

A little about me.

I was born in Augusta, Georgia in August of 1964 to Rev. Aurel H. (Monty) Muntean and Barbara T. Muntean. I am the quintessential American, and a true Baby Boomer. My father was a first generation American born from Romanian immigrants. He was born and raised in Dearborn, Michigan in the early 1920's. His father immigrated in the previous decade, and was a decades long employee of the Ford Motor Company. My mother was born and raised in Moultrie, Georgia in the mid-1930's and was a granddaughter to a farmer and prominent local politician. Her family immigrated to Virginia in the mid-1600's. So, I am both the son of immigration, and a Son of the Revolution, born of a WWII Vet and a child born and raised during the Great Depression.

My father fought in World War II as a navigator on a B-24 based in England. After the war, he went to college and worked for a few years. He settled in Georgia and eventually decided to get an advanced degree and enter seminary as an Episcopal Priest. He met my mother while both were studying at the University of Georgia in the mid-50's. After completion of his seminary training, he was placed in south Georgia as an associate rector. They became quite active in the Civil Rights Movement in the early 60's and, accordingly, they were moved frequently by the church for their safety. My father was an early member of the Southern Christian Leadership Council. By the late '60's, my father decided to leave the clergy and the movement. We moved to Clayton County, Georgia where my father explored other career opportunities and my mother continued her career as an educator. For the remainder of his life, my father struggled to find employment worthy of his considerable talents, and we faced considerable challenges financially as a result. He passed in 2013 at the age of 89. My mother was not only an educator. She was also very active in politics. She became a primary lobbyist for teachers and education to the Georgia State Legislature, and was elected as President of the Georgia Association of Educators in the late '70's. My parents divorced in the mid-'70's and my siblings and I lived with our mother through High School. She passed in 1985 after a long battle with breast cancer at the age of 50. They lived amazing lives and did great things. As tough as our childhood was, I owe them a debt that could never be paid, and am honored to have their name.

As for me, I graduated from Forest Park Senior High School in 1982, and Emory University in 1986. When I left for college, I was relieved to know that I could live without the weight of the expectations on me. I was barely able to afford the school. My first month on campus I found a job at a grocery store just off campus. Instead of 'that guy who thinks he's...', I became Kroger John, and worked there my entire time at Emory. I added a second job during the summers. Being a nobody had its appeal. I had some great friends in High School, but I walked away and did not look back. I was trying to run away from the expectations and did not want ANYONE at Emory to know them. As I have reconnected with many of them over the past decade or so, I realize how foolish that was.

At Emory, I met and studied under some brilliant people. Emory in the '80's was a very special place. I made some great friends, but never let any of them know the expectations for me. While at Emory, I applied for and was selected to intern for the Carter Library to help plan an upcoming symposium on nuclear non-proliferation. Ultimately, I was chosen to be the Chief Intern for the symposium. During the planning process, we had routine meetings with President Carter. At one of those meetings, I had an exchange with him that inspired me to decide my post-college career. I decided that instead of the poor boy becoming a stock broker, I should join the military to serve my country. This was the best decision of my life. Amazing people, remarkable training, honor, trust, and purpose, desire to serve, it checked a lot of boxes for me, and no one in the service knew me from Adam. I could just be me. It took almost a year and a half after graduation to get my deployment orders. After considering joining the Navy (I was not eligible to fly), I entered the Army in August of '87 and served until I relinquished company command at the end of '95. These were the best 8 years of my life. I met my now ex-wife, had my 4 children, worked for, with and over some of the most incredible people anyone could know, and saw things few people could see. Although I never saw combat, I DID see the Berlin Wall come down while stationed there from 1988-91, and still have pieces of it in my home. Over the years, I have often told people that regardless of what happens in my life, I have already had the 2 best jobs a man can have: Dad, and Tank Company Commander in the US Army.

While in the Army, not only did I learn a lot about leadership and purpose, but I also learned a powerful lesson about me: I am NOT a politician. I cannot lie and deceive for a living (I learned this lesson while working for a stock broker my senior year at Emory). I cannot set up a colleague for failure. I cannot promote myself at the expense of others. I cannot seek to blame others for my failures. I can be diplomatic, but I can make a sailor blush, too. I could LEAD, but not by using those tools. This also reinforced my doubts about the expectations for me.

When I decided to enter the Army, I did not make the commitment to stay on active duty until retirement. My commitment to myself, and stated directly when I interviewed during my recruitment, was that I would give all I could to learn and develop in a world that I have no knowledge of and would stay in as long as I felt that I would be competitive to command at the next level. Whether or not I could stay for at least 20 years and receive a pension, if I was not able to command in the future, I would look for opportunities outside. I did not join for the security of a paycheck. I joined to lead. By the end of '95, I had had a few issues with my immediate superior that would jeopardize my ability to compete for command later in my career. Combined with the ongoing draw down of combat forces, issues of my faith in our government leaders at the highest levels, and an opportunity to help a family business I decided to leave the service. Despite the fact that my company's success had provided a pathway to keep my career moving forward, I knew that as the ONLY officer on the Army from Emory that wasn't a lawyer, doctor or nurse, the above factors convinced me to forego that path and leave the service. Since I had served the required 8 years of service, I was unable to continue my career in the reserve components. I cherish that time of my life and give thanks and honor to all of those that served with me. I do not regret this decision. I know it was the best decision we could make at the time.

Unfortunately, my life met a rather similar fate as my father when he left the clergy. The opportunity to help my brother did not work out as expected, and I had to carve a new life forward. Despite working multiple jobs, we struggled mightily to try and make ends meet. Ultimately, those efforts failed and we declared bankruptcy in '98. Eventually, I found a job in the floor care industry, and a few years later moved up to the flooring sales side of the industry. I have been in that industry since, and have had moderate to middling success. I was able to provide a decent if not simple life for my children, but after walking away from a home during the mortgage crisis to the endless struggles to keep afloat, by the time our youngest completed high school, my marriage was done. After almost 24 years, we parted amicably, and I consider her and her new husband as friends. I tell people all of the time that I am happily divorced. We continued to support our children thru college and law school as a team.

But that failure and the choices made before it caused me to begin a soul searching process to figure out what I ought to do. I continued to struggle to meet all of my obligations and at one point point, this raised enough suspicion to face charges and I spent a night in jail. Despite the fact that I never had to go to a trial, the charges were never formally dismissed. I just know that none of my actions were ever illegal, and were never intended to cause harm to anyone.

After that episode, I was fully convinced that high expectations for me had no basis in reality. As I continued my soul searching, however, I always received the same answer: this is YOUR task. This is your calling. You struggle because you have denied it.

So, even if I accept that answer, the NEXT question to answer is this: how on EARTH does a relative nobody with no wealth, name recognition or position, with no status in the political system, have ANY chance to enter and succeed in the political process? When will the American people actually be in any position to hear anything I have to say?

The answer? Well...

In all seriousness, the answer STARTS by my acceptance of the task. Once I have done that, the first thing to do is to announce my task. After that, I have to be truthful, patient, and firm in my beliefs. If I can do those things, then the rest will follow. I have no idea how my message will be received, or if anyone will even listen to it coming from a failed, flawed man? I just know that NOW is the time that I have to say it.

The bottom line: this nation is at the precipice for the end of the American Experiment. The only way to change the outcome is to do something never before done. Almost as outrageous as a group of shopkeepers and farmers standing up to the most powerful nation on earth to do something never before seen in the history of civilization.

I know there are solutions for all of the issues we face as a nation. I know that We the People can solve them. I firmly believe that they can be solved with grace, mercy, love and peace. And I know the system we have in place now wants nothing to do with it.