TO: Interested Parties
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RE: NPA Focus Group – Resistance Grandmas

RESISTANCE GRANDMAS: THE RICH, LATE MIDDLE-AGED, WHITE WOMEN WHO FUEL THE LEFT'S RAGE

I. Shock: The Sign, the Slur, and the Justification.

In the year since President Trump's historic victory, commentators have obsessed over what they call the radicalization of young white men. But a quieter, just as revealing transformation has swept another group once known for moderation and civility: older, affluent white women. This change came into sharp focus last August in Arlington, Virginia, when a supporter of Democratic gubernatorial candidate Abigail Spanberger appeared at a rally opposing Republican Winsome Earle-Sears, who is Black. The woman (white, stylish, and late-middle-aged) held a hand-lettered sign that read:

> **"HEY, WINSOME! IF TRANS CAN'T SHARE YOUR BATHROOM, THEN BLACKS CAN'T SHARE MY WATER FOUNTAIN!"**

The comparison stunned onlookers. Its deliberate echo of Jim Crow-era segregation (when Black Americans were barred from public spaces, including water fountains) clashed violently with the rally's theme of inclusion. That sign revealed three things about its maker:

- she fancied herself clever,
- she believed she was modeling tolerance, and
- she never noticed the racism in her own message.

This incident captured a larger paradox of modern progressivism. How do people certain of their moral enlightenment so easily recreate the intolerance they claim to fight. And it raised a question few analysts have touched, what happened to the affluent, college-educated women who once anchored suburban moderation?

We began paying attention to this group we're calling the Resistance Grandmas, for their strong identification with anything that opposes Donald Trump or any Republican.

II. Numbers Behind the Shift.

At our Trump-aligned consulting firm, which handles polling and data analysis, we wanted to know how this change took root. On the surface, voting patterns among white voters and women

haven't moved much in a decade. In 2012, Mitt Romney carried whites 59-39; in 2024, Donald Trump won them 57-42. Barack Obama won women 55-44; Kamala Harris carried them 53-45. Those shifts are negligible and well within the margin of error. The real story isn't gender or race. It's **education and income**.

In 2012, college graduates leaned Republican, 51-47, while postgraduates favored Democrats 55-42. By 2024, that pattern had flipped and widened: Harris won college grads 53-45 and postgrads 59-38. Non-college voters went the other way. High-school grads and those with some college, once evenly split, gave Trump a 56-43 lead.

Income followed suit. Voters earning under $50,000, once a 60-38 Obama bloc, shifted to a 50-48 Trump edge. Those earning over $100,000 flipped from a 54-44 Romney majority to a 51-47 Harris win.

The result is a stark **class-by-education divide** that now defines American politics. In 2024 exit polls, Harris carried white college-educated women by 17 points; Trump won white non-college women by 28, a staggering 45-point gap. That split dwarfs any shift by race or gender and has become the defining fault line of our political era.

III. What Broke the Resistance Grandmas?

The data raised a deeper question. How did it come to be that a Democratic voter could hold a sign equating a Black woman's views with segregation and believe she was displaying *tolerance*? And did her fellow Democrats secretly agree with her? As it turns out, they did and do. It takes a remarkable degree of moral gymnastics to justify it, but they manage. So, the real question isn't what "*broke*" young white men, as the media keeps asking, but what **radicalized rich white women**, and whether they even realize it.

To find out, we convened a focus group last month in Northern Virginia. The participants were white, liberal, middle-aged, college-educated, upper–middle-class suburban women, the exact demographic that has become the emotional and financial engine of the modern Democratic Party. These Resistance Grandmas spoke of "*bubbles*" and "*silos*" of opinion in which Americans supposedly live, yet each was convinced that *she herself* lived outside those bubbles. Their wealth, education, and "*virtue*," they believed, gave them unique access to truth. In their view, others (especially conservatives) were trapped in ignorance created by poverty, religion, or lack of education.

Republican voters, they told us, were not merely misinformed but *morally defective*: "*stupid*," "*poor*," and often "*evil*." They also confessed to fearing that young people were being "*poisoned*" by right-wing voices like the late Charlie Kirk, the conservative activist recently assassinated while visiting college campuses to debate liberal ideas. Politics, for these women, was not a civic duty but a personal identity. Their hyper-engagement made them feel superior, proof that they were not only informed but righteous. Even when their sources were demonstrably wrong, they clung to them as articles of faith.

To call their outlook arrogant or disconnected would be an understatement. In short, the Resistance Grandmas are **broken but utterly convinced that everyone else is the problem.**

IV. Inside the Room.

When the moderator brought up the Virginia rally and the controversial sign, the women immediately recognized the incident. Most agreed that the wording was "*ugly*" or "*unfortunate*," yet several defended the intent behind it. "*The message was bad*," one participant said, "*but Republicans have already taken it too far with their trans bans. Democrats have to punch back.*" Another hesitated. "*I'm conflicted. Are we defending it just because it came from someone who shares a lot of our beliefs?*" A third offered a different perspective. "*Trump started this,*" she said. "*He made it normal for people to say whatever they want*."

As the conversation continued, a participant tried to explain the sign's logic. "*I wouldn't hold up that sign myself*," she said, "*but I think the person was just trying to find an analogy*."

The discussion drifted into history. One woman mentioned the old signs on businesses that had excluded racial and religious groups, and she repeated the language out loud.

*"You used to have hotels that said no n*****s, no Jews, no dogs,"* she said.

Her comment drew little reaction; the group simply moved on. Throughout the exchange, the tone mixed self-criticism with justification. Participants wanted to distance themselves from the sign's wording but not from its sentiment. The need to appear compassionate clashed with a readiness to excuse hostility when it seemed to serve a larger cause.

V. Self-Perception and Moral Authority.

As the conversation widened beyond the rally, a picture began to form of how the participants saw themselves in the political landscape. They described their circle as educated and globally aware, able to see issues from a wider perspective than their neighbors or relatives. Several contrasted their situation with what they imagined of Republican voters, whom they associated with limited means and information.

One woman put it bluntly: *"We're the knowledgeable ones. When people start feeling the real effects of what they voted for, that's when they'll change."*

Another recounted an argument with a cousin who planned to vote for a conservative candidate because of farm policy. *"He's just thinking about his daily life and making enough money to support his family,"* she said, contrasting that focus with her own concerns about global impact. *"People get stuck thinking about how it affects them that day, not the bigger picture."*

The comments revealed how strongly education and affluence shaped their sense of civic virtue. Because they could follow the news closely and discuss it at length, they considered themselves better equipped to decide what the country needed. They regarded this as a

responsibility rather than a privilege, but their language often implied hierarchy—an assumption that others would eventually have to learn from their example.

Politics, for many of them, had become less about persuasion than stewardship. Their compassion for people they considered misguided coexisted with irritation at those same people's resistance. The result was a mix of empathy and condescension that defined much of the group's tone throughout the session.

VI. Information and Influence.

When the moderator asked where the women turned for news, nearly all described themselves as "*constantly online*." They said they read several newspapers, followed national cable outlets, and subscribed to a mix of podcasts and email newsletters. Many used the same phrase, "*I read everything*" to explain how they judged what to believe.

They were sharply critical of media bias yet confident in their ability to tell truth from distortion. *"People who only watch one network don't get the full picture,"* one participant said. Another added, *"That's why we read so much. We can tell what's really going on."*

Asked which sources they trusted most, the group surprised no one by naming a single voice in unison: historian **Heather Cox Richardson**, author of the daily newsletter *Letters from an American*. To them, her writing was indispensable. "*It's like a summary of everything that happened, and she cites all the sources*," one woman said. "*She's a historian, so she gives perspective*," another added. "*I start every morning with her emails*."

Several said they admired Richardson's calm tone and academic background, calling her work "*objective*" and "r*eassuring*." The newsletter served as both a digest of daily events and a framework for interpreting them; it told them not only what had happened but how to feel about it.

At the same time, their confidence in being well informed sometimes slipped into certainty. Participants who distrusted traditional outlets often accepted Richardson's interpretations without question, citing her credentials as proof of accuracy. Their discussion illustrated how information, identity, and belonging have become intertwined: reading the same sources was not only about staying current but about confirming membership in a community that saw itself as enlightened.

VII. Case Study: Reaction to a Political Killing.

One topic that brought these themes into sharper focus was the recent assassination of conservative activist Charlie Kirk, who had been touring college campuses to debate students on political issues. The moderator mentioned the story only briefly, but the response was immediate.

Several participants said they were shaken, though not by the violence itself so much as by the political fallout. "*Trump immediately blamed the radical left*," one said. "*That was irresponsible and unbelievable*." Another added that she had posted online in frustration: "*Why are people canonizing this horrible man?*"

Their theories about the crime reflected the same mix of certainty and suspicion that colored their news habits. One woman speculated that allies of the right might have orchestrated the murder to distract from unrelated scandals. Others doubted any clear motive could ever be known but agreed that the episode would "*get twisted*" in the media.

The discussion showed how quickly outrage could turn into calculation. Even while condemning violence in principle, the Resistance Grandmas treated the event mainly as a political problem, a narrative to manage rather than a tragedy to mourn. The conversation then drifted toward broader fears about misinformation, social media, and the next election.

VIII. Fear, Anger, and a Sense of Threat.

As the conversation shifted from information sources to emotion, the tone in the room changed. The participants spoke openly about their fears for the country and the frustration that constant political exposure brings. Several said they felt they had to stay vigilant at all times *"on alert"* as one described it, because politics now touched every part of daily life.

A recurring worry was the influence of social media on younger relatives. "*My nephew's twenty-one, and he doesn't vote the same way I do,*" one woman said. "*He sees ten-second clips online and thinks that's the news.*" Another added, "*I'm terrified of that with my son, who's fifteen. I'm always checking what he's looking at to make sure he's not getting pulled into something.*"

These comments reflected a broader anxiety about how quickly ideas spread and how easily misinformation might shape a new generation. Beneath the concern for their children was a fear of losing cultural influence, the sense that they no longer controlled the conversation.

The women also described the emotional cost of following politics so closely. Several said that keeping up with events left them exhausted and angry. "*In general, my life hasn't really changed much,*" one participant admitted, "*except that I'm angry all the time.*" Others nodded, echoing the same sentiment. Their engagement had begun as a moral obligation but had turned into a source of tension and fatigue.

Underlying it all was the belief that public life had grown more dangerous. They referenced recent acts of political violence and worried that the rhetoric surrounding elections could ignite something worse. Even while condemning threats and attacks, they expressed little confidence that the atmosphere would calm. What remained was a mixture of fear and weariness, a sense that outrage had become permanent and that no one, not even they, could step outside it.

During one of the final exchanges, a participant described her internal debate over whether to report a longtime friend who had privately admitted being inside the Capitol on January 6, 2021. "*I went back and forth for two weeks,*" she said. "*In the end I just went on the website and told them she was there.*" The group's reaction was immediate and approving. "*Good for you,*" several said. The moment revealed how personal loyalty could give way to political duty, how moral certainty could eclipse hesitation.

The scene recalled a line from the film *Caddyshack*, when Judge Smails insists, "I've sentenced boys younger than you to the gas chamber. Didn't want to do it. Felt I owed it to them." The humor in that moment underscored the seriousness here: the women believed they, too, owed it to the country to enforce their own sense of justice.

IX. Leadership and the Future.

Near the end of the session, the conversation turned from anger to the question of leadership. What kind of person, the moderator asked, might calm the nation's divisions?

The women agreed that they wanted a figure who could "*lower the temperature*." "*I just want someone steady,*" one said. "*A leader who tells the truth and doesn't make everything a fight.*" Others echoed her, calling for honesty, composure, and decency over ideology. But when specific names were mentioned, optimism gave way to doubt. Each potential candidate was quickly ruled out, too polarizing, too cautious, too moderate, too extreme. The participants' standards seemed impossible to satisfy.

Identity also entered the discussion. Some admitted that, even while embracing inclusion in principle, they worried about electability. "*I like Governor Shapiro*," one said, "*but I don't think the country's ready for a Jewish president*." Another mentioned a different favorite. "*I love Pete*," she said, referring to Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg, "*but he's gay, and I don't think that helps us win*."

The contradiction was clear: the Resistance Grandmas prized diversity and tolerance but feared that those same qualities might cost their party an election. Strategy began to outweigh conviction. One participant summarized the emerging consensus: "*Maybe it's time to just pick someone who can win, even if he's another straight, white, Christian guy*."

Despite the uncertainty, everyone agreed that the next election would be decisive. Some hoped that a Democratic victory would "*restore sanity*"; others doubted that any leader could reverse the climate of hostility. "*Even if the right person won,*" one woman said quietly, "*half the country would still call it rigged.*"

By the end of two hours, the participants said they felt both informed and powerless, caught between their ideals and their fatigue. Their search for a leader mirrored their own ambivalence: a yearning for calm in a culture that keeps rewarding outrage.

X. What the Conversation Revealed.

The Northern Virginia focus group offered a narrow but revealing window into a widening national divide. The women were articulate, educated, and intensely engaged. They spoke about empathy, civic duty, and the need for decency in public life, yet their own words traced the fatigue and distortion that constant outrage creates. Perspective, even for the best-intentioned, is hard to keep inside a never-ending argument. Three themes ran through almost every exchange:

- **Certainty** that education and information grant moral clarity.

- **Fear** of misinformation, of losing influence, of what the other side might do next.

- **Fatigue,** the slow realization that anger itself has become routine. Together these impulses twisted around one another until conviction and anxiety were impossible to tell apart.

What emerged was a picture of the political horseshoe, opposites so distant they curve back toward each other, defined less by policy than by distrust and moral pride. The Resistance Grandmas' frustration mirrored that of many on the other side, each camp certain it alone sees reality clearly.

As the session ended, they voiced a small hope that the country might still find a way back to calm and common purpose. Whether that hope can survive a culture built on outrage is uncertain. But their conversation left one clear lesson. Beneath polls and party lines, the real contest for the nation's future is over how Americans think, speak, and live with one another.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

The foregoing is a work of commentary based on reporting, interviews, and composite observations. Names, occupations, and identifying details of private individuals have been altered or omitted to protect privacy. Quotations from public figures and events are included for purposes of fair comment and critique. The opinions expressed are those of the author and do not purport to represent the views of any organization or employer. Every effort has been made to ensure that factual references to public events and data are accurate at the time of writing.