

Kinjies and Me

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Kinji is a metaphor I've used privately and now I'm going public with it. It refers to realizing that something isn't what you had been led to believe it was. "I get it now, that's a kinji, how about that?"

The kinji metaphor, or concept, comes from a writing I did for a personal website I've maintained since 2007, robertsgriffin.com. www.robertsgriffin.com. It's included in an unpublished book of writings of mine called *What Came to Mind: Thoughts Late in Life*. Here's a link to a [free copy of that book](#). I called the writing "The Hollywood Argyles and Kinji Shibuya." The Hollywood Argyles was a musical group that in 1960 had a number one hit record of the novelty song "Alley Oop." Here is a [link](#) to the song online. Kinji Shibuya was a professional wrestler back in the '50s.

My writing pointed out that in fact there was no such group as the Hollywood Argyles. Someone named Gary Paxton made the "Alley Oop" record one afternoon in Los Angeles with musicians who were around the recording studio at the time. The studio was on the corner of Hollywood Boulevard and Argyle Avenue, thus the name Paxton came up with for the non-existent group. With Paxton's approval, musicians traveled the country posing as the Hollywood Argyles. I attended one of those imposter performances at the Flamingo Club in Saint Paul, Minnesota and bought the ruse completely.

As with the Hollywood Argyles, Kinji Shibuya wasn't what I thought he was. Here is the part of the website/book writing that

deals with Kinji Shibuya. After this excerpt, I'll end this piece with six prominent examples of my current kinjies.

In the 1950s as a kid, I watched wrestling on television every week from Minneapolis on a local channel, like 8:00 p.m. on a Friday. I understand now that televising the matches was a good deal for both the television station and for Verne Gagne, the promoter of the matches and a star wrestler himself. The matches were held in a downtown Minneapolis arena in any case, so there were no production costs to the station beyond the outlay for a couple of cameras, an announcer, and a technician or two, and the wrestling shows got good ratings. For Verne, since only the preliminary matches were shown on television and the main events were hyped during the telecasts, it enticed people to come to his promotions.

There I'd be, week after week—I suppose I was thirteen, in there—sprawled alone on a dilapidated couch with a bag of Old Dutch potato chips in front of a 17-inch black-and-white Zenith television set that looked like a small refrigerator on the second floor of Mr. Jensen's house that my mother, dad, and I rented from him. A regular on those wrestling shows was Kinji Shibuya. Nothing subtle about the personas of the wrestlers in those years (or now): Kinji Shibuya was a sneaky, evil Jap straight from Japan. His presentation played well back then because this wasn't long after World War II, a time when we had been conditioned to hate the Japanese with a passion—kind of like now with Putin, but even worse. Check out the 1943 Hollywood film "[Gung Ho](#)" on YouTube sometime to get a sense of what anti-Japanese propaganda was like in those years.



Kinji Shibuya, short and stocky with a burr haircut, would enter the ring before his matches in bare feet wearing some kind of Japanese robe, a kimono or something, with a sinister look on his face to a chorus of boos from the crowd. For sure, I didn't like him lounging there on the couch as I was watching him on TV. Before a match started, he would squat in his corner with his back ramrod straight and raise one bent leg with a flexed foot in the air and slam his foot to the mat, bam! and then do the same thing with the other leg, bam! and then, smirking, malevolence personified, rub his hands conspiratorially together in front of his chest, the whole business an alien, scary Jap ritual of some kind.

The actual match was basically given over to Kinji Shibuya and his clean-cut, all-American opponent shuffling sideways in a circle eyeing each other, and then they'd grab one another around the back of the neck and tussle a bit and then break apart and start shuffling in a circle again. The entire match, they rarely left their feet. During brief episodes of action, typically Shibuya would be getting his just comeuppance. He'd have his back up against the

ropes with his arms out to the side and his hands grasping the upper rope taking punches to the stomach from the valourous American and grimacing and grunting grandly with each punch—ugh, ugh, ugh! For some reason, he was completely immobilized and helpless on these occasions.

Punches with closed fists were against the rules of wrestling; that's what the announcer said. Open fists where you hit people with your palm were OK, but no knuckles. Even though closed fist punches were illegal, with Japs they were entirely justified, plus there was something American about them, the real deal, even patriotic, John Wayne the movie actor and all that, not foreign, ineffectual open-hand karate chops like Kinji Shibuya employed, so we cheered our hero on no matter if he broke the rules or not.

The referee, taking note of this transgression of the rules, the punching to the stomach, would ever so gently tap our surrogate, the good guy all-American, on the shoulder and shake his head no, you can't do that. When that mild reminder had no effect, the punching going on unabated, ugh, ugh, ugh, the referee would start counting in slow, deliberate fashion, raising and lowering his right arm way up and way down. "One! . . . Two! . . . Three! . . ." At some number a penalty was going to be imposed, though I never found out what the number or penalty was, because at four the virtuous rule-breaker would stop and take a step back and the circle-shuffle would start up again. Evidently, you could do anything for a count of four at least, even punching with your knuckles.

The shuffling and punching and a few headlocks and arm twists, plus some bounces off the ropes, went on for I suppose fifteen minutes. The bounces off the ropes involved both wrestlers, for some unknown reason, to suddenly start running rapidly back and forth across the ring bouncing off the ropes. They'd zip past each other three or four times and then stop and pose, glaring at one another and letting the excitement of what had just occurred, all the

running back and forth, sink in. Then, out of nowhere it seemed, Kinji Shibuya would pull a sneaky, dirty, Jap stunt à la Pearl Harbor and win the match. Suddenly, it was over. Why couldn't the referee have seen the low, underhanded stunt Kinji Shibuya had connived to pull? It was obvious to the rest of us—the announcer, the paying customers, and me—but the referee had somehow missed it. Then Kinji Shibuya, victorious, leering in that devious Jap way of his, would put on his un-American kimono or whatever it was and leave the ring. He got away with it this time, but just wait until next week's match. He'll get what he deserves then and I'll be there watching on TV. But next week would come and darned if he didn't fool the referee again and right at the end chalk up another unfair victory!

I later found out that Kinji Shibuya was actually Jerry Shibuya from Utah, a former college football player who lived a quiet suburban life with his wife and children. Oh.

So that's where the kinji metaphor, concept, whatever to call it, comes from. Kinji was himself a kinji, not what I thought he was. I'll list six major kinjies for me these days with the idea that doing it might prompt you to come up with some kinjies of your own.

The first kinji is World War II. This goes back to the late 1990s. I was conducting interviews for a book about the white nationalist William Pierce.¹ Up to that point I had held the accepted view of that war—you know, Hitler, evil incarnate, bent on conquering the world, was stopped from pulling it off by the forces of righteousness in *The Good War*. Pierce was just speaking his mind—he was making no effort to shake up my thinking about World War II—but nevertheless he did, or anyway he started a reconsideration of that bloodbath. All to say, Churchill is no longer my hero.

A second kinji—and again it's related to my Pierce connection—is pretty much all center stage purveyors of truth and morality to the

masses: movie and television show creators, major publisher authors, journalists (including “the newspaper of record” *The New York Times*), politicians, heavy traffic websites, textbook writers, and classroom lecturers. Pierce was billed by the mainstream media and others in the know as this hate-filled bigot holed up in a guarded compound in West Virginia—“the most dangerous man in America” they called him. When I got to meet him, he turned out to be a quiet, sensible, self-effacing, bookish PhD in physics who didn’t hate anybody. If Pierce wasn’t as he was portrayed, who and what else wasn’t? As it’s turned out, enough else wasn’t that it kinjied me.

A third kinji, the whole white villainy thing. I was an adult during the heyday of the black civil rights movement—the marches in the South, Martin Luther King, the evil of segregation, the lowlife Southern whites with their head-busting clubs and nooses. I bought the idea that whites as a whole were down and dirty bad guys who deserve to get screwed over in any way you can come up with. That whites were my race, me, that my father came from rural Georgia, put a check on that perspective just a tad, but very little. The power of propaganda and social pressure (snubs are the least you’ll endure if you get caught with the wrong attitude). Movies like “To Kill a Mocking Bird” and “Mississippi Burning” and every television show reinforced my negative outlook on an entire race of people, not only now but for all time. Writing the Pierce book in particular—Pierce again—encouraged me look at racial realities for myself and find books that were not on the reading list, as it were. The outcome is that I broke from my strong predilection to hide out with old French movies and 19th-century Russian novels and takeout submarine sandwiches to advocate for whites as a race. The racial area never ceases to surprise me. I think of an article I started writing around the time of George Floyd’s death. This was 2020, not that long ago. Like everybody, I assumed that Derek Chauvin the cop was guilty of murdering Floyd and I was going to figure out the best possible

defense of Chauvin at his trial and got into it and it hit me, “Damn, the guy’s innocent!”²

Jews and Israel as unimpeachable good guys in life’s drama has been kinjied. Nowadays, if a Jew has written a book or article or is proposing a policy or has made a movie, I don’t automatically, as I once did, nod a Pavlovian yes. I think critically about its merits and implications. Israel isn’t *a priori* blameless to me anymore. They are either to blame or not and I’ll mull it over. I note that Israel is only 263 miles long and from ten to 71 miles wide and think about how much attention and support and resources it gets and what’s going on with that. I certainly don’t want Jews hurt, but with equal intensity I don’t want Jews hurting anybody. I’ve had it with organized destruction and killing—war, terrorism—I don’t care who’s doing it.³

The women’s movement has gotten kinjied. Betty Friedan and her comrades-in-arms like Gloria Steinem in the early days, the ‘60s, Friedan’s book *The Feminine Mystique*⁴ and all, sounded good to me, but as the years went on, what Hemingway called his bullshit detector kept going off for me. These days, I’m sympathetic to men’s concerns and the traditional family and I’m on the side of keeping biological males out of girls’ and women’s sports. I’m sympathetic to gays⁵ and transsexuals, and—the talk this election season—cat ladies, as well as cat gentlemen, for that matter. I’m especially for whites being one of them, but I’m also for blacks and Asians and Hispanics and Jews and Arabs and American Indians and every other category of human being on the planet. At the same time as I say this about collectivities, however, I see our fundamental challenge in life as an individual one: become the truest, wisest, most productive, most decent, most honorable, and happiest person you can manage in the finite time allotted to you on this earth. Sing your unique song and look out for yourself and yours, find someone to love who’ll love you back, wish everyone

well and help them when you can, try not to harm anybody, even in small ways, be kind, and then die, and try to leave some good behind. That's my take on it.

A sixth, and last, kinji I'll mention, is really a rekinji. The first two decades of my life, I was wholeheartedly a patriotic American—the Founding Fathers, the Constitution and Bill of Rights, our proud heritage, I pledge allegiance to the flag. In my day, elementary and secondary schools didn't badmouth the U.S. as they do now. After I became an adult, that positive view of America was kinjied by the people I earlier called center stage purveyors of truth and morality: “Let me tell you about slavery and racism and imperialism and all the economic and social injustice.” It sounded good and got me some dinner invitations. Over the past couple of decades, however, I've kinjied that kinji. Which is not to say I think America was, or is, unflawed; a place can be a great place without being an unflawed place. I'm the son of a barely literate barber. I couldn't look you in the eye. I accepted the charge I now see at the heart of what this country is about: to take personal responsibility for making something worthwhile out of myself. I worked on my character and got an education and did the best I could with whatever job I was able to get (I'm doing my best with this article at the moment), and it's worked out that now very near the end I'm gratified by what I've done with my life and at peace and, yes, I'm proud of myself. The United States of America gave me the chance to make that happen and I'm incredibly thankful for it. To people who denigrate my country and its people and their ancestors, my ancestors: how about if you stick that where the sun don't shine.

Endnotes

1. Robert S. Griffin, *The Fame of a Dead Man's Deeds: An Up-Close Portrait of White Nationalist William Pierce*, FirstBooks Library, 2001.

2. Robert S. Griffin, “If I Had Made the Closing Argument in Defense of Derek Chauvin . . .” *The Occidental Observer*, posted May 13, 2021.
3. See my article, “A Commentary on the Life of Jeannette Rankin,” *The Occidental Observer*, posted June 22, 2024.
4. Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*, W.W. Norton, 2013, originally published in 1963.
5. See my article, “The White Racial Movement and Gays,” *The Occidental Observer*, posted June 26, 2018.