clinton loses Arkansas, her home state.

The people that know these people best don't trust them.

We're all fucked.

## Trump: 137, Clinton: 104

Every minute is a reminder of another minute that disappointed you.

You were better at math than you let on. In high school, you were twice bumped up to the more difficult math level.

This does not mean you understand how numbers work.

You don't trust numbers any more than people. Even though no number has broken your heart without a person attached to it.

## Popular Vote: Trump 49%, Clinton 47%

Remember this is theater. Remember conversations about how it seems peculiar that so many televised sports championships go seven games. Nobody sweeps anymore. Who wants to watch a game that isn't close?

So you call states too early and know people will forget your mistaken projections by the next election. As long as it isn't In Print in some old timey newspaper, you'll be ok. You do everything live. There are bound to be mistakes. So long as patience isn't one of them. It's not lying, it's jumping to wrong conclusions. It's an Olympic sport for most journalists in the 21st century.

*Close* is such a subjective term. It's in so many ballads. *Landslide* is just some ancient Fleetwood Mac song. Nobody watches landslides unless they are invested in the bodies beneath it.

This is theater. But not A Play. This is not a Broadway show or even a high school drama club one act play festival. This is a flash mob. Someone terrible has an idea. They are encouraged by other horrible people who either think similarly or else enjoy watching carnage.

Then they get strangers involved, and soon hundreds of people who have no reason to be excited about a wedding feel emotions, after witnessing a fake proposal by two people who want to be famous but have no talent other than manipulating people by pretending to have feelings.

You know, political theater. You don't buy tickets for it. You don't think "Tonight, I would like to feel admiration for two people pretending to be in love." You were just trying to eat dinner in a mall while you waited for your sister's braces to get tightened. You were in the wrong place, at the wrong time to be able to exist quietly. To not be invested.

Sometimes this happens because you are taking a bus to work. Sometimes it's because you live in a country where everyone wants to be on TV, no matter the consequence.

As long as you're famous, who cares what people think of you?  
Wait.

Who are you?

Who is the you here?

Everything in the second person is so muddled. Are you the journalist or the politician? Or the audience who doesn't have time to leave the theater before the show ends?

Is there a difference any more?

## Trump: 150, Clinton: 122

Asymptosis is a bedtime story we tell exhausted children to get them to sleep.

Things are getting better. The bad guys are still winning but not by as much. The heroes will get them tomorrow night. Shhhh.....

“But the bad guys are still—”

But not by as much. And we know the narrative. The good guys always win, right?

Children never know history if we don't teach it to them. And we have not been teaching all our children the same history. This isn't just the lesson of the 2016 election. This has been clear in every political story and every racially motivated murder in the last at least two decades.

We are telling bedtime stories instead of teaching history.

So we grow up believing in bedtime stories, even when we are watching history happen right in front of us. We can't bring ourselves to believe that the bedtime stories were lies.

“What I'm watching isn't true.” We say. “The world has never been this cruel.”

Shhhhh.....

## Trump: 168, Clinton: 122

I've told this story before.

During the 2012 election, I was also working in Harvard Square. A couple of Harvard students were discussing the election which Obama was clearly going to win.

When I first posted the story, people assumed that the two people I was talking about were white. They weren't. So, please know, in this particular instance, the two people about to say incredibly stupid shit weren't white. But I can totally see why you'd think they were.

**Random Harvard Dude #1:** "I'm just excited to have voted for the first ever two-term Black president."

**Random Harvard Dude #2:** "You know, everybody keeps talking about him being the first Black President but nobody acknowledges that he's multi-racial."

**RHD #1:** "Yea, but there have been a lot of White presidents."

**RHD #2:** "He's not half-White, he's half Asian."

**RHD #1:** "Oh yea. I always forget that. How come nobody ever refers to him as the first Asian President."

I am behind the computer, angling my head like a Velociraptor.

**Me:** "President Obama isn't Asian, that I'm aware of."

**RHD #2:** "Yea, he is. Back before he was running for president, I used to hear all the time how embarrassing it was that he wasn't as embraced by the Asian community as he should have been. How being Black took up all the space in the dialog about his identity, but his mom was totally Asian."

**Me:** "Are you thinking of Tiger Woods?"

RHD #1 drops his bag.

RHD #2: "Dude. You can not Tell Anyone this happened. This NEVER happened."

\*\*\*

I've told this story, too.

There's a guy who sells t-shirts in Boston. I used to help him promote his shirts until women I know from the poetry community started telling me about how he accosted them in grocery stores and said problematic things.

One poet, who I have huge respect for has still never told me why, upon seeing that shirt, she said "You need to not wear that shirt."

She doesn't ever have to. Her tone said it all.

The same night of the Tiger Woods Incident, he was in the store praising Obama. Obama this. Obama that. Like he was the only one in the room who'd voted for Obama.

"Do you remember," he asked "how they tried to run Hillary against him? I mean, come on. A woman? You can't have a woman running things. They...you know. A woman. Come on. Am I right? You know I'm right."

He was not right.

I asked him not to talk to me about politics. Another coworker told him he wasn't allowed to talk to women in the store. I've also asked him not to talk to me about Thor, which seems like an unimportant tangent, but his main complaint is that Thor is currently portrayed as a woman.

The guy sucks.

But he knows Trump is a hateful piece of shit who would have deported his parents. He's sometimes ignorant, almost always problematic, but I don't think he's Stupid.

But I almost want to know. Who did he vote for this time?

**Trump: 244, Clinton: 209**

I never want to hear the term *Rejection Election* again.

## Trump: 0, Clinton: 0

Briefly, the Politico page reset in error.  
It was the most hopeful I'd been all night.

## Trump: 244, Clinton: 215

Peter flew out to Poland at 7pm tonight. The second of my close friends to move out of visiting range this year. The three of us got to hang out a couple of times before Dr. Bobby left, and after the departure of Dr. Bobby, the two of us got some decent hangout time.

Of course, he offered that I should come visit him in Poland. I don't speak Polish (although my adoptive family's pre-Stone name is Pasieczny), and have no desire to join a community where you are expected to be at a church every week. I still appreciated the offer.

And, no, I will not be going to Poland, or any other country, regardless of this election's outcome.

Since 2004, I only move for really good money or really good sex.

But not if either of those things requires pretending belief in the invisible cloud man.

Before he left, Peter gave me a bottle of absinthe. Real absinthe. Not the stuff you can get in Cambridge bars.

When I say *I wish I had drunk some absinthe tonight*, I do not mean, I am sad and alcohol is the crutch I am looking for.

When I say *I wish I had drunk some absinthe tonight*, I do not mean, I wish to escape.

When I say *I wish I had drunk some absinthe tonight*, I mean that if I had the foresight to drink some absinthe earlier tonight, I would have to consider that I was reading the results wrong or, more likely, I would not be paying attention at all, and I would wake up tomorrow with things I could actually regret being responsible for, as opposed to waking up being disappointed in other people.

When I say *I wish I had drunk some absinthe tonight*, I mean I wish I was sleepy and flirty as opposed to annoyed and disappointed with strangers.

When I say *I wish I had drunk some absinthe tonight*, I do not mean I wish I was on a plane or in another world where things were different.

When I say *I wish I had drunk some absinthe tonight*, I only mean, I wish those particular friends were still here (there are plenty of other friends still here...no need to be morbid), so that we could have toasted to whatever is about to happen to us, force down the astringent wormwood in one gulp and look at each other with the same regret we shared whenever we drank to terrible things. And, at least this time, we wouldn't have the aftertaste of fucken Campari. Or Fernet. It would have been a new awful taste with familiar faces. We could have called it *The End Of Lucidity*.

