

Impeachment: A Night at the Movies

The US House of Representatives soberly fulfills its constitutional obligation to investigate alleged wrongdoing by a sitting president, steadily building its case for that president's impeachment.

The Deep State schemes to remove a sitting president, trumping up (pun intended) supposed "high crimes and misdemeanors" and gaming a faux-constitutional "impeachment probe" to deny that president due process to which he's entitled.

Both of the previous paragraphs describe the same set of events. We're living through them right now, and we're in the grip of a second-level "Rashomon effect."

Per Wikipedia, that effect (named for a movie in which four witnesses offer contradictory descriptions of a murder) "describes a situation in which an event is given contradictory interpretations or descriptions by the individuals involved."

Extended to the audience, the effect plays out as two people watching the same film, each seeing it so differently from the other that for all intents and purposes they're "watching two different movies."

Both viewers are quite sure that their interpretations are correct, and it's highly unlikely that they'll come to any agreement as to what they both just objectively saw.

There's one thing that both viewers probably know, though:

The House is going to vote to impeach, because the President Donald J. Trump impeachment version of *Rashomon* is directed by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, a student of Russian playwright Anton Chekhov.

"If you say in the first chapter that there is a rifle hanging on the wall," wrote Chekhov, "in the second or third chapter it absolutely must go off. If it's not going to be fired, it shouldn't be hanging there."

When Pelosi announced the House impeachment inquiry on September 24, she was figuratively hanging a gun on the wall of the House chamber, after 2 1/2 years of resisting impeachment talk and suppressing impeachment efforts in the House.

Why? In addition to her theatrical acumen, Pelosi also knows basic arithmetic. She saw the votes were there to impeach.

SOMEONE was going to hang the gun on the wall.

SOMEONE was going to fire the gun.

Pelosi could direct the play, or she could settle for a bit part (and probably lose her position as Speaker).

If Pelosi's the director of *Rashomon: The House Impeaches Trump*, Trump himself is both producer and leading man. He's been begging for this role since before his inauguration. He commissioned the script, donated the props, and spent 2 1/2 years trying to get Pelosi to take the bait. He loves drama above all else and expects, based on experience, to profit politically from this production.

You've got opinions on the impeachment process. I do too. We're probably watching two different movies to at least some extent.

But in our hearts, we both know how this movie ends: The House will vote to impeach Trump, probably before Thanksgiving (disclosure: I've got a small bet in a prediction market that it will happen before the end of the year).

Coming soon: Trump returns as Colonel Nathan Jessup in *A Few Good Men: This Time It's Senatorial*.