



The American Flag is at Half-Mast Today

By William Eaton

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The American flag is at half-mast today because the person whose job it is to pull the thing all the way up, and who indeed sometimes does—unfortunately he got a call on his phone right when he was in the middle of doing his job. We can't tell you how sorry we are about that.

The American flag is at half-mast today because I—and frankly I don't know why they always expect me to do this job—but I had a dental appointment or one of my kids was sick or I just made an honest mistake, what's so bad about that? So maybe I thought it was a holiday when it wasn't. And, in any case, I sent an e-mail before noon, or maybe just a little bit after. I assumed that John, who's such a nice man, would pull the flag up, as he usually does when I am not able to get in right away. But obviously something went wrong,

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probably with the network—something is always going wrong with the network, don't you think? It's too bad, about the network and also about the flag.

I can personally assure you that the flag is not at half-mast today and that it has always been company policy to raise the flag to the very top of the mast except on those days when we receive official notification that an important person has died, which, our records will show clearly, we have not received in this case.

It is a sad day when, for whatever reason, the American flag does not make it all the way to the very top, where it of course belongs, and let me first assure all of you that my administration will do everything in its power to find out who among our internal enemies, who do not appreciate all that this country has done for them, or among our many external enemies, who will stop at nothing to oppose the imposition of American freedom and democracy on the rest of the world and to destroy our very way of life, our sources of oil and computer chips, and the many decent, law-abiding and hard-working consumers of our football and basketball T-shirts. And may I say further that, thanks to one of our great American traditions that has allowed our great presidents to ignore our great laws and our great constitution when they feel that great circumstances warrant such bold action, and thanks to our global hegemony and advanced military systems that allow us to kill, somewhat indiscriminately and certainly without bothering with so-called due process, which is not all it's cracked up to be—I can personally assure you that in this case, as in every case, evildoers will be identified and they will be killed, and a new department will be created and thousands if not millions of Americans will be given steadily low-paying jobs—not to actually pull up any flags, of course, but to ensure that—whether, whatever or whenever our flags are pulled or not—from this day forward correct procedures will be correctly followed.

I don't know why you think the American flag is at half-mast today. This is the height to which the flag has always been pulled, and we've never heard anyone complain about it before. I'm sorry if you see things differently. We'd be glad to allow you to give it a double-pull if you'd like. All you need do is register online for this absolutely free service which will also entitle you to be among the first to hear about our other great products.

We have heard that the American flag is at half-mast today. In such circumstances, when it turns out that no one important has died and yet the flag, for whatever reason, has never gotten pulled all the way up—normally a correction would be issued, so that the record comes to show that the flag was indeed—or, if you prefer, should have been or indeed should be—at full mast. But given that tomorrow we expect the flag will be back

up at the top, what we've decided is that this is a situation in which it is not appropriate to issue a correction or to take any further action regarding the flag's placement. It may well be that the puller-upper has had a good reason for making the decision she seems to have made, and in any case, it's just best, it's our policy; the senior management team has met to discuss this matter, and we have reviewed our decision with the Director, and again, making a correction, as if a mistake had been made—we have decided that this is not appropriate at the present time given our policies.

The American flag is at half-mast today because I, the God-forsaken puller-upper, yes, I was talking on the phone while working, and, yes, it was my cock-sucking wife on the other end who started telling me about how the car I just bought for her last week—and even though, yada-yada, didn't I remember how she had said she had her suspicions?—but no, the not unattractive saleswoman had told me the car been given the “100% Gold rating” under the new “No Regrets personalized inspection system®,” and 100% ratings were extremely rare, and I was lucky to be able to get such a car at such a price, and now it needs a goddamn new transmission, and . . . Frankly, I'm sorry about the flag, but you can go fuck yourself and this whole fucking country. I don't know why I even bother to come to work, to earn money for what? So I end up with a “new used” car that needs a brand-new-fucking-used transmission for a fucking \$1,999 plus tax, plus you can put right up your ass the new brakes and fuel-injection system it will also turn out to need absolutely positively before my credit card can go bust and I am allowed to move the thing from the garage to the junkyard and turn my plates in to your fucking Department of Motor Vehicles where—if you want to know my honest fucking opinion—the flag should always be at half-mast!

I understand that you are quite concerned about the fact that the American flag is at half-mast today, and even though, it seems, no one important has died, but this is a complex matter. I know you think it inappropriate that my campaign has received what you call “substantial” contributions from the Half-Mast Company and from the Sustainable Green Profit Agenda, which it may apparently have some involvement with. I have heard, too, as you apparently have, that this company has done some, perhaps not a lot, of outsourcing of flag raising to people who have the advantage of being born without arms and who are therefore happy to pull on flags as best they can for one dollar an hour and without health-insurance, vacations or weekends. And may I personally say that I think that, in the long run, it is not only better for the global economy, it is also better for our economy and indeed for you and me if our flag-raising is handled in the most cost-effective manner, and especially when you consider the number of flags that need raising and how the entrepreneurial genius of Half-Mast's founder and her venture capital backers have led the company to new market highs, and this even as the company has yet to turn a profit and there have been some glitches in its wonderful program to allow each star of the flag to memorialize an American

killed by terrorists or friendly fire, while also advertising the products of one of our 50 greatest multinational corporations, the vast majority of whose profits are reported in small-island tax havens, but whose headquarters are right here in the United States of America!

The American flag is at half-mast today, but I am single woman and gluten is now giving me hives and also nuts, and I think I'm on the spectrum, and nobody realized this when I was growing up, and I just heard that my neighbor's son-in-law's mindfulness app got an orphan virus and she wants me to go visit him in the hospital.

We are expecting very high call volumes. If you would please spell your first name and last name and clearly state the account number that appears on the back of your bill, the last four digits of your Social Security number, your zip code and your birthdate, we appreciate your patience, a representative will be right with you and will not be able to fully understand English or be able to help you with your problem, which, if you would please consult your contract, you will see it is not our responsibility, and at the end of this call it will be appreciated if you could take a short survey because customer service is very important to us.

Photo by Mark Wilson/Getty Images, as appearing in a [Slate article, December 17, 2012](#).