



A Sharp Exposé and Scathing Critique of Misguided and Misguiding American Leaders

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Please give these clear-eyed Big Picture understandings close consideration. This is the 7th of 16 essays in *See Clearly: Sanity During Insane Times*. This Book Twelve of this manifesto contains accurate assessments of all the ways politicians are looting the country, excessively exploiting working people, undermining our democracy, lying to their constituents, cheating American citizens, betraying the best interests of the majority, irresponsibly mortgaging the future, manipulating people by hijacking their emotions, abusing power, rashly depleting natural resources, tragically damaging the environmental commons, and immorally sabotaging the common good.

In a bona fide liberty-loving democratic republic, the people are protected from being ruled with excessive ruthlessness by wealthy dominion-demanding rich people and their organizational tools -- giant corporations. Or for that matter, being governed by demagogues in repressive authoritarian regimes, or by religious fanatics. *We the People* generally prefer fairer and more honest governance. We want a more broadly inclusive populism that offers better opportunities and more assured freedoms, and we want greater social justice to reign from sea to shining sea. We want to live in places where the air is not polluted and the water is not tainted with toxins, and where a reasonable modicum of environmental justice prevails. We want to be able to enjoy our lives and liberties and individual pursuits of happiness, and we want a fairer society that is more inclusive, and thus enjoys improved social cohesion that makes for greater mutual security and more peaceable coexistence. To establish these social goods, we must demand that our representatives honestly refocus our national priorities.

To really improve matters, a more widely shared prosperity is needed, and improved security for the populace, and adequate investments in social safety net programs, and better protections of the environment. These propitious conditions are needed at the same time that our leaders are not running the country into risky levels of debt by fraudulently borrowing trillions of dollars to bribe voters, stimulate the economy, and nefariously give the lion's share of the spoils to the few. To achieve these common good goals, we need respect-worthy leaders who will champion fair reforms and act with more honorable ethical integrity, and stop imposing more and more austerity measures on the people in order to give unconscionably big tax cut windfalls to those with the highest levels of income and inheritances.

A Big Picture Focus

To actualize the greater good, we must be guided by more comprehensive concerns -- ones that take into account *The Common Good, Properly Understood*. Most folks see that the status quo is rigged irresponsibly against the vast majority of the people. As a presidential candidate, Donald Trump promised to fix this, in a deceitful assurance that was part of a pathological con job. Instead of taking effective steps to honestly fix things, conniving Republican politicians stole the 2016 elections through a long litany of illegitimate and deceitful means and then began imposing an unbelievable number of manipulative schemes and frauds against the people in the course of their chaotic rule. The sordid details of this short-term-oriented infamy are spelled out herein.

Our colonial forbearers were outraged at King George III's despotic usurpations and abuses of power, so they courageously declared independence from the British monarchy in 1776. Then, 12 years later, delegates representing the people of the new nation ratified a Constitution that had been hammered out during four months

of contentious consensus-seeking at the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia the previous summer. A primary purpose for the creation of this commendably good guidance in our democratic republic was to ensure that sufficient checks, balances, accountability and safeguards were established in the government to protect the people from having any future despots or demagogues seize power, usurp it, and blatantly abuse it.

These eminently respectable Founders declared that the government's legitimacy itself, and its moral right to use the power of the state, are only justified and lawful when the people who are subject to that political power give their consent. This theory of consent is historically contrasted to the divine right of kings, and was often invoked as a charge against the legitimacy of colonial empires. Providentially, Article 21 of the United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights formally confirmed this ultimate gauge of legitimacy in 1948, stating: "The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government".

We are living in a Bizarro world in which Republican politicians have abandoned stances they long stood for, as Max Boot points out in his compelling book *The Corrosion of Conservatism: Why I Left the Right*. Max Boot is a longtime conservative writer and historian who succinctly states that he has been utterly dismayed since the 2016 national elections by witnessing "the Republican Party switch its position on issue after issue -- going from free trade to protectionist, from pro-immigration to nativist, from tough on Russia to appeasing Russia, from fiscal discipline to fiscal irresponsibility, from defending the rule of law to undermining it."

Lord Acton, a member of the British Parliament in the 1860s, once famously wrote, "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely". The Founders of our great American experiment in democratic governance understood this basic political truth; this is why they created a Constitution containing effective checks and balances to prevent corruption, self-dealing by politicians, abuses of power, demagogic despotism, and taxation without fair representation. Ever since the Constitution was ratified, there has been a progressive evolution of laws, rights and protections that have helped make our democratic republic a broadly propitious force in helping assure the majority of people a fair modicum of liberty, justice and reasonable cause for being able to share in the American Dream of opportunity, equal treatment and fair dealings under the law.

The truth in Lord Acton's words are now being revealed anew by the bright light of subpoena power that the new majority of Democrats in the House of Representatives is exerting to fulfill the implied responsibility given to them in the Constitution to wield oversight over the Executive Branch and federal agencies. With Democrats now setting the legislative agenda and holding investigative hearings, this means the American people are starting to see more details of the scandalous rigging, strategic deception, corrupt activities, impeachable foreign intrigue, miscellaneous malfeasance and conspiratorial cover-ups that many Republican politicians have been scandalously engaged in. Republicans, having lost the domineering One Party power they exerted in the legislative branches of government from 2017 to 2019, fell back on their narrow majority in the U.S. Senate to acquit Donald Trump in a sham impeachment trial designed to forgive the many incriminating findings that have come to light about wrongdoing by Trump and his Cabinet members and honesty-deficient, corporate-kowtowing Republican politicians. A crisis of reckoning is engulfing our public sphere as a result of this obstruction of justice. *See Clearly* provides good plans for how to deal with this!

The ruling class is waging class warfare against the citizenry, and as a pathetic consequence of the ways the status quo is rigged, millions of people in the USA and billions around the world are being wantonly endangered and outright harmed. With conservative politicians so cravenly doing the bidding of corporate CEOs, they have been eviscerating government regulations, causing us to lose sensible safeguards against influence peddling, cost externalizing schemes, environmental harms, roguery and impeachable offenses, and all manner of worse-than-the-mob scams that include tax evasion, violations of campaign finance laws, money laundering, insurance and bank fraud, brazen emoluments improprieties, Charitable Foundation fraud, insider trading and deficit-financed tax cuts and financial leverage that heighten the probability of a recession and more costly bailouts.

It is fanatically misguided for corporate entities to be allowed to exercise domineering power. Since the two main legal purposes of corporations are to maximize profits and minimize responsibilities and liabilities of CEOs and managers and investors, corporate entities are driven to externalize costs, foisting them onto you and me -- and onto everyone in the future, to their inevitable eventual hardship and titanic chagrin.

The Vital Role of Women in Politics

Gender inequities are among the harshest of all injustices in our male dominated society. Martin Luther King Jr. once declared that injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhumane of all forms of inequality. Injustices related to healthcare and pre-existing conditions and reproductive rights are especially opprobrious to women, and they are just one aspect of a multitude of gender inequities and harms, including many that are being exposed by aggrieved women through the #MeToo movement.

Congratulations to the record number of women who won political office in the 2018 and 2019 national elections! These achievements were long overdue. While many good women were successful in their election contests, many more like Stacey Abrams in Georgia were cheated out of power by the GOP political machine. Women have been broadly deprived of fair representation in the halls of power in our sexist patriarchal republic ever since it began. This deeply unjust disenfranchisement of females has enabled significant discrimination against women in compensation, benefits, job security, a hard-to-break glass ceiling, sexual harassment, violations against both their dignity and safety, and many episodes of domestic violence, in addition to discrimination based on race and harsh deprivations of reproductive rights. Women of the world, unite! Men, give us greater respect.

Let us philosophize. The legacy we leave to every person in the future is the most consequentially important consideration for us collectively, and we need farsighted guidance from our leaders and institutions to ensure that aggregate impacts of all our individual choices and activities do not too severely compromise the hopes of people in future generations to live in a healthy and sustainable world. Let's help prevent a dystopian future!

It is crucially important for humankind to make accurate assessments of the big challenges we face in the world today so as to identify and implement the best plans for propitiously dealing with these existential challenges. We need our leaders to more honestly and honorably strive to promote the common good, instead of allowing shrewd opportunists to use divisive propaganda and demagogic deceit to harmfully exploit working people and consistently favor the interests of corporations over individuals. And we need to find better ways to prevent the excessive depletion of natural resources and wanton damages to the environmental commons.

Here's the bottom line. The tree of life is under furious assault, with wildlife being driven toward extinction and the most productive biological habitats being decimated, sadly including beautiful coral reefs and tropical rainforests that are exceptionally rich in biodiversity. Threatened species and endangered species are being sacrificed to hunters, developers, fossil fuel profiteers and zealous exploiters of public lands.

We humans are treating planet Earth like a business in liquidation, converting natural resources to cash at nearly the fastest possible rate. Compounding this insidiously consequential folly, shrewd ruling factions are making damned sure that economic and political systems continue to be rigged so that the wealth generated is ever more narrowly concentrated in the hands of the few, along with domineering power. This is being done to the detriment of the vast majority, with mounting costs and risks being foisted onto the masses, and everyone in the future. This tragic scheme is being made worse by leaders who are rashly running up national debts by borrowing huge sums of money and ensuring that most of the spoils of this fraudulent burdening of future taxpayers are given to the same wealthy people who are grabbing most of the benefits of these über-scams. This debt stimulates spending in the economy, partially masking the ill effects of increasing inequality and dire disparities in security and well-being between the fortunate few and the struggling many.

History and the Present

The brilliant design of checks and balances in our government was developed to prevent despotic abuses of power by making sure that no branch of government could become too powerful. The Constitution was created to divide power between the legislative, executive and judicial branches of government, and includes various limits and controls on the powers of each branch. When one party manages to gain control of all three branches of government, it allows a culture of corruption to fester, and opportunities for tyranny to reign.

Ruthlessly shutting opposing political parties out of power is an extraordinarily detrimental and unethical gambit, for it is contrary to democratic fairness and personal freedoms. When political power is dominated by a single political party, it allows greed-driven compulsions to propagate, and protections to be decimated, ambitions to go

unchecked, authority to be usurped and abused, political corruption to proliferate, wealth to be increasingly concentrated in the hands of the few, and exploiters of public lands and mineral resources to proceed full speed ahead, treacherously externalizing costs, socializing risks and tragically damaging the commons. Such were the outcomes of Democrats having been shut out of power from January 2017 to January 2019. Treacherous Trump Republicans have demonized Democrats, to boot, rashly ignoring voices that propose excellent solutions, like a carbon fee to intelligently and fairly internalize costs currently being externalized onto society. They are also preventing working people from being given a better deal in place of the current Bad Deal most workers are getting. Our leaders must cope more honestly with colossal challenges like economic inequalities and climate injustices, and with the unimaginably dire and costly consequences of an insidiously unfolding greenhouse gas double-glazing of our home planet. We must come together and demonstrate much greater regard for future well-being and sustainable existence.

Far-reaching corruption in electioneering and governance are currently undermining fairer representation of the people, and violating the common good, rendering Republican rule really illegitimate. The *GOP* political machine has been formidable in its zealotry for gaining control and abusing power, and their primary way to achieve this has been by pandering to rich conservatives and illicitly allowing Big Money to corrupt our elections and lawmaking. Republican politicians have been ruthless in their use of divide-to-conquer tactics and distorting propaganda to brainwash their followers, telling them Big Lies and deceiving them and distracting them from big issues. "Conservative" politicians are betraying the vast majority of the American people through bait-and-switch treachery and their fiscally irresponsible Tax Cut scam, financed by borrowing trillions of dollars from all taxpayers in every future year. They have engaged in this "casino capitalist" hyper-stimulus of the economy to goose profits and funnel them to the few, and to drive unemployment down while ramping up materialistic resource depletion and the damaging exploitation of public lands. In this, they are foolishly sacrificing future well-being and sustainability to gain short-term advantages for themselves and their cronies.

The *GOP* political machine has been ruthlessly formidable under Donald Trump. Republicans have demonstrated they will do anything to win, no matter how unethical and immoral, and no matter how divisive and antithetical to creating a more perfect union, and contrary to the general welfare of the American people, and damaging to domestic tranquility, and undermining of individual and national security, and tragically harmful to the common good, and insidiously threatening to hopes for securing "the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity."

These understandings are not "fake news". It should be clearly recognized that investigative reporters and journalists in the free press -- "the Fourth Estate" -- make the media crucially important to democracy for informing the public and serving as a check on abuses of power in Congress, the White House, the judiciary and the corporate world. Great reporting is coming out of the Washington Post and the New York Times, and on MSNBC, serving our democratic republic commendably in this moment of unfolding constitutional crisis. In pathetic contrast, Fox News and conservative talk radio hosts are confusing the national dialogue, giving cover to abusers of power, rationalizing wrongdoing, pushing fake news and Big Lies, whipping up violent rhetoric, promoting hate, and using divisive strategies to push a far right agenda and the politicization of the judiciary.

The devious master manipulator Donald Trump tells his own narcissistic version of reality, using bizarrely self-serving and self-aggrandizing spin to impose a twisted solipsistic narrative on every happenstance. He tells stories that bitterly attack anyone who criticizes him and tend to be real whoppers — WITCH HUNT! — FAKE NEWS!! — and he tries to skew public opinion into a cult-following-like belief system in his suspiciously twisted tales and rhetoric. This creates starkly oppositional camps of hosanna-chanting believers and apologists on the one hand, and outraged folks who see the glaring contrast between his dishonest interpretation and fairer and more expansive visions of reality.

In our excessively short attention span world, Trump's bizarrely selfish solipsistic tweets have gained surprising traction, and his demagogic deceit is having tragic effects. He is like a Trojan Horse for the few, echoing the disingenuous, dissembling, deceitful, manipulative and extremely divisive preaching of emotion-manipulating skills on Fox News, Inc., and Sinclair Broadcasting and other conservative media outlets.

Since the legitimacy of leaders in our democracy relies on the consent of the governed, and since Republicans represent only a minority of the people -- and considering that the 2016 elections involved much devious intrigue and downright illicit activity -- Republican leadership in the White House and the U.S. Senate right now is cast in the stark light of infamy. It should be acknowledged that most of the people who supported Trump gave their consent only after being subjected to an unprecedented barrage of divisive and deviously manipulative propaganda that hijacked their emotions, goaded their fears, stoked resentments, scapegoated immigrants, propagated malicious cyber-attack disinformation, promoted a raft of really Big Lies, riled up racial prejudices, caused hate crimes to spike, and stoked white male nativist nationalist tribalism in millions of individual echo chambers across the land of the semi-free. And they have indulged in unethical, debilitating, anxiety-inducing and effectively diabolical machinations targeted to make people believe the Supreme Court should be stacked with more anti-choice and anti-gay Republican judges who just happen to side with giving overriding prerogatives to corporations and the rich instead of representing the best interests of the majority.

Not only did Republicans achieve their 2016 election wins through a long litany of illegitimate means rather than by offering people fairer representation of their best interests and the common good, these scheming hyper partisan politicians have governed with ruthless unreason. They have double-crossed the American people by ruling with cunning chicanery, discriminatory zeal, widespread conflicts of interest, risky fiscal irresponsibility, contempt for rules of law, unrelenting deceit, extreme ecological myopia, un-Jesus-like moral turpitude, many extremist rulings in legal cases targeted to enable wide-ranging malfeasance, and an anti-egalitarian agenda that panders mercilessly to the elite well-connected few, with little evidence of honest integrity or caring for the many. And they shut down the federal government for a record long period, and are operating under an illicit national emergency declaration to force the American people to pay for the wall on the southern border.

From January 2017 to January 2019, with the Trump administration and the Senate and the House all run by narrow majorities of conservative politicians elected by a minority of the people, these politicians ruled as if they had won a landslide mandate to impose a harsh far right agenda. They abused the power of their office and refused to compromise with representatives of significantly more than half the people. Given the broad illegitimacy of such rule, federal courts are the best hope for the people to be protected from a myriad of harms and wrongdoing. Unfortunately for all, Republicans are compromising the foundational independence of the judiciary right now, for they are stacking federal courts with young judges appointed to life-long terms who tend to injudiciously favor patriarchal sexism and "right-wing social engineering" and an exploitive economic agenda that helps facilitate corporate corruption, and an anti-egalitarian, anti-environmental and undemocratic crusade against the common good. Let's demand more mainstream progressive judges!

A Spotlight on the Crucial Role of the Supreme Court

Chief Justice John Roberts has declared that the Supreme Court is "apolitical." Oh, right. This contention is a deceitful, as revealed in its partisan ruling to overturn lower court decisions against the corrupting influence of gerrymandering. The Roberts Court betrayed the American people with its *Citizens United* ruling in January of 2010 by selling our democracy to the highest bidders — rich people and giant corporations. In that ruling, the narrow 5 to 4 majority of "conservatives" overturned restrictions on corporate spending in elections dating back more than 100 years — and they had the brazen effrontery to try to justify their action by using the flimsy assertion that "independent expenditures do not lead to, or create the appearance of, *quid pro quo* corruption." In the ten years since then, it has become damningly crystal clear that Big Money is profoundly corrupting our elections and rashly skewing our national policies and pathologically distorting our priorities.

Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts engaged in a revelatory Twitter dispute with Trump in November 2018, after Trump tweeted about an "Obama judge" having made a decision against the constitutionality of an effort to keep desperate migrants from applying for asylum. "We do not have Obama judges or Trump judges," Roberts said in a statement released on Thanksgiving eve, "or Bush judges or Clinton judges. What we have is an extraordinary group of dedicated judges doing their level best to do equal right to those appearing before them. That independent judiciary is something we should all be thankful for." Trump almost immediately reacted by tweet from his vacation home in Florida: "Sorry Chief Justice John Roberts, but you do indeed have 'Obama judges,' and

they have a much different point of view than the people who are charged with the safety of our country." That was really maniacally twisted spin!

Both of these "eminences" are partially right. Roberts was right, we do need to be thankful for the judiciary still being somewhat independent, though Brett Kavanaugh's rushed confirmation is another step backwards because it strengthens domineering rule by the minority party, and many legal cases in our country show that our criminal justice system treats people better if they are rich and guilty than if they are poor and innocent. And Trump was also right, our judiciary has indeed become too politicized -- but it is Republican judges that are the most biased toward enabling abuses of minority power and giving excessive influence and advantages to rich people and corporate entities and crony capitalist robber barons and religious fundamentalists.

I appeal to each and every judge in the federal judiciary to really honestly and honorably try to do their fair-minded "level best" by keeping consequential ethics in mind and Big Picture considerations like those evaluated in *See Clearly*. Supreme Court Justices should much more honestly honor the oath of office they have sworn to -- that they "will administer justice without respect to persons, and do equal right to the poor and to the rich."

Trump has appointed more judges than any president in history, thanks to the machinations of Mitch McConnell and other Republicans in the U.S. Senate who refused to allow President Obama to fill more than 100 vacancies on federal courts and one on the Supreme Court. And biased "Trump judges" will be tilting the scales of justice for decades to come, reprehensibly reinforcing corporate power, uncompromising extreme partisanship and improprieties in campaign financing and voter suppression. They will continue to staunchly defend patriarchal sexism, racial discrimination and a general culture of corruption that is spreading like a cancer, corroding the foundations of our society. Trump judges will tend to make partisan rulings that favor rich people over poor people, capitalists over workers, corporations over communities, Republican politicians over Democrats, men over women, conservatives over the Country, white people over people of color, rigged elections over fair elections, partisan advantage over ethical propriety, those who gerrymander over those disadvantaged by gerrymandering, dishonest propagandists over honest journalists, fearful citizens against immigrants and asylum seekers, gun rights fanatics over those who support sensible efforts to reduce gun violence, irresponsible profiteers over common sense protections of public lands and the environmental commons, evangelical religious zealots over women and gay people, Christians over Muslims, Jews, agnostics and atheists, an extreme agenda over the general welfare of the people and progressive national plans, reckless short-termism in letting resource exploiters deplete natural resources instead of championing conservation, and climate crisis deniers over those who advocate wise precautionary principles and the greater good and sustainable well-being.

Efforts by Republicans to entrench a right-wing majority on the Supreme Court are targeted to make sure that the "Roberts Five" majority will continue to be able to impose its will over the people by making more narrow 5-to-4 rulings that side with the Few over the Many. In the biggest scheme of things, Republican politicians want to have a majority of extreme right judges on the Supreme Court who are predisposed to allow Donald Trump to get away with breaking election laws, violating provisions of the Constitution and rules of law, and engaging in intrigue with Russians who used cyber-attacks to help him get elected and weaken our democracy.

This is corruption incarnate! Seeing clearly, the American people should renounce this stacking of federal courts with Republican partisans. Donald Trump chose Brett Kavanaugh over all other possible nominees because he seems to be biased toward acting as an enabler of abuses of power rather than as an independent check against corruption, sexual misconduct, violations of women's rights, growing inequality, fraud, political malfeasance, influence peddling and the anti-democratic litany of extreme Republican agenda priorities.

Kavanaugh is a lifelong Republican partisan who is likely to be deciding people's fates on the highest court in the land for decades. He suspiciously happens to be far outside the judicial mainstream in having professed the belief that courts should show greater deference to the presidency, possibly even when power is being used contrary to the law, ethical norms, fundamental values or ideals espoused in the Constitution itself. He should not have been confirmed as a Justice because of the fact that he is likely to side with protecting Trump from accountability for his lying, breaking campaign finance laws, hiding his tax returns, obstruction of justice, emoluments profiteering, cover ups and various abuses of power and violations of the Constitution. Right now, with so many misdeeds being

uncovered related to the Trump administration's activities in office, it is the wrong time for Republicans to have succeeded in appointing a judge to the Supreme Court who will take the side of the Roberts Five in rationalizing, enabling and facilitating much of the egregious wrongdoing that is taking place.

The Supreme Court should act as an effective and ethical check against abuses of power. We simply can't trust Trump to act morally and constitutionally, since right now the current Administration and rogue Republicans in Congress are acting like functionaries enabling wrongdoing. Judges should rightly be chosen on merit, who will honestly commit to fairly and impartially deciding cases in ways that reasonably limit inimical abuses of authority by Trump and rich conservatives, and big corporations and the scheming politicians they have bought. We simply can't trust the Supreme Court right now, and that makes it too illegitimate to accept.

We the People have historically feared attacks from abroad, so it is ironic that we are now experiencing such existentially significant threats to our democracy from within. We can no longer tolerate Republican politicians in Congress abdicating their responsibilities of honestly representing the people and serving as a check against Trump's abuses of power, and against the permissive reigning culture of corruption.

A Biblical Perspective

The goal of establishing a government with strong checks and balances that can stand for time immemorial against both domestic despotism and foreign tyranny is at the very heart of the U.S. Constitution, so it is tragic that our democratic republic, dedicated in founding ideals to serving the common good and the general welfare, has devolved today into an illegitimate state by allowing a demagogue and his co-conspiratorial minions to seize power and brazenly abuse authority. And to conspire with foreign autocrats like Putin in Russia, Mohammed bin Salman in Saudi Arabia and Erdogan in Turkey. This is antithetical to the best interests of all citizens.

According to Proverbs 6:16-19 in the Bible, there are 6 things the LORD hates, and a 7th that is an abomination unto Him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are swift in running to evil mischief, a false witness who speaketh lies, and a person who sows discord among brothers. In light of Donald Trump's manipulative demagogic evil strategies and narcissistic character disorders, the Goddess of Irony grumbles ominously, and sounds of singing reverberate in our consciousness, moving our attention inward and subtly swaying our consciences. Listen! It is the voice of the melodious singer-songwriter and activist Holly Near, voicing these evocative lyrics: "I ain't afraid of your Yahweh I ain't afraid of your Allah I ain't afraid of your Jesus -- I'm afraid of what you do in the name of your God."

Republicans are putting their Party over country by using terribly divisive tactics to succeed in sacrificing the common good to the monomaniacal pursuit of power, profit and personal advantages in our corrupted crony capitalist system. In so doing, these politicians are causing excessively myopic and consequentially harmful impacts. It is no wonder that many folks judge their worse-than-Machiavellian schemes as "acts of evildoers".

Think clearly of the long litany of profoundly corrupt scams and unethical swindles and illicit schemes that "conservatives" have used to win elections and grab power. Keep in mind that most religious evangelicals support Trump Republicans, in an egregious instance of hypocrisy. These politicians have engaged in almost every possible illegitimate ruse, rather than more genuinely trying to promote the greater good and improve the general welfare of the people. They have suppressed voting, purged voter rolls, restricted early voting and made extreme gerrymanders of hundreds of congressional districts, all to advance their self-interest and do the scurrilous bidding of rich people and giant corporate entities. They have refused to take steps to prevent influence peddling and limit the corrupting effects of Big Money given by donors, often in secret, to decide elections and rig our laws and pervert our system of justice. They have cheated, repetitiously told falsehoods, divisively stoked hot button cultural issues, taken advantage of people's fears and grievances to emotionally manipulate them, and engaged in duplicitous smear campaigns, character assassinations and dirty electioneering tricks. They have traitorously encouraged Russian cyber-attacks and disinformation campaigns to help them get elected, and promoted fake news and inimical political conspiracy theories, and denied facts and expertise to push their short-sighted and corrupt agenda. They threaten their opponents with jail or violence, and Trump broke laws by using hush money to cover up his scandalous adulteries. Yikes! Let us meditate.

See clearly what's happening here, and why it's so seriously wrong. Wealthy donors, led by secretive Koch conclave co-conspirators and other well-heeled allies, have colossally corrupted our economic and political systems, using Big Bucks and *Dark Money*. Encouraging this corruption, the conservatives on the Supreme Court gave their stamp of approval with their narrow *Citizens United* ruling that Big Money in our elections cannot even create the appearance of corruption. Really! They expressed this erroneous opinion despite the plainly evident extent of corrupting influence in allowing rich donors to decide almost everything. "Not a puppet, not a puppet!", Trumpian characters exclaim, in almost comically disingenuous diabolical denial.

All of these indignities are being exacerbated by the fact that many of the scams being perpetrated are sad examples of malfeasance and activities that bend or outright break rules of law, and even violate the great Enlightenment Era ideals upon which our Constitution was founded. The American people are being subjected not only to this litany of ruses and outright frauds, but to deep psychological distress and insecurity due to the extremely divisive nature of the Demagogue-in-Chief's attempts to blame others, insult opponents, stoke racial prejudices and pit people against each other. "United we stand; divided, the despots win." The Underground Mole shouts out, "Reject these uncivil, decency-deficient, unpatriotic and democracy-undermining villains!"

Ideas like this are expansively evaluated in *See Clearly*. Note that there are plenty of excellent solutions to all the big challenges we face, and we urgently need to begin undertaking them. They should be guided by a *Bill of Rights for Future Generations*, and by *Good Proposals for Saving Humanity*. And they should be informed by the propitious worldview and recommendations made in my first book, *Common Sense Revival*.

In light of all the misguided and illicit actions being taken by Trump Republicans in the world today, Dr. Tiffany B. Twain proclaims: "If Donald Trump really had a shred of moral integrity, he would repent of his dastardly deeds, admit his sins, fire Vice-President Mike Pence and then resign from office. The Constitution stipulates that their successor will be the Speaker of the House -- currently, Nancy Pelosi. As for Brett Kavanaugh, he should be replaced on the Supreme Court by the well-qualified consensus candidate Merrick Garland, allowing fairer representation in the halls of power.

Chaos in the White House is dangerous to national security, and the revelations about it resemble an intrigue-packed thriller novel. The respect-deserving investigative journalist Bob Woodward has painted a harrowing portrait of the Trump presidency in his book *Fear: Trump in the White House*, which is based on many in-depth interviews with officials in the administration and other principals. Woodward relates the dramatic story of Trump's lawyer John Dowd peppering him in the White House residence with questions about the Russia investigation, "provoking stumbles, contradictions and lies until the president eventually lost his cool." Trump finally erupted, "This thing's a goddamn hoax", and launched into a half-hour-long rant that finished with him saying, "I don't really want to testify" to the Special Counsel Robert Mueller and his team of investigators. Ha! -- I guess not! After all, his then lawyer John Dowd reportedly warned him that he would likely end up in prison wearing an "orange jumpsuit" if he were to testify under oath in the Russia investigation. He should know!

Republicans in Congress have evaded their Constitutional duty to exercise oversight over the President and members of his administration. In response, Democratic state Attorney Generals have been filing lawsuits against the rogue regime at a record pace, blocking Trump's cruel "zero tolerance" child separation policy, defending women's reproductive rights and fighting for protections of the environment -- despite its being critically important in sustaining us and everyone in the future. Many state Attorney Generals are thus acting to create accountability crucially needed to stop the worst harms of the domineering Republican agenda. "The inability and unwillingness of Republicans in Congress and state legislatures to hold this administration and others in power accountable means that our system of checks and balances rests with state attorneys general, who are filing lawsuits against Trump when he violates tenets of the Constitution and rules of law."

What We Must Do About the Excessively Risky State of the Trump Establishment

Republicans assert that their agenda is being undermined by "a vast left-wing conspiracy" and "an angry, left-wing mob". In sharp contrast, Hillary Clinton famously declared back in the 1990s that there was a "vast right-wing conspiracy" against her and President Clinton and progressive causes. Since every American is being veritably

bombarded with an intense barrage of competing claims and obfuscating spin and propaganda, it is hard for us to know what really to believe. We need to think straight, and see clearly.

It is crucial for us to ferret out the essential truth of this matter, since the consequences for our lives and for the lives of all humans forever hereafter will be profoundly affected by the environmental, ecological and climatic decisions being made today, and by our resource depletion activities and the extent to which we allow cost externalities like pollution, toxic wastes and associated medical care to be foisted onto society, instead of demanding that our representatives take effective steps to prevent and alleviate such harms. Likewise, the impacts of our economic, business, financial, regulatory, social and political activities powerfully affect people living today, and will affect the fate of all people in the future. So our systems should be redesigned to be more in accord with visionary progressive understandings like those articulated in this manifesto.

To figure out whether the biggest threats to us will be found in left-wing schemes or right-wing schemes, let's be smart and "follow the money". Look what's happening here. Left-leaning politicians are calling for a safer healthcare system, more affordable medical care, improved public education, lower interest rates on student debt, comprehensive immigration reform, greater fairness in political representation, stronger protections from corporate wrong-doing, smarter regulations to prevent harms and cost externalizing schemes, bigger investments in the country's physical infrastructure, urgent climate actions, large reductions in the amount of money borrowed by the government to finance tax cuts for the few, a fairer and less racially unjust system of criminal justice, better solutions to the deadly coronavirus and opioid crises, lower prices for prescription drugs, the end of punitive marijuana laws, thorough investigations into election malfeasance and violations of rules of law and the Constitution, and international cooperation to pay forward economic stability and more broadly shared prosperity for our heirs.

In glaring contrast, right-wing politicians are using outrageously divisive tactics to grab and keep power, and staunchly opposing campaign finance reforms and expanded voting rights and fairer representation of the people. They are trying to obstruct justice and cover up malfeasance by Donald Trump and members of his co-conspiratorial administration. They are trying to entrench corrupt governance through partisan gerrymandering of congressional districts. They are abusing their illegitimately gained power by dangerously running the nation into trillions of dollars of additional debt to reward wealthy donors with huge tax cuts. They are stacking federal courts and the Supreme Court with far right conservatives who inimically favor wealthy people over poor people and corporations over workers and citizens. They are giving coal and oil companies more privileges to push their products and spew more greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, with inevitably damaging and catastrophically costly impacts related to global warming. These impacts include more intense storms and extreme temperatures, worse droughts and wildfires in many places, ominous rises in sea level and storm surges, and growing numbers of people worldwide devastated by extreme weather-exacerbated natural disasters.

In the big picture, unprincipled Republican politicians have used twisted trickery in the form of an egregious bait-and-switch scheme in which they promise to champion the best interests of the working class and people on Main Street, and then do the bidding of rich people and corporate entities by crippling the ability of workers to collectively bargain for fairer treatment. At the same time, they try to insidiously impose austerity measures on the masses by cutting spending on healthcare, public education, environmental protections and many other hallmarks of a civilized society. And they simultaneously give lavish benefits to rich people and Wall Street banks and usurious Payday loan lenders and other corporate interests, to the detriment of the vast majority of the people. In these rash schemes, they are undermining the common good and the general welfare, sabotaging the environment, mortgaging the future, and courting "catastrophic and irreversible consequences" by failing to take effective steps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere.

The Way It Is

Our Founders loved liberty, and hated despotic usurpations and abuses of power, so the brilliant Constitution they created featured checks and balances to prevent tyranny, and to ensure a more perfect union dedicated to an expansive vision of the general welfare of the people and their liberties and the nation's security. Fast forward to right now. *See Clearly* is an ultimate Big Picture exposé of the wide-ranging wrongdoing involved in the way the

status quo is currently rigged. In seeing clearly, we realize how long a litany of corrupt schemes and illicit scams and unethical con jobs are being perpetuated by power abusing "conservatives" against *We the People*. By seeing clearly, we recognize the vital importance of wide-ranging farsighted progressive change.

It is my strongly felt conviction that we can no longer afford to let conservatives run roughshod over the greater good by ruthlessly dominating our churches and federal and state governments. We need to collectively pledge allegiance to unifying policies, greater good goals and smarter national priorities. We need to demand a peaceful revolution that will ensure our representatives give us more honorable and just national plans, and more inclusive and egalitarian national priorities. Our representatives in Congress should start by enacting legislation that effectively reverses the corruption-facilitating *Citizen's United* ruling, which wrongfully allows Big Money to corrupt our elections and lawmaking. And let's ratify the eminently fair-minded Equal Rights Amendment!

Only a misled minority of Americans consents to Republican governance today. People see that these usurpers of power are Big Money-bought puppet politicians who prioritize profits over people's health and well-being. People see the treachery and ultimate wrongheadedness of those who rationalize helping domineering CEOs and crony capitalists impose their excessively profit-obsessed plans on the people while promoting a crusade against a safe environment and fairer treatment of working people. Sensible folks see that all of this is crazily contrary to the health of providential living conditions for human beings and life on Earth.

The culture of corruption in Crazytown seems to be spreading like cancer. What we really need is a new reality that features better management. We need fairer leaders who are not pushing a divisive agenda or striving to benefit from partisan rancor and chaos in the administration of what should be proper governance. We need leaders who are less obsessed with exploiting workers, cheating consumers and using up limited resources at the fastest possible rate. We need leaders who are not creating a Reality TV drama that allows them to get away with excessive profiteering and widespread malfeasance, and who are not propagating a tsunami of distractions from all the unscrupulous, self-serving, self-dealing, self-aggrandizing and harmful goings on, right here and right now. The Big Brother government that George Orwell imagined in his dystopian novel 1984 has come in an ugly, cruel, deceitful, condemnation deserving, and transcendently irresponsible form! Let's reverse course. Instead of getting rid of all the vitally important functions of government and opening the barn doors to individual and corporate cost externalizing and unethical scheming, let's do the opposite!

Today the specter that haunts humanity is transmogrifying, and it is a specter of corporatocratic capitalism run amok. This force is depriving *We the People* of greater fairness in the "social contract". It is sad that the eminently wise aspects of Golden Rule reciprocity principles are being arrogantly abrogated. It is tragic for we Americans to be forced to suffer the consequences of the Tricky Trumpster's naked greed and the terrible detrimentality of his money-obsessed crusade for self-dealing and maximized benefits for himself and the few -- always at the expense of the many, "the lazy bums". Too, it is sad to have scandal and distraction and misinformation and divisiveness trump all, and to have the people be subjected to poisonous psychological games being played by a leader who exhibits a deficiency of empathy and an absurdly narcissistic hubris, and a dangerous lust for cultivating the good graces of the world's worst despots. Our Founders would have fits!

Let's give Donald Trump the Actor of the Century Award, which he so richly deserves for his leading role in a Feature Drama portraying a Twitter-mad demented demagogue in a modern reality show adaptation of Sinclair Lewis' *It Can't Happen Here*. Let's do this in a star-studded celebrity ceremony sometime soon, and then usher him off the stage and out of the glare of the revealing spotlights. He is simply too great a danger to justice, fair elections, national security, people's civil rights, and peace in our democratic republic and around the world.

Let's stop aiming our slings and arrow at each other, and stop allowing scheming Dividers to exploit the people, for that only ensures excessive amounts of outrageous misfortune. Once we *See Clearly*, we will know more.

The Profiteer-in-Chief is trying to make damned sure that he himself will be the biggest beneficiary of his corrupt national priorities. He and his crony pals -- like the damned Mercers and the ruthless billionaires in the Koch network of wealthy "conservative" donors, the titans of industry. Yes, titans of giant power-abusing oil companies and brazen drug companies engaged in excessive profiteering, and Wall Street banking institutions and real estate tycoons. Many of these modern day robber barons meet in secretive conclaves twice a year, where they hatch and

further their scheming plans to rig affairs to their maximum advantage by eliminating regulations, artificially goosing profits in the short run, and making real sure that the top dogs who are doing the deciding will be the ones that get the lion's share of the spoils.

There are often U.S. Senators and Representatives in attendance at the conspiratorial Koch conclaves like the annual ones in Palm Springs, along with cunning conservative journalists, media propagandists and scheming Republican Party operatives. Two Supreme Court Justices have also attended the meetings -- Clarence Thomas and Antonin Scalia. Impeach Clarence! He simply has too many conflicts of interest, and his judicial record demonstrates unequivocally that he readily violates his Judicial Oath of Office. He seems to have conveniently forgotten that he solemnly swore he would "administer justice without respect to persons, and do equal right to the poor and to the rich." Also, Thomas has repeatedly supported the assertion, absurdly, that he cannot see any corruption or even appearance of corruption in anti-democratic ruses implicit in the *Citizens United* ruling, which was a wrongly decided case that basically allows politicians to make our system a "one-dollar-one-vote" political system and NOT a much fairer one-person-one-vote system. This is corruption incarnate! And the consequences are proving to be catastrophic for the USA, and for humanity.

Most people would probably prefer that our leaders were chosen in fairer elections, by citizens uniting to elect representatives who most honestly appeal to the broadest expression of the general welfare of *We the People*. That necessarily means NOT almost exclusively pandering to the best interests of the few, corruptly enabled and unethically prioritized. This, pathetically, is *What's the Matter with Kansas*. "It's about the Corruption, Stupid!", screams a headline.

A few practical voices among conservatives now and then warn about excessive injustices that may lead to serious or even revolutionary conflicts. But with strong police forces and the world's most powerful military, and with an oppressive *Incarceration Nation* injustice system -- and authoritarian despots in power -- they seem satisfied they will be able to continue to overplay their hands, as if they figure that critical resulting problems will lie somewhere down the road, perhaps after they are out of office or dead. Their election losses in November 2018 are finally resulting in some investigative oversight by House Democrats, but Republicans have doubled down on their complicity in all manner of wrongdoing. Let's honestly understand what's going on here.

Dateline July 24, 2018, one week after the Helsinki Summit

Something suspicious is happening here. Donald Trump held a secretive summit with Vladimir Putin in Helsinki that was followed by a revealing press conference in which Trump sided with Putin in denying that either of them could possibly have been involved in underhanded efforts to rig the 2016 election outcome in favor of Republicans. By taking that deceitful stand, Trump was almost treasonously denying extensive evidence that convinces all our American intelligence agencies that Russia was deeply involved in influencing our 2016 elections. How again? One way was through Russian hacking of Democratic Party communications and voter information, along with voter profiling like that provided by Cambridge Analytica, and then the micro-targeted propagation of emotion-hijacking fake news, conspiracy theories and character assassinations through ads on social media. There were also many other Russian cyber-attack strategies designed to divide people and to demoralize them through what a recent KGB defector called "ideological subversion, active measures, or psychological warfare." By thus eroding people's trust in democracy, these villains strive to triumph.

Trump deserves the exposure of his corruption by investigators and reporters in an approaching dénouement to what he often ridiculously refers to as "fake news" and a "Witch Hunt". Hmmm. As Parkland High School student Emma Gonzales stated, "We call BS." There were dozens of indictments and 7 guilty pleas in the Mueller probe, and Republicans materially distorted the findings in the final report, and deceitfully spun it as "exonerating". We face a constitutional crisis, and our political leaders should be more honest with us about the Mueller investigation, and the Ukraine Plot, and criminal efforts made to cover up shenanigans and obstruct justice. Let's hang tight, my fellow Americans, as this crisis unfolds, and get better organized to really actualize greater good goals. And let's remove Donald Trump from office, and give power to the people and honest representatives.

Let's also demand that the improper confirmation of the excessively partisan Brett Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court be reversed, and put a reasonable moderate onto the high court, like the good consensus choice before

Republican Senators went nuclear on the judiciary -- Merrick Garland, who is an eminently well-qualified and reasonable Chief Circuit Judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia. Let's demand that he be appointed as a first step in Republican restitution on account of the profound illegitimacy of the scandalous coup that Republican politicians perpetrated to gain power. Keep foremost in mind the extent to which the crowing victors have been egregiously misusing their power.

Once we See Clearly, we will also know that we must reverse the debt-financed Tax Cut swindle that was passed by exclusively Republican Senators and treacherous "Representatives" in December 2017. The fact that these politicians achieved their election victories using nefarious means makes their swindles doubly offensive. This highly regressive debt-financed Republican Tax Cut scam should be rescinded, and it should be rightly replaced with a fairer plan that results in balanced budget impacts, not spiking amounts of debt. The new law should give Not One More Cent in tax breaks to people in the top 1%, compared to tax rates in effect before the roguish Republican law. After all, the legislation gave America's 5,000 richest families an average tax cut of more than \$80 million each per year, which future taxpayers will have to pay for, in interest costs, every year, forever. And the new law should be designed to provide more generous funding for schools, infrastructure, healthcare for all, social safety net programs, environmental protections, the environmental justice-oriented Green Climate Fund, and foreign aid and international diplomatic missions that help ensure peaceful coexistence.

Conclusion

Survival is the ultimate moral good for our kind, and Big Picture perspectives are needed to help ensure our human survival and flourishing. Such perspectives should be comprehensive, and they should take into account the best understandings of deep ecologists and scientists in every discipline, and of spiritual leaders. They also should not deny the most ethically aware worldviews, or the latest and most accurate scientific understandings. Survival involves indefinitely sustained biological existence. We humans need to clearly recognize and respect the fact that we cannot continue to consume more than can be supplied by natural resources and regeneration in healthy ecosystems. The carrying capacity of damaged ecosystems is much less than that of healthy ones, so it is an overarching necessity for us to act to prevent harms to habitats. Otherwise, by upsetting the providential balance in nature, we will degrade the indispensable foundation of our flourishing and survival.

"Après moi, le deluge" attitudes did not work out well for the power-abusing nobility in France, because they cavalierly treated the masses too ruthlessly, provoking the French Revolution in 1789. And it sure didn't prove to be propitious for King Louis XVI, who was guillotined in January 1793. It was even indignantly worse for "Let them eat cake" Marie Antoinette, who met the same fate nine months later. Republican efforts today to roll back environmental protections, and to reject global responsibilities under the Paris Agreement on climate change, are essentially a dead end "Après nous, le deluge" attitude. Revolutionarily positive change must come!

Big Picture perspectives should be better informed by a Buddha-like triumvirate of Right Mindfulness and Right Understanding and Right Action. They should be guided by foresight and respect for the long-term greater good, like that imbued in a Bill of Rights for Future Generations. Greater concern should be given to social justice and environmental justice, and to the proper stewardship of Creation. More respect should be given to attitudes like the compassionate caring manifested by spiritual leaders, like Jesus Christ and the Dalai Lama.

I feel strongly that all people should be enlisted to help pay forward some good deeds to our heirs in the future generations, so that we create improved and safer prospects for overall well-being for everyone.

Truly,

Dr. Tiffany B. Twain

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