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**Notes from editor (not for publication):**

Hi, Elayne — Please, again, be careful with quotes and attribution. Also note that The Other 98% is notorious for scraping other people’s work. A Dec. 20 [post on LinkedIn](#) from an Indigenous writer was almost word-for-word what you quoted from the unattributed Dec. 25 [Facebook post](#) (though the one paragraph that was new was the one you quoted). Still felt icky not to go to the source, which is why I changed the quote itself a bit.



HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

####BEGIN HED####

1 Our disturbing dissonance

####END HED####

####BEGIN SUBHED####

2 We still need moments of joy and respite without guilt,  
3 even when the cruelties and crises of our politics and our  
4 environment are impossible to ignore

####END SUBHED####

5 TEXT BODY:

####BEGIN TEXT####

6 DURING THE SNOWSTORMS in January, my family managed  
7 to meet up for a birthday celebration in sunny California where

8 the temperatures were in the 60s and 70s and the sky was  
9 beautifully blue every day.

10 The winter respite was lovely but sobering as well,  
11 because I knew we were lucky to be able to take the trip since  
12 we are what could be called, in economic terms, privileged. That  
13 alone made me feel guilty as we departed.

14 The guilt persisted as I watched children having fun on  
15 the beaches. I kept thinking of all the incarcerated children in  
16 what are called “detention facilities,” but which I view as  
17 concentration camps.

18 Those kids are eating fowl food, sleeping on cold floors,  
19 being denied necessary healthcare, education, clean water, and  
20 fresh air. Worst of all, they are often separated from their parents,  
21 even as infants and toddlers.

22 The older ones draw pictures like the ones by children  
23 starving and ill in Germany’s Holocaust camps. Others have  
24 written letters that are now surfacing on social media.

25 Here is an excerpt from [a letter 14-year-old Ariana wrote](#)  
26 after being detained for 45 days.

27 “I have never felt so much fear to go to a place as I feel  
28 here[.] Every time I remind myself that once I go back to  
29 Honduras a lot of dangerous things could happen to my mom  
30 and I. My younger siblings haven’t seen their mom in over a  
31 month. [...] Since I got to this Center all [I] feel is sadness and  
32 mostly depression. [...] It[']s sad to hear that people[']s cases are  
33 being denied and [they] are being sen[t] back to countr[ies] [...]  
34 where they are escaping from and are looking for protection and  
35 want to feel safe. [...] Serious situations happen here and the  
36 officers can’t take them serious enough and there are no  
37 [consequences], they don’t care.”

38 The juxtaposition of exuberance and trauma was entirely  
39 dissonant. How could these two simultaneous scenarios possibly  
40 make sense?

41 That dissonance was mirrored and magnified by  
42 watching people in museums, parks, restaurants, and cafés

43 enjoying themselves as if nothing were wrong or troubling. I felt  
44 as if I were being jolted back to normal times, when we all felt  
45 relatively safe, and random acts of violence were not something  
46 we had to fear every day.

47           Yet how could we ignore what was going on in our  
48 world?

49           \* \* \*

50           JUST A BRIEF GLANCE at the news each morning and  
51 evening gave me pause and reminded me of the worries that  
52 seemed ever-present and inescapable. I couldn't stop feeling  
53 guilty for enjoying myself as day by day the dissonance became  
54 more disturbing.

55           All over the world, while we were enjoying our time  
56 together, devastating weather events marked a serious sign of  
57 possibly unsolvable climate change that could mean global water  
58 shortages, droughts that will increase migration, and other events  
59 that will irretrievably alter our ways of life and threaten social  
60 and political stability.

61           Added to these threats and dangers we now face is the  
62 lack of political will to do what is urgently needed while we still  
63 have time. Science is seriously under attack, as is access to  
64 healthcare and public health preventive measures, no matter how  
65 sick people might be.

66           Meanwhile, our government is sabotaging environmental  
67 protection from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA),  
68 disaster relief from the Federal Emergency Management Agency  
69 (FEMA), and weather information from the National Oceanic and  
70 Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

71           This is a recipe for disaster.

72           As Indigenous writer Robert Coulter posted on LinkedIn  
73 last December, "What's being spun as bureaucratic reshuffling is  
74 actually a brazen assault on research that keeps people safe and  
75 economies functioning in a world facing escalating climate  
76 chaos."

77 In his post, which focused on relevant issues and  
78 pending crises that require scientific research and activity, he  
79 concluded with this warning: If we don't fight now to protect  
80 these institutions and the scientists "who make sense of our  
81 changing planet, we'll be left with nothing but political spin  
82 while the climate crisis unfolds with ever-greater ferocity.

83 "This is our planet on the line, and our democracy too,"  
84 he said.

85 \* \* \*

86 TO EXPAND UPON this focus on the threatening absence of  
87 research, I would add that the travesties we've witnessed and  
88 worried about, ranging from ICE murders to threats of cancelled  
89 elections and election interference, all because our current inept  
90 and inhumane power brokers in government are colluding with  
91 their financially privileged and deeply corrupt cronies.

92 Since I am by nature a worrier, I have sleepless nights  
93 about all of this, but it's something we all need respite from, and  
94 we shouldn't feel guilty about how and where we find it. I'm  
95 trying to drop the guilt while recognizing the disturbing  
96 dissonance we are living with in these dark days. I hope others  
97 are seeing that as well.

98 Returning home from my respite there was plenty of ice,  
99 but it wasn't unexpected or alarming. It's ICE, and everything it  
100 represents, that gives me restless nights, along with the deep and  
101 disturbing dissonance that prevails.

####END TEXT####

BIO/COATTAIL:

####BEGIN BIO/COATTAIL####

102 **ELAYNE CLIFT** ([elayne-clift.com](http://elayne-clift.com)) has written this column  
103 about women, politics, and social issues for two decades.

####END BIO/COATTAIL####

*LAST ISSUE IN WHICH THIS FILE CAN BE RUN:*

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####END MAXISSUE####

LINKS:

105

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VIDEO:

106

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LOGLINE (SOCIAL MEDIA):

107

####BEGIN LOGLINE####

####END LOGLINE####