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When News Turns into Noise

by Jordan M. Clarke





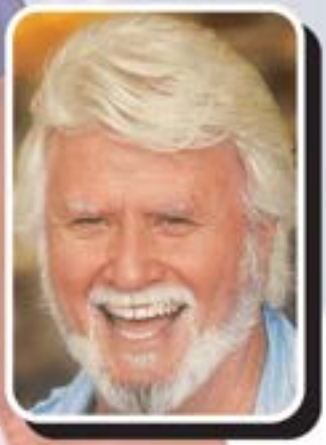
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EDITOR'S LETTER



Gene Ho

Editor-In-Chief

Fresh Start

/freSH/ /stärt/
Noun: an opportunity to start over without prejudice.

There have been times in my life when I had a complete "fresh start." The easiest to remember was the time when I graduated high school. I was never really an academic standout. I certainly wasn't an athletic standout.

However, when I left high school, I moved from Kings Park, New York, to Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, and THERE I had a brand-new start. A fresh start.

Nobody in my new home knew who I was. Anything GOOD or BAD was never known. I could start fresh and be my own person.

It worked out well. In my new home, I never gained a reputation as some great academic wonder. I certainly wasn't known as a college athlete, but I was myself.

I became a decent writer. I ended up being a photographer. In my new home, no one ever knew about my old failings or my old accomplishments. It was a true "fresh start."

Nowadays, that is rare. With social media, it's very hard to reset: a quick online search and everything seems to follow you around. At the same time, it's not impossible.

In many ways, that's why I love sports so much. Say a baseball team is doing horribly. However, at midseason, they make a few trades. They make a few switches in the lineup. The team makes a change in the pitching order. You throw in a free agent superstar, and presto! You're suddenly a contender!

Or maybe not. See, sometimes it doesn't even matter.

If the new team is good and starts to win, that is fantastic, but that's not the point. The point is that everyone resolves on their own to make a change, to put the past behind them.

The sports world is full of interim coaches. These are the coaches who take over after a head coach gets fired. Normally, they have little chance to take over as the permanent head coach when the next year begins, but it marks a change.

Some "fresh starts" begin with fire sales of top-level talent. A team "new start" is more of a surrender of sorts. Their fresh start is trading in top talent in exchange for future draft picks.

So, where does it leave all the players left on the team on what seems like a losing trajectory? Where does it leave the interim head coach if there is little chance to get the job permanently? **It forces them all to reset their minds to do their best.**

If the team starts winning, that is great. If the team starts to lose, that is also fine, because what matters is that everyone is doing

their best. If they do their best as individuals, they show other people their resolve. At the very least, it's an "audition" for future jobs and future opportunities.

Now, when we say "a fresh start," we want to make sure that it is understood that we mean a fresh start away from this political chaos of the last nine years!

This will be the challenge for Americans as we start into a new administration. For some, the fresh start is a welcomed one, but even with the new administration coming in, the country is divided. Electoral map aside, the numbers are almost equal between those on the side that won and those on the side that lost. In all, it will be a fresh start. The Americans on the "winning side" need to ask themselves if now is the best time to gloat in your victory. Doing so only further divides.

Our social media society has equated "being involved" with "meme warfare." Some think that THEIR part in the electoral process "battle" is sharing pictures online that mock the other side. Perhaps America is tired of the "liberal tears" and "conservative tears" online memes.

Rather, is it not time for a more positive approach and to start talking about positive things? As for Americans on the "losing side," perhaps they can ask themselves what they can do to bolster their side of the debate on the direction of the country.

Maybe work to make YOUR community great and use THAT as a great "I told you so," as proof that "my way" works.

What doesn't work is negativity. Sometimes the best thing to do when people DO NOT want to do things YOUR way is to just sit back and worry about yourself for a while. In essence, just "make YOURSELF great again."

What America does NOT need is to be further divided. This doesn't have to be a bitter rivalry. Oddly, the reason we got into this position in the first place is we cared.

America has never been so tuned into politics. However, along in the process, an interesting Catch 22 happened. Disagreements turned into hate because people were so passionate on BOTH sides.

This election gives America a chance to reset. It gives us a fresh start. What we do with that is up to us as individuals.



"Stray"

by Margie

I was hungry and lost;
Not much food could be found.
So lonely and cold
In a great big town.

People looked happy,
Saying, "It's again time for giving!"
And the sharing of love
Made their lives worth living.

But I stayed in the background,
Where I seemed to belong,
In the cold dark shadow;
Going forth would be wrong.
For, many times when I did go near,
None listened to my plea.
Perhaps they thought my troubled path
Simply was my destiny.

Until one day, so special to me,
A stranger passing took time to see,

Came closer at once,
Knowing I was in need,
And that kindly voice
Brought me comfort indeed.

A gentle hand softly stroked my fur,
And though weak as I was, I managed to purr.

My tired eyes
I know had a beam,
Then I started to wonder
If it all were a dream.

But I soon found it true,
For love made it real
In a warm home for sharing
And no hunt for a meal.

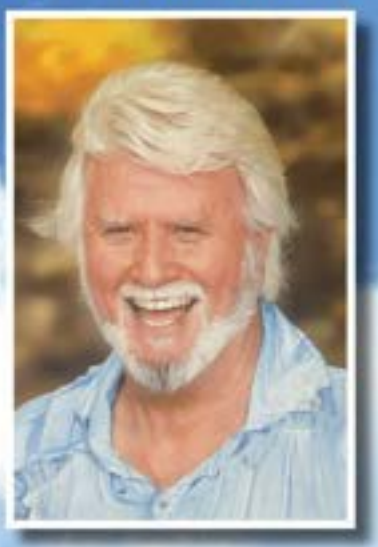
It's so Purr-fect!!!



"And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, 'Fear not, for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people. For, unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, Which is Christ the LORD. And this shall be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.'" – Luke 2:9-12

Walk Through the Doors of Opportunity

By Pastor Bob Joyce



Do you remember the cartoon movie *Monsters, Inc.*? We used to watch that silly little movie when my youngest son was a toddler. It's about a hidden world of monsters that can be accessed through a child's closet door. During one scene, the characters are running through the factory where the doors are processed, looking for one in particular, but they accidentally go through many different doors and end up in surprising places all over the world.

That scene reminds me of the many ways God gives us doors of opportunity to share the gospel all around us, wherever we go. There are countless doors, each with a path to a great opportunity for the gospel, if we'll only go through them.

Paul prayed for these doors of opportunity, hoping "God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ" (Colossians 4:3). In another letter he said, "A great door and effectual is opened unto me" (1 Corinthians 16:9). Paul realized there are many ways God presents subtle openings in everyday life to present the gospel, and he looked for them.

BUB JUVE

God also presents these kinds of doors to us. You might be wondering: "When do I come across these opportunities?" You don't have to look hard. They come along in everyday activities.

A door may open to you when a co-worker tells you about his family problems. That's your opportunity to share the word of God. You might see a situation brewing at church or in your home. That's your door of opportunity to pray. You might see a chance to witness to a family member, friend, or even a stranger. Every time you go to church and sing with the saints or stand up to testify for Jesus, every time you stand up to darkness and say, "No, this is what the Lord says," God has given you a door of opportunity.

Walk Through the Door

Jesus said, "Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it" (Revelation 3:8). When God presents a door to you, walk through it. Don't stand there staring at the entryway.

Think of how different our world would be today if Paul had not chosen to go through his doors of opportunity. The doors God presents to you are just as important as the Apostle Paul's. God places each one of us where He wants us to be for a particular reason, and He uses all these moments together to accomplish His purposes.

God ordained these good works that each of us should walk in them (Ephesians 2:10). We're not here by accident. When you gave your heart to God, everything in your life became an opportunity. The question is: What are you going to do with these opportunities?

I try to use every opportunity I get. I don't have to worry about the outcome because I know God sees to it that His plans are accomplished. Good things happen not because of who I am, but because of Who He is. When I preach, I open my mouth, knowing the Lord sent me here to stand up and speak for Him. That's really all I do—as He pours into my heart and soul and fills me up, I pour out into you.

Somebody might say, "That's fine for you, Pastor Bob, but I'm not a preacher." That's okay; God didn't call everybody to preach, but He did tell us all to share our testimony. You don't have to stand behind a pulpit or have a fine education. All you have to do is tell somebody what the Lord did for you.

Of course, some people will turn into preachers. Those people still start out walking through little doors, and pretty soon they'll be walking through bigger and bigger doors. After a while, God might send some through huge doors like those at St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome (which are around 50 feet tall!). As Jesus told us, those who are faithful with a little will be trusted with much (Luke16:10).

You Have Something to Say

Somebody else might say, "I would speak, but I don't have anything to say." Brother, if the Lord saved your soul, you have something to say! Everybody who's been touched by the Lord has a testimony to share.

"But, Brother Bob, I'm not an eloquent speaker like those other guys." Don't worry about that. Moses wasn't eloquent either, yet God used him (Exodus 4:10). God gives you what you need when you need it. He'll provide the wisdom and knowledge, and He'll show you when it's time to speak and when it's time to be quiet and wait for the right moment.

Philip was busy doing the Lord's work in Samaria, and the Lord sent him to a specific place in the road, to a specific chariot, to give the gospel to a specific person (Acts 8:26-40). There must have been hundreds of people in chariots and on horses along the road that day, yet God told Philip specifically where to

go at the right time.

What's important is to realize we're on God's schedule, not our own. It's our job to be sensitive to hear what the Lord says and be ready to go when He says, "Go."

Satan Watches the Doors

We're not the only ones who know about the doors of opportunity God opens to us. The devil knows about them, too, and he's going to do everything he can to keep us from going through those doors. Paul said, "A great door and effectual is open unto me, and there are many adversaries" (1 Corinthians 16:9).

When you become a Christian, everything doesn't suddenly come up roses. As long as you're living on planet Earth, you're going to have trouble. Jesus told us it would be that way. He said, "I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves" (Matthew 10:16). But He promised to see us through. He said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

There's always opposition. You can bank on it. Every single one of us will face the darkness because the devil is opposed to the word of God and the work of the Holy Spirit.

So, don't think it's strange when it happens to you. Rejoice, because when Satan and his adversaries are fighting you, then you know you must be doing something right. That devil is going to fight you tooth and toenail, but he's not going to shut the door that God has opened in your life. Remember, Jesus opened the door, and no one else can shut it (Revelation 3:7).

Have Courage

We're not in this fight alone. We can trust God to block the enemy and give us the strength to carry on. As the children of Israel prepared to go into the promised land, Moses said to them, "Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the LORD your God Who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you" (Deuteronomy 31:6). The same words hold true for us today.

As Paul said, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31) God is our fortress and deliverer (Psalm 18:2). God comforts us and gives us the weapons we need, and the devil is no match for the weapons of the Lord. As John said, "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome [Satan], because greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4).

It is the Lord Who protects us from the weapons of the devil. Don't let fear of opposition hold you back from the opportunities God has prepared for you. God provides all you need, from the timing of the event to the words to say. You have nothing to fear.

Just like in that movie *Monsters, Inc.*, you have an endless number of doors of opportunity presenting themselves around every corner. Try one of those little ones. You'll see how easy it is when the Holy Spirit is in control, and pretty soon, you'll be so excited to see how God uses you in ways you never thought possible. You'll look forward to bigger and greater doors and all the great things you'll experience on the other side.

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BEFORE THE ELECTION



AFTER THE ELECTION



INAUGURATION DAY







2024 Presidential Election: TRUMP WON!

Now the Path Forward

by Dave Blaze




2024

Newly re-elected President Trump's trajectory now involves not only returning to the presidency, but his future will be defined by his approach to consolidating power, pushing policy agendas, and handling numerous legal and social dynamics. His plans will influence not just the U.S. but global politics and the economy as well.

Key Policy Agendas

Economic Policy and Tax Reform:
Trump's economic priorities have historically focused on tax cuts, deregulation, and policies to stimulate growth by promoting domestic industries. Continuing in this vein would likely mean further tax cuts for individuals and businesses and a renewed focus on deregulation. Given inflationary concerns, a pro-business, pro-growth approach may be paired with some fiscal policy adjustments to stabilize the economy.

Immigration and Border Security, Build the Wall:
Immigration has always been a cornerstone of Trump's policy platform. Expectations would likely center on increased border security, particularly focused on extending physical and technological barriers, enforcing stricter immigration controls, and potentially re-implementing policies from his first term.

Energy Independence:
Trump's focus on U.S. energy independence and fossil fuel development has been clear. Any future efforts here might involve rolling back environmental regulations on the energy sector, promoting coal and natural gas production, and reducing incentives, such as government subsidies, for renewable energy sources.

Healthcare Reform:
If Trump seeks to fulfill his long-standing goal of repealing and replacing the Affordable Care Act, the next four years could witness renewed attempts to overhaul healthcare. With Robert F. Kennedy Jr. playing a vital role, proposals could involve market-driven approaches, emphasizing individual choice, competition, and state control.

Judicial Appointments:
Judicial nominations were a hallmark of Trump's first term, significantly altering the composition of the Supreme Court and lower Federal Courts. Filling judicial vacancies would remain a top priority, given Trump's belief in a judiciary that aligns closely with conservative interpretations of the law. Therefore, a Senate majority leader aligned with President Trump would be crucial.

Education and "Anti-Woke" Policies:
The fight against "woke" culture has become a rallying point, and Trump might, and we say might, push policies aimed at reforming educational content, public broadcasting, and funding policies for organizations promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Foreign Policy Reorientation:
Expect a focus on "America First" strategies, including renegotiating trade agreements, addressing NATO financial contributions, and potentially altering relationships with allies and adversaries, notably China. Trump will seek to finish what was started during his first term but sidetracked by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Legal Challenges and Their Implications

Trump has several ongoing legal matters, some involving civil cases related to personal and business dealings and others with potential criminal implications. Here's a look at these challenges and how they might impact his plans.

State and Federal Cases:
Trump faces a range of cases involving alleged financial improprieties, tax issues, and potential civil liabilities from various lawsuits. The impact of these cases will largely depend on their progression and any legal strategies his team employs to delay or dismiss charges. Influence on Judicial Proceedings: While a sitting president generally has some legal protections, Trump's legal challenges could still affect his public image and the perception of his integrity. Additionally, if any cases progress into his term, they could complicate his ability to govern unimpeded.



Political Fallout and Legal Precedents:
How these legal challenges unfold will also shape legal precedents related to the presidency and post-presidential legal accountability. Each case could set significant precedents in American legal and political history.

Foreign Policy and Global Relations

China and Trade Relations:
Trump has taken a hard line on China, and a potential return to this focus would likely see heightened tariffs, increased scrutiny of Chinese companies operating in the U.S., and tighter restrictions on technology exports. Trump may seek to renegotiate trade deals or enforce stricter intellectual property protections.

Russia and Eastern Europe:
Trump's approach to Russia has been scrutinized, and his stance could involve a nuanced strategy, potentially reducing U.S. involvement in Eastern European conflicts or reassessing NATO obligations.

Middle East Strategy:
Trump may also revisit his efforts to broker peace deals in the Middle East, which could entail further U.S. disengagement from regional conflicts and a shift toward economic incentives over military intervention.

Latin America and Immigration Policies:
Expect a focus on strengthening U.S. borders and re-engaging Latin American nations to address root causes of migration. Trump may employ sanctions, trade adjustments, and aid redirection to influence migration patterns.

"America First" Realignment:
Trump's approach to global governance would likely be a more pronounced version of "America First," meaning prioritizing U.S. economic interests, sovereignty, and power above collaborative efforts with international organizations like the United Nations or WHO.

Transforming the Republican Party

Further Consolidation of Power:
Trump has wielded significant influence over the GOP, transforming it into a more populist, nationalist party. Trump, moving forward, could accelerate this shift, perhaps endorsing candidates who align with his vision and applying pressure to opponents.

Challenges to GOP Leadership:
Any opposition within the party would likely face an uphill battle, given Trump's substantial base of support. Trump received a decisive Electoral College victory and a mandate from the American people with a large win of the popular vote. Efforts to challenge his influence would have to address the populist movement he embodies without alienating his supporters.

Building a Lasting Legacy:
Trump's goal, especially during the first two years of the new administration, might involve reshaping the GOP into a "Trumpist" party defined by policies and principles that outlast his leadership, setting a blueprint for future GOP candidates. Trump will want to work hard for the American people to maintain a strong base after the 2026 midterm elections.

Impact on Future Generations of Politicians:
The legacy of Trump's approach could influence future generations of conservative politicians, encouraging a focus on populist messaging, strong stances on immigration and trade, and an anti-establishment posture.

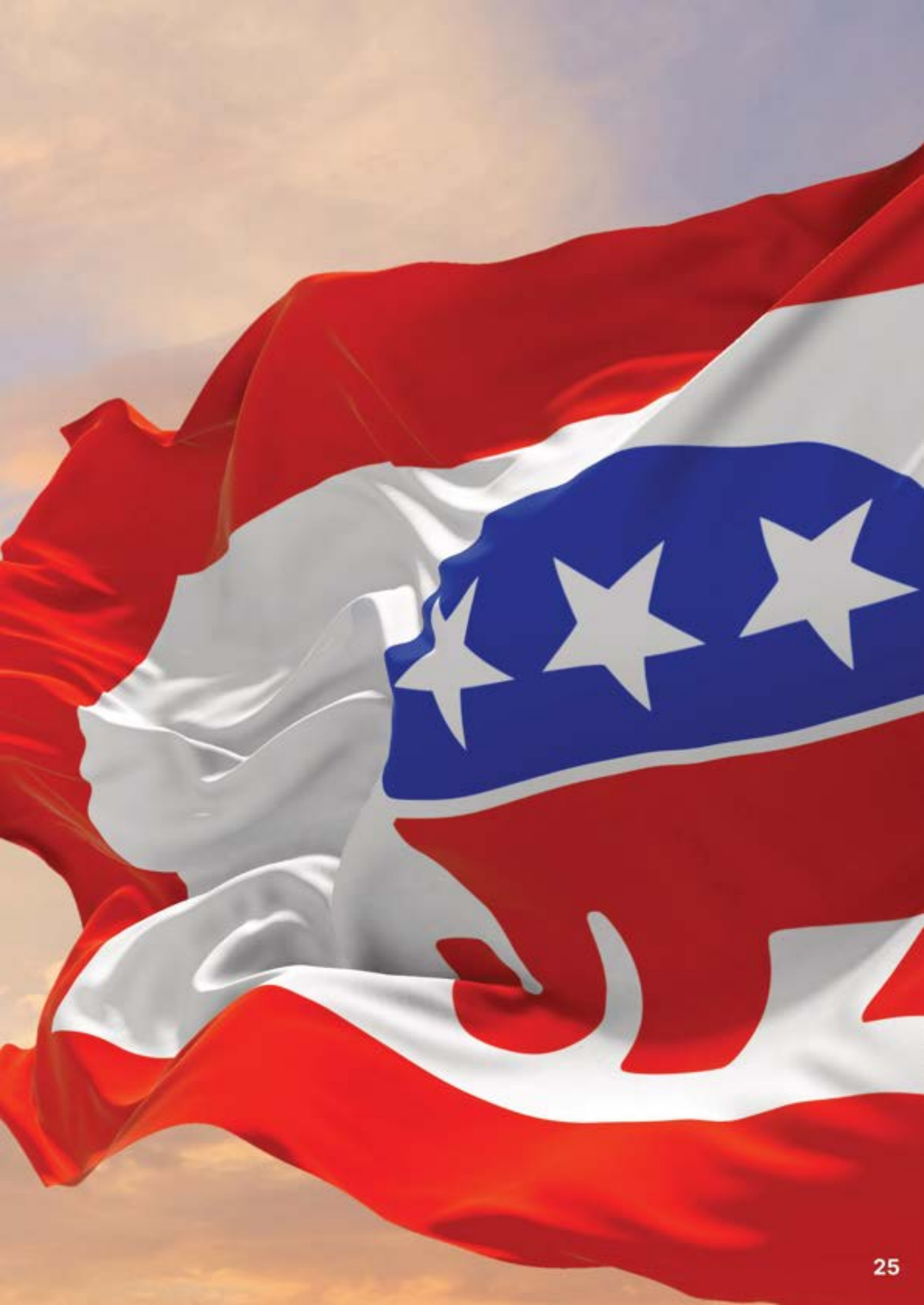
Media Strategy and Public Image

Direct Communication with Supporters:
Trump's reliance on direct communication platforms (Truth Social, rallies, public statements) is likely to continue. This strategy allows him to bypass traditional media filters and reach supporters with his narrative directly.

Use of New Media Technologies:
Expect innovative use of media platforms, potentially expanding into newer channels and technologies to influence the political discourse.

Social Media Dynamics:
Trump's relationship with social media companies has been complicated, with bans and suspensions creating challenges in reaching a broad audience. Now that he has been reinstated on platforms like Twitter/X, Trump will seek to leverage them to re-establish a wider online presence.

Media Polarization and "Fake News" Narratives:
"Fake News" rhetoric is a cornerstone of Trump's media strategy. By continually questioning mainstream media narratives directed at him, Trump may further polarize media consumers, encouraging a loyal base to rely solely on his chosen outlets. Echo chambers can be hazardous.



Managing Domestic Divisions

Addressing Divisiveness:
Trump's tenure has both energized and divided the nation. Moving forward, how he addresses or leverages national divides will shape his success. Relationship healing must be at the forefront.

Policies Addressing Social Concerns:
On domestic social issues, Trump may emphasize policies that reflect a traditionalist stance, appealing to conservative values. You can expect proposals aimed at restricting federal funding for initiatives tied to "woke" ideologies, diversity programs, and far left-leaning social liberalism.

"Law and Order" Stance:
With a focus on maintaining public safety, Trump may double down on law enforcement initiatives, attempting to address concerns around rising crime and urban decay. Nationalist sentiments could become more central, with Trump encouraging a return to "traditional American values" in schools, government, and society. This might involve policies supporting patriotic education, American symbols, and history.

Economic Impact and Influence on Global Markets

Repercussions of America-First Policies:
Trump's policies could shift global economic balances, with U.S.-centric trade policies potentially isolating certain economies and prompting trade realignments.

Influence on Global Markets and Investment:
Policy shifts in the U.S. influence global markets, and Trump's emphasis on domestic manufacturing and economic self-reliance could prompt welcome shifts in supply chains.

Potential Trade Wars:
Renewed trade tensions could arise, particularly with China and potentially the European Union, as Trump seeks to prioritize American manufacturing and reduce dependence on imports. Therefore, a rise in domestic manufacturing will be greatly encouraged.

The Trump Legacy and Long-Term Implications

A Lasting Impact on American Politics:
Trump's approach is transforming how political leaders campaign, communicate, and govern. His emphasis on populism and his unfiltered communication style may set the tone for future generations of political figures — something to keep an eye on.

The Future of U.S. Governance:
Trump's legacy may include a new form of conservative governance that combines elements of populism, economic nationalism, and a confrontational media strategy. This could reshape not only the GOP but also American political discourse for decades. This is key!

Implications for Democracy and Political Norms:
Trump's approach to governance, focusing on centralizing power and challenging traditional democratic norms, has set a new precedent that may influence how future administrations operate and how the public perceives the role of the presidency.

Each move, policy, and strategy will have implications for the political landscape, the economy, and U.S. society. **Trump's influence is likely to persist far beyond his administration, shaping the next era of American politics. The Best is Yet to Come!**


2025

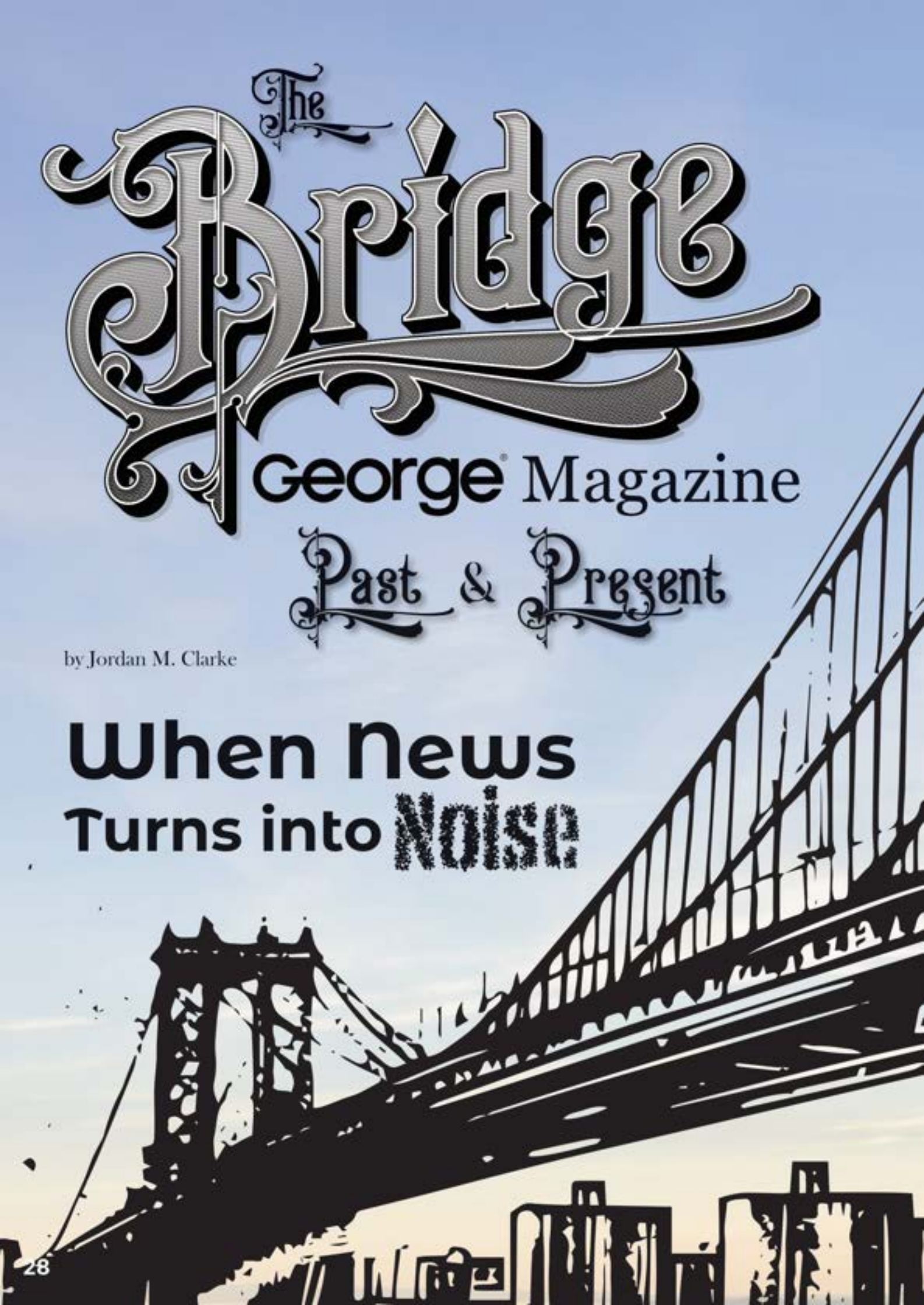
The Bridge

George® Magazine

Past & Present

by Jordan M. Clarke

When News Turns into Noise









THE BRIEF

Our lives have started to resemble scenes from cheesy horror movies, where we all know something unsettling is about to happen. Picture it: It's dark, and that one girl is alone with her boyfriend, hearing ominous sounds coming from the basement. As she approaches the door, everyone in the theater or watching at home collectively shouts, "Don't open the door, you fool!"—because we all recognize the inevitable twist that's about to unfold. Yet, when the expected villain, murderer, or ghost jumps out, we still scream as if it's the first time we've seen it. We anticipate the scare, but our hearts race, and we feel that familiar surge of adrenaline, which keeps us coming back for more. So, why can't we see the crazy string of events, censorship, and outrageous claims made by the media? JUMP SCARE!

In George Magazine's 1998 Election Issue, in the article titled Monica: The Movie, Neal Gabler talks about just that. The Lewinsky-Clinton scandal of the nineties was all the rage, featured in tabloids and news channels and, of course, celebrity and political magazines. The article explores the media frenzy surrounding Monica Lewinsky and the political implications of her relationship with President Bill Clinton. Gabler examines how the scandal was portrayed in the media and the societal obsession with the personal lives of public figures. He discusses the narrative's transformation into a sensational spectacle and reflects on the broader themes of power, sexuality, and the role of the media in shaping political discussions. The article critiques how personal scandals can overshadow substantive political issues in America. There was clearly a narrative in mind when all of this information went as public as it did.

Gabler ultimately depicts the media's role in the scandal. "Reagan was the first president to see politics not as a means of addressing problems but as a way of distracting the public from them," he explains in his article. Watergate being the first full-scale scandal



on television at the time, it brought viewers "a mix of intrigue, suspense, and high stakes that were so appealing it set in motion a process whereby the presidency would constantly be under siege as the media caught new Watergates in the same single-minded way Hollywood sought blockbusters." He then writes, "Attempting to reconcile the TV ratings—the public is really tired of their media's pontifications about the scandal, not the scandal itself."

In *George Magazine's* article titled, *The Great Media Bloodbath of 2024*, in Issue 18, Gene Ho discussed the true purpose of journalism and media. "If you are going to call yourself the 'media', then be the media," Gene stated. He then went on to explain the mainstream media uses their platforms not to inform people and entertain them, but as a weapon to push their agendas. As someone who has been attacked and scrutinized in mainstream media, Gene would resort to his Facebook account to defend himself and counteract what the mainstream media pushed about him. Now, with a big following of his own, Gene shared a message to other people who are experiencing the same, "Trust your viewers—they are smart enough to make their own decisions—give information—talk about stats—don't try to convince your readers."

Oftentimes, when we think of the word *censorship,* places like North Korea and China may come to mind. In today's media, not only do television shows, movies, and social media platforms influence and sway people's opinions and perceptions, but they silence the voices of those who speak against certain narratives by either shadow-banning their posts and videos or just banning and deleting the outspoken users' accounts all together, resulting in a loss of their following and having to rebuild their previously popular accounts. This is all happening in the country we so dearly love, America—land of the free.

Over the last several years, the number of online creators and celebrities with opinions outside the pushed narrative have been silenced. Whether it's from the social media themselves or a higher position of power silencing these voices, we truly don't know—the important thing to note is that people are being silenced for a reason.

I remember about four years ago, I myself viewed videos on TikTok that were later deleted and taken down for "violating community guidelines," or the account of the video's origin was removed and banned all together. What's absurd is that the posts that were removed or banned were informative, ranging from resources about holistic and natural remedies to conspiracies involving online furniture store *Wayfair*, "chem-trails" in the sky, the cabal, and global secret societies. Anytime a news program talks about celebrity drama, is it because they don't have any actual news to broadcast to us, or are they trying to distract the public from knowing crucial information that can sway their corrupt narratives?

YouTuber and political commentator, Blaire White, has faced scrutiny and censorship for sharing her anti-feminist beliefs and right-leaning support since 2015. As a trans woman, White has been called "transphobic" for showing her support for former president Donald J. Trump. In a YouTube video, White and her boyfriend wore the slogan "Make America Great Again" on their hats while attending an anti-Trump protest to see if people would peacefully make conversation with them and discuss their views. Unfortunately, in the video, she explains that she was assaulted twice, had a nail ripped off, and had a drink thrown in her face.

LGBTQ magazine *The Advocate* described White as "far-right" in a 2023 article, while White claims she is "center-right." In a clip from a *Jubilee* video, White debates an "unhinged" trans activist. During their discussion of allowing trans people to use their preferred genders' bathrooms, White explains why self-identity isn't enough to freely use the restroom you want. When prompted y her debater, "Why aren't you listening to other trans women, Blaire?" White responds promptly, "I do all day; I am right now—you seem to be looking at it through the lens of always trans being the priority—I'm looking through the lens of women being the priority here." When asked why, White explains that many people will use being trans as a cover-up to be a creep in women's restrooms. "I think there's levels to it—I think that trans women (who are actually trans) who can assimilate in that space and not cause a disruption—would be the ideal time to start doing that."

On the matter of gender-affirming care to minors, White states she doesn't believe a child can make those types of serious life

changes. Her debater then states, "Some adults don't even understand what they want to do."

"Exactly," White replies. "So, how can a child?"

On the topic of politics, they discuss being allowed into the White House as a trans person. "As a black-trans woman, you and I do not get to have that same experience—My blackness should not have to pay for your whiteness that is destroying my community," says her debater. White questioned her statement to insinuate she didn't understand what she meant.

The moderator cuts in, "OKAY—That's enough!" she shouted at White, leaving her unable to defend herself.

"How are you going to say that—and then that's the end?" She remained silenced, as there was a concern that her perspective could be contagious, causing anxiety in viewers about sharing or even considering similar thoughts.

White has also dealt with a suspended Instagram account for 30 days in 2017 as well as *X* (formerly *Twitter*) in 2018 and 2020 for her tweets on transgender issues, suspension from YouTube in 2020, and content removed from her Instagram account in 2019 and 2020 often related to, again, gender commentary—squashing the narrative that gender identity and sexuality are appropriate for children/minors to be learning in school from their teachers. "Obviously I'm not anti-gay marriage, and I'm not homophobic."

In a video reacting to users who make hate videos of her online, particularly TikTok, where she is permanently banned, White states, "Fun Fact: I am banned from *TikTok*—if you don't know—I can't respond to any (hateful videos) on the app, so I'm going to do it here (referring to her *YouTube* channel). We all know *TikTok* is the *wokest* of all the apps—everything I believe is pretty much going to be a prevailing narrative and theme of *TikTok*."

TikTok has been on the chopping block for a couple of years now. Influencers who depend on the app for their livelihood have shared numerous farewell videos and posts amid rumors of the platform's potential shutdown. This speculation arose due to concerns over security breaches and spying, given that the app's parent company, *ByteDance*, is based in China. On September 16, 2024, *TikTok* was in federal court fighting to keep the app alive before it's January deadline, where the app will retire for good in the U.S.

The influence of China on various aspects of American politics and culture raises important questions. From political campaign contributions to the Democrat Party to the scrutiny surrounding Hillary Clinton's emails



and Hunter Biden's laptop, there are numerous instances that suggest a deeper involvement than many might care to acknowledge. Platforms like *TikTok*—which is often criticized for its content moderation policies banning depictions of violence, nudity, and conservative viewpoints—make the matter contentious .

This situation is reminiscent of a complex web, where each thread—whether it's social media censorship or political connections—intertwines to reveal a broader narrative about foreign influence and domestic policy. The impact of these factors on society shouldn't be underestimated, emphasizing the need for a critical examination of how these dynamics shape our society.

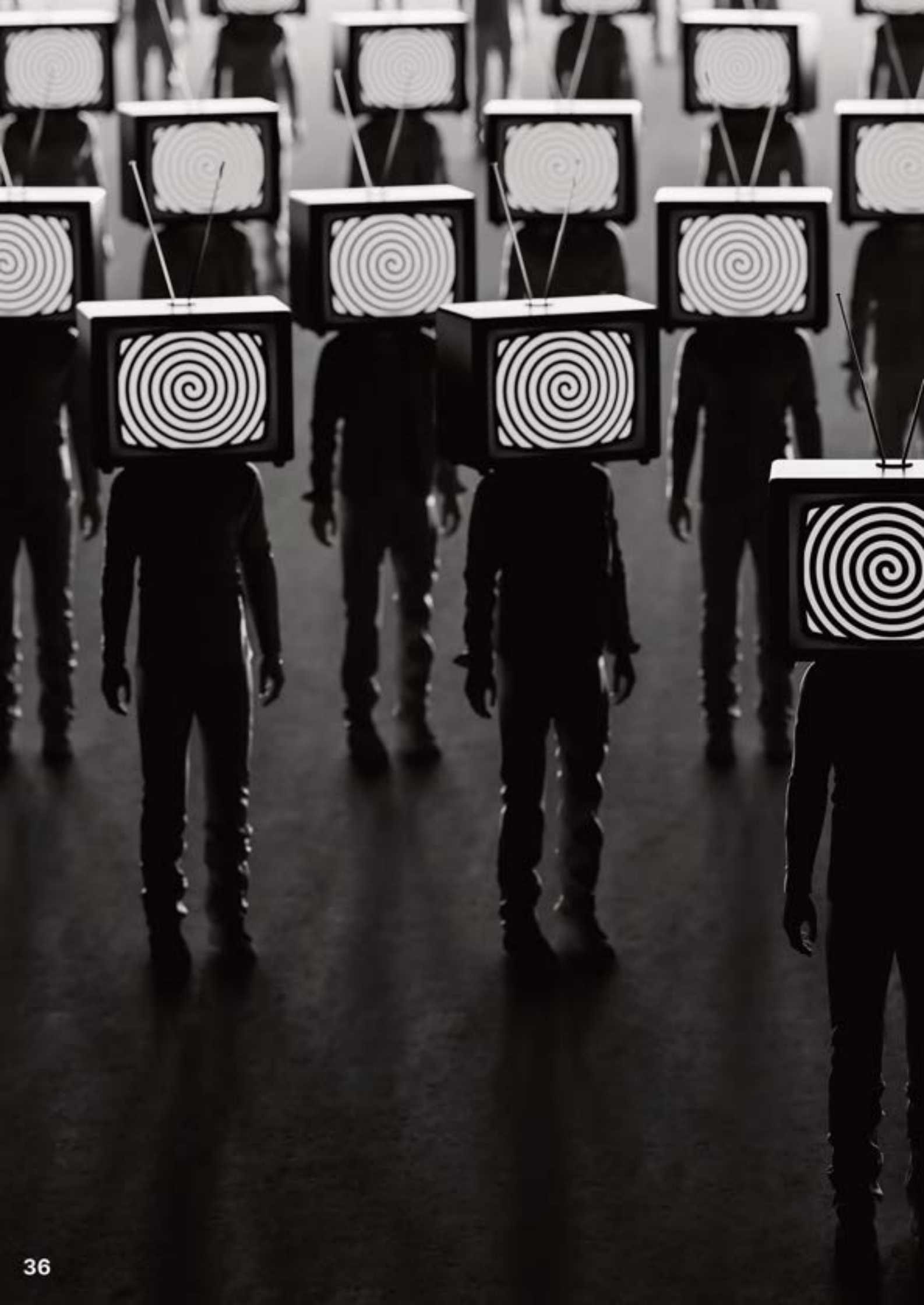
Aside from controlling what we watch and whom we are influenced by, over the last fifty years, the media has shaped the turnout of presidential elections to fit whatever narrative they desire. With the latest election just shy of a month away, it's no surprise to see a crazy story or scandal no matter where I turn. From the turmoil in the Middle East and disastrous weather patterns to the P. Diddy allegations, the media has certainly been working overtime to influence public perception. Media has consistently played a pivotal role in uncovering and amplifying political controversies, constructing public debate, and influencing perceptions of accountability.

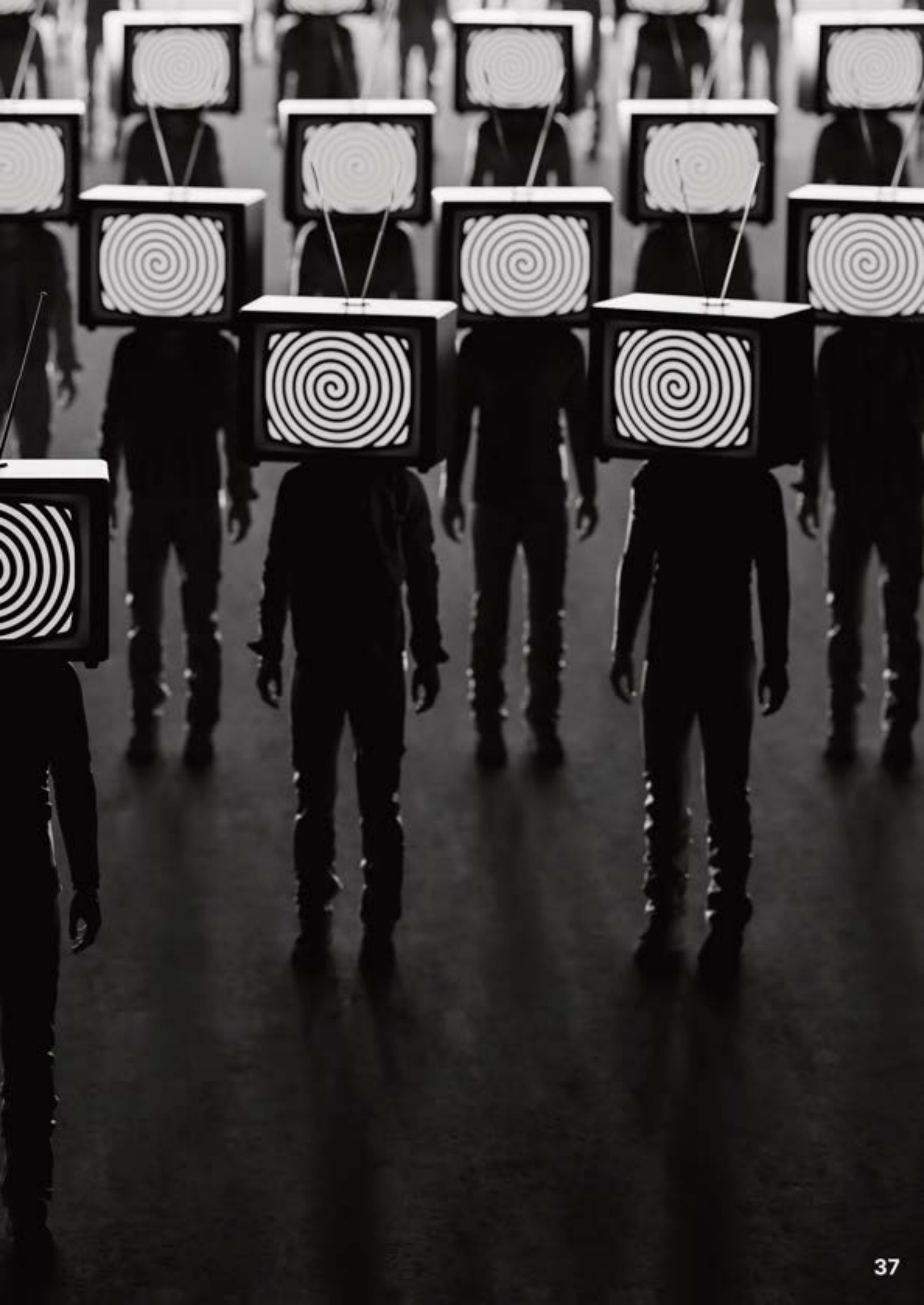
Taylor Swift has openly shared her beliefs, and with her massive fan base, many fans are likely to resonate with her views, as she has captured the hearts of so many. With her recent endorsement for Kamala Harris in an Instagram post, the comments are filled with people praising her for her decision. Showing that she supports equality and women's rights, Swift states in the caption of her post, "I'm voting for @kamalaharris because she fights for the rights and causes I believe need a warrior to champion them." "I was so heartened and impressed by her selection of running mate @timwalz, who has been standing up for LGBTQ+ rights, IVF, and a woman's right to her own body for decades." Towards the end of her endorsement, Swift says, "Your research is all yours to do, and the choice is yours to make."

Singer for the band *Paramore*, Hayley Williams, went on an anti-Trump rant during a live performance this past September at the iHeart Radio Music Festival. "Project 2025 is Donald Trump's playbook for controlling and punishing women, poor people, people of color, and the LGBTQ+ community," she shouts into the camera, wearing all blue. "It is time for all Americans to ban together to finally defeat the Trump agenda." The crowd goes crazy; she asks them, "Do you want to live in a dictatorship?—Well, show up and VOTE!"

More high-profile celebrities who endorsed







the Harris/Walz campaign publicly include Martha Stewart, Aubrey Plaza, Mel Brooks, Olivia Rodrigo, George Clooney, Barbra Streisand, John Legend, Rosie O'Donnell, Jamie Lee Curtis, Robert De Niro, Charli XCX, Cardi B, Kesha, and, of course, Beyoncé.

Major social media platforms like *TikTok, Instagram, Facebook*, and *X* have shown their algorithm bias with whom they censor, ban, and remove content from. They are known over the last several years for not only their endless entertainment and keeping up with the latest trends and drama but also for censoring political discourse on topics like protests, human rights, and sensitive political issues—especially from those who share content that stray from the pushed narratives—if they don't agree, they take it down.

I went ahead and decided to look into every scandal over the last fifty years, specifically during an election year. Starting in the 1972 presidential election, we have the infamous Watergate Scandal. *The Washington Post* reported the FBI had determined that the Watergate break-in was part of a massive campaign of political spying and sabotage on behalf of the Nixon re-election committee. The break-in was covered up by members of Nixon's administration, which became a huge public scandal, eventually leading to the resignation of the Republican president.

Moving forward to the 1980 presidential election, we had the Iran Hostage Crisis, the 1988 Willie Horton Ad scandal, Bill Clinton's Draft Evasion of 1992, Chinese contributions to the Clinton campaign in 1996, and many more in-between. The media has kept themselves busy and our brains preoccupied from the drama. In the 2008 election, Barack Obama faced scrutiny over his connections to his former pastor, Rev. Jeremiah Wright, who gave sermons that included strong critiques of U.S. foreign policy, racial issues, and statements that some interpreted as anti-American or anti-white. Notably, his phrase "God damn America" drew significant media attention and was seen as inflammatory.

In 2016's presidential election, Hillary Clinton used a private email server while serving as Secretary of State, which raised questions concerning security and her transparency. On the topic of security, we have the Hunter Biden laptop situation of the 2020 election, where Hunter faced allegations against his business dealings and the actual contents of the laptop. Finally, we have the P. Diddy scandal for this



year's 2024 presidential election. In 2022, Sean "Diddy" Combs faced serious allegations from his former partner, Cassie Ventura, who accused him of sexual assault and abuse in a lawsuit. While he denied the claims, the high-profile case ended in a settlement, sparking widespread media attention and prompting discussions about power dynamics and abuse in the entertainment industry.

As of now, P. Diddy is continuing to navigate the fallout from the allegations and settlement with Cassie Ventura. The impact of the scandal has led to increased scrutiny of his personal and professional life. There have been ongoing discussions in the media about accountability in the industry. Much like the scandal with Jeffrey Epstein in 2020, Epstein and Diddy both reveal unsettling parallels in the world of power, exploitation, and the entertainment industry. They both face serious allegations of sexual misconduct, shedding light on the darker side of fame and influence. Both scandals highlight the pervasive issue of abuse of power, with victims bravely stepping forward to challenge a culture that often protects the powerful. They cause crucial conversations about the urgent need for change regarding such abuses—and who partakes in them.

In a recent *Instagram* post by Robert Kennedy Jr., he stated›, "Right now, freedom of speech is under withering and relentless attack in America and across the globe—but at least we still have enough of it here that you can watch this video—We can still run an opposition political campaign—In a lot of countries, you can't do that anymore because the state now controls the media—the state censors the internet." He then goes on to explain that Brazil just banned *X* (formerly *Twitter*) because Elon Musk "refused to censor users' speech," with Musk being told he'd "better behave himself" or he will "Lose his privileges and it should be taken down—they are directly speaking to millions of people without any level of oversight or regulation—and that has to stop."

At the Yahoo Internet Life Online Music Awards in 1999, Prince, a legend whose music redefined an era, gave a speech upon accepting his award for *Best Internet-Only Single:* "Don't be fooled by the internet. It's cool to get on the computer, but don't let the computer use you," he stressed. "We all saw 'The Matrix'—the battlefield is in the mind—the prize is the soul—just be careful."



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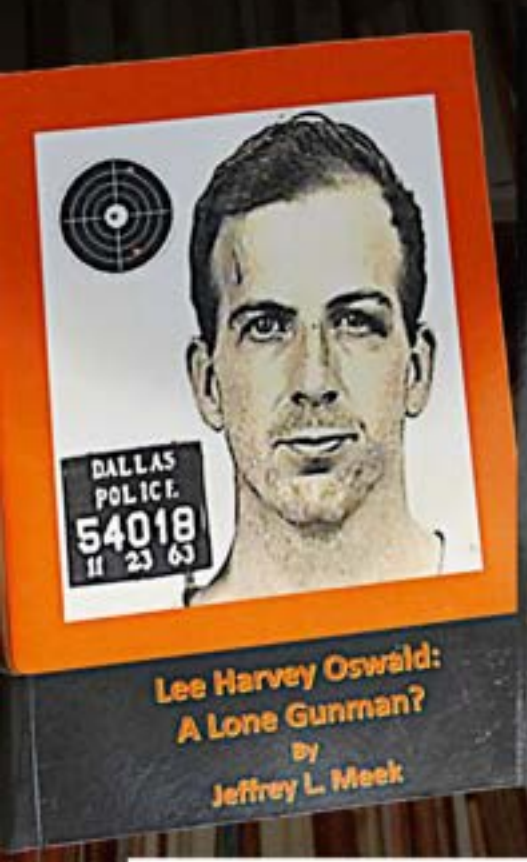
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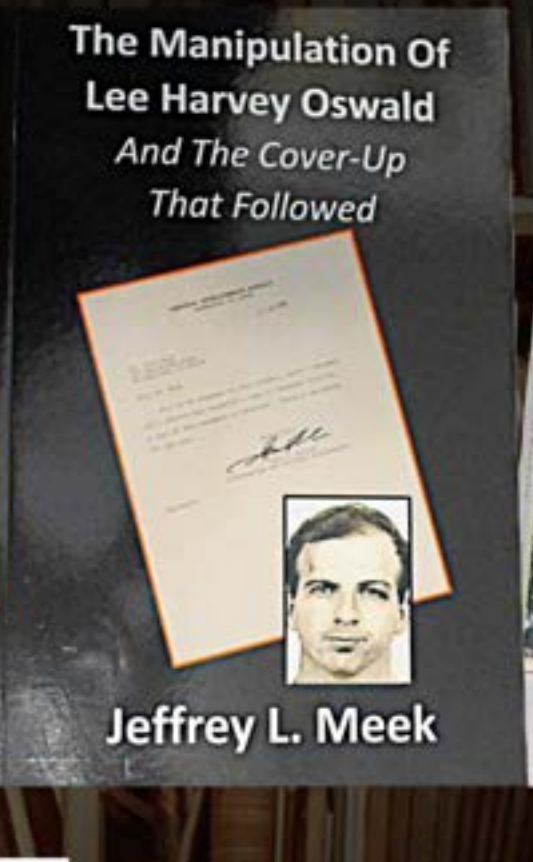


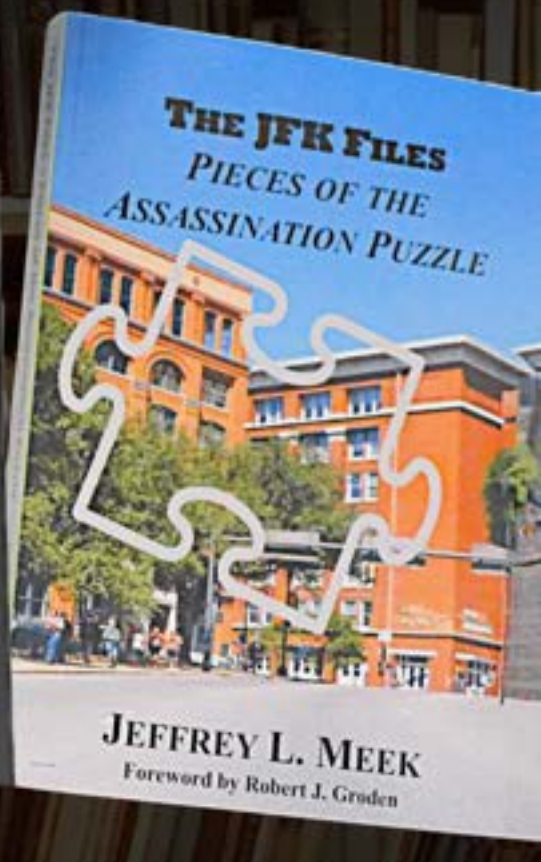
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LET MY PEOPLE GO, JESUS, JESUS, RESURRECTION DAY,
AMAZING GRACE, HIS EYES ON THE LITTLE ONES, HOW GREAT THOU ART, THAT'S HIM,
SOMEBODY BIGGER, DO NOT PASS ME BY, HE HIDETH MY SOUL, SAVIOR









Jeffrey L. Meek has investigated the assassination of President John F. Kennedy since 1975, has lectured on the subject, interviewed numerous police officers and many others with connections to November 22, 1963.

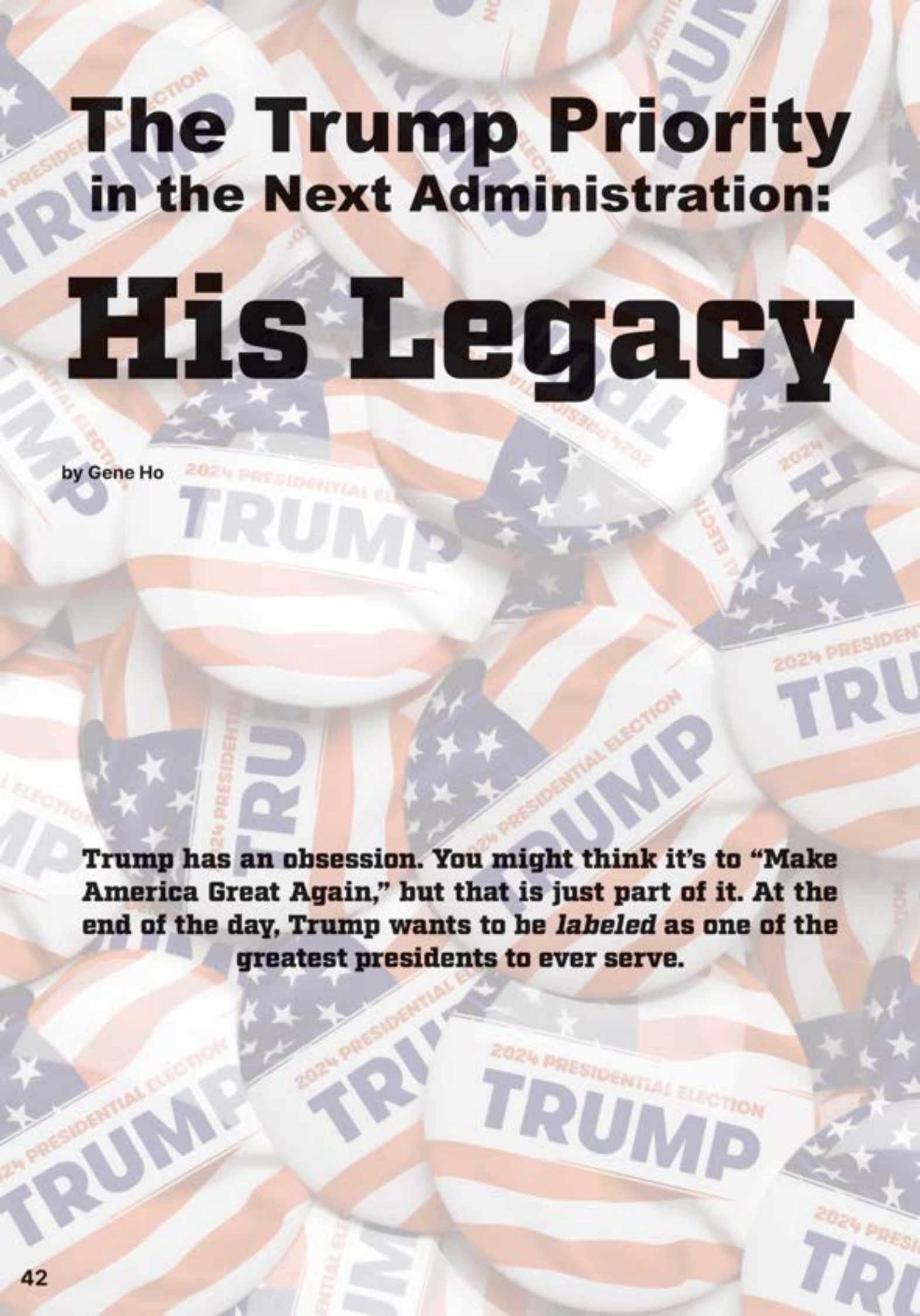
Meek writes a once a month column on the Kennedy assassination for the Hot Springs Village Voice newspaper. He is the author of four JFK assassination publications including "The Manipulation of Lee Harvey Oswald and the Cover Up That Followed' and "The JFK Files: Pieces of the Assassination Puzzle." Meek's book are available at Amazon.com.

For autographed copies contact Meek at jmeek@hsvvoice.com.

The Trump Priority in the Next Administration:

His Legacy

by Gene Ho



Trump has an obsession. You might think it's to "Make America Great Again," but that is just part of it. At the end of the day, Trump wants to be *labeled* as one of the greatest presidents to ever serve.


2024 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION
TRUMP

Here is how I know:

In 2016, I was Trump's campaign photographer. At the time, all the campaign staff could feel the momentum. Although there were plenty of Republican candidates still in the mix, everyone around Trump could just feel there was something special going on. And so could Trump.

Before a single primary vote could be cast, Trump needed to get on the ballot. On a particular day, Donald Trump had to register to be a candidate. I was there as his photographer, but I was also there to witness his signature to "apply" for the ballot.

This was months before a single election. Other than the size of the Trump rallies, nobody knew if Trump would ever win a single primary—let alone win the United States presidency.

But most of the staff knew. I knew, and I believe that Trump knew.
So, after that day, I took those pictures of the signing and created a framed picture with custom matting. It showed the pictures of Trump signing, and it had a separate "custom-cut matting" describing the event. The wording said something to the effect of, "On this historic day, Donald J. Trump registers to be on the ballot."

I took that framed plaque and had it hung up in one of the Trump Campaign offices. I thought it was special, but so did Trump.

When Trump eventually made his way into the campaign office, he stopped and stared at the framed picture. At this time, still, not a single vote had been cast, but Trump stared at that picture, and he said, "I want this. Put it on the plane."

History is GREAT looking back in retrospect. However, when you are there in "real time"



and can sense history being made, then it's even more exciting. Trump saw that in that picture. He understood that something great was happening. The fact that Trump took that framed picture off the wall shows he understands history and legacy.

Here is what to expect in the next two years:

Things will get done and get done fast.

The clock is ticking, and Trump has two years. I say two years and not four years because of the midterm elections in 2026. Trump is NOT an ordinary "lame duck" president. His legacy is on the line, depending on how well he does in his first two years in office.

Things will get done and get done fast. If Trump doesn't get things done fast and America doesn't feel an immediate difference, then momentum will go the other way to the Democrats.

If that happens, the Democrats will rally during the 2026 midterms, and you will see a "blue wave." That happens ... prepare to see a real "lame duck" in full effect.
Trump doesn't want that to happen. This is about two elections: the one that he just won and the one that will happen in 2026. A dynamic presidency the first two years will ensure a Republican midterm win and will allow Trump to get his agenda through.

That's not easily done.

George W. Bush called it "a thumping" in 2006. In 2010, Barrack Obama called it "a shellacking." In both instances, the opposite party had big wins.

At this point, it is Trump's game to "win or lose," but the clock is ticking. What I expect you will see is Trump coming out of the gate strong.





"The Election Is Only Fair If My Candidate Wins"

by Dave Blaze

The notion that "the election is only fair if my guy wins" is a deeply flawed and dangerous perspective that undermines the very foundation of democratic principles. This mindset not only erodes trust in the electoral process but also threatens the stability and integrity of democratic institutions. Let's take a good look at the absurdity of this belief by examining the principles of democracy, the importance of fair elections, the consequences of rejecting election results, and the role of media and political leaders in perpetuating this narrative. OK, here we go!



The Principles of Democracy

At its core, democracy is built on the principles of equality, fairness, and the rule of law. These principles ensure that every citizen has an equal voice in the political process and that the government is accountable to the people. A fair election is one in which all eligible voters have the opportunity to participate, and the outcome is determined by the will of the majority, the will of the people.

Equality:
In a democratic system, every citizen's vote carries the same weight. This principle of equality ensures that no individual or group has undue influence over the outcome of an election. The idea that an election is only fair if a particular candidate wins undermines this principle by suggesting that the votes of those who support other candidates are less valid, or "not legal votes."

Fairness:
Fairness in elections means that the process is transparent, free from manipulation, and conducted according to established rules and regulations. This includes ensuring that all candidates have an equal opportunity to campaign, that voters have access to accurate information, and that the counting of votes is conducted impartially. The belief that an election is only fair if a specific candidate wins disregards these principles and implies that the process is only legitimate if it produces a desired outcome.

Rule of Law:
The rule of law is a fundamental principle of democracy that ensures that all individuals and institutions are subject to the same legal standards. This includes the conduct of elections, which must be governed by laws and regulations that are applied consistently and fairly. Rejecting the results of an election simply because a preferred candidate did not win undermines the rule of law, threatens the stability of democratic institutions, and makes you a sore loser!

The Importance of Fair Elections

Fair elections are essential for the legitimacy and stability of democratic systems. They provide a mechanism for the peaceful transfer of power, ensure that the government reflects the will of the people, and hold elected officials accountable. The belief that an election is only fair if a particular candidate wins undermines these essential functions. Only sore losers would think otherwise.

Peaceful Transfer of Power:
One of the hallmarks of a democratic system is the peaceful transfer of power from one administration to the next. This process relies on the acceptance of election results by all parties, regardless of the outcome. The notion that an election is only fair if a specific candidate wins threatens this process by encouraging the rejection of legitimate results and potentially leads to political instability and violence, as we saw in 2020.

Reflecting the Will of the People:
Elections are a means for citizens to express their preferences and choose their representatives. The legitimacy of the government depends on its ability to reflect the will of the people. The belief that an election is only fair if a particular candidate wins disregards the preferences of the majority and undermines the legitimacy of the government.

Accountability:
Elections provide a mechanism for holding elected officials accountable for their actions. By allowing citizens to choose their representatives, elections ensure that those in power are responsive to the needs and concerns of the electorate. The idea that an election is only fair if a specific candidate wins undermines this accountability by suggesting that the outcome is predetermined and not subject to the will of the voters.

Consequences of Rejecting Election Results

Rejecting the results of an election simply because a preferred candidate did not win has serious consequences for the stability and integrity of democratic systems. This mindset can lead to political polarization, undermine public trust in the electoral process, and create a climate of uncertainty and instability, which is the desired result of sore losers.

Political Polarization:
The belief that an election is only fair if a particular candidate wins contributes to political polarization by reinforcing the idea that the other side is illegitimate. This mindset fosters division and animosity between different political groups, making it more difficult to find common ground and work together to address important issues. Only would-be dictators would seek this.

Undermining Public Trust:
Public trust in the electoral process is essential for the functioning of a democratic system. When individuals reject the results

of an election simply because their preferred candidate did not win, it undermines confidence in the fairness and integrity of the process. This erosion of trust can lead to decreased voter participation and a sense of disillusionment with the political system.

Climate of Uncertainty and Instability:
Rejecting election results can create a climate of uncertainty and instability, as individuals and groups may refuse to accept the legitimacy of the government. This can lead to protests, civil unrest, and even violence, further destabilizing the political system and undermining the principles of democracy. Perhaps this is the result that the sore losers are after: destabilization of the United States.

The Role of Media and Political Leaders

The media and political leaders play a significant role in shaping public perceptions of the electoral process. Unfortunately, some media outlets and political leaders have perpetuated the narrative that an election is only fair if a particular candidate wins, further exacerbating the problem.

Media Influence:
The media, as well as social media, has a powerful influence on public opinion and can shape perceptions of the electoral process. When media outlets and social platforms promote the idea that an election is only fair if a specific candidate wins, they contribute to the erosion of trust in the electoral system. It is essential for the media to provide accurate and unbiased information about the electoral process and to promote the principles of fairness and equality.

Political Leaders:
Political leaders have a responsibility to uphold the principles of democracy and to promote trust in the electoral process. When leaders refuse to accept the results of an election or promote the idea that the process is only legitimate if they win, they undermine the stability and integrity of the democratic system. It is crucial for political leaders to respect the will of the people and to work towards a peaceful and orderly transfer of power.

The Absurdity of the Belief, as If You Didn't Know

The belief that an election is only fair if a particular candidate wins is fundamentally absurd because it contradicts the very principles of democracy. This mindset disregards the importance of equality, fairness, and the rule of law, and it undermines the legitimacy and stability of the electoral process.

Contradiction of Democratic Principles:
Democracy is built on the idea that all citizens have an equal voice in the political process and that the outcome of an election reflects the will of the majority. The belief that an election is only fair if a specific candidate wins contradicts these principles by suggesting that the votes of those who support other candidates are less valid or illegal.

Undermining Legitimacy:
The legitimacy of a government depends on its ability to reflect the will of the people and to be accountable to the electorate. Rejecting the results of an election simply because a preferred candidate did not win undermines this legitimacy and threatens the stability of the political system and the United States government as a whole. This now becomes a national security issue.

Erosion of Trust:
Public trust in the electoral process is essential for the functioning of a democratic system. The belief that an election is only fair if a particular candidate wins erodes this trust and creates a climate of uncertainty and instability, which is the desired result of the losing side.

The notion that "the election is only fair if my guy wins" is a deeply flawed and dangerous perspective that undermines the very foundation of democratic principles. This mindset erodes trust in the electoral process, threatens the stability and integrity of democratic institutions, and contributes to political polarization and division. To ensure the continued functioning of democratic systems, it is essential to uphold the principles of equality, fairness, and the rule of law and to promote trust and confidence in the electoral process. By rejecting the absurdity of this belief and working towards a more inclusive and equitable political system, we can strengthen the foundations of democracy and ensure that the will of the people is truly reflected in the outcomes of elections.

Haters are going to hate, and sore losers will always, ultimately, LOSE!

America Needs a Fresh Start:

Why It's Time to Move Beyond Partisan Politics

by Michele Marin



As the dust settles from the latest election, many Americans feel more divided than ever. The back-and-forth between political factions has left citizens exhausted, frustrated, and wondering if there's a path forward where politics doesn't tear at the nation's fabric. It's clear that America needs a fresh start—a way to recalibrate our priorities, focus on shared goals, and move forward together. But to achieve this, we must acknowledge one core truth: relentless partisanship is undermining the very foundations of our democracy.



The Impact of Partisan Politics on the American Psyche

One of the most striking aspects of modern American politics is the profound disconnect between the people and their government. Trust in Congress has fallen to historic lows, with a Gallup poll in 2023 showing that only 8% of Americans have a "great deal" of confidence in Congress. The lowest level of trust in any major institution isn't limited to one party or demographic; it's a universal signal that Americans are tired of partisan bickering that accomplishes little and seems more focused on scoring political points than addressing real issues.

Increasingly, Americans are rejecting the idea that they need to pick sides in a "winner takes all" environment. A 2022 survey by the Pew Research Center found that 61% of Americans believe that both parties should compromise more to address national issues rather than stick to rigid ideological lines. This is an urgent, collective desire for leadership that prioritizes solutions over party loyalty.

Shared Priorities Beyond Politics

When we look beyond the 24-hour news cycle, we see that Americans are not nearly as divided on core issues as we might think. For instance, there is broad agreement on the need to boost the economy, make healthcare affordable, and improve public safety. A 2023 survey by the Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI) revealed that over 70% of Americans, regardless of political affiliation, want policies that improve economic opportunity and reduce crime rates.

This shared purpose offers a powerful, unifying message: We have more in common than we often realize. However, to channel these common goals into tangible action, we must redefine what it means to be politically engaged. Instead of focusing solely on party platforms, Americans can prioritize community initiatives and local solutions that have immediate impact and are less subject to partisan interpretation.

How Partisan Politics Harm the Everyday American

Relentless partisanship isn't just a headline issue; it has real-world consequences that affect every American. According to the Brookings Institution, hyper-partisanship leads to a cycle where government shutdowns, delayed legislation, and fiscal cliffs become the norm, creating instability in everything from economic planning to healthcare access. Americans ultimately pay the price, with economic uncertainty impacting everything from employment to mortgage rates.

One recent example was the delay in healthcare funding in 2023 due to budget disputes. Many Americans experienced interruptions in essential services, reinforcing the harmful impacts of political gridlock. As political analyst Bruce Cain notes, "Our democracy was designed for debate, not stalemate. The founding fathers believed in a system that could bend but not break under the weight of competing views."

The Power of Local Engagement and Bipartisan Cooperation

Interestingly, some of the most effective change-makers today are not found in Washington, D.C., but in local communities. Across the country, cities and towns are bypassing partisan obstacles by addressing issues directly. In Indiana, for instance, South Bend implemented a city-wide safety program in 2022, funded and supported by a coalition of local leaders across party lines, resulting in a 15% drop in crime. This is one of many examples where people are taking the initiative to solve problems without waiting for federal intervention.

Even in Congress, there are glimmers of hope. The bipartisan Safer Communities Act of 2022, a law aimed at reducing gun violence and enhancing school safety, was passed with support from both parties. This cooperation showed that progress is possible when leaders prioritize solutions over slogans. Americans are ready for more of this kind of governance—focused on actual results rather than political grandstanding.

Moving Forward: What Needs to Happen

To bring America back together, we need a renewed commitment to respectful dialogue and mutual understanding. Political disagreements should not be a reason to demonize each other; instead, they can provide opportunities to find innovative solutions. Here are three steps we can take to create a less polarized America:

1. **Emphasize Civic Education**

Understanding our system of government and each citizen's role in it is essential for bridging divides. Schools can promote civic education, fostering a generation that understands how to engage in constructive debate and compromise.

2. **Celebrate Common Ground**

Highlighting stories of Americans who have come together for the greater good despite political differences can serve as powerful inspiration. National media and community leaders can showcase these examples as proof that unity is not just an ideal but a practical solution.

3. **Support Leaders Who Prioritize Solutions Over Partisanship**

As voters, we can hold politicians accountable by supporting those who demonstrate a willingness to reach across the aisle. Whether through town halls, voting records, or personal actions, leaders committed to unity deserve our attention and support.

A New Chapter for America

The United States has a long history of overcoming division and emerging stronger. In the words of Abraham Lincoln, "A house divided against itself cannot stand." To secure a prosperous future, we must be willing to reframe our approach to politics—one that seeks common ground rather than conflict. If we can look beyond partisan lines and prioritize what truly matters to everyday Americans, we can open a new chapter for this country—one in which we move forward, united, with purpose and optimism.

HANDLE W/ CARE

by Darrin Williams, MA, LMHC

You are reading this article after the presidential election on November 5, 2024, and more than likely the official results of the election have been announced. At the time of this writing, two weeks prior to election day, I do not know who is going to win the presidency or control the House and Senate. It appears to be a toss-up, as evidenced by most of the recent national polls. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to encourage and challenge you, the reader, to treat the opposing side and its voters—no matter who won the election—with dignity, respect, and care.





The "other side" will include your immediate and extended family members, peers at work, and people who live in your apartment complex or neighborhood. In addition, this will include your friends, acquaintances, and your social groups. Most importantly, this includes yourself!

You have an opportunity to develop and rekindle relationships with people on the "other side" of the political aisle but also to solidify and renew relationships with people with whom you share similar political views. This could be a new beginning, a chance to move out of your comfort zone and experience something rewarding regardless of your political, religious, race, and economic class. Doing so will help the healing process from this divisive election cycle—since the election of 2020, really—which has been so wounding to the soul of this country and her individual citizens.

Relentless Racket

This election process has been contentious for the citizens of this nation for many reasons. Much of the hostility was initiated, amplified, and magnified by media influencers on the right and left. Despite who won, many of the same narratives will continue on both sides. New and repackaged talking points will catch the "ear and eye" of everyday Americans, whether flowing from the mainstream news media or the cyberworld of podcasters. Ultimately, their purpose is to make money, and we Americans are their primary consumers.

However, as I and other George Magazine writers have shown in previous articles, nefarious countries are using their military intelligence and assets to sow discord in this country for the purpose of bringing chaos and division to this nation. Furthermore, internal, domestic media influencers and organizations do the same, that is, use similar means of delivering propaganda, suspicion, and lies to their audiences. Why? For the purpose of creating division and using it as a means to fulfill their own agendas.

Besieged by such propaganda, how can our relationships begin to heal on an inter- and intra-level? Any relationship is only healthy if it is developed and built upon a solid foundation.

Foundation Building

Developing a healthy relationship of any kind requires feeling safe and secure in the relationship. Trust and safety are cornerstones of any type of healthy relationship. The ongoing practice of building trust in relationships is multifaceted and experienced on many levels of a relationship. There is emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual trust that needs to be established and bolstered regularly for a relationship to grow and mature.

Irresponsible Blame

A poor relationship is characterized by irresponsibility. For example, one person in the relationship blames the other person and assumes the role of victim, denying personal responsibility. Such blaming behavior has existed since the beginning of humanity.

Whom did Eve blame for her choosing to eat the one piece of fruit that was forbidden? Whom did Adam blame for his choosing to follow Eve's lead when he took the bite from the tree of knowledge of good and evil?

Thus, the pattern of blaming behavior began in the Garden of Eden and has continued for millennia. When self-protection and self-preservation defense mechanisms are practiced, the cornerstones of trust and safety are undermined.

Blaming keeps an individual from taking full responsibility for and ownership of their choices. It is important to be continually aware that we are responsible for our own thoughts, feelings, and actions (behaviors). It takes ongoing practice to shoulder legitimate responsibility in any type of relationship; when this behavior is practiced, trust and safety between individuals increase.

So, be aware of the blame game and begin practicing taking ownership of your thoughts, feelings, and actions. Only when the other person sees and experiences that your words match your behaviors will trust and safety be realized.

Reasonable Expectations

The mental ability to keep your expectations about others realistic is also important for developing and experiencing healthy relationships. Expect others to often make mistakes in any type of relationship. Of course, certain "big" mistakes have the natural potential for significant, logical consequences that impact the trust and



safety of the relationship. Yet, for everyday mistakes, it is important to exercise grace and practice the Golden Rule: Treat others as you want to be treated.

Many individuals in relationships fall into the trap of playing a scolding, dominating parent role or an "acting out" child role. These behavior roles are not beneficial to maintaining healthy relationships. Furthermore, intimidation and dominance are not healthy behaviors for any type of relationship. Once again, broken trust and a feeling of being unsafe are realized by the other person. Those who fall into the "acting out" child role can easily fall into the trap of being a victim, and passive aggressive behaviors are easily escalated.

Deliberate Listening

The behaviors of listening more and talking less are important to practice. We as human beings have all different types of personalities, and for certain types of personalities, these are much needed practices in all their relationships.

Listening—and more specifically, active listening—are skills that can be attained and practiced at any age by any personality. Stay neutral and focus on what the other person says verbally and nonverbally. Also, clarifying and speaking back in your own words to the person what you heard shows that you are really listening and not just nodding your head while daydreaming about the movie or sporting event you plan to watch later that evening.

Shared Responsibility

Most of society and the current world we live in tear down others and take pleasure in destroying others' reputations and characters. The Creator has much to say about bearing false witness against another.

Most cyber-social sites are a continual stream of drama, lies, and self-centered behaviors. These behaviors of putting down others and tearing others down have been escalating rapidly for years in the fest pool of the cyber world. They are destructive and toxic to any relationship.

They were most evident during these four years since the election of 2020 and throughout the campaigning of 2024. The right and left mainstream media are both responsible for sowing seeds of discord and division. Alternative media and its plethora of podcasters are no less guilty.

Naturally, trust is broken between people when they and their behaviors are villainized by media influencers. Most individuals have felt unsafe and unprotected because of the "evil" behaviors of certain individuals on the other side of the political aisle. However, now is the opportunity to build up one another rather than tear down. Choosing to do what does not come naturally will help build trust and safety again.

Strategic Conflict Resolution

Specific conflict resolution principles can be practiced to help foster trust and safety in any relationship. For example, to work towards building a healthy relationship, focus on the subject and not the person when communicating about sensitive matters such as politics and religion. Raising your voice and using personal insults or mocking tones peppered with sarcasm are not beneficial when working towards the goal of agreeing to disagree.

If the conversation becomes personal and you or the other person resorts to namecalling, character assassination, and hitting below-the-belt tactics, pause and take a "time out" from the conversation. This is best experienced when people in a relationship have already established a plan for communicating ahead of time. Plan ahead and set some basic rules on how to have passionate conversations about certain subjects and beliefs.

Disagreements will occur in any relationship. Once emotions have calmed down, it is important to continue the conversation and not leave it without resolution, even if the resolution is that there is an agreement to disagree on the conflicting subject.

Another helpful principle is to use "I" statements during the course of the discussion. This shows you are taking personal responsibility and not blaming the other person. Using "I" statements will minimize the chance the other person will become defensive. For example, say, "I feel hurt when you are running late from work, and you do not call me" instead of

"You never let me know when you are going to be late."

Communication Styles

The ability to be aware and practicing healthy communication skills are vital for developing a foundation of trust and safety. There are primarily four patterns of communication used in most relationships. These four are the assertive, aggressive, passive, and passive-aggressive communication styles.

Aggressive communication is characterized by being loud and even shouting. Intimidating body language, often with piercing eye contact, is used in this style. Blaming, shaming, and threatening behaviors are often used in aggressive communication.

The individual who uses aggressive communication puts their needs before the needs of others; often, the needs of the other person are not even considered. They appear angry most of the time and do not attempt to listen to others. Trust and safety are quickly eroded in the presence of this unhealthy pattern of communication.

Passive communication is also unhealthy in a relationship. The person who resorts to passive communication mostly knows their needs and feelings but does not express them to the other person.

This pattern of communication shows itself as acting indifferent to the conversation or continually yielding to others. The person will come across as overly apologetic. Minimum confidence is displayed verbally and nonverbally. A passive communicator will often appear anxious and maintain minimum eye contact. Their voice will be softspoken or very quiet. They may be non-committal, responding with shrugs.

Passive aggressive communication patterns are characterized by giving the "silent treatment" when conflict is experienced. The body language will be ambiguous and incongruent with the words expressed verbally in the conversation. Mixed messages are given to the other person, which creates confusion; trust and safety between them are challenged. A classic example is when the individual states, "I am fine," then slams the door.

Assertive communication is the healthy way of communicating, for it fosters trust and safety between individuals. Open body language is displayed during the conversation. The person who uses assertive communication maintains eye contact, and their verbal communication is displayed in a moderate volume and calm tone. They will remain calm or relaxed when communicating.

This person is aware and knows their feelings and needs. They are able to communicate their needs respectfully and clearly. Yet, at the same time, they are considering the needs and wants of the other person.

The American people are the soul of America. All Americans have inherent dignity, worth, and importance regardless of their political party, religion, race, or social class. Now is the time to move outside our individual comfort zones and consider the benefits of communicating with the goal of building rather than tearing relationships down.

"Handle with care" should characterize our interactions with all Americans regardless of our differences. This will begin the healing process that this nation so greatly needs.

AT HOME WITH GENE HO

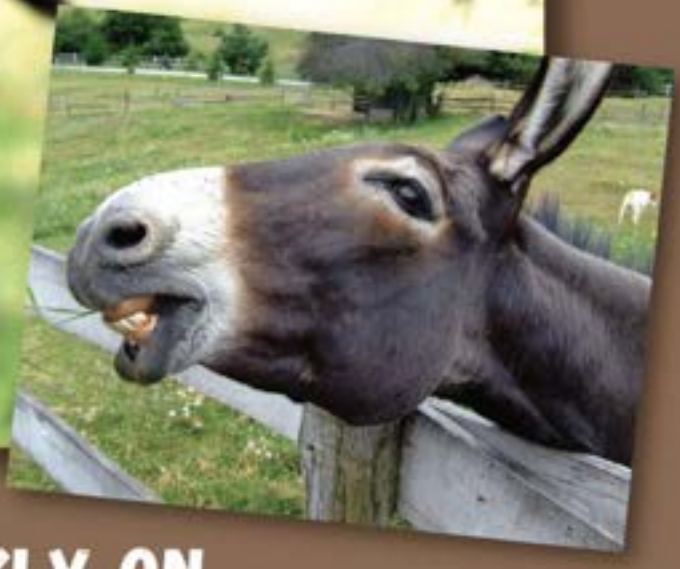
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AMERICA

Is Tired of the Political Chaos of the Last 8 Years

by Dave Blaze





The last eight years in American politics have been marked by unprecedented levels of chaos, division, and uncertainty. From contentious elections to polarizing policies, the political landscape has left many Americans feeling exhausted, disillusioned, and not knowing what to believe. It is time that we explore the various factors contributing to this political chaos, the impact it has had on the American public, and the potential paths forward for a more stable and unified future.

The Rise of Political Polarization

One of the most significant factors contributing to the political chaos of the last eight years is the rise of political polarization. The ideological divide between Democrats and Republicans has grown wider, with each side becoming more entrenched in their beliefs. This polarization has been fueled by a variety of factors, including the influence of partisan media, the rise of social media echo chambers, and the increasing influence of special interest groups.

The result has been a political environment where compromise and collaboration are increasingly rare. Instead, political discourse has become more combative and adversarial, with each side viewing the other as an existential threat. This has led to a breakdown in the ability of the government to effectively address the needs and concerns of the American people.

The Impact of Partisan Media

Partisan media has played a significant role in exacerbating political polarization. Cable news networks, talk radio, and online news outlets have increasingly catered to specific ideological audiences, reinforcing existing beliefs and biases. This has created a media landscape where individuals can easily find news and information that align with their views while avoiding perspectives that challenge their beliefs.

The result is a more divided and polarized public, with each side becoming more convinced of their own righteousness and the illegitimacy of the other. This has made it more difficult for Americans to engage in constructive dialogue and find common ground on important issues.

The Role of Social Media

Social media has also played a significant role in the political chaos of the last eight years. Platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Telegram, Rumble, Truth Social, and Instagram have become central to the way Americans consume news and engage in political discourse. While social media has the potential to connect people and facilitate the exchange of ideas, it has also contributed to the spread of misinformation, the amplification of extreme views, and the creation of echo chambers.

The algorithms used by social media platforms are designed to prioritize content that generates engagement, which often means sensational and polarizing content. This has led to the



proliferation of fake news, conspiracy theories, and divisive rhetoric, further fueling political polarization and chaos.

The Influence of Special Interest Groups

Special interest groups and lobbyists have also played a significant role in shaping the political landscape over the last eight years. These groups often have significant financial resources and influence, allowing them to shape policy and legislation in ways that benefit their interests. This has led to a political environment where the needs and concerns of ordinary Americans are often overshadowed by the interests of powerful corporations and organizations.

The influence of special interest groups has contributed to a sense of disillusionment and frustration among many Americans, who feel that their voices are not being heard and that the political system is rigged in favor of the wealthy and powerful. Of course, this is propagated by the rich and powerful using a reverse psychological approach, where the rich and powerful portray themselves as the heroes of the common man.

The Erosion of Trust in Institutions

The political chaos of the last eight years has also been marked by a significant erosion of trust in institutions. From the government to the media to the judiciary, many Americans have lost faith in the institutions that are supposed to uphold democracy and protect their rights. This erosion of trust has been fueled by a variety of factors, including political scandals, perceived corruption, and the spread of misinformation.

The result is a more cynical and disillusioned public, with many Americans feeling that the system is broken and that their leaders are not acting in their best interests. This lack of trust has made it more difficult for the government to effectively address the challenges facing the country and has contributed to a sense of instability and uncertainty.

The Impact of Contentious Elections

The last eight years have been marked by several highly contentious elections, which have further fueled political chaos and division. The 2016 presidential election, in particular, was one of the most polarizing in American history, with both major party candidates facing significant controversy and opposition. The election of Donald Trump, a political outsider with a combative





and unconventional style, further exacerbated existing divisions and tensions.

The 2020 presidential election was similarly contentious, with widespread allegations of voter fraud and a highly polarized electorate. The aftermath of the election saw unprecedented levels of political violence and unrest, culminating in the storming of the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021. These events have left many Americans feeling disillusioned and concerned about the future of democracy in the United States.

The Role of Political Leaders

Political leaders have also played a significant role in contributing to the chaos and division of the last eight years. The rhetoric and actions of leaders on both sides of the political spectrum have often been inflammatory and divisive, further fueling polarization and conflict. The use of social media by political leaders to communicate directly with the public has also contributed to the spread of misinformation and the amplification of extreme views.

The result has been a political environment where trust in leadership is at an all-time low, and many Americans feel that their leaders are more interested in scoring political points than in addressing the needs and concerns of the public.

The Impact on Public Health

The political chaos of the last eight years has also had a significant impact on public health. The COVID-19 pandemic, in particular, has highlighted the deep divisions and dysfunction within the political system. The response to the pandemic has been highly politicized, with conflicting messages from political leaders, misinformation, and a lack of coordinated action.

The result has been a public health crisis that has been exacerbated by political chaos and division. The pandemic has also highlighted disparities and inequalities within the healthcare system, further fueling frustration and disillusionment among many Americans.

The Economic Impact

The political chaos of the last eight years has also had significant economic consequences. The uncertainty and instability created by political polarization and dysfunction have made it more difficult for businesses to plan and invest for the future. This has contributed to economic volatility and has made it more difficult for many Americans to achieve financial stability and security.

The economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated these challenges, with many Americans facing job losses, reduced income, and financial hardship. The failure of political leaders to effectively address these economic challenges has further fueled frustration and disillusionment among the public.

How We Move On: The Path Forward

Despite the challenges and chaos of the last eight years, there is hope for a more stable and unified future. Addressing the root causes of political polarization and division will require a concerted effort from political leaders, the media, and the public.

Promoting Constructive Dialogue

Two of the key steps towards reducing political chaos are promoting constructive dialogue and finding common ground on important issues. These will require a willingness to listen to and understand different perspectives, as well as a commitment to finding solutions that benefit all Americans.

Reforming the Media

Reforming the media landscape is also essential to reducing political polarization and chaos. This will require efforts to promote responsible journalism, reduce the spread of misinformation, and create a more diverse and inclusive media environment.

Addressing the Influence of Special Interest Groups

Reducing the influence of special interest groups and lobbyists is also essential to restoring trust in the political system. This will require campaign finance reform, increased transparency, and efforts to ensure that the voices of ordinary Americans are heard and represented in the political process.

Strengthening Institutions

Strengthening institutions and restoring trust in government, the media, and the judiciary are also essential to reducing political chaos. These will require efforts to promote accountability, transparency, and integrity within these institutions, as well as a commitment to upholding the principles of democracy and the rule of law.

Addressing Economic Inequality

Addressing economic inequality and ensuring that all Americans have access to opportunities and resources are also essential to reducing political chaos. These will require efforts to promote economic growth, create jobs, and ensure that the benefits of economic growth are shared more broadly.

Promoting Civic Engagement

Promoting civic engagement and encouraging Americans to participate in the political process are also essential to reducing political chaos. These will require efforts to increase voter turnout, promote civic education, and create opportunities for Americans to engage in meaningful dialogue and action on important issues.

The last eight or maybe nine years now in American politics have been marked by unprecedented levels of chaos, division, and uncertainty. The rise of political polarization, the influence of partisan media and social media, the role of special interest groups, the erosion of trust in institutions, and the impact of contentious elections have all contributed to this political chaos. The result has been a more divided and disillusioned public, with many Americans feeling exhausted and frustrated by the state of the political system.

Despite these challenges, there is hope for a more stable and unified future. Addressing the root causes of political polarization and division will require a concerted effort from political leaders, the media, and the public. By promoting constructive dialogue, realizing that your neighbors are not evil because they disagree with your political slant, reforming the media, addressing the influence of special interest groups, strengthening institutions, addressing economic inequality, and promoting civic engagement, it is possible to create a more stable and unified political environment. It's a TALL order!

Ultimately, the future of American democracy depends on the ability of the American people to come together and work towards a common goal. While the challenges are significant, the resilience and determination of the American people offer hope for a brighter and more stable future.

The BRICS Group:

Doomed to Failure?

by Jon David

The BRICS group, comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, was established with the aim of creating a counterweight to Western dominance in global institutions, taking specific aim at the reserve currency status of the U.S. Dollar. While the group has grown in both membership and influence, there are several reasons why BRICS may ultimately fail to achieve its goals.


BRICS

BRICS+



BRICS is an informal grouping of nations that includes the Federative Republic of Brazil, the Russian Federation, the Republic of India, the People's Republic of China, and the Republic of South Africa.

New 2024 members:

- Argentina
- Ethiopia
- Iran
- Saudi Arabia
- Egypt
- UAE


SAUDI ARABIA
IRAN
RUSSIA
CHINA
INDIA
UAE
BRAZIL
SOUTH AFRICA
ETHIOPIA

Diverse Economic Interests

One of the primary challenges facing BRICS is the diverse economic interests of its member countries. Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa have vastly different economic structures, priorities, and levels of development. For instance, China is a manufacturing powerhouse, while Brazil and Russia are major commodity exporters. India, on the other hand, has a rapidly growing services sector. These differences make it difficult for the group to develop cohesive economic policies and strategies.

Political Differences

The political systems and ideologies of BRICS members also vary significantly. China and Russia are authoritarian regimes, while Brazil, India, and South Africa are democracies. These differences can lead to conflicting priorities and approaches to governance, making it challenging for the group to present a united front on the global stage.

Internal Conflicts

Internal conflicts and rivalries among BRICS members further complicate the group's efforts to achieve its goals. For example, India and China have a long-standing border dispute that has led to military clashes in recent years, with India pushing back hard and effectively against China. These tensions can undermine the group's ability to work together effectively and present a unified stance on international issues.

Economic Instability

Economic instability within BRICS member countries can also pose a significant challenge to the group's success. For instance, Brazil and South Africa have struggled with economic recessions and high levels of unemployment in recent years. Russia's economy has been heavily impacted by international sanctions and fluctuating oil prices. These economic challenges can limit the ability of BRICS members to contribute to joint initiatives and investments.

Dependence on the US Dollar

One of the key goals of BRICS is to reduce dependence on the US dollar in international trade and finance. However, achieving this goal has proven to be difficult. Despite efforts to promote the use of local currencies and create alternative financial institutions, the US dollar remains the dominant currency in global transactions. This is due primarily to the U.S. government's stability and the great success and stability of the U.S. economy. This dependence on the dollar can limit the effectiveness of BRICS' economic initiatives and reduce its influence in the global financial system.

Lack of Institutional Framework

Unlike other international organizations such as the European Union or NATO, BRICS lacks a formal institutional framework. The group operates on an informal basis, with decisions made through consensus at annual summits. A losing formula. This lack of a formal structure can make it difficult to implement and enforce agreements, leading to a lack of accountability and follow-through on commitments.

Limited Influence in Global Institutions

Despite its growing influence, BRICS still faces significant challenges in reshaping global institutions to better reflect the interests of developing countries. The group has made some progress in establishing alternative institutions, such as the New Development Bank (NDB) and the Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA). However, these institutions are still relatively small and lack the resources and influence of established organizations like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.

Geopolitical Tensions

Geopolitical tensions and conflicts involving BRICS members can also undermine the group's efforts. For example, Russia's invasion of Ukraine has led to widespread international condemnation and sanctions, isolating the country from much of the global community. Not all BRICS members agree with Russia's actions. These geopolitical challenges can create divisions within BRICS and limit the group's ability to work together effectively.

Expansion Challenges

The recent expansion of BRICS to include new members such as Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates presents both opportunities and challenges. While expansion can increase the group's influence, it can also lead to greater internal divisions and disagreements. The inclusion of countries with different political systems, economic structures, and regional interests can make it even more difficult for BRICS to develop cohesive policies and strategies.

De-dollarization Efforts

Efforts to reduce dependence on the US dollar, known as de-dollarization, have been a key focus for BRICS. However, these efforts are failing. The US dollar remains the dominant currency in global trade and finance, and many BRICS members continue to rely on it for their international transactions. Additionally, the creation of a new BRICS currency or increased use of local currencies would require significant coordination and cooperation among member countries, which may be difficult to achieve given their diverse interests and priorities. For example, China is a known currency manipulator.

Limited Success of Alternative Monetary Institutions

While BRICS has established alternative institutions such as the New Development Bank (NDB) and the Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA), these institutions have had limited success in challenging the dominance of established organizations like the IMF and the World Bank. The NDB, for example, has faced challenges in securing funding and implementing projects, while the CRA has yet to be fully utilized. These limitations can reduce the effectiveness of BRICS' efforts to reshape the global financial system.

Regional Member Nation Rivalries

Regional rivalries among BRICS members can also pose a significant challenge to the group's success. For example, India and China have competing interests in Asia, while Brazil and South Africa have regional ambitions in Latin America and Africa, respectively. These rivalries can create tensions and divisions within BRICS, making it difficult for the group to work together effectively on global issues.


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BRIC

Lack of a Cohesive Vision

One of the fundamental challenges facing BRICS is the lack of a cohesive vision for the group's future. While the group was founded on the premise of creating a counterweight to Western dominance, its members have different priorities and goals. In layman's terms, the BRICS partners cannot get their act together. This lack of a unified vision can make it difficult for BRICS to develop and implement effective strategies and policies.

Dependence on Commodity Exports

Several BRICS members, such as Brazil, Russia, and South Africa, are heavily dependent on commodity exports for their economic growth. This dependence can make their economies vulnerable to fluctuations in global commodity prices, which can in turn impact their ability to contribute to BRICS initiatives. Additionally, the focus on commodity exports can limit the diversification and development of other sectors within these economies.

Corruption and Governance Issues

Corruption and governance issues within BRICS member countries can also pose significant challenges to the group's success. Without a stable government, the nation's currency isn't worth the paper on which it is printed. For example, Brazil and South Africa have faced high-profile corruption scandals in recent years, which have undermined public trust in their governments and hindered economic growth. These issues can limit the effectiveness of BRICS initiatives and reduce the group's credibility on the global stage.

Environmental Challenges

Environmental challenges, such as climate change and resource depletion, can also impact the success of BRICS. Many BRICS members are major contributors to global greenhouse gas emissions and face significant environmental challenges. Addressing these issues requires significant investment and cooperation, which can be difficult to achieve given the diverse interests and priorities of BRICS members.

Social Inequality

Social inequality within BRICS member countries can also pose a challenge to the group's success. Many BRICS members are monarchies or dictatorships and therefore have high levels of income inequality; they often face significant social challenges, such as poverty and lack of access to education and healthcare. Addressing these issues requires significant investment and policy changes, which can be difficult to achieve given the diverse economic and political systems of BRICS members.

Limited Public Support

Limited public support for BRICS initiatives within member countries can also impact the group's success. Many citizens of BRICS member countries may not be aware of or fully understand the goals and objectives of the group. Additionally, public support for BRICS initiatives may be limited by domestic economic and political challenges, such as unemployment and corruption.

Technological Disparities

Technological disparities among BRICS members can also pose a challenge to the group's success. While China and India have made significant advancements in technology and innovation, other BRICS members, such as Brazil and South Africa, lag behind in terms of technological development. These disparities can impact the ability of BRICS to develop and implement effective strategies and policies in areas such as the digital economy and innovation.

Limited Influence in Global Trade

Despite its growing influence, BRICS still faces significant challenges in reshaping global trade to better reflect the interests of developing countries. The group has made some progress in promoting trade among its members, but it still faces significant barriers in terms of tariffs, trade regulations, and market access. Additionally, the dominance of established trade organizations, such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), can limit the effectiveness of BRICS' efforts to reshape global trade.

Dependence on Foreign Investment

Several BRICS members, such as Brazil and South Africa, are heavily dependent on foreign investment from Western nations for their economic growth. This dependence can make their economies vulnerable to fluctuations in global investment flows and can limit their ability to contribute to BRICS initiatives. Additionally, the focus on attracting foreign investment can limit the development of domestic industries and innovation.

Limited Success in Reducing Poverty

Despite its goals of promoting economic development and reducing poverty, BRICS has had limited success in achieving these objectives. Many BRICS members still face high levels of poverty and inequality because, as stated earlier, the BRICS members are primarily monarchies and dictatorships; therefore, progress in reducing these issues is slow to nonexistent. Addressing these challenges requires significant investment and policy changes, which can be difficult to achieve given the diverse economic and political systems of BRICS members.

Limited Influence in Global Security

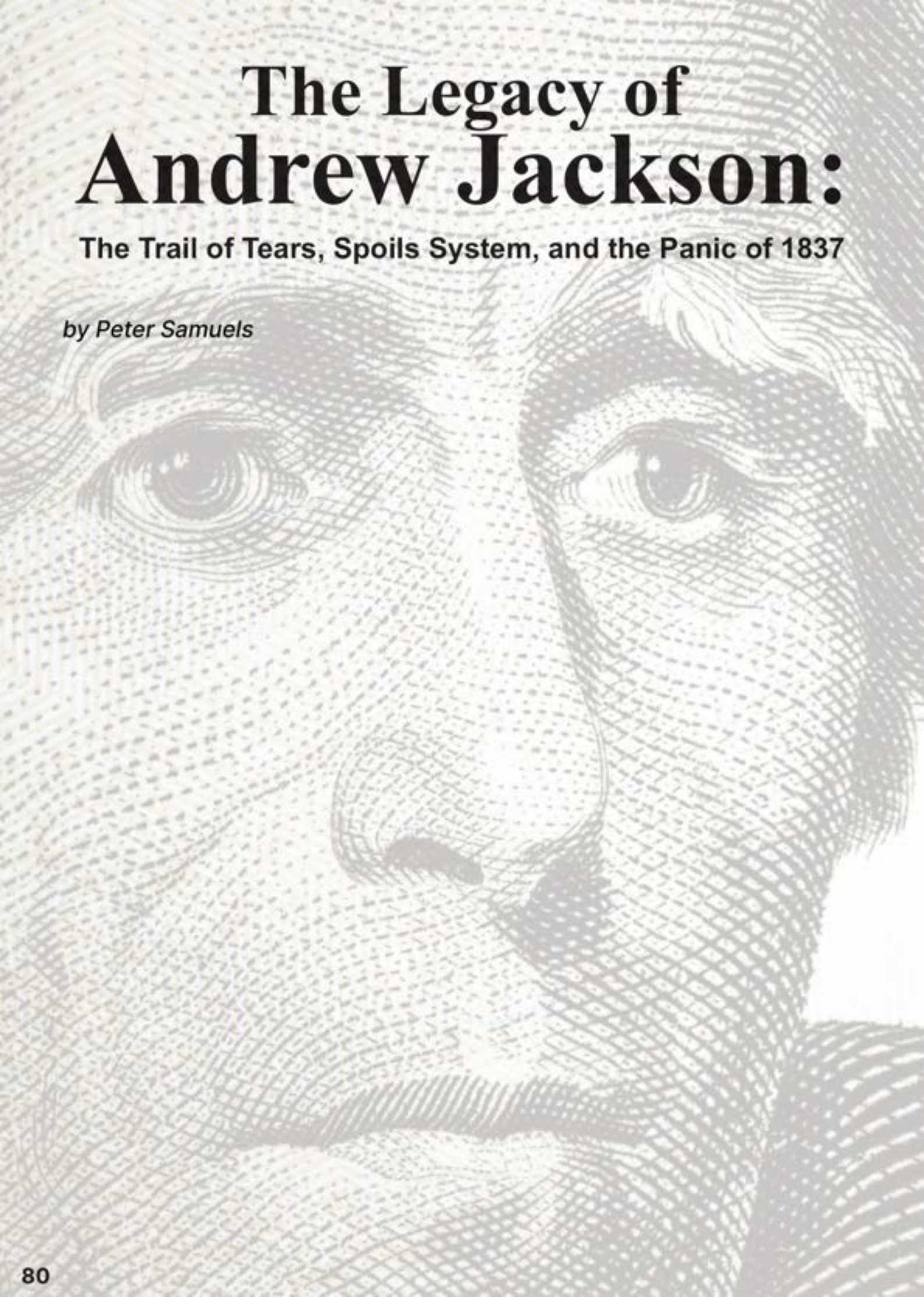
Despite its growing influence, BRICS still faces significant challenges in reshaping global security to better reflect the interests of developing countries. The group has made some progress, but nothing near to what has been expected.

The BRICS Group is doomed to failure due to the very nature of the member nations. However, numerous social media accounts expound on the growth and strength of the BRICS Group, but these accounts do so to gain your confidence and then try to sell you some vitamin supplements or some other far-out fantasy product. The BRICS Group nations, being made primarily of monarchies, dictatorships, and governments filled with corruption, are not collectively a group destined to succeed.

The Legacy of Andrew Jackson:

The Trail of Tears, Spoils System, and the Panic of 1837

by Peter Samuels



Andrew Jackson, the seventh President of the United States, is a figure who elicits strong opinions. While some view him as a populist hero who championed the common man, others see him as a deeply flawed leader whose policies and actions had devastating consequences, but just who was Andrew Jackson? His legacy can tell us.

The Trail of Tears and Indian Removal Act

One of the most egregious aspects of Jackson's presidency was his policy towards Native Americans. The Indian Removal Act of 1830, which Jackson strongly advocated, led to the forced relocation of thousands of Native Americans from their ancestral lands in the southeastern United States to territories west of the Mississippi River. This forced migration, known as the Trail of Tears, resulted in the deaths of thousands of Native Americans due to disease, starvation, and exposure.

Jackson's justification for this policy was that it would allow for the expansion of white settlements and the cultivation of more land. However, this policy was a blatant disregard for the rights and sovereignty of Native American tribes. It was a clear example of ethnic cleansing and has left a lasting scar on the history of the United States.

Opposition to the National Bank

Jackson's vehement opposition to the Second Bank of the United States is another reason his presidency is often criticized. Jackson believed that the bank was a tool of the elite and that it wielded too much power over the economy. In 1832, he vetoed the recharter of the bank and subsequently withdrew federal funds, placing them in various state banks, which were often referred to as "pet banks."

This move destabilized the national economy and led to the Panic of 1837, a financial crisis that resulted in widespread economic hardship. Jackson's distrust of centralized banking and his subsequent actions contributed to a period of economic instability that had lasting effects on the country.

The Spoils System

Jackson is often credited with popularizing the "spoils system," a practice where political supporters and allies are rewarded with government positions. While this system was not entirely new, Jackson took it to new heights, replacing a significant portion of federal employees with his own supporters.

This practice led to widespread corruption and inefficiency within the government. Many of the individuals appointed by Jackson were unqualified for their positions, leading to a decline in the quality of public service. The spoils system undermined the merit-based system of government employment and set a dangerous precedent for future administrations.

Authoritarian Tendencies

Jackson's presidency was marked by his authoritarian tendencies and his willingness to use executive power to achieve his goals. One notable example is his response to the Nullification Crisis of 1832-1833, when South Carolina declared that it had the right to nullify federal tariffs. Jackson responded by threatening to use military force to enforce federal law, a move that many saw as an overreach of executive power.

While Jackson's actions during the Nullification Crisis ultimately preserved the Union, his willingness to use force against a state set a troubling precedent. His authoritarian approach to governance often bypassed the checks and balances that are fundamental to the American political system.

Treatment of Enslaved People

Jackson was a slave owner, and his treatment of enslaved people was brutal and inhumane. He owned hundreds of enslaved individuals over his lifetime and was known for his harsh treatment of them. Jackson's presidency was marked by his staunch support for the institution of slavery, and he took measures to ensure its continuation and expansion.

Economic Policies and the Panic of 1837

Jackson's economic policies, particularly his opposition to the national bank and his support for the Specie Circular, contributed to the Panic of 1837. The Specie Circular was an executive order issued by Jackson in 1836 that required payment for government land to be in gold and silver. This policy led to a shortage of hard currency, which in turn caused a credit crunch and a severe economic downturn. The Panic of 1837 resulted in widespread bank failures, unemployment, and economic hardship for many Americans. Jackson's economic policies, driven by his distrust of centralized banking and paper money, played a significant role in causing this financial crisis.

Violation of Supreme Court Rulings

Jackson's disregard for the authority of the Supreme Court is another reason his presidency is often criticized. One of the most notable examples of this is his response to the Supreme Court's ruling in Worcester v. Georgia (1832). The Court ruled that the state of Georgia had no authority to impose its laws on Cherokee tribal lands. However, Jackson ignored the ruling and allowed Georgia to continue its efforts to remove the Cherokee people from their land.

Jackson's refusal to enforce the Supreme Court's decision undermined the rule of law and set a dangerous precedent for executive overreach. His actions demonstrated a blatant disregard for the checks and balances that are essential to the functioning of the American political system.

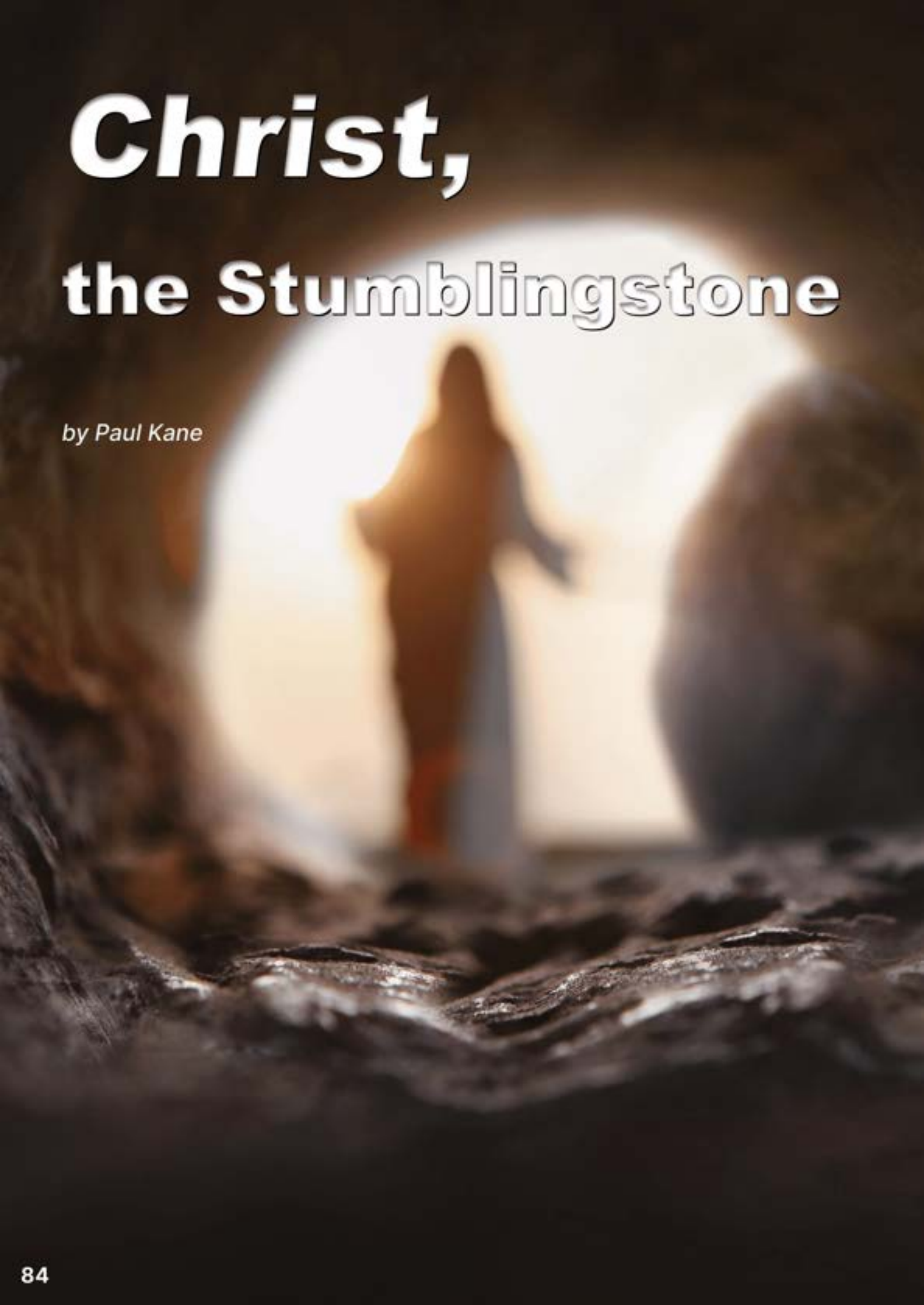
Legacy of Violence and Conflict

Jackson's presidency was marked by a legacy of violence and conflict. His aggressive policies towards Native Americans, his support for the institution of slavery, and his willingness to use military force to achieve his goals all contributed to a climate of violence and instability. Jackson's actions often exacerbated existing tensions and conflicts, leading to further suffering and hardship for many Americans.

President Andrew Jackson's actions and policies had devastating consequences for many Americans, particularly Native Americans and enslaved people. His presidency serves as a reminder of the importance of upholding the principles of justice, equality, and the rule of law in the governance of the United States.

Christ, the Stumblingstone

by Paul Kane



"Unto the Jews a stumblingblock," and ***"Unto the wisdom of the world foolishness."*** How true is the statement in 1 Peter 2:7-8? ***"Unto you, therefore, who believe He is precious, but unto them which be disobedient, the Stone which the builders rejected, the Same is made the Head of the corner, and a Stone of stumbling, and a Rock of offense, even to them which stumble at the Word, being disobedient, whereunto also they were appointed."***

This is stated also in Romans 9:32-33, ***"Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that Stumblingstone, as it is written, 'Behold, I lay in Zion a Stumblingstone and Rock of offense,' and whosoever believeth in Him shall not be ashamed."***

Worldly, wise men and selfrighteous men have always stumbled at the virgin birth of the Son of God. The great mystery and miracle of the incarnation is too much for the wisdom of this world. Even religious leaders today repudiate it because it cannot be explained within the realm of natural science. **This is the spirit of antichrist that was in the world before the last of the apostles died.** The Christianized agnostics in the assemblies today do not care for the fellowship of the members of the Body of Christ whom they call Fundamentalists.

We say to those who DO believe in this all-important doctrine—that is, the deity of Christ—be warned against fellowshipping or supporting the pseudo Christians who deny the deity of the Son of God (2 John 10-11). Then 1 John 2:22 says, ***"Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist."***

Christ was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. This is the testimony of the Holy Spirit in John 1:10. Because the rulers, spiritual and physical, of this world knew not the eternal purpose of God in Christ, they crucified the Lord of glory (1 Corinthians 2:8). ***"They killed the Prince of life"*** (Acts 3:14-15).

To the religious, self-righteous Jews on Earth, when Christ was in their midst, their Messiah said, ***"Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father; there is one that accuseth you, Moses, in whom ye trust, for had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me, for he wrote of Me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe My words?"*** (John 5:45-47).

Note this terrible indictment against the Jewish leaders: ***"But though He had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him, that the saying of Isaiah, the prophet, might be fulfilled, which he spake: 'Lord, who hath believed our report? And to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?'"*** (John 12:37-38, referencing Isaiah 53:1).

"The Jews had agreed already that if any man did confess that He was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue" (John 9:22). The Jews, often mentioned in the gospels, are not to be taken for the everyday Jewish person or the common man of Israel. In first-century Palestine, there was no separation between church and state. The priests at the temple in Jerusalem not only officiated over the religious life of the Jews; they were also rulers and judges. These, along with the Sadducees, were what was referenced as "the Jews."

The Jews would not believe their own Scriptures. They claimed to believe Moses, but they did not. Just as the Modernists claim to believe Christ, they do not. The Jews saw Christ feed five thousand people with one scanty meal; they saw Him calm the stormy sea; they saw Him raise Lazarus from the dead; they acknowledged that He was a Teacher come from God, that He spoke as never men spake, that He might be John





the Baptist raised from the dead or some old testament prophet reincarnated, but when Christ made Himself equal with God, they took up stones to kill Him (John 10:28-35). Then Christ added, ***"They hated Me without a cause."***

Who Hath Believed Our Report?

That was a very important question, ***"Who hath believed our report?"*** And the other question asked with it, ***"To whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?"***

The answer to this last question is given in the language of Christ recorded in Matthew 11:25-27, ***"Thou hast hid these things from the wise and the prudent and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight, and no man knoweth the Son but the Father."***

What a wonderful truth this is! AND this still seems good unto the Father. When Simon made the great confession to the Messiah, ***"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,"*** the Son of God said a most significant thing: ***"BLESSED ART THOU...FLESH AND BLOOD HATH NOT REVEALED THIS UNTO THEE, BUT MY FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN"*** (Matthew 16:16-19). In line with this great truth, the Apostle Paul wrote years later, ***"No man can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit"*** (1 Corinthians 12:3).

In Ephesians 1:16-19, we learn that the same God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ gives the Spirit of wisdom and revelation to all members of the Body of Christ who really desire to know the deep things of God. ***"For the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God"*** (1 Corinthians 2:10).

But look, millions of members of the Body of Christ, who believe the report concerning the virgin birth and eternal deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, do NOT believe the Lord's report concerning "the mystery of Christ" (Ephesians 3:1-11). Why? One reason is because the eyes of their understanding have not been enlightened in accordance with Ephesians 1:18.

This mystery is, to the great majority of redeemed saints, **"The Mysterious Mystery."** Its enemies in the assemblies are many, and even some fundamentalists call it divisive teaching because they have not received the Spirit of revelation.

Like the Jews in the days of Christ, they have agreed that they will put out of the synagogue any who confess and teach that the risen Lord revealed a mystery to the Apostle Paul **different** from the message and program that He gave to the twelve apostles. This, right here, is THE cause of all of the schisms and divisions in the Body of Christ today, **because the eyes of their understanding have not been enlightened in accordance with Ephesians 1:18.**

***

In Ephesians 1:13, the Holy Spirit, through the Apostle Paul, declares that men are saved and sealed by hearing and BELIEVING the Word of Truth, the gospel of your salvation. Therefore, here, now, is declared unto you the Word of Truth, the gospel of your salvation: ***"that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures"*** (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). BELIEVE today. **The time is short.**





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Election Cycle & False Media Narratives

by Gene Ho





How the media can create false narratives during an election cycle. WOW! What a topic! This is a very complex topic, but I'll break it down into several key areas to help everyone understand the different ways this happens.

You see, the media plays a crucial role in shaping public perception during election cycles. Ideally, it should provide accurate, unbiased information to help voters make informed decisions. However, various factors can lead to the creation of false narratives, which can significantly impact the outcome of an election. These factors include media bias, sensationalism, misinformation, and the influence of social media.

Media Bias

Types of Media Biases

Media bias occurs when journalists and news organizations present information in a way that favors a particular political party, candidate, or ideology. There are several types of media bias.

Selection Bias: This occurs when media outlets choose to cover certain stories while ignoring others. For example, a news organization might focus extensively on a candidate's scandal while downplaying their policy proposals.

Presentation Bias: This involves the way information is presented. For instance, a news outlet might use positive language to describe one candidate and negative language to describe another.

Confirmation Bias: This happens when media outlets present information that confirms their audience's preexisting beliefs. This can lead to echo chambers where viewers are only exposed to one side of the story.

Examples of Media Bias

During election cycles, media bias can manifest in various ways. For example, a news outlet with a conservative bias might focus on a liberal candidate's perceived weaknesses, while a liberal-leaning outlet might do the opposite. This selective coverage can create a skewed perception of the candidates and their platforms.

Sensationalism

Definition and Impact

Sensationalism refers to the practice of emphasizing shocking or sensational stories to attract viewers and increase ratings. During election cycles, this can lead to the overemphasis of scandals, gaffes, and controversies at the expense of substantive policy discussions.

Examples of Sensationalism

For instance, a candidate's minor mistake during a speech might be blown out of proportion and dominate news coverage for days. This can distract voters from more important issues and create a false narrative about the candidate's competence or character.

Misinformation and Disinformation

Definitions-

Misinformation refers to false or misleading information that is spread unintentionally, while disinformation is deliberately false information spread with the intent to deceive.

Sources of Misinformation and Disinformation-

Misinformation and disinformation can come from various sources, including social media, partisan news outlets, and even foreign actors. During election cycles, these false narratives can spread rapidly and influence public opinion.

Example:

For example, during the 2016 U.S. presidential election, false stories about candidates were widely shared on social media. Some of these stories were created by foreign actors with the intent to sow discord and influence the election outcome.

The Role of Social Media

Amplification of False Narratives

Social media platforms can amplify false narratives by allowing them to spread quickly and reach large audiences. Algorithms designed to maximize engagement often prioritize sensational or controversial content, which can include false information.

Echo Chambers and Filter Bubbles

Social media can also create echo chambers and filter bubbles, where users are only exposed to information that aligns with their existing beliefs. This can reinforce false narratives and make it difficult for users to encounter diverse perspectives.

The Influence of Political Campaigns

Campaign Strategies

Political campaigns often use media to their advantage by crafting narratives that favor their candidates. This can include the strategic release of information, the use of


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targeted advertising, and the manipulation of social media.

Negative Campaigning

Negative campaigning, where candidates attack their opponents rather than focusing on their own platforms, can also contribute to the creation of false narratives. These attacks are often amplified by the media, leading to a distorted view of the candidates.

The Role of Fact-Checking

Importance of Fact-Checking

Fact-checking is essential for countering false narratives and ensuring that voters have accurate information. Fact-checkers verify the accuracy of claims made by candidates, political parties, and the media.

Challenges of Fact-Checking

However, fact-checking faces several challenges. False information can spread rapidly, making it difficult for fact-checkers to keep up. Additionally, some voters may distrust fact-checkers, especially if they perceive them as biased.

The Impact on Voters

Influence on Public Opinion

False narratives can significantly influence public opinion by shaping voters' perceptions of candidates and issues. This can lead to misinformed voting decisions and undermine the democratic process.

Erosion of Trust

The spread of false narratives can also erode trust in the media and the electoral process. When voters feel that they cannot rely on the information they receive, it can lead to cynicism and disengagement from the political process.

The creation of false narratives during election cycles is a multifaceted issue that involves media bias, sensationalism, misinformation, and the influence of social media. These false narratives can significantly impact public opinion and the outcome of elections.

To address this issue, it is essential that George promote media literacy, support fact-checking efforts, and encourage diverse, accurate, and truthful reporting. By doing so, we can help ensure that not only our readers but voters in general have the information they need to make informed decisions and uphold the integrity of the democratic process.


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Moving Forward Together

Past the Election Results

by Shelley Allen

"It is not the size of the dog in the fight that counts,
but the fight in the dog that wins."

– A.G. Lewis

No matter the results of the 2024 presidential election, life will go on. Whatever the outcome and whether it is resolved in November, December, or months from now, the quality of our lives in 2025 and beyond depends on what we, the people, do now. Will we fill our streets with peace or with violence?

What can we do while waiting for the ballot counting to be finished, the Electoral College process to work, and the legal contests to be resolved? We cannot stop protesters from protesting or rioters from rioting, but we can do everything within our power to live in peace with everyone around us—individually as well as collectively.

By resolving our differences, we can move forward together. Working-class families, hardworking individuals, and business owners of every political stripe can find common ground. If we do not, the frayed fabric of our society will unravel further.



Common Ground

For our posterity's sake, we must recognize that there are pathways to peace and choose them. They are well worth our focus, indeed our most diligent effort.

Ronald Reagan advised, "Peace is not the absence of conflict, but the ability to cope with conflict by peaceful means." Even if we cannot resolve our differences, we can handle the conflicts we have with our neighbors peacefully. If we do so, we can obtain the best of American ideals.

Delayed election results may paint this period of uncertainty with doubtful speculation, flaying frayed nerves, but that does not mean we are doomed to default to violence and more hatred. As beings blessed with reason, we can find the will to work together when we share a common goal. Faced with the existential threat of collapse if our social unity completely disintegrates, our common goal is therefore survival as a nation.

Despite what naysayers might say, individuals CAN make a difference, and together we have more power to change the political climate than ever before. It is not the omnipotent behemoth the political pundits would have us believe. Besides, "it is not the size of the dog in the fight that counts, but the fight in the dog that wins." (Fun Fact: This aphorism was first penned by a 19th-century travel agent and part-time poet named Arthur G. Lewis, who authored a column called "Stub Ends of Thought" that was published in the magazine *Book of the Royal Blue*, the April 1911 issue of which contains this famous gem.)

Put whatever fight is left in you after this long, arduous election cycle to good use, not ill. Stoke the embers of passion smoldering in your heart into flames for causes beyond yourself—things that are not just important to you but to everyone.

What's Most Important

Forty-four states held state legislative elections this year, electing nearly 6,000 state legislators. That's thousands of people freshly delegated to address the issues most important to millions of Americans. What those issues are may vary from state to state, and thousands may already be clamoring for our representatives' immediate attention, but if they would earnestly tackle just the extremely important ones, the vast majority of us would be exceedingly thankful.

What are those top issues? According to a September Gallup poll, 52% of voters rate the economy as an "extremely important" issue. Other top issues that poll participants said mattered most to them when it comes to voting include democracy, the Supreme Court Justices the candidates would pick, abortion, healthcare, education, immigration, terrorism and national security, crime, and taxes.

The opinions of Americans on what issues are most important may have been significantly influenced by what media sources they regularly consume, but that is not likely the sole reason for their choices. Their concerns may have been shaped by life experiences, business impacts, and family members or even themselves suffering from the policies and regulations of local, state, and federal governments. Whatever the reason for the differences in our priorities, Republican and Democrat voters can agree on TWO things:

1. Our local, state, and federal government representatives have the DUTY to serve OUR interests, not their own.

2. Our future depends on whether we can work together to address national problems.

Refocus

Together, no matter where you are perched on the political spectrum, we can all focus on holding our government leaders ACCOUNTABLE. Their feet must be held to the fire when they stray from their obligations. Their actions must match what they have promised to do. When they have failed to meet our expectations, they must be made to relinquish their power in subsequent, fair, and free elections.

TLDR (Too Long, Didn't Read): Our focus should be upon holding those accountable for doing the jobs they were hired to do.

We are all clinging to the same leaky lifeboat. We are all impacted by the same legislative leviathan. We are all one body of people beholden to our posterity.

One thing that may help as we turn our attention toward moving forward together is to remember that, despite the many differences between our two primary factions, our opponent, too, has a sense of humor. When we dialogue with others who disagree with our viewpoint, we can try to show them what we see without being derogatory or using inflammatory language. We can use humor!

Humor can connect disparate opinions far more effectively than conventional word weapons. Beating your opponent over the head with physical weapons certainly is not conducive to peace, nor is bashing them with destructive speech. However, a gleam of humor shown when presenting your perspective will reassure others "that a fellow human being is ticking inside a strange face" (Eva Hoffman). As Agnes Repplier, the American essayist, observed, "Humor brings insight and tolerance."

"Humor brings insight and tolerance." -Agnes Repplier (1855–1950)

When Disagreements Inevitably Arise

We can be wise as owls about what solutions we wish to propose, support, or implement, but we must be harmless as doves when explaining them to detractors if we truly want to get them implemented. Like participants randomly partnered in the penultimate potato sack race, our legs and hands are bound to one another—smelly feet, bad breath, and all—and we must move forward together, or we will not move forward at all.

There is no need to panic, though, for "as long as a man endeavors to make good, there is always a chance for him to do so" (A.G. Lewis). Now is our chance. We can present a unified front when facing the issues extremely important to us all, and we will, once we no longer look behind but forward, where there is always hope.

Dreamy December Destinations

Magical Holiday Getaways

by: Michele Marin



As the year winds down, December emerges as a time when people around the world take a collective sigh of relief, step away from the daily grind, and embrace the spirit of adventure.

For many, the allure of December lies in the transformation of familiar landscapes into winter wonderlands, where glistening snow blankets the earth and the atmosphere shimmers with the anticipation of the holiday season. It's a time when destinations come alive with festive lights, the aroma of seasonal delicacies, and the joyous laughter of people celebrating life.

In this December travel roundup, we'll embark on a journey to discover some of the most captivating destinations. So, as the year draws to a close, unwrap the gift of travel and discover the joy of celebrating the holidays in a new and enchanting setting.

Adventure in the French Alps:

Val d'Isère, French Alps



Nestled in the heart of the majestic French Alps, this charming alpine village transforms into a winter paradise in December. Its unique appeal lies in its perfect blend of world-class skiing and a cozy, traditional Savoyard atmosphere.

With reliable snowfall all season long and countless challenging slopes for all levels of ability, the vast resort of Val d'Isère is the top choice among the most diehard skiers. The extensive Espace Killy ski area, which Val d'Isère shares with Tignes, offers a diverse range of terrain, catering to all skill levels.

However, what truly sets Val d'Isère apart is not just the skiing but the entire experience. Sip hot cocoa by a crackling fireplace in a rustic mountain chalet, indulge in Michelin-starred cuisine, and celebrate après-ski in a festive holiday atmosphere.



In December, Val d'Isère's charm is further heightened by the seasonal festivity. Indulge in complimentary chocolates, meet Father Christmas, and enjoy fireworks on the slopes of Val d'Isere.

If you're traveling with a large family or groups of friends, Chalet Inoko is your private haven amidst the snow-covered trees in Val d'Isère. The stunning chalet comprises six elegant bedrooms flanked by modern design and top-notch amenities, including an indoor pool and hot tub with a view. It offers a luxurious winter escape.

To book, visit *PurpleSki.com;* 7-night stays start at $46,000.

Winter Wonderland:

Stockholm, Sweden



When it comes to celebrating Christmas in a fairytale setting, Stockholm, Sweden, emerges as a top contender. With thousands of lights adorning the streets and the scent of freshly baked gingerbread cookies wafting through the air, this enchanting Scandinavian city transforms into a winter wonderland every December.

The heart of Stockholm's Christmas festivities lies in its beautifully adorned Gamla Stan (Old Town). The two busiest Christmas markets are Stortorget Square—in the heart of Gamla Stan—and Skansen's Christmas Market. Enjoy spiced wine, Christmas crafts, and holiday decor, plus try the typical gastronomic specialties such as sausages made of reindeer or moose.



You cannot leave Stockholm in December without trying the *julbord*—the Swedish Christmas buffet—only available during this month. Swedes usually eat it at noon, and it consists of a mix of hot and cold dishes, including marinated herring, salmon, cod, sausages, meatballs, and the *julskinka*—a leg of cooked ham marinated in mustard. These with gingerbread and spiced wine are the essential basis of any good Christmas menu in Sweden.

While in Stockholm, stay at the five-star Grand Hôtel Stockholm, voted the best hotel in Northern Europe by Condé Nast Traveler's Readers' Choice Awards 2023, for a luxurious retreat in the heart of the city.
Visit *GrandHotel.se/en* to book.



Christmas in the Big Apple:

New York City, USA

New York City during the festive season is a spectacle in itself, but beyond the classic holiday experiences—the Rockettes and ice skating at Rockefeller Center—the Big Apple holds unexpected delights that can make your Christmas visit truly extraordinary.

The New York Botanical Garden Holiday Train Show is a charming and unexpected treat for train enthusiasts and families alike. Watch model trains zip past nearly 200 famous New York landmarks in the warmth of the conservatory.
Visit NYBG.org

Venture to Brooklyn's Dyker Heights neighborhood, where you'll find houses extravagantly adorned with holiday lights, life-size Santas, sleighs, snowmen, and Christmas carols. This local tradition turns the area into a dazzling display of Christmas cheer for all ages. Tours are available.

While ice skating in NYC is a popular holiday activity, try The Rink at Bryant Park for a more intimate and delightful experience. Surrounded by the city's skyscrapers and twinkling lights, this rink offers a cozy ambiance perfect for



a romantic date or a fun outing with friends.
Visit BryantPark.org

Step aboard a cozy boat for a Cocoa and Carols Holiday Cruise around New York Harbor. Sip on hot cocoa, enjoy freshly baked cookies, and sing along to festive tunes as you sail past iconic landmarks adorned with holiday lights.
Visit Sail-Nyc.com

Step back in time at the Merchant's House Museum for a unique and immersive experience. Witness a historic candlelit reading of Charles Dickens' classic, A Christmas Carol, in the same parlor where the story's author once performed. This intimate event offers a genuine taste of 19th-century holiday traditions.
Visit MerchantHouse.org

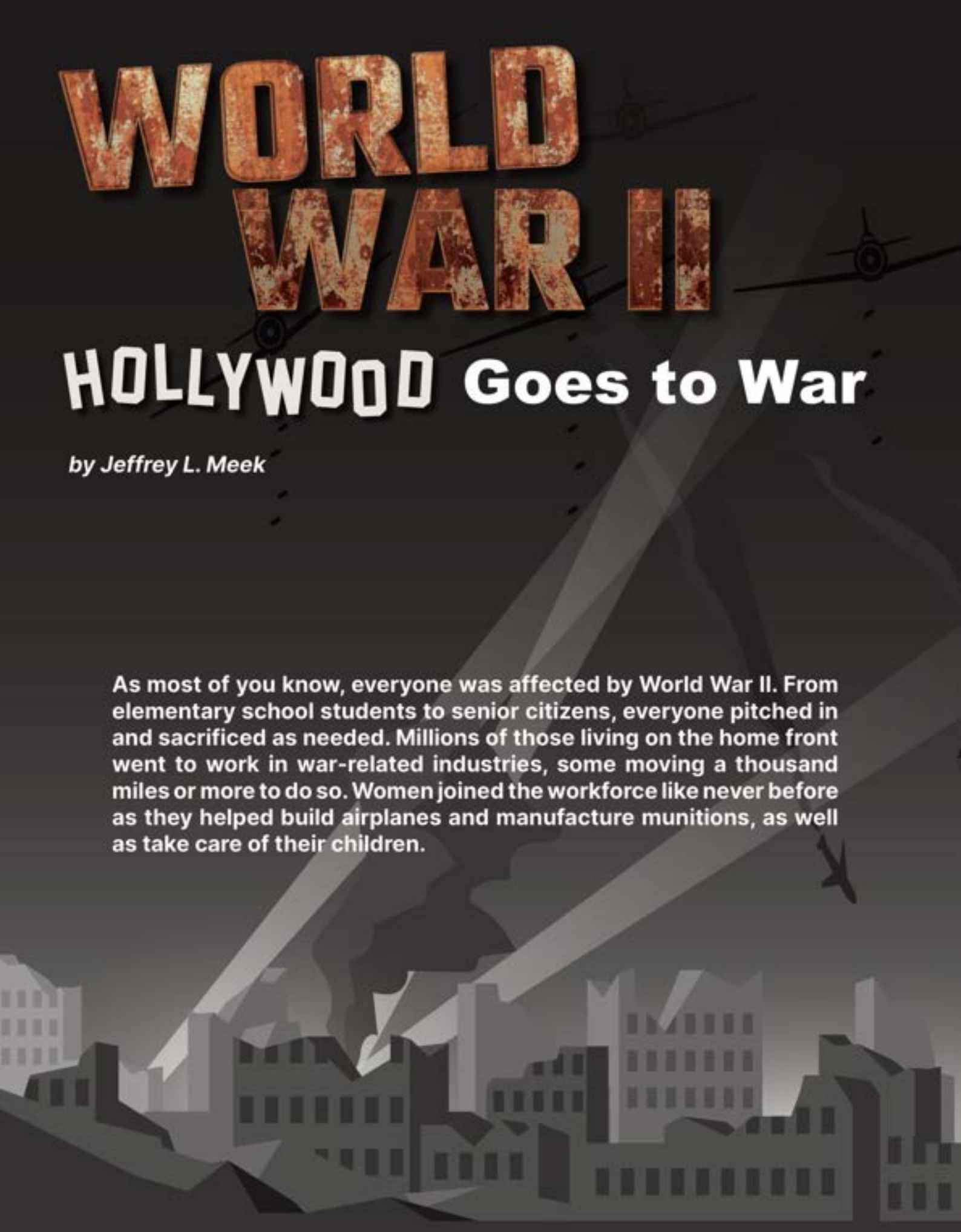
For a truly remarkable experience, stay at the Madison Avenue jewel, the Lotte New York Palace Hotel in Midtown Manhattan. The hotel stakes its claim as the city's most iconic hotel, and this year, the courtyard Christmas tree, which has been a staple for countless holiday seasons, returns.
Visit LotteNYPalace.com to book.

WORLD WAR II

HOLLYWOOD Goes to War

by Jeffrey L. Meek

As most of you know, everyone was affected by World War II. From elementary school students to senior citizens, everyone pitched in and sacrificed as needed. Millions of those living on the home front went to work in war-related industries, some moving a thousand miles or more to do so. Women joined the workforce like never before as they helped build airplanes and manufacture munitions, as well as take care of their children.



1939-1945



They also picked up the slack in the world of baseball, forming a women's professional league to fill the void left by professional baseball players serving in the Armed Forces, like Yogi Berra, who enlisted in 1943 and became a gunner on the *USS Bayfield* at Normandy, or Warren Spahn, who joined the Army and was wounded at the Bridge of Remagen and received a Purple Heart. Baseball players weren't the only professionals at war. Hollywood, in big numbers, pitched in as well, as actors served in the war and actors and actresses did their best to keep America's spirits up during the bitter struggle against Germany and Japan.

The list of those in Hollywood who did their part is a long one. Betty Grable, James Cagney, Spencer Tracy, Audrey Hepburn, Rita Hayworth, Betty Davis, Ava Gardner, Veronica Lake, Bing Crosby, Lana Turner, Betty Grable, Mickey Rooney, and Judy Garland, to name just a few. There were many others who made their mark on the war, as they went above and beyond what was required of them. A few of these are whom we will focus on in this article.

Perhaps best known for serving during the war was actor Jimmy Stewart. He didn't just join the Army Air Corps; he flew combat missions into the teeth of the enemy on many occasions. Stewart had already made 31 movies by Dec. 7, 1941, and had won the Best Actor award for the 1940 movie *The Philadelphia Story*.

Already a qualified pilot, he was drafted in late 1940 but initially rejected due to his lack of sufficient weight—only 143 pounds. Stewart wasn't deterred and started stuffing himself until he managed to be accepted by the Army Air Corps in March 1941. On December 7th, he was training at Moffett Field, California. After completing the training in January 1942, he became a 2nd Lieutenant and a flight instructor.

Stewart wanted in the fight and was eventually sent to Tibenham, England, in November 1943 as commander of the 8th Army Air Force's 445th Bomb Group, 703rd Squadron. He flew his first bombing mission a month later, attacking Kiel, Germany. Stewart participated in a 1,000-plane raid on Berlin, one of the most heavily defended areas in all of Germany.

He later became Chief of Staff of the 2nd Bomb Wing and received the rank of Colonel. In all, he flew 20 missions. Stewart later became a one-star general in the Air Force Reserve and flew one mission in the Vietnam War in a B-52.

Henry Fonda made more than 80 films and was also quite famous before the outbreak of war. Fonda insisted on enlisting over the protestations of his boss, movie director Darryl Zanuck. He eventually became a Navy intelligence officer. In December 1944, while Fonda was aboard the *USS Curtiss* near Saipan, a Japanese kamikaze attacked the ship. Fonda recovered intelligence from the sinking Japanese plane. He left active duty in 1946 and wore his real Navy hat in the hit movie *Mr. Roberts*. Zanuck also signed up in 1941 as a reserve lieutenant colonel in the Signal Corps.

Another actor closely associated with the Air Force was Clark Gable. Gable also wanted to participate in the fight and entered the service on Aug. 12, 1942, in California. Earlier that year, on Jan. 16, 1942, his wife, Carole Lombard, had been killed in an airplane crash outside Las Vegas after a highly successful war bond drive at the Indiana State House that brought in $2,017,513. After refueling in Las Vegas, the plane crashed a few minutes



Betty Grable on a B-17, showing her backside. Why? Because at the time, she was pregnant. (Jeff Meek photos)

later into the "Double Up" peak on Mt. Potosi. In all, 23 were killed, including 15 servicemen.

Gable wasn't sure he'd pass the physical. He was 41 years old, hadn't finished high school, had none of his real teeth, and had several skin problems. He was sent to Officer Candidate School in Miami, where the press was waiting. For the cameras, he shaved off his famous moustache. Gable graduated 700th out of a class of 2,600 men. He had made it and was even asked to give the graduation speech. He later went into training at a gunnery school.

At Fort Wright, he earned his wings as a gunner. Gable was then put with the 351st Bomb Group, where he put together a film project. Several Hollywood friends, also in the service, joined him in April 1943 in Peterborough, England, north of London.

Gable was promoted to captain and flew several B-17 combat missions. On one mission, he was almost hit by a 20-mm German shell that tore the heel off one of his boots. Once Hitler knew Gable was flying missions over Germany, he instructed Luftwaffe chief Hermann Goering to offer a reward to any pilot who shot Gable out of the sky. Gable reportedly said he'd go down with the plane rather than be captured and put on display.

During his tour of duty, Gable oversaw the filming of men and machines going about their work and at rest at English resorts. In October 1943, with thousands of feet of film footage, Gable was recalled to the U.S. Before he left, he had earned an Air Medal, an American Campaign Medal, and the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with a bronze star.

Back in Hollywood, he began editing films into what would be seldom-seen documentaries. On Jan. 16, 1944, the one-year anniversary of his wife's death, Gable was invited to the launch of a Liberty Ship named after his wife. That marked the end of his service. On June 12, 1944, citing his age, he requested a discharge. It was granted by an Army captain named Ronald Reagan.

Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., was another popular actor who served in the war. On April 10, 1941, he had been commissioned a lieutenant in the U.S. Naval Reserve at age 31. Fairbanks served on the *USS Wasp* and the *USS Wichita* in 1942. He later joined Lord Louis Mountbatten's Combined Operations Command. Later, Fairbanks returned to the U.S. and set up a top-secret base in Virginia Beach called Camp Bradford. The men under him worked on deception tactics and put them to use in the North Africa, Sicily, Italy, and Southern France campaigns. He then returned to Washington, D.C., and was assigned to the Strategic Plans Division of the Navy's Psychological Warfare Department. He left active duty in 1946.

Ronald Reagan came to fame in the 1940 movie *Knute Rockne, All American*. He joined the Army Reserves before Pearl Harbor, but bad eyesight kept him stateside, where he made training films with the Army Air Force First Motion Picture Group. William Holden, Arthur Kennedy, and others helped with the films. They called themselves "The Culver City Commandos." As we know, Reagan went on to become the California governor and President of the United States.

Some people refer to Bob Hope as the first "frequent flyer," as the entertainer traveled the world bringing a small respite to wartime duty. He was born in London in 1903, then moved to Cleveland and became a U.S. citizen in 1920.



He started entertaining troops in May 1941 with a radio show at March Field, Riverside, California. Hope, Jerry Colonna, and Francis Langford did that first show.

They began to travel throughout California, and in the spring of 1942, Hope became the MC for the Hollywood Victory Caravan, which toured dozens of cities. The appearances raised a billion dollars for Army and Navy relief agencies. Making the trip with him were James Cagney, Olivia de Havilland, Cary Grant, and others.

They traveled the U.S., Alaska, England, and Northern Ireland and did their first combat zone show in North Africa. In Palermo, Sicily, the show survived a German aerial attack. In 1944, Hope and his "Gypsies" headed to the Pacific and performed in more than 150 shows at places like Saipan and Tarawa. Hope called it the "malaria circuit."

Belgium-born actress Audrey Hepburn also played a role in the Allied victory. Attending school in England in 1939, her mother sent her to the Netherlands for safety. Then, in May 1940, Germany invaded the Netherlands. Hepburn, only 11 years old, worked with the resistance movement by carrying messages in her shoes. Later, as a teenager, she worked in what were called "blackout shows," secret performances held in private homes.

In 1955, Hepburn said of those shows, "The best audience I ever had made not a single sound at the end of my performance." Hepburn felt she really identified with Anne Frank—both born the same year, lived in the same country, experienced the same war; "except she was locked up, and I was on the outside," said Hepburn. Anne Frank's father wanted Hepburn to play Anne in the movie *The Diary of Anne Frank*, but Hepburn was too old to pull it off.

Remember the show *I Love Lucy*? Well, Lucille Ball, besides being a favorite GI pinup girl, also helped the war effort in another way. In 1942, Ball helped expose a group of Japanese spies in Hollywood when she picked up their radio traffic—on her teeth fillings! She reported the incident to MGM's security officers, who then contacted the FBI. They sent investigators to canvass the area and, sure enough, found an underground radio station operated by a Japanese gardener. Whether coincidence or fact, Ball stuck to the story throughout her life.

Speaking of Lucy, let's take a look at Desi Arnaz. He was offered a commission with the Cuban Army at the start of the war but turned it down. He tried to join the U.S. Navy but was turned down because he was not a citizen. Next, he tried the Army Air Force but was turned down again. Somehow, he eventually got into the infantry. Thereafter, he had some medical problems and ended up as a Medical Corps entertainer.

Did you ever get the email floating around saying Lee Marvin fought with Bob Keeshan, who later became Captain Kangaroo? Well, it's not true. Marvin was wounded in June 1944 during the invasion of Saipan, not Iwo Jima, as the email says. He was shot through his wallet in the fighting at "Death Valley," but managed to carry out four wounded men. He spent 13 months in a naval hospital and received a Purple Heart, not the Navy Cross. Keeshan didn't enlist until June 1945 and never left the U.S.

A famous soldier turned movie actor was infantryman Audie Murphy. Murphy was born near Kingston, Texas, in 1924, one of



Left: Audie Murphy statue outside the Audie Murphy Museum in Greenville, Texas

Right: Audie Murphy's dog tags

Right: Audie Murphy's book, To Hell and Back

nine kids barely surviving on the family farm. When Murphy was 16, his father walked out on the family, never to be seen again. A year later, after the attack at Pearl Harbor, Murphy tried to join the Marine Corps but was turned away. The same thing happened when he tried the paratroopers. At age 18, he was accepted into the Army. He would eventually fight in Sicily, Italy, and northern Europe. He received 21 medals, including the Congressional Medal of Honor.

On Jan. 26, 1945, Murphy's company was in the woods facing the German village of Holtzwihr. Six German tanks, supported by infantry, attacked their position. Murphy sent his troops back but stayed to call in artillery fire on the German advance. As the Germans closed in, Murphy mounted a burning tank destroyer and opened up with the vehicle's .50 caliber machine gun. He shot so many Germans in the tanks, and the remaining infantry pulled back. He was hit in the leg but kept firing until he ran out of ammunition. Then he pulled back, got his company together, and mounted a successful counterattack that resulted in a German retreat.

In June 1945, Murphy came home as a national hero. In 1949, he wrote a book, *To Hell and Back*.

It was a *Life* magazine story about Murphy that began his Hollywood career. James Cagney saw the story about his heroism, invited him to Hollywood, and paid for some acting classes. Then a friend helped him get his first movie roles.

In 1949, he made his first movie, *Bad Boy*. Then in 1951 came *The Red Badge of Courage* with fellow World War II veteran Bill Mauldin. In 1955, Murphy played himself in *To Hell and Back*, the story of his exploits in the war. It remained Universal Studios' biggest hit until *Jaws* hit movie screens in 1975.

Murphy was never able to put the war behind him. He was haunted by nightmares and slept with a pistol under his pillow. He got addicted to tranquilizers, and by 1968 he was broke. On May 23, 1971, he was killed in a plane crash near Roanoke, Virginia, in the Brush Mountains.

Many other future actors fought in the war. James Arness of *Gunsmoke* fought at Anzio and received a bronze star. *The Twilight Zone's* Rod Serling served with the 11th Airborne Division and worked behind enemy lines, taking enemy prisoners, and was wounded during the liberation of Manila. Eddie Albert joined the Navy in June 1942 and served on the attack transport *USS Sheridan*. During the invasion of Tarawa in 1943, he received a bronze star for taking troops off the island's reefs under enemy fire.

Glen Ford helped film the Normandy landings and also shot footage at Dachau concentration camp; Art Carney was hit by shrapnel on Omaha Beach during the Normandy invasion. Charles Durning also fought there, as well as the Battle of the Bulge, and survived a famous massacre of American troops near Malmedy, Belgium. During his service in Europe, he was wounded three times.

Gene Autry was a pilot for the Army Air Force; Bruce Cabot, who starred in *King Kong* in 1933, served as an intelligence officer with the Army Air Force in North Africa, Sicily, and Italy; Jackie Coogan was a glider pilot in the China-Burma-India theater; Robert Cummings served as a flight instructor with the Army Air Force; Charlton Heston enlisted in the Army Air Force in 1942 and served as a radio



operator on B-25's; Alan Ladd was drafted into the Army at the height of his career and made training and propaganda films; Victor Mature enlisted in the Coast Guard and served in the North Atlantic.

Red Skelton was drafted in March 1945 and entertained troops in Italy. He once said he was the only entertainer to go in as a private and come out as a private. Tyrone Power enlisted in the Marines in August 1942. He later qualified as a pilot and was one of the first to land on Iwo Jima, bringing in supplies.

Sidekicks Johnny Carson and Ed McMahon spent nearly 30 years together on *The Tonight Show.* Carson began his naval service in the V-12 program. Two days before he reported to the battleship *USS Pennsylvania*, a kamikaze attacked the ship. His first duty when he came aboard on Aug. 14, 1945, was to accompany a detail assigned to remove the dead bodies. McMahon joined the Navy in 1943, then the Marine Corps in 1944, and would soon become a Marine aviator for the planned invasion of Japan.

Bernard Schwartz, better known as Tony Curtis, was inspired by Cary Grant's role in *Destination Tokyo* and Tyrone Power in *Crash Dive*. He decided to join the Navy and chose submarine duty. He was injured at Guam loading torpedoes and was paralyzed for a short time, then later witnessed the Japanese surrender in Tokyo Bay on Sept. 2, 1945. He went to Hollywood in 1948 at age 23, changed his name, and a year later made his first film, *Criss Cross* playing a rumba dancer. His first big hit, *Sweet Smell of Success* (1957), helped make him a star.

And of course, there was the famous Stage Door Canteen on 44th Street in New York City. It was run by the American Theatre Wing and offered dancing, nonalcoholic drinks, food, and friendship to servicemen away from the war. By 1945, there were eight Stage Door canteens in the U.S., London, and Paris.

It opened on March 1, 1942, and could hold 500 people. In the first hour it was open, GI's ate 500 sandwiches and were entertained by Walter Pidgeon, Tallulah Bankhead, and Gertrude Lawrence. Hollywood stars like Betty Davis, Marlene Dietrich, Bing Crosby, Hedy Lamarr, Helen Hayes, Carole Landis, and many more served the sandwiches and drinks and would even dance with a lonely serviceman far away from home.

Even a new young actress volunteered on Monday nights. Her name was Lauren Bacall. Seven nights a week, the entertainment continued, and anyone, black or white, from any Allied nation was welcome to join in the fun and excitement. All the canteens closed after the war, but if you ever talk to a serviceman who'd been to one, you know the thrill of being there will never fade away.

Hollywood stars also participated in war bond drives and even made a movie about them called *The All-Star Bond Rally,* which starred Betty Grable. Bing Crosby debuted his new hit song, "Buy a Bond," in the film. Hope, Frank Sinatra, and Harpo Marx were very involved in the Seventh War bond drive. Lana Turner, all by herself, raised $5.25 million in bonds by selling kisses—105 kisses for $50,000 each. Abbott and Costello did a 41-city tour. Beginning in September 1942, "Stars Over America" featured Humphrey Bogart, Gary Cooper, Clark Gable, Cary Grant, Marlene Dietrich, and Judy Garland as they toured 360 communities.



Left: Spencer Tracy - Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo - Movie

Hollywood also helped the war effort in other ways. Lt. General John Dewitt of the Army Western Defense Command was looking for a way to protect facilities. Reports, later proved false, said Japanese planes were attacking coastal facilities, but a Japanese submarine did shell the Ellwood Oil Field near Santa Barbara on Feb. 23, 1942, causing little damage and no casualties.

DeWitt found a reserve officer, Major John Ohmer, Jr., to put together a plan to camouflage critical facilities. With the help of *MGM Studios, Disney, 20th CenturyFox*, and others, set designers, prop men, artists, and carpenters first camouflaged the Lockheed-Vega plant in Burbank, California, then a Boeing plant in Seattle, the Vultee Aircraft facility in Downey, and many more. They covered the areas with canvas paintings to look like lawns, streets, or wooden structures. Tall roofs became hillsides, and trees were made from chicken wire with glued-on chicken feathers painted different shades of green. The disguised plant at Boeing covered 26 acres and featured schools and parks. Thankfully, the camouflaged areas were never needed, and Hollywood switched its partnership with the military to making training films and movies.

Oh, yes, movies by the dozen. Some have remained as classics: *Guadalcanal Diary, Casablanca, Sahara, Minister of Fear, Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo, The Story of GI Joe, They Were Expendable, A Walk in the Sun, Foreign Correspondent,* and *The Mortal Storm.* Humphrey Bogart, Ingrid Bergman, Claude Rains, Peter Lorre, Richard Conte, Anthony Quinn, Ray Milland, Spencer Tracy, Van Johnson, Robert Mitchum, John Wayne, Dana Andrews, Donna Reed, Myrna Loy, Virginia Mayo, and many other stars applied their talents to wartime moviemaking.

It was a time when America was united in purpose and determined to win a war, a time when one of the most often expressed sayings was, "We are all in this together." America pulled together—both the common man on the street and the star or starlet in Hollywood—and defeated **two** deadly enemies and preserved the peace.

My next article will also be about Hollywood, but about an aspect of Hollywood not many are aware of. That story—how the Central Intelligence Agency, Department of Defense, and the FBI have influenced the programs and movies we watch, even going so far as to set up a CIA liaison officer with the motion picture industry. Don't miss it.

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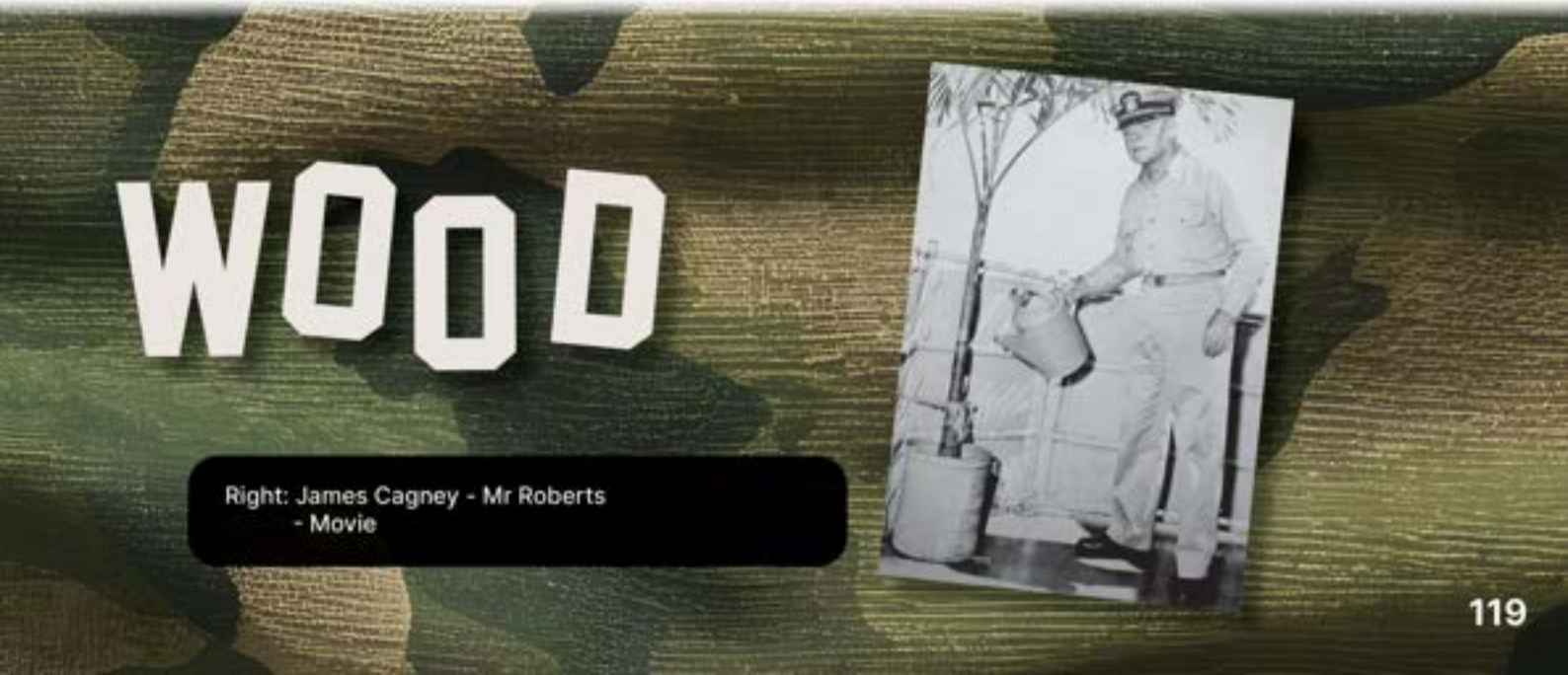
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Right: James Cagney - Mr Roberts - Movie

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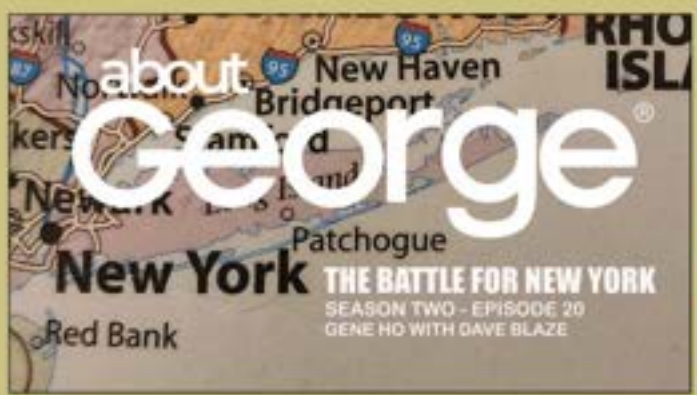
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