

POLITICS AS USUAL: House of Cards

House of Cards -- Aurora-style

By Alison Collins-Mrakas

I don't watch a lot of television. I have better things to do with my time than vegetating in front of a TV screen. I have 1 or 2 shows that I watch regularly (I won't tell you what they are lest you judge me?and, no, there's no ?housewives? in the title?).

Of course, I also watch Power and Politics with Evan Solomon because it's one of the best political shows out there.

I like all things political ? and TV shows about politics are, of course, my favourite. In the late 90s and early 2000s, my favourite show was The West Wing. The writing was great, as was the acting. But, what was most appealing about the show was the sense that we, as viewers, were getting insider's access to the corridors of power; how decisions were made; what was hidden; what was revealed. It was fascinating to see how things were/are ?really? done in the White House.

Fast forward 10 years and we have a new political drama on TV (okay, it's not on TV, it's on Netflix, which I rather grudgingly finally gave in to the hubby's wishes and agreed to get it?cable and Netflix for a person who never even had cable until I got married?)

Anyway, House of Cards is the buzz of the political world. It's an extraordinary show (we binged watched the first season last weekend. All I can say is ? OMG!). It is extremely well written. The acting is superb. Kevin Spacey is simply malevolent as Vice President Frank Underwood. And Robin Wright is positively sociopathic as his wife ? and partner in crime ? Claire Underwood. House of Cards is like the West Wing ? the nasty years ? much, much nastier. It's like Jed Bartlett has been replaced by a de Medici and advised by Machiavelli (with an assist from Karl Rove). The machinations and the double dealing are intricate and terrifying, but wholly believable.

It is the dirty underbelly of what real politics are like.

So, why am I discussing my TV viewing habits? Well, because recent events in the PC nomination race seemed to be ripped from the script of an episode of House of Cards.

How else to explain the truly extraordinary situation our riding is in. First, one of the PC candidates' nomination applications is rejected. That decision has been subject to much ?discussion? and derision by some ? certainly in the twittersphere, that bastion of reasoned discourse and sanity.

And now, one of the remaining two candidates has withdrawn from the nomination race citing threats to himself and his family. Threats, to a candidate for nomination. I've never heard anything like it.

This isn't some third world country we're talking about where candidates ?disappear? before their names are even printed on a ballot. This is Canada. We don't threaten our candidates for office! Yes, attack ads could be called threats one supposes but they are reputational threats. This was ? allegedly - a direct threat ? that now involves the police, for heaven's sake. Unbelievable.

So, just what the heck is going on? Is this some half-baked political strategy? Or have people simply lost their minds? How else can you explain such a colossally stupid move as to threaten a candidate? Whose ends does a threat serve? As a political tactic, it has failed miserably.

Politics is all about the long game. Rank amateurs play the short game.

Frank Underwood would not be impressed.

Until next week, stay informed, stay involved because, this is after all Our Town.