



Newsom's Hero: Narcissus, by Caravaggio

Buried deep within [Evan's morose but accurate roundup](#) at The Drain lurked [this item](#), which tells you pretty much everything you need to know about California Governor Gavin Newsom. Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass is in Sacramento lobbying legislators for relief money in the wake of January's devastating wildfires. She probably won't get close to what she wants: the state is facing a huge budget crunch and the federal government run by sociopaths is unlikely to help the state. But still:

Bass met with legislative leaders Wednesday but did not sit down with Newsom, who is in the middle of preparing his budget revision.

Bass told reporters that she was unable to get onto Newsom's schedule. She stopped by his office hours later for an unplanned meeting with two of his top aides.

Bass faces harsh criticism for her handling of the fires — some justified, but most just piling on because the Mayor is an easy target. So Newsom doesn't want to get anywhere near her.

But wait a minute. Bass has been a good soldier throughout Newsom's term. She worked hard as a Congressmember to fight against the recall effort. She has never criticized him publicly. Los Angeles faces a severe budget shortfall — up to \$1 billion dollars. And Newsom can't even talk to her for 10 minutes? Sorry: the idea that Newsom is so busy "preparing his budget revision" is comical. That's done by the Department of Finance. She needs his help. So he made sure to humiliate her.

This is classic Newsom. Everything — *everything* — is about him.

Consider that in 2022, voters put an initiative on the ballot that would have raised the state's income tax rate for those making more than \$2 million a year — at most a few hundred, maybe even a few dozen people. It would have paid for getting EV chargers throughout the state, which are necessary to achieve its climate goals, and also for more and better-paid firefighters. But those weren't just *any* taxpayers: they were big contributors for Newsom, who thinks he is going to be the next President. So he went out of his way to oppose the measure, and killed it. [Then just a few weeks later, he cut the budget for EV chargers](#), saying that the state couldn't afford it.

More recently, we have seen him going out of his way to throw transgender people under the bus, sucking up to ~~Hitler Youth Chairman~~ Turning Point USA Executive Director Charlie Kirk and [telling Kirk how right he was about transgender girls in sports](#). Then [he said that the case of Kimar Abrego Garcia is a "distraction."](#) No one is too powerless for Gavin Newsom to kick them while they are down. So the Mayor of Los Angeles shouldn't be surprised.

And that's his m.o. On everything. A few months ago, a friend of a friend who worked for a climate nonprofit that worked on EV charging in multifamily units wanted to meet with the Governor. Again, his schedule is busy. But his aides' response was telling: "What's in it for him?," they asked. This is my own experience. I was on the board of a local Democratic club that wanted to honor Newsom for a fundraiser (which figured to bring in people to see the Governor). And his aides asked us the same question they had asked my friend: "what's in it for him?" Then they demanded that we give an award to his wife (who for the record is pretty accomplished).

By the way, did I mention about him imposing a lockdown on the state during Covid — and then [going to a lobbyist's birthday party at a fancy Sonoma restaurant](#)? Or that [he slept with](#)

[his best friend's wife?](#)

Look, I get it. [Politics ain't beanbag.](#) You don't get to be Governor without self-promotion, and Newsom, who has been running for President since elementary school (at least), thinks he will be in the Oval Office in 2029 (assuming that we will have free and fair elections, which we shouldn't). Personal character should not and cannot be our test of our political leaders (even if the current occupant of the Oval Office lacks a single redeeming or even position quality).

But someone whose will go out of his way to snub and humiliate his friends is a cut above — or below. And it reveals that he cannot be trusted with power: he will turn on a dime and betray any substantive commitment, no matter how important, if it gets him the slightest political benefit. He did it with Proposition 30, and he will do it on climate again.

And no, not every politician is like that. Barack Obama — no one's idea of a conviction politician — forged ahead with health care reform even when many of his aides and allies told him not to. Joe Biden got us out of a pointless war in Afghanistan even though it would have been easier just to muddle through. "Profiles in Courage" is hardly a thick multi-volume series, and there is a reason for that. But it isn't "Famous Jewish Sports Legends," either.

(And for the record, even that leaflet [has been getting a lot thicker recently.](#)

If Newsom turns out to be the Democratic nominee in 2028, then I will vote for him and work for him, because the alternative is so awful. But we can do a hell of a lot better. And we should,.