

# Cognitive Dissonance

Nobody asked but ...

Today I saw a pickup truck that had a front plate that messaged “Don’t Tread on Me!” Then, when he passed I noticed the driver had an American flag decal on his back window. I wondered just who he thought was treading on him, if not the government that has usurped that flag as its avatar. Where do flags come from in human endeavor? Their original use was as military position markers. The flag standard is deployed so that troops can see the rallying point amid the fog of war. Also, symbolism is used so they can see who is on their side (I have often wondered how effective this may be with all the foppery shown with units, uniforms, and standards.) As distinct harbingers of war, the flag and heraldic symbols are not part of how I express my patriotism. I would rather plead my patriotic case for America by experiencing as much of its peaceful splendor as I can. I would rather give a narrative account or share pictures and sounds. A flag tells you nothing about Kentucky’s Red River Gorge, or the Land Between The Lakes, or Western Kentucky BarBQ, or a Spring day during the Keeneland Horseracing Meet, or a court-side seat for a University of Kentucky basketball game.

— Kilgore Forelle