

Trump Supporters Brainwashed?

WHAT'S HAPPENED TO REPUBLICAN VALUES?

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Introduction and Question

OK, the title is provocative and maybe annoying to Trump supporters. But guys, under Trump you've done a 180° about core values for the Republican Party. Why?

To help frame the discussion, here's a simple question for both Republicans and Democrats:

Assume Trump's behavior since becoming president and all actions by the Trump Administration are the same – record turnover of cabinet members; heads of key agencies and departments who have never be screened or approved by the Senate; Trump cozying up to the Russians for no apparent reason; selected cabinet members and advisors convicted of felonies and either in prison or awaiting sentencing; Trump publicly ignoring and insulting the key intelligence and law-enforcement agencies; making war-like decisions without consulting Congress as required in the Constitution; appointing family members as advisors to represent the US with foreign governments. The appointees, several of whom appear to have a clear conflict of interest, could not receive security clearances without a Trump override; reversing long-held Republican support of free trade; separating refugee families with legitimate case for asylum status and housing some of the children in cages; record federal deficits despite a decent economy...and a long list of other actions, insults, rude behavior.



Republicans: Given all of what's happened, would you still support Trump if he were a Democrat?

Democrats: Would you continue to oppose Trump as vigorously as most Democrats have if Trump were a Democrat?

Take some time and think about how you would answer the question. If you're true to your beliefs, the answer is "yes" whether Republican or Democrat. If your answer is "no," then you should pause even longer and ask a second question, "What do I really believe in?"

Note: Entries are the same as the blog (www.usrevolution5.com) with some minor editing. This booklet also includes a couple of entries made after the original series. The blog entry number is noted for each section.

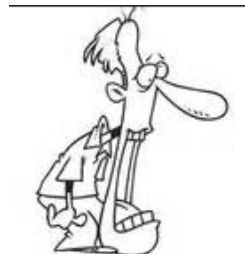
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#301 Republicans: Why Continue to Support Trump?

During the Independence Day weekend (2018), I tried to assess ([Entry #300](#)) whether a 5th US revolution was likely sometime in the next few years. While one should always be careful about claiming objective analysis of one's own writing, I concluded "Yes, a revolution is likely."

Well, this past two weeks seemed to add an exclamation point or two to that conclusion. Over the years in this blog I've tried to avoid commenting on daily or weekly events. Many such events are merely "noise" over the long-term...and there are many talking heads in the various media offering their analysis.



However, Trump's behavior recently has been jaw-droppingly bizarre, even by Trump standards. Consider his behavior at the NATO meeting when he trashed the US' most loyal allies. The apparent effort to dismantle NATO was a pure gift to Putin. The

NATO alliance was established by the US post WWII as a counter to the Soviet Union's efforts to invade other European countries. The history of and reason for NATO seem to be unknown to Trump.

One can argue what percent of GDP NATO countries should spend on defense. The target for countries is 2.0% of GDP and participating countries have been moving toward the 2.0% target. Rather than complimenting these efforts and then taking credit for their increased spending, Trump berated the NATO-country leaders by offhandedly claiming the countries should increase spending to be more in line with the US, or 4.0% of GDP.



Legitimate arguments have two sides. The other side of demanding more spending on defense is the reminder that the US and western European allies fought a very heavily armed Germany in WWI and WWII. Be careful about encouraging countries to build a very strong defense system when one or more could become your adversary. Remember, it's better to have a potential adversary inside the tent pissing out than outside pissing in.

Following the NATO meeting Trump visited England and managed to humiliate publicly Prime Minister May. And for what gain? The US has no skin in the Brexit game. Regardless of the deal Britain negotiates with the European Union, the US can continue to trade with both. So why trash the Prime Minister? Why be rude to THE most reliable European ally? What was there to gain?



The only rationale seems to be Trump wanted to gain approval from Putin. But why court Putin? Putin doesn't play golf, at least as far as we know. Putin doesn't appear to be a particularly affable guy. I mean would you really want to sit down and have a beer and cigar with the guy? So why try to gain his approval? Why would you want to be Putin's puppet?

Let's start to answer that question by following the money. Based on what I know about his finances, Trump seems to be in considerable debt to Putin's cronies (and maybe Putin) -- probably hundreds of millions of dollars. With all that debt Trump seems more worried about protecting his own skin than protecting the welfare of the United States.



Think about taking a loan from the Russians as taking a loan from the mafia. The Russians, like the mafia, play serious hardball when it comes to collecting debts. Trump and Manafort seem to be aware of the dirt bath they might get if they don't cooperate with the Russians.

If it's not the money, then Trump must be so mentally unhinged that he belongs on the funny farm. Likely the cause is both the money and unstable mentally but let's stick with the money.

Which brings the discussion back to the likelihood of a 5th US revolution – the Revenge Revolution. While as of this writing Trump's approval ratings among Republicans remains remarkably high, the very high ratings might be best viewed like a bubble in the stock market or housing market. The bubbles seem to last well beyond what is logical, then suddenly burst and all the air gets sucked out.



What might precipitate the Trump support-bubble bursting? When the scope of the corruption begins to touch those closest to Trump – immediate family. What happens to support when Robert Muller goes before the grand jury and gets indictments for Junior, Ivanka and Jared Kushner? Will Republicans begin to wake up to the extent of the corruption?

What about the public testimony from the US translator during discussions with Putin in Helsinki. What about the transcript the Russians release of the meeting? Republicans, surely you're not so naïve to believe the Russians didn't record the meeting.

Will Republicans begin to realize Trump's relationship with Putin could qualify as treason? Yes, despite the White House flip-flops and wildly funny explanations, the Russians are continuing to try influencing elections in the US. Such efforts could

rightfully be considered an attack on the US and therefore any effort to aid and abet the enemy (Russia) would be considered treasonous.



Republicans go look in the mirror and ask yourself, “Why would I support a president whose behavior is not in the best interests of the United States?” “Why would I support a president who shows more support for Russia than our closest allies?”

OK, so you don’t like the French...or even the Germans. And yes, English food is a bit bland. But why should...and no it wasn’t shouldn’t...you support a president who states publicly his distrust for the US intelligence agencies?

Why support a president who refused to allow anyone to sit in on the meeting with Putin in Helsinki? Why support a president who refused to have someone transcribe dialogue at the meeting? Who refuses (as of this date) to share any information from the meeting with the head of the intelligence agencies or the military? Republicans – doesn’t this behavior give you reason to pause and ask “What is going on here?”



Why would a president want to keep secret dialogue with an arch enemy? Would you still be as supportive if such behavior had been exhibited by president Obama or if Hillary Clinton were president? I’ll just bet you might not be as silent and sanguine.

If you’re a Republican, how can you justify and support Trump’s behavior as president? Your rationale is not only flimsy, but filled with holes. Have you no shame?



While you might ignore all the shenanigans and secrecy with the Russians, claiming the “Trump haters” just don’t understand and are overreacting as usual, I’ll bet you begin to pause when Trump’s so-called “economic policies” hit your pocketbook hard.

Without getting into a wonkish discussion about economics, several of Trump’s so-called economic policies – tariffs, even on countries even where we have a trade surplus, massive tax cuts for business and the wealthy, promoting a weak dollar, promoting low interest rates and a couple of

others – are at cross purposes. First and maybe most important is the tariffs will raise prices and reduce employment – and your pocketbook will be affected.

If Trump wants to make the US more competitive in specific industries, which everyone supports, then two critical items are necessary – increased investment in those industries and a better education for more people. Trump's economic policies do neither. *(Update: Based on data released by BLS for 2019, the amount of manufacturing in the US declined in 2019.)*



Revenge Revolution.

There's more to discuss but enough for now. The final thought of this "sense check" entry. When all the lower-income Trump supporters finally realize they've been had, we will see the tipping point for the revolution. Remember, hell hath no fury like a (former Trump supporter) scorned. So Republicans, be prepared and make sure to enjoy the ride to the

#302 Trump Supporters Really Brainwashed?

Scene: Jordan's office, Washington, DC.

Jordan: "Gelly, nice to have you back from vacation."



Gelly: "Nice to be back. Had lots of fun but sorta, kinda missed the office."

Jordan: "Glad to hear that. See you got new reading glasses while you were gone. Look very nice."

Gelly: "Thanks."

Jordan: "Anything special on the calendar today?"

Gelly: "Nothing special except your visitor."



Jordan: "Right. Walt's coming over sometime late morning."

Gelly: "How'd he get the name Walt? That's not his real name is it?"

Jordan: "No. The guys in the fraternity nicknamed him Walt. And I might have been the culprit. He was always dreaming about some big project...like Walt Disney."

Gelly: "Hope you two have a good visit. Let me know if you need anything special. We can order in lunch if you want."

----- Walt arrives -----

Walt: "Jordan, great to see you. Been a while."

Jordan: "Nice to see you, Walt. Last time was a couple of years ago when you guys came to Charlotte for the 4th of July."



Walt: "We had a great time and the fireworks at the club were sensational."

Jordan: "What brings you to town, anyway?"

Walt: "Trying to help salvage the right-wing of the Republican Party. Since the Revenge Revolution, the right-wing has been in shambles."

Jordan: "You've got a tough job ahead of you. With that in mind, I have what may be a sensitive question."

Walt: "You, concerned about being sensitive? Since when? Go ahead. We've been friends for too long to worry about sensitive questions. Besides, if I don't like the question, I'll just go run and hide."

Jordan: "Think back to the 2016 presidential campaign. Did you originally support Trump?"



Walt: "I thought Trump was a blowhard. More of a flake real-estate salesman than a conservative Republican."

Jordan: "But as the other candidates dropped out and the field narrowed..."

Walt: "...as the field narrowed, his appeal increased. Truth be known, I would have voted for a yellow dog rather than Hillary. I just didn't like her."

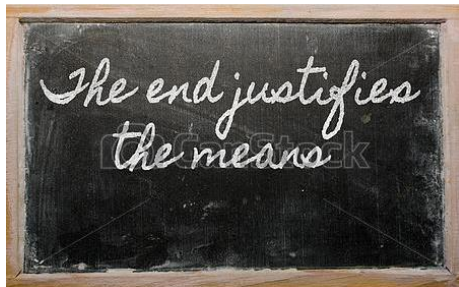
Jordan: "OK, so you committed to a Republican candidate no matter what. That candidate turns out to be Trump, who you thought was a flaky real-estate salesman."

Walt: "Guess so."

Jordan: "Then Trump gets elected. Were you pleased with the results?"

Walt: "I was pleased he was trying to make changes. You know, make the Federal government more efficient. And I liked the idea of draining the swamp."

Jordan: "Were you pleased with his choices for cabinet secretaries? Think about Flynn, Price and Pruitt, for example. And what about bringing in the Trump family as close advisors? Were you satisfied with everyone's experience in running large, government-like organizations?"



Walt: "Guess I never really considered the experience. Was more intrigued with the idea of change than the quality of the people involved or what they had to do to implement change. Sort of the ends justifying the means."

Jordan: "What about Trump's attacks on the media, the FBI, the CIA...the entire intelligence community?"

Walt: "As time went on Trump's claims about fake news and liberal bias in the media seemed to be proved right. The more I studied, the more I thought the FBI was really after him."

Jordan: "As part of your 'studying', did you ever step back and ask yourself, 'Gee, what Trump is claiming to be true is contrary to just about everything I've learned over the years. Wonder why I am changing my views?'"

Walt: "Didn't ask any question exactly like that."

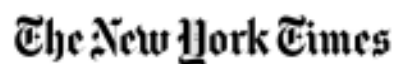
Jordan: "Aside from Trump and his tweets, where'd you get your news?"

Walt: "Why do you care? Why the interrogation?"

Jordan: "No interrogation. What I'm trying to do is understand why...and how...Trump gained such rabid support among hard-right Republicans when many on the right originally considered him a Democrat. I find the shift in attitude fascinating...and troubling."



Walt: "We'll talk about troubling later. As I said, I did my own studying trying to understand if Trump was real or not. I spent lots of time watching Fox – mostly Hannity and O'Reilly before he got unfairly railroaded out – and I'd catch Limbaugh on the radio a couple of times a week. The more I listened to these guys the more convinced I was Trump was on the right track."



Jordan: "Did your studying include reading newspapers – let's say the Miami Herald, Palm Beach Post, Washington Post, NY Times?"

Walt: "On rare occasion the Wall Street Journal. The Times? Never. Run by a bunch of liberal NY Jews. Oops, sorry. But you know what I meant."

Jordan: "Actually, I don't know what you meant. Give me an example or two."

Walt: "Take Paul Krugman at the Times. He's way too liberal and always trashed Trump."

Jordan: "Krugman is an op-ed columnist for the NY Times, not a reporter. The editorial and news gathering sections of the Times are completely separate."

Walt: "I have no proof and therefore, to me, there's no separation. If what he writes is in the NY Times, it means the NY Times supports it."

Jordan (shaking his head): "Any other sources of info?"

Walt: "A few conservative websites that have their act together."



Jordan: "If I understand correctly, your primary sources of info were Trump, Trump's tweets, probably the White House press secretary – Sarah Huckabee – and a couple of commentators on Fox. No print media other than an occasional read of the Journal. And no other networks such as PBS, CBS, and say MSNBC."

Walt: "You got it right. All those non-Fox sources are too liberal...and fake."

Jordan: "OK. Why don't we take a break, get some coffee and, then, if ok with you, discuss the evolution of your views about the Mueller investigation."



Walt: "OK, but you have to buy coffee...and I want a bagel, too."

Jordan: "You do know those liberal NY Jews are the source of those bagels, right?"

#303 Trump Supporters Brainwashed? (Continued)

Jordan: "So, Walt, how's the coffee?"



Walt: "Great! Where'd you get it? Don't tell me. It's from that liberal bastion, Starbucks."

Jordan: "Yes, Starbucks. But why does everything in your world have to fall into a bucket? Why do institutions have to be labeled liberal or conservative? Starbucks is a coffee shop, not a political party."

Walt: "You don't get it do you? Or maybe you don't want to understand."

Jordan: "You've lost me. Understand what?"

Walt: "Many of these institutions are part of a conspiracy. A Few years ago that conspiracy was focused on getting rid of Trump...and was the primary cause of the Revenge Revolution."



Jordan: "C'mon. Stop me from banging my head against the wall. I admit I find your logic fascinating, even humorous at times...but your logic is also incredibly frustrating."

Walt: "Why so frustrating? Seems pretty straightforward to me."

Jordan: "Start with the conspiracy assumption. A conspiracy requires a group of people. But the group is usually fairly small since it's hard to keep a secret, even within a small group. And now you're talking about a conspiracy with hundreds, if not thousands, even tens of thousands of participants. That logic does fly."

Walt: "But it's true."



Jordan: "Just think about. How could one possibly coordinate the activities of all these organizations, let alone people within the organizations? As I said, Starbucks is just a coffee shop."

Walt: "Here's an example. Before the break you said we were going to discuss my thoughts on the Mueller Witch Hunt. I know, you think it was an investigation but it was really a witch hunt. The FBI's behavior was a perfect example of one group that conspired to stop Trump from getting elected. Then the FBI tried to get him out after the election."

Jordan: "Statements claiming the FBI conspired to elect Hillary make no sense to me. The facts suggest the opposite. Actions of the FBI likely helped Trump get elected."

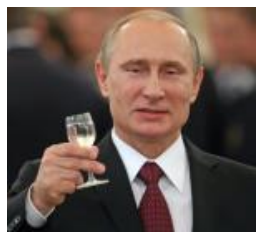
Walt: "See, there you go spouting off the liberal fake news. You need to watch Fox News and start getting the truth."



Jordan: "If the FBI was trying to get Hillary elected, then why did Comey hold a press conference a few days before the election effectively reopening an investigation about Clinton that found no laws were broken?"

Walt: "I think laws were broken. She should have been punished and locked up. But Comey's real purpose in criticizing Clinton just before the election was to gain more sympathy for her...and encourage the Democrats to vote for her."

Jordan: "Huh?"



Walt: "Same thing with Obama. He knew the Russians had hacked the Democratic National Committee HQ and were releasing emails to the public. But he didn't do anything about it. Why not?"

Jordan: "You tell me since the Russians were helping Trump?"

Walt: "The Russians weren't helping Trump. Why didn't Obama make any public announcement? Because he didn't want to make the DNC and Clinton look like they were not on top of things. I'm telling you, Mueller should have investigated Obama and not Trump."



Jordan: "Just for fun, please tell me, in Trump world, does the sun come up in the east or west?"

Walt: "Whadda mean?"

Jordan: "Never mind. Back to the FBI. Let's turn the situation around. Suppose the FBI had strong evidence that the RNC had been hacked and the Russians might be working with the DNC to get the Democratic candidate elected. What would you want from the FBI?"



Walt: "A thorough investigation. Why should the FBI allow a foreign country, especially a known enemy of the US, try to influence the outcome of a presidential election? If the FBI didn't investigate, it would be dereliction of duty. All of them should be fired...and some tried for treason."

Jordan: "Let me see if I understand your position correctly. If the FBI had credible evidence a foreign country, and especially an enemy like the Russian, had infiltrated a campaign and was trying to influence the election, you'd want the FBI to pursue the investigation vigorously, right?"

Walt: "Yep."

Jordan: "And it would be unpatriotic, possibly treasonous if those who had credible information didn't pursue an investigation and prosecution."

Walt: "Yep, again."

Jordan: "Yet, when the FBI had very credible evidence that the Russians had infiltrated the Trump campaign and the campaign was likely conspiring with the Russians, you supported the Republicans in Congress who objected. Those same Republicans thought the investigation should be stopped. Why did you support them when you just said there should be an investigation?"

Walt: "You don't listen very well do you? I told you, the FBI favored Clinton and therefore the FBI evidence and Mueller investigation were a ploy to get Trump out of office."



Jordan: "How did you know there was no evidence if you wanted to stop the investigation before it was completed?"

Walt: "Because Mueller never disclosed publicly any evidence...until issuing that phony report."

Jordan: "Even though releasing some of the evidence might have compromised the investigation and might have violated some national security laws, you thought it should be released anyway. And because Mueller didn't release the evidence, you think it was likely fake."



Walt: "Not likely fake, it was fake. At least now you're starting to understand."

Jordan: "Walt, have you ever studied how people think after they've been brainwashed?"

#304 Republicans Brainwashed? How One Supporter Cured.

Walt: "Are you implying that I've been brainwashed?"



Jordan: "Just asking if you knew the logic stream of people who have been brainwashed."

Walt: "Who else is in the office? Gelly still here?"

Jordan: "No, she's got a meeting in another building and will be out for at least an hour. Why do you ask?"

Walt: "Because I've never told anyone...well other than the psychiatrist. Sure Gelly's not here? And you're not taping this conversation, right?"

Jordan: "She's not here. I saw her leave. And, no, the conversation is not being taped. What's the big deal?"



Walt: "OK, you're right. I was brainwashed by Trump. It's embarrassing to talk about it."

Jordan: "I can understand that. How'd you figure it out?"

Walt: "I don't remember exactly. It's not like I woke up one morning and said, 'Gee, I've been brainwashed.'"

Jordan: "Well, what did happen?"

Walt: "The realization was gradual at first, almost like baby steps. I do remember being taken aback in late summer 2018 when Trump started to yank security clearances from former high-ranking people who'd been in the FBI, CIA and NSA."



Jordan: "What about Trump yanking the security clearances made you take pause?"

Walt: "I remember seeing an interview with John Brennan...might have been Clapper but I think it was Brennan. Anyway, the guy said a security clearance was not for the benefit of the individual but for the benefit of the country. I'd never really thought of it that way. And here goes Trump acting like a king and taking away security clearances from people who know more about threats to national security than he does."

Jordan: "And..."

Walt: "...and I kept asking myself 'Why take away the clearances?' Then I began to think it was his fragile ego was hurt when some of these guys raised questions about the Trump Administration's policies. It began to bother me that Trump's actions to satisfy his ego could really hurt the country."

Jordan: "After that revelation, did you change your mind about a conspiracy among the US national security agencies to get rid of Trump?"



Walt: "Not all at once. I bounced back and forth. It was as if I was playing ping-pong by myself. One day a conspiracy theory; the next day no conspiracy."

Jordan: "But each day you were less and less supportive?"

Walt: "Gradually I became convinced there was no conspiracy. One day I said to myself, 'Self, Trump is the problem, not the FBI or CIA.'"

Jordan: "Then what"

Walt: "When I started to put claims of a conspiracy theory into a different context, then a lot of other claims Trump was making started to fall apart."

Jordan: "How long did it take you to change your mind?"



Walt: "Once I got through the conspiracy analysis, then like the baby who now knows how to walk, the pace picked up considerably. And finally, Trump became more like Humpty Dumpty."

Jordan: "Did you talk to anyone about your change of support for Trump?"

Walt: "How could I? For three plus years...during the campaign and then when he was in the White House...I'd tweeted about why Trump was so, so right. To admit I'd changed my mind would have been embarrassing to say the least. In fact, I still can't talk about it. You're the first one who knows."

Jordan: "Well, I'm glad we're talking about it. But go back to the time you really started to change. How'd the psychiatrist get involved?"



Walt: "As I looked in the mirror, I just couldn't believe what I'd been doing. I needed to find out why. What had made me act that way?"

Jordan: "So you found a psychiatrist?"

Walt: "I first did some research. In fact one of the experts on behavior modification was a professor I think you took a class from at MIT. Ed somebody."

Jordan: "Ed's class was a seminal event for me. Very insightful and frankly, changed my life."



Walt: "Well, I poured through a couple of his books. Then I decided to see a psychiatrist."

Jordan: "Good for you. How'd you find the right one?"

Walt: "Looked through their stated specialties and a lot about what they had studied and where they studied. Narrowed in down to a couple and then chose the one who was more familiar with Ed's work...and who knew him professionally."



Jordan: "Walk me through how you guys worked together."

Walt: "First couple of sessions were really me laying out: (i) what attracted me to Trump, sources of information I used, what actions I took, etc.; (ii) how I felt when Trump took certain actions or made certain statements. Did I always support him? Did I have any doubts? The sessions were background information."

Jordan: "Then what?"

Walt: "Next few sessions were trying to understand how I thought I had changed. Content was much like you and I have talked about but a lot more detail."

Jordan: "After you laid out all the history, what was next?"

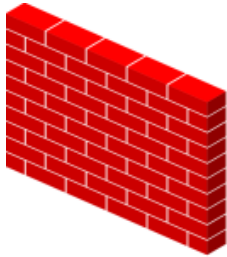
Walt: "The next sessions were fascinating, frustrating and embarrassing. Some of the time we talked about how people become brainwashed."



Jordan: "You became your own case study."

Walt: "I was a case study in a course I didn't want to take. I really had no idea I was being brainwashed. For a long time, all Trump's ideas seemed to make sense. Trump seemed so right...and everyone who didn't support him seemed so wrong. The world was black and white."

Jordan: "But somehow you managed to break out of the brainwashing. How did that happen?"



Walt: "Look, I'm no brainwashing expert but as was explained to me, there are 'holes' in most brainwashing caps. If reaction to an event or an idea goes through one of those holes, it accesses the pre-brainwashed mind. Think of it as a being on either side of a wall or maybe as separate partitions on a computer hard drive."

Jordan: "For you, the idea of Trump using security clearances for political reasons slipped through one of those holes."

Walt: "Yep, and at least part of me was accessing a different partition of my hard drive. Part of me was back to my pre-brainwashed days."



Jordan: "This discussion is absolutely fascinating...but I need a break bad."

Walt: "Me, too, and I could use another cup of coffee. Now that I've confessed, I can quit claiming Starbucks is part of a liberal conspiracy and is just a coffee shop. Even more embarrassing for me, I like their coffee."

#305 Republicans Brainwashed by Trump? Truth Isn't Truth?



Walt: "I'll tell you another event that penetrated the brainwashing cap. In fact, I still shake my head when thinking about it."

Jordan: "Which was?"

Walt: "Remember when Rudy Giuliani, then Trump's attack dog, stated on 'Meet the Press' that 'truth isn't truth'?"

Jordan: "Remember it well. I did not see the live broadcast...think I was doing something important like playing golf...but saw the video several times."

Walt: "Did you see the look on the host's face? What's the guy's name?"

Jordan: "Chuck Todd."



Walt: "That's it. Todd looked more dumbfounded than a deer in headlights. Then he tried to let Giuliani correct his mistake. But Giuliani in true Trump fashion, refused to admit an error and proceeded to straight-jacket himself."

Jordan: "You know Giuliani was right...if you add just one word."

Walt: "Not sure what you mean."

Jordan: "Giuliani's right if you state it as, 'Trump's truth isn't truth.'"



Walt: "Hadn't thought of it exactly like you phrased it but Giuliani's comment was so stupid an alarm bell went off in my head."

Jordan: "So you had two Trump-related brain-penetrating epiphanies in a couple of weeks."

Walt: "Like I said before we went to get more coffee, after Trump's order to revoke security clearances for high-level people who could protect the country, I began asking myself, 'Self, what have I been thinking?' Then other Trump actions started to migrate from logical to questionable."

Jordan: "You think Giuliani's 'truth isn't truth' could have accelerated the questioning?"



Walt: "Probably. But I'm still embarrassed to talk about my brainwashed state. I mean, when I was brainwashed, Kellyanne Conway's claim about 'alternative facts' never caused me to pause."

Jordan: "Not to press too much but didn't you think Conway's statements were pure BS?"

Walt: "No. I even repeated her stuff in discussions about Trump. One time while having coffee with a friend of mine the conversation turned to Trump. He made an assertion and I responded that you have your facts and I have mine."

Jordan: "How'd he respond?"

Walt: "After I repeated the claim about alternative facts, he said I was brainwashed, then left the restaurant."

Jordan: "Ever get back together for coffee?"

Walt: "The next time he asked me to provide a data source supporting some Conway-like claim I'd made."

Jordan: "And...?"



Walt: "I asked him if he was calling me a liar. He asked again for the source of information. I repeated my claim he was calling me a liar...then I left."

Jordan: "Seen him again?"

Walt: "No. Maybe I should call him. He was right all along. But see, that's another example of being so embarrassed about past behavior. I mean, what do I say?"

Jordan: "Why not call him for coffee and let the conversation take its course."

Walt: "Good idea."

Jordan: "Were there any other what you might call epiphanic events that caused you to think you might have been brainwashed?"

Walt: "The incident might not qualify as an epiphany but one that I still find humorous."

Jordan: "There was humor in the Trump fiasco?"

Walt: "Well, guys probably think it's funny. Not sure about women. Most guys never progress beyond sophomoric humor."

Jordan: "I'm game. What was the event?"

Walt: "Remember when Trump's so-called confidants started to flip?"

Jordan: "Started with Michael Cohen. What's so funny about Cohen flipping?"



Walt: "Nothing. What still makes me smile was when the owner of the National Enquirer was granted immunity."

Jordan: "You mean...?"

Walt: "Yep. Who ever thought a Pecker could be granted immunity? Had we known a pecker could be immune from prosecution our college life could have been a lot more fun!"

Jordan: "That is pretty funny...and so sophomoric. Seriously, anything else stand out?"



Walt: "Once the brainwashing cap got penetrated, I started to look at the flood of Trump's tweets a lot more critically. What I noticed was that virtually every tweet laid the blame for a problem on someone else or on some Federal agency. Trump seemed to forget he was in charge."

Jordan: "So, now you're beginning to view Trump a bit more objectively. What happened to your political position? Did you start to shift left? If so, how far?"

Walt: "I shifted to probably right center. Still basic conservative values but with a social conscience."

Jordan: "Reminds me of how Bush43 tried to position himself – compassionate conservative. Then he got steamrolled by the neocons and lost focus."

Walt: "Guess my 'right center' is more like pre-Reagan Republicans. That was before the party got pushed way right and eventually just refused to work across the aisle. I know the Democrats seemed to shift too but at one time the Republicans and Democrats actually worked together to get things done."



Jordan: "OK, now we're in a new era. Trump is gone and the country has gone through the Revenge Revolution. And you're more open to crossing party lines. What about other former Trumpsters?"

Walt: "Some will never get it. Remember after Nixon resigned, there was what, 20-25% of the populace still supported him? So those people will stay in their Trump cave. But the rest of us need to start working together to avoid becoming a banana republic. People don't think the US can slip that far but it can."

Jordan: "I'm delighted you want to make the government work again. Now, what's next?"

#306 Not Countering Trump's Trashing Judiciary? Banana Republic.



Walt: "So, you want my thoughts on next steps to help the US recover from Trump and his brainwashed supporters, right?"

Jordan: "That's what I asked."

Walt: "First step would be to rebuild trust in the judicial system. Look, I used to cheer when Trump would talk about the crooked FBI or how unfairly he was being treated...and all that crap."



Jordan: "What changed your mind?"

Walt: "Like most things about Trump, after a few real facts...not Fox facts...but real facts penetrated my brainwashing cap, I asked myself, 'Why would the FBI all of a sudden switch from being good guys to bad guys?'"

Jordan: "And your answer was?"

Rant!



Walt: "I couldn't come up with a good answer. I also thought if the president had been a Democrat and had done 10% of what the public knew Trump had done, Republicans would have been ranting and raving, demanding impeachment and jail time. Just look at how long Republicans were obsessed with Hillary's email server. Even when no one could find any evidence of criminal activity, they kept probing. They wouldn't give up no matter what the evidence was."

Jordan: "Well, how would you compare Trump's behavior to say presidents Clinton or Nixon?"

Walt: "Clinton was no one's angel. Yes, sex in the White House might be tawdry, but Monica a threat to national security? C'mon."



Jordan: "What about Nixon's behavior?"

Walt: "The Watergate break-in was illegal. The cover-up worse. But, again, was there any threat to national security?"

Jordan: "Only if you consider Nixon might have become so unhinged about the investigation that he'd try to start a war as a diversion. But I think the military would have ignored the orders."



Walt: "Trump, on the other hand, set a new standard for illicit behavior. OK, most everybody can overlook being in bed with porn stars. But in bed with the Russians? No way. Think about it. The president of the United States, and much of his immediate family, in bed with the Russians. Some of his sleaziness was well-known and not a surprise. So, with his known background, why did Republicans let him on the ticket, let alone get nominated? When the info on the Russian connection started to come out, why did Republicans sit on their hands and do nothing to get rid of him? I admit I'm not innocent...for a while I retweeted some of his stuff. But what about Republican leaders in the House and Senate? They had access to confidential information and did nothing with it. They're still in denial. Bunch of wimps."



Jordan: "You know why they're in denial."

Walt: "Probably same reason as I was – brainwashing. And that's my point -- now that there has been the Revenge Revolution, the next step should be to start rebuilding confidence in the judiciary. The country needs a credible counter to the Congressional clowns -- the judiciary."

Jordan: "Stating the obvious...or at least what should be obvious to the populace...if a country does not have a fair-and-objective judicial system, there can be no democracy."

Walt: "We've joked...maybe more like gallows humor...about how the US could slide into becoming a banana republic. You really think that's possible?"



Jordan: "Yes, and let me give you an example. An example of what happens when a fair-and-objective judiciary and a fair executive branch are ignored. The result is lack of sustained economic growth...and for some countries the result is so bad that 'Yes, we have no bananas.'"

Walt: "You really think there's a link between a fair judicial system and economic growth?"

Jordan: "No question about it...but for some reason many people don't make the link. And politicians don't talk about it -- maybe they don't know it either. Here's a chart that I keep close at hand as a reminder why fair government matters."



Walt: "If I read this chart correctly, in about 1900, GDP (Gross Domestic Product) per capita was about the same in the US and Argentina."

Jordan: "I've seen some studies that indicate Argentina was actually ahead of the US."

Walt: "Wow, look what happened over the next century, and especially after WWII."

Jordan: "Amazing huh? Argentina migrated to less and less of a democracy with a less objective judiciary -- one that favored the wealthy. And what happened? Economic growth stagnated compared to the US."

Walt: "So by 2016, real GDP per capita in the US was 4-4.5 times greater than Argentina. I never knew that. And you're saying a lot of the difference was due to a fair-and-objective judicial system."

Jordan: "That's not the only cause but I think the foundation. Sure, the judicial system in the United States has never been perfect, but until Trump tried to pack the Supreme Court and lower courts with benefit-the-rich only cronies, the system had been reasonably objective."

Walt: "At the same time, we had Trump trash talking, claiming the judiciary was crooked. Remind you of someone from the 1930's? Anyway, when I suggested it was important to rebuild confidence in the judiciary, I never considered that without a fair judiciary, sustained economic growth was not possible."



Jordan: "I'm not sure many of Trump's wealthier supporters realized that either. Do me a favor. Next time someone claims that only economies with minimal government oversight can grow, ask them about the value of an objective judiciary. After the blank stare, remind the laissez-fairer's about what happened to economic growth in Argentina compared to the US."

Walt: "I will. I confess, I never realized for the country to expand its wealth, there must be an objective judiciary. And the judiciary must not just protect businesses and/or those with money...but an objective judiciary must protect everyone. You know what? I need another break. My post-Trump 'de-brainwashing' is emotionally draining."

#307 Good Witch Saves US from Becoming Banana Republic

Jordan: "OK, Walt, I know your head hurts from all the conversation about your 'de-brainwashing' of Trump. But, what you've gone through is really interesting. If you have time, have a couple more questions."

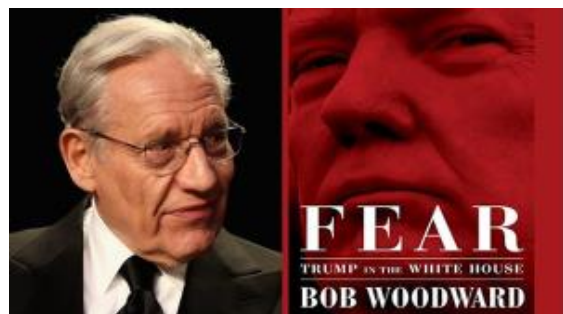


Walt: "I agree it was an interesting experience. Yes, I've got time for a couple more questions, then I'm outta here."

Jordan: "Let's start with Bob Woodward's book about Trump. You know, 'Fear.' How'd you react?"

Walt: "React in what way? Not sure what you mean."

Jordan: "First, did you believe what Woodward wrote?"



Walt: "Yes. Best I can tell, Woodward is about as credible a journalist as you can find. I've never heard what I call a true Washington journalist say he's anything but top drawer. Forget what the talking heads say about him."

Jordan: "You mean talking heads like Limbaugh and Hannity?"

Walt: "Those two guys and their ilk are not journalists."



Jordan: "How'd you react when Trump claimed the book was full of lies and made-up quotes?"

Walt: "Before I was 'de-brainwashed'...is there a different term than 'de-brainwashed'?...anyway, before being 'de-brainwashed', I would have believed Trump. But when I was able to cut through the mental fog and start looking at the facts, I had to laugh."

Jordan: "You mean laugh at Trump?"



Walt: "Yes, and sometimes at myself for having believed him. Trump lied who knows how many times a day. He was a serial liar...even about stuff that didn't really matter. He made Pinocchio look like a penny waiting for change. So the serial liar claims this highly respected journalist made up key parts of the book...and then the serial liar expects rational

people to believe him. C'mon. At that time Woodward had written I think 7-8 books about presidents. And he's going to make up quotes?"

Jordan: "What about your reaction to the general theme of the book? Woodward described the Trump administration as operating more like what you'd expect in a banana republic."



Walt: "Woodward's book title was spot on. The word 'fear' was a great descriptor. Fear among the White House staff and the agencies about what crazy stuff Trump might try to do and fear of the consequences for the country."

Jordan: "You think Woodward...and some others...helped bring Trump down?"

Walt: "Trump put himself in self-destruct mode during the campaign...even before the campaign. One thing I can say about Trump – he was an incredibly effective bully."

Jordan: "You think Woodward's book took away his bully pulpit, as it were?"

Walt: "You know what came to mind when you were just talking?"

Jordan: "I'm game. What?"



Walt: "The scene from the 'Wizard of Oz' where the bad witch tries to bully Dorothy to give up her ruby slippers. Then the good witch – in this case Woodward rather than Glenda – shoos off the bad witch and protects Munchkin Land."

Jordan: "Pretty good, Walt. A bad witch gets intimidated by a good witch – as you said the good witch being Woodward."

Walt: "Or the good witch could have been Mueller. The scene from Oz seems to make perfect sense since Trump kept calling any investigation about him a witch hunt."

Jordan: "When bad witch was shoed off, the Munchkins...aka Republicans...had the opportunity to return to normal."

Walt: "Unfortunately, the Munchkin Republicans waited too long before showing any spine and the country ended up with the Revenge Revolution."

Jordan: "I agree the Republicans were wimps, especially Mitch McConnell and Paul Ryan. Both so-called Congressional-leaders enabled Trump's bizarre behavior rather than restraining it, but..."



Walt: "...But what?"

Jordan: "I think the US was headed toward a Revenge Revolution anyway. The population was too polarized and Congress did nothing to bring the country back together."

Walt: "If that's the case, are you saying Trump and Woodward had no effect?"



Jordan: "No. Trump's actions made the polarization much worse. He allowed the wacko fringes to come out of the closet. In fact he seemed to promote the wacko far right. Maybe even worse, his economic policies and efforts to control the judiciary accelerated the country's slide to becoming a banana republic."

Walt: "What do you think Woodward accomplished?"

Jordan: "You tell me what you think Woodward accomplished. You're the former Trumpster."



Walt: "Woodward...along with a few others...confirmed what a lot of people suspected about Trump. Except what Woodward showed the situation was much worse than most anyone thought."

Jordan: "The emperor with no clothes and it was pretty ugly, huh?"

Walt: "Very ugly. We, as in collective 'we,' owe Woodward and the others a big 'Thank You' for helping stop Trump. And helping stop the US from sliding into a banana republic."

Jordan: "A certain percentage of the populace still views Woodward as the bad guy, not the good guy."

Walt: "That's the 'shoot-the-messenger' crowd. Most of them are all talk and no guts."



Jordan: "Or, as they say in Texas, 'All hat; no cattle.' That's the same group who wanted staffers to resign if they didn't totally agree with Trump. 'Hail the king. He can do no wrong.'"

Walt: "You been in that kind of situation before?"

Jordan: "Yes, a couple of times, although obviously not at the White House. Let me tell you in those situations, it is very high risk to try to get the truth out. The messenger is often the one shot and the real message gets lost in the sound of the gunshots. We can save those stories for another time."

Walt: "OK. In the meantime, here's a toast to the good witches – Bob Woodward and the people in the Administration who tried to act like adults."

Jordan: "Hear, hear. To the good witches, 'Thank you. And yes, we have no banana...republic."

Walt: "I'll let that one pass. Now, I have to go. Great visit."

Epilogue:

Since the original series, a couple of entries asked whether Republicans have been brainwashed by Trump. Entry #339 addresses supports the argument.

Since the Impeachment hearing and the formal vote in 2019:Q4, the behavior of Republicans in the House and especially the Senate seems to have reinforced the argument about brainwashing. Where have Republicans with a spine been hiding? Whether one thinks Trump's behavior is impeachable or not, the unwillingness to commit to calling witnesses and sorta, kinda pretending



to have a fair trial indicates to me that Republicans in the Senate have abandoned their oath to the Constitution.

If the witnesses reinforce the case that Trump has done nothing to justify impeachment, as claimed by Trump and Republicans, then why not call the witnesses? Talk about back asswards logic. I have these witnesses that reinforce my case. But just to spite the other side, I'm

not going to call the witnesses. Who would want to be represented by that kind of lawyer? Republicans, when you traded your morals and ethics to Trump, what did you get in return?

#339 Still Supporting Trump? Quit Claiming to be a Republican.

Current entry -- the reason I skipped the blog entry last week was to take time and try to make some kind of sense of actions by Trump and actions, or lack thereof, by Republicans in Congress and elsewhere. By any measure, Trump's behavior is illogical, inconsistent and illegal.

In fairness to Trump, he's exhibited this same behavior for many years. While being president has inflated his ego and allowed him to exhibit behavior dangerous to the country, his approach to decision-making and working with others – now as head of government rather than just head of a real estate company – has remained the same as it was in New York. Noting that Trump has not changed his behavior as president does not condone his behavior. Trump continues as he has been for decades – a scumbag crook.

What changed is behavior of all but a few Republicans. Proposals and/or actions undertaken during the Obama and Clinton Administrations that Republicans labeled as illegal or even treasonous, are now considered by Republicans as perfectly acceptable under the Trump Administration.

Recall when Trump wanted to lock up Hillary Clinton for a having a personal email server, even though no evidence was found that classified information was compromised? Now the same Republicans who chanted "Lock her up!" think it's okay when Trump indicates publicly he'd take

information on a candidate provided by a foreign entity, even if an enemy of the US. If offered such information, he would not call the FBI. Just in case you're wondering such behavior is illegal and possibly treasonous. And no, his insincere recant of his statement doesn't count.

While the list of egregious behavior by Trump, his family and/or members of the Trump Administration is almost endless, what has me the most confused – baffled might be a better term – is why so-called Republicans have been so quick to join Trump and discard long-held positions on free trade, fiscal responsibility, and individual rights. What happened to the Republicans who supported those long-held beliefs?

As noted periodically in this blog, I think many so-called Republicans have been brainwashed by watching too much Fox News and/or listening frequently to Rush Limbaugh. However, if 75% of the former Republicans have been brainwashed, that still leaves 25% who should be able to think. So where is this 25% group that's not been brainwashed? Who knows because other than a handful, no high-profile Republican seems to be speaking out against Trump.

The malleability of Republicans is dangerous. Putting Trump aside, the US needs two viable political parties to function correctly. Right now we have one party that's functioning as a party – the Democrats. Then we have a bunch of people supporting a wannabe autocrat, but not functioning as a political party – so-called Republicans.

Let's consider this comparison. You say, "Look at all of what Trump has done. It's been great. So don't get so hung up on his behavior." If that's your logic, then ask yourself, "If I were in Germany in the 1930s, would I support Hitler? After all, Hitler helped improve the economy. Forget that he got rid of a few million of those pesky 'undesirables.' Overall, things were better for Germany and we should support Hitler." The question might be a bit of a stretch but many Republicans appear to be as malleable and spineless as many Germans in the 1930s.



Here's a more straightforward question for people who support Trump and claim to be Republican. Are you a person who believes in long-term Republican values -- free trade, fiscal responsibility, individual rights, etc.? Are you willing to discard those core values and support someone who has no ethics, shows no loyalty to others and even shows no loyalty to the United States? If you decide to continue to support Trump, obviously it's your choice. But if you continue, please stop claiming to be a Republican.

One more item. Please take time to think about the meaning of the oath taken by the president:
"I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States."

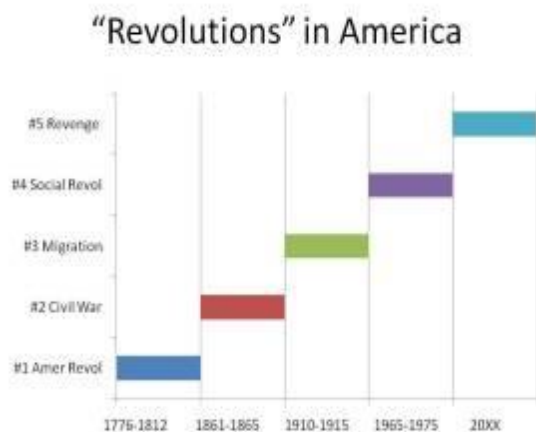
Now, go look in the mirror and ask yourself, "Has Trump made every effort to preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States?"

About the Blog and the Author

Original entry, December 2013. Why this blog? (www.usrevolution5.com) For many years people have told me my strengths are: (i) making accurate predictions on social and economic issues long before others (ii) offering practical solutions to complex problems (iii) teaching effectively.

As the title of the blog notes, I believe the United States is headed for another revolution, probably by CY2020, or a few years thereafter. As a country we seem to have a revolution about every 50 years. Here's my count of the revolutions.

1. Revolution against British rule, which did not end until the War of 1812
2. Internal revolution, or Civil War, 1861-1865
3. Industrial revolution – say 1910-1917 – combination of an influx of foreign immigrants and migration from farms to cities
4. Rights revolution, civil rights, women's rights, environmental rights occurred late 1960's, early 1970's
5. Fifth revolution, which I have labeled the 'Revenge Revolution,' which is what this blog is all about.



While I believe a revolution of sorts is inevitable, how we as a country manage the revolution will determine the amount of violence and bloodshed. I've designed the blog to lay out what I think are the issues, explain in what I hope are understandable terms, and then offer practical solutions.

The solutions are woven into a story. We all seem to learn more effectively with stories. I hope you find these stories interesting and helpful in understanding topics and proposed solutions. Doubtless you will not agree with all the

proposed solutions...but at least you will have been presented another perspective.

Some of the stories seem more personal in nature and less about policy. I am including these segments because we are all products of our environment. We cannot divorce completely professional lives from our personal lives and background.

If you have a political bent leaning strongly left or right, you're likely to be disappointed in some of the proposed solutions. The goal is to present problems and solutions in an understandable way. Some solutions might lean more right; others might lean more left. I'm not keeping score about which side has more solutions. I hope you don't try to keep score either.

If you are a stickler for details, then read no farther. I've done my homework and the data are sound enough. If you want to nitpick, OK. But you'll be missing the point. Listen to people making policy decisions in the United States. Whether voters or elected officials, few grasp the basics of an issue. The real world operates using less than perfect information.



(The original entries were a dialogue. More recent entries are more essay style.) I decided my character should be a penname. Why? To provide more freedom to address issues without the reader immediately assuming some sort of bias on my part.

The character name, "Jordan Abel" evolved one day. As far as the names and traits of the characters, like any author, I suppose, these are based in part on people one knows. If you are a friend and recognize yourself, don't take the character too seriously. The topic is serious but using you as a base for the character was convenient.

We all have quirks and it was much easier to write with someone in mind than to construct a character. Besides, even the seeming "bad guys" in this blog have some positive traits. Keep reading, you'll turn out OK...and I will deny to everyone else that you are the model for the character.

Where is this blog going? I don't know. I intend to keep writing. National politics and personal issues provide an endless source of material. I also hope that my prediction about an armed revolution in the US is exaggerated. However, from everything that is happening in the US, I think a revolution is inevitable.

If no one reads the blog, that's OK. Just starting the blog and the writing has been great fun...and at times cathartic. If you are a reader, I hope you enjoy it and I hope, on occasion, to provoke you to think about issues a bit differently. Thanks for your time. John R. Dabels for **Jordan Abel**
More about the author, <http://www.linkedin.com/in/johndabels>. Contact, jrdabels@outlook.com.