

# The Great American Political Circus

*Shôn Ellerton, November 21, 2020*

*If there's one circus that hasn't been cancelled this year, it is that of American politics.*



The current circus is packing up to go leaving in its stead another circus for all of us to ‘enjoy’! It’s been a riveting show and to be honest, far more interesting than some of the fictional political dramas I’ve watched on the box. The election is over, or certainly, as good as over. Assuming the results are squared up and certified, Biden will be the next President Elect having won the electoral vote by a wide margin of over 30% with a 7% advantage over the popular vote. Who says the electoral college isn’t fair?

## Cautious optimism

I believe there is a new-found sense of cautious optimism in American politics sweeping the nation. The radical left and right may be loud and expressive (which the media thrives from), but I sense a measure of unity and conciliation between moderate Democrats and Republicans; yes, those ‘boring’ ones which the media have no interest in covering. As for landslides? There was no ‘Blue Wave’ nor a ‘Red Wave’ which doesn’t surprise me in the least. Many from either side of the political divide expected them but reality strikes when the average American doing what most Americans do, aspiring to be what most Americans want to be, makes the most appropriate choice of who to vote in the ballot booth. And who do they vote for? The candidate that most closely aligns to the needs of the voter, that is, the need to support themselves and their families.

I believe that most voters have become, if anything, veering towards the political centre. At the polling station, the left-wingers have become a little more conservative while the right-wingers have become a little more progressive. In other words, the majority have turned more centrist in their political views. However, not all do so but they represent a much smaller group of individuals. The radicals. This group comprises a wide variety of individuals from all walks of life representing a wide variety of biases and agendas. It is highly influential and extremely vocal. Moreover, it captures the interest of mainstream media, because, without it, much of it will dry up from lack of revenue. Apart from well-established objective and neutral publications like *The Economist*, *Financial Times* and *National Geographic*, much of mainstream media thrives on sensationalism. I think many would agree with me that many media outlets have gradually shaped into sensational tabloid outlets driven by catchy headlines to entice eager mouse-clickers.

## The radicals

In brief, members of this much smaller or radical group include the ultra-wealthy, celebrities, and movie stars, the genuinely disadvantaged, the easily persuaded and ignorant, the social justice warriors, the proselytisers, and the extremists. Let's take a quick tour of this smaller group of individuals starting with the celebrities and the ultra-wealthy.

### Celebrities and movie stars

The ultra-wealthy and those who have the luxury of not being overly affected financially regardless of who will be elected are more likely to vote, or appear to vote, more radically. For example, movie stars and celebrities who 'have it made' can profit enormously by espousing values, or to use another term, virtue-signalling, to others purporting the need to support the cause to promote equity, eradicate systemic racism and to reduce carbon emissions, albeit with the conspicuous absence of wanting to narrow the wealth gap between the uber-rich and the average man in the street. Regarding carbon emissions, I take pleasure in recalling the posts by Lewis Hamilton—the famous Grand Prix driver—who virtue-signalled the need to reduce carbon emissions. I cannot think of many other activities which produces more carbon emissions per capita than Grand Prix racing! Hypocrisy is rife in this community. Most celebrities and movie stars have everything to gain—usually financially—by preaching

these narratives and have been incredibly vocal about doing so with the aid of mainstream media to promulgate it. Certainly, supporting Trump or dismissing political correctness would probably serve any Hollywood movie star a big disfavour in today's woke climate. The question which is often not asked is what side of the political fence do such personalities really vote for in the secrecy of the polling booth.

## Tycoons and CEOs

Tycoons and CEOs of powerful companies like big tech giants, pharmaceuticals and banks hold enormous wealth when compared to the wealth of the average American worker. They also hold enormous influence through the press but, unlike celebrities and movie stars, some are blatantly right-wing and make it clear that the only way to be successful in life is to work hard and not have a Plan B. Basically, it is up to you and not by actions from others to make your dream a reality. Remember that Arnold Schwarzenegger motivational video a couple of years ago? Trump, not being particularly renowned for being an avid reader, did state that one of his favourite books is [\*The Fountainhead\*](#) by Ayn Rand. He looked up to the character, Howard Roark in the book, who plays the no-nonsense and egoist young architect who displays nothing but contempt for institutionalised tradition and socialism. This is interesting because the architecture of Roark is highly modern and progressive—some of it quite striking I can say—yet, when it comes to progressive values in politics, Trump is anything but.

## The dissatisfied

Next in our group are those who simply have had enough of the establishment, regardless of who is in power. Some are genuinely affected unfavourably by the current system and want to push for a radical change. However, this would probably represent a very small number as it is likely that most changes required to improve the lives of the disadvantaged in this group could be met by non-radical means. For example, raising the level of the hourly minimum wage or enacting legislation to make areas accessible for disabled people are probably considered non-radical proposals which can make a huge difference to many. Absolutely ridiculous proposals like introducing [‘ethnomathematics’](#) and [‘ebonics’](#), both bizarre notions that mathematics and the English vocabulary are racist being rooted in Western values, in Seattle schools makes for highly

amusing reading. But in all seriousness, such proposals further disadvantage black and coloured minorities for obvious reasons.

## The ignorant

There are those who may be at total odds of knowing what is going on and, instead, rely on following the trend by others. They are often easily persuaded and become victims of coercion on social media and other forms of social interaction whether it be through friends, family, colleagues or acquaintances. Many are decidedly afraid to deviate from what others around them purport to do or what they believe in and display all the fears of being morally excluded if they do not conform.

## The social justice warriors

There are the social justice warriors, primarily urbanised folk, that enjoy pushing the narrative that the country needs a radical change to seek equity for the disadvantaged depending where they lie on the hierarchy of the intersectional lens. Many of these are folk are predominantly white, well-off and not particularly well-travelled or have much in the way of worldly knowledge; for example, knowledge of the happenings throughout repressed nations, many of which are hardly covered by mainstream media. For example, many who seek justice for women's equality may not be aware of, or simply do not want to know about, the brutal injustices towards women in sub-Saharan Africa, indigenous communities in Australia or much of the Muslim world.

## Those who proselytise

There are those radicals who proselytise or seek to convert other people's faith or ideology. Religion and ideology—one could argue that they may be the same thing—for most, is a private and intimate relationship with a higher power, or perhaps, none. Laws set out to legislate if someone is allowed to do something or not based on a religion may seem totally illogical or out of context for someone not following that religion or ideology. The United States is far off from being a theocracy, of course, but it has not demonstrated true secularism—the separation of church and state—clearly based on some of the differing legislation depending on which US state one is in. For example, some schools in the so-called 'Bible Belt' are renowned for practicing creationism. Some states

have made abortion illegal. And others have declared that drinking alcohol should be heavily frowned upon, like the state of Utah.

## The extremists

The last segment of people who may want radical change may be those least inclined to vote at all. The extremists. To me, an extremist is one who will take the initiative to harm someone else rather than having an ideology, faith or movement compromised. Thankfully, this group is very small, although the press will flock in large numbers to cover them at demonstrations, rallies, protests and riots. Most extremists simply have no care for a civil and orderly society but rather, seek the thrill of seeking disruption, attention and chaos. Whether it be from the far-right like the Proud Boys, the far-left like Antifa and other radical groups associated with BLM, or simply looters and raiders, these people are, in general, dangerous and unhinged. They always thrive on a common 'demon' that they must seek and destroy, depending what's on the 'Menu of the Day'.

## Examples of common sense

Returning to the vast majority of voters who comprise the moderates whether they sit with the Democrats or Republicans, it seems clear that when it comes to reasonable policy and legislation, common sense often prevails. Before I cite a couple of examples, it is worth mentioning that, in the United States, the people have the direct power to vote on specific acts of legislation through propositions. Most other countries in the western world only allow the people to vote for a specific party with the hope that the right decision is made by the party in question. Although, under special circumstances, some countries allow specific policy changes through a plebiscite, as with the relatively recent one held in Australia whether gay couples may be married legally or not. I was once registered as a California voter whilst overseas when I filed in a vote for Obama back in 2008. At the bottom of the form were various propositions one of which, as I remember, was one relating to granting exclusive casino rights for native indigenous peoples in California. It was a very simple YES or NO question and the people had a direct vote on it. Such is the power of a direct vote.

Here are a couple of examples how reason and common sense prevailed. The rejection of Proposition 16 in California and the approval of Amendment 2 in

Florida. Starting off with Proposition 16, otherwise known as the Diversity Ban Proposition, this proposition was recently introduced to overturn the 1996 Proposition 209, which made it essentially illegal to hire based on gender, race, or colour. Many, including myself, would find little fault in introducing legislation making it illegal to discriminate against anyone based on these traits; however, there are others, particularly in the far-left community, who feel that they find it necessary to practice *affirmative action* to ‘level the playing field’. In order to achieve this, it would first be necessary to overturn Proposition 209. Unfortunately, as it would turn out, enacting Proposition 16 would simply re-create the very problem which Proposition 209 attempted to eradicate. That is, the biased selection of white, male candidates to fulfil job roles, the very problem which Proposition 209 meant to address. Thankfully, the majority of voters put their rational hats on at the voting booth and rejected Proposition 16, because, clearly, as good as its intentions may have been, would have just opened up another can of worms and a truckload of bureaucracy. Democrats and Republicans voted overwhelmingly against this.

As for Amendment 2 in Florida, this was passed by both Republicans and Democrats to increase the minimum wage to fifteen dollars through increments over a set time period. The media played its share of fearmongering suggesting that, no way, would Republicans vote for this; however, they were proved wrong. Most Republicans and Democrats alike see little sense with an ever-growing segment of the population not being able to support themselves, thus the need to bring in some government control to moderate the free market. One may arguably state that the Ayn Randian vision of a *laissez-faire* economy with little or no government intervention has already established itself if one can take the examples set by big tech and pharmaceuticals. The wealth divide is getting wider along with a growing sense of fear and panic of disenfranchisement with so much of the population as it started to do during the early days of the Great Depression. Who’s to blame? Why, Trump of course!

## Trump Derangement Syndrome

As if someone who has an irrational fear and disgust of spiders or snakes, Trump often elicits similar emotions—the *Trump Derangement Syndrome (TDS)*—out of so many people regardless of how intelligent they are, how old they are, what race or colour they are, or even how wealthy they are. Let’s just put aside whether Trump is bad or good with respect to his policies or his

character. The very notion of a character like Trump doing *anything* right is inconceivable, or if he did, it would be duly ignored or attributed to someone else. Imagine you're a hair shampoo company and the press made it public that Trump was using *your* shampoo. I guarantee sales would plummet! It would not surprise me if many anti-Trumpers with similar hair colours or styles of Trump (or Boris Johnson, for that matter) would change their hair colour or style without a second thought. Ridiculing Trump will be with us for many years, and let's face it, so many of us enjoy doing it. Souvenirs with Trump's face will probably sell well (especially in a joke novelty shop), if not already. I remember coming across grinning Nixon 'Tricky Dick' coffee mugs at some time in the past. After all, what would be better joke than to give a Trump mug to someone with TDS?

Unfortunately, Trump Derangement Syndrome can get so acute that there are many who would not hesitate to have him publicly hung, drawn, and quartered. What is particularly terrifying about this is that, I strongly believe, if Trump suddenly found himself unguarded in a mob of anti-Trumpers, something as drastic as this could happen. Lord of the Flies style. There would be no one to protect him and if anyone protested, the mob would do the same to that person. These mobs are particularly dangerous because they act on impulse and they do not react or fear from the consequences of their actions. The bulk component of these mobs comprises of those who are easily led, many of which could be considered not all that intelligent. That is not to say that the intelligent do not get involved in mob mentality for they are often the ones who spawn and orchestrate it to fit an ideology, religion, or some other set of narratives.

We have had the most extraordinary rants from public figures like Keith Olbermann and Elizabeth Warren. When Olbermann suggests that Trump supporters must be prosecuted and convicted and removed from our society and that Trump should be sent to the electric chair for each count of death attributed to the virus, or when Elizabeth Warren ranted on how Trump is singlehandedly destroying the world and its environment, one could be forgiven into thinking that half the world is becoming infected by a strain of ergot or some other virus that makes everyone lose their minds. Coincidentally and for fun, my son and I recently watched an old classic Star Trek episode called *The Naked Time* where the crew went mad because of such a virus!

Broad comparisons of Trump being made against Hitler, a man that deliberately exterminated millions of people because of an ideology, or the Ku Klux Klan

who espouse the theory that white people are superior to others is hyperbole extreme. This is a man that is hated so much by so many people that there can be no recourse for reconciliation. I can assume that Trump is broadly aware of this and hence his continual belligerence to act out the character that he is becomes more pronounced. An analogy could be a likened to someone telling a child that they have been badly behaved for years on end and whatever good that child does will never be acknowledged. And this is the problem. Trump has become the seminal persona of an infant or juvenile with the power to make decisions that have a global impact many of which may be irreversible. After all, would you give your child the power of choice to do what ever he or she wants to do?

## Handling the pandemic

Trump's presidency has, no doubt, been chequered with a mix of policies and actions that have created massive waves and divisions within the national and global communities. It is far too simplistic to state whether many of Trump's policies and actions were good or bad, because each policy or action, no doubt, affects groups of people or whole nations in a different way. This is the same for all political leaders. However, Trump's handling, or more accurately, messaging of how the pandemic should be controlled has been, what I can make out, atrocious and has possibly been instrumental for him failing to win a second term, assuming that he has already lost it.

This is what I cannot fathom. How could such a crisis like this pandemic be placed solely in the hands of the governors of the states? The same question could be applied to other federation nation-states like Australia. I believe there could have been two options for Trump to show that he had, at least, some control of the pandemic.

### Option 1: Grant emergency powers

The first option would be to assume control of the situation by enacting a national state of emergency and granting additional powers at federal level to make universal decisions on what measures are needed to control the spread of the virus. Politics aside, this would require all the state governors to convene together and abide by a national directive. Democrats and Republicans would be required to throw away their political differences and treat the pandemic as a natural disaster.



This is, of course, fraught with difficulties. One, the federal executive—Trump—would be granted these additional powers much like what had occurred with the Patriot Act back in the early 2000s. Provided Trump followed the advice of an international authority like the World Health Organisation, an international body which the majority of the public tends to trust, he might have been seen as someone who acted appropriately. Whether the WHO's advice is wholly correct is moot, because we are still learning more about this virus. However, to make a national decision without a panel of, generally, universally accepted experts in the field providing input is foolhardy.

The second problem is, of course, herding a bunch of cats, or in this, the state governors to come to an agreement on enacting a nationwide plan. Technically, should such powers be granted to the federal executive, this decision would normally be taken without governor consent, however, to do so would be met with fierce resistance with a president as unpopular as Trump. Would Trump's character allow him to moderate a forum of all the governors in these unusual times to gain a working consensus, if perchance, the governors could bring themselves to convene at all? I doubt it, considering Trump's dominant persona.

## Option 2: Support state governors

The second option is much simpler and more practical in nature. Why not offer support to all the governors along with their independent plans on what measures they require to control the pandemic in their respective states? The exception to this; however, may apply to international ports of entry in which the federal government will need to exercise some sort of control with consistency nationwide. Would Trump be equally reviled for being shown as a weak president and failing to take direct action? Probably. In any case, many of the state's governors have not been particularly willing to ask much in the way of advice from their president. Could Trump listen to each of the state's governors and let them operate as they seem fit *and* give them support regardless of whether their policies align with his or not? As before, his character simply does not strike me as the type that would do so.

## The brash character of Trump

Regardless of the two options presented above, the underlying behaviour of Trump's heartlessness, brashness and display of belligerence has made him very unpopular with so many, and to be honest, quite rightly so. For example, the

nation will not easily forget the walk of belligerence to the church from the White House flanked on either sides by his guard whilst holding a bible in his hand—seemingly forgetting that there are many others who hold other faiths—nor when he tweets or declares that China is to blame for the virus and then calling it the China Plague or the ‘Kung Flu’, which, incidentally, my wife of Chinese descent found amusing. Whether or not China is to blame for the virus is one thing, but rather than objectively stating that the virus originated from China and spelling out the plans as to how to deal with it, Trump’s preference is to ‘bad-mouth’ China instead; a quite unpresidential response many would agree with.

### The best circus act of all!

Nothing can be more circus-like than the sheer amount of hypocrisy, ignorance, lack of common sense and confusion that has been in existence throughout this pandemic. This time, it is us we must blame. Or some of us, at least.

The worst element is the hypocrisy and lack of common sense, especially during occasions where mass gatherings took place. Whilst Trump’s rallies got slated left, right and centre by the media, national celebrations for Biden’s win still went on ahead and being largely unreported as being super-spreaders. The other blazingly absurd bout of hypocrisy was during the New York City lockdowns when Bill de Blasio, the mayor, decided to participate himself in the BLM protests. It seemed perfectly okay for BLM protests to happen and yet, there was a rule in place that no more than ten people could convene. This is just nonsense and it simply sends the message out to the world that politics is far more important than working to contain the spread of the virus.

Keeping with the subject of mass gatherings, those who think it is safe to gather in crowds as long as a mask is worn should think again. Let me put this into some perspective. The average diameter of the coronavirus is around 100 nanometers or 0.1 microns. This is one tenth of a millionth of a metre. Take the diameter of a garden pea 0.75 centimetres, which is the equivalent of 7500 micrometres. If one increases their size by 7500 times, that would be not to dissimilar to the size of Mount Everest. Imagine climbing Mount Everest and discovering a garden pea (I expect frozen of course); that would be our little coronavirus lying there. I suspect it highly unlikely that most masks worn by those in these gatherings could contain something as small as this. However, common sense by adhering to social distancing and not gathering in large

crowds is key to controlling the spread; however, common sense is in very short supply.

As for confusion, we cannot shift too much of the blame on the people because guidance has been scant, the rules keep changing, conflicting information has been spread through media and social media, and we still have much to learn on how the virus works.

## They are all lies!

As for lies, let's first define what a lie is. The definition of a lie is to make an untrue statement with intent to deceive. If someone said to you 'We will win this war [of the pandemic]', does that constitute a lie? Anti-Trumpers would say so, but what about similar rhetoric said by other world leaders? Churchill said this during WWII and had England lost, would he have been called a liar? Boris Johnson paraphrased this on several occasions during the pandemic.

Here's a sample of a list of lies said by Trump according to the New York Times. See if you think they are genuine lies.

***'Looks like by April, in theory...it miraculously goes away.'*** [this is an opinion]

***'One day, it's like a miracle, it will disappear.'*** [this is a fact, the Earth will disappear one day too I expect and it doesn't need a miracle of any kind]

***'We're doing a great job with it. Just stay calm. It will go away.'*** [maybe they are trying to do a great job; staying calm is better than panicking, and, like before, the virus will go away at some point]

***'I'd love to have the country opened up...by Easter'.*** [This is clearly an opinion; wouldn't most people want to see the country opened up?]

***'We have prevailed'*** [from what exactly? Don't know? Why is it a lie?]

Are they genuine lies or just overly optimistic statements made on little or no grounds of evidence? I think the latter. I'm not suggesting they're good statements to make. Not at all. But genuine lies?

OK. Let's talk about Trump's lies.

***He said the fence between America and Mexico was basically complete.***

However, the Department of Homeland Security admits just 5% of the border is fenced. Unless he was misinformed, this *could* be considered a lie.

***He claimed to have saved or created over 150,000 jobs.***

However, 1.2 million jobs were lost under the stimulus bill. This is not a lie but, it does not discount the fact that 1.2 million jobs were lost.

***He claimed that by the end of his first term, he would cut the deficit in half.***

This is not a lie. It could be considered over-optimism, nothing more.

So, let me surprise you. The above three statements came from Obama's administration during 2012, not Trump's.

Basically, what I am suggesting is that every president I can think of has made statements which are either overly optimistic or simply untrue; the politician's gambit!

As for the press, they excel at spinning lies when it sees fit. I was quite bemused when mainstream media started to announce Biden as President Elect before he was officially announced as President Elect. Many world leaders refrained from congratulating Biden until this was made official. And yet the press made derogatory news of such leaders refusing to congratulate Biden on his win. If we go back to the subject of lies, surely this was a significant one!

## **The chaos of the voting machine**

One of the greatest acts in this magnificent circus is the whole voting process. Looking at this through the lens of my data engineering career, I feel compelled to express an opinion on the chaotic voting system that is in place in the United States.

The biggest problem that seems to me is to uniquely identifying voters, and I understand this problem, because not many months ago, I was working on a project for the South Australian judicial system to identify people on an exercise to gather data sets for national reporting of the percentage of differing ethnic groups of those that went through the judicial system. It is impractical to get an

accurate result because there is no unique identifier for everyone. The greatest challenge is to obtain datasets from other governmental authorities. For example, driving licence data is held by the enforcement agencies, tax file numbers by the government tax office and Medicare data by the government health services sectors. Data is not freely exchanged and when it is, it can become an extensively long exercise to forge data sharing agreements. Moreover, Australia does not have a national number like a social security number which they do have in place in the United States.

In a perfect world, the use of using social security numbers as a unique reference for voting ballots seems sensible enough. However, there are many states, around twenty-five of them, that prohibit the disclosure of social security numbers. These social security numbers would, somehow, need to be accessed from a database containing a single source of truth of uniquely referenced voters, the data engineer's equivalent of nirvana. When a vote is cast, the system should never allow it to be duplicated or unable to be cross-referenced uniquely to a valid voting citizen. The system as it stands is open to so many holes, that it would be impossible *not* to have duplications and invalid votes being cast into the system.

It seems totally reasonable that all that vote must be formally identified to ensure that they are valid to vote and that they are crossed off the list to avoid duplications. Passports and driving licences—or ID cards if you are not driving a vehicle—are the best ways of being formally identified. Passports, driving licences or ID cards issued by the DMV do not have social security numbers which closes off the avenue of cross-referencing a picture ID and a social security number. Social security cards are basically pieces of cheap paper with your name and number on it. No photograph. No hologram. Nothing. They are essentially useless as ID cards and, in any case, not many individuals carry one on their person. There has been a lot of chitchat on social media and the press about the injustices of forcing voters to procure ID cards or driving licences on the basis that not everybody can afford to get one or have access to a facility to get one. It never fails to surprise me how weak this argument is. If the government is unable to assist in providing the odd \$10 to get an ID card issued, then there is a systemic problem which should have been addressed many years ago. Like a student procrastinating his study for his final exams to the last couple of months, the US government will probably shelve any plans to

improve the voting process and come 2024, the whole debacle will repeat itself again.

Regarding mail-in voting, it never ceases to amaze me what the fuss was all about. As far as I am aware, there are two types of mail-in voting: universal mailout balloting and absentee mail voting. There is something called a no-excuse absentee ballot meaning that you do not need an excuse to vote by mail. Except for nine states which stubbornly required an excuse to vote by mail, all the states allow one to receive an absentee vote by mail, a very easy process requiring one to log in to a website and request a mail-in ballot. Seems fair enough. Then there is universal mailout balloting in which a ballot is sent automatically to every known registered address in the state. This is the type of mail-in voting which Trump said would be a disaster, and in this case, I tend to agree with him. Having worked with databases with millions of addresses in government jobs, this is riddled with so many problems. Dud addresses, false addresses, duplicate addresses, addresses that are no more, and so on. This is just so plainly obvious for anyone who has worked in this sector. Yet the mainstream press has not been particularly informative when distinguishing the difference between universal mailout balloting and absentee mail voting. Many have spun the story to suggest that mail-in voting is not available at all, which is false of course. When I had a discussion with someone on no-excuse absentee voting, the response I got was a little on the heated side suggesting I was a bit harsh when I said there was no excuse for someone to vote using absentee voting. He did not understand the term of no-excuse voting, and this is understandable because the mainstream press has not generally made this clear to so many.

As of writing, there has been a large amount of tension between the Democrats and the Republicans regarding the veracity of the election results. The Democrats say that they won fair and square. The Republicans suggest that vote counting has been misappropriated to foreign outfits and rigged by the Democrats. Error aside, which is going to take place within any system put into place, there is some degree of likelihood that deliberate tampering could happen to the election votes. However, as of writing, there seems to be no evidence that this has been the case, at least, in a large scale. The scale of venom circulating through social media—especially from social media warriors like Robert Reich—contend that Trump is destroying democracy and that he will never concede with the possibility that he might never leave the White House under

his own duress is astonishing. After watching *Star Wars III: Revenge of the Sith* with my son the other night, I can't help feeling that Trump is being made out like Chancellor Palpatine converting a republic to an empire. Julius Caesar, of course, did just that, but I doubt that many would consider Trump anywhere near to Caesar in terms of a historical hero leader of people. All I can say here is keep calm and let the process of verifying the election along with any investigations of voter fraud continue. I feel certain that these investigations will probably lead to nowhere.

## Rumblings within the machine

What I surmise from all what is going on within the Democratic and Republican parties is that internal rifts are developing within both parties. The radical left and right tend to be veering away from the centrist politic within each of the two parties. The radical left and right always want more and there seems nothing that will appease them in terms of being satisfied. When extreme views put forward by political commentators like Jennifer Rubin suggesting that there should be no 'survivors' left in the Republican Party, I feel greatly disappointed that such lack of rational reasoning and dangerous rhetoric could make its way into a mainstream newspaper like the *Washington Post*. In all honesty, this is also a prime example of how to destroy democracy by creating one controlling and enveloping party.

The radical politicians make far more noise—and press—than sensible and moderate ones. I would consider Trump, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (otherwise known as AOC), and possibly Harris as radicals in their own respective parties. According to some of the press I have read, there appears to be a significant degree of pressure within each party to conform to the most outspoken and radical. Many mainstream Republicans have turned away from Trump and many mainstream Democrats have grown wary of those in the radical left. Maintaining centrism, neutrality or not taking sides can be difficult and it is often considered to be an unpopular stance by much of the populace, especially of the radicals.

There was a great quote in that *Star Wars Revenge of the Sith* movie I watched the other day when Lord Vader said to Obi Wan Kenobi during the fight on the volcanic planet at the end of the movie,

*‘If you are not with me, you are my enemy’*

of which Obi Wan replied

*‘Only the Sith deal with absolutes.’*

This phrase sums up the mentality of the radical to a tee.

Such behaviour is not wholly surprising. For example, AOC has made it patently clear that she is supporting the idea of lists of being drawn up of Trump supporters so that they can be accounted for. There was also the Trump Accountability Project created to make Trump accountable for all his actions once released from the presidency. However, after Biden’s unity speech, the project was dropped. On a light-hearted note, in one of the episodes of *Dad’s Army* (a British comedy of the Home Guard during WWII), the Home Guard managed to capture a German parachutist who found some of his captors disagreeable. Forthwith, he got his little black book out and pencilled their names on his little list.

But jokes aside, this is very unsettling behaviour and reflects a remarkably similar mentality to the comment ascribed to the fictional Sith above, ‘If you are not with me, you are my enemy.’

## And finally

Much as I despise the radical left along with its woke and ultra-progressive ideologies with a passion, I tend to align with the moderate and centrist Democrats of the classical liberal variety. In other words, less authoritative with more power being given to local and state governments. Many republicans fear that if the Democrats get into power, it will become a socialist state destroying the very foundations of what made the United States from a few scattered colonies to a world superpower. I believe the reality is this. Not a lot will change day-to-day for most Americans regardless who gets elected as most day-to-day legislation is made at state and county level. Don’t like living in the Bible Belt? Move to California. Don’t like living with high taxes? Move to a state with lower taxes. The freedom is there to choose, and that is what makes the United States what it is. Selecting the right state governor is often more important for the daily lives of the average American than who gets elected for the United States president.



One of the quandaries I was thinking of the other day was this. If I had the power to snap my fingers and usher in either Trump or Biden as the next president, regardless who won the vote, what would I do? To be perfectly honest, if Trump *did* get the votes and won the election, there would be continual rioting, violence, and looting. No small wonder that many shops were boarded up just before election day. With Biden, I foresee far less rioting and destruction of property. As for wokeness, political correctness and critical race theory, all of which, I abhor, this will continue regardless who is in power. It may be that having Biden elected as president may *reduce* these ultra-progressive ideologies while Trump will continue to accentuate them. It could be feasible that Trump, in some ways, thrives off the woke left by garnering support from the radical right.

Perhaps we should hand the reins over to Biden to offer a new start. Can Biden set out to make the nation less divided? Will he be able to reduce the national debt? Maybe. Maybe not. But we have all been exhausted by a president who has grabbed the limelight with such intensity for the past four years, that we need some sort of a break from it all. Maybe we need more ‘blandness’ from a president to cool off. As hard as the radical left is trying to do so, the introduction of socialism, extremist policies like Proposition 16 mentioned earlier and a complete overhaul of the governmental structure including the judiciary is going to be unlikely under a Biden government. As mentioned earlier, common sense eventually prevails. Therefore, Biden would be my choice.

My question is this. Say Trump finally concedes and steps down from political office to do whatever he wants to continue doing in civilian life, will he be left alone or will he still be the ‘focus of hate’ and pursued relentlessly? Those who want to pursue this ‘focus of hate’ path are part of the systemic problem of hate, anger, and violence. They are looking backwards, keeping the country in a primitive state of division and violence, and unwilling to focus their efforts on re-building a new future with Biden as the president.