

The other quip

Originally written as a long-form response to an extended online debate I've been having with my two liberal friends. I started with another document, analysing the reasons for the deep divide between the two camps in America. But since our debate kept focusing on Trump, I wrote this one to provide more specific details on my positions.

"Quip" means document in this context.

Disclaimer: the actual quip I keep writing doesn't mention Trump at all. It wasn't the purpose of that document to discuss current events or political opinions. The purpose was to analyse the causes for the unbridgeable gap that exists between the two camps.

Copyright: this document represents **my** opinions, which were formed over the years based on my unique experiences. Expecting that these opinions will somehow apply to you is quite unreasonable. Make sure to form your own opinions based on information that confirms your worldview. Having said that, a lot of my opinions that tend to be more conservative seem to be shared by many people, so they are not unique. Most importantly, my objective is not to convince anyone that I am "right" and others are "wrong" - that's the central fallacy addressed in my other document. It's just a set of opinions that work for **me**. Throughout this document, you'll notice **my** opinions highlighted in bold and underscored. Those visual cues are there to remind you that I am not trying to convince anyone, nor is it an invitation for debate.

Errata: not really, just an admission that I was too lazy to provide references for my claims. After all, it's an opinion piece. However, if any of my claims seem unreasonable and require supporting literature, I will happily do the research - but so should you.

Prologue

I have a friend, let's call him Jake. Jake is an obnoxious, larger-than-life, me-me-me kind of person. He's got a really bad case of constant verbal diarrhea. He can only talk about himself and how great he is, how smart he is (he isn't), how much he knows (he doesn't) - and so on. Spending time with him, and listening to him is like pulling teeth. Nevertheless - I am grateful to know him, and to be his friend. Because despite all of the above - he proved to be the kindest, most selfless person I know. He would take his last shirt off and give it to you if he felt you needed it. You wouldn't even have to ask.

Jake is not Trump, and Trump is not Jake. But I tell you this because in **my experience**, superficial appearances or even constant external behavior patterns can be very deceiving.

I am not sure that Trump's exterior is much of an indication of his interior.

Or maybe it is. The thing is that I don't care.

Or rather.. I do care, but I feel it just **doesn't matter**.

Our system

Our political and umbilically-attached business systems are incredibly corrupt. We have political dynasties, kings and princes, aristocracy and courtiers, career politicians that spend their entire lives on Capitol Hill, laws that are literally written in corporate boardrooms and rubber-stamped by politicians on payroll. Protections for big business, protection for police and DAs, FISA courts, hellish systems of racial and economic oppression, unfair and elitist education system, lapdog science that serves corporate and political interests, out of control big pharma, big tech and big energy, murderous healthcare system, and the list goes on.

This system is enormous, powerful and extremely capable of protecting and perpetuating itself.

People at the top of this system deserve a special note. As an example, if you or I became multi-millionaires overnight, we would likely retire, and pursue other interests. So when a person becomes wealthy or powerful beyond belief - and stays in the business - **what keeps them going?** Certainly not the need for more money.

Some people are motivated by power, and it is hard for us to grasp intuitively, just like a same-sex attraction is hard to grasp for a straight person, or vice versa. Sure, we understand it logically, but not in a way that would make it a motivator.

Well, those people who climb to the top of the human food chain, and keep going, and **want to keep going**, are motivated by one thing - lust for power over others. And no, those are not people who care about others, that's a completely different breed. Those are people who crave control, and want more of that.

Those people are not interested in changing that system, they are living off of it. They only want to make it stronger and more oppressive.

There is a special place in hell for such people. In **my** opinion. Unaccountable rulers that have none of the concerns of regular people. Ugh.

Our entire political and business system is led by people like that. People like that have been "leading" humanity for millenia.

A conservative view is that America has offered an antidote to this, for the first time. "By the people, for the people" is a good summary of that concept. The more that concept is eroded, the more people become concerned, and ultimately rebellious.

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An assumption that voting for any one guy or gal may fix any of that is clearly idiotic. Under this system, a newly minted president will either quickly roll over for prevailing business-political interests, or stall trying to institute even the smallest change, or, as it is in the case with an outlier like Trump, be blocked at every step by the administrative state and symbiotic corporate interests.

If there's anything BLM, Antifa and other neo-marxist movements get right, is that any meaningful change and dissolution of power can only come from a massive civil disobedience. Call it revolution, revolt, uprising, riots, anything. Traditional ideas that peaceful voting can bring about a radical change are not supported by any evidence. In **my** opinion.

That being said, all of the above are **very bad methods**, often resulting in much worse outcomes than intended, and occasionally in outright atrocities and horror. So the best next thing becomes a strong **outsider leader** with the right agenda, supported by a populist movement (left or right), not too beholden to any special interests, and possessing a strong desire to bring around a drastic change.

Fortunately, Trump has the right agenda and many of the other prerequisites.

Unfortunately, he is Trump.

Trump

Election

Like I said before in our long-running chat (look it up), Trump is a vehicle. He is the outlet for the accumulated anger and frustration of people who feel disenfranchised, demonized and abandoned in contemporary America. He is the rebellion of people reduced to simplistic noble/evil dichotomy, ridiculed, ignored and cancelled. Sure, everyone - yes, I think everyone - would've preferred a Trump that was as eloquent as Obama, as charismatic as Bill Clinton, and as good looking as JFK. But in our "lesser evil" leadership selection process, we were left with Trump. God, sometimes I miss the multi-party parliamentary system.

Side note: one of you called the majority of Trump voters "racist and fearful". Umm, no.

In other words, (roughly) half of the country was watching with horror how the country was (in their view) sliding into oblivion - and all they wanted was to scream "what the hell are you doing?!?!"... and Trump offered the only way to scream it. In their view, **the alternative was much worse**.

Again, the key point is: we are all choosing a lesser evil, always. That is just a fact of life. So in this case, the prospects offered by the other side were so appalling that huge swaths of reasonable, kind and honest people cringed, held their noses, and ended up voting for Trump¹. So he was elected, and is still widely supported not because of his personal merits but despite them; people purposefully ignore his personality and conduct, and try to focus on his attempted policy moves. Lesser evil.

And honestly, the other side should've come up with a better candidate. And they might be doing it again.

It is indisputable that Trump is not presidential, and has some very nasty aspects of his personality. How hopeless should people have felt to vote for someone like that? How many years of presidentially-looking and well-behaved duds at the helm were needed for someone so awful to win?

To summarize, personality traits literally **don't matter** as most people that are able get that high up the human food chain will have some very dark sides to their personas, and some are truly evil. That is my opinion. They are all terrible people, some just hide it better than others, which I

¹ None of the people I know who voted for Trump were happy about it. Still, after 4 years, most of them will vote for him again.

think is **actually worse**. Without naming names, there are multiple political and business leaders that are deeply flawed people, with enormous disdain to rank-and-file folks, but through carefully crafted appearances able to dupe the idiotic masses into keeping them in power. Ugh.

A loud potty mouth that ends up doing the right thing is better than an eloquent and buttoned-down fatcat that rapes children after work.

See "[System](#)" for more context.

Pre-pandemic performance

Many of Trump's **stated policies** and intentions align with my worldview. Specifically:

- Staunch support for Israel
- Avoidance of foreign wars
- Nominating and confirming conservative and originalist Justices and judges
- Support for the 2nd amendment
- Immigration control and reform (merit-based)
- Criminal justice reform
- Opposition to radical religious terrorism
- De-regulation and pro-business policies
- Opposition to China - including IP theft, job transfer, and gutting of US self-reliance
- Opposition to other communist regimes and philosophies
- Support for the US Constitution and Bill of Rights
- Opposition to the administrative state - "the swamp" - see "[System](#)"
- Support for national identifiers such as symbols, history and values (e.g. "American exceptionalism" and individualism)
- Infrastructure
- Etc. I'm probably forgetting some

The list above is not an invitation for debunking and argument. This is **my opinion**, shared by many, and disputed by others. Also, these are **stated** policies, not achievements.

During the first three years of his presidency, Trump tried to aggressively pursue some or most of his stated policies. His success is debatable, and this is not an invitation for debate, but a statement of opinion. In that opinion, Trump was **quite successful** pursuing some of those policies, and **unsuccessful** in others.

Some progress is better than none. That is **my** opinion.

So going back to the original "lesser evil in a two-party system" concept, I will vote for anyone with a similar policy agenda, even if that anyone has a very small chance of achieving any of the

stated goals. Because an alternative would be the opposite agenda, one I am against, with a similar or greater chance of success.

At a risk of repeating myself, the candidate I vote for could be a terrible person. I will choose to ignore his/her personality, and so will many others, as long as I don't have a better choice.

Pandemic performance

Due to my deep distrust of political and business power systems, I find that there is enough reason to doubt the mainstream narrative about the pandemic. From the way actual numbers and infection rates are presented and interpreted, to efficacy of various mitigation methods like lockdowns (and beach closures). Moreover, since it is my belief that the scientific community and their work products are deeply beholden to, and dependent on various corporate and political interests, I find it plausible that relevant data is manipulated, promoted or suppressed in service of those interests.

Again, a reminder - this is my opinion, shared by some and rejected by others. Not an invitation to debate or dispute. If that is of interest, we can have a separate discussion on how such opinions are formed and perpetuated.

So first and foremost, I think it is too early to make a call whether any country or state performance was good or bad. We are not through this yet, and there's a possibility that we won't be for a long time, if ever. The jury is still out.

Second, hindsight is always 20:20. So coulda-shoulda narrative is definitely appealing, but there is no clear evidence or proof that someone could've done better. Armchair quarterbacks are called that for a reason.

Third, our country is vastly different from pretty much any other country. Even between individual US states there are vast differences on pandemic response and interim outcomes. In other words, and I stated this repeatedly in our chat, we have no one to compare ourselves to. We can perhaps compare some states with some countries, but that's where it ends. Our federal system, coupled with cultural characteristics such as a deeply ingrained sense of individual rights and limits of government, doesn't really have any analogous entities in the world.

Additionally, it is hard to find a comparable crisis in recent US history, where we could evaluate a more traditional presidential performance against Trump's. If you think 9/11 is a comparable crisis in any way, discontinue reading now. Logic is a prerequisite.

Fourth, in terms of the efficacy of Federal government response: even if we ignore for a moment (and we shouldn't) the complexity of federal vs. state responsibilities - which is a long-standing power struggle in our country - I am not convinced that the enormously bureaucratic, cumbersome and inefficient federal machine (see [System](#)) could've done much better. And that's assuming that the executive branch even received the right information in a timely manner (see the [mental game](#) I mention at the end of this paragraph).

Purposely avoiding mentioning individual aspects of the federal response and their merits, I want to stress a very simple fact: quickly pivoting and executing in such a massive and complex system is extremely hard, especially if no one has ever taken any preparations seriously. An expectation of a magical instantaneous turn-around is no more reasonable than an attempt to pin all responsibility on one person.

Lastly, this pandemic happened to occur during an election year in a very divided and polarized political climate. There is no surprise that this crisis is being used aggressively for political gain, by all sides. So yes, it is **my** opinion that it is extremely useful to some to make this pandemic look and feel much worse. And it would not surprise me in the slightest if some would go as far as to risk human lives and livelihoods for political purposes. On all sides. It's that bad.

To summarize, again - we don't know enough about this pandemic, and maybe never will. Crisis response, especially if the crisis is of the "black swan" type, is always clumsy when it comes to organizations large and small. So I'm not giving any performance ratings regarding pandemic response at this point, and if I did - I'd spread them up equally across state and federal leaders, and the scientific community as well.

And even if I accepted the premise that "Trump killed half a million people" - which I fully reject at this point - come election time, I would still, like everyone else, look for the lesser evil, whatever that might be.

A quick mental game: if I have a manager that I despise, and can create a situation where he fails and gets fired, I would be tempted to do it.

Conclusion

Last elections, I voted for a terrible person. This time, I will probably vote for a terrible person again.

But so did you. And you will, again, this November.

Afterword

Despite its length, this document still represents everything at a very low resolution, a collection of pixelated thumbnails really. Almost any statement here can be unpacked into multiple dimensions, exposing complexities, alternative definitions, underlying motives, competing agendas, etc. To give one example, “2nd Amendment” could be interpreted as a desire to have cool toys and possibly compensate for certain parts of one’s anatomy; or, it could mean the very foundation of a hope for social justice for the systemically oppressed.

So I encourage you to avoid jumping to rash conclusions, which are in essence just another collection of thumbnails. Demand HD. I’ll be happy to provide more context.