

# Donald Trump in 2018:

## False or Misleading Facts, Unfit to be president

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### Table of Contents

Trump's changes to [White House website](#)

#### [January 2018](#)

Wolff's [book](#) about Trump

Trump proclaims himself a [genius](#)

Trump speaks at a [fourth-grade](#) level

Trump awards prizes for worst [fake news](#)

#### [February 2018](#)

16 Feb 2018: [Russians](#) indicted

23 Feb 2018: Trump's speech to [CPAC](#)

Trump's inconsistent positions on [gun control](#) legislation

#### [March 2018](#)

1 Mar 2018: [Russia more belligerent](#)

14 Mar: [Trump admits inventing "facts"](#)

[Trump hates McCabe at FBI](#)

Scott [Pruitt's](#) condominium

#### [April 2018](#)

[Comey's](#) book about Trump

Trump's response to chemical weapons in [Syria](#)

#### [May 2018](#)

9 May: [Negative News is Fake News](#), journalists are [enemy](#) of American people

17 May: Trump's paranoia about [Spy](#) in Trump's 2016 campaign

#### [June 2018](#)

3 June: [Pardon Me?](#)

6 June: Trump's [ignorance](#)

9 June: Trump hates [CNN](#)

7 Nov: Trump bans CNN's [Acosta](#) from White House

15 June: More [lies](#) from Trump

20 June: Trump lies about [remains](#) from North Korea

#### [July 2018](#)

More [lies](#) from Trump

[Russia](#) interfered with 2016 U.S. election

Trump never shops for [groceries](#)

#### [August 2018](#)

More [lies](#) from Trump, no voter fraud  
Another book about Trump: [Unhinged](#)  
Trump says he is "your [favorite](#) president"  
Giuliani makes a [mess](#)  
Trump attacks [Google](#)  
Trump attacks Lester [Holt](#) at NBC News

#### [September 2018](#)

Another book about Trump: Woodward's [Fear](#)  
Anonymous [Resistance](#) Inside the Trump Administration  
National Park Service Altered Inauguration [Photographs](#)  
Trump [embarrasses](#) himself  
Trump's warnings about hurricane [Florence](#)  
Allegations about [Rosenstein](#)

#### [October 2018](#)

[Hurricane Michael](#)  
Trump's ignorance of [climate change](#)  
Trump inspires maker of [pipe bombs](#)

#### [November 2018](#)

10 Nov: Trump [disrespects](#) military

#### [December 2018](#)

6 Dec: [Tillerson's](#) comments on Trump  
Trump's [Anxiety](#) about Mueller's Investigation  
18 Dec: Trump's [letter of intent](#) in Russia  
23 Dec: Carl Bernstein says Trump [unfit](#) to be president  
30 Dec: General Stanley A. McChrystal says Trump [untruthful and immoral](#)

### **Themes:**

Trump's [False or Misleading "Facts"](#)

Trump's low approval by voters

Trump's [Rude & Obnoxious Remarks](#)

["You're fired!" & Resignations](#)

[Allegations of Sexual Misconduct](#)

[Clifford](#) aka "Stormy Daniels"

Giuliani makes a [mess](#)

[continuation](#)

21 Aug 2018: Cohen pleads [guilty](#) to campaign finance violation

29 Nov 2018: Cohen pleads [guilty](#) to perjury

12 Dec 2018: Cohen [sentenced](#)

[McDougal](#) and *The National Enquirer*

[Immigration reform](#) and the Wall

[How Trump makes decisions](#)

### [Conclusion](#)

[Removal of Trump from Presidency](#)

[Bills](#) in U.S. House of Representatives on removal of Trump

6 Apr 2017 [Raskin](#)

12 July 2017 [Sherman](#)

18 Aug 2017 [Lofgren](#)  
11 Oct 2017 [Green](#) (first attempt)  
15 Nov 2017 [Cohen](#)  
6 Dec 2017 [Green](#) (second attempt)  
19 Jan 2018 [Green](#) (third attempt)  
[Bibliography on Trump Unfit to be President](#)

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## Introduction

On 22 January 2017 — two days after Trump was inaugurated as president of the USA — I began chronicling Trump's bizarre behavior, including his making many false statements of fact, and other evidence of Trump's unfitness to be president. My essay on Trump during [2017](#) has 239 pages of quotations, facts, and my commentary, with 1730 links to news articles and documents.

This essay chronicles Trump's bizarre behavior during 2018. In writing this essay, I document details — with many citations — that I hope will assist future historians in understanding Trump's unfitness to be president during 2018. Collecting and preserving quotations in one document makes it easier for future historians to read the details.

### **I avoid Trump's policies.**

I avoid mentioning Trump's policies, some of which may be unconstitutional or ill-conceived, even harmful to the interests of the USA. Disagreements about policy are disputable or controversial, a matter of subjective opinion. On the other hand, Trump's false statements of fact have been shown by journalists to be objectively *false*.

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## Trump's changes to White House website

The White House website under President Obama had the following different sections for transcripts and documents:

1. [Speeches & Remarks](#) transcripts of Obama's and Biden's speeches
2. [Press Briefings](#) transcripts of press briefings
3. [Statements & Releases](#) documents released by White House

Obama's website was easy to navigate and contained what I would expect to find at the White House. But Trump's White House condensed all three of these separate topics into one section called [Briefings & Statements](#). The effect of Trump's change was to push recent items off the first page, forcing the reader to wade through irrelevant material, then click the next page button at the bottom of the webpage. Another effect was to conceal the fact that

press briefings were less frequent in the Trump White House than in Obama's White House. Still another effect was to conceal that the White House website contained transcripts of only some of the president's speeches.

On 6 February 2017, the Trump White House added a new section to its website that collected newspaper-style [articles](#) that praised the president's policies and actions. Those articles struck me as unnecessary propaganda.

Many of Trump's important speeches are *not* available at the White House website, for example:

- 10 March 2018 speech in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
- 14 March 2018 speech in Missouri.
- 4 May 2018 speech to National Rifle Association annual meeting. ([Pence's](#) speech is posted at the White House.)
- 25 May 2018 remarks to journalists about the Kim/Trump summit, as Trump departed from the White House to the Naval Academy.
- 25 May 2018 speech to graduating class at U.S. Naval Academy.
- 20 June 2018 speech in Duluth, Minnesota.
- 5 July 2018 speech in Great Falls, Montana
- 31 July 2018 speech at the Florida State Fairgrounds in Tampa, Florida (where Trump famously said one needs a photo identification card to purchase [groceries](#).)
- 29 Sep 2018 speech in Wheeling, West Virginia, where Trump said he "fell in love" with North Korean leader, Kim Jong Un.
- 8 Dec 2018 press conference on White House lawn, where Trump announced that his chief-of-staff, John Kelly, would be leaving.

In summary, there was less information at Trump's White House website than at the White House websites for the two previous presidents.

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## January 2018

### Goodbye, Pakistan

On 1 January 2018, Trump showed why he will never be elected "Miss Congeniality" on his beauty pageant.

The United States has foolishly given Pakistan more than 33 billion dollars in aid over the last 15 years, and they have given us nothing but lies & deceit, thinking of our leaders as fools. They give safe haven to the terrorists we hunt in Afghanistan, with little help. No more!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:12 EST, 1 January 2018.

The Pakistani government in Islamabad promptly summoned the U.S. Ambassador to explain Trump's tweet. [Express Tribune](#) in Pakistan; [The Nation](#) in Pakistan; [Reuters](#).

Trump forgot to mention the corruption in the Pakistani government and the widespread Islamic terrorism inside Pakistan. As my [essay](#) in 2013-2014 explained, the Pakistani government has failed to eradicate polio, making Pakistan one of three nations in the world where polio still infects people.

On 4 January, the U.S. Government suspended \$ 1355 million/year in "security aid" to Pakistan. [New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#).

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### **Trump did *not* make air travel safe**

On 2 January 2018, Trump took credit for zero fatal airplane crashes by commercial airlines in the year 2017.

Since taking office I have been very strict on Commercial Aviation. Good news — it was just reported that there were Zero deaths in 2017, the best and safest year on record!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 09:13 EST, 2 Jan 2018.

Trump arrogantly took credit for the good work of pilots, air traffic control, mechanics, as well as engineers' development of better engines and aircraft. Journalists pointed out that there had been zero fatalities on commercial airlines in the USA for each of the past four years. The two most recent fatal crashes in the USA are:

- A. 49 people died when a regional airline turboprop aircraft crashed near Buffalo, NY in February 2009.
- B. Three people died in the crash of a Korean airliner at San Francisco airport on 6 July 2013.

[Washington Post](#); [Washington Post](#); [Associated Press](#); [FactCheck.org](#); [The Atlantic](#).

Notice that when something good happens (e.g., stock market prices go up), then Trump takes credit and boasts of his accomplishment. But when something bad happens (e.g., North Korea develops better nuclear weapons), then Trump blames it on Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, or Obama.

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**Goodbye, Mr. Bannon**  
**Hello, cease-and-desist letters from Trump's attorney**

**or**  
**How to Sell Wolff's Book that is critical of Trump**

Steve Bannon was chief of Breitbart News website, where he helped elect Trump. Trump appointed Bannon to be chief strategist at the White House. In August 2017, Trump fired Bannon and Bannon returned to Breitbart. Bannon spoke to Michael Wolff, the author of a forthcoming book about Trump. The book quotes Bannon as saying a 9 June 2016 meeting between Trump's eldest son, Kushner, Manafort, and Russians was "treasonous" and "unpatriotic". [The Guardian](#); [New York Times](#). Within hours of the publication of Bannon's remarks on 3 January by *The Guardian*, Trump issued a written statement to journalists, part of which said:

Steve Bannon has nothing to do with me or my Presidency. When he was fired, he not only lost his job, he lost his mind. Steve was a staffer who worked for me after I had already won the nomination by defeating seventeen candidates, often described as the most talented field ever assembled in the Republican party.

. . . .

Steve pretends to be at war with the media, which he calls the opposition party, yet he spent his time at the White House leaking false information to the media to make himself seem far more important than he was. It is the only thing he does well. Steve was rarely in a one-on-one meeting with me and only pretends to have had influence to fool a few people with no access and no clue, whom he helped write phony books.

Donald J. Trump, "Statement from the President of the United States," [New York Times](#), 3 Jan 2018.

Also posted at [Associated Press](#).

Trump not only engages in an ad hominem attack on Bannon, but also Trump now attempts to deny that Bannon had influenced Trump during both the campaign and early months in the White House.

Callum Borchers, writing in the [Washington Post](#), said: "President Trump essentially excommunicated Stephen K. Bannon on Wednesday with a fire-breathing statement...."

Can this squabble get worse? Yes. Later on 3 January, Trump's personal attorney sent Bannon a cease-and-desist letter that claims Bannon violated a written employment agreement that contained confidentiality and non-disparagement clauses. Trump's attorney also claimed that Bannon had defamed Trump. [Washington Post](#); [ABC News](#).

The U.S. Supreme Court has repeatedly held that "political speech" receives the highest protection under the First Amendment, so it is difficult to make a case that one can defame the president. Also the U.S. Supreme Court has repeatedly held that a government employee can speak publicly on a "matter of public concern", which free-speech holding protects Bannon. The employment agreement was between Bannon and the Trump Organization, a private company. But Bannon was employed by the White House, so the agreement arguably does *not* cover what Bannon observed in the White House. The cease-and-desist letter was probably intended to intimidate Bannon into stopping criticism of Trump. [Washington Post](#);

### [Volokh Conspiracy](#).

On 4 January, Trump's personal attorney sent a “cease and desist” letter to Henry Holt, the publisher of Wolff's book on Trump, titled *Fire and Fury: Inside the Trump White House*. [Washington Post](#). My comment is that it is very inappropriate for the president of the USA to be engaging in attempted censorship. Henry Holt properly ignored the cease-and-desist letter, as described in the next paragraph.

The real winner in this event may be Henry Holt, a division of Macmillan, the publisher of Wolff's book on Trump. The book was scheduled to be publicly sold beginning 9 January, but the first sale was moved to 5 January, because of the publicity from Trump denouncing Bannon. Because of pre-orders, on 4 January this book is already Nr. 1 at [amazon.com](#) and Barnes & Noble, two leading online book stores. [CNN](#); [Wall Street Journal](#); [The Guardian](#).

When Trump attempted to protect his reputation, he actually further damaged his reputation, by increasing sales of Wolff's book. This episode would make a nice case study for students in business school on how *not* to respond to a crisis.

On 9 January, Bannon, his journalism career now in tatters, resigned from Breitbart. [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [Associated Press](#).

On 10 January, the [Wall Street Journal](#) reported that one million copies of Wolff's book had been sold in the first four days, ending the night of 8 January.

On 11 January, the Rodong Sinmun newspaper in North Korea gleefully reported that the popularity of Wolff's book, *Fire and Fury: Inside the Trump White House*, “foretells Trump's political demise”. Meanwhile, the publisher has ordered the printing of more than one million paper copies of Wolff's book. [Associated Press](#).

On 21 January 2018 — approximately two weeks after Wolff's book was available for sale — *The New York Times* listed Wolff's book as Nr. 1 on its nonfiction best-seller list for a second consecutive week.

On 18 March 2018, Wolff's book was Nr. 1 on *The New York Times* nonfiction best-seller list for the tenth consecutive week.

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### **Trump proclaims himself a "genius"**

At the White House press briefing on Thursday, 4 January 2018, Trump's spokeswoman was asked about Trump's mental fitness to be president.

QUESTION: What's the President's reaction to the growing number of suggestions, both in this book and in the media, that he's mentally unfit to serve as President?

MS. SANDERS: The same way we have when it's been asked before: that it's disgraceful and laughable. If we was unfit, he probably wouldn't be sitting there and wouldn't have defeated the most qualified group of candidates the Republican Party

has ever seen. This is an incredibly strong and good leader. That's why we've had such a successful 2017 and why we're going to continue to do great things as we move forward in this administration.

"Press Briefing by Press Secretary Sarah Sanders," [White House](#), 4 January 2018.

My comment is Whoa! The people who voted for Trump in the Republican primary elections in 2016 and who "defeated the most qualified group of candidates the Republican Party has ever seen" were *not* professional psychiatrists. Those voters lacked both the education and professional experience to decide whether Trump was mentally unfit. Further, the spokeswoman's remark about "successful 2017" is propaganda. Trump's promises to voters (e.g., the wall along the Mexican border, banning Muslims from entering the USA) remain unfilled. The proper way to respond to questions about the president's mental fitness is to have the president examined by a group of unbiased psychiatrists, and then have their report made public.

On Saturday morning, 6 January 2018, Trump gave himself a mental evaluation. He not only passed but also proclaimed himself a genius.

Now that Russian collusion, after one year of intense study, has proven to be a total hoax on the American public, the Democrats and their lapdogs, the Fake News Mainstream Media, are taking out the old Ronald Reagan playbook and screaming mental stability and intelligence.....

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:19 EST, 6 Jan 2018.

....Actually, throughout my life, my two greatest assets have been mental stability and being, like, really smart. Crooked Hillary Clinton also played these cards very hard and, as everyone knows, went down in flames. I went from VERY successful businessman, to top T.V. Star.....

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:27 EST, 6 Jan 2018.

....to President of the United States (on my first try). I think that would qualify as not smart, but genius.... and a very stable genius at that!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:30 EST, 6 Jan 2018.

*The New York Times* retorted:

What it comes down to is an effort to understand and explain a president who acts so differently from every other person to have held his office. Mr. Trump's self-absorption, impulsiveness, lack of empathy, obsessive focus on slights, tenuous grasp of facts and penchant for sometimes far-fetched conspiracy theories have invited armchair diagnoses and generated endless commentary.

Michael Tackett, "Trump Defends His Mental Capacity, Calling Himself a 'Genius'," [New York Times](#), 6 Dec 2018.

At a press conference at Camp David on 6 January, Trump said:

QUESTION: Mr. President, you were talking about the policy issues that you all were focusing on the last few days here at Camp David, but this morning you were tweeting about your mental state. Why did you feel the need to tweet about that this morning?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, only because I went to the best colleges for college. I went



to a — I had a situation where I was a very excellent student. Came out and made billions and billions of dollars. Became one of the top businesspeople. Went to television and, for ten years, was a tremendous success, as you probably have heard. Ran for President one time and won.

....

And when I saw some of the people say — and you look at some of [Wolff's] past books. He did a book on Rupert Murdoch. It was a terrible exposé and it was false. So much of it was false. I consider it a work of fiction and I think it's a disgrace that somebody is able to have something, do something like that. The libel laws are very weak in this country. If they were strong, it would be very helpful. You wouldn't have things like that happen where you can say whatever comes to your head.

"Remarks by President Donald Trump, Vice President Mike Pence, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, and House Speaker Paul Ryan After Congressional Republican Leadership Retreat," [White House](#), noon, 6 Jan 2018.

My comment is that Trump is too stupid to understand global warming, even when it is explained to him. When someone is really smart, everyone around him knows it, and it is unnecessary for him to boast about his intelligence. Trump's "tenuous grasp of facts" and his delusions show a serious disconnect from reality. My [essay](#) on Trump during 2017 documents his delusions about the size of the crowd at his inauguration and his belief that Obama wiretapped the Trump Tower, amongst other examples.

In looking at photographs of Trump during the campaign in 2016 and since then, I am impressed by Trump's *appearance*. He is always wearing a nice suit, his neck tie is straight, his hair is combed, .... And then it occurred to me that *appearance* is all that Trump has. Any so-called accomplishments are the work of his subordinates.

One of the big problems in treating mental illness is that mentally ill people *believe* they are normal and do not need treatment. So it is *not* credible when a person denies he is mentally ill. Trump's assertion that one of his two greatest assets is "mental stability" and Trump's assertion that he is "very stable" are not only worthless, but also shows he does not understand mental illness.

In his first tweet on 6 January quoted above, Trump links the current interest in his mental stability to the Democrats failing to prove collusion between the Russians and the Trump campaign. He again attacks "the Fake News Mainstream Media", who have been reporting his failures and his problems. This may be evidence of paranoia by Trump.

Note that Trump accuses the Democrats and journalists of "taking out the old Ronald Reagan playbook and screaming mental stability and intelligence". But history shows that — in November 1994, after Reagan's presidency ended in Jan 1989 — Reagan publicly admitted he had Alzheimer's disease. So it is plausible that Trump may be in the early stages of some neurological or psychiatric condition, exacerbated by the pressure of being president of the USA with constant criticism by political opponents, commentators, and journalists. Moreover, as Callum Borchers said in the [Washington Post](#), Trump comparing himself to Reagan is "ill-advised" and "not the best historical reference."

There is now abundant accumulated evidence in Trump's tweets and Trump's public statements to seriously question Trump's mental ability. The reports by journalists of anonymous sources in the White House add to the concern that Trump is unfit to be president. The continued assurances by the White House press spokeswoman, and other senior government officials, are misleading and *not* plausible. It is a disservice to the public by keeping Trump in office when he is unfit to serve. When I say the "public", I mean not only the USA, but also worldwide. For example, Trump's inconsistent and childish responses to North Korea have greatly complicated the solution of the North Korean problem, as I document in my [essay](#). Trump's belligerent statements and insulting Kim Jong Un has increased the peril for people in South Korea, as well as American military personnel in South Korea and Japan.

On 12 July 2018, after a wild, disruptive, and insulting performance at the NATO summit in Brussels on 11-12 July (see, e.g., [Politico](#); [New York Times](#)), Trump again declared he was a stable genius.

QUESTION Thank you. We understand your message, but some people ask themselves, will you be tweeting differently once you board the Air Force One? Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: No, that's other people that do that. I don't. I'm very consistent. I'm a very stable genius. (Laughter.)

"Remarks by President Trump at Press Conference After NATO Summit, Brussels, Belgium," [White House](#), 12 July 2018.

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### Trump speaks at a fourth-grade level

On 8 January 2018, the Swedish website, [factba.se](#), performed a lexicological analysis of the first 30,000 words spoken extemporaneously (e.g., press conferences) by each of the last 15 U.S. presidents, beginning with Hoover in 1929. By using extemporaneous speech, there is no influence by speechwriters. On the Flesch-Kincaid grade level scale, Trump spoke at the mid-fourth-grade (4.6) level, the lowest of any of the 15 presidents. Truman spoke at almost the sixth-grade (5.9) level, the next lowest of the presidents.

By any metric to measure vocabulary, using more than a half dozen tests with different methodologies, Donald Trump has the most basic, most simplistically constructed, least diverse vocabulary of any President in the last 90 years. This is by a statistically significant margin in each case.

....

It statistically made no difference which way we analyzed it, or which method. It affected some scores and some of the ranks, but not the position of Donald Trump on that list. In each case, he ranked last of the past 15 presidents.

By every metric and methodology tested, Donald Trump's vocabulary and grammatical structure is significantly more simple, and less diverse, than any President since Herbert

Hoover, when measuring “off-script” words, that is, words far less likely to have been written in advance for the speaker.

Bill Frischling, “‘Stable Genius’ — Let’s Go to the Data,” [factba.se](https://www.factba.se), 8 Jan 2018.

Reported by [Newsweek](https://www.newsweek.com), 8 Jan 2018.

The conclusion is obvious: Trump is *no* genius. The 71 year old Trump speaks like a child in the fourth grade of school. Trump's use of name-calling is also childish.

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### **7 Jan 2018: Adam Schiff (D-Calif.)**

On Sunday, 7 January 2018, Adam Schiff, the ranking Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee, appeared on CNN's State of the Union television program and said about Wolff's book:

JAKE TAPPER, CNN HOST: Congressman, I want to get your take on the president's response to Michael Wolff's new book, "Fire and Fury," the suggestion that there are many people around the president who are concerned he's mentally unfit for office.

President Trump, in response, tweeted — quote — "Actually, throughout my life, my two greatest assets have been mental stability and being, like, really smart. Crooked Hillary Clinton also played these cards very hard and, as everyone knows, went down in flames. I went from very successful businessman to top TV star to president of the United States on my first try. I think that would qualify as not smart, but genius, and a very stable genius at that" — unquote.

What is your reaction to those tweets?

REP. ADAM SCHIFF (D), CALIFORNIA: Well, look, I don't think anyone is particularly surprised by what has been revealed in the Wolff book in terms of the questions that people working closest with the president have about his capacity to do the job.

I don't think there is anyone in Congress, frankly, of either party who does not concur at least privately with those observations and concerns. Certainly, very few are willing to express them publicly in Congress, and I think that's to the detriment of our institution.

The big question for us, though, is, you know, plainly, we have a seriously flawed human being in the Oval Office. Will those flaws be allowed to permeate the whole of government?

And I see honestly, Jake, some very disturbing signs that they are. And among the most serious, from my point of view, are these reports that the Justice Department, at the president's urging, is now investigating Hillary Clinton again.

transcript, "Mexico Not Paying for President Trump's Wall?; New Book Questions Trump's Mental Fitness; Interview With Senior Policy Adviser to the President Stephen Miller; Interview With California Congressman Adam Schiff," [CNN](https://www.cnn.com), interview on 7 Jan 2018,

transcript first posted 10 Jan 2018.

Three sentences by Schiff are quoted by Ian Kullgren, "Schiff: 'We have a seriously flawed human being in the Oval Office'," [Politico](#), 12:53 EST, 7 Jan 2018.

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## **Trump wants to change defamation law**

Trump has a long history of wanting to change defamation law to make it easier for public figures, like Trump, to sue news media, journalists, and authors who criticize him. One of the features of Trump's personality is that he likes to sue people who irritate him.

On 30 March 2017, Trump tweeted:

The failing @nytimes has disgraced the media world. Gotten me wrong for two solid years. Change libel laws?

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 10:27 ET, 30 Mar 2017.

On 10 December 2017, Trump tweeted:

Very little discussion of all the purposely false and defamatory stories put out this week by the Fake News Media. They are out of control — correct reporting means nothing to them. Major lies written, then forced to be withdrawn after they are exposed...a stain on America!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 16:18 EST, 10 Dec 2017.

On 6 January 2018, Trump held a press conference — quoted in context in the section above titled "Trump proclaims himself a genius" — where Trump mentioned libel laws:

The libel laws are very weak in this country. If they were strong, it would be very helpful. You wouldn't have things like that happen where you can say whatever comes to your head.

"Remarks by President Donald Trump, Vice President Mike Pence, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, and House Speaker Paul Ryan After Congressional Republican Leadership Retreat," [White House](#), noon, 6 Jan 2018.

Before a cabinet meeting on 10 January 2018, Trump told journalists:

On a separate front, we are going to take a strong look at our country's libel laws so that when somebody says something that is false and defamatory about someone, that person will have meaningful recourse in our courts. If somebody says something that's totally false and knowingly false, that the person that has been abused, defamed, libeled will have meaningful recourse.

Our current libel laws are a sham and a disgrace, and do not represent American values or American fairness. So we're going to take a strong look at that. We want fairness. You can't say things that are false — knowingly false — and be able to smile as money pours into your bank account. We're going to take a very, very strong look at that. And I think what the American people want to see is fairness.

Donald J. Trump, "Remarks by President Trump in Cabinet Meeting," [White House](#), 10 Jan 2018.

When Trump says "I think what the American people want to see is fairness", I think he means that journalists and authors who criticize the president should be punished in court. Before Trump became president, "American values" were respect for freedom of the press — such freedom is mentioned in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Trump believes it is "unfair" when Trump is offended by a journalist who criticizes Trump. Defamation law in the USA is mostly state law, limited by U.S. Supreme Court opinions that provide protections for authors and journalists who report on "public figures".

Various journalists reported on Trump's 10 January threat to change the federal law of defamation. See e.g., [New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#); [Associated Press](#).

As documented in my previous [essay](#) on Trump, he has defamed Obama in at least three series of false statements:

1. Repeatedly saying during 2011-17 that Obama was *not* born in the USA.
2. Alleging that Obama had ordered wiretapping of Trump Tower.
3. Stating that Obama rarely called widows of U.S. Military personnel killed in action.

If defamation law were easier for plaintiffs, then Obama could more easily sue Trump for defamation. This reason alone strongly suggests that Trump should *not* change defamation law. Note that Obama — unlike Trump — is *not* litigious, but this is just a hypothetical example of how changes in defamation law would endanger Trump.

On 5 Sep 2018, Trump [again](#) suggested changing the libel laws.

## 12 Jan 2018: Trump's annual physical examination

On Friday, 12 January 2018, a U.S. Navy physician gave Trump an annual physical examination. Note the examination did *not* include a psychiatric examination. [Politico](#) noted the irony that launch officers in the U.S. Air Force receive an annual psychiatric examination, but the commander-in-chief — who orders the launch of nuclear weapons — does *not* receive a regular psychiatric examination.

On 12 January, the [Associated Press](#) reported the physician said Trump was in "excellent" health, although it is obvious that Trump is fat.

On 16 January, the White House posted a [summary](#) of the physician's report on Trump's health. The important part for this essay is the one sentence: "A cognitive screening exam using the Montreal Cognitive Assessment was normal, with a score of 30 over 30."

The president's physician attended the daily press briefing at the White House on 16 January. He said the following about the president's cognitive function:

QUESTION: Thank you. Two questions for you. Number one: There have been some questions as part of your exam — I'm wondering if you talked to the President about this — about the President's mental fitness. He has pushed back on that calling himself a "stable genius". Can you assess the President's mental fitness for office?

DR. JACKSON: Absolutely. So, many of you may have picked up on the fact that we did do a cognitive assessment as part of the exam. And initially, you know, I had no intention of including the cognitive assessment in this exam because, to be honest with you, per all the guidelines that are out there, it's not indicated at this time.

A lot of the guidelines would suggest that you do cognitive screening questions, and that, if you have a positive or concerning answer in the screening questions, that then you engage with a cognitive screening tool.

So I had no intentions whatsoever doing that, like I said, because I didn't feel it was clinically indicated. And part of the reason I didn't think it was clinically indicated is because I've spent almost every day in the President's presence since January 20 — or, you know, last year, when he got into office. And I've seen him every day. I'll see him one, two, sometimes three times a day because of the location of my office. We have conversations about many things, most don't revolve around medical issues at all. But I've gotten to know him pretty well and I had absolutely no concerns about his cognitive ability or his neurological functions.

So I was not going to do a cognitive exam, I had no intention of doing one. The reason that we did the cognitive assessment is, plain and simple, because the President asked me to do it. He came to me and he said, is there something we can do — a test, or some type of screen that we can do — to assess my cognitive ability?

And so I looked into it, and once again — and my initial question was that I didn't think it was indicated and I didn't think we should do it. After looking at some of the guidelines, there are a few guidelines out there that lean in the direction of potentially doing it. You know, the Medicare guidelines and some of the NIH, National Institute of Aging — they've indicated that it might be a good thing to start doing for most patients in the future.

With that in mind, I went through and I looked at a variety of the cognitive assessments that were available. Most of them were very simple, very short. And I think that's the goal, actually, for primary care providers, in doing this, is to keep it simple. Keep it short.

We picked one of the ones that was a little bit more involved, it was longer. It was the more difficult one of all of them. It took significantly longer to complete, but the President did exceedingly well on it. So that was not driven at all by any clinical concerns I have; it was driven by the President's wishes and he did well on it.

....

QUESTION: Dr. Jackson, thank you. Could you just elaborate, in layman's terms, if possible — and you've been doing a great job of that — what you ruled out in these cognitive tests?

You know, there have been reports that the President has forgotten names, that he's

repeating himself. Are you ruling out things like early onset Alzheimer's? Are you looking at dementia-like symptoms?

[Irrelevant second question omitted here.]

DR. JACKSON: Yes, so I think that that cognitive test, it's well respected. It's a test that's used throughout the United States; lots and lots of institutions use that test. It's the one that they use at Walter Reed for patients that they feel like they need to do cognitive screens on.

So it's a universally accepted test. And, like I said, it's a little bit more extensive than some of the shorter ones that are in some of the guidelines. But, yeah, it screens for all those things. It screens for any type of cognitive issues like Alzheimer's and all those other things.

So the fact that the President got 30 out of 30 on that exam, I think that there's no indication whatsoever that he has any cognitive issues. And on a day-to-day basis, like I said before, it's been my experience that the President — he's very sharp, and he's very articulate when he speaks to me. And I've never known him to repeat himself around me. He says what he's got to say, and he speaks his mind. And I've found no reason whatsoever to think that the President has —

QUESTION: He speaks his mind? (Laughter.)

DR. JACKSON: Yeah. I've found no reason whatsoever to think that the President has any issues whatsoever with his thought process.

....

DR. JACKSON: But, no, I mean, I think at this particular point, based on my exam, and the cognitive testing that we did, and just my day-to-day interactions with the President — you know, the President is mentally very, very sharp; very intact.

QUESTION: Do believe he is fit for duty?

DR. JACKSON: Absolutely, he's fit for duty. I think he will remain fit for duty for the remainder of this term and even for the remainder of another term, if he's elected.

....

QUESTION: Dr. Jackson, just to make sure we're clear on this — when you analyzed his cognitive ability or neurological functions, that is not the same thing as a psychiatric exam or psychological exam, correct?

DR. JACKSON: It is not. No, it's a screening assessment for cognitive impairment. Yeah, right.

"Press Briefing by Press Secretary Sarah Sanders and Dr. Ronny Jackson," [White House](#), 16 Jan 2018.



Dr. Jackson's press briefing became a cheerleading performance when he said: "I think [Trump] will remain fit for duty for the remainder of this term and even for the remainder of another term, if he's elected." Trump's first term expires in January 2021, Trump's hypothetical second term expires in January 2025. I suggest that it is ridiculous to extrapolate one medical exam of a now 71-year old president for seven more years.

Several news articles suggested that Trump has serious cardiovascular disease, which Dr. Jackson minimized in his press briefing. [CNN](#); [New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#).

Many observers have concluded that Trump has mental problems, although there is *no* consensus whether the problems are neurological, psychiatric, or a psychological personality disorder. Trump's perfect score on the screening examination for cognitive impairment appears to indicate he does not have a neurological disease.

To take just one example — from my essay on [North Korea](#) — beginning 17 Sep 2017, Trump's repeated insults and belligerent taunting of Kim Jong Un in North Korea suggests that Trump lacks control of violent impulses. But then on 11 Jan 2018, Trump *in*consistently said: "I [would?] probably have a very good relationship with Kim Jong Un." That suggests that Trump is *un*aware of what he has said.

Trump's defective thought process includes his inability to cite correct facts:

- Trump's belief that Obama was *not* born in Hawaii
- Trump's delusion that he would have won the popular vote in Nov 2016, except that millions of illegal immigrants voted for Hillary Clinton
- Trump's delusion about the size of the crowd at his inauguration
- Trump's delusion that Obama ordered the wiretapping of Trump Tower

These examples are documented in my essay about [Trump](#) during 2017.

### **Trump awards prizes for worst fake news**

Back on 27 November 2017, Trump suggested a prize for the worst fake news.

We should have a contest as to which of the Networks, plus CNN and not including Fox, is the most dishonest, corrupt and/or distorted in its political coverage of your favorite President (me). They are all bad. Winner to receive the  
FAKE NEWS TROPHY!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 09:04 EST, 27 Nov 2017.

On Monday, 2 January 2018, Trump announced on 8 January he would make awards for the worst fake news.

I will be announcing THE MOST DISHONEST & CORRUPT MEDIA AWARDS OF THE YEAR on Monday at 5:00 o'clock. Subjects will cover Dishonesty & Bad Reporting in various categories from the Fake News Media. Stay tuned!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 20:05 EST, 2 Jan 2018.



The Fake News Awards, those going to the most corrupt & biased of the Mainstream Media, will be presented to the losers on Wednesday, January 17th, rather than this coming Monday. The interest in, and importance of, these awards is far greater than anyone could have anticipated!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 15:35 EST, 7 Jan 2018.

My comment is that this is a highly inappropriate publicity stunt that is designed to excite Trump's supporters, who are ignorant of First Amendment law. It's entertainment for the plebeians.

There is a "chilling effect" on freedom of speech and freedom of the press when the U.S. president in the White House criticizes journalists. Moreover, the president's criticism of specific newspapers and television networks is a negative endorsement — it is inappropriate for the White House to be evaluating products and services.

Steve Cohen, U.S. Representative from Tennessee, considered Trump's "undermining freedom of the press" to be an impeachable offense, by including that count in his 15 Nov 2017 draft articles of impeachment. (See [bills](#), below.)

Finally, there is the irony of Trump — who the [Washington Post](#) documented made 1950 false claims as president during 2017 — giving awards for fake news. Trump himself should win that award for his continuing stream of false "facts" and delusions.

On the evening of 8 January 2018, the [Committee to Protect Journalists](#) gave Trump first prize in the "Overall Achievement in Undermining Global Press Freedom" category. The CPJ also awarded Trump the runner-up in the "Most Thin-skinned" category. My comment is that all genuine Americans will stand a little taller now that our president has received the recognition that he so richly deserves. <sarcastic smirk>

On 17 January at 20:00 EST, Trump announced his awards for fake news. CNN took first place with four awards, *The New York Times* took second place with two awards, and third-place was shared by ABC, *The Washington Post*, Time, and Newsweek. Trump's awards were announced on a [Republican](#) party website, *not* on a White House website. [New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#).

I suggest that Trump used the Republican party website, instead of something from the White House, in what may be an attempt to evade government ethics regulations. Trump might argue that he is speaking as a political candidate, not as a government official. The problem with that position is that the awards were for 2017, during which time Trump was president, and most of the allegedly fake news criticized the president.

The [Washington Post](#) criticized Trump's fake news awards after the news media had acknowledged and corrected its error. In contrast, "President Trump almost never admits error, even as he has made more than 2,000 false or misleading [statements](#)." The fake news article attributed by Trump to *The Washington Post* was actually a tweet to the personal account of a reporter who writes for the *Post*.

Note that, back on 8 Dec 2017, [Politico](#) counted 15 nations where despotic leaders had

adopted Trump's "fake news" label for any news article that angered the leader. The USA formerly was a beacon of freedom and democracy, but under Trump the USA has become an inspiration for authoritarian rulers.

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### 30 Jan 2018: Trump's SOTU speech

On the night of 30 January 2018, Trump read his State of the Union (SOTU) speech. Trump apparently did *not* depart from the text prepared by his speechwriters. But Trump did make numerous factual errors in his SOTU speech. Worse, many of the errors in his SOTU speech were repeats of errors that had been detected by journalists in previous speeches and statements by Trump. [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [Associated Press](#); [Los Angeles Times](#).

I am particularly irritated by Trump's phrase "clean coal". This phrase is propaganda, *not* a fact. Burning coal emits sulfur dioxide, which makes acid rain that damages vegetation. Burning coal emits large amounts of soot. There are many alternative energy sources that are less harmful to the environment than coal. Trump's ignorance of atmospheric chemistry and Trump's willingness to champion coal miners is on display here.

Trump falsely claimed that more people watched his SOTU speech on television than any previous president's SOTU speech.

Thank you for all of the nice compliments and reviews on the State of the Union speech. 45.6 million people watched, the highest number in history. @FoxNews beat every other Network, for the first time ever, with 11.7 million people tuning in. Delivered from the heart!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:02 EST, 1 Feb 2018.

One day before Trump's erroneous Tweet, [Forbes](#) magazine posted at its website a commentary that Trump's Nielsen ratings "did not beat Barack Obama's first State of the Union ratings back in 2010."

The [Associated Press](#) reported "Trump's TV viewership as measured by Nielsen (45.6 million, as he said) trailed that for first State of the Union speeches by Barack Obama (48 million), George W. Bush (51.7 million) and Bill Clinton (46.8 million)."

The [Washington Post](#) reported that "15 of the last 25 [SOTU] speeches" had a larger audience share in the Nielsen ratings.

[PolitiFact](#) also criticized Trump's false facts: "Trump came in sixth in total State of the Union viewers since Nielsen began collecting the data in 1993."

This is perhaps another appearance of Trump's narcissistic character flaw, which requires him to be the best, or most important, in everything that he does.

On 5 February 2018, Trump characterized Democrats who failed to applaud his SOTU message as "treasonous" and "unAmerican". See [below](#).

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## February 2018

### Trump's Military Parade

On 6 February, news leaked out that on 18 January Trump had ordered the Pentagon to plan a grand military parade. Apparently, Trump was inspired by a French military parade on Bastille Day. [Washington Post](#); [CNN](#).

The [Washington Post](#) reminds us that "Trump's interest in having a large-scale military parade now is likely to receive a mixed reception, especially among those who are concerned about nationalism, militarism or the president's past praise for authoritarian leaders. The tradition stretches back centuries but typically has followed the conclusion of wars."

On 14 February, the White House budget director said Trump's parade will cost between US\$ 10 million and 30 million. [Associated Press](#); [Washington Post](#).

My comment is that a military parade seems like something that North Korea, Iran, or the former Soviet Union would do. Why does Trump want to emulate rogue nations with a totalitarian government? Aside from the cost of transporting military equipment to Washington, DC, there is also concern that a military parade would inflame tensions with North Korea.

On 16 August 2018, Trump canceled the parade for the year 2018, as the estimated cost ballooned to \$92 million. [Associated Press](#).

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### 16 Feb 2018: Russians indicted in the USA

On 16 Feb 2018, the U.S. Government indicted 13 Russian citizens for interference in the 2016 U.S. presidential election. The Russians supported Trump and opposed Hillary Clinton. Of course, the Russian government will refuse to extradite these 13 criminal suspects. But if the suspects travel to Europe, then they can be arrested in Europe and extradited to the USA. There appears to be *no* evidence that Trump's campaign knowingly conspired with the Russian online disinformation campaign. [DoJ](#); [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#).

Here is what is really important. During late 2016, and continuing during 2017, Trump repeatedly said he believed that Russians did *not* interfere with the presidential election. [New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#).

On 17 February, Trump's national security adviser, General McMaster, said "As you can see with the FBI indictment, the evidence is now really incontrovertible and available in the public domain." [Associated Press](#); [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#). The conclusions of the U.S. intelligence community in 2016, and now the grand jury's indictment, show that Trump was wrong. Trump's thought process is defective when he believes his delusion instead of the conclusion of people who have examined the evidence. The conventional explanation is that Trump refuses to believe that Russian propaganda helped him be elected,

because recognizing Russian interference casts doubt on the legitimacy of the election that Trump won.

On 16 February, Trump tweeted:

Russia started their anti-US campaign in 2014, long before I announced that I would run for President. The results of the election were not impacted. The Trump campaign did nothing wrong — no collusion!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 15:18 EST, 16 Feb 2018.

Trump is correct about the 2014 date. Trump offers *no* evidence that the Russian inference did not influence the election. The Department of Justice (DoJ) press release cited above says only "There is no allegation in the indictment that the charged conduct altered the outcome of the 2016 election." It is now clear that Russia *intended* to interfere with the 2016 U.S. presidential election. Trump *may* be correct that his campaign did not collude with the Russians.

On 17 February, Trump mixed the FBI investigation of a school shooting with the FBI investigation of Russian meddling in the 2016 U.S. presidential election.

Very sad that the FBI missed all of the many signals sent out by the Florida school shooter. This is not acceptable. They are spending too much time trying to prove Russian collusion with the Trump campaign — there is no collusion. Get back to the basics and make us all proud!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 23:08 EST, 17 Feb 2018.

In September 2017, a man alerted the FBI to a YouTube video posted by "Nikolas Cruz" (who killed 17 people at a high school on 14 February 2018). In the video, Cruz says "I'm going to be a professional school shooter." The FBI was unable to do anything, because the FBI did not know the location of Cruz. (See, e.g., [New York Times](#); [Sun-Sentinel](#).) That *one* event is the only publicly reported oversight by the FBI in this high school shooting at the time of Trump's 17 February tweet. Trump's plural "all of the many signals" is fiction. The Broward County Sheriff's Office in Florida may have missed many signals, but that is separate from the FBI. Moreover, the FBI investigation of the YouTube video was entirely separate from the Special Prosecutor's investigation of Russian inference in the election. Note how Trump mangles the facts, and winds up relating a school shooting to the FBI's alleged persecution of Trump.

On 17 February, Trump criticized General McMaster's comment about the evidence is "really incontrovertible" that Russia interfered with the 2016 U.S. presidential election.

General McMaster forgot to say that the results of the 2016 election were not impacted or changed by the Russians and that the only Collusion was between Russia and Crooked H, the DNC and the Dems. Remember the Dirty Dossier, Uranium, Speeches, Emails and the Podesta Company!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 23:22 EST, 17 Feb 2018.

My comment is that it is *not* McMaster's job either to defend Trump's 2016 campaign or to feed Trump's ego about winning the election. As Trump's delusion collides with reality, Trump's behavior is bizarre. See The [Washington Post](#) and The [New York Times](#) for more about Trump's Tweet Storm. (Later [Washington Post](#) article.) The [Associated Press](#) and The

[Washington Post](#) have articles on factual errors by Trump in his Tweet Storm. [CNN](#) has a news analysis with the headline "Trump blames everyone but Russia".

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## 23 Feb 2018: Trump's speech to CPAC

On 23 February, Trump gave a purely partisan speech at the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC). Here is a small part of what Trump said:

But we have a very crooked media. We had a crooked candidate, too, by the way. But we have a very, very crooked media.

AUDIENCE: Lock her up! Lock her up! Lock her up!

THE PRESIDENT: I will say this, folks: Everything that's turning out, now it's amazing that's come full circle. Boy, have they committed a lot of atrocities when you look. (Applause.) Right? When you look. Have they done things that are wrong.

....

And then everybody said, "He cannot get elected. He cannot do it." You need 270 votes. You need Electoral College — which, by the way, is much tougher than the popular vote. The popular vote, actually, would be so much easier. You go three or four states, and you just go and you just do great job. Hillary forgets that. You know, she went to these states. I said, "What's she doing? Why does she keep going back to California?" (Laughter.) Crazy.

Next time, they're going to remember Iowa. They're going to remember Ohio. (Applause.) Remember? They spent a lot of time in Pennsylvania to no avail. (Applause.) They spent a lot of money. They spent a lot of money in North Carolina, the great state of North Carolina. (Applause.) We did very well there. ....

....

Don't worry, you're getting the wall. Don't worry, okay? I heard some — (applause) — we're getting the wall.

AUDIENCE: Build that wall! Build that wall! Build that wall!

THE PRESIDENT: I had a couple of these characters in the back say, "Oh, he really doesn't want the wall. He just used that for campaigning." I said, are you — can you believe it? (Laughter.) You know, I say, every time I hear that, the wall gets 10 feet higher. You know that, right? (Applause.) Every time. Every single time. Okay?

No, we're going to have the wall or they're not going to have what they want. You know, we have a problem: We need more Republicans. We have a group of people that vote against us in a bloc. They're good at two things: resisting, obstruction. Resisting, obstruction. And they stick together. They do. They always vote in a bloc. You know,

it's very rare that you get a couple of them to come your way. Even on the tax cuts. I mean, we're going to be fighting these people in the '18 election. We're going to be fighting people that voted against the tax cuts, because the tax cuts are phenomenal and popular, and helping people and helping our country.

....

Donald J. Trump, "Remarks by President Trump at the Conservative Political Action Conference," [White House](#), 23 Feb 2018.

My comments on the above quotations:

1. The decision was made by the U.S. Government in 2016 *not* to prosecute Hillary and that is the end of the discussion. To prosecute Hillary Clinton in 2018 would be to politicize the Justice Department. Trump's attacks on the news media are getting old. Trump is rambling incoherently here.
2. So far, Trump has failed to obtain funding for his wall along the Mexican border. See [below](#).
3. Sadly, more than 15 months after the election in 2016, Trump is still boasting about his win in the Electoral College. The [Washington Post](#) commented that Trump's campaign never ended.
4. And then Trump condemns Democrats for voting in a bloc in Congress. What about when Republicans vote in a bloc — in lock-step with Trump?

Several news sources fact-checked Trump's CPAC speech and found the usual factual errors by Trump. [New York Times](#); [Associated Press](#); [PolitiFact](#); [NBC News](#).

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## **Trump rejects U.S. Constitution Trump inconsistent on gun control**

On 14 February 2018, the third-worst school shooting occurred in Florida, in which 17 people were killed. That tragedy created an opportunity for demagogues to call for new laws in an attempt to prevent future mass murders. On 28 February, Vice-President Mike Pence and Trump held a meeting in the White House of some members of the U.S. Congress. At that meeting, Trump made two astounding statements:

THE PRESIDENT: We could work on that. And we have to do something about the mentally ill not being able to buy a gun. I mean, they have so many checks and balances that, you could be mentally ill, and it takes you six months before you can prohibit him. So we have to do something very decisive. Number one, you can take the guns away immediately from people that you can adjudge easily are mentally ill, like this guy. You know, the police saw that he was — the problem, they didn't take any guns away. Now, that could have been policing. I think they should have taken them way anyway, whether they had the right or not.

....

THE PRESIDENT: .... But you can't buy a handgun at 18, 19, or 20. You have to wait until you're 21. But you can buy the gun [assault rifle], the weapon used in this horrible shooting, at 18.

You are going to decide — the people in this room, pretty much, are going to decide. But I would give very serious thought to it. I can say that the NRA is opposed to it. And I'm a fan of the NRA. I mean, there's no bigger fan. I'm a big fan of the NRA. They want to do it. These are great people. These are great patriots. They love our country. But that doesn't mean we have to agree on everything. It doesn't make sense that I have to wait until I'm 21 to get a handgun, but I can get this weapon at 18. I don't know.

So I was just curious as to what you did in your bill.

SENATOR TOOMEY: We didn't address it, Mr. President, but I think —

THE PRESIDENT: You know why? Because you're afraid of the NRA, right? (Laughter.)

....

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, the category you spoke about, Mr. President — the gun violence restraining orders ....

But the focus is to literally give families and give local law enforcement additional tools if an individual is reported to be a potential danger to themselves or others. Allow due process, so that no one's rights are trampled. But the ability to go to court, obtain an order, and then collect not only the firearms, but any weapons in the possession of that individual.

THE PRESIDENT: Or, Mike, take the firearms first and then go to court, because that's another system. Because a lot of times, by the time you go to court, it takes so long to go to court, to get the due process procedures.

I like taking the guns early, like in this crazy man's case that just took place in Florida. He had a lot of firearms. They saw everything. To go to court would have taken a long time. So you could do exactly what you're saying, but take the guns first, go through due process second.

"Remarks by President Trump, Vice President Pence, and Bipartisan Members of Congress in Meeting on School and Community Safety," [White House](#), 28 Feb 2018.

There are two things wrong in the above quotations from Trump:

1. Trump asserts that the police should have removed the assault rifle from the possession of the school shooter in Florida, "whether they had the right or not". If the police did



not have a legal right to remove his rifle, then the police would be acting in violation of his constitutional rights.

2. Then Trump asserts "take the guns first, go through due process second." This is a blatant violation of the Fifth Amendment to the U.S Constitution, made applicable to the states by the Fourteenth Amendment.

In January 2017, Trump took an oath at his inauguration to "preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States". Thirteen months later, Trump violated that oath at a meeting in the White House. Remarkably, there were many Representatives and Senators at the 28 February 2018 meeting, but none of them objected to Trump's blatantly unconstitutional proposals. Notice that there is also *no* discussion of whether the government would need to pay compensation for firearms and ammunition seized from mentally ill citizens.

James Hohmann, writing in The [Washington Post](#), said Trump's remarks showed "both disregard and even disdain for the rule of law."

Dr. Ben Sasse, U.S. Senator for Nebraska, later issued a three-sentence statement that said:  
Strong leaders don't automatically agree with the last thing that was said to them. We have the Second Amendment and due process of law for a reason. We're not ditching any Constitutional protections simply because the last person the President talked to today doesn't like them.

"Sasse Statement on President's Due Process Comments," [Sasse](#), 28 Feb 2018.

Sasse's references to "last thing said to them" and "last person the President talked to today" reflect the common belief that Trump adopts the opinion of the last person with whom Trump talked on an issue, see [below](#).

On 2 March 2018, the [Associated Press](#) reported that Trump's endorsement of gun control legislation (e.g., increasing the minimum age for the purchase of assault rifles from 18 to 21 years, seizing firearms possessed by mentally ill people) put Republicans in the U.S. Congress in disarray and temporarily delayed legislation on the subject of gun control.

The day after the White House meeting quoted above, Trump met privately in the White House with the Executive Director of the National Rifle Association (NRA). After meeting with the NRA, Trump appeared to change his position on gun control, although Trump did *not* specify any details. [New York Times](#); [ABC News](#); [Washington Post](#).

After the NRA meeting, Trump tweeted:

Good (Great) meeting in the Oval Office tonight with the NRA!  
Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 22:04 EST, 1 Mar 2018.

The Executive Director of the NRA provided a few details of the meeting.

I had a great meeting tonight with @realDonaldTrump & @VP. We all want safe schools, mental health reform and to keep guns away from dangerous people. POTUS & VPOTUS support the Second Amendment, support strong due process and don't want gun control.



Chris Cox, [tweet](#), 21:07 EST, 1 Mar 2018.

Did Trump insincerely tell Cox what Cox wanted to hear? Or did Trump really change his position from the previous day? If Trump changed his position, this would be an example of Trump adopting the position of the last person with whom Trump spoke on an issue.

On 28 February, Trump was willing to disagree with the NRA and Trump even accused Senator Toomey (R-Penn.) of being afraid of the NRA. The next day, after a meeting with the Executive Director of the NRA, Trump seemed to be in lock-step with the NRA.

On 12 March 2018, Trump announced his gun-control measures. *All* of Trump's proposals are approved by the NRA. Trump abandoned his previous proposal of increasing the minimum age to purchase rifles from 18 to 21 years, probably because the NRA opposed that proposal. [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#).

On 18 May 2018 at 07:30 CDT, a 17 year old pupil entered Santa Fe High School in Santa Fe, Texas (near Galveston) with a shotgun and revolver. He killed 10 people and wounded at least 10 people. Three hours later, Trump commented:

Unfortunately, I have to begin by expressing our sadness and heartbreak over the deadly shooting at Santa Fe High School in Texas. Just took place moments ago. We're closely monitoring the situation, and federal authorities are coordinating with local officials. This has been going on too long in our country. Too many years. Too many decades now.

We grieve for the terrible loss of life, and send our support and love to everyone affected by this absolutely horrific attack. To the students, families, teachers, and personnel at Santa Fe High: We're with you in this tragic hour, and we will be with you forever.

My administration is determined to do everything in our power to protect our students, secure our schools, and to keep weapons out of the hands of those who pose a threat to themselves and to others. Everyone must work together, at every level of government, to keep our children safe. May God heal the injured and may God comfort the wounded, and may God be with the victims and with the victims' families. Very sad day. Very, very sad.

"Remarks by President Trump at White House Prison Reform Summit," [White House](#), 11:41 EDT 18 May 2018.

My comment is that politicians are quick to send their "thoughts and prayers" after each mass shooting in the USA, but those same politicians refuse to defy the National Rifle Association and **do something** that might prevent future mass shootings in the USA.

Trump says "we will be with you forever", but that is surely hyperbole — Trump will forget about this shooting in a few days, as he confronts other problems and plays golf.

Trump is absolutely correct when he said: "This has been going on too long in our country. Too many years. Too many decades now." Politicians like Trump have failed to do anything significant to prevent these mass murders. Note that shootings in schools in the USA began in

the 1990s. I believe the culture of violence in movies and video games is responsible for this current epidemic of real violence. Further, firearms are easy for anyone — even people with a history of violent crimes, threats of violence, or mental illness — to purchase.

On 18 May 2018, there was a shooting at a school near Houston Texas that killed 10 people. On 31 May, Trump traveled to Houston to meet with families of the victims. Afterwards, Rhonda Hart — the mother of a dead girl — told journalists that talking to Trump "was like talking to a toddler". [Houston Chronicle](#); [NBC News](#)(AP). Her remark makes sense, because [above](#) I cite an analysis that Trump speaks at the fourth-grade level, the lowest of any recent U.S. president.

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## March 2018

### Russia more belligerent

#### Russia's new weapons

During 2016 and 2017, Trump repeatedly praised Russian president Putin and Trump said he wanted to work with Putin. Trump's love of Russia is despite Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014, Russia protecting Assad from prosecution for war crimes in Syria, Russia helping North Korea evade economic sanctions imposed by the United Nations, and Russia's interference in the U.S. presidential election in 2016.

On 1 March 2018, Putin suddenly announced Russia had developed five new weapons that were designed to evade U.S. defenses:

1. a cruise missile that is powered by a nuclear reactor and can fly *anywhere* in the world.
2. a torpedo that is powered by a nuclear reactor and can travel long distances underwater, and carries a nuclear warhead.
3. a new intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) named SARMAT that can fly over the North and South poles and evade missile defense systems.
4. a vaguely described new hypersonic cruise missile.
5. a vaguely described hypersonic glide vehicle named Avengard, that is surrounded by a cloud of plasma that will frustrate radars.

[New York Times](#)(1Mar); [New York Times](#)(2Mar); [Washington Post](#); [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#).

The unveiling of Russia's new weapons indicates a resumption of the cold war, and underscores that Western Civilization can *not* trust Russia. Trump is a fool to have trusted Russia. To be clear, there is *no* evidence that Russia's new weapons exist, but the fact that

Putin would brag about these alleged new weapons shows Russia can not be trusted.

On 20 October 2018, Trump announced that he will withdraw the USA from the 1987 Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces treaty with Russia, because Russia's new weapons violated that treaty. [New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#); [The Guardian](#); [White House](#)(20Oct).

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### **Russia murders in England**

In March 2018, Russian agents brazenly attempted to kill two former Russian citizens who are now living in England.

Sergei Skripal is a former Russian army colonel who in 2006 was convicted in Russia of spying for the United Kingdom. He was released from Russia in 2010, in an exchange of espionage agents. Skripal moved to Salisbury, England where he purchased a home. [The Guardian](#)(5Mar). On 4 March 2018, Sergei Skripal and his 23 year old daughter were found unconscious on a bench in a shopping mall in Salisbury, after they had visited a pub and a restaurant. Skripal and his daughter were taken to a hospital, where they remained in critical condition. A total of 21 people received medical treatment, including policemen and medical personnel who had responded to Skripal. [The Guardian](#); [The Independent](#); [Associated Press](#)(9Mar); [Associated Press](#)(timeline). On 8 March, journalists reported that the two had been poisoned with a rare nerve agent. [Reuters](#)(8Mar). On 12 March, the British prime minister said it was "highly likely" that the Russian government was responsible for the attempted murder of Skripal. The chemical that was used to poison Skripal was developed in Russia as a chemical weapon for military use. [Reuters](#); [Reuters](#)(13Mar).

Notice that Russia simply denied any involvement in the attack on Skripal, and Russia did *not* offer an antidote or medical treatment advice for its chemical weapon. Because Russia developed this chemical weapon, they have more experience with its biological effects than any other nation.

On 22 March, the policeman was discharged from the hospital, 17 days after he was exposed to the nerve agent. Skripal and his daughter remain "heavily sedated", in critical condition. [The Guardian](#); [Reuters](#); [Associated Press](#).

On 29 March, Yulia Skripal was out of a coma and talking to police. [The Guardian](#). On 5 April, Yulia was still "disoriented" but improving. [The Guardian](#). On 6 April, Sergei Skripal's condition was upgraded from critical. [Associated Press](#); [The Guardian](#).

On 28 March, police in England suggested that the nerve agent was applied to the front door handle of Sergei Skripal's home in England. [BBC](#); [New York Times](#).

On 12 April, OPCW confirmed that the Skripals were poisoned with a nerve agent "of high purity". The OPCW report said: "The results of analysis by the OPCW designated laboratories of environmental and biomedical samples collected by the OPCW team confirm the findings of the United Kingdom relating to the identity of the toxic chemical that was used in Salisbury and severely injured three people." [OPCW](#)(report summary);

[Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#).

In the second recent attack, Nikolai Glushkov — a former Russian businessman with connections to a critic of Putin — was found dead in his home in London on the night of 12 March. Glushkov had been strangled. [The Guardian](#); [The Telegraph](#)(subscription); [Reuters](#). On 16 March, police began a murder investigation. [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#); [Metro](#)(17Mar).

We are reminded that Russia — a rogue nation — in October 2006 used radioactive Polonium-210 in a cup of tea to kill Alexander Litvinenko in London. Litvinenko was a former spy for the Soviet Union.

#### **Trump's weak response to Russia**

On 13 March, Trump said: “As soon as we get the facts straight, if we agree with them, we will condemn Russia or whoever it may be.” [BBC](#); [tweet from BBC](#). My comment is that Trump never waits for facts, he simply invents the so-called facts that he imagines are true. Note that even when the facts are straight, Trump reserves the right to reject those facts if he does not agree with them. On 14 March, Trump had still *not* condemned the Russian attacks in England. [New York Times](#); [Associated Press](#); [The Guardian](#)(opinion).

Trump, as documented in my 2017 essay on Trump, has a long history of refusing to believe that Russia meddled in the 2016 U.S. presidential election. Trump also has a long-standing desire for better relationship with Putin in Russia. Trump's delusions make it difficult for Trump to believe that Russia is a rogue nation that is committing crimes worldwide.

In contrast to Trump, on 12 March, U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson told journalists the poison used to attack Skripal “clearly came from Russia”. [U.S. State Dept](#)(statement); [New York Times](#); [Associated Press](#); [NBC News](#); [CBS News](#).

On 15 March 2018, there was a joint statement by the leaders of France, Germany, the United States, and the United Kingdom. The entire statement said:

We, the leaders of France, Germany, the United States and the United Kingdom, abhor the attack that took place against Sergei and Yulia Skripal in Salisbury, United Kingdom, on March 4, 2018. A British police officer who was also exposed in the attack remains seriously ill, and the lives of many innocent British citizens have been threatened. We express our sympathies to them all, and our admiration for the United Kingdom police and emergency services for their courageous response. This use of a military-grade nerve agent, of a type developed by Russia, constitutes the first offensive use of a nerve agent in Europe since the Second World War. It is an assault on the United Kingdom's sovereignty and any such use by a state party is a clear violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and a breach of international law. It threatens the security of us all. The United Kingdom thoroughly briefed its allies that it was highly likely that Russia was responsible for the attack. We share the United Kingdom's assessment that there is no plausible alternative explanation, and note that Russia's failure to address the legitimate request by the government of the United Kingdom further underlines Russia's responsibility. We call on Russia to address all

questions related to the attack in Salisbury. Russia should, in particular, provide full and complete disclosure of the Novichok program to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). Our concerns are also heightened against the background of a pattern of earlier irresponsible Russian behavior. We call on Russia to live up to its responsibilities as a member of the U.N. Security Council to uphold international peace and security.

"Statement from the United States, France, Germany, and the United Kingdom on the Attack in Salisbury," [White House](#), 15 March 2018.

Trump's national security advisers gave Trump a written list of talking points for Trump's 20 March telephone call with Russian president Vladimir Putin. Trump ignored those talking points. Specifically, Trump failed to condemn the Russian poisoning of Skripal.

[White House](#); [Washington Post](#). The White House reaction was to search for the person who leaked the talking points to journalists. [Associated Press](#). On 2 April, the Kremlin revealed that Trump invited Putin to the White House during their 20 March telephone conversation. [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#).

On 14 March, the U.K. government expelled 23 Russian diplomats as a protest against the poisoning of Skripal. [Reuters](#). The U.S. Government did nothing until 26 March — 12 days after the U.K. expulsion — when Trump expelled 60 Russians. Many of the expelled Russians are believed to be engaged in espionage, *not* diplomacy. [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [Associated Press](#).

During a 3 April 2018 press conference at the White House, Trump said:

... I think I could have a very good relationship with President Putin. I think. It's possible I won't. And you will know about it. Believe me, this room will know about it before I know about it. It's a real possibility that I could have a good relationship.

And remember this: Getting along with Russia is a good thing. Getting along with China is a good thing. .... So I think I could have a very good relationship with Russia and with President Putin. And if I did, that would be a great thing. And there's also a great possibility that that won't happen. Who knows. Okay?

"Remarks by President Trump and Heads of the Baltic States in Joint Press Conference," [White House](#), 3 April 2018.

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### **Trump admits inventing "facts"**

On 14 March 2018, Trump gave a private campaign fundraising speech in Missouri. There Trump said that, in his discussion of trade with Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Trump claimed that the United States has a trade deficit with Canada. But the important point is that Trump admitted that he did *not* know whether his claim was true.

*The Washington Post* reported Trump's actual words in his 14 March speech were:

Trudeau came to see me. He's a good guy, Justin. He said, 'No, no, we have no trade deficit with you, we have none. Donald, please,' .... 'Donald, we have no trade deficit.' ....

... So, he's proud. I said, 'Wrong, Justin, you do.' I didn't even know. I had no idea. I just said, 'You're wrong.' You know why? Because we're so stupid.

Josh Dawsey, Damian Paletta, & Erica Werner, "In fundraising speech, Trump says he made up trade claim in meeting with Justin Trudeau," [Washington Post](#), first posted 14 March 2018.

Unlike Trump, *The Washington Post* actually learned the correct facts:

The Office of the United States Trade Representative says the United States has a trade surplus with Canada. [It reports](#) that in 2016, the United States exported \$12.5 billion more in goods and services than it imported from Canada, leading to a trade surplus, not a deficit.

*Ibid.*

See also: [Washington Post](#)(transcript of Trump's remarks); [Washington Post](#)(15Mar); [New York Times](#); [Globe&Mail](#); [Associated Press](#); [CNN](#)(commentary).

There are at least three things wrong with Trump's behavior in this episode:

1. Trump, a man with a bachelor's degree in economics, planned to discuss trade policy with the leader of Canada without Trump bothering to learn whether the USA has a trade deficit with Canada.
2. On 14 March, Trump publicly boasted about his ignorance of essential facts in an important discussion!
3. On 15 March, after criticism by journalists and commentators, Trump still falsely asserts that the USA has a trade deficit with Canada, as shown by Trump's tweet quoted below. It is one thing to make a mistake about a fact, but only a moron would continue to make the same mistake *after* being corrected.

Taken together, these three problems show that Trump does *not* care about facts, which makes Trump unfit to be president. And this episode is *not* an isolated problem for Trump. The [Washington Post](#) reports Trump made 2436 false or misleading statements in the first 406 days of his presidency.

In response to the article in *The Washington Post*, Trump tweeted:

We do have a Trade Deficit with Canada, as we do with almost all countries (some of them massive). P.M. Justin Trudeau of Canada, a very good guy, doesn't like saying that Canada has a Surplus vs. the U.S.(negotiating), but they do...they almost all do...and that's how I know!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 09:29 EDT, 15 Mar 2018.

There is a glaring flaw in Trump's tweet. Just because most nations have a trade surplus with the USA does *not* imply that one particular nation has a trade surplus with the USA. And on the morning following his 14 March speech, Trump is still insisting that the USA has a trade deficit with Canada, despite the U.S. Trade Representative website saying the USA has a trade surplus with Canada.

Trump's fictitious trade deficit is *not* the only problem with facts in his speech in Missouri on 14 March. In that speech, Trump invented a story about Japanese testing of imported U.S. automobiles. Trump said:

It's called the bowling ball test, do you know what that is? That's where they take a bowling ball from 20 feet up in the air and they drop it on the hood of the car. And if the hood dents, then the car doesn't qualify. Well, guess what, the roof dented a little bit, and they said, nope, this car doesn't qualify. It's horrible, the way we're treated. It's horrible.

"Transcript of Trump's remarks at fundraiser in Missouri on March 14," [Washington Post](#), 15 Mar 2018.

Trump's spokeswoman at the White House admitted that Trump's bowling ball test was false. The Associated Press reported:

THE FACTS: That "test" didn't happen. "He's joking about this particular test," White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders said Thursday [15 Mar].

Possible inspiration for Trump's story: a fanciful old Nissan ad showing its SUV miraculously escaping damage as bowling bowls cascade down an urban street, trashing other vehicles.

Calvin Woodward, "AP FACT CHECK: Trump and the attack of the bowling balls," [Associated Press](#), 17 Mar 2018.

My read of the transcript of Trump's speech shows Trump was *not* joking. This part of Trump's speech was a serious discussion of trade imbalances. Sanders' admission did *not* appear in a press briefing with a transcript at the White House website, so I am unable to quote her remarks in context.

I want to call attention to a section of Trump's speech that was badly rambling and also contained *three* factual errors.

Now we have a very big trade deficit with [South Korea], and we protect them. So we lose money on trade, and we lose money on the military. We have right now 32,000 soldiers on the border between North and South Korea.

Let's see what happens. Think I've done a good job with that one. That's sort of interesting.

People are saying, "oh, his rhetoric is terrible. He's going to go" — well, the rhetoric from last 30 years hasn't been so good. It was called appeasement.

Please don't do anything. Obama, let's not talk about that. In the meantime, he's [i.e., Kim is] making nuclear weapons. He had a test, they had a test of a nuclear weapon about a year ago, and it registered as an 8.6. Now, you heard of that, on the Richter scale, right? So they said, "man, there was an earthquake." Eight point six someplace in Asia. Where was it? Oh it was in North Korea. It wasn't — it was a nuclear test, and it shifted a mountain — it was a real mountain. ....

"Transcript of Trump's remarks at fundraiser in Missouri on March 14," [Washington Post](#), 15 Mar 2018.



In the three sentences in the first paragraph quoted above, Trump complained about a trade imbalance with South Korea and complained about South Korea not reimbursing the USA for the cost of 32,000 U.S. soldiers. In the next three paragraphs, Trump praised himself, Trump appears to complain about the "rhetoric" either from North Korea or about North Korea (Trump is *not* clear), Trump complained about Obama's "appeasement" of North Korea, and then Trump mentioned the yield of the most recent North Korean nuclear weapon test. Trump did not develop any of these complaints in his speech, they are only incoherent rambling. Note also that Trump uses pronouns (e.g., "he") without clearly saying to whom they refer. Trump's speech has degenerated into random thoughts that occur to Trump.

There is a factual error in Trump's 14 March speech, when Trump claimed there are 32,000 U.S. soldiers in South Korea, but the [Pentagon](#) and [U.S. Forces Korea](#) say there are only approximately 28,500. So Trump is fraudulently asking South Korea to pay the USA for 3,500 ghost soldiers.

There are two more factual errors in Trump's 14 March speech, when he described the sixth (most recent) test of North Korea's nuclear weapons. This test was on 3 Sep 2017, approximately 6 months ago — *not* "about a year ago". The U.S. Geological Survey said the test registered 6.3 on the Richter scale, *not* Trump's exaggeration of 8.6, which was fictitious. The Richter scale uses base 10 logarithms, so the difference between 8.6 and 6.3 on the Richter scale corresponds to a factor of 200 in energy released. Trump made a significant exaggeration. Frankly, I would be surprised if Trump understands how earthquakes and underground nuclear weapons tests are measured on the Richter scale. Trump is probably ignorant of logarithms too. Trump did *not* mention the yield of the North Korean nuclear weapon in kilotons of TNT, which is the way nuclear weapons are usually described by the military.

The USA has real problems. Trump is unfit to be president when he invents fictitious "facts" to describe real problems, and when he rambles incoherently in a public speech.

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### **Trump hates Andrew McCabe at FBI**

On 29 January 2018, Andrew McCabe announced he would retire as deputy director of the FBI on 18 March 2018, when he was eligible for a full pension. Trump had harshly criticized McCabe because in 2015 McCabe's wife was a Democratic candidate for State Senator in Virginia.

On Friday night at 22:00 EDT, 16 March 2018, former FBI Deputy Director Andrew McCabe was fired. McCabe was scheduled to retire on Sunday, 18 March, with full retirement benefits after 21 years of service at the FBI.

For citations to news articles about McCabe's scheduled retirement and his termination, see [below](#).

[CNN](#) and [Reuters](#) posted a written rebuttal by McCabe that clearly explains the political nature of his termination.



Here are some of the tweets by Trump about McCabe. These tweets show that Trump hated McCabe. Trump's first tweet that mentions McCabe was in July 2017, when Trump tweeted:

Problem is that the acting head of the FBI & the person in charge of the Hillary investigation, Andrew McCabe, got \$700,000 from H for wife!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 06:21 EDT, 25 July 2017.

In December 2017, Trump tweeted:

FBI Deputy Director Andrew McCabe is racing the clock to retire with full benefits. 90 days to go?!!!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 15:30 EST, 23 Dec 2017.

Adding to suspicion that the firing of McCabe was politically motivated, two hours after McCabe was fired, Trump gloated:

Andrew McCabe FIRED, a great day for the hard working men and women of the FBI — A great day for Democracy. Sanctimonious James Comey was his boss and made McCabe look like a choirboy. He knew all about the lies and corruption going on at the highest levels of the FBI!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 24:08 EDT, 16 Mar 2018.

The Fake News is beside themselves that McCabe was caught, called out and fired. How many hundreds of thousands of dollars was given to wife's campaign by Crooked H friend, Terry M, who was also under investigation? How many lies? How many leaks? Comey knew it all, and much more!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 13:34 EDT, 17 Mar 2018.

On 18 March, The [Washington Post](#) reported numerous factual errors in Trump's recent tweets. See also [Associated Press](#).

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### Scott Pruitt's condominium

U.S. Government employees are supposed to fly in coach-class on commercial airline flights. In February 2018, it was revealed that Scott Pruitt — head of the Environmental Protection Agency in Trump's cabinet — traveled first-class on airliners. On one short flight from Washington, DC to New York City, Pruitt's first-class ticket cost taxpayers \$1641, more than six times the price of a coach-class ticket. [Washington Post](#). The EPA explained that Pruitt flew in first-class, because of security concerns if Pruitt traveled in coach-class. For example, in May 2017, a member of the public recognized Pruitt and "approached Pruitt 'with threatening language' that was 'vulgar'", according to the [Washington Post](#).

Just as outrage over Pruitt's airplane expenses died down, a new problem emerged over the ethics of Pruitt's lease on a condominium in Washington, DC in early 2017.

On 29 March 2018, [ABC News](#) reported that Scott Pruitt had lived in a townhouse in Washington, DC during Pruitt's first six months in Washington. But the townhouse is "co-owned by the wife of a top energy lobbyist". The [Associated Press](#) confirmed the ABC News article.

On 30 March, the [Associated Press](#) reported that Pruitt paid only \$50/night that he occupied in the condominium, and paid nothing for nights he was not in Washington. Assuming he occupied the condominium for 30 days, the rental would be \$1500/month. The AP mentions prices of other condominiums in the area: "One-bedroom apartments range between \$1,600 and \$2,500 a month, depending on amenities. Single rooms listed online for one-night rentals averaged about \$120 a night."

On 30 March, [Bloomberg News](#) reported that Pruitt paid only \$6100 over six months, as a result of the lease specifying rent only for days Pruitt lived in the condominium. That is an effective rate of \$1017/month.

On 30 March, the [Washington Post](#) reported that Pruitt now lives where "One-bedroom apartments in the building ... start at about \$3,100 per month and go to nearly \$4,500."

On 31 March, Aaron Blake at the [Washington Post](#) wrote about the appearance of impropriety. Blake says Pruitt's "rental agreement is pretty swampy."

There are at least three things wrong with Pruitt's lease on the condominium:

1. The \$50/night rate is too low, and constitutes a gift of approximately \$70/night.
2. Not charging for 58 nights when Pruitt was absent was an additional gift to Pruitt.
3. The condominium is co-owned by the wife of a lobbyist for energy companies.

On 2 April, the EPA again said Pruitt's lease did *not* violate any ethics rules, because the \$50/night did "constitute a fair market rate". [Associated Press](#); [The Hill](#). My comment is that journalists report that the EPA is *wrong* about the fair-market rate, and the EPA ignored the nonpayment for nights that Pruitt was absent.

On the night of 2 April, the [New York Times](#) reported: "The Environmental Protection Agency signed off last March on a Canadian energy company's [Enbridge Inc.] pipeline-expansion plan at the same time that the E.P.A. chief, Scott Pruitt, was renting a condominium linked to the energy company's powerful Washington lobbying firm."

On 3 April, [The Atlantic](#) and the [Washington Post](#) reported that Pruitt brought two aides from Oklahoma to Washington, DC. The EPA gave these aides huge salary increases (e.g., 33% and 52%), after the White House refused to approve the increased salaries. On 4 April, the [Associated Press](#) reported that the EPA is asking the two aides to repay the salary increase and Pruitt claims he did *not* know about the salary increases.

On 4 April, at a White House press briefing, the president's press secretary said:

QUESTION: ... My question to you though has to do with another sweetheart deal, that's the \$50-a-night payment that the EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt pays to — paid to a lobbyist that did business with the EPA. As you know, Sarah, the President promised to drain the swamp. His behavior — his actions seem very swamp-like. Why is the President okay with this?

MS. SANDERS: The President is not. We're reviewing the situation. When we have

had a chance to have a deeper dive on it, we'll let you know the outcomes of that. But we're currently reviewing that here at the White House.

QUESTION: Does the President have confidence in the EPA Administrator at this point?

MS. SANDERS: The President thinks that he's done a good job, particularly on the deregulation front. But again, we take this seriously and we're looking into it and we'll let you know when we finish.

"Press Briefing by Press Secretary Sarah Sanders and Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen," [White House](#), 4 April 2018.

But the following day, 5 April, Trump himself told journalists that Pruitt has done a "fantastic job". The transcript at the White House reported Trump's words:

QUESTION: How are you feeling about Scott Pruitt, Mr. President? Is he —

THE PRESIDENT: I think he's done a fantastic job at EPA. I think he's done an incredible job. He's been very courageous. Hasn't been easy, but I think he's done an absolutely fantastic job. I think he'll be fine.

QUESTION: (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: I think he'll be fine. Yeah, I want to look at it. I haven't seen the details, but I can tell you, at EPA he has done a fantastic job.

QUESTION: Are you bothered by the reports about him, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: On Scott?

QUESTION: Yeah.

THE PRESIDENT: Who's saying that? I have to look at it, and close. You know, I hear different versions of it. But I'll make that determination.

But he's a good man. He's done a terrific job. But I'll take a look at it very closely. "Remarks by President Trump in Press Gaggle en route Washington, D.C.," [White House](#), 16:22 EDT, 5 April 2018.

See also: Cristiano Lima, "Trump praises Pruitt for 'fantastic job' amid ethics scandals," [Politico](#), 17:11 EDT, 5 April 2018.

My comment is that I doubt Trump *understands* ethics rules. Trump's promise in 2016 to "drain the swamp" was a campaign promise, *not* a sincere belief. And Trump is oblivious to facts in general, as well as the facts about Pruitt. The controversy over Pruitt's lease is one week old on 5 April, and Trump is still unaware of reports by journalists. Nonetheless, Pruitt is helping industry increase pollution and increase global warming, and Trump believes that makes Pruitt a great man.

On 5 April, another detail about Pruitt's lease was exposed. The lease agreement was originally intended to be signed by J. Steven Hart, the head of a lobbying firm for energy companies. Some unknown person crossed off Steven's name and hand wrote the name of Stephen's wife on the final contract. [Washington Post](#); [Washington Post](#). If there is really no conflict of interest here, why would someone change the name on the contract?

On 5 April, the [New York Times](#) reported that at least five EPA employees were either reassigned or demoted after they questioned Pruitt's lavish spending. On 6 April, the [Associated Press](#) reported on the excessive security costs for Pruitt, compared to previous EPA administrators.

The original lease on the condominium ended on 1 April 2017. [Politico](#) and [CNN](#) reported that, after Pruitt overstayed, the condominium owners ordered Pruitt to leave in July 2017. In August 2017, the condominium owners changed the locks on the door to the condominium.

On 7 April, the [Washington Post](#) reported more facts that showed Pruitt's rent was below market rate.

On Saturday, 7 April, Trump decided to support Pruitt.

While Security spending was somewhat more than his predecessor, Scott Pruitt has received death threats because of his bold actions at EPA. Record clean Air & Water while saving USA Billions of Dollars. Rent was about market rate, travel expenses OK. Scott is doing a great job!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 20:03 EDT, 7 April 2018.

My comment is that, as usual, Trump got the facts wrong. Pruitt's security cost more than three times his predecessor (see e.g., [Associated Press](#) and [Washington Post](#)), Pruitt's rent was approximately half the market rate, and the travel expenses are *not* ok. Also, Trump shows *no* understanding of ethical rules for attorneys and judges about conflict of interest and the appearance of impropriety.

On 8 April, the [Associated Press](#) exposed Trump's factual errors in his 7 April tweet about Pruitt. On 11 April, [PolitiFact](#) exposed three errors in Trump's tweet:

1. "somewhat more" is "mostly false",
2. "record clean air and water" is "inaccurate, and the overall claim lacks substance", and
3. "rent was about market rate" is "mostly false".

On 9 April, it was disclosed that the top ethics officer in the U.S. Government sent a letter to the top ethics officer at the EPA. The letter questions Pruitt's lease of one room in a condominium, Pruitt's allegedly demoting employees who questioned his lavish spending, Pruitt using federally funded flights home to Oklahoma, and other alleged misconduct by Pruitt. [New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#); [Bloomberg News](#).

On 16 April, the General Accounting Office said it was unlawful for Pruitt to spend approximately \$ 43,000 on a soundproof booth in his office at EPA headquarters. [GAO](#); [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [Politico](#).

On 20 April, [Politico](#) reported that J. Steven Hart — husband of the woman who leased a condominium to Pruitt — "lobbied the agency while Pruitt was leading it, contrary to his and Pruitt's public denials that he had any business before the [Environmental Protection] Agency". Also on 20 April, Hart resigned from the lobbying firm after 35 years of employment.

On 21 April, the [Washington Post](#) reported more details on lobbying of Pruitt by Hart's firm.

On 26 April, Pruitt testified under oath at the House Energy and Commerce subcommittee, where he admitted he was involved in giving large raises to two employees. (On 3 April, Pruitt publicly denied being involved in the raises.) [Washington Post](#).

On the night of 1 June 2018, the [Associated Press](#) reported: "Newly filed reports show the Washington lobbyist whose wife rented a bargain-priced Capitol Hill condo to Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt had far more contact with the agency than previously disclosed, despite repeated denials by both men." See also: [New York Times](#).

Also on 1 June, the [Washington Post](#) reported the EPA spent \$1560 for a dozen fountain pens "each emblazoned with the seal of the Environmental Protection Agency and the signature of its leader, Scott Pruitt." For comparison, I use a Japanese pen that is \$18 per dozen, but then I don't work for Trump's Government.

In June 2018, *The Washington Post* reported that Pruitt had assigned U.S. Government employees to help his wife find a job. [Washington Post](#)(5June); [Washington Post](#)(13June).

On 5 July 2018, Pruitt finally [resigned](#).

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While I am generally not commenting on policy matters in this essay, I can not resist remarking that Pruitt is eviscerating automobile emission standards. [New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#). Not only is air pollution harmful to people, but also petroleum is a scarce natural resource that should be conserved. And then there is increased global warming from increased carbon dioxide emissions.

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## April 2018

### Swamp Monster is Nr. 2 Man at EPA

In the 2016 campaign, Trump promised to "drain the swamp" in Washington, DC. So Trump appointed Andrew Wheeler, a former coal-mining lobbyist for 9 years, to be the second-in-command at the EPA. On 12 April 2018, the U.S. Senate confirmed Wheeler by a vote of 53 to 45. [New York Times](#)(5Oct2017); [Bloomberg News](#)(7Feb); [Washington Post](#)(12Apr).

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## Comey's book about Trump

On 9 May 2017, Trump fired FBI Director James Comey. Comey retaliated by writing a book titled *A Higher Loyalty: Truth, Lies, and Leadership*, which is scheduled for first public sale on 17 April 2018. *The Washington Post* obtained an advance copy of this book and reported:

In his memoir, Comey paints a devastating portrait of a president who built “a cocoon of alternative reality that he was busily wrapping around all of us.” Comey describes Trump as a congenital liar and unethical leader, devoid of human emotion and driven by personal ego.

Philip Rucker, "James Comey's memoir: Trump fixates on proving lewd dossier allegations false," [Washington Post](#), 17:41 EDT, 12 April 2018.

*The New York Times* also obtained an advance copy of Comey's book, and *The Times* reported:

“This president is unethical, and untethered to truth and institutional values,” Mr. Comey writes in the book, saying his service to Mr. Trump recalled for him the days when he investigated the mob in New York. “The silent circle of assent. The boss in complete control. The loyalty oaths. The us-versus-them worldview. The lying about all things, large and small, in service to some code of loyalty that put the organization above morality and above the truth.”

....

“We are experiencing a dangerous time in our country,” [Comey] writes, “with a political environment where basic facts are disputed, fundamental truth is questioned, lying is normalized and unethical behavior is ignored, excused or rewarded.”

Michael D. Shear, "Comey's Memoir Offers Visceral Details on a President 'Untethered to Truth'," [New York Times](#), 12 April 2018.

*The New York Times* said in its book review:

In his absorbing new book, “A Higher Loyalty,” the former F.B.I. director James B. Comey calls the Trump presidency a “forest fire” that is doing serious damage to the country's norms and traditions.

“This president is unethical, and untethered to truth and institutional values,” Comey writes. “His leadership is transactional, ego driven and about personal loyalty.”

....

A February 2017 meeting in the White House with Trump and then chief of staff Reince Priebus left Comey recalling his days as a federal prosecutor facing off against the Mob: “The silent circle of assent. The boss in complete control. The loyalty oaths. The us-versus-them worldview. The lying about all things, large and small, in service to some code of loyalty that put the organization above morality and above the truth.”

....

Michiko Kakutani, "James Comey Has a Story to Tell. It's Very Persuasive."

[New York Times](#), 12 April 2018.

On Friday morning, 13 April 2018, Trump exploded:

James Comey is a proven LEAKER & LIAR. Virtually everyone in Washington thought he should be fired for the terrible job he did — until he was, in fact, fired. He leaked CLASSIFIED information, for which he should be prosecuted. He lied to Congress under OATH. He is a weak and.....

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 08:01 EDT, 13 April 2018.

....untruthful slime ball who was, as time has proven, a terrible Director of the FBI. His handling of the Crooked Hillary Clinton case, and the events surrounding it, will go down as one of the worst “botch jobs” of history. It was my great honor to fire James Comey!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 08:17 EDT, 13 April 2018.

DOJ just issued the McCabe report — which is a total disaster. He LIED! LIED! LIED! McCabe was totally controlled by Comey — McCabe is Comey!! No collusion, all made up by this den of thieves and lowlives!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 15:36 EDT, 13 April 2018.

Trump spewed a stream of unsubstantiated insults about Comey: "proven leaker", "liar", "untruthful slime ball". My comment is that Trump seems eager to prove that he needs to repeat the fourth-grade in school.

Moreover, the White House enlisted the Republican National Committee (RNC) to engage in a conspiracy to further defame Comey. The RNC created a website — [lyin' comey](#) — to collect criticism of Comey. See e.g., [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [CNN](#); [Voice of America](#).

We have been here before. Instead of ignoring criticism of the president, in January 2018 the White House attacked Wolff, the author of a book critical of Trump, and helped make Wolff's book a best-seller for many weeks. (See [above](#).)

Furthermore, when the Republican National Committee defends Trump, that RNC arguably tarnishes the reputation of *all* Republicans. As documented in my previous [essay](#), and again in this essay, Trump has many real defects, including:

- Trump frequently gives wrong "facts", especially when he is either boasting of his accomplishment or boasting about public admiration for himself.
- Trump is ignorant of how the U.S. Government works, including ignorance of the law.
- Trump [speaks](#) at the fourth-grade level, the lowest of the past 15 U.S. presidents, showing Trump's lack of intellectual ability.
- Psychologists and psychiatrists have [warned](#) of Trump's erratic and impulsive style, and perhaps a narcissistic personality disorder.
- Trump engages in [obnoxious](#) remarks and ad hominem attacks on people, a renunciation of civil discourse.
- Trump *may* have committed obstruction of justice when he fired FBI Director Comey.



In summary, Trump has real problems that Republicans should be loath to support.

On the morning of 15 April, Trump issued a tweetstorm:

Unbelievably, James Comey states that Polls, where Crooked Hillary was leading, were a factor in the handling (stupidly) of the Clinton Email probe. In other words, he was making decisions based on the fact that he thought she was going to win, and he wanted a job. Slimeball!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:42 EDT, 15 April 2018.

The big questions in Comey's badly reviewed book aren't answered like, how come he gave up Classified Information (jail), why did he lie to Congress (jail), why did the DNC refuse to give Server to the FBI (why didn't they TAKE it), why the phony memos, McCabe's \$700,000 & more?

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:57 EDT, 15 April 2018.

Notice that "badly reviewed book" is ambiguous. Are the reviews badly written? Or do the high-quality reviews say Comey's book is bad? Further, the president should not be saying that Comey (or anyone else) deserves jail, because that is for courts to decide.

Comey throws AG Lynch "under the bus!" Why can't we all find out what happened on the tarmac in the back of the plane with Wild Bill and Lynch? Was she promised a Supreme Court seat, or AG, in order to lay off Hillary. No golf and grandkids talk (give us all a break)!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 08:08 EDT, 15 April 2018.

Trump's incoherent tweet refers to a 27 June 2016 meeting between Attorney General Lynch and Bill Clinton, when both of their airplanes were parked at the Phoenix Arizona airport. Bill walked to Lynch's airplane. Later Bill claimed they talked about golf and their grandchildren. Amazingly, Trump can see the appearance of impropriety in the Lynch/Clinton meeting, but *not* in [Pruitt](#)'s condominium lease.

Slippery James Comey, a man who always ends up badly and out of whack (he is not smart!), will go down as the WORST FBI Director in history, by far!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 09:07 EDT, 15 April 2018.

The [Washington Post](#) reported that "The tweets were filled with unproven assertions. Comey has not been formally accused of disclosing classified information or lying to Congress."

The Associated Press reported two factual errors by Trump in his tweetstorms about Comey. President Donald Trump is again twisting facts when it comes to former FBI director James Comey's disclosure of a sensitive investigation into Democrat Hillary Clinton right before the 2016 election.

In a flurry of tweets, Trump claims Comey was motivated by a desire to please Clinton during the 2016 campaign in an anticipation of a Democratic win. But in going public about a renewed investigation into Clinton's email practices, he infuriated Democrats who believe to this day the revelation cost her a victory.



Trump also wrongly asserts that Comey was behind former FBI deputy director Andrew McCabe's decision to authorize the disclosure of a probe into the Clinton Foundation, in violation of agency rules. In fact, a Justice Department watchdog report concluded the opposite.

....

TRUMP: "Unbelievably, James Comey states that Polls, where Crooked Hillary was leading, were a factor in the handling (stupidly) of the Clinton Email probe. In other words, he was making decisions based on the fact that he thought she was going to win, and he wanted a job. Slimeball!" — tweet Sunday [15 April].

THE FACTS: Trump's claim seems to defy logic. If Comey were angling for a job in an anticipated Hillary Clinton administration, disclosing a renewed FBI investigation into her email practices right before the 2016 election wouldn't be the way to do it.

Trump appears to be referring to a passage in Comey's new book, "A Higher Loyalty," revealing that he had "assumed from media polling that Hillary Clinton was going to win." Comey writes that he has since wondered whether his decision to disclose the reopened probe was affected by a concern that "concealing" it as Clinton appeared to hold a poll lead would make her an "illegitimate president."

....

TRUMP, speaking of a report by the Justice Department's inspector general on McCabe: "He LIED! LIED! LIED! McCabe was totally controlled by Comey — McCabe is Comey!! No collusion, all made up by this den of thieves and lowlives!" — tweet Friday [13 April].

THE FACTS: Trump mischaracterizes the report, which concludes that McCabe had misled Comey about his role in a news media disclosure about Clinton in the days before the 2016 election. It's a finding that contradicts Trump claim that McCabe was "totally controlled" by Comey.

Last week's report describes how Comey and McCabe had entirely different accounts about a Justice Department interview with a Wall Street Journal reporter that revealed an investigation into the Clinton Foundation, violating agency rules. According to the report, Comey said he was led to believe that McCabe had not authorized the disclosure to the Journal. But McCabe told investigators that he informed Comey that he had approved it.

Ultimately, the watchdog report found that McCabe's actions were at odds with the wishes of Comey — and not, as Trump asserts, at Comey's behest. "We do not believe that Comey would have been approving of such a disclosure by McCabe if he had been told about it," the report states.

In a statement Friday, McCabe noted that as deputy director he had full authority to approve sharing information with the media and said he permitted subordinates to do

so in this case to correct a false story that he had tried to stymie an FBI probe into the Clinton Foundation.

Hope Yen & Eric Tucker, "AP FACT CHECK: Trump twists Comey role in Clinton disclosure," [Associated Press](#), 16 April 2018.

### **15 April: Comey's interview**

On 10 April, Comey recorded a five-hour interview with George Stephanopoulos of ABC News. The interview was distilled to one hour and broadcast at 22:00 EDT on 15 April. Here are three significant quotations that have not already been quoted in reviews of Comey's book:

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS: And [Trump's] refusal to criticize Vladimir Putin?

JAMES COMEY: I don't know what's behind that. I mean, that mystified me even after President Trump became president 'cause I discovered that he wouldn't criticize him even in private, which — I can understand a president making a geopolitical decision that, "I ought not to criticize an adversary country's leader for some reason publicly." But I discovered President Trump wouldn't even do it privately, and I don't know why that is.

....

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS: You saw it right there, and we talked about this earlier — why is President Trump so reluctant to call out Vladimir Putin?

JAMES COMEY: I don't know. I'm struck by it and I'm struck by it both in public and in private. Because I can understand the arguments why the president of the United States might not want to criticize the leader of another country because there's always good reasons to try and build better relationships, I suppose, even when that other leader is someone who is killing his own citizens and engaging in attacks against our country. But you would think that in private — talking to the F.B.I. director, whose job it is to thwart Russian attacks, you might acknowledge that this enemy of ours is an enemy of ours. But I never saw. And so I don't know the reason. I really don't.

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS: Do you think the Russians have something on Donald Trump?

JAMES COMEY: I think it's possible. I don't know. These are more words I never thought I'd utter about a president of the United States, but it's possible.

....

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS: You write that President Trump is unethical, untethered to the truth. Is Donald Trump unfit to be president?

JAMES COMEY: Yes. But not in the way m— I often hear people talk about it. I don't buy this stuff about him being mentally incompetent or early stages of dementia. He

strikes me as a person of above average intelligence who's tracking conversations and knows what's going on. I don't think he's medically unfit to be president. I think he's morally unfit to be president.

A person who sees moral equivalence in Charlottesville, who talks about and treats women like they're pieces of meat, who lies constantly about matters big and small and insists the American people believe it, that person's not fit to be president of the United States, on moral grounds. And that's not a policy statement. Again, I don't care what your views are on guns or immigration or taxes.

There's something more important than that that should unite all of us, and that is our president must embody respect and adhere to the values that are at the core of this country. The most important being truth. This president is not able to do that. He is morally unfit to be president.

"Transcript: James Comey's interview with ABC News chief anchor George Stephanopoulos," [ABC News](#), 22:36 EDT, 15 April 2018.

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On Monday morning, 16 April, Trump tweeted:

Comey drafted the Crooked Hillary exoneration long before he talked to her (lied in Congress to Senator G), then based his decisions on her poll numbers. Disgruntled, he, McCabe, and the others, committed many crimes!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 08:25 EDT, 16 April 2018.

In the above tweet, "Senator G" is Senator Grassley, chairman of the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee. Comey adequately explained what Trump mischaracterized as "based his decisions on her poll numbers".

Two days later, Trump tweeted again about Comey.

Slippery James Comey, the worst FBI Director in history, was not fired because of the phony Russia investigation where, by the way, there was NO COLLUSION (except by the Dems)!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 08:05 EDT, 18 April 2018.

In his 11 May 2017 interview with Lester Holt (see my previous essay on Trump), Trump said he fired Comey because of "this Russia thing". Now Trump denies firing Comey because of the Russia investigation.

On Friday, 20 April 2018, Trump tweeted:

So General Michael Flynn's life can be totally destroyed while Shadey James Comey can Leak and Lie and make lots of money from a third rate book (that should never have been written). Is that really the way life in America is supposed to work? I don't think so!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 06:34 EDT, 20 April 2018.

My comments is that General Flynn was "totally destroyed" after he lied to Vice-President

Pence and then Trump fired Flynn. Comey had a distinguished career and his book is *not* "third-rate".

On 24 April, [The Hill](#) reported that more than 600,000 copies of Comey's book were sold in the first week.

On 6 May 2019, Comey's book was Nr. 1 on *The New York Times* best-seller list of nonfiction books for the second consecutive week.

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On 27 April, Trump again attacked Comey.

Is everybody believing what is going on. James Comey can't define what a leak is. He illegally leaked CLASSIFIED INFORMATION but doesn't understand what he did or how serious it is. He lied all over the place to cover it up. He's either very sick or very dumb. Remember sailor!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 06:26 EDT, 27 April 2018.

Trump has been falsely asserting that Comey leaked classified information. Trump refers to some memoranda that Comey wrote about his meetings with Trump. The memorandum that Comey leaked to *The New York Times* was **not** classified. See:

- John Kruzel, "Fact-checking Donald Trump's tweets about former FBI Director James Comey," [PolitiFact](#), 18 April 2018.
- Philip Bump, "The Comey memos bolster his claim that he didn't leak classified information," [Washington Post](#), 20 April 2018.
- Philip Bump, "There's still no evidence Comey leaked classified information to the media," [Washington Post](#), 23 April, updated 27 April 2018.
- John Kruzel, "What the law says about James Comey's leaked memos," [PolitiFact](#), 24 April 2018.
- Eugene Kiely & D'Angelo Gore, "Trump Wrong on Comey 'Leak,' McCabe Funds," [FactCheck](#), 26 April 2018.
- John Wagner, "'Either very sick or very dumb': Trump escalates attacks on former FBI director," [Washington Post](#), 27 April 2018.
- Eileen Sullivan, "Trump Renews Attacks on Comey Before Turning to Praise of Korean Talks," [New York Times](#), 27 April 2018.

There are several things wrong with Trump's 27 April tweet about Comey. First, as usual, Trump gets his facts wrong — Comey did *not* leak classified information. Comey did *not* lie to cover up his alleged leak. Second, Trump displays his uncontrolled anger in his tweet. Third, Trump accuses Comey of either mental illness or stupidity, in a childish, ad hominem attack on Comey. Each of these three errors by Trump is a good reason why Trump is unfit to be president. Trump is oblivious to how immature he appears in his angry tweets with childish insults and false facts.

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On the night of 2 May 2018, Rudolph W. Giuliani — the former mayor of New York City and a recent addition to Trump's collection of personal attorneys — appeared on a Fox News Channel program and gave a *third* explanation for why Trump fired Comey.

He fired Comey because Comey would not, among other things, say that [Trump] wasn't a target of the investigation. He's entitled to that. Hillary Clinton got that, and he couldn't get that. So he fired him, and he said, 'I'm free of this guy.'

Greg Sargent, "Giuliani's other big admission may be even worse for Trump," [Washington Post](#), 09:54 EDT, 3 May 2018.

See also: [Politico](#); [The Hill](#); [CBS News](#).

I disagree that Trump was "entitled" to a public declaration by Comey that Trump was not a target in the ongoing FBI investigation.

On 31 May 2018, Trump tweeted another explanation for why he fired Comey.

Not that it matters but I never fired James Comey because of Russia! The Corrupt Mainstream Media loves to keep pushing that narrative, but they know it is not true!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 08:11 EDT, 31 May 2018.

[The Hill](#) explains that this tweet is *not* consistent with Trump's previous explanations. My opinion is that Trump is trying to avoid being charged with the crime of obstruction of justice for firing Comey. Philip Bump of the [Washington Post](#) wrote a detailed explanation of why Trump fired Comey. The most important point is what Trump himself told Lester Holt of [NBC News](#) on 11 May 2017. (See my 2017 essay on Trump.)

On 19 September 2018, Trump actually said in an interview that he should have fired FBI Director Comey *before* Trump became president on 20 Jan 2017.

TRUMP: If I did one mistake with Comey I should have fired him before I got here. I should have fired him the day I won the primaries. I should have fired him right after the convention. Say, 'I don't want that guy.' Or at least fired him the first day on the job. If I did one mistake it was, you know, I, I really did fire him, you know I fired him a couple of months in, so it's not like. But I would have been better off firing him or putting out a statement that I don't him there when I get there."

"READ: President Trump's exclusive interview with Hill.TV," [The Hill](#), 19 Sep 2018.

Clearly, Trump did *not* have the authority to fire government employees until after Trump was inaugurated on 20 Jan 2017. If Trump had told Obama that Trump did not want Comey, Obama probably would have ignored Trump. My opinion is that Trump's brain has turned to mush when Trump said that he should have fired Comey *before* Trump was inaugurated.

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## Trump loves perjurers and leakers

I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby Jr. was chief of staff for Vice-President Dick Cheney. In 2003, syndicated columnist Robert Novak reported the identity of a CIA agent. In 2007, Libby was convicted of four felonies resulting from the leak of the agent's name, but *no* one was charged

with the leak itself. [New York Times](#).

On Friday afternoon, 13 April 2018, Trump issued a pardon to Libby. In July 2007, President George W. Bush commuted Libby's 30-month prison sentence. [Associated Press](#); [New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#).

I interpret Trump's pardon as indicating that Trump approves of both leaking government secrets and lying to investigators. This is strange, because Trump often angrily condemns people for leaking confidential matters in Trump's White House.

An alternative interpretation was given by journalists at the [Washington Post](#), who suggested that Trump was assuring his cronies that if they made false statements to investigators, then Trump would protect them. But that assurance assumes that Trump is still president when his cronies are convicted of perjury, obstruction of justice, and false statements to the FBI.

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### **Trump's response to chemical weapons in Syria**

On the night of 7 April 2018, Assad's government used chemical weapons (i.e., chlorine gas, probably also a nerve agent) on people in Douma, an eastern suburb of Damascus. Trump immediately began threatening Assad with U.S. Military airstrikes, which threats gave Assad six days of warning to move his military assets. On the night of 13 April, the U.S. Military — with token contributions from France and England — destroyed three targets in Syria. All of that is chronicled in my [essay](#) on the civil war in Syria. In that essay, I cite that Trump *knows* not to announce military strikes in advance, but Trump did it anyway.

On the morning of 14 April, Trump gloated about his military strike on Syria, a third-world nation.

A perfectly executed strike last night. Thank you to France and the United Kingdom for their wisdom and the power of their fine Military. Could not have had a better result. Mission Accomplished!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 08:21 EDT, 14 April 2018.

My comment is that "mission accomplished" will be true only if Assad stops using chemical weapons. Then NBC News, one of the three major television networks in the USA, wrote:

President Donald Trump never gets tired of declaring that he's winning.

He's often said that he [won](#) the popular vote in 2016, though he lost by nearly 3 million ballots. His re-election [slogan](#), rolled out less than 14 months into his presidency suggests a job already done — "Keep America Great." And on Saturday morning, he declared "Mission Accomplished!" in a tweet about limited airstrikes designed to degrade Bashar al-Assad's chemical weapons capabilities.

The tendency to overstate his success served him well in marketing Trump brands long before he became president and has been a central element of his political persona in the White House.

The narrow achievement of executing a single military operation demonstrates just how much Trump needs every victory he can declare at a time when the FBI just raided the offices of his personal lawyer, he's still fending off special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation of his campaign and possible obstruction of justice, his agenda is stalled in Congress, his major legislative triumphs promise to greatly exacerbate the debt he vowed to eliminate and his approval ratings remain [underwater](#) [approximately 41% approval].

Jonathan Allen, "Trump overstates what he's 'accomplished.' Again." [NBC News](#), 18:31 EDT, 14 April 2018.

My comment is that the tone of the NBC News article hints at terminal frustration with Trump, perhaps the beginning of mainstream media becoming disrespectful of Trump. I suggest that, after 14 months of the Trump presidency, a majority of people are beginning to see Trump as the children's story about the emperor who wore clothing so fine that no one could see the clothing.

### **Trump's airstrikes were unconstitutional**

Now we come to an important question of whether the airstrikes on Syria were legal, according to laws in the USA. On the night of the airstrikes, the U.S. Secretary of Defense said:

We and our allies find these atrocities inexcusable. As our commander in chief, the president has the authority under Article II of the Constitution to use military force overseas to defend important United States national interests. The United States has vital national interests in averting a worsening catastrophe in Syria, and specifically deterring the use and proliferation of chemical weapons.

"Briefing by Secretary Mattis on U.S. Strikes in Syria," [Pentagon](#), 13 April 2018.

I disagree with the Secretary of Defense, because I do *not* see any "important United States national interests" to justify this airstrike. Assad did *not* use chemical weapons to attack U.S. citizens. Assad has never threatened U.S. citizens with chemical weapons. What Trump has done is unilaterally appoint the USA to enforce international law that prohibits use of chemical weapons. If Trump wants to punish alleged violations of international law, then Trump needs specific authorization from the U.S. Congress. During the Obama presidency, Trump clearly stated this need for Congressional approval in *two* tweets:

What will we get for bombing Syria besides more debt and a possible long term conflict? Obama needs Congressional approval.

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 29 August 2013.

The President must get Congressional approval before attacking Syria — big mistake if he does not!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 30 August 2013.

Violating the allocation of power in the U.S. Constitution is obviously an impeachable offense.

More than one day *after* the attack on Syria, Trump informed Congress of what they already



knew from reading news articles:

At approximately 9:00 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time on April 13, 2018, at my direction, United States military forces, acting in concert with French and British military forces, struck Syrian military chemical weapons-related facilities. The targets of the combined operation were a scientific research center installation, a storage facility, and a bunker. I directed this action in response to the Syrian government's continued and unlawful use of chemical weapons, including in the horrific attack in Duma, Syria, on April 7 that injured or killed numerous innocent civilians. The purpose of this military action was to degrade the Syrian military's ability to conduct further chemical weapons attacks and to dissuade the Syrian government from using or proliferating chemical weapons.

I acted pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct foreign relations and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive and in the vital national security and foreign policy interests of the United States to promote the stability of the region, to deter the use and proliferation of chemical weapons, and to avert a worsening of the region's current humanitarian catastrophe. The United States will take additional action, as necessary and appropriate, to further its important national interests.

I am providing this report as part of my efforts to keep the Congress fully informed, consistent with the War Powers Resolution (Public Law 93-148). I appreciate the support of the Congress in this action.

"Text of a Letter from the President to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate," [White House](#), 15 April 2018.

#### **15 April 2018: Haley says more sanctions on Russia**

#### **16 April 2018: Trump says no**

On Sunday, 15 April 2018, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley said on CBS News program "Face the Nation" that more sanctions against Russia would be announced on Monday. Haley said the new sanctions would be targeted at "companies that were dealing with equipment related to Assad and chemical weapons use". [CBS News](#); [Politico](#).

But on Monday, 16 April, the White House said that there would *not* be more sanctions on Russia, unless Russia committed new misconduct. [Washington Post](#); [Washington Post](#)(Nikki under the bus); [Associated Press](#); [Politico](#).

The White House basically blamed Haley for misunderstanding possible future sanctions on Russia. One White House staffer, Larry Kudlow, blamed Haley for "momentary confusion." On 17 April, Haley retaliated by essentially calling the White House staff liars. What actually happened was the White House changed policy on Russia, but failed to inform Haley. [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [Politico](#).

My comment is that Haley regularly speaks in the United Nations Security Council and shreds the Russian position like lettuce. Only an idiot would want to tangle with Haley. Since the beginning of Trump's presidency, the White House has been disorganized and

dysfunctional, and Trump appears to like that chaos. Trump's amateurish White House staff undercut the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, which is a serious gaffe.

One other point. Ambassador Haley has a difficult job dealing with professional liars from Russia, Syria, Iran, and North Korea. The amateurs in the White House should *not* be making Haley's life more difficult by failing to inform her of changes of policy.

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## May 2018

### Trump dictated health report

On 1 May 2018, [CNN](#) revealed that Trump dictated a health report that Dr. Harold Bornstein signed in December 2015. The report said, in part: "If elected, Mr. Trump, I can state unequivocally, will be the healthiest individual ever elected to the presidency."

When Trump released the report to the public during the presidential campaign, Trump may have perpetrated a fraud on the American public.

On 1 February 2017, Bornstein told the [New York Times](#) that Trump takes the drug finasteride (brand name: Propecia) to treat male-pattern baldness. That public disclosure angered Trump. Two days later, Trump sent his former personal bodyguard and an attorney to Bornstein's office to retrieve all of Bornstein's original records on Trump. [NBC News](#).

Trump's staff explained that the White House physician wanted the medical records, to provide continuity of care. But the White House physician is only entitled to a *copy* of Bornstein's records on Trump. The original records are Bornstein's property.

My comment is that Bornstein was wrong to tell *The New York Times* that Trump was taking finasteride. But that violation of physician-patient confidentiality does *not* justify Trump sending two men to Bornstein's office to intimidate Bornstein into surrendering Trump's original medical records.

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### 9 May: Negative News is Fake News

On 9 May 2018, Trump resumed his attack on the news media.

The Fake News is working overtime. Just reported that, despite the tremendous success we are having with the economy & all things else, 91% of the Network News about me is negative (Fake). Why do we work so hard in working with the media when it is corrupt? Take away credentials?

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:38 EDT, 9 May 2018.

Notice that Trump himself explicitly equated "negative" news about Trump as "Fake News".

*The Washington Post* explained the "91%" remark:

He was spending his morning watching "Fox and Friends," as he is wont to do, and up flashed a [report](#) from the Media Research Center stating that 91 percent of network news coverage of Trump from January through April was negative. The Media Research Center, we'll note, is part of the conglomerate of conservative enterprises funded by Robert Mercer and his family, the folks that also funded Cambridge Analytica, Breitbart and former White House adviser Steve Bannon.

Philip Bump, "Trump makes it explicit: Negative coverage of him is fake coverage," [Washington Post](#), 09:17 EDT, 9 May 2018.

Predictably, the White House Correspondents' Association condemned Trump's tweet. [Washington Post](#); [The Hill](#).

I have three comments:

1. The 9 May tweet is a continuation of Trump's longstanding hatred of the mainstream news media that exposes Trump's mistakes and false facts (i.e., lies). See this essay for [change defamation law](#); [fake news awards](#); [Cohen's impeachment bill](#) at §5. See my 2017 [essay](#) on Trump, especially at 16-17 Feb, 24 Feb, and 11 Oct 2017. See [FactCheck.org](#) for 16 Jan 2018.
2. The 9 May tweet is more evidence of Trump's narcissistic character: according to Trump's tweet, *any* "negative" coverage of Trump is "Fake" news.
3. Trump's suggestion that the White House should "take away credentials" is a way to manipulate news coverage so that criticism of Trump is suppressed. This is a blatant violation of freedom of the press, in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

### **Journalists are "the enemy of the American people"**

On 16 July, after a [disastrous](#) press conference with Russian President Putin, Trump was excoriated by both Democrats and Republicans. Trump's response was to blame journalists for failing to report the alleged successes of his meeting with Putin. And on 19 July 2018, Trump again called journalists the "enemy of the American people".

The Summit with Russia was a great success, except with the real enemy of the people, the Fake News Media. I look forward to our second meeting [with Putin] so that we can start implementing some of the many things discussed, including stopping terrorism, security for Israel, nuclear.....

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 09:24 EDT, 19 July 2018.

Seventeen months ago, Trump first tweeted that journalists were the enemy of the American people:

The FAKE NEWS media (failing @nytimes, @NBCNews, @ABC, @CBS, @CNN) is not my enemy, it is the enemy of the American People!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 16:48 EDT, 17 Feb 2017.

On 19 July 2018, the [New York Times](#) published an article on Trump calling journalists an enemy of the people.

My comment is that Trump is not only a demagogue, but also unamerican to criticize journalists who are legally protected by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

On 29 July 2018, Trump tweeted about a meeting nine days earlier.

Had a very good and interesting meeting at the White House with A.G. Sulzberger, Publisher of the New York Times. Spent much time talking about the vast amounts of Fake News being put out by the media & how that Fake News has morphed into phrase, "Enemy of the People." Sad!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 08:30 EDT, 29 July 2018.

"Fake News" did *not* morph into "Enemy of the People". Trump escalated his inflammatory rhetoric from "Fake News" to "Enemy of the People". What is really "sad" is that the USA has a president who is a demagogue and a habitual liar.

In explanation of Trump's 29 July tweet, two hours after Trump's tweet, Sulzberger said:

My main purpose for accepting the meeting was to raise concerns about the president's deeply troubling anti-press rhetoric.

I told the president directly that I thought that his language was not just divisive but increasingly dangerous.

I told him that although the phrase "fake news" is untrue and harmful, I am far more concerned about his labeling journalists "the enemy of the people." I warned that this inflammatory language is contributing to a rise in threats against journalists and will lead to violence.

I repeatedly stressed that this is particularly true abroad, where the president's rhetoric is being used by some regimes to justify sweeping crackdowns on journalists. I warned that it was putting lives at risk, that it was undermining the democratic ideals of our nation, and that it was eroding one of our country's greatest exports: a commitment to free speech and a free press.

"Statement of A.G. Sulzberger, Publisher, The New York Times, in Response to President Trump's Tweet About Their Meeting," [New York Times](#), 29 July 2018.

See news articles at: [New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#); [Associated Press](#).

On the afternoon of 29 July 2018, Trump had another tweet storm about journalists.

When the media — driven insane by their Trump Derangement Syndrome — reveals internal deliberations of our government, it truly puts the lives of many, not just journalists, at risk! Very unpatriotic! Freedom of the press also comes with a responsibility to report the news...

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 15:09 EDT, 29 July 2018.

...accurately. 90% of media coverage of my Administration is negative, despite the tremendously positive results we are achieving, it's no surprise that confidence in the media is at an all time low! I will not allow our great country to be sold out by anti-Trump haters in the...

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 15:09 EDT, 29 July 2018.

...dying newspaper industry. No matter how much they try to distract and cover it up, our country is making great progress under my leadership and I will never stop fighting for the American people! As an example, the failing New York Times...

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 15:09 EDT, 29 July 2018.

...and the Amazon Washington Post do nothing but write bad stories even on very positive achievements — and they will never change!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 15:09 EDT, 29 July 2018.

My comments on these four tweets:

1. Dr. Charles Krauthammer, a psychiatrist and commentator, created the phrase "Bush Derangement Syndrome". "Trump Derangement Syndrome" is a phrase used on 16 July 2018 by Dr. Rand Paul, a former ophthalmologist and now a U.S. Senator from Kentucky. [Associated Press](#). Using fancy words like "syndrome" pretends there is an intellectual diagnostic process here, instead of propaganda.
2. Trump calls the news media "insane". But journalists have good reason to hate Trump, after Trump's many insults at the news media.
3. Trump is grieved that journalists expose "internal deliberations of our government". Revealing "internal deliberations of our government" often shows errors or dysfunction by Trump, which embarrasses Trump.
4. Trump boasts of "the tremendously positive results we are achieving". Construction of Trump's wall along the Mexican border has not begun. North Korea continues to build more nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles. Trump has failed to achieve much of his agenda.
5. How is Trump going to stop "anti-Trump haters in the dying newspaper industry"?
6. "I will never stop fighting for the American people!" is propaganda. Us versus them. But [opinion polls](#) show only 40% of the American people approve of Trump's job performance. The American people do *not* — and should not — speak with one voice.
7. Trump routinely refers to *The New York Times* as "the failing New York Times". But the [Associated Press](#) tells us "the Times' ownership company in May [2018] reported a 3.8 percent increase in first-quarter revenue compared to the same period in 2017." So the "failing Times" is more propaganda — if not an outright lie — by Trump.
8. Trump forgot to mention [CNN](#), which Trump claims is the worst of fake news.

Trump learned nothing from his meeting with Sulzberger.

On Tuesday morning, 31 July 2018, Trump tweeted:

The Fake News Media is going CRAZY! They are totally unhinged and in many ways,

after witnessing first hand the damage they do to so many innocent and decent people, I enjoy watching. In 7 years, when I am no longer in office, their ratings will dry up and they will be gone!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 09:34 EDT, 31 July 2018.

The word "unhinged" is the title of a book written by a former employee in Trump's White House. On 26 July, it was publicly announced that the book is scheduled for first sale on 14 August 2018. [CNN](#); [Washington Post](#). So in two weeks, Trump will be hearing a lot about he is [unhinged](#).

Trump's use of "crazy" and "unhinged" is a childish insult, which demeans people who really suffer from mental illness.

It is strange that Trump would "enjoy watching" the "damage [that Fake News] do[es] to so many innocent and decent people". One wonders if Trump really intended to say that.

On Sunday, 5 August 2018, Trump exploded:

The Fake News hates me saying that they are the Enemy of the People only because they know it's TRUE. I am providing a great service by explaining this to the American People. They purposely cause great division & distrust. They can also cause War! They are very dangerous & sick!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:38 EDT, 5 Aug 2018.

My comment is in his third sentence, Trump says "they cause great division". The pronoun "they" properly refers to its nearest antecedent, which is "American People" — but that makes no sense. Trump frequently makes this grammar error, but I have been avoiding picking at the grammar of the uneducated Trump. It is appropriate that Trump's stupid tweet is marred by a grammar error. It would be a "great service" to the American people if the president would use correct grammar.

On 30 August 2018, Trump was again tweeting his hatred of journalists.

I just cannot state strongly enough how totally dishonest much of the Media is. Truth doesn't matter to them, they only have their hatred & agenda. This includes fake books, which come out about me all the time, always anonymous sources, and are pure fiction. Enemy of the People!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:11 EDT, 30 Aug 2018.

As an example of the effect of Trump's inflammatory rhetoric, on 30 August 2018 Robert Darrell Chain was arrested in Encino, California and charged with threatening to kill reporters at *The Boston Globe* newspaper. On 10 August, the *Globe* announced a nationwide editorial campaign criticizing Trump for his attacks on journalists. Chain made 14 threatening telephone calls to the *Globe*, in which Chain sometimes repeated Trump's phrase "enemy of the people". [Boston Globe](#); [Los Angeles Times](#); [Associated Press](#); [Boston Globe](#)(AP); [Washington Post](#).

On Monday morning, 29 October, Trump blamed the news media — "the true enemy of the people" — for "anger and outrage" in the USA. The context for this 29 Oct tweet is given

below.

There is great anger in our Country caused in part by inaccurate, and even fraudulent, reporting of the news. The Fake News Media, the true Enemy of the People, must stop the open & obvious hostility & report the news accurately & fairly. That will do much to put out the flame...

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 08:03 EDT, 29 Oct 2018.

On Thursday night, 6 December, Trump said it again.

FAKE NEWS — THE ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 22:08 EST, 6 Dec 2018.

On Sunday, 9 December 2018, Trump again said journalists were the "enemy of the people".

The Trump Administration has accomplished more than any other U.S. Administration in its first two (not even) years of existence, & we are having a great time doing it! All of this despite the Fake News Media, which has gone totally out of its mind — truly the Enemy of the People!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 17:43 EST, 9 Dec 2018.

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## 17 May: Trump's Paranoia

On 4 March 2017, Trump alleged — without any evidence — that the FBI had wiretapped his office in the Trump Tower in New York City during the 2016 presidential campaign.

Eventually, Trump stopped asserting that baseless claim. On 17 May 2018, Trump began alleging that the FBI had put an informant in Trump's campaign office. This time, Trump initially cited Andrew McCarthy, a former Assistant United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York.

Wow, word seems to be coming out that the Obama FBI "SPIED ON THE TRUMP CAMPAIGN WITH AN EMBEDDED INFORMANT." Andrew McCarthy says, "There's probably no doubt that they had at least one confidential informant in the campaign." If so, this is bigger than Watergate!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 08:45 EDT, 17 May 2018.

"Apparently the DOJ put a Spy in the Trump Campaign. This has never been done before and by any means necessary, they are out to frame Donald Trump for crimes he didn't commit." David Asman @LouDobbs @GreggJarrett Really bad stuff!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 06:24 EDT, 18 May 2018.

Reports are there was indeed at least one FBI representative implanted, for political purposes, into my campaign for president. It took place very early on, and long before the phony Russia Hoax became a "hot" Fake News story. If true — all time biggest political scandal!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 09:50 EDT, 18 May 2018.

Notice that Trump's narcissistic character flaw is on display: "bigger than Watergate!" and "all time biggest political scandal!". Is Trump the all-time biggest liar?



The FBI used an informant to provide information from *three* people in Trump's campaign on Russian collusion with the Trump campaign. The informant was *not* embedded in the campaign and he did *not* spy on the political campaign. Once again, Trump hysterically exaggerates. [New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#).

On 19 May, Trump continued his tweets:

If the FBI or DOJ was infiltrating a campaign for the benefit of another campaign, that is a really big deal. Only the release or review of documents that the House Intelligence Committee (also, Senate Judiciary) is asking for can give the conclusive answers.

Drain the Swamp!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 17:27 EDT, 19 May 2018.

On 20 May, Trump decided to waste taxpayer's money on an investigation of his implausible claim that the FBI surveilled his presidential campaign "for political purposes".

I hereby demand, and will do so officially tomorrow, that the Department of Justice look into whether or not the FBI/DOJ infiltrated or surveilled the Trump Campaign for Political Purposes — and if any such demands or requests were made by people within the Obama Administration!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 13:37 EDT, 20 May 2018.

At 18:30 EDT on Sunday, 20 May, the [Associated Press](#) reported: "The Justice Department has asked its inspector general to determine whether there was any impropriety or political motivation in how the FBI conducted its counterintelligence investigation of persons suspected of involvement with Russian agents who interfered in the presidential election." See also [Washington Post](#).

On Monday, 21 May, Trump had a meeting at the White House with the Deputy Attorney General (Rod Rosenstein) and the head of the FBI (Christopher Wray).

[Washington Post](#)(AP); [Bloomberg](#); [New York Times](#). My comment is that this extraordinary meeting erodes the independence of the FBI investigation of Trump's 2016 presidential campaign. The DoJ had already publicly agreed to investigate Trump's claims of an FBI spy in his campaign, so the meeting was *not* necessary, except as an improper attempt by Trump to influence the investigation.

On Tuesday night, 22 May, Trump made two tweets:

If the person placed very early into my campaign wasn't a SPY put there by the previous Administration for political purposes, how come such a seemingly massive amount of money was paid for services rendered — many times higher than normal...

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 21:13 EDT, 22 May 2018.

...Follow the money! The spy was there early in the campaign and yet never reported Collusion with Russia, because there was no Collusion. He was only there to spy for political reasons and to help Crooked Hillary win — just like they did to Bernie Sanders, who got duped!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 21:13 EDT, 22 May 2018.

On Wednesday morning, 23 May, Trump made three tweets:

Look how things have turned around on the Criminal Deep State. They go after Phony Collusion with Russia, a made up Scam, and end up getting caught in a major SPY scandal the likes of which this country may never have seen before! What goes around, comes around!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 06:54 EDT, 23 May 2018.

Trump quoted a legal commentator on the Fox News cable television channel:

“It’s clear that they had eyes and ears all over the Trump Campaign” Judge Andrew Napolitano

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:00 EDT, 23 May 2018.

SPYGATE could be one of the biggest political scandals in history!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:12 EDT, 23 May 2018.

On 23 May, [CNN](#) had a story with the headline: "Donald Trump turned a rumor into a full-blown government conspiracy in just 5 days".

On 24 May, the Department of Justice disclosed some evidence to senior senators and congressmen. After the briefing, Adam Schiff, the ranking Democrat on the U.S. House of Representatives Intelligence Committee, told journalists: “Nothing we heard today has changed our view that there is no evidence to support any allegation that the FBI or any intelligence agency placed a spy in the Trump campaign or otherwise failed to follow appropriate procedures and protocols.” [New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#); [Reuters](#).

On 25 May, Trump continued his tweet paranoia:

The Democrats are now alluding to the the concept that having an Informant placed in an opposing party’s campaign is different than having a Spy, as illegal as that may be. But what about an “Informant” who is paid a fortune and who “sets up” way earlier than the Russian Hoax?

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 08:04 EDT, 25 May 2018.

Can anyone even imagine having Spies placed in a competing campaign, by the people and party in absolute power, for the sole purpose of political advantage and gain? And to think that the party in question, even with the expenditure of far more money, LOST!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 08:04 EDT, 25 May 2018.

On 26 May, the *one* informant has now expanded to plural spies "all over my campaign" as Trump's delusions worsen.

With Spies, or “Informants” as the Democrats like to call them because it sounds less sinister (but it’s not), all over my campaign, even from a very early date, why didn’t the crooked highest levels of the FBI or “Justice” contact me to tell me of the phony Russia problem?

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 15:28 EDT, 26 May 2018.

On 29 May 2018, Andrew Napolitano — a former judge in a New Jersey trial court, and now a Fox News legal commentator — said: “But the allegations by Mayor Giuliani over weekend which would lead us to believe that the Trump people think that the FBI had an

undercover agent who inveigled his way into the campaign, and was there as a spy on the campaign seem to be baseless, there's no evidence for that whatsoever.” On 23 May, Trump himself had tweeted to quote Napolitano. That nicely demolishes Trump's delusion. Further, the Republican Chairman of the House Oversight Committee, Trey Gowdy, said the FBI was justified in using the informant. [The Hill](#); [Washington Post](#); [Fox News](#)(transcript of Gowdy).

On 29 May, Trump promised to do some real work and stop tweeting about the FBI investigation of collusion between his presidential campaign and Russia.

Sorry, I've got to start focusing my energy on North Korea Nuclear, bad Trade Deals, VA Choice, the Economy, rebuilding the Military, and so much more, and not on the Rigged Russia Witch Hunt that should be investigating Clinton/Russia/FBI/Justice/Obama/Comey/Lynch etc.

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:27 EDT, 29 May 2018.

I comment that Trump's 29 May tweet would have been a graceful end to this topic, but Trump continued his obsession with the FBI investigation.

On 31 May, Trump continued his obsession with his delusion about FBI spies in his 2016 presidential campaign:

The corrupt Mainstream Media is working overtime not to mention the infiltration of people, Spies (Informants), into my campaign! Surveillance much?

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 08:05 EDT, 31 May 2018.

Trump refused to abandon his delusion about FBI spies in his campaign. On Tuesday, 5 June, Trump tweeted:

Great interview by @LouDobbs with Chris Farrell of Judicial Watch concerning the governments counter-intelligence operation into the Trump Campaign. SPYGATE at the highest level. Who would believe?

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 21:02 EDT, 5 June 2018.

Of course, Trump claims the FBI wronged him worse than anyone else in U.S. History.

...This is a level of criminality beyond the pale. This is such a grave abuse of power and authority, it's like nothing else we've seen in our history. This makes the Nixon Watergate burglary look like keystone cop stuff

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 21:27 EDT, 5 June 2018.

On 6 June, the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, Paul Ryan (R-Wisc.), agreed with Representative Trey Gowdy (R-S.Car.) that there was *no* evidence of a spy in Trump's presidential campaign. [Associated Press](#); [New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#). The remarks in these news articles about Trump's pardoning himself refer to an issue discussed [below](#).

On 23 July 2018, Trump's delusion reappeared about an FBI spy in his presidential campaign. The occasion was the release of search warrant documents at the FISA court on Carter Page.

....and the DOJ, FBI and Obama Gang need to be held to account. Source #1 was the major source. Avoided talking about it being the Clinton campaign behind it. Misled the Court to provide a pretext to SPY on the Trump Team. Not about Carter Page..was

all about getting Trump.....  
Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:01 EDT, 23 July 2018.

The [Associated Press](#); [Los Angeles Times](#); and [NBC News](#) explained that Trump mentions false "facts" about the surveillance application for Carter Page.

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## June 2018

### 2 June 2018: Another Big Lie from Trump

On 9 June 2016, Donald Trump Jr. met with Russians at Trump Tower in New York City. When journalists reported that fact in July 2017, the White House issued a terse statement. On 29 January 2018, Trump's personal attorney acknowledged in a letter to Mueller that the president himself "dictated" that terse statement. That letter to Mueller was published by the [New York Times](#) on 2 June 2018.

In addition to the terse mention of the statement about Trump Jr., the letter to Mueller also argues that the president can *not* obstruct justice, because the U.S. Constitution gives the president complete control over federal criminal investigations. That ignores historical precedent that the U.S. House of Representatives was planning to impeach Richard Nixon for obstruction of justice, and the House did impeach Bill Clinton for obstruction of justice. There is a long tradition of independence for FBI investigations and criminal prosecutions, to avoid political motivations for criminal investigations and prosecutions.

What was known in 2017 about the Russians meeting Donald Trump Jr. — and the changing story from Trump Jr. and the White House — was chronicled in my previous [essay](#) at pages 206-208. Major news media reported on the January 2018 admission by Trump's attorneys: [New York Times](#)(2June); [Associated Press](#); [Washington Post](#)(AP); [CNN](#); [New York Times](#)(4June).

On 4 June 2018, John Berman — co-anchor of the CNN cable television program "New Day" — compared the changing story from the White House to a "a writhing hydra of dishonesty. — You chop off one lie, and two more emerge in its place." [CNN](#).

The [Associated Press](#) explained that Jay Sekulow, one of Trump's personal lawyers, denied on 16 July 2017 and again on 31 July 2017 that Trump had drafted the statement. On 1 August 2017, White House spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders said Trump "certainly didn't dictate, but he — like I said, he weighed in, offered suggestion like any father would do." All falsehoods.

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### 3 June 2018: Pardon Me?

Back in July 2017, Trump was already considering pardoning himself.

While all agree the U. S. President has the complete power to pardon, why think of that

when only crime so far is LEAKS against us. FAKE NEWS  
Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:35 EDT, 22 July 2017.

Once again, Trump shows his ignorance of the law. It is false that "all agree" that Trump has the power to pardon himself. Amongst attorneys, a president pardoning himself is highly controversial. [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [The Guardian](#); [Politico](#).

On Sunday, 3 June 2018, Trump's personal attorney, Rudy Giuliani was interviewed by George Stephanopoulos. Here is some of what Giuliani said about Trump's alleged power to pardon himself.

STEPHANOPOULOS: The [29 Jan 2018] letter also cites the president's pardon power. Do you and the president's attorneys believe the president has the power to pardon himself?

GIULIANI: He — he's not but he probably does. He has no intention of pardoning himself but he probably — not to say he can't. I mean, that — that's another really interesting constitutional argument, can the president pardon himself.

STEPHANOPOULOS: Do you think it's an open question?

GIULIANI: It would be an open question. I think it would probably get answered by gosh, that's what the constitution says and if you want to change it, change it. But yes.

STEPHANOPOULOS: A lot of focus on the president...

GIULIANI: I think the political ramifications of that would be tough. Pardoning other people is one thing, pardoning yourself is another. Other presidents have pardoned people in circumstances like this both in their administration and sometimes the next president, even of a different party will come along and pardon.

STEPHANOPOULOS: A lot of focus on the president's pardon power this week. He pardoned Dinesh D'Souza we saw this week. Roger Stone says the president's sending a signal to those caught up in the Russia investigation.

GIULIANI: He is not. I think what he's doing — I think the president feels guilty that some of these were delayed. Maybe there was too much concern with injustice or the White House about doing it because it would look bad. These are so different than the case — cases he's involved in. And the issue of any pardon there is so far — no — I mean, except for a couple guilty pleas, nobody's really been convicted yet.

""This Week' Transcript 6-3-18: President Trump's Personal Attorney Rudy Giuliani," [ABC News](#), 3 June 2018.

On Monday, 4 June 2018, Trump arrogantly asserted he had "the absolute right to pardon myself".

As has been stated by numerous legal scholars, I have the absolute right to PARDON myself, but why would I do that when I have done nothing wrong? In the meantime, the never ending Witch Hunt, led by 13 very Angry and Conflicted Democrats (& others) continues into the mid-terms!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 08:35 EDT, 4 June 2018.

As usual, Trump did not mention names or citations for the so-called "legal scholars" on whom Trump relies for his assertion. In 1974, president richard nixon asked the Department of Justice if he could pardon himself, and the [DoJ](#) said: "Under the fundamental rule that no one may be a judge in his own case, the President cannot pardon himself."

Trump's assertion of an "absolute right" is hyperbole. A president pardoning himself is unprecedented, therefore there are no judicial opinions on whether such a pardon is valid and lawful.

Trump's tweet is nonsense for another reason. Trump asserts that he "has done nothing wrong". *If* that is really true, then that is a good reason *neither* to prosecute *nor* convict Trump. And if Trump were wrongly convicted, then that is a good reason to pardon Trump. But — and this is important — Trump *should not* pardon himself.

*The Washington Post* published a [news article](#) and an [analysis](#) that suggest that Trump might be impeached if he pardoned himself.

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## 6 June 2018: Trump's Ignorance

### Trump believes Canadians burnt White House in 1812

Trump invoked "national security" to justify placing tariffs on imported aluminum and steel from Canada. This seems strange, because Canada is a long-time ally of the USA, and Canada has *never* attacked the USA.

During a telephone call on 25 May, Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau asked Trump what Canada had done to become a national security threat to the USA. And Trump replied "Didn't you guys burn down the White House?" during the War of 1812. Trump's gaffe was first reported on 6 June by [CNN](#). See also: [New York Times](#); [Canadian Broadcasting Corp](#); [Edmonton Journal](#).

For those who went to the same school as Trump, it was the British who burnt the White House in 1812. It is bad enough that Trump is imposing burdensome tariffs on our allies, but justifying those tariffs with ignorance and stupidity should be an embarrassment to the USA.

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### Trump believes Texans gawked in boats during Hurricane Harvey

On 6 June 2018, the [White House](#) transcript showed Trump said at a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) briefing: "People went out in their boats to watch the hurricane. That didn't work out too well." That was during Hurricane Harvey in Houston during August 2017. Trump really believes stupid Texans went out in boats to gawk at the hurricane. The Truth is that those boats were rescuing people who were trapped in their home

by a flood. [Houston Chronicle](#); [Associated Press](#); [PolitiFact](#).

Does the USA have a better government when the president is delusional?

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## 9 June 2018: Trump hates CNN

Just before Trump departed from the G-7 summit in Quebec for a summit with Kim Jong-Un in Singapore, Trump held a press conference:

QUESTION: As you were heading into these G7 talks, there was a sense that America's closest allies were frustrated with you and angry with you, and that you were angry with them and that you were leaving here early to go meet for more friendlier talks with Kim Jong Un in Singapore. And I'm wondering if you —

THE PRESIDENT: It's well put, I think.

QUESTION: — if you view it the same way. And do you view the U.S. alliance system shifting under your presidency, away —

THE PRESIDENT: Who are you with, out of curiosity?

QUESTION: CNN.

THE PRESIDENT: I figured. Fake News CNN. The worst. But I could tell by the question. I had no idea you were CNN. After the question, I was just curious as to who you were with. You were CNN.

....

Now, we are going to fix that situation. And if it's not fixed, we're not going to deal with these countries. But the relationship that I've had is great. So you can tell that to your fake friends at CNN.

....

QUESTION: Mr. President, we're sitting here, and kind of you've attacked the U.S. press back home, but you've also done it on foreign soil. I guess I want — I'd like to ask you why you do that. Do you think —

THE PRESIDENT: Because the U.S. press is very dishonest, much of it. Not all of it. Oh, I have some folks in your profession that are with the U.S., in the U.S. — citizens, proud citizens; they're reporters. These are some of the most outstanding people I know. But there are many people in the press that are unbelievably dishonest. They don't cover stories the way they're supposed to be. They don't even report them, in many cases, if they're positive.

So there's tremendous — you know, I came up with the term, “fake news.” It's a lot of



fake news. But at the same time, I have great respect for many people in the press. "Press Conference by President Trump After G7 Summit," [White House](#), 10:13 EDT, 9 June 2018.

Trump's public display of his personal hatred for CNN is inappropriate.

In this same press conference, Trump said: "... but the latest number is \$817 billion on trade. That's ridiculous and it's unacceptable." Trump alleged that the U.S. trade deficit was "\$817 billion", but the true government number is actually \$568.4 billion. [Associated Press](#). Ignoring the U.S. trade surplus in services to Canada is the same error that Trump made in March 2018, see [above](#). Trump is not only *wrong*, but also he refuses to correct his error.

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On 15 June 2018, the U.S. Government admitted it had separated 1,995 children from 1,940 illegal immigrant parents at the border with Mexico from 19 April to 31 May 2018. [Reuters](#). Although moral people were aghast, it is long-standing policy to separate criminal adults from their children. On 14 June, Attorney General Jeff Sessions gave a [speech](#) on the topic that mentioned the Bible: "I would cite you to the Apostle Paul and his clear and wise command in Romans 13, to obey the laws of the government because God has ordained them for the purpose of order." [Washington Post](#).

On 14 June 2018, Sarah Sanders — the White House press secretary — gave a press briefing at which she insulted a CNN journalist.

QUESTION [by Jim Acosta of CNN]: Can I just ask a second question, completely unrelated, on these children who are being separated from their families as they come across the border? The Attorney General, earlier today, said that somehow there's a justification for this in the Bible. Where does it say in the Bible that it's moral to take children away from their mothers?

SANDERS: I'm not aware of the Attorney General's comments or what he would be referencing. I can't —

QUESTION: Is it a moral policy, in your view?

SANDERS: I can say that it is very biblical to enforce the law. That is, actually, repeated a number of times throughout the Bible. However, this —

QUESTION: But where in the Bible does it say —

SANDERS: Hold on, Jim. If you'll let me finish.

QUESTION: — it's okay to take children away from their parents?

SANDERS: Again, I'm not going to comment on the Attorney's specific comments that I haven't seen.

QUESTION: You just said it's in the Bible to follow the law.

SANDERS: That's not what I said. And I know it's hard for you to understand even short sentences, I guess, but please don't take my words out of context. But the separation of —

QUESTION: That's a cheap shot, Sarah. That's a cheap shot, Sarah.

SANDERS: — illegal alien families is the product of the same legal loopholes that Democrats refuse to close. And these laws are the same that have been on the books for over a decade. And the President is simply enforcing them.

QUESTION: But how is it moral? How is it a moral policy to take children away from their parents? Can you imagine —

SANDERS: It's a moral policy to follow and enforce the law.  
"Press Briefing by Press Secretary Sarah Sanders," [White House](#), 15:16 EDT, 14 June 2018.

I am appalled at the White House press secretary Sanders for the ad hominem attack on Acosta.

At a press conference in England on 13 July, Trump refused to answer a question from CNN.

QUESTION: Mr. President, since you attacked CNN, can I ask you a question —

PRESIDENT TRUMP: John Roberts, go ahead. Go ahead, John.

QUESTION: Can I ask you a question? (Inaudible.)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: No. No. John Roberts, go ahead. CNN is fake news. I don't take questions — I don't take questions from CNN. CNN is fake news. I don't take questions from CNN.

John Roberts of Fox. Let's go to a real network. John, let's go.  
"Remarks by President Trump and Prime Minister May of the United Kingdom in Joint Press Conference," [White House](#), 13 July 2018.

On 14 July, the White House canceled a scheduled interview of John Bolton by Jake Tapper of CNN. The cancellation was retaliation for an allegedly disrespectful question asked by Jim Acosta of CNN at the 13 July press conference quoted in the previous paragraph. [The Hill](#); [The Hill](#). My comment is that Trump is good at starting childish feuds.

On 25 July 2018, the White House banned CNN reporter Kaitlan Collins from an event in the Rose Garden, in retaliation for questions that she asked Trump earlier in the day. The event in the Rose Garden was open to all credentialed journalists, except Collins, who was disinvited by Sarah Sanders. [CNN](#); [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#). [Fox News](#), Trump's favorite news source, also condemned banning Collins: "We stand in strong solidarity with CNN for the right to full access for our journalists as part of a free and unfettered press."

On the night of 31 July 2018, Trump gave a speech in Tampa Florida, in which Trump's supporters heckled CNN correspondent Jim Acosta. Trump [retweeted](#) a video of the heckling,

indicating Trump's approval. [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [Sun-Sentinel](#); [The Hill](#).

My comment is that Trump is inciting a mob to attack journalists. This is *not* how a president should behave.

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### 7-19 Nov 2018: Acosta of CNN banned from White House

On 7 November 2018, the day after the midterm election, Trump attacked Jim Acosta of CNN at a press conference at the White House. Trump began to run off the rails when Acosta disputed Trump's assertion that the [caravan](#) of migrants from Honduras is an "invasion". Then Acosta asked Trump if Trump was concerned about being indicted by Special Counsel Mueller. Finally, after the microphone was taken away from Acosta, Acosta asked about Trump calling journalists "the enemy of the people", a topic I chronicle [above](#). In an inaudible part of the press conference, Acosta seems to accuse Trump of inspiring a [pipe bomber](#) to mail bombs to CNN. Trump again blames alleged "fake news" for inspiring the pipe bomber to mail bombs to CNN.

QUESTION [by Jim Acosta of CNN]: Okay. Thank you, Mr. President. I wanted to challenge you on one of the statements that you made in the tail end of the campaign in the midterms, that this —

THE PRESIDENT: Here we go.

QUESTION: Well, if you don't mind, Mr. President —

THE PRESIDENT: Let's go. Let's go. Come on.

QUESTION: That this caravan was an "invasion." As you know, Mr. President —

THE PRESIDENT: I consider it to be an invasion.

QUESTION: As you know, Mr. President, the caravan was not an invasion. It's a group of migrants moving up from Central America towards the border with the U.S.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you for telling me that. I appreciate it.

QUESTION: Why did you characterize it as such? And —

THE PRESIDENT: Because I consider it an invasion. You and I have a difference of opinion.

QUESTION: But do you think that you demonized immigrants in this election —

THE PRESIDENT: Not at all. No, not at all.

QUESTION: — to try to keep —

THE PRESIDENT: I want them — I want them to come into the country, but they

have to come in legally. You know, they have to come in, Jim, through a process. I want it to be a process.

And I want people to come in. And we need the people.

QUESTION: Right. But your campaign had — your campaign —

THE PRESIDENT: Wait. Wait. Wait. You know why we need the people, don't you? Because we have hundreds of companies moving in. We need the people.

QUESTION: Right. But your campaign had an ad showing migrants climbing over walls and so on.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, that's true. They weren't actors. They weren't actors.

QUESTION: They're not going to be doing that.

THE PRESIDENT: They weren't actors. Well, no, it was true. Do you think they were actors? They weren't actors. They didn't come from Hollywood. These were — these were people — this was an actual — you know, it happened a few days ago. And —

QUESTION: They're hundreds of miles of way though. They're hundreds and hundreds of miles away.

THE PRESIDENT: You know what?

QUESTION: That's not an invasion.

THE PRESIDENT: I think you should — honestly, I think you should let me run the country, you run CNN —

QUESTION: All right.

THE PRESIDENT: — and if you did it well, your ratings would be much better.

QUESTION: But let me ask, if I — if I may ask one other question —

THE PRESIDENT: Okay, that's enough.

QUESTION: Mr. President, if I may — if I may ask one other question.

THE PRESIDENT: Okay, Peter, go ahead.

QUESTION: Are you worried —

THE PRESIDENT: That's enough. That's enough. That's enough.

QUESTION: Mr. President, I didn't — well, I was going to ask one other. The other

folks that had —

THE PRESIDENT: That's enough. That's enough.

QUESTION [by Jim Acosta of CNN to White House intern who is trying to seize the microphone]: Pardon me, ma'am, I'm — Mr. President —

THE PRESIDENT: Excuse me, that's enough.

QUESTION: Mr. President, I had one other question if —

THE PRESIDENT: Peter. Let's go.

QUESTION [by Jim Acosta of CNN]: — I may ask on the Russia investigation. Are you concerned that you may have indictments —

THE PRESIDENT: I'm not concerned about anything with the Russia investigation because it's a hoax.

QUESTION [by Jim Acosta of CNN]: — that you may indictments coming down? Are you —

THE PRESIDENT: That's enough. Put down the mic.

QUESTION [by Jim Acosta of CNN]: Mr. President, are you worried about indictments coming down in this investigation?

QUESTION: Mr. President —

THE PRESIDENT: I'll tell you what: CNN should be ashamed of itself having you working for them. You are a rude, terrible person. You shouldn't be working for CNN.

Go ahead.

QUESTION: I think that's unfair.

THE PRESIDENT: You're a very rude person. The way you treat Sarah Huckabee is horrible. And the way you treat other people are horrible. You shouldn't treat people that way.

Go ahead. Go ahead, Peter. Go ahead.

QUESTION [by Peter Alexander of NBC News]: In Jim's defense, I've traveled with him and watched him. He's a diligent reporter who busts his butt like the rest of us.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I'm not a big fan of yours either. So, you know.

(Laughter.)

QUESTION [by Peter Alexander of NBC News]: I understand.

THE PRESIDENT: To be honest with you.

QUESTION: So let me — so let me ask you a question if I can —

QUESTION: (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: You aren't — you aren't the best.

QUESTION: You repeatedly said — Mr. President, you repeatedly — over the course of the —

QUESTION: (Off-mic.) (Inaudible) called the enemy of the people —

THE PRESIDENT: Okay, just sit down, please.

QUESTION: (Off-mic.) (Inaudible) campaign (inaudible) and sent pipe bombs. That's just (inaudible).

THE PRESIDENT: Well, when you report fake news —

QUESTION: (Off-mic.) (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: No. When you report fake news, which CNN does a lot, you are the enemy of the people.

"Remarks by President Trump in Press Conference After Midterm Elections," [White House](#), 11:57 EST, 7 Nov 2018.

Hours after this press conference, the White House retaliated by suspending Acosta's access to the White House "until further notice." [CNN](#); [Washington Post](#)(press conference); [Washington Post](#)(suspension); [New York Times](#); [Associated Press](#); [NBC News](#).

Trump's press secretary, Sarah Sanders, said that Acosta was denied access to the White House because Acosta "placing his hands on a young woman just trying to do her job as a White House intern". But video, as well as eyewitness statements by journalists in the press briefing room, show that Sanders' accusation is false. Acosta held on to the microphone as the intern attempted to seize the microphone, but Acosta did *not* touch the intern. Why would Sanders make an assertion that was easily proven false? I suggest that Trump and Sanders long ago abandoned any hope of influencing people who read *The New York Times* or *The Washington Post*. Instead, Trump and Sanders focus on communicating with gullible Americans who believe whatever Trump and his cronies say.

The White House *could* have temporarily suspended Acosta for continuing to ask questions after Trump told Acosta "enough" eight times, and for refusing to relinquish the microphone. Those two reasons would have been better than the false accusation of touching the female intern.

Notice that in a press conference on the midterm elections, Acosta asked four off-topic questions:

1. Acosta disputed Trump's assertion that the caravan of migrants from Honduras is an "invasion".
2. Acosta asked Trump if Trump was concerned about being indicted by Special Counsel Mueller.
3. Acosta asked about Trump calling journalists "the enemy of the people".
4. In an inaudible part of the press conference, Acosta seems to accuse Trump of inspiring a pipe bomber to mail bombs to CNN.

I wonder if Acosta was trying to provoke an angry attack from Trump — if so, then Acosta was successful. In hindsight, Trump's anger management problem is again exposed, while Acosta looks like a competent journalist who asks hard questions that expose Trump's unfitness to be president. Anyone who speaks before a live audience (e.g., teachers, professors, politicians) needs to learn to calmly control a disruptive audience member. Trump never learned that skill. Worse, Trump has *no* good answer for easily foreseeable questions about his immigration policy and his relationship with journalists.

On 7 November, Sarah Sanders was very clear that Acosta was banned for touching a female intern. But on 9 November, Trump said Acosta was banned for treating the White House and president with disrespect.

QUESTION: Mr. President, how long are you going to leave Jim Acosta in the penalty box?

THE PRESIDENT: I think Jim Acosta is a very unprofessional man. He does this with everybody. He gets paid to do that. You know, he gets paid to burst in. He's a very unprofessional guy. Whether it was me or Ronald Reagan or anybody else, he would have done the same thing.

Look, I don't think he's a smart person, but he's got a loud voice. And —

QUESTION: Is it permanent?

THE PRESIDENT: Wait, wait. David, do you mind if I answer the question?

QUESTION: Sure. Of course.

THE PRESIDENT: And as far as I'm concerned, I haven't made that decision. But it could be others also. When you're in the White House — this is a very sacred place to me. This is a very special place. You have to treat the White House with respect. You have to treat the presidency with respect. If you've ever seen him dealing with Sarah Huckabee Sanders, it's a disgrace. And he does it for, you know, the reason.

....

You've got to treat the White House and the Office of the Presidency with respect.



"Remarks by President Trump Before Marine One Departure," [White House](#), 09:05 EST, 9 Nov 2018.

Notice that Trump threatens other journalists with being banned from the White House, when he said "But it could be others also." Trump is clearly intimidating journalists.

On 13 November, CNN filed litigation in U.S. District Court in Washington, DC asking a judge to order Trump to restore Acosta's access to the White House. [CNN](#); [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [Associated Press](#).

On 13 November, the White House again changed its story about why Acosta was denied access to the White House. The initial story — which was false — was that Acosta had assaulted a female intern. Then Trump said Acosta had shown disrespect. Now Sarah Sanders, Trump's spokeswoman, says:

We have been advised that CNN has filed a complaint challenging the suspension of Jim Acosta's hard pass. This is just more grandstanding from CNN, and we will vigorously defend against this lawsuit.

CNN, who has nearly 50 additional hard pass holders, and Mr. Acosta is no more or less special than any other media outlet or reporter with respect to the First Amendment. After Mr. Acosta asked the President two questions — each of which the President answered — he physically refused to surrender a White House microphone to an intern, so that other reporters might ask their questions. This was not the first time this reporter has inappropriately refused to yield to other reporters.

The White House cannot run an orderly and fair press conference when a reporter acts this way, which is neither appropriate nor professional. The First Amendment is not served when a single reporter, of more than 150 present, attempts to monopolize the floor. If there is no check on this type of behavior it impedes the ability of the President, the White House staff, and members of the media to conduct business. Sarah Sanders, quoted by Aaron Blake, "The White House is changing its tune on why it yanked Jim Acosta's press pass," [Washington Post](#), 12:53 EST, 13 Nov 2018.

Sanders' reason on 13 November *might* legally justify removing Acosta's access to the White House. But her 13 Nov reason is pretextual and *not* credible, coming six days after Acosta's access was denied, and coming after two earlier reasons. Moreover, the transcript of the 7 Nov press conference shows Trump insulted Acosta, which is presumably the real reason Acosta was later denied access to the White House. Trump's denial of access to Acosta is probably viewpoint discrimination, which is prohibited by the U.S. Supreme Court's interpretation of the First Amendment. In my opinion on 13 Nov, Trump received bad legal advice to "vigorously defend against this lawsuit." Trump *should* have mooted the litigation by restoring Acosta's access to the White House.

On 16 November, a federal judge granted a temporary restraining order that ordered the White House to restore Acosta's access. [CNBC](#); [Washington Post](#).

On the morning of 16 November, Sarah Sanders issued the following statement to journalists:  
Today, the court made clear that there is no absolute First Amendment right to access

the White House. In response to the court, we will temporarily reinstate the reporter's hard pass. We will also further develop rules and processes to ensure fair and orderly press conferences in the future. There must be decorum at the White House.

Sarah Sanders, quoted in "White House demands "decorum" after CNN beats it in court," [Axios](#), 16 Nov 2018.

After the judge's ruling on 16 November, Trump himself called for "decorum" and "respect" at White House press conferences.

QUESTION: Mr. President, do you have any comment on the CNN ruling a moment ago?

THE PRESIDENT: No. Just, people have to behave and they have to do — we're writing up rules and regulations to make our position. I think you were treated very unfairly, both of you. I think you were treated very unfairly because you had somebody interrupting you. And if they don't listen to the rules and regulations, we'll end up back in court and we'll win. But more importantly, we'll just leave, and then you won't be very happy, because we do get good ratings.

QUESTION: Mr. President, when you talk about rules and regulations, what do you mean, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: Decorum. You can't take three questions and four questions, and just stand up and not sit down. Decorum. You have to practice decorum. You were there; you understood, and you understand. We want total freedom of the press; that's very important to me. It's more important to me than anybody would believe.

But you have to act with respect. You're in the White House. And when I see the way some of my people get treated at press conferences, it's terrible. So we're setting up a certain standard, which is what the court is requesting. And always freedom of the press, always First Amendment. But that's the way it is.

And we always have the option of just leaving. You know, if we feel that things aren't being treated properly, that people aren't being treated properly, we always have the right to leave. And I think the other media, the other press in the room, will not be very happy if that happens. But I've instructed my people: When they're not treated properly, you have the right to just leave any time you want.

"Remarks by President Trump at Signing of H.R.3359, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency Act," [White House](#), 12:27 EST, 16 Nov 2018.

For a timeline, see the Associated Press article at [Washington Post](#).

In my opinion, the biggest threat to decorum at the White House press conferences is Trump, with Sanders a secondary threat to decorum. Further, a written policy to regulate journalists at the White House will need to meet First Amendment standards as interpreted by the U.S. Supreme Court. The White House is receiving bad legal advice if Sanders thinks she can write a policy that will comply with Constitutional standards. Journalists will probably file litigation to prevent the White House from enforcing their new written policy.

On Monday, 19 November, Sarah Sanders informed Acosta that it would again revoke Acosta's access to the White House when the temporary restraining order expired on 30 November. Now the White House is making a retroactive application of unwritten standards for journalists. CNN immediately requested an emergency hearing in court and a preliminary injunction. [CNN](#); [Washington Post](#); [Associated Press](#). Because there was no way that Acosta could have known about these new standards during the 7 November press conference, it is elementary due process law that the White House violated Acosta's legal rights when it revoked his access. One has to wonder about the competence of the many lawyers in the White House, when Trump and Sanders continue to perpetrate denial of Constitutional rights.

On Monday afternoon, 19 November, the White House formally restored Acosta's access to the White House. CNN then withdrew its litigation. Sanders issued written rules for journalists. [New York Times](#); [Politico](#). I am concerned that Sanders informally issuing written rules does *not* comply with the Administrative Procedures Act that requires publication in the Federal Register, and an opportunity for public comment on proposed rules.

On Sunday, 25 November, Sabrina Siddiqui, a journalist for *The Guardian* newspaper in Manchester England, said on a CNN television program:

QUESTION by BRIAN STELTER, CNN ANCHOR: Sabrina, did you agree to the rules? Did you ever hear about these rules before they were released?

SABRINA SIDDIQUI, POLITICAL REPORTER, "THE GUARDIAN": No. Frankly, I don't think that anyone has agreed to the rules, because there's no reason for the White House to dictate the terms about how reporters do their jobs. I think we should be very clear about what's behind these new rules. The White House wants to hold on to the notion that Jim Acosta was somehow out of line, even though there's no evidence to support that claim. And they're using that as an excuse to try and exert control and restrict access when it comes to the ways that these briefings and press conferences are conducted.

But follow-ups are commonplace. And in fact, they serve a very critical importance when you think about the fact that the president might, for example, try and avoid answering a certain question or he might answer it in a way that's misleading. That's precisely where a good follow-up question comes into play.

So all of this really comes back to the idea that the White House does not want to admit it got the Jim Acosta situation wrong and it wants to prolong this feud with the media, because they know that that's something that the president can use to harden support within his base.

[CNN](#), 11:00 EST, 25 Nov 2018.

See also: [tweet](#); [The Hill](#).

On Monday, 26 November, Trump proposed a taxpayer-funded international television network to compete with CNN.

While CNN doesn't do great in the United States based on ratings, outside of the U.S. they have very little competition. Throughout the world, CNN has a powerful voice

portraying the United States in an unfair....  
Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 14:47 EST, 26 Nov 2018.

....and false way. Something has to be done, including the possibility of the United States starting our own Worldwide Network to show the World the way we really are, GREAT!  
Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 14:47 EST, 26 Nov 2018.

Does Trump realize that taxpayers support part of the Public Broadcasting System (PBS) inside the USA, and taxpayers support all of Voice of America internationally? But PBS and Voice of America have content that is independent of government, while Trump seems to be proposing a network to spread propaganda from the White House.

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## 15 June 2018: More Lies from Trump

On Friday morning, 15 June, Trump gave a press conference in the driveway in front of the White House. Trump spewed out a series of remarkable statements, some of which are quoted here:

Now, I feel badly for a lot of those people. I feel badly for General Flynn. He's lost his house. He's lost his life. And some people say he lied, and some people say he didn't lie. I mean, really, it turned out maybe he didn't lie.

....

QUESTION: Mr. President, did you tape that statement about Don Jr.? Did you dictate the statement about Donald Trump, Jr.?

THE PRESIDENT: Let's not talk about it. You know what that is?

QUESTION: But can you tell us?

THE PRESIDENT: It's irrelevant. It's a statement to the New York Times — the phony, failing New York Times.

QUESTION: Well, just to clear it up. To clear it up.

THE PRESIDENT: Just wait a minute. Wait a minute. That's not a statement to a high tribunal of judges.

QUESTION: Understood.

THE PRESIDENT: That's a statement to the phony New York Times.

In fact, frankly, he shouldn't even speak to the New York Times because they only write phony stories anyway, although yesterday they wrote a nice story about what a (inaudible).

QUESTION: Thank you, sir. On the [Department of Justice Inspector General's] IG report, you've said twice now that it exonerated you and it proved there's no collusion. The IG report —

THE PRESIDENT: Look, if you read the IG report, I've been totally exonerated. As far as I'm concerned —

QUESTION: It had nothing to do with collusion. It had nothing to do with that.

THE PRESIDENT: Take a little at it. Take — no, take a look at the investigation. Take a look at how it started. Take a look at the horrible statements that Peter Strzok, the chief investigator, said. And take a look at what he did with Hillary Clinton. Take a look at —

QUESTION: (Inaudible), sir, that has nothing to do with collusion. Why are you lying about it, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: I'll tell you what — you're asking me about Peter Strzok being fired. I am amazed that Peter Strzok is still at the FBI, and so is everybody else that read that report. And I'm not even talking about the report; I'm talking about long before the report. Peter Strzok should have been fired a long time ago, and others should have been fired.

....

QUESTION: Is Crimea part of Russia? Do you —

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. President Obama lost Crimea, just so you understand. This was long before I got there. Just — I want to make it so the fake news prints it properly. President Obama lost Crimea.

QUESTION: So it's his fault?

THE PRESIDENT: Wait, wait. That's his fault. Yeah, yeah, it's his fault. Yeah, it's his fault.

.... But just to put it — one more time, President Obama gave away Crimea. That should have never happened.

"Remarks by President Trump in Press Gaggle," [White House](#), 09:03 EDT, 15 June 2018.

My comments:

Trump fired General Flynn because he lied to Pence. Then Flynn pled guilty to lying to the FBI. Now Trump says "it turned out maybe he didn't lie."

Trump asserted he can make false statements to *The New York Times* about his son, Don Jr.

It is true that those false statements are not perjury, because Trump was not under oath. But do Americans really want their president brazenly lying to journalists?

Then Trump asserted the Inspector General's report on Comey's investigation of Hillary Clinton's e-mails somehow exonerated Trump on collusion with Russians. That was a huge false statement, as a journalist said during the press conference: "Why are you lying about it, sir?" Trump ignored that good question.

At the end of this press conference, Trump rewrote history so that Russian President Putin's annexation of Crimea is the fault of Obama.

There are many more errors by Trump in this one press conference than the three terse snippets that I quoted above. Journalists wrote many articles exposing factual errors in this press conference by Trump. See e.g., [Associated Press](#); [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [PolitiFact](#); [ABC News](#); [CBS News](#); [NBC News](#). The [Toronto Star](#) found 22 errors by Trump in this one press conference.

The [Washington Post](#) found 3251 false or misleading claims by Trump from 20 Jan 2017 to 31 May 2018.

On 19 June, Ashley Parker, writing in The [Washington Post](#), suggested that Trump had recently increased his rate of making false statements. Parker said: "President Trump — a man already known for trafficking in mistruths and even outright lies — has been outdoing even himself with falsehoods in recent days, repeating and amplifying bogus claims on several of the most pressing controversies facing his presidency."

One should be appalled at Trump's frequent false facts and delusions. But the bigger problems is that most politicians in the U.S. Congress ignore Trump's falsehoods, instead of removing Trump from office. Trump is clearly unfit to be president when he can not distinguish fact from fiction.

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### 18 June 2018: Trump needs more praise

On Monday, 18 June 2018, Trump publicly whined about journalists giving him too little credit for the Kim/Trump summit.

If President Obama (who got nowhere with North Korea and would have had to go to war with many millions of people being killed) had gotten along with North Korea and made the initial steps toward a deal that I have, the Fake News would have named him a national hero!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 10:57 EDT, 18 June 2018.

Again we see the narcissistic personality disorder in Trump, when he demands more praise. Trump's "initial steps" in denuclearizing North Korea are signing an inadequate Statement, which I criticized in my separate [essay](#) on North Korea, and a photo opportunity with Kim Jong-Un.

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**18-19 June 2018:  
Trump lies about crime by refugees in Germany**

On Monday, 18 June 2018, Trump opined on Germany — and also Europe — allowing millions of Muslim migrants to enter Europe, and especially Germany. Trump lied when he said: "Crime in Germany is way up."

The people of Germany are turning against their leadership as migration is rocking the already tenuous Berlin coalition. Crime in Germany is way up. Big mistake made all over Europe in allowing millions of people in who have so strongly and violently changed their culture!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 09:02 EDT, 18 June 2018.

On Tuesday, 19 June 2017, Trump again lied when he said that crime in Germany had increased by 10% and "migrants" were to blame. Trump then alleges that unspecified "Others [sic] countries are even worse."

Crime in Germany is up 10% plus (officials do not want to report these crimes) since migrants were accepted. Others countries are even worse. Be smart America!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 09:52 EDT, 19 June 2018.

Later on 19 June, Trump gave a speech that repeated his errors about crime in Germany:

The United States has just surpassed Germany as having the most asylum seekers of any nation on Earth. Can you image that? Can you image? And Germany — we talk about Germany — they allowed millions of people in. And, by the way, their crime, from the time they started, is up more than 10 percent. And that's one of the reasons it's at that level is because they don't like reporting that kind of crime, so they put it down as different kind of crime. But their crime is up more than 10 percent since they started taking them in.

"Remarks by President Trump at the National Federation of Independent Businesses 75th Anniversary Celebration," [White House](#), 19 June 2018.

The [Associated Press](#) and [Washington Post](#) both reported that the per capita crime rate in Germany in 2017 was the lowest in the past 30 years (since 1988). German government statistics showed a 10% *decrease* in reported crimes during 2017, compared to 2016.

See also: [Washington Post](#)(20June); [New York Times](#); [Deutsche Welle](#)(18June); [Deutsche Welle](#)(19June); [CBS News](#); [The Hill](#).

[Deutsche Welle](#), the German government news service for foreigners, reported 785 murders in Germany during 2017. There are approximately 82 million people living in Germany, so the per capita murder rate is 0.95 per 100,000 people per year. For comparison, the [FBI](#) says were 17,250 murders in the USA during 2016, the most recent year available when I wrote this paragraph in June 2018. The population of the USA in 2016 is approximately 323 million, giving a per capita murder rate in the USA of 5.3 per 100,000 people per year. The per capita murder rate is more than 5 times greater in the USA than in Germany.

Instead of false tweets about Germany's problem, Trump should be working to decrease the murder rate in the USA.

Back on 11 January 2018, Trump had an outburst about emigrants to the USA from "shithole



countries" (e.g., Haiti, El Salvador, and African countries, probably also Muslim-majority nations). (See [below](#).) Trump quickly learned not to say "shithole countries", but he continued thinking about the concept that immigration from some nations is more desirable than other nations.

We don't want what is happening with immigration in Europe to happen with us!  
Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 09:04 EDT, 18 June 2018.

Donald Trump's grandfather emigrated to the USA from Germany in 1885. Donald's grandfather began purchasing property in New York City in 1908, which began the Trump real-estate empire. It took only two generations in the USA for the German values of attention to detail (Gründlichkeit) and accuracy (Richtigkeit) to dissipate from Donald Trump. This is a problem not only with Trump's personal failings, but also with American voters who elected Trump. Opinion [polls](#) show approximately 40% of American voters continue to approve of Trump's performance.

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### **20-23 June 2018: Trump lies about quick delivery of remains by North Korea**

In a speech in Duluth Minnesota on Wednesday, 20 June 2018, Trump claimed that North Korea had already returned the remains of 200 U.S. Military personnel who were killed in the Korean war. [Reuters](#) quoted Trump: "We got back our great fallen heroes, the remains sent back today, already 200 got sent back." The [Washington Post](#) quoted Trump: "We got back our great fallen heroes, the remains. In fact, today, already 200 have been sent back." The transcript of Trump's speech in Duluth is not posted at the White House website, so I relied on news reports.

On Saturday, 23 June 2018, Trump told an audience in Nevada:

One of the big things we just did is we had a great meeting, as you know, and a very successful one with North Korea. And the relationships is now very good. (Applause.) We got along really good. The total denuclearization of North Korea, and the process is beginning. And further talks are going on.

We're getting our — the remains back of our great heroes. There have been — so many people asked me, "Could you do it?" The remains are coming back. (Applause.) They have over 200 already. This is something — we never got anything back, anybody back. And so many — I guess, for the most part, it would be the children and the grandchildren, they want to get the remains back of their fathers and their grandfathers. And we're starting that, and it's been really incredible.

Donald J. Trump, "Remarks by President Trump at a Roundtable Discussion on Tax Reform," [White House](#), 14:01 PDT, 23 June 2018.

Trump lied twice in one paragraph on 23 June. First, North Korea has delivered *zero* remains since the Kim/Trump summit on 12 June, while Trump falsely claimed delivery of "over 200" remains. [Associated Press](#)(27June); [Associated Press](#)(25June).

Second, Trump falsely claimed "we never got anything back, anybody back", while the

[Associated Press](#) reported: "Between 1996 and 2005, joint U.S.-North Korea military search teams ... recovered 229 sets of American remains. .... The last time North Korea turned over remains was in 2007, when Bill Richardson, a former U.N. ambassador and New Mexico governor, secured the return of six sets." [Yonhap](#) reported: "More than 440 sets of remains were repatriated to the U.S. from 1990-2007, ...."

On 24 June, the [Associated Press](#) reported that the U.S. Military had 100 coffins ready for whenever North Korea returned remains. That was four days after Trump falsely claimed North Korea had already returned 200 corpses.

On 17 July 2018, [Reuters](#) reports that North Korea has returned *zero* remains since the 12 June Kim/Trump summit, 35 days ago.

Finally, on 27 July 2018, North Korea repatriated 55 cases of remains. At the Kim/Trump summit, Kim apparently told Trump that North Korea had collected approximately 200 remains. It is *not* known why North Korea did not hand over the other 145 remains.

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## July 2018

### More Lies from Trump

On 3 July 2018, Trump repeated a false statement about Obama.

Just out that the Obama Administration granted citizenship, during the terrible Iran Deal negotiation, to 2,500 Iranians — including to government officials. How big (and bad) is that?

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 08:03 EDT, 3 July 2018.

Why is Trump defaming Obama? In 2016, Trump's opponent was Hillary Clinton, *not* Obama. Perhaps Trump is blaming Obama for one of the many problems that Trump inherited when he became president in January 2017.

The [Associated Press](#); [New York Times](#); and [Washington Post](#) all condemned Trump's tweet as false. *The Washington Post* traced this false fact back to its origin with an Iranian politician, which was then reported by the FARS news agency in Iran, and then repeated by [Fox News](#), which is Trump's major source of news.

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### Russia interfered with 2016 U.S. election

On 3 July 2018, the U.S. Senate Intelligence Committee issued a summary of its future report that concluded that Russians interfered with the 2016 U.S. elections. [Politico](#); [Associated Press](#); [Washington Post](#).

Trump has repeatedly denied that Russia interfered with the 2016 U.S. elections, probably because such interference could make Trump an illegitimate winner. Trump's opinion was

contradicted by factual conclusions from the U.S. Intelligence community in 2016.

On 13 July 2018, the Special Counsel, Robert Mueller, indicted 12 Russian agents for hacking e-mails of Democrats during the 2016 U.S. elections. [DoJ](#); [New York Times](#); [Associated Press](#); [Washington Post](#). Note that these 12 are residents of Russia, and Russia will surely *not* extradite them to the USA, so they will never stand trial in the USA.

On 16 July, Trump met with Russian President Putin in Helsinki. Then Trump had a disastrous press conference, see the transcript at the [White House](#). Trump publicly continued his delusion that Russia did *not* interfere in the 2016 U.S. election. [Washington Post](#); [Washington Post](#)(fact-check); [New York Times](#); [New York Times](#)(fact-check); [Politico](#); [Associated Press](#); [Associated Press](#)(fact-check); [Reuters](#).

On 16 July, John McCain, the chairman of the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee, blasted Trump's performance with Putin.

Today's press conference in Helsinki was one of the most disgraceful performances by an American president in memory. The damage inflicted by President Trump's naiveté, egotism, false equivalence, and sympathy for autocrats is difficult to calculate. But it is clear that the summit in Helsinki was a tragic mistake.

President Trump proved not only unable, but unwilling to stand up to Putin. He and Putin seemed to be speaking from the same script as the president made a conscious choice to defend a tyrant against the fair questions of a free press, and to grant Putin an uncontested platform to spew propaganda and lies to the world.

It is tempting to describe the press conference as a pathetic rout — as an illustration of the perils of under-preparation and inexperience. But these were not the errant tweets of a novice politician. These were the deliberate choices of a president who seems determined to realize his delusions of a warm relationship with Putin's regime without any regard for the true nature of his rule, his violent disregard for the sovereignty of his neighbors, his complicity in the slaughter of the Syrian people, his violation of international treaties, and his assault on democratic institutions throughout the world.

Coming close on the heels of President Trump's bombastic and erratic conduct towards our closest friends and allies in Brussels and Britain, today's press conference marks a recent low point in the history of the American Presidency. That the president was attended in Helsinki by a team of competent and patriotic advisors makes his blunders and capitulations all the more painful and inexplicable.

No prior president has ever abased himself more abjectly before a tyrant. Not only did President Trump fail to speak the truth about an adversary; but speaking for America to the world, our president failed to defend all that makes us who we are — a republic of free people dedicated to the cause of liberty at home and abroad. American presidents must be the champions of that cause if it is to succeed. Americans are waiting and hoping for President Trump to embrace that sacred responsibility. One can only hope they are not waiting totally in vain.

John S. McCain, "SASC CHAIRMAN JOHN MCCAIN ON TRUMP-PUTIN MEETING," [McCain](#), 16 July 2018.

On 16-17 July, there was a firestorm of criticism of Trump by politicians and commentators. But it was already well known that (1) Trump is ignorant of facts, (2) Trump admires dictators (e.g., Putin in Russia, Xi Jin-Ping in communist china, Kim Jong-Un in North Korea). Moreover, Trump's narcissistic character flaw makes it impossible for Trump to admit that Russia helped him be elected president. Trump's defects makes it easy to understand Trump's disastrous performance with Putin.

On 17 July, Trump offered the lame excuse that he had omitted a "not" from one sentence in his disastrous press conference yesterday. [White House](#). But there is much more wrong with his press conference than one sentence. What Trump said at the disastrous press conference is consistent with what Trump has said on many previous occasions. Furthermore, after the disastrous press conference, Trump was interviewed by Sean Hannity of [Fox News](#), in which Trump failed to correct any of his errors in the disastrous press conference. On 17 July, Trump was interviewed by Jeff Glor of [CBS News](#), in which Trump said "... I accept our intelligence community's conclusion that Russia's meddling in the 2016 election took place. It could be other people, also. There are lots of people out there." Trump refuses to accept the Truth that Russia influenced the 2016 U.S. presidential election. See also: [NBC News](#); [CBS News](#); [Associated Press](#); [Associated Press](#).

On 22 July, Trump asserted another reason why he believes Russia did *not* interfere in the 2016 U.S. presidential election: Trump now believes claims of Russian interference were a "hoax".

So President Obama knew about Russia before the Election. Why didn't he do something about it? Why didn't he tell our campaign? Because it is all a big hoax, that's why, and he thought Crooked Hillary was going to win!!!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 18:23 EDT, 22 July 2018.

As usual, Trump offers *no* evidence of a hoax.

On 24 July, Trump said he was concerned that Russia would interfere with the 2018 election in the USA. But in a surprise, Trump said that Russia would support Democrats.

I'm very concerned that Russia will be fighting very hard to have an impact on the upcoming Election. Based on the fact that no President has been tougher on Russia than me, they will be pushing very hard for the Democrats. They definitely don't want Trump!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 11:50 EDT, 24 July 2018.

Trump's ignominious performance in Helsinki is in contrast to Trump's unsupported assertion that "no President has been tougher on Russia than me". Trump's assertion that Russians are supporting Democrats is also *not* plausible. On 27 July, the [Associated Press](#) reported that Russians had attempted to access the computers of a Democrat, U.S. Senator Claire McCaskill.

On 2 August 2018, NBC News reported a White House press briefing that Russia was continuing to attempt to influence elections in the USA.

Top U.S. national security and intelligence officials on Thursday [2 Aug]

unambiguously warned that Russia has undertaken "pervasive" efforts to interfere in the 2018 midterm elections and beyond, and offered a sketch of how the government plans to combat such meddling.

At a White House press briefing, the five — [1] National Security Adviser John Bolton; [2] Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen; [3] FBI Director Chris Wray; [4] Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats; and [5] Gen. Paul Nakasone, the director of the National Security Agency and the commander of U.S. Cyber Command — also took turns expressing concern over ongoing efforts by Moscow to interfere in U.S. elections, with Nielsen sounding the alarm that "our democracy itself is in the cross hairs."

Adam Edelman, "Russia still working to undermine U.S. elections, top national security officials warn," [NBC News](#), 2 Aug 2018.

See also: [White House](#)(transcript of briefing); [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [Wall Street Journal](#); [Reuters](#).

My comment is that Trump has refused to believe that Russia interfered with the election in the USA in 2016. Trump's disbelief may have stalled the attempt of the U.S. Government to prevent further interference by Russia. Meanwhile, Trump's press conference with Putin on 16 July 2018 sure looks like collusion with Russia.

For a brief moment in January 2017 (see, e.g., [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#)) and again in July 2018, Trump — apparently insincerely — said he believed Russia interfered with the 2016 U.S. election. But then Trump reverted to his delusion that Russia did *not* interfere with the 2016 U.S. election.

Only hours after the press briefing at the White House, Trump gave a speech in Pennsylvania that asserted that Russian interference with the 2016 U.S. election was a "hoax". [NBC News](#); [NBC News](#); [CNN](#).

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## **How to Convince Trump: Colorful Flash Cards**

On 25 July 2018, European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker visited the White House and quickly negotiated a trade agreement with Trump. Trump agreed to no tariffs on imports from Europe, and Juncker promised Europe would purchase lots of soybeans and liquified natural gas from the USA.

How did Juncker accomplish this negotiating feat? The [Wall Street Journal](#) reported that Juncker came prepared with "more than a dozen colorful cue cards with simplified explainers". Each simple card had a maximum of three numbers. See also: [MarketWatch](#); [The Independent](#); [Washington Post](#). My comment is that it is an embarrassment to the USA, when its president is stupid and needs to see elementary-school-style flash cards.

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## Trump never shops for groceries

I remember back in 1992, when George Herbert Walker Bush was campaigning for president. Bush went into a grocery store and marveled at a laser scanner at the cash register that read barcode on groceries. Such laser scanners had been in common use since the mid-1970s, but Bush apparently never went into a grocery store. I was impressed that Bush was so patrician, so important, that he could not be bothered to go grocery shopping. That was a colossal disconnect between Bush and the vast majority of American people. Bush was acting like he was royalty, who could not be bothered with plebeian activities like grocery shopping.

It happened again on 31 July 2018. In a speech in Tampa Florida, Trump claimed one needed a photo identification card to purchase groceries. The context is that Trump is fighting voter fraud by advocating a requirement that voters show a photo identification card before being issued a ballot. The following day, Sarah Sanders noted one does need a photo identification to purchase alcoholic beverages — but Trump was talking about groceries, *not* alcohol, furthermore Trump does not drink alcohol. [Associated Press](#); [Associated Press](#)(fact-check); [New York Times](#); [ABC News](#); [CNN](#); [Salt Lake Tribune](#); [BBC](#); [Washington Post](#)(video); [Huffington Post](#).

My comment is to ask whether Americans want a president who is so wealthy, so self-important, so out-of-touch with ordinary people, that the president never goes grocery shopping.

On 14 November 2018, Trump falsely [asserted](#) that one needs voter identification to purchase breakfast cereal at a grocery store. Obviously, Trump learned nothing from his 31 July mistake.

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## August 2018

### More Lies from Trump

While Trump was criticizing journalists for alleged "fake news", Trump himself on 31 July and 2 August falsely claimed that U.S. Steel was opening *six* or *seven* new plants in the USA, when the Truth was they were opening zero new plants. [Associated Press](#); [PolitiFact](#).

In early August 2018, the largest wildfire in California history was destroying homes and killing people. Trump tweeted a simplistic solution:

Governor Jerry Brown must allow the Free Flow of the vast amounts of water coming from the North and foolishly being diverted into the Pacific Ocean. Can be used for fires, farming and everything else. Think of California with plenty of Water — Nice! Fast Federal govt. approvals.

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 13:43 EDT, 6 Aug 2018.

California wildfires are being magnified & made so much worse by the bad

environmental laws which aren't allowing massive amounts of readily available water to be properly utilized. It is being diverted into the Pacific Ocean. Must also tree clear to stop fire from spreading!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 17:53 EDT, 6 Aug 2018.

The [Los Angeles Times](#) responded to Trump's tweets with the headline: "In a strikingly ignorant tweet, Trump gets almost everything about California wildfires wrong". The real problem is that California is becoming hotter and drier, as the result of climate change, which Trump denies. California's drought makes vegetation more flammable. The water problem affects the Central Valley, while the fires are in northern California — two different locations. The [Associated Press](#) and [PolitiFact](#) also conclude that Trump is mentioning wrong facts. The [Washington Post](#) mentioned that Trump ignored "residents who lost their homes or firefighters who lost their lives." More than 1000 homes have been destroyed by the wildfires currently burning in California.

### ***No Evidence of Voter Fraud***

In 2016, Trump claimed that he lost the popular vote to Hillary Clinton because more than three million people voted illegally. In May 2017, Trump created a commission to validate his delusion of millions of illegal voters. Trump ended the commission in January 2018, after it became mired in litigation. (See my previous [essay](#).) On 3 August 2018, Maine Secretary of State Matthew Dunlap — one of 11 members of the commission — [concluded](#) that there was *no* evidence of fraudulent voting. Dunlap said that his participation on the commission was "the most bizarre thing I've ever been a part of." [Washington Post](#); [Associated Press](#); [NBC News](#); [Portland Press-Herald](#).

It is *not* enough that Trump won the vote in the Electoral College in 2016. Trump's narcissistic character flaw also requires him to win the popular vote, as evidence that the American people admire Trump more than Hillary Clinton. So Trump created his delusion that he would have won the popular vote, except that more than three million illegal votes were allegedly cast for Clinton. Then Trump created a presidential commission to validate his delusion.

I am *not* concerned by the waste of taxpayer's money on this commission. I am concerned about Trump's repeated lies about fraudulent voting, lies that tarnish the reputation of elections in the USA, one of the foundations of U.S. Democracy. I am concerned about the commission's attempts to obtain confidential voting records from states. *If* there is any evidence of fraudulent voting, the state's attorney general should investigate and prosecute this crime.

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### **14 Aug 2018: *Unhinged*, another book about Trump**

In December 2017, Trump's White House [fired](#) Omarosa Manigault Newman. She had her revenge, when she wrote her book titled *Unhinged: An Insider's Account of the Trump White House*.



On 26 July 2018, the publisher publicly announced that her book is scheduled for first sale on 14 August 2018. [CNN](#); [Washington Post](#).

I am referring to Omarosa Manigault Newman by her first name, because that is what she prefers.

On 2 August, *The Daily Mail* in England reported on one excerpt from Omarosa's book. Back on 9 May 2017, Trump terminated the employment of the FBI Director, James Comey. The official White House explanation was that Deputy Attorney General Rod J. Rosenstein had written a memo to Trump recommending the termination of Comey. Then, on 11 May 2017 Donald Trump was interviewed by Lester Holt of NBC News, where Trump told Holt that Trump had already decided to terminate Comey before Trump received Rosenstein's memo. Omarosa says:

“While watching the interview I realized that something real and serious was going on in Donald's brain. His mental decline could not be denied. .... Throughout this erratic and contradictory interview, I kept thinking, 'Oh no! Oh no! This is bad! Donald rambled. He spoke gibberish. He contradicted himself from one sentence to the next. Hope [Hicks, then communications director] had gone over the briefing with him a dozen times hitting the key point that he had fired Comey based on the recommendation by the DOJ which the vice president and other surrogates had been reinforcing for days.”

Hazel Jones, "EXCLUSIVE: 'Something serious was going on in Donald's brain.' Omarosa tells how President Trump exhibited a 'mental decline that could not be denied' as she watched his rambling Lester Holt interview in her explosive book," [Daily Mail](#), 2 Aug 2018.

Omarosa had worked with Trump intermittently for 15 years, so she is in a good position to notice "his mental decline".

Significantly, Omarosa is the first person from inside Trump's White House to speak of Trump's mental defect. Trump's defective thought process is increasingly obvious, but everyone wants to ignore it.

On Friday, 10 August, the [New York Times](#) and [The Guardian](#) published articles about the advance copy of Omarosa's book that they were given. The [Washington Post](#) published an article after they received excerpts from Omarosa's book. Omarosa says Trump is a “racist, misogynist, and bigot.” The White House press secretary, Sarah Sanders, immediately responded with a harsh criticism of Omarosa. Sanders said: “It’s sad that a disgruntled former White House employee is trying to profit off these false attacks.” My comment is that just because Omarosa is a "disgruntled former employee" does *not* imply that she is making "false attacks" on Trump. Sanders' statement is *not* posted at the White House website.

Sanders' criticism of Omarosa repeats the debacle that the White House made in responding to Michael [Wolff's](#) book in January 2018. *The Washington Post* reported: “Trump instructed aides to respond Friday [10 Aug] after complaining about Manigault Newman’s book and that she had recorded him, two White House officials said. The original plan was to ignore the book, but Trump grew angry, the officials said, prompting the statement from Sanders.” My comment is that the original plan was the correct course. Trump's inability to control his anger, and his impulsive decision making, are again apparent.

Trump knew Omarosa during her appearances on three seasons of *The Apprentice* television program, but Trump hired her to work on his political campaign in 2016 and hired her again in 2017 to work in the White House. Moreover, *after* Omarosa was fired by the White House chief of staff, John Kelly, Trump offered Omarosa a \$15,000/month job working on his 2020 presidential re-election campaign. (The \$15,000/month job could be construed as "hush money", because it came with a nondisclosure agreement in which Omarosa would promise neither to say nor to write "disparaging comments" about Trump or Pence.) One must question Trump's judgment in repeatedly hiring Omarosa, if Omarosa is as bad as Sanders now says.

On 11 August, the [Associated Press](#) reported that Trump told journalists that Omarosa is a "Lowlife. She's a lowlife."

On Sunday, 12 August, Omarosa appeared on NBC television program "Meet the Press". The transcript is posted at [NBC News](#). Omarosa played an audio recording she made in the Situation Room of the White House, when Kelly terminated her employment.

On Sunday night, Sanders issued a hysterical statement to journalists that said in part: "... the very idea a staff member would sneak a recording device into the White House Situation Room, shows a blatant disregard for our national security — and then to brag about it on national television further proves the lack of character and integrity of this disgruntled former White House employee." Sanders' statement is *not* posted at the White House website. [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [Associated Press](#).

My opinion is that the choice of the Situation Room was probably made by Kelly, so Kelly is to blame for choosing a high-security room for a routine personnel matter. There is nothing on Omarosa's recording that affects "national security". Without recordings, Omarosa would have *no* evidence to corroborate what she wrote in her book.

On Monday morning, 13 August, Trump tweeted three times about Omarosa:

Wacky Omarosa, who got fired 3 times on the Apprentice, now got fired for the last time. She never made it, never will. She begged me for a job, tears in her eyes, I said Ok. People in the White House hated her. She was vicious, but not smart. I would rarely see her but heard....

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 09:27 EDT, 13 Aug 2018.

23 minutes later, Trump finished his vicious tweet about Omarosa.

...really bad things. Nasty to people & would constantly miss meetings & work. When Gen. Kelly came on board he told me she was a loser & nothing but problems. I told him to try working it out, if possible, because she only said GREAT things about me — until she got fired!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 09:50 EDT, 13 Aug 2018.

While I know it's "not presidential" to take on a lowlife like Omarosa, and while I would rather not be doing so, this is a modern day form of communication and I know the Fake News Media will be working overtime to make even Wacky Omarosa look legitimate as possible. Sorry!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 10:21 EDT, 13 Aug 2018.

Aside from whatever may be in Omarosa's book, her criticism of Trump provoked Trump to label Omarosa as "wacky" (twice) and "lowlife" (for a second time in three days). Trump's second tweet implies he liked Omarosa when "she only said GREAT things about me". Trump's third tweet combines his two villains: "Fake News Media" and Omarosa.

Notice that Trump is not consistent with *why* Omarosa was fired. On 10 August, the [Washington Post](#) reported Omarosa was fired "for abusing the government car service." But in his second tweet on 13 August, Trump mentions Omarosa "miss[ed] meetings and work." When an employer is inconsistent with the reason an employee was fired, the real reason may be an unacceptable reason.

Furthermore, Trump's three tweets confirm what was reported in *The Washington Post* on 10 August: Omarosa says Trump is "unable to control his impulses".

On the morning of 12 August, Omarosa said on "Meet the Press" that, after her book was in production, she went to Los Angeles where she heard a tape recording of Trump using the n-word during production of *The Apprentice* television show. [Washington Post](#)(AP); [New York Times](#). On the night of 13 August, Trump tweeted his rebuttal:

.@MarkBurnettTV called to say that there are NO TAPES of the Apprentice where I used such a terrible and disgusting word as attributed by Wacky and Deranged Omarosa. I don't have that word in my vocabulary, and never have. She made it up. Look at her MANY recent quotes saying....

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 21:50 EDT, 13 Aug 2018.

....such wonderful and powerful things about me — a true Champion of Civil Rights — until she got fired. Omarosa had Zero credibility with the Media (they didn't want interviews) when she worked in the White House. Now that she says bad about me, they will talk to her. Fake News!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 21:57 EDT, 13 Aug 2018.

On the morning of 14 August, Trump escalated his feud with Omarosa by calling her a "dog".

When you give a crazed, crying lowlife a break, and give her a job at the White House, I guess it just didn't work out. Good work by General Kelly for quickly firing that dog!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:31 EDT, 14 Aug 2018.

Trump's insults about Omarosa (e.g., "lowlife", "wacky", "deranged", "crazed", "dog") show Trump's techniques for winning a fight. In my opinion, Trump's insults show that Trump is unable to control his anger, and Trump acts like an angry child.

The [Washington Post](#) published an article with the title: "'Like a dog': Trump has a long history of using canine insults to dehumanize enemies". See also [New York Times](#).

On 14 August, Trump filed private arbitration to enforce the nondisclosure agreement that Omarosa signed when she became an employee of the Trump campaign in 2016.

[Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [Politico](#); [Associated Press](#).

On 15 August, Trump was silent about Omarosa. Apparently calling Omarosa a "dog" on the morning of 14 August satisfied Trump.

On 22 August 2018, Omarosa's book was at the top of *The New York Times* best seller list for nonfiction books. The [Washington Post](#) explained how Trump's criticism of Omarosa helped make her book a bestseller.

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## **Trump says he is "your favorite president"**

On 8 August 2018, Trump arrogantly proclaimed in a tweet that he was "your favorite president". This is probably another example of Trump's narcissistic character flaw, in which he craves public admiration. When I searched Twitter, I found three earlier tweets by Trump that also said "your favorite president".

On 19 November 2017, Trump first tweeted that he was "your favorite president".

Sen. Jeff Flake(y), who is unelectable in the Great State of Arizona (quit race, anemic polls) was caught (purposely) on "mike" saying bad things about your favorite President. He'll be a NO on tax cuts because his political career anyway is "toast."

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 18:22 EST, 19 Nov 2017.

We should have a contest as to which of the Networks, plus CNN and not including Fox, is the most dishonest, corrupt and/or distorted in its political coverage of your favorite President (me). They are all bad. Winner to receive the FAKE NEWS TROPHY!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 09:04 EST, 27 Nov 2017.

In July 2018, Trump had his knickers in a twist about the FBI serving a search warrant on Michael D. Cohen's office (*not* "break into"). Trump was also upset that Cohen had taped their conversations, although it is not only legal but also a substitute for handwritten notes.

Inconceivable that the government would break into a lawyer's office (early in the morning) — almost unheard of. Even more inconceivable that a lawyer would tape a client — totally unheard of & perhaps illegal. The good news is that your favorite President did nothing wrong!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 08:10 EDT, 21 July 2018.

The Republicans have now won 8 out of 9 House Seats, yet if you listen to the Fake News Media you would think we are being clobbered. Why can't they play it straight, so unfair to the Republican Party and in particular, your favorite President!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 11:14 EDT, 8 Aug 2018.

Because Trump lacks the qualifications to be president, because Trump is mentally unfit to be president, and because Trump does *not* act like a legitimate president, it is particularly inappropriate for Trump to call himself "your favorite president". Given that approximately 40% of Americans approve of Trump's job performance (see [below](#)), it is *not* plausible that Trump is America's favorite president.

On 22 December 2018, Trump was feeling unappreciated after he made a stupid and impulsive decision to withdraw all U.S. troops from Syria, then Trump shut down the U.S. Government over the refusal of Democrats in Congress to fund Trump's wall along the Mexican border.

If anybody but your favorite President, Donald J. Trump, announced that, after decimating ISIS in Syria, we were going to bring our troops back home (happy & healthy), that person would be the most popular hero in America. With me, hit hard instead by the Fake News Media. Crazy!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 20:59 EST, 22 Dec 2018.

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### 19 Aug 2018: Giuliani makes a mess

On 19 April 2018, Trump hired Rudy Giuliani — a former mayor of New York City and now an attorney in private practice — as a full-time personal attorney for Trump.

In May 2018, Giuliani gave interviews on television in which he made a [mess](#) of Trump's alleged adultery with an actress in pornographic movies.

On 3 June 2018, Giuliani gave an interview on television in which he made a [mess](#) about Trump's ability to pardon himself for any crimes.

On 6 June 2018, Giuliani publicly humiliated Kim Jong-un, the leader of North Korea, just days before the Kim/Trump summit, as described in my essay on [North Korea](#).

On 19 August 2018, Giuliani was at it again, when he appeared on the NBC television program "Meet the Press" and talked about negotiations for a future deposition of Trump by the Special Counsel, Robert Mueller.

CHUCK TODD: So you believe this is on them? You believe this is on them, that you would've, that you guys have not delayed the interviewing — delayed the negotiations with Mr. Mueller?

RUDY GIULIANI: Yes, each time, by 3 or 4 days, so we could write a letter in response. They have taken 2-3 weeks to get back to us, so what I have to tell you is, look, I am not going to be rushed into having him testify so that he gets trapped into perjury. And when you tell me that, you know, he should testify because he's going to tell the truth and he shouldn't worry, well that's so silly because it's somebody's version of the truth. Not the truth. He didn't have a, a conversation —

CHUCK TODD: Truth is truth. I don't mean to go like —

RUDY GIULIANI: No, it isn't truth. **Truth isn't truth.** The President of the United States says, "I didn't —"

CHUCK TODD: Truth isn't truth? Mr. Mayor, do you realize, what, I, I, I —

RUDY GIULIANI: No, no, no —

CHUCK TODD: This is going to become a bad meme.

Chuck Todd & Rudy Giuliani, "Meet the Press — August 19, 2018," [NBC News](#), 19 Aug 2018. [Boldface added by Standler.]

Giuliani was trying to explain the problem when two witnesses testify under oath to opposite facts. Each witness has sworn to tell the Truth, but one of the witnesses is wrong. The witness who testifies about wrong facts is not necessarily committing perjury, sometimes witnesses are sincere but wrong, other times witnesses may not remember correctly. That wrong witness is not telling the Truth, which is what Giuliani was inartfully — like a clumsy idiot — trying to say.

I was a research scientist for more than 15 years before becoming an attorney. I was initially troubled by litigators very fluid definition of Truth — and when I say "fluid" I am being charitable to the lying weasels. <grin> Litigators present their *version* of the Truth. It is a problem for the finder of fact (i.e., jury or judge) to determine which contradictory witness is more credible, or to ignore both witnesses.

In my opinion, Trump had poor judgment to hire a celebrity attorney like Giuliani. And given Giuliani's series of messes, Trump had extremely poor judgment to continue allowing Giuliani to give public statements and interviews. Actually, Trump should have fired Giuliani.

Mainstream journalists were aghast at Giuliani's "truth isn't truth" remark. See e.g., [Associated Press](#); [New York Times](#). The following day, Giuliani tried to explain his "truth isn't truth" remark, as he frantically attempted a do-over. [Associated Press](#); [Washington Post](#); [CNN](#); [Politico](#).

On 20 August 2018, Eugene Robinson, a columnist for the [Washington Post](#), wrote under the headline "'Truth isn't truth' is the Trump era's epitaph". Robinson says: "Constant, relentless, shameless lying is not ancillary to the Trump administration. It is not a sideshow; it's the main event." Robinson's words are like a breath of fresh air, after listening to Giuliani and Trump.

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## Trump attacks Google

On 28 August 2018, Trump was again tweeting about alleged unfairness of the news media, this time focusing on the alleged bias of the Google search engine.

Google search results for "Trump News" shows only the viewing/reporting of Fake New Media. In other words, they have it RIGGED, for me & others, so that almost all stories & news is BAD. Fake CNN is prominent. Republican/Conservative & Fair Media is shut out. Illegal? 96% of...

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 05:24 EDT, 28 Aug 2018.

....results on "Trump News" are from National Left-Wing Media, very dangerous.

Google & others are suppressing voices of Conservatives and hiding information and news that is good. They are controlling what we can & cannot see. This is a very serious situation — will be addressed!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 05:34 EDT, 28 Aug 2018.

My comments on Trump's two angry tweets on 28 August:

1. Search engines find articles that match a query. There is nothing wrong with Google. Google returns mostly criticism of Trump, because criticism of Trump dominates recent news articles. In Trump's distorted reality, negative news about Trump is "FAKE NEWS".
2. One reason that there is so much criticism of Trump by the news media is that, on 21 August, Trump's former personal attorney pled [guilty](#) to 8 felonies, and implicated Trump in two of those felonies. Trump is now an unindicted conspirator in two felonies.
3. Trump wonders if it is "illegal" for search engines to exclude conservative news media. The answer is NO!
4. When I search Google News for articles about Trump, I often see Fox News and other conservative organizations in the search results. I believe Trump is inventing false facts about search engines excluding conservatives. Note that Trump cites *no* source for his alleged facts.
5. What U.S. Government agency will Trump task to "address" Trump's concern about allegedly unfair search engines?
6. If Trump would stop yakking about the mainstream media being the "enemy of the American people", then maybe the media would treat Trump better.

On the afternoon of 28 August, Trump held a meeting in the Oval Office of the White House with two executives of soccer organizations. At the end of the meeting, a journalist asked Trump about Google.

QUESTION: Do you think that Google should be investigated?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Yeah, I think Google has really taken advantage of a lot of people. And I think that's a very serious thing, and it's a very serious charge. I think what Google and what others are doing — if you look at what's going on at Twitter, if you look at what's going on in Facebook, they better be careful, because you can't do that to people. You can't do it.

We have tremendous — we have literally thousands and thousands of complaints coming in. And you just can't do that. And so I think that Google and Twitter and Facebook, they're really treading on very, very troubled territory. And they have to be careful. It's not fair to large portions of the population.

"Remarks by President Trump, FIFA President Gianni Infantino, and U.S. Soccer President Carlos Cordeiro on the 2026 World Cup," [White House](#), 15:00 EDT, 28 Aug 2018.



Erik Wemple, the news media critic for the [Washington Post](#), wrote an opinion titled: "Google gives Trump a look at reality. Trump doesn't like it." The [Washington Post](#) also had a news article on this topic.

The [Associated Press](#) tersely described the news about Trump's attack on Google.

Floyd Abrams — an attorney who specializes in freedom of press — wrote an insightful opinion for the [Washington Post](#) that explains why the Government should *not* regulate search engines.

[PolitiFact](#) explained why Trump's was wrong to say that a Google search for "Trump News" returns 96% stories from left-wing journalists.

Trump has this delusion that Google is biasing its search results, and Trump has another delusion ("you can't do that to people") that Google's search engine is somehow unlawful. Based on those two delusions, Trump is going to investigate Google.

Trump has a long series of delusions that he is persecuted, including:

1. Trump believes he would have won the popular vote in 2016, except that more than three million people voted illegally.
2. On 4 March 2017, Trump announced that Obama had ordered a wiretap of Trump Tower in 2016. (See my previous [essay](#) at pages 54-70.)
3. On 17 May 2018, Trump [announced](#) that the FBI had put a spy in his campaign in 2016.
4. On 28 August 2018, Trump [announced](#) that Google search results were biased against him.
5. On 30 August 2018, Trump [accused](#) Lester Holt of NBC News of altering a videotape of a May 2017 interview with Trump.

Trump never presented any credible evidence for any of these delusions. Trump's delusions are reasons why Trump is unfit to be president. It is dangerous when the president can *not* distinguish between implausible conspiracy theories and true facts.

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## Trump attacks Lester Holt of NBC News

On 9 May 2017, Trump fired the director of the FBI, James Comey. The White House propaganda group concocted a reason why Trump fired Comey. But on 11 May 2017, Trump was interviewed by Lester Holt of NBC News, and Trump gave a different reason for firing Comey. See my previous [essay](#) on Trump at pages 83-92, which includes a transcript of the interview with Holt. In the interview with Holt, Trump essentially confesses to obstruction of justice.

On 30 August 2018, Trump accused Lester Holt of NBC News of "fudging my tape". As usual, Trump provides *no* evidence to support his scurrilous accusation.

What's going on at @CNN is happening, to different degrees, at other networks — with @NBCNews being the worst. The good news is that Andy Lack(y) is about to be fired(?) for incompetence, and much worse. When Lester Holt got caught fudging my tape on Russia, they were hurt badly!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:02 EDT, 30 Aug 2018.

There are at least four things wrong with Trump's terse last sentence, quoted above:

1. *When* was Lester Holt "caught fudging my tape"? Trump does *not* say.
2. *Who* caught Lester Holt altering the videotape? Trump does *not* say.
3. What did Trump really say, that is *not* on the allegedly altered videotape? Trump needs to specifically say what was altered, but Trump does *not* say.
4. How and when were Lester Holt and NBC News "hurt badly"? Trump does *not* say.

In fact, Trump's 30 August 2018 tweet seems to be Trump's first complaint about the allegedly altered videotape, which is now 15-months old.

[NBC News](#) posted a video of Holt's interview with Trump.

Journalists condemned Trump's lies about Lester Holt:

- "Trump accuses NBC News' Lester Holt of 'fudging' tape of interview about Comey firing, as legal pressures mount," [CNBC](#), 30 Aug 2018. ("... Trump and his attorneys are adopting a siege mentality, ...")
- "AP FACT CHECK: Trump's baseless claim of 'fudged' NBC tape," [Associated Press](#), 30 Aug 2018.
- "Trump seeks to backtrack on 2017 comments on Comey firing," [Reuters](#), 17:45 EDT, 30 Aug 2018.
- "Trump claims, without evidence, that NBC was 'caught fudging' TV interview with him," [Washington Post](#), 10:35 EDT, 30 Aug 2018.
- "Donald Trump just keeps claiming things he said on tape aren't real," [CNN](#), 18:34 EDT, 30 Aug 2018. ("If Trump had actual evidence (*he doesn't*) of a major broadcast network changing the nature of an answer he gave on something as consequential as the firing of Comey, why would he wait for 15 months to break that news? (*He wouldn't, of course.*) .... This is what happens when ... you allow someone to substitute opinions for facts.")
- "Trump Falsely Accuses NBC's Lester Holt Of Getting 'Caught Fudging' Russia Interview," [Forbes](#), 11:12 EDT, 30 Aug 2018. ("Trump offered no explanation of how

NBC might have "fudged" the interview, in which the most explosive words came from the president's own mouth. From the time the interview aired until today, no one has accused Holt of altering the interview — and he was never "caught" or "hurt badly" as a result.”)

On 20 September 2018, Jay Sekulow, one of Trump's personal attorneys, claimed that Lester Holt and NBC News had edited the interview to omit a quotation from Trump that is allegedly exculpatory. [CNN](#); [Washington Post](#). But as CNN says: "But such edits are not uncommon in television news, especially when an interview subject is rambling."

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## September 2018

On 2 September 2018, Tamara Keith of National Public Radio ([NPR](#)) counted the number of times Trump used the words "fake" or "phony" in his tweets. During August 2018, Trump used those two words 46 times in tweets, "far surpassing his previous record." She concluded: "This is part of a trend: as Trump's presidency has gone on, these kinds of tweets have increased over time, with peaks coming in months with particularly bad headlines for the president." NPR reminds us of Trump's [9 May](#) tweet and observed: "Often when Trump says something is fake, it isn't false. Rather, he just doesn't like it."

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On 3 September, Trump criticized his Attorney General for prosecuting two Republican candidates in the November elections. Trump's tweet was a blatant attempt at politicization of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Two long running, Obama era, investigations of two very popular Republican Congressmen were brought to a well publicized charge, just ahead of the Mid-Terms, by the Jeff Sessions Justice Department. Two easy wins now in doubt because there is not enough time. Good job Jeff.....

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 14:25 EDT, 3 Sep 2018.

Trump's tweet may be an impeachable offense, for showing favoritism to Republicans in criminal prosecutions.

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Back on 11 October 2017, Trump [tweeted](#) "With all of the Fake News coming out of NBC and the Networks, at what point is it appropriate to challenge their License?" Trump — who is really stupid — did not realize that the government does *not* license television networks.

On 4 Sep 2018, Trump again displayed his ignorance on the topic of licensing journalists.

NBC FAKE NEWS, which is under intense scrutiny over their killing the Harvey Weinstein story, is now fumbling around making excuses for their probably highly unethical conduct. I have long criticized NBC and their journalistic standards — worse than even CNN. Look at their license?

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 10:58 EDT, 4 Sep 2018.

Trump's suggestion that the government should license journalists is a blatant violation of freedom of the press, in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Repeating his 11 Oct 2017 mistake shows that Trump is too stupid to learn from his mistakes. In fact,

Representative Cohen believed Trump wanting to license journalists was an [impeachable](#) offense.

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### Woodward's book, *Fear*

*The Washington Post* obtained an advance copy of Bob Woodward's new book, *Fear, Trump in the White House*, which will be released for public sale on 11 September.

John Dowd [ , Trump's principal personal attorney in special counsel Mueller's investigation,] was convinced that President Trump would commit perjury if he talked to special counsel Robert S. Mueller III. So, on Jan. 27, the president's then-personal attorney staged a practice session to try to make his point.

In the White House residence, Dowd peppered Trump with questions about the Russia investigation, provoking stumbles, contradictions and lies until the president eventually lost his cool.

"This thing's a goddamn hoax," Trump erupted at the start of a 30-minute rant that finished with him saying, "I don't really want to testify."

....

Later [on 21 March 2018], Dowd told Trump: "Don't testify. It's either that or an orange jumpsuit."

But Trump, concerned about the optics of a president refusing to testify and convinced that he could handle Mueller's questions, had by then decided otherwise.

"I'll be a real good witness," Trump told Dowd, according to Woodward.

"You are not a good witness," Dowd replied. "Mr. President, I'm afraid I just can't help you."

The next morning, Dowd resigned.

....

A central theme of the book is the stealthy machinations used by those in Trump's inner sanctum to try to control his impulses and prevent disasters, both for the president personally and for the nation he was elected to lead.

....

Again and again, Woodward recounts at length how Trump's national security team was shaken by his lack of curiosity and knowledge about world affairs and his contempt for the mainstream perspectives of military and intelligence leaders.

At a National Security Council meeting on Jan. 19, Trump disregarded the significance of the massive U.S. military presence on the Korean Peninsula, including a special intelligence operation that allows the United States to detect a North Korean missile launch in seven seconds vs. 15 minutes from Alaska, according to Woodward. Trump questioned why the government was spending resources in the region at all.

“We’re doing this in order to prevent World War III,” Defense Secretary Jim Mattis told him.

After Trump left the meeting, Woodward recounts, “Mattis was particularly exasperated and alarmed, telling close associates that the president acted like — and had the understanding of — ‘a fifth- or sixth-grader.’ ”

Philip Rucker & Robert Costa, "Bob Woodward's new book reveals a 'nervous breakdown' of Trump's presidency," [Washington Post](#), 11:08 EDT, 4 Sep 2018.

*The New York Times* also obtained an advance copy of Woodward's new book.

President Trump so alarmed his defense secretary, Jim Mattis, during a discussion last January of the nuclear standoff with North Korea that an exasperated Mr. Mattis told colleagues that “the president acted like — and had the understanding of — a ‘fifth or sixth grader.’ ”

....

These anecdotes are in a sprawling, highly anticipated new book by Bob Woodward, which depicts the Trump White House as a byzantine, treacherous, often out-of-control operation — “crazytown,” in the words of the chief of staff, John F. Kelly — hostage to the whims of an impulsive, ill-informed and undisciplined president.

Mark Landler & Maggie Haberman, "Jim Mattis Compared Trump to 'Fifth or Sixth Grader,' Bob Woodward Says in Book," [New York Times](#), 4 Sep 2018.

My comment is that Woodward's book will sink Trump's reputation even lower. However, I am concerned that Woodward attributing criticism of Trump to Mattis and Kelly will damage Trump's relationship with those two men. We need Mattis and Kelly to continue containing some of the damage that Trump is doing.

Trump tweeted denials by [Mattis](#) and [Kelly](#), then Trump concluded:

The Woodward book has already been refuted and discredited by General (Secretary of Defense) James Mattis and General (Chief of Staff) John Kelly. Their quotes were made up frauds, a con on the public. Likewise other stories and quotes. Woodward is a Dem operative? Notice timing?

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 19:18 EDT, 4 Sep 2018.

Woodward has much more credibility than Trump. Further, the statements attributed to Mattis and Kelly look like they were prepared by a professional propagandist, *not* something a career U.S. Marine would write. Moreover, the formatting of the alleged statements by Mattis and Kelly look the same as the formatting of the statement by White House Press Secretary [Sanders](#). Still further, the alleged Kelly 4 Sep statement appears to be recycled from 30 April 2018, when it was previously reported that Kelly allegedly called Trump an

idiot. [CNN](#)(30Apr); [Politico](#)(30Apr); [NBC News](#)(1May); [New York Times](#)(2May).

Woodward reports that Mattis said talking to Trump was like talking to a fifth-grade pupil. That is consistent with a 31 May 2018 remark quoted [above](#) in which a woman said talking to Trump "was like talking to a toddler". Mattis is also consistent with an analysis of Trump's extemporaneous speech that showed Trump talked like a [fourth-grade](#) pupil.

The following morning Trump again suggested changing libel laws, so Trump could sue Woodward.

Isn't it a shame that someone can write an article or book, totally make up stories and form a picture of a person that is literally the exact opposite of the fact, and get away with it without retribution or cost. Don't know why Washington politicians don't change libel laws?

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:33 EDT, 5 Sep 2018.

[Above](#), I chronicled some of Trump's previous suggestions that libel law needs to be changed. Trump still does *not* understand that libel laws are primarily state common law, not federal statutes.

On Friday, 7 September, Trump again criticized Woodward's book.

The Woodward book is a scam. I don't talk the way I am quoted. If I did I would not have been elected President. These quotes were made up. The author uses every trick in the book to demean and belittle. I wish the people could see the real facts — and our country is doing GREAT!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:32 EDT, 7 Sep 2018.

Later on 7 September, Trump repeated some of his criticisms of Woodward's book to journalists aboard Air Force One.

THE PRESIDENT: .... So I can say that Woodward — Woodward's book is a total fraud. Which it is, it's a total fraud. I don't talk that way. You people know me, I don't talk that way. I can't get up and talk in front of a crowd — many times without notes — for an hour and twenty-five minutes and get the biggest crowds in the history of politics. Because this is not like what you saw last night [in Montana] — that place was packed. And you're in Billings. And all over the country, you don't see an empty seat. You don't get up and do that because you don't know how to think or talk. You can only do that if you're at a very, very high level.

So, the book that was written was fiction. I don't speak that way. I'm highly educated and always did well. Always did well, no matter what I did. Whether I was in show business — I was in show business. I had "The Apprentice." It was one of the top shows on television. No matter what I did — before that, I was a businessman. I was great at business. And then I tried politics. And I started off as President, and guess what happened? I won.

The book was just total fiction. Disappointing, but when I went I went back and did research on Woodward after the book — I guess it comes out soon — I did a little research; Bush had the same problems, and Obama had the same problems (inaudible).

But that book was total nonsense. And when General Mattis and General Kelly and Sarah and everybody else come out and totally disavow everything that they said in the book — and others too, by the way — you see the list of people — it's hard to believe you can allow somebody to get away with it.

And frankly, I'll say it again: Our libel laws should be tough enough so you can't do that. Our libel laws are pathetic. Our libel laws should be toughened up, so if somebody writes things that are fraudulent and false, they get sued and they lose. We should do that.

"Remarks by President Trump in Press Gaggle Aboard Air Force One," [White House](#), 7 Sep 2018.

There is probably a transcription error in the first paragraph quoted above, when Trump said: "I can't get up and talk in front of a crowd". The word "can't" should be "can". While Trump *can* talk without notes for more than an hour, his remarks are rambling and incoherent. On 7 Sep, notice how Trump went from criticizing Woodward's book to praising Trump as "highly educated and always did well."

On Sunday, 9 September, Woodward was interviewed on a [CBS](#) television program and concluded about Trump: "That people better wake up to what's going on." My comment is that everyone seems to be ignoring the obvious problem of an unfit president — except for a handful of psychiatrists and psychologists, and except for a very few courageous politicians.

In his 4 Sep tweet quoted above, Trump suggests "Woodward is a Dem operative?" Again on 10 Sep, Trump continues his paranoia that Woodward "is like a Dem operative".

"It is mostly anonymous sources in here, why should anyone trust you? General Mattis, General Kelly said it's not true." @SavannahGuthrie @TODAYshow Bob Woodward is a liar who is like a Dem operative prior to the Midterms. He was caught cold, even by NBC.

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 08:36 EDT, 10 Sep 2018.

Of course, the real reason for the anonymous sources is that they want to continue their employment in Trump's government, to protect the USA from Trump's bad decisions.

On 12 September, the [Associated Press](#) tells us that Woodward's book has already sold 750,000 copies, one day after the book began public sales.

On 18 September, the publisher of Woodward's book says 1.1 million copies were sold in its first week of publication. [Associated Press](#).

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## Anonymous Resistance Inside the Trump Administration

On the afternoon of 5 September, *The New York Times* published an anonymous op-ed by "a senior official in the Trump administration".

But we believe our first duty is to this country, and the president continues to act in a manner that is detrimental to the health of our republic.



That is why many Trump appointees have [vowed to do what we can](#) to preserve our democratic institutions while thwarting Mr. Trump's more misguided impulses until he is out of office.

The root of the problem is the president's amorality. Anyone who works with him knows he is not moored to any discernible first principles that guide his decision making.

Although he was elected as a Republican, the president shows little affinity for ideals long espoused by conservatives: free minds, free markets and free people. At best, he has invoked these ideals in scripted settings. At worst, he has attacked them outright.

In addition to his mass-marketing of the notion that the press is the "enemy of the people," President Trump's impulses are generally anti-trade and anti-democratic.

....

But these successes [e.g., effective deregulation, historic tax reform, a more robust military] have come despite — not because of — the president's leadership style, which is impetuous, adversarial, petty and ineffective.

....

Meetings with [Trump] veer off topic and off the rails, he engages in repetitive rants, and his impulsiveness results in half-baked, ill-informed and occasionally reckless decisions that have to be walked back.

....

Take foreign policy: In public and in private, President Trump shows a preference for autocrats and dictators, such as President Vladimir Putin of Russia and North Korea's leader, Kim Jong-un, and displays little genuine appreciation for the ties that bind us to allied, like-minded nations.

anonymous, "I Am Part of the Resistance Inside the Trump Administration," [New York Times](#), 5 Sep 2018.

Notice that the "vowed to do what we can" link in the original op-ed is to an article on Woodward's book. The anonymous senior administration official appears to confirm a theme in Woodward's book.

At a meeting at the White House, journalists asked Trump about the anonymous op-ed. Trump obviously had not yet read the anonymous op-ed, but he responded anyway:

QUESTION: Mr. President, any comments on the anonymous op-ed in the New York  
—

QUESTION: Mr. President, the anonymous op-ed, sir? Do you have a reaction?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't understand.

QUESTION: There's anonymous op-ed in the New York Times that says, "I Am Part of the Resistance Inside the Trump Administration." Just posted. Your reaction?

THE PRESIDENT: Hey, I'll ask the sheriffs: Can you imagine? We have somebody in what I call the "failing New York Times" that's talking about he's part of the resistance within the Trump administration.

QUESTION: This person works for the administration, they said.

THE PRESIDENT: This is what we have to deal with. And, you know, the dishonest media — because you people deal with it as well as I do — but it's really a disgrace.

I will say this: Nobody has done what this administration has done in terms of getting things passed and getting things through. ....

....

So when you tell me about some anonymous source within the administration, probably who's failing and probably here for all the wrong reasons. Now — and the New York Times is failing. If I weren't here, I believe the New York Times probably wouldn't even exist. (Applause.) And some day — let me just tell you — and some day, when I'm not President, which hopefully will be in about six and a half years from now, the New York Times and CNN, and all of these phony media outlets, will be out of business, folks. They'll be out of the business. Because there will be nothing to write, and there will be nothing of interest.

....

So they don't like Donald Trump, and I don't like them, because they're very dishonest people. Remember this also, about the New York Times: When I won, they were forced to apologize to their subscribers. They wrote a letter of apology — it was the first time anybody has ever done it — because they covered the election incorrectly. So if the failing New York Times has an anonymous editorial — can you believe it? "Anonymous" — meaning gutless. A gutless editorial.

We're doing a great job. The poll numbers are through the roof. Our poll numbers are great. And guess what? Nobody is going to come close to beating me in 2020 because of what we've done. We've done more than anybody ever thought possible in — it's not even two years.

"Remarks by President Trump in Meeting with Sheriffs," [White House](#), 17:05 EDT, 5 Sep 2018.

At 17:45 EDT on 5 September 2018, Trump [tweeted](#) part of a one-sentence message: "The Failing New York Times!" Then, half an hour later, Trump's next tweet contained only a single word:

TREASON?

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 18:15 EDT, 5 Sep 2018.

Does the so-called "Senior Administration Official" really exist, or is it just the Failing New York Times with another phony source? If the GUTLESS anonymous person does indeed exist, the Times must, for National Security purposes, turn him/her over to government at once!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 19:40 EDT, 5 Sep 2018.

Trump's immediate response was *not* to engage the anonymous official on substantive issues.

In his remarks at the White House, Trump was incredibly stupid to comment on an op-ed that he had *not* read, and had just learned about from questions by journalists. Trump's rant about allegedly "dishonest" journalists is *not* relevant to the substance of the anonymous op-ed. Trump asserted that his opinion poll "numbers are great" — not only is that irrelevant to the substance of the anonymous op-ed, but also Trump's approval in polls is slowly declining (see [below](#)). In his reply to journalists at the White House, Trump's irrelevant mention of his alleged economic achievements is quoted [below](#) and criticized there.

In his first tweet, Trump again displays his ignorance of the U.S. Constitution when he accuses the anonymous senior official of "treason". The U.S. Constitution — Article 3, § 3, clause 1 — says "Treason against the United States, shall consist only in levying War against them, or in adhering to their Enemies, giving them Aid and Comfort." Irritating the president is *not* treason.

In his second tweet, Trump focuses on identifying a leak in his administration. Obviously, Trump wants to punish the leaker for embarrassing Trump.

Trump's response contains more reasons why he is unfit to be president.

On 5 September, journalists covered the anonymous op-ed and Trump's reaction. For example: [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [Associated Press](#); [CNN](#); [The Guardian](#).

On 6 September, the [Washington Post](#) published a news article that shows examples of aides to Trump frustrating Trump's decisions. This theme in Woodward's book agrees with the anonymous op-ed. Meanwhile, the White House propaganda is *not* challenging the substance of Woodward's book and the op-ed.

On Friday, 7 September, Trump told journalists aboard Air Force One that the Department of Justice should investigate and determine who wrote the anonymous op-ed. [Associated Press](#); [Washington Post](#). Later, a transcript was posted at the White House website.

QUESTION: Do you think Jeff Sessions should be investigating who the author of the op-ed piece was or (inaudible)?

THE PRESIDENT: I think so, because I think it's national security. Yeah. I would say Jeff should be investigating who the author of that piece was because I really believe it's national security.

QUESTION: And is there action that should be taken against the New York Times?  
(Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we're going to see. I'm looking at that right now.

QUESTION: (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: It only happened yesterday, right? But I'm looking. I am looking.

QUESTION: You said last night that it's treason, what happened. In this country, we can punish treason with the death penalty. Are you serious about that?

THE PRESIDENT: We're going to take a look at what he had, what he gave, what he's talking about — also where he is right now. Supposing I have a high-level national security meeting, and he has got a clearance — I know we talked about clearances a lot, recently — and he goes into a high-level meeting concerning China or Russia or North Korea or something, and this guy goes in. I don't want him at those meetings. So, we're going to see what happens. We're looking at it very strongly from a legal standpoint.

"Remarks by President Trump in Press Gaggle Aboard Air Force One," [White House](#), 7 Sep 2018.

But the Justice Department should *not* investigate the author of the anonymous op-ed, because writing and publishing the op-ed was a lawful activity. There is a line of U.S. Supreme Court cases holding that anonymous pamphlets are protected speech. Furthermore, the purpose of criminal law is to punish *past* crimes, not to prevent future crimes. So a criminal investigation by the Department of Justice is *not* appropriate to address Trump's concern that the author of the anonymous op-ed *might* leak classified information in the future.

Note that on 7 Sep, Trump said the anonymous op-ed "only happened yesterday", when it actually happened two days ago. One of the signs of mental illness is that the patient is disconnected from time.

I am dismayed by the reaction inside Washington DC to the anonymous op-ed. Many politicians have criticized the author of the anonymous op-ed as disloyal or insubordinate, and those politicians want the author identified and removed from government. But I think the author of the anonymous op-ed is *not* the problem — Trump is the problem. I think we should remove Trump from the presidency, because he is unfit to be president. In reply to the argument that the author of the anonymous op-ed is insubordinate, I thought we rejected the "following orders" excuse at the Nazi war crimes trials in the 1940s. The anonymous author has a moral obligation *not* to obey illegal orders.

Some commentators have criticized the anonymous author of the op-ed because that author increased Trump's paranoia. In my opinion, that is a criticism of Trump, *not* a criticism of the anonymous whistleblower who revealed what is happening in the White House and highest levels of the U.S. Government.

Trump commanded staff in the White House to identify the author of the anonymous *Times* op-ed. But, a month later, on 5 October, the White House had abandoned the search without finding the author. [Associated Press](#); [CBS News](#)(AP); [CNBC](#)(AP); [NBC News](#); [Vanity Fair](#). My comment is that it appears that the White House staff resisted Trump's command to identify the anonymous author of the op-ed.

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## **National Park Service Altered Inauguration Photographs**

When too few people attended Trump's January 2017 Inauguration, Trump had a simple solution: alter the official photographs to increase the attendance. On 21 Jan 2017, both Trump and his press secretary, Spicer, called the director of the National Park Service and ordered the photographs altered. The National Park Service cropped the photos to remove empty space, so the photos showed only part of the Truth — giving a false impression. On 6 September 2018, *The Guardian* newspaper published the results of their investigation. [The Guardian](#)(6Sep); [CNN](#)(7Sep). Back on 7 March 2017, the [Washington Post](#) reported that Trump had called the director of the National Park Service. Do we call this cheating, fraud, untruthfulness, deception, dishonesty, ... ? Note that these photographs are *not* of a private event, but are an official government record. Note also that this alteration of government records occurred on the first full day of Trump's presidency, marking the beginning of the president's long series of lies and untruthfulness.

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## **Trump embarrasses himself**

On 5 September 2018, Trump was at the White House in a meeting with sheriffs, when journalists surprised Trump with questions about an anonymous op-ed just published by *The New York Times*. The op-ed and the substance of Trump's response is chronicled [above](#). Trump also included a long, irrelevant response about Trump's alleged economic achievements:

I will say this: Nobody has done what this administration has done in terms of getting things passed and getting things through. A article was just printed, just came out a few minutes ago: Trump breaks the record for budget gridlock wins, “scores big win.” So for 20 years — it’s a 20-year record — for a 20-year record — they call it “the ‘fouled up’ budget gridlock” and “scores big win.” Here is the thing. So this just came out. So in 20 years, it hasn’t been like it is now. It’s — we broke — we broke it. That’s just really positive stuff.

And then, in addition to that, point after point after point, if you look, almost 4 million jobs created since the election. (Applause.) More Americans now employed than ever recorded in our history. So we have more people working today than at any point ever in our history.

We’ve created 400,000 manufacturing jobs. Manufacturing jobs are growing at the fastest pace in more than 30 years. Economic growth last quarter was 4.2 percent. And as you people know, it was headed down. Big. And it was a low number. A very low number. It would’ve been — in my opinion, it would’ve been less than zero. It was

heading to negative numbers.

New employment claims recently hit a — think of that — the unemployment picture in the country is the best it's been in 49 years. African American unemployment, lowest in the history of our country. Asian American unemployment, lowest in the history of our country. Hispanic American unemployment, lowest in the history of our country.

I mean, I'm just looking at these — just point after point. Under my administration, veterans' unemployment reached its lowest in many, many years. The — let's see — almost 3.9 million Americans have been lifted off food stamps, just since my election. Then you go into all of the benefits that we got from the tax cuts. All of you people benefitted tremendously from the tax cuts. (Applause.)

You go into regulation cuts. You go into Right to Try. Right to Try is where you have the right — if a person is terminally ill, you have a right to go and try, and see whether or not a drug that's not approved yet can be used and utilized. They didn't allow that.

Point after point: Getting rid of the individual mandate, the most unpopular thing there is in Obamacare. Coming up with new healthcare plans. We've never had a period — even if you look at the Olympics; got the Olympics. The World Cup just got — you just saw them; they were in my office. Got the World Cup. Nobody has — and we have started the wall. Nobody has ever done, in less than a two-year period, what we've done.

"Remarks by President Trump in Meeting with Sheriffs," [White House](#), 17:05 EDT, 5 Sep 2018.

My comment is that the sheriffs are accustomed to dealing with mentally ill people who are creating a disturbance. But the sheriffs probably did not expect to hear a rambling, irrelevant outburst by the president in the White House.

As one would expect from Trump, his facts are wrong. A week later, Congress still has *not* passed a budget for Trump to sign, which makes Trump's "20 year" boast false. Also "we have started the wall" is false — Congress never allocated funds for construction of Trump's wall. On 8 September, the Associated Press reported:

The economy, though healthy, has been in better shape at many times in the past.

Growth reached 4.2 percent at an annual rate in the second quarter. That's the best in the past four years. So far, the economy is growing at a modest rate compared with previous economic expansions. In the late 1990s, growth topped 4 percent for four straight years, from 1997 through 2000. In the 1980s expansion, growth even reached 7.2 percent in 1984.

The unemployment rate of 3.9 percent is strong but it's not at the best point ever. It is near an 18-year low. The all-time low came in 1953, when unemployment fell to 2.5 percent during the Korean War. Meanwhile, a greater percentage of Americans held jobs in 2000 than now.

Hope Yen, "AP FACT CHECK: Trump's wrong on economy and treason," [Associated Press](#), 8 Sep 2018.

Trump spewing false facts about the economy is an ineffective and irrelevant response to the anonymous op-ed in *The Times*. Trump's base of supporting voters is probably too stupid to notice that Trump is not only factually wrong but also irrelevant.

On the morning of 10 September, Trump tweeted:

The GDP Rate (4.2%) is higher than the Unemployment Rate (3.9%) for the first time in over 100 years!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:03 EDT, 10 Sep 2018.

It is *not* clear why the rate of increase in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) should be compared to the unemployment rate. One expects that Donald Trump, a graduate of one of the finest business colleges in the USA, would make proper comparisons of economic indicators. And, as usual, Trump has his facts wrong: the GDP exceeded the unemployment rate 12 years ago. [Washington Post](#); [Associated Press](#); [Fox News Research](#); [New York Times](#); [Bloomberg News](#); [FactCheck.org](#).

### **Thank God for Trump!**

Then on the morning of 10 September 2018, Trump retweeted an [image](#) that Trump found on Twitter that says "Thank God for Trump!" This was blatant self-praise that was excessive even by Trump's standards. Several journalists reported Trump's retweet: [Washington Post](#); [The Hill](#).

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### **Trump warns about hurricane Florence**

I searched Trump's tweets at 05:00 EDT on Thursday, 13 September 2018, and here is some of what I found about hurricane Florence:

The Storms in the Atlantic are very dangerous. We encourage anyone in the path of these storms to prepare themselves and to heed the warnings of State and Local officials. The Federal Government is closely monitoring and ready to assist. We are with you!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 15:35 EDT, 10 Sep 2018.

In the above tweet, Trump says "the storms" and "these storms" — plural — when the real concern is about *one* storm, hurricane Florence.

To the incredible citizens of North Carolina, South Carolina and the entire East Coast — the storm looks very bad! Please take all necessary precautions. We have already begun mobilizing our assets to respond accordingly, and we are here for you!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 15:41 EDT, 10 Sep 2018.

In the above tweet, Trump says "the storm" instead of being precise and saying "hurricane Florence". Trump also says the hurricane "looks very bad" instead of giving a numerical value for the maximum sustained wind speed and forecast rainfall. Trump warns "the entire East Coast", when the forecast on 10 Sep is that Florida, and coastal states from New Jersey



to Maine, will likely have little impact from hurricane Florence and its remnants.

My people just informed me that this is one of the worst storms to hit the East Coast in many years. Also, looking like a direct hit on North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia. Please be prepared, be careful and be SAFE!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 19:17 EDT, 10 Sep 2018.

The [Associated Press](#) reports that the last time a Category 4 hurricane hit North Carolina was in the year 1954. In the above tweet, Trump's "many years" should have a numerical value. Also, Florence is forecast to hit the Carolinas, *not* "the East Coast".

On 11 September, Trump humiliated himself by saying Florence was "tremendously wet", something no professional meteorologist would say.

THE PRESIDENT: The places that are in the way and in the most jeopardy would be Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina — that area. And again, they haven't seen anything like what's coming at us in 25, 30 years — maybe ever. It's tremendously big and tremendously wet. Tremendous amounts of water.

....

Now, I've also heard it could be 21 and 22 inches. If you can imagine what that is — 22 inches of rain. It is not something that we've had. Certainly, we've never had this on the East Coast. So — but I think we're very well prepared and very well set up.

"Remarks by President Trump and FEMA Administrator Brock Long on Hurricane Florence Response Measures," [White House](#), 15:13 EDT, 11 Sep 2018.

In the above-quoted public briefing, Trump *should* have mentioned the numerical values in the National Weather Service forecasted 7-day rainfall (i.e., between 50 cm and 75 cm rainfall during 13-20 Sep), instead of Trump's childish expression "tremendously wet". Later in the briefing, Trump mentions 22 inches of rainfall as unprecedented "on the East Coast". As usual, Trump has his facts wrong. Virginia had 27 inches of rain in hurricane Camille, and North Carolina had 24 inches of rain in hurricane Floyd in 1999.

An hour later, Trump tweeted:

The safety of American people is my absolute highest priority. Heed the directions of your State and Local Officials. Please be prepared, be careful and be SAFE!  
<https://www.ready.gov/>

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 16:16 EDT, 11 Sep 2018.

Hurricane Florence is looking even bigger than anticipated. It will be arriving soon.

FEMA, First Responders and Law Enforcement are supplied and ready. Be safe!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 06:58 EDT, 12 Sep 2018.

In the above tweet, what does "arriving soon" mean? The National Weather Service has forecasts of *when* and *where* the hurricane will arrive. Why not quote those forecasts? Even better, why not link to the current forecast?

At noon on 12 September, Trump tweeted a weather satellite image of hurricane Florence:

It is imperative that everyone follow local evacuation orders. This storm is extremely dangerous. Be SAFE! #HurricaneFlorence <https://www.ready.gov/hurricanes>  
Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 12:37 EDT, 12 Sep 2018.

The above-quoted tweets show that Trump does *not* understand the weather forecast for hurricane Florence. In my opinion, Trump's ignorance makes him unfit to be president.

My main criticism of Trump's warnings about hurricane Florence is that he uses vague words, instead of mentioning numerical values. Trump was educated as an economist at one of the best business colleges in the USA, and professional economists routinely use numbers. But when Trump mentions a number, it is often either an exaggeration or misleading.

Trump seems to get his information from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), instead of the National Hurricane Center operated by the National Weather Service. The National Hurricane Center has an informative [webpage](#) on Florence with links to current advisories, forecasts, and graphic images. Trump is ignoring the best information about hurricane Florence.

On the morning of 12 September, the National Hurricane Center [measured](#) a 25-meter (83-foot) high wave near the center of hurricane Florence. What will an 83-foot high wave do to a wood-frame house on the beach? It will obliterate the house and wash the debris out to sea. Trump *should* mention this to motivate people on the Carolina coast to evacuate *before* hurricane Florence arrives.

Back on 12 February 2018, Trump's proposed federal budget slashed funding for NOAA — the parent agency of the National Weather Service — by 20%. [Scientific American](#); [Weather Channel](#); [Washington Post](#). It is not surprising that Trump, who is ignorant of science, does *not* understand the importance of scientific research to a modern industrial economy. Even farmers and ranchers depend on accurate weather forecasts.

Hurricane Maria hit Puerto Rico in September 2017. Electric power was out on part of the island for most of the following year, owing to the incompetence of the local electric utility. The official death toll in Puerto Rico was initially 64, but on 28 August 2018 was increased to 2975. [Associated Press](#). On 13 September 2018, in two consecutive tweets, Trump not only disputed facts, but also blamed Democrats for the allegedly false death toll.

3000 people did not die in the two hurricanes that hit Puerto Rico. When I left the Island, AFTER the storm had hit, they had anywhere from 6 to 18 deaths. As time went by it did not go up by much. Then, a long time later, they started to report really large numbers, like 3000...

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 08:37 EDT, 13 Sep 2018.

.....This was done by the Democrats in order to make me look as bad as possible when I was successfully raising Billions of Dollars to help rebuild Puerto Rico. If a person died for any reason, like old age, just add them onto the list. Bad politics. I love Puerto Rico!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 08:49 EDT, 13 Sep 2018.

As usual, Trump is alleging false facts. [FactCheck.org](#); [Associated Press](#);

[Associated Press](#)(fact-check); [Washington Post](#); [Wall Street Journal](#).

When something good happens, Trump takes full credit. When something bad happens, Trump blames someone else — typically Obama, George W. Bush, or Bill Clinton. Here Trump blames *Democrats*. Trump is displaying his paranoia: Democrats did this to Trump.

At noon on Tuesday, 18 September, Trump showed his ability to predict the future.

Right now, everybody is saying what a great job we are doing with Hurricane Florence — and they are 100% correct. But don't be fooled, at some point in the near future the Democrats will start ranting...

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 11:50 EDT, 18 Sep 2018.

...that FEMA, our Military, and our First Responders, who are all unbelievable, are a disaster and not doing a good job. This will be a total lie, but that's what they do, and everybody knows it!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 11:50 EDT, 18 Sep 2018.

At the time of these two tweets, the remnant of Florence was causing rain in Massachusetts and southern New Hampshire. The death toll from Florence was then approximately 32, mostly in North Carolina. Trump again makes a grammar error with pronouns. In the last sentence of his second tweet, Trump clearly intends that "they" refer to Democrats, but the nearest antecedent is "FEMA, our Military, and our First Responders".

On 19 September, Trump visited North and South Carolina and again mangled the English language:

"This is a tough hurricane," [Trump] said. "One of the wettest we've ever seen from the standpoint of water."

"Trump calls Florence 'one of the wettest we've ever seen from the standpoint of water'," [ABC News](#), 10:02 EDT, 19 Sep 2018.

Apparently this is the first time Trump has seen wet water. <sarcastic smirk>

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## Trump angry with Mattis

[Above](#), journalists mentioned on 4 September that Woodward's book quotes the Secretary of Defense, Jim Mattis, as saying Trump acted like "a fifth- or sixth-grader." That criticism by Mattis will surely get the attention of Trump, who has the delusion that he is a genius and well-educated.

On the evening of 12 September, [Politico](#) reported that Trump stopped using Mattis' old nickname "Mad Dog". Trump demoted Mattis to "Moderate Dog". The scuttlebutt is that Trump will replace Mattis after the 6 November 2018 election. See also: [Military Times](#); [The Hill](#); [Los Angeles Times](#).

On 15 September, the [New York Times](#) reported that Trump "increasingly concerned that [Mattis] is a Democrat at heart." Being called a "democrat" by Trump is an insult. Toward

the end of the previous section of this essay, I quote a 13 Sep tweet in which Trump says the increase in official death toll in Puerto Rico from hurricane Maria "was done by the Democrats in order to make me look as bad as possible".

On 11 October 2018, Trump was interviewed by CBS News and he said the following about Mattis:

Lesley Stahl: What about General Mattis? Is he going to leave?

President Donald Trump: Well, I don't know. He hasn't told me that. I have —

Lesley Stahl: Do you want him to —

President Donald Trump: — a very good relationship with him. It could be that he is. I think he's sort of a Democrat, if you wanna know the truth. But General Mattis is a good guy. We get along very well. He may leave. I mean, at some point, everybody leaves. Everybody. People leave. That's Washington.

"President Trump on Christine Blasey Ford, his relationships with Vladimir Putin and Kim Jong Un and more," [CBS News](#), 14 Oct 2018.

General Mattis has spent his entire life serving his country, and now Trump insults Mattis by calling him a "Democrat". Trump takes a very casual approach to his administration [hemorrhaging](#) employees at a rate higher than any previous president.

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### **Rosenstein allegedly discussed recording Trump**

On Friday, 21 September 2018, the [New York Times](#) reported that in May 2017 Deputy U.S. Attorney General Rosenstein discussed secretly recording Trump and then using the 25th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution to remove Trump from the presidency. Rosenstein disputed the report in *The New York Times*. Then the [Washington Post](#) reported that McCabe's memoranda suggested that *The Times* was correct. [Fox News](#) and the [Associated Press](#) suggested that Rosenstein was being sarcastic — *not* serious — when Rosenstein suggested secretly recording Trump.

In a campaign speech in Missouri on the night of 21 Sep, Trump promised to remove the "lingering stench" from the FBI and Department of Justice. It is *not* clear whether Trump was referring to the (1) long-running FBI investigation of possible Trump campaign collusion with Russia in 2016 or (2) the recent report of Rosenstein mentioned in the previous paragraph here.

"Look what's being exposed at the Department of Justice and the FBI," Trump told a packed house in Springfield, Mo. Friday night. "You have some real bad ones. You see what's happening at the FBI — they're all gone, they're all gone. But there's a lingering stench and we're going to get rid of that too."

"Trump says he will 'get rid' of a 'lingering stench' in the FBI, DOJ." [ABC News](#), 20:25 EDT, 21 Sep 2018.

See also: [Associated Press](#); [St. Louis Post-Dispatch](#).

As we learned from Comey earlier in 2018, Trump demands *personal loyalty* from his

employees. Integrity and competence are not important to Trump. So speculation was that Trump would terminate Rosenstein's employment.

Trump despises *The New York Times* — "the failing New York Times", Trump often says — but ironically Trump might use a news article in *The Times* as a factual basis to terminate Rosenstein's employment. Similarly, Trump might rely on McCabe's memos to terminate Rosenstein's employment, after Trump [tweeted](#) on 13 April 2018: "He [McCabe] LIED! LIED! LIED!"

On Monday noon, 24 September, the headline in the [Washington Post](#) was "Rosenstein to stay as deputy attorney general, will meet with Trump". The first sentence of the news article says: "Deputy Attorney General Rod J. Rosenstein will stay in the job for now, but will meet with the president on Thursday [27 Sep], the White House said Monday,...." Later on 24 September, the [Washington Post](#) editorial board said: "Trump should leave Rod Rosenstein alone". I agree. Trump has been repeatedly criticizing Jeff Sessions, the Attorney General, for failing to protect Trump. The Justice Department needs more independence from Trump.

On Wednesday afternoon, 26 Sep 2018, Trump held a press conference in New York City, where Trump said: "But my preference would be to keep him [Rosenstein], and to let him finish up. .... I would much prefer keeping Rod Rosenstein. Much prefer." [White House](#).

On Thursday morning, 27 Sep, Trump postponed the Rosenstein/Trump meeting until sometime next week. On Thursday, Trump watched live television showing his U.S. Supreme Court nominee, Brett Kavanaugh, defend himself from allegations of sexual assault in 1982. [New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#); [Associated Press](#).

During the next week, 1-5 October, Kavanaugh dominated the news in the USA, and everyone seemed to forget about Rosenstein.

On Monday, 8 October 2018, Trump invited Rosenstein aboard Air Force One, when the two flew to Orlando, Florida for the annual meeting of the International Association of Chiefs of Police. Before the flight, Trump told journalists that he had no plans to fire Rosenstein. [White House](#). The [New York Times](#) reported: "After the president and Mr. Rosenstein arrived in Florida, a White House official said the two men had spoken for about 30 minutes during the flight. Hogan Gidley, a spokesman, told reporters that Mr. Rosenstein still has a job."

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## October 2018

### Possible tax fraud by Trump

On 2 October 2018, *The New York Times* reported that there were fraudulent transfers of wealth to Trump from his father. [New York Times](#).

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## Trump's paranoia: Democrats pay protesters

In the days before the U.S. Senate voted 50 to 48 to confirm Brett Kavanaugh — Trump's nominee to the U.S. Supreme Court — many women protested in Washington, DC.

The very rude elevator screamers are paid professionals only looking to make Senators look bad. Don't fall for it! Also, look at all of the professionally made identical signs.

Paid for by Soros and others. These are not signs made in the basement from love!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 09:03 EDT, 5 Oct 2018.

Trump's remarks about "elevator screamers" refers to women who accosted Senator Jeff Flake in an elevator on 28 Sep. [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#).

My comment is that people at Trump's political rallies hold "identical signs" that are "professionally made", so is Trump condemning his own practice?

There is *no* evidence that "Soros and others" are paying for signs used by anti-Kavanaugh protesters. [Washington Post](#)(5Oct); [Washington Post](#)(fact-checker).

Then on 6 November, Trump tweeted about "paid professional protesters" with "expensive signs" on the anti-Kavanaugh side:

Women for Kavanaugh, and many others who support this very good man, are gathering all over Capitol Hill in preparation for a 3-5 P.M. VOTE. It is a beautiful thing to see — and they are not paid professional protesters who are handed expensive signs. Big day for America!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 12:08 EDT, 6 Nov 2018.

Kavanaugh was confirmed by the Senate on Saturday afternoon, 6 October. On Tuesday morning, 9 October, Trump was still believing the Democrats promised to pay protesters to oppose Kavanaugh's nomination.

The paid D.C. protesters are now ready to REALLY protest because they haven't gotten their checks — in other words, they weren't paid! Screamers in Congress, and outside, were far too obvious — less professional than anticipated by those paying (or not paying) the bills!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 08:32 EDT, 9 Oct 2018.

There is *no* evidence to support Trump's 9 Oct tweet. The [Washington Post](#) reported: "As best we can discern, [Trump is] saying the imaginary benefactors of imaginary paid protesters have skipped out on their imaginary obligations and left the imaginary paid protesters with imaginary unpaid wages." Trump apparently misunderstood a joke or sarcasm on the "Fox & Friends" cable television show, making Trump too stupid to understand a plebeian television program.

See also [Politico](#); [The Hill](#).

There are at least *three* problems with what Trump said about alleged paid protesters:

1. Without any evidence, Trump added the imprimatur of the presidency to wild conspiracy theories being publicized by other Republicans.

2. Trump is spreading fake news.
3. Trump denigrated the motivation of sincere protesters by saying that they were paid actors.

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## Trump ignorant about health insurance

Trump is ignorant about health insurance. He proved his ignorance by writing an [op-ed](#) in *USA Today* that was published on 10 Oct 2018. The fact-checker at the [Washington Post](#) said: "almost every sentence contained a misleading statement or a falsehood."

See also criticism of Trump's factual errors at: [PolitiFact](#); [Associated Press](#); [NBC News](#); [FactCheck.org](#); [Huffington Post](#).

On 11 October, [USA Today](#) lamely reprinted the FactCheck.org article that explains some of the errors in Trump's op-ed that USA Today printed.

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## Hurricane Michael

Trump got his facts wrong about Hurricane Michael. The Associated Press summarized: Hurricane Michael has shown that President Donald Trump can't always be counted on to give accurate information to the public when a natural disaster unfolds.

Trump wrongly stated that the hurricane moved across land with blazing speed, which stopped a terrible situation from becoming even worse because the storm didn't linger. He also at least mildly exaggerated the ferocity of the storm's winds.

His rhetorical record in times of calamity has been spotty. Hope Yen & Seth Borenstein, "Trump on hurricane and political winds," [Associated Press](#), 13 Oct 2018.

I looked at the White House transcript mentioned by the Associated Press, where Trump said about Hurricane Michael:

But some of those winds reached almost 200 miles an hour, which is unheard of. People are saying it's the third most powerful that they've seen hit our country anywhere.

Remarks by President Trump at Signing of S. 3508, the "Save Our Seas Act of 2018," [White House](#), 11:27 EDT, 11 Oct 2018.

The Associated Press quoted an interview of Trump by Fox News:

The level of power, people have not seen: the 170-, 180-mile-an-hour winds. At one point, it reached almost 200 miles an hour. So we haven't seen that before. And I guess you have two or three cases where maybe there might have been slightly stronger wind. But this is in history.



Fox News interview of Trump.

So here is what meteorologists measured:

MAXIMUM SUSTAINED WINDS...155 MPH

A wind gust of 130 mph (210 kph) was recently reported at a University of Florida/Weatherflow observing site near Tyndall Air Force Base before the instrument failed. A wind gust to 129 mph (207 km/h) was reported at the Panama City Airport. "Hurricane Michael Intermediate Advisory Number 16A," [NOAA](#), 13:00 CDT, 10 Oct 2018.

The Associated Press reported:

Based on its internal barometric pressure, Michael was the third most powerful hurricane to hit the U.S. mainland, behind the unnamed Labor Day storm of 1935 and Camille in 1969. Based on wind speed, it was the fourth-strongest, behind the Labor Day storm (184 mph, or 296 kph), Camille and Andrew in 1992.

"Hurricane Michael slams into Florida, charges into Southeast," [Associated Press](#), 10 Oct 2018.

The maximum sustained wind of 155 miles/hour was measured aloft by an airplane. The maximum winds on the ground will be slower. So Trump's statement of "almost 200 miles an hour" is false. To a meteorologist, there is a huge difference between a wind speed of 155 and 200 miles/hour.

Trump said Michael was the "third most powerful" hurricane to hit the USA. Michael was the third strongest by minimum air pressure. Michael was the fourth-strongest by wind speed, which is what Trump was citing.

Trump not only mentions wrong facts, but also he consistently exaggerates.

[CBS News](#) also mentioned Trump's false statement about 200 mile/hour wind in hurricane Michael.

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### **Trump's ignorance about global warming**

Trump can not understand simple facts, like the actual wind speed of hurricane Michael, so Trump is unable to understand complicated atmospheric physics and chemistry that leads to global warming.

On 15 October 2018, Trump revealed his current opinion about global warming in an interview by Lesley Stahl of CBS News.

Lesley Stahl: Do you still think that climate change is a hoax?

President Donald Trump: I think something's happening. Something's changing and it'll change back again. I don't think it's a hoax, I think there's probably a difference. But I don't know that it's manmade. I will say this. I don't wanna give trillions and trillions of dollars. I don't wanna lose millions and millions of jobs. I don't wanna be put at a

disadvantage.

Lesley Stahl: I wish you could go to Greenland, watch these huge chunks of ice just falling into the ocean, raising the sea levels.

President Donald Trump: And you don't know whether or not that would have happened with or without man. You don't know.

Lesley Stahl: Well, your scientists, your scientists —

President Donald Trump: No, we have —

Lesley Stahl: At NOAA and NASA —

President Donald Trump: We have scientists that disagree with that.

Lesley Stahl: You know, I was thinking what if he said, "No, I've seen the hurricane situations, I've changed my mind. There really is climate change." And I thought, "Wow, what an impact."

President Donald Trump: Well — I'm not denying.

Lesley Stahl: What an impact that would make.

President Donald Trump: I'm not denying climate change. But it could very well go back. You know, we're talkin' about over a millions —

Lesley Stahl: But that's denying it.

President Donald Trump: — of years. They say that we had hurricanes that were far worse than what we just had with Michael.

Lesley Stahl: Who says that? "They say"?

President Donald Trump: People say. People say that in the —

Lesley Stahl: Yeah, but what about the scientists who say it's worse than ever?

President Donald Trump: You'd have to show me the scientists because they have a very big political agenda, Lesley.

Lesley Stahl: I can't bring them in.

President Donald Trump: Look, scientists also have a political agenda.  
"President Trump on Christine Blasey Ford, his relationships with Vladimir Putin and Kim Jong Un and more," [CBS News](#), 15 Oct 2018.

My comments:

1. Notice that Trump gives *no* reasons to support his opinions. Mental hospitals are full of people with strange opinions that have no factual support. Opinions must be supported with rational reasons before those opinions are credible.
2. Trump specifically asserts that the atmosphere will cool sometime in "millions of years", but Trump gives *no* reason to believe his assertion. Even if Trump is correct, that does *not* help someone 100 years from now. Over the next century, we can expect the average annual temperature to slowly increase as concentrations of CO<sub>2</sub> and other greenhouse gases increase.
3. Trump attempts to cast doubt on conclusions of scientific research by asserting that scientists "have a political agenda". But atmospheric temperature is *not* affected by whether someone is politically conservative or politically liberal. There is no place in calculations to insert a parameter that depends on the political beliefs of the scientist making a calculation.
4. Trump may have blustered his way through business college, but he acts like an idiot when he tries to discuss scientific topics.

On 30 October 2018, in an interview by Axios, Trump disputed a Nov 2017 U.S. Government [report](#) on climate change, but Trump never read that report. See commentary by:

1. Amy Harder & Andrew Freedman, "On climate change, Trump disavows his own scientists, government," [Axios](#), 5 Nov 2018.
2. Timothy Cama, "Trump disputes federal climate report's findings, says he hasn't seen it," [The Hill](#), 5 Nov 2018.

My comment is that Trump could *not* understand the report if he tried to read it. Not only does the report contains words and concepts that are beyond Trump's limited intelligence, but also the report is in 15 chapters. The U.S. Government needs to contract with Marvel Comics to produce a ten-page version in comic book format. <sarcastic smirk>

On 21 November 2018, Trump correctly noted the weather forecast for New England on Thanksgiving Day called for high winds and record low temperatures. But Trump also displayed his ignorance when he confused daily weather with long-term climate change.

Brutal and Extended Cold Blast could shatter ALL RECORDS — Whatever happened to Global Warming?

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 19:23 EST, 21 Nov 2018.

The [Associated Press](#) said "Displaying a thin grasp of science, President Donald Trump questioned the reality of global warming because it was cold outside." My comment is that Trump has *no* understanding of science.

On 23 November 2018, the Friday after Thanksgiving Day, the U.S. Government released another [report](#) on climate change. Commentators suggested that the Government scheduled

the release during the holiday in an attempt to minimize news coverage of the report. [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [NBC News](#); [CNN](#); [Global News](#) in Canada.

On Monday, 26 November, Trump briefly spoke with journalists. Here is what Trump said about global warming and the three-day old report on climate change.

QUESTION: Mr. President, have you read the climate report yet?

THE PRESIDENT: I've seen it, I've read some of it, and it's fine.

QUESTION: They say economic impact could be devastating — of climate change.

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah. I don't believe it.

QUESTION: You don't believe it?

THE PRESIDENT: No. No. I don't believe it. And here's the other thing — you're going to have to have China, and Japan, and all of Asia, and all of these other countries — you know, it — it addresses our country.

Right now, we're at the cleanest we've ever been, and that's very important to me. But if we're clean but every other place on Earth on is dirty, that's not so good.

So I want clean air. I want clean water. Very important.

"Remarks by President Trump Before Marine One Departure," [White House](#), 14:44 EST, 26 Nov 2018.

On Tuesday, 27 November, Trump gave an interview to *The Washington Post*. Here is what Trump said about global warming and the four-day old report on climate change.

DAWSEY: You said yesterday when you were leaving that you were skeptical of a climate change report that the government had done. Can you just explain why you're skeptical of that report?

TRUMP: One of the problems that a lot of people like myself — we have very high levels of intelligence, but we're not necessarily such believers. You look at our air and our water and it's right now at a record clean. But when you look at China and you look at parts of Asia and when you look at South America, and when you look at many other places in this world, including Russia, including — just many other places — the air is incredibly dirty. And when you're talking about an atmosphere, oceans are very small. And it blows over and it sails over. I mean, we take thousands of tons of garbage off our beaches all the time that comes over from Asia. It just flows right down the Pacific, it flows, and we say where does this come from. And it takes many people to start off with.

Number two, if you go back and if you look at articles, they talked about global freezing, they talked about at some point the planets could have freeze to death, then it's going to die of heat exhaustion. There is movement in the atmosphere. There's no question. As to whether or not it's man-made and whether or not the effects that you're talking about are there, I don't see it — not nearly like it is. Do we want clean water?

Absolutely. Do we want clean air to breathe? Absolutely.  
[Trump then changes the topic to wildfires in California.]  
"President Trump's full Washington Post interview transcript, annotated," [Washington Post](#),  
18:16 EST, 27 Nov 2018.

Taking Trump's sentences in the order that he spoke them to *The Washington Post*:

1. His self-praise about having a "very high level of intelligence" is not only arrogant, but also without factual support. [Above](#), I mention that Trump speaks on a fourth-grade level.
2. Trump mentions the cleanliness of our air and water. One of the key problems in global warming is the concentration of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere. Carbon dioxide is not dirty like smoke from burning coal. The cleanliness of our water is not relevant to global warming. Trump is displaying his ignorance when he confuses pollution with global warming.
3. The plastic and other garbage that washes up on the Pacific coast of the USA is *not* relevant to global warming.
4. Trump clumsily makes a point about global warming being an international problem. But Trump withdrew the USA from the international Paris Accord on Climate Change, which weakened an international solution.
5. Trump's second paragraph refers to a now discredited theory in the 1970s. See [Washington Post](#).
6. Trump's refusal to *believe* measurements and a consensus of computer models does not make those measurements unreal, and does not make those computer models invalid. Climate change is happening, regardless of Trump's beliefs.

Trump's failure to grapple with the real issues in global warming shows that he has *no* understanding of the science in global warming.

On 28 November, the [Associated Press](#) reported how Trump is dismantling efforts to reduce climate change. And on 1 December, the Associated Press reported that of Trump's 12 facts about climate change, 11 are false.

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## Trump inspires maker of pipe bombs

On 22 October 2018, someone put a pipe bomb in the mailbox of George Soros, a wealthy man and donor to democratic party politicians. Soros was recently falsely accused by Trump and other Republicans of funding protesters at the confirmation of Justice Kavanaugh, as described [above](#). Soros was also recently falsely accused by Republicans of funding the caravan of migrants that is proceeding from Honduras to Mexico to the USA, as described [below](#).

On the night of 23 October, the Secret Service intercepted a bomb sent to Hillary Clinton. On the morning of 24 October the Secret Service intercepted a bomb sent to Barack Obama.

Also on the morning of 24 October, a bomb was found in the mail room of CNN's New York office. The bomb at CNN was addressed to John Brennan, former Director of the Central Intelligence Agency. Brennan is now a commentator for NBC News and MSNBC, but not CNN.

Just before noon on 24 October, the Sunrise, Florida office of Debbie Wasserman Schultz was evacuated after a "suspicious package" was found there. The bomb sent to Schultz was addressed to Eric Holder, Obama's first U.S. Attorney General, but the bomber used the wrong address for Holder. The Post Office then sent the bomb to Schultz, who the bomber listed as the return address. (Incidentally, the bomber misspelled Schultz's last name on the return address, in addition to his error in the address for Holder.) Schultz is a Democrat in the U.S. House of Representatives and a former chairwoman of the Democratic National Committee.

On the afternoon of 24 October, bombs addressed to Congresswoman Maxine Waters were intercepted at a congressional mail-sorting facility near Washington, DC and at a postal facility in Los Angeles. Trump has often insulted Maxine Waters, as documented [below](#).

On the night of 24 October, a total of seven bombs had been found, none of which exploded. The bomb maker was clearly intending mass murder.

Anonymous law enforcement officers told journalists on 24 October that the bomb sent to Soros is similar to the bombs sent to Hillary Clinton and Obama, so there is probably only one bomb maker. The [Los Angeles Times](#) tells us the bomb sent to Waters in Los Angeles is similar to the bombs found on the east coast. Moreover, Schultz's office was listed as the return address for all of the bombs, which is additional evidence that there is only one bomber.

**Sources:** [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [CNN](#)(live blog); [Associated Press](#).

I blame Trump for inspiring — if not inciting — this bomb maker with Trump's rhetoric that endorses violence against journalists and Democrats.

On the night of 24 October, Trump spoke at a campaign rally in Wisconsin, where Trump expressed *no* responsibility for contributing to an uncivil and inflammatory political environment. Worse, Trump declared: "The [news] media also has a responsibility to set a civil tone and to stop the endless hostility and constant negative — and oftentimes, false — attacks and stories." [Washington Post](#); [Associated Press](#); [NBC News](#). I read Trump's declaration as saying that, because journalists are "endlessly hostile" to Trump, it is acceptable to kill journalists with pipe bombs. The real problems are Trump calling journalists "the enemy of the people", and Trump insulting individual journalists. When journalists expose Trump's errors, the journalists are doing their job.

On the morning of 25 October, law enforcement seized two pipe bombs sent to former vice-

president Joe Biden and one pipe bomb sent to actor Robert DeNiro. These latest bombs are similar to bombs sent to Obama, Hillary Clinton, and CNN. [New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#); [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#). The three latest bombs increase the total to ten, none of which exploded.

On the morning of 25 October, Trump blamed "Fake News" for the anger in our society. Is Trump implying that this anger caused the bombings?

A very big part of the Anger we see today in our society is caused by the purposely false and inaccurate reporting of the Mainstream Media that I refer to as Fake News. It has gotten so bad and hateful that it is beyond description. Mainstream Media must clean up its act, FAST!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:18 EDT, 25 Oct 2018.

In my opinion, a big part of the anger in our society is caused by Trump's deliberate lies and insults about journalists and Democrats. Note that 90% of the bombs were sent to Democrats, and only one bomb was sent to a news organization (i.e., CNN), but Trump is only talking about the alleged responsibilities of journalists. Trump is ignoring the responsibilities of politicians to avoid both personal insults and inflammatory rhetoric.

At 03:14 on Friday, 26 October, Trump criticized CNN, which has been blaming Trump's rhetoric for causing a bomb maker to send pipe bombs to Democrats and CNN.

Funny how lowly rated CNN, and others, can criticize me at will, even blaming me for the current spate of Bombs and ridiculously comparing this to September 11th and the Oklahoma City bombing, yet when I criticize them they go wild and scream, "it's just not Presidential!"

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 03:14 EDT, 26 Oct 2018.

In the preceding tweet, Trump shows that he is not aware of the difference between a private news organization and the president of the USA. When the president speaks, he represents the authority of the U.S. Government, which can have a chilling effect on private conduct. Trump calling journalists "the enemy of the people" and Trump suggesting that the U.S. Government license journalists are two examples where Trump has attempted to intimidate journalists who are critical of Trump. In my opinion, Trump continues to act like a far-right-wing fringe political candidate, almost two years after becoming president.

On Friday morning, 26 October, law enforcement found two more bombs, one addressed to U.S. Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ), the other addressed to Obama's Director of National Intelligence, James Clapper. The package to Booker was intercepted at a mail facility in Florida, where authorities believe some of the bombs were deposited in the mail. The package to Clapper was addressed to CNN in New York City. [Washington Post](#); [CNBC](#); [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#). The total number of bombs is now twelve.

Trump tweeted his concern about the pipe bombs affecting the midterm election.

Republicans are doing so well in early voting, and at the polls, and now this "Bomb" stuff happens and the momentum greatly slows — news not talking politics. Very unfortunate, what is going on. Republicans, go out and vote!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 10:19 EDT, 26 Oct 2018.



Notice that Trump shows *no* concern at the attempted assassination of prominent Democrats. And Trump shows *no* concern at the bomber's attacks on CNN. Trump calls it "bomb stuff", but it is really domestic terrorism by a supporter of Trump. Finally, Trump urges Republicans to vote, but apparently Democrats can stay home and watch fake news on television.

### **bomber arrested**

On 26 October, at 10:00 EDT, federal agents arrested 56 year old Cesar Sayoc at Plantation, Florida, who is suspected of mailing the dozen bombs. Sayoc's van has multiple pro-Trump stickers on the windows. Obviously, Sayoc supports Trump. The multiple stickers on Sayoc's van and his postings on social media suggest that Sayoc's bomb making and choice of targets were inspired by Trump. Sayoc sent bombs to targets of Trump's insults and inflammatory criticism, so Sayoc's choice of targets is additional evidence of Trump's influence on Sayoc. Sayoc's van also has a sticker on the side that says "Dishonest Media CNN Sucks".

Sayoc has a long criminal history in Florida, dating back to 1991. Sayoc's father immigrated to the U.S. from the Philippines, but Cesar Sayoc was born in New York City. Sayoc is currently homeless, and living out of his 16-year old van.

### **News Articles about Sayoc:**

- "Aventura man arrested over suspected mail bombs had van covered in pro-Trump stickers," [Miami Herald](#), 11:12 EDT, 26 Oct 2018.
- "What we know about mail bomb suspect Cesar Sayoc," [WPLG](#) in Miami/Ft. Lauderdale, 12:43 EDT and updated many times, 26 Oct 2018.
- "Who is Cesar Sayoc, the Florida man arrested in the mail pipe bomb case?" [Miami Herald](#), 26 Oct 2018.
- "Who is Cesar Altieri Sayoc? What we know about the suspected mail bomber arrested in Florida." [Washington Post](#), 26 Oct 2018.
- "What We Know About Cesar Sayoc, the Mail Bombing Suspect," [New York Times](#), 26 Oct 2018.
- "Pipe bomb suspect Cesar Sayoc, Jr. is registered Republican and Trump fan with criminal record," [NBC News](#); 26 Oct 2018.
- "Attorney General Sessions Delivers Remarks Announcing the Ongoing Investigation Into Suspicious Packages," [U.S. DoJ](#), 26 Oct 2018.
- "FBI Director Christopher Wray's Remarks Regarding Arrest of Cesar Sayoc in Suspicious Package Investigation," [FBI](#), 26 Oct 2018.
- "Bomb suspect was cash-strapped ex-stripper devoted to Trump," [Associated Press](#), 26 Oct 2018.

- "Florida Trump supporter charged in chilling mail-bomb plot," [Associated Press](#), 26 Oct 2018.
- "Bomb suspect: Ex-stripper with cash problems, Trump devotion," [Associated Press](#), 27 Oct 2018. ("Cesar Sayoc is an amateur body builder and former stripper, a loner with a long arrest record who showed little interest in politics until Donald Trump came along.")
- "Many of bomb suspect's conspiracy theories tracked Trump's," [Associated Press](#), 27 Oct 2018.
- "'He felt that somebody was finally talking to him': How the package-bomb suspect found inspiration in Trump," [Washington Post](#), 27 Oct 2018.
- "Mail bomb suspect appears in Miami court, possible 'hit list' found in van," [Miami Herald](#), 29 Oct 2018.
- "Package bomb suspect Cesar Sayoc kept list of more than 100 possible targets, official says," [Washington Post](#), 29 Oct 2018.
- "Mail bomb suspect researched political targets for months, feds say in new filing," [Miami Herald](#), 31 Oct 2018.
- "Bomb Suspect Planned His Campaign for More Than Three Months, Court Papers Say," [New York Times](#), 31 Oct 2018.
- "'This is not how I raised him,' mother of mail bombing suspect Cesar Sayoc wrote in exclusive letter to ABC News," [ABC News](#), 21:46 EST, 4 Nov 2018. (Mother of Sayoc wrote: "My son has been ill for a long time and my family and I have tried, over and over again, without success to urge him to get the help he needs." and "...Our political leaders, like our President Donald Trump, need to recognize that there are many sick people in this country who take their rhetoric and words of 'War with the Media' and 'War with the Democrats' to heart.")

### **more bombs and more Trump**

On the afternoon of 26 October, two more bombs were announced. One was addressed to U.S. Senator Kamala Harris in Sacramento, California. The other bomb was addressed to Tom Steyer, a wealthy liberal activist who wants Congress to impeach Trump. [Los Angeles Times](#); [Sacramento Bee](#)(Harris); [KGO](#)(Steyer). There are now 14 known bombs.

As Trump departed from the White House for a campaign rally in North Carolina, Trump again denied any responsibility for the bombings.

QUESTION: Are you to blame at all for what happened, Mr. President?

QUESTION: Does it bother you at all?

THE PRESIDENT: No, not at all. No, I mean — not at all, no. There's no blame. There's no anything. If you look at what happened to Steve Scalise, that was from a supporter of a different party. If you look at what happened on — numerous of these incidents, they were supporters of others. No.

I'm just really proud of law enforcement. I think they did an incredible job. And I will see you in North Carolina.

QUESTION: Could you do something differently in the way that you engaged (inaudible)?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I don't think so. I think that we're running a great campaign. People love what we're doing. They love what we're saying. The Republicans had tremendous momentum, and then, of course, this happened, where all that you people talked about was that. And rightfully so. It was a big thing. Rightfully so.

But now we have to start the momentum again. I think the Republicans have tremendous momentum — when you think of Judge Kavanaugh, when you think of all the things that have happened. And hopefully we're going to go into a great victory.

We have a lot of Senate races where we're leading — races that, frankly, were going to be uncontested. It looks like we're leading a lot of those races. The House is — got a lot of people in the House, so we're going to see how that goes. But I think we're doing very well in the House.

....

QUESTION: Would you yourself pledge to tone down the President for the next few days during the campaign?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think I've been toned down, if you want to know the truth. I could really tone it up. Because, as you know, the media has been extremely unfair to me and to the Republican Party.

QUESTION: How? How have we been unfair?

THE PRESIDENT: I think the media has been very, very unfair in terms of the Republican Party and the way it's been covered. And they understand that. They write articles about that. Many of them admit that. But the media has been unbelievably unfair to Republicans, conservatives, and certainly to me.

But with all of that being said, we're winning. So, I like that.

Thank you very much. Thank you.

"Remarks by President Trump Before Marine One Departure," [White House](#), 16:36 EDT, 26 Oct 2018.

Trump referred to "what happened to Steve Scalise". On 14 June 2017, Scalise was shot by a former campaign worker for Bernie Sanders. Sanders had sought the Democratic party nomination to be president, but was defeated by Hillary Clinton. The distinction is that Sanders *never* engaged in the vicious personal insults that Trump routinely uses. And Sanders never engaged in the attacks on CNN that Trump frequently uses.

Then Trump admits that he has already "toned down" his rhetoric. Why would he do that, unless his staff told him to stop inciting violence against journalists and Democrats?

Notice how Trump attempts to change the subject away from his responsibility for the bombings. First, Trump praises law enforcement. Then Trump says Republicans need to "start the momentum again" in the political campaign. And finally, Trump alleges that the news media has been "very unfair", to Republicans and to Trump himself. Unfair is a conclusion, but Trump failed to say *how* the news media had been unfair to him.

If Trump does not want to engage in decency and civility, then Trump should consider that his inflammatory rhetoric might inspire a deranged Democrat to attempt to assassinate Trump, in a misguided attempt to avenge Trump's insults.

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On Monday morning, 29 October, a 15th pipe bomb was discovered. This bomb was addressed to the CNN headquarters in Atlanta, but was intercepted at a Post Office. [Associated Press](#); [CNN](#). Trump awarded CNN first prize in Trump's [fake news](#) contest, and Trump has been especially critical of [CNN](#) — which may have inspired the bomber to target CNN.

On Thursday night, 1 November, another pipe bomb addressed to Tom Steyer was discovered at a postal sorting facility in Burlingame, California. [NBC News](#); [Washington Post](#)(AP); [CNN](#). Sayoc has been in the federal lock-up in Miami since his arrest on 26 October, so Sayoc could not have mailed this bomb during the past week. Either the Post Office took a week to send first-class mail from Florida to California, or there is a second bomber who is a copycat of Sayoc. On 28 Oct, Trump released a tweet that was critical of Steyer (see below), which could have motivated a second bomber to send a bomb to Steyer.

### **Trump continues his inflammatory rhetoric**

On 26 October 2018, at a campaign rally in Charlotte, North Carolina, Trump politely said: "Everyone will benefit if we can end the politics of personal destruction. We must unify as a nation in peace love and harmony." But minutes later, in the same speech, Trump blasted Democrats for their failure to support Trump's immigration policy. And Trump also said inflammatory words about journalists, including getting his supporters to chant "CNN sucks!". [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [CBS News](#); [ABC News](#).

On Saturday morning, 27 October 2018, an anti-Semitic bigot attacked a synagogue in Pittsburgh Pennsylvania, killing 11 worshipers and wounding 6 people. As this massacre was unrelated to Trump — Trump is *not* anti-Semitic — the massacre provided a diversion in

news media from Trump's inflammatory rhetoric inspiring Sayoc, the pipe bomber.

On Sunday, 28 October, Tom Steyer, the target of the most recently discovered pipe bomb, was interviewed on CNN's State of the Union cable television program. A [transcript](#) of the interview is posted on the Internet, in which Steyer again calls for the impeachment of Trump. Then Trump tweeted:

Just watched Wacky Tom Steyer, who I have not seen in action before, be interviewed by @jaketapper. He comes off as a crazed & stumbling lunatic who should be running out of money pretty soon. As bad as their field is, if he is running for President, the Dems will eat him alive!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 13:03 EDT, 28 Oct 2018.

Trump's personal attack on Steyer was reported by journalists, e.g.: [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [Politico](#); [CNBC](#); [Washington Times](#).

Trump calling Steyer "wacky" and "crazed and stumbling lunatic" are personal insults that are irrelevant to the substance of Steyer's interview. Trump's remarks about Steyer are an example of Trump's inflammatory rhetoric that inspired Sayoc. And finally, Trump says "if [Steyer] is running for president" — but Steyer is *not* a candidate for any elected office.

I agree with *The New York Times* article cited two paragraphs above. Trump reads a few perfunctory words written by his aides about grief and civility, then reverts to genuine Trump style of hurling invectives and insulting opponents. This inflammatory conduct by Trump seems to excite Trump's supporters.

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On Monday morning, 29 October, Trump blamed the news media — "the true enemy of the people" — for "anger and outrage" in the USA:

There is great anger in our Country caused in part by inaccurate, and even fraudulent, reporting of the news. The Fake News Media, the true Enemy of the People, must stop the open & obvious hostility & report the news accurately & fairly. That will do much to put out the flame...

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 08:03 EDT, 29 Oct 2018.

....of Anger and Outrage and we will then be able to bring all sides together in Peace and Harmony. Fake News Must End!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 08:07 EDT, 29 Oct 2018.

On Monday night, Trump emphasized he was angry with the "*fake news media*", *but not all* journalists.

CNN and others in the Fake News Business keep purposely and inaccurately reporting that I said the "Media is the Enemy of the People." Wrong! I said that the "Fake News (Media) is the Enemy of the People," a very big difference. When you give out false information — not good!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 20:00 EDT, 29 Oct 2018.

Check out tweets from last two days. I refer to Fake News Media when mentioning Enemy of the People — but dishonest reporters use only the word "Media." The people

of our Great Country are angry and disillusioned at receiving so much Fake News.  
They get it, and fully understand!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 20:14 EDT, 29 Oct 2018.

My comment is that Trump is really slinging propaganda now. Trump is exploiting recent crimes (e.g., Sayoc's pipe bombs, the massacre at a synagogue in Pittsburgh) to argue for the suppression of news articles that offend Trump (i.e., what Trump calls "fake news"). Actually, the mainstream media avoids inflammatory partisan rhetoric, racism, and anti-Semitism. When the mainstream media mentions inflammatory partisan rhetoric, they are usually quoting a politician like Trump. Finally, Trump is a hypocrite to talk about "inaccurate" reporting of news, when Trump is famous for false or misleading statements of fact. Also see, e.g.: [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#)(opinion); [NBC News](#); [CNBBC](#); [Politico](#).

Trump's Monday night clarification is a false distinction. So which organizations are the fake news? Back on [17 Jan 2018](#) Trump gave fake news awards: "CNN took first place with four awards, *The New York Times* took second place with two awards, and third-place was shared by ABC, *The Washington Post*, Time, and Newsweek." In other words, Trump's fake news includes the major sources of news in the USA. Trump excludes from fake news his favorite Fox News cable channel and other news organizations with a right-wing bias. A news organization becomes fake when it exposes Trump's errors. Trump's distinction between fake news and acceptable news is actually mainstream media vs. right-wing bias.

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On Monday night at 22:00 EDT, 29 October, Trump was interviewed by Laura Ingraham on the Fox News cable television channel. Fox News posted a [video](#) of the interview. In a [news article](#), Fox News quotes Trump as saying Sayoc "was insane a long time before. You look at his medical records. He was insane for a long time."

There are several things seriously wrong with this terse quotation from Trump:

1. The president of the USA must *not* comment on the guilt or innocence of a criminal defendant before a verdict is reached in a trial. Any comment by the president would add to pre-trial publicity and possibly taint the jury pool.
2. "Insane" is a legal term, which indicates that the defendant is not guilty, because the defendant was not aware that his acts were wrong. In twice mentioning the word "insane", Trump created a legal defense for Sayoc.
3. Trump is *neither* a psychiatrist *nor* a psychologist, further Trump has *not* looked at Sayoc's medical records. While Trump is *not* qualified as a witness in Sayoc's legal proceedings, Trump expressed his opinion on insanity anyway.

[CNBC](#) suggested that Trump apparently called Sayoc "insane" to separate Sayoc from Trump and Trump's Republican allies. This would be a *political* move by Trump, to improve Republican chances of victory in the 6 November elections.

Sayoc *may* have been mentally ill, but if Sayoc can both understand the legal proceedings

against him and assist his public defenders, then Sayoc can be tried in criminal court. And Sayoc can be punished if a jury finds that Sayoc mailed the pipe bombs *and* Sayoc knew that mailing pipe bombs was wrong.

On 7 November 2018, Trump held a [press conference](#) at the White House, in which there was a brief mention of Trump calling journalists "the enemy of the people" and a hint that Trump blames alleged "fake news" for inspiring the pipe bomber.

### **Conclusion to Trump's inspiring a pipe bomber**

Politicians in the Democratic Party blamed Trump for inspiring Sayoc. But supporters of Trump said Trump was not to blame for Sayoc. Amidst this partisan dispute, it was refreshing to see an article in the [Washington Post](#) that describes an interview with a professor who has studied the effect of political rhetoric that leads to violence. Prof. Susan Benesch at American University concluded that "... there is no question in my mind that the president's rhetoric has helped to shift discourse norms in our country such that it is more acceptable among more people to denigrate and attack other groups of human beings."

Trump has been using inflammatory rhetoric and personal insults during the 2016 campaign, and since he became president in January 2017. Even after his allies tell him to tone it down, Trump continues. Trump's continuing use of inflammatory rhetoric suggests to me that either (1) Trump intends to inspire violence by his supporters against Trump's enemies, or (2) Trump enjoys insulting people and Trump has a reckless disregard for the effect of his rhetoric and propaganda.

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## **November 2018**

On 7 November 2018, the day after the midterm election, Trump attacked Jim Acosta of CNN at a press conference at the White House. I describe this attack [above](#), together with Trump's other attacks on CNN.

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### **Trump disrespects military**

On 10-11 November, Trump was in Paris for the 100-year anniversary of Armistice Day in World War I. On 10 Nov, the day before Armistice Day, the leaders of France, Germany, and Canada visited a military cemetery in France. But *not* Trump. It was raining and Trump did not want to get wet. So Trump ordered White House chief of staff John Kelly and Gen. Joseph Dunford, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to attend a ceremony at a different cemetery, while Trump rested at the residence of the U.S. Ambassador to France. [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [Associated Press](#); [NBC News](#); [The Hill](#); [USA Today](#).

It is impossible for a human being to look at these military cemeteries in Europe, with their neat rows and columns of thousands of white crosses, and not have at least one tear in their



eyes. But Trump would not have any emotion at seeing the real costs of wars. Those buried in military cemeteries endured conditions far worse than Trump getting sprinkled in a light rain. Trump could issue an Executive Order directing his wife, Melania, to hold an umbrella over the president's head. (I am being sarcastic, as Trump routinely uses Executive Orders to bypass Congress.)

To military personnel who have suffered in wars, there are few people more disgusting than a hypocritical politician who *talks* about the importance of the military and who gives speeches thanking veterans for their service, but who personally avoided military service. These hypocritical politicians (e.g., Trump) expose their hypocrisy when they avoid attending memorial services for dead military personnel.

U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth calls Trump "cadet bone spurs". There are two reasons. First, Trump was a cadet in junior ROTC at a private high school, but Trump never served in the military. Second, Trump received deferments from being drafted to serve in Vietnam, because of bone spurs on his feet. [Washington Post](#); [CNBC](#); [The Hill](#).

On 13 November, Trump realized that he should have visited the cemetery on 10 November, so — in typical Trump fashion — Trump blamed someone else.

By the way, when the helicopter couldn't fly to the first cemetery in France because of almost zero visibility, I suggested driving. Secret Service said NO, too far from airport & big Paris shutdown. Speech next day at American Cemetery in pouring rain! Little reported — Fake News!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 10:49 EST, 13 Nov 2018.

In my opinion, Trump *should* have overruled the Secret Service and visited a cemetery on 10 November. And why does the distance from the airport matter, when Trump is located at the U.S. Ambassador's residence in Paris?

Although Trump returned to the White House on the evening of 11 November, Trump failed to go to Arlington National Cemetery on 12 November. [New York Times](#); [Military Times](#); [Washington Post](#); [Fox News](#).

Journalists realized that — unlike previous presidents — Trump had never visited U.S. Military personnel in combat zones (e.g., Afghanistan, Iraq). On 19 November, the [Washington Post](#) reported that Trump was concerned about his personal safety. That makes Trump a coward.

On 26 December 2018, Trump made a surprise three-hour visit to Iraq — Trump's first visit to a combat zone. Trump told U.S. military personnel that he was scared when the interior lights in his airplane were switched off for security. [White House](#). That was an inappropriate thing for Trump to say to combat troops who were shot at by ISIL terrorists.

During his 26 Dec visit to Iraq, Trump lied to the troops when he said: "You haven't gotten [a pay raise] in more than 10 years — more than 10 years. And we got you a big one. I got you a big one. I got you a big one." [White House](#). The Truth is U.S. military personnel have received a pay increase every year for more than 30 years. Trump also lied when he said he arranged a "more than 10%" pay increase, when the increase was only 2.6%. [PolitiFact](#);

[Associated Press](#)(28Dec); [Associated Press](#)(29Dec); [Washington Post](#); [CNN](#); [Military Times](#).

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### Trump says you need VoterID to purchase cereal

On 14 November, Trump gave an interview to *The Daily Caller*. In a discussion about alleged voter fraud, Trump asserted that one needs photo identification to purchase breakfast cereal at a grocery store.

“If you buy a box of cereal — you have a voter ID,” Trump continued. “They try to shame everybody by calling them racist, or calling them something, anything they can think of, when you say you want voter ID. But voter ID is a very important thing.”  
Saagar Enjeti and Benny Johnson, "Exclusive: President Trump Calls For Brenda Snipes To Be Fired," [Daily Caller](#), 13:57 EST, 14 Nov 2018.

See the criticism of Trump in the [Washington Post](#); [Washington Post](#)(fact-check); and [PolitiFact](#).

On 31 July, Trump falsely [asserted](#) that one needed identification to purchase groceries. Trump learned nothing from the criticism of his 31 July mistake.

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### 15 Nov 2018: Trump's tweets

Trump has been in a bad mood since Republicans lost their majority in the U.S. House of Representatives in the 6 Nov election, and since Trump is scared of what Mueller's investigation will find. On Thursday, 15 Nov, Trump issued a tweet storm:

The White House is running very smoothly and the results for our Nation are obviously very good. We are the envy of the world. But anytime I even think about making changes, the FAKE NEWS MEDIA goes crazy, always seeking to make us look as bad as possible! Very dishonest!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 06:59 EST, 15 Nov 2018.

The inner workings of the Mueller investigation are a total mess. They have found no collusion and have gone absolutely nuts. They are screaming and shouting at people, horribly threatening them to come up with the answers they want. They are a disgrace to our Nation and don't...

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:14 EST, 15 Nov 2018.

....care how many lives the ruin. These are Angry People, including the highly conflicted Bob Mueller, who worked for Obama for 8 years. They won't even look at all of the bad acts and crimes on the other side. A TOTAL WITCH HUNT LIKE NO OTHER IN AMERICAN HISTORY!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:32 EST, 15 Nov 2018.

Universities will someday study what highly conflicted (and NOT Senate approved) Bob Mueller and his gang of Democrat thugs have done to destroy people. Why is he protecting Crooked Hillary, Comey, McCabe, Lisa Page & her lover, Peter S, and all of

his friends on the other side?  
Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 09:49 EST, 15 Nov 2018.

Responding to Trump's four tweets in chronological order, the White House is *not* "running very smoothly". There have been a record number of resignations and terminations, as documented [below](#). In early November, there are rumors that Trump will soon terminate the White House chief of staff, John Kelly, and three Cabinet secretaries, Nielsen, Zinke, and Ross. See, e.g., [Washington Post](#); [Politico](#). Trump's proclaiming "We are the envy of the world." is self-serving praise, and further is *not* true.

Trump continues to criticize Mueller's investigation, probably to soften the impact of indictments of Trump's cronies and henchmen. "Worked for Obama for 8 years" is *not* an indelible stain on reputation. Mueller's investigation is *not* a "witch hunt". Calling FBI agents a "gang of Democrat thugs" is disrespectful to law enforcement.

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### **Trump attempted to prosecute Hillary Clinton and Comey**

On 20 November 2018, the [New York Times](#) reported that Trump attempted to have the Justice Department prosecute Hillary Clinton and the former FBI Director, James Comey. *The Times* cited two anonymous sources in the White House. This is an outrageous attempt by a president to have the Justice Department prosecute the president's personal enemies. White House legal counsel (Donald McGahn) explained to Trump that if Trump ordered the Justice Department to prosecute Hillary Clinton, then Congress might impeach Trump.

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### **Manafort's lawyers communicated with Trump's lawyers including confidential facts from Mueller's investigation**

On 26 November 2018, Special Counsel Mueller alleged that Manafort had breached his guilty plea agreement by making false statements to the FBI. [New York Times](#). In my opinion, the bigger and more interesting news is in the following paragraph.

On 27 November 2018, Rudy Giuliani, one of Trump's personal attorneys, publicly disclosed that one of Manafort's attorneys (Kevin M. Downing) had been communicating confidential facts to Trump's attorneys about Mueller's investigation. Paul Waldman at *The Washington Post* wrote that Trump effectively had a spy in the Mueller investigation. This conduct by Manafort's and Trump's lawyers is arguably criminal (e.g., obstruction of justice, criminal conspiracy) and could also lead to those lawyers being disbarred. [New York Times](#)(27Nov); [NY Daily News](#)(29Nov); [Washington Post](#)(28Nov); [NBC News](#); [Washington Post](#)(28Nov).

Separately, Trump publicly dangled the possibility of pardoning Manafort, which sends a message to Manafort. The message is if Manafort continues cooperating with Trump, then Trump will reward Manafort with a pardon. On 28 November, *The New York Post* reported their interview with Trump:

He's never discussed a pardon for Paul Manafort, President Trump said Wednesday [28 Nov] — but it's "not off the table."

“It was never discussed, but I wouldn’t take it off the table. Why would I take it off the table?” the president said during an Oval Office interview.

Marisa Schultz and Nikki Schwab, "Trump says pardon for Paul Manafort still a possibility," [New York Post](#), 14:41 EST, 28 Nov 2018.

On the morning of 29 November, Trump told journalists at the White House:

QUESTION: It seems like you’re leaning toward pardoning Paul Manafort. Is that true?

THE PRESIDENT: No, the question was asked yesterday about pardons, with respect to Paul Manafort, who — it’s very sad what’s happened to Paul, the way he’s being treated. I’ve never seen anybody treated so poorly.

But the question was asked to me by the New York Post. And I said, “No, I have not offered any pardons.” And I think they asked — or whatever — “Would you?” I said, “I’m not taking anything off the table.” That was done as a question from the New York Post.

"Remarks by President Trump Before Marine One Departure," [White House](#), 10:23 EST, 29 Nov 2018.

Pardoning Manafort, Trump's former campaign chairman in 2016, would be a blatant abuse of the president's pardon power. Pardoning Manafort might cause Trump to be impeached.

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## December 2018

### Tillerson's comments on Trump

On 6 December 2018, Rex Tillerson — Trump's first Secretary of State — made a rare public appearance at a fundraising dinner for the M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston Texas. Tillerson was interviewed by Bob Schieffer of CBS News. Tillerson said two things that interested me:

1. Tillerson expressed concern about American voters relying on Twitter for their news: "I will be honest with you, it troubles me that the American people seem to want to know so little about issues, that they are satisfied with a 128 characters."
2. Tillerson characterized Trump as "pretty undisciplined, doesn't like to read, doesn't read briefing reports, doesn't like to get into the details of a lot of things."

[Houston Chronicle](#); [CBS News](#); [New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#); [Associated Press](#).

By now, readers of this essay know that when Trump is criticized, Trump retaliates with name calling and personal attacks. And so Trump fired back at Tillerson:

Mike Pompeo is doing a great job, I am very proud of him. His predecessor, Rex Tillerson, didn’t have the mental capacity needed. He was dumb as a rock and I

couldn't get rid of him fast enough. He was lazy as hell. Now it is a whole new ballgame, great spirit at State!  
Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 15:02 EST, 7 Dec 2018.

If Tillerson lacks "mental capacity" and "was dumb as a rock", then *why* did Trump nominate Tillerson to be Secretary of State, one of the most important positions in the cabinet? Trump's criticism of Tillerson reflects badly on Trump.

The fact that Trump "doesn't like to read" makes Trump unfit to be president. Reading is a major way that people learn, and how they stay current in a changing world. Reading is a more efficient way of acquiring information than meetings.

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### Trump's Anxiety about Mueller's Investigation

Since early November 2018, Trump has anxiety about the conclusion of Mueller's investigation. Trump's response has been a propaganda storm that discredits Mueller's investigation as the partisan work of "17 angry Democrats". But Cohen, Trump's former personal attorney, has [implicated](#) Trump in violations of campaign finance law, a felony.

Trump's propaganda about "17 angry Democrats" began on 1 Aug 2018.

..This is a terrible situation and Attorney General Jeff Sessions should stop this Rigged Witch Hunt right now, before it continues to stain our country any further. Bob Mueller is totally conflicted, and his 17 Angry Democrats that are doing his dirty work are a disgrace to USA!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 09:24 EDT, 1 Aug 2018.

Notice that on 1 August Trump is asking the Attorney General to obstruct justice, by ending an investigation of Trump and his henchmen. But Sessions properly recused himself from this investigation of Trump. Mueller's investigation is *not* "stain[ing] our country", but will stain Trump personally.

According to NBC News, Voters Nationwide Disapprove of the so-called Mueller Investigation (46%) more than they Approve (41%). You mean they are finally beginning to understand what a disgusting Witch Hunt, led by 17 Angry Democrats, is all about!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 10:39 EST, 7 Nov 2018.

On 3 December, Trump explicitly accused Mueller and his FBI agents of seeking false testimony (i.e., "lies").

Bob Mueller (who is a much different man than people think) and his out of control band of Angry Democrats, don't want the truth, they only want lies. The truth is very bad for their mission!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 10:56 EST, 3 Dec 2018.

During 8 Nov 2018 to 7 Dec 2018, there were three other tweets by Trump that include the phrase "Angry Democrats".

On Friday morning, 7 December, Trump tweeted his personal lawyers were already preparing a rebuttal to Mueller's Report that they had not seen:

It has been incorrectly reported that Rudy Giuliani and others will not be doing a counter to the Mueller Report. That is Fake News. Already 87 pages done, but obviously cannot complete until we see the final Witch Hunt Report.

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 08:39 EST, 7 Dec 2018.

On 7 December, Mueller filed documents in federal court about the sentencing of Cohen on 12 Dec. On Friday evening, 7 Dec, Trump declared that these documents "totally clear the president".

Totally clears the President. Thank you!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 18:00 EST, 7 Dec 2018.

This tweet on Friday evening was another false statement by Trump. An article in the [Washington Post](#) had a headline: "Court filings directly implicate Trump in efforts to buy women's silence, reveal new contact between inner circle and Russian". An article by the [Associated Press](#) had the headline: "For first time, prosecutors connect Trump to a federal crime". Is Trump delusional about the serious legal problems that he personally faces? On 10 December, the [Associated Press](#) published a fact-check that concludes: "President Donald Trump is in denial when it comes to the Russia investigation and other scandals besieging him."

In my opinion, this unseemly deluge of propaganda from Trump is what I would expect from a guilty criminal defendant. Trump's propaganda and lies are more reasons why he is unfit to be president.

Then there began a chorus of people calling for Trump's impeachment or prosecution. See the citations for 8-9 December 2018, [below](#).

On Monday morning, 10 December, Trump continued his propaganda:

"Democrats can't find a Smocking Gun tying the Trump campaign to Russia after James Comey's testimony. No Smocking Gun...No Collusion." @FoxNews That's because there was NO COLLUSION. So now the Dems go to a simple private transaction, wrongly call it a campaign contribution,...

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 06:46 EST, 10 Dec 2018.

....which it was not (but even if it was, it is only a CIVIL CASE, like Obama's — but it was done correctly by a lawyer and there would not even be a fine. Lawyer's liability if he made a mistake, not me). Cohen just trying to get his sentence reduced.

WITCH HUNT!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:00 EST, 10 Dec 2018.

Notice that Trump again blames "Democrats" for the allegedly partisan attack. Then Trump misspelled "smoking" twice in his first tweet. The timing of the payment of hush money just before the election in 2016 is evidence that it was a "campaign contribution". Further, while paying hush money may be a "private transaction" by a real estate mogul, it is a crime when

done by a political candidate for the U.S. presidency. Then Trump tries to argue that what he did was no worse than what Obama did (see next paragraph). Finally, Trump again tosses out propaganda about "witch hunt".

Trump is betting that people will *not* know about Obama's campaign finance violation. In January 2013, Obama's 2008 campaign was assessed an administrative penalty of \$375,000 for late reporting of contributions and other technical violations. [Politico](#); [Washington Post](#); [NBC News](#). Note that — according to Cohen — Trump *intended* to mislead voters by concealing his alleged adultery, while Obama did not intend to mislead voters. Trump ordered Cohen to pay hush money and then conceal the payments, which is much worse than what the Obama campaign did.

We are watching Trump spew a variety of specious or bogus excuses, in the hope that a reader will believe one of his excuses. What is really clear from Trump's burst of excuses is that Trump is scared of being either indicted or impeached.

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### Trump's letter of intent in Russia

Trump's relationship with Russia — possible real estate deal in Moscow, and possible collusion with Russian influence on 2016 election in the USA — is too complicated for me to accurately describe it in this essay. But journalists occasionally report some fact that is worth mentioning in this essay.

Trump and his associates have vehemently denied any financial deal with Russians, as mentioned in my [essay](#) on Trump for the year 2017. In September 2017, journalists revealed that on 28 Oct 2015, Trump signed a letter of intent for a new building in Moscow. But in December 2018, Rudy Giuliani, one of Trump's personal attorneys, publicly denied on CNN that Trump had signed the letter of intent. Giuliani's factual error catapulted Trump's letter of intent back into the news.

What seems to have killed Trump's proposed new building in Moscow is public disclosure in June 2016 of Russian hacking of Democrats' e-mails.

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## Carl Bernstein on Trump

On 23 Dec 2018, Carl Bernstein, a former Washington Post journalist who helped end the Nixon presidency, was interviewed by Brian Stelter on CNN. Bernstein explicitly noted that Republican politicians were saying privately that Trump was "unfit [to be president of the USA] on psychological grounds" and that Trump was "particularly unfit in his conduct of foreign policy".

STELTER: Carl, help us connect this fight to Trump's precarious position overall. To me, James Mattis issued a warning to America with his resignation letter and that's the other big story this weekend, loss of support for the president. How do you connect these fights?

CARL BERNSTEIN, CNN POLITICAL ANALYST: Well, you just said it right, it's all one big story and that story is about the fitness or unfitness of Donald Trump to be president of the United States. What the Mattis letter has done in monumental way is to push Republicans into making some real judgments, they're talking to each other, there is coming to be a much greater consensus that he is unfit to be the president of the United States if you talk to Republicans, that he is unfit on psychological grounds, that he is unfit perhaps because of his contempt for the law and particularly unfit in his conduct of foreign policy in such a way as to be a danger himself.

And this is what Mattis has said, Tillerson has said, McMaster has said. They view the president of the United States as a danger to the national security of the United States and Mattis issued a warning, a shot across the bow that this can no longer be tolerated having a president who does business in this way, trashes our alliances and allows Vladimir Putin to be the king of the world by destabilizing the United States of America.

STELTER: But if Republicans are saying it privately, very few of them are saying it publicly. Do you believe that will change?

BERNSTEIN: I think that it's starting to change already. I think as journalists that we need to be going to all Republican members of the House and Senate and having serious discussions with them, questions on background, what do they think about the fitness of Donald Trump to be president of the United States and let's start running detailed stories about what they really think because the contempt that so many of them

have, as well as the fear of Donald Trump, they're also afraid of his base, and Trump is a president of his base, not a president trying to unite the country. But they are also still fearful of his base why a lot of them haven't come out and spoken, they've been craven against the president.

Listen to what Mitch McConnell said, he broke with the president of the United States after the Mattis letter in a way that is absolutely definitive and I think is going to be regarded as a changing point in the Trump presidency because there is — this is no longer about just the Mueller investigation, this is about the fitness or unfitness of Trump in every regard and especially about an untruthful presidency that it makes it impossible to have a truthful debate.

....

BERNSTEIN: .... But this is not just a question of whether [Trump] is going to be impeached, convicted, not convicted. This is about whether or not a consensus is developing that the president of the United States is not fit to serve in a situation such as we have never had in the history of this country.

Read what individuals are saying in the Congress, being, quote — quoted as saying he's off the rails. Republicans saying that, not Democrats. He's off the rails psychologically. He's not stable enough to be president.

These are questions that as journalists we have to look at not pejoratively, not saying whether we think he's psychologically unfit, but what people of the country think. We also ought to be talking to people in the country about all these things, but also about Republicans particularly and what they say about these questions and also Trump tried to make this — his fitness about whether or not he's committed, quote, collusion.

Well, the larger question is whether he has been a tool wittingly, unwittingly, half-wittingly of a hostile foreign power and the evidence seems to stack up that wittingly, unwittingly or half-wittingly, he has been a tool of a hostile foreign power, of Vladimir Putin in such a way as to undermine the interest of the United States. It doesn't mean it's impeachable but it is an amazing fact.

"President Trump is the Mis-Leader in Chief; Right Wing Personalities Pulling Trump's Strings," [CNN](#), 23 Dec 2018.

Sometime around 7 December 2018, Republican politicians began to abandon Trump, as Special Prosecutor Mueller issued reports to judges on the sentencing of Cohen (Trump's former personal attorney) and Flynn (Trump's first national security advisor). Those reports included factual information about Trump's misconduct. Trump's impulsive and stupid announcement on 19 Dec to withdraw all U.S. troops from Syria — which caused Secretary of Defense Mattis to resign — added to the alienation of Republican politicians from Trump.

In the above quotation, Bernstein refers to a statement by Mitch McConnell, Senate Majority Leader. Here is McConnell's entire statement.

I believe it's essential that the United States maintain and strengthen the post-World War II alliances that have been carefully built by leaders in both parties. We must also

maintain a clear-eyed understanding of our friends and foes, and recognize that nations like Russia are among the latter.

So I was sorry to learn that Secretary Mattis, who shares those clear principles, will soon depart the Administration. But I am particularly distressed that he is resigning due to sharp differences with the President on these and other key aspects of America's global leadership.

It is regrettable that the President must now choose a new Secretary of Defense. But I urge him to select a leader who shares Secretary Mattis's understanding of these vital principles and his total commitment to America's service members.

"McConnell Statement on Secretary Mattis," [McConnell](#), 20 Dec 2018. Copy at [tweet](#).

This is strong criticism of Trump from McConnell. The gentlemanly style of McConnell is very different from the personal insults from Trump.

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### **Gen. Stanley McChrystal on Trump**

On 30 December 2018, Retired U.S. Army Gen. Stanley A. McChrystal appeared on the ABC News television program "This Week". Here is some of what he said about Trump:

MARTHA RADDATZ [anchor]: Jim Mattis' last day as defense secretary is this Monday. You saw his very public rebuke of President Trump.

What do you think Americans should make of a resignation of someone like Jim Mattis?

MCCHRYSTAL: I would guess that Secretary Mattis took a long time agonizing over writing a letter that was as direct about his feelings as that particular letter was.

He knew it would be very public and it would make a very strong statement that was much broader than the Syria issue. It was about America's role in the world.

I personally think it was valuable. I think maybe it causes the American people to take pause and say, wait a minute, if we have someone who is as selfless and as committed as Jim Mattis resigns his position, walking away from all the responsibility he feels for every service member in our forces, and he does so in a public way like that, we ought to stop and say, OK, why did he do it?

We ought to ask what kind of commander in chief he had that Jim Mattis that, you know, the good Marine, felt he had to walk away.

RADDATZ: So, if someone was asked to be secretary of defense right now who you knew, what would you say to that person?

MCCHRYSTAL: I would ask them to look in the mirror and ask them if they can get comfortable enough with President Trump's approach to governance, how he conducts

himself, with his values and with his world view, to be truly loyal to him as a commander in chief and going forward.

And we're all instinctively loyal. But the reality is, if there's too much of a disconnect, then I would tell him, I think it's — it would be a bad foundation upon which to try to build a successful partnership with that job.

RADDATZ: If you were asked to join the Trump administration, what would you say?

MCCHRYSTAL: I would say no.

I think it's important for me to work for people who I think are basically honest, who tell the truth as best they know it.

RADDATZ: You think he's a liar?

MCCHRYSTAL: I don't think he tells the truth.

RADDATZ: Is Trump immoral, in your view?

MCCHRYSTAL: I think he is.

RADDATZ: What would you say to those Americans, then — and there are a lot of them — who support Donald Trump, who say, I like what he's doing, he's shaking things up, I don't care about this other stuff?

MCCHRYSTAL: Yeah, I would say everyone has to make their own judgment. I can't tell any supporter of one politician or another that they are wrong.

But what I would ask every American to do is, again, stand in front of that mirror and say, what are we about? Am I really willing to throw away or ignore some of the things that people do that are — are pretty unacceptable, normally, just because they accomplish certain other things that we might like?

If we want to be governed by someone we wouldn't do a business deal with because their — their background is so shady, if we're willing to do that, then that's in conflict with who I think we are. And so I think it's necessary at those times to take a stand.

""This Week' Transcript 12-30-18: Customs and Border Protection Commissioner Kevin McAleenan, Rep. Hakeem Jeffries and Gen. Stanley McChrystal," [ABC News](#), 30 Dec 2018.

When someone important criticizes Trump, then Trump typically responds with a vicious, obnoxious, personal attack. And so, two days later, Trump insulted General McChrystal.

“General” McChrystal got fired like a dog by Obama. Last assignment a total bust.

Known for big, dumb mouth. Hillary lover!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 10:32 EST, 1 Jan 2019.

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## Trump's False or Misleading "Facts"

My essay on Trump during [2017](#) documented many instances of false statements by Trump. Having established that Trump can *not* get his facts correct — especially when he is boasting of his accomplishment — there is *no* need to present more cumulative evidence. Accordingly, in this essay I only mention Trump's false facts in some major speeches, or when the factual error is particularly egregious.

Glenn Kessler and colleagues at *The Washington Post* have done an outstanding job of counting the cumulative factual errors in Trump's speeches. Here are links to some of Kessler's articles during 2018:

1. On 20 January 2018, The [Washington Post](#) reported 2140 false or misleading claims during his first year in office, an average of 5.9 claims/day.
2. On 2 March 2018, The [Washington Post](#) reported 2436 false or misleading claims during 406 days as president, an average of 6.0 claims/day.
3. On 1 May 2018, The [Washington Post](#) reported 3001 false or misleading claims during 466 days as president, an average of 6.5 claims/day.
4. On 1 June 2018, The [Washington Post](#) reported 3251 false or misleading claims in 497 days, an average of 6.5 claims/day.
5. On 1 August 2018, The [Washington Post](#) reported Trump made 4229 false or misleading claims during 558 days as president, an average of 7.6 claims/day. *The Post* found Trump's rate of false claims per day is increasing as his presidency continues.
6. Glenn Kessler has been very professional, using noninflammatory phrases like "false or misleading" to characterize Trump's misstatements of fact. But on 22 August 2018, Kessler finally [called](#) a false statement by Trump a "lie". The specific context was whether Trump knew about payments of hush money to Stephanie Clifford, a topic that I discuss [below](#). Kessler wrote: "How to characterize Trump's statements has become its own pitched political battle, with many of the president's critics demanding that they be called 'lies.' The Fact Checker has been hesitant to go that far, as it is difficult to document whether the president knows he is not telling the truth."
7. On 4 September 2018, The [Washington Post](#) reported Trump made 4713 false or misleading claims during 592 days as president, an average of 8.0 claims/day.
8. On 2 November 2018. The [Washington Post](#) found that Trump made 6420 false or misleading claims in 649 days, a long-term average of 9.9 claims/day. "... in the seven weeks leading up the midterm elections, the president made 1,419 false or misleading claims — an average of 30 a day."
9. On 10 December 2018, Glenn Kessler at the [Washington Post](#) introduced a new rating, "Bottomless Pinocchio", for false statements that are repeated at least 20 times. Trump

earned 14 of these new Bottomless Pinocchio awards. Kessler wrote: “The president keeps going long after the facts are clear, in what appears to be a deliberate effort to replace the truth with his own, far more favorable, version of it. He is not merely making gaffes or misstating things, he is purposely injecting false information into the national conversation.”

10. On 30 December 2018, Glenn Kessler at the [Washington Post](#) found Trump made a total of 7645 false or misleading claims in the 710 days since Trump became president.
11. On 30 December 2018, Glenn Kessler at the [Washington Post](#) reported that 2018 was "a year of unprecedented deception" by Trump, with an average of 15.4 false claims per day.

On 29 December 2018, the [New York Times](#) published an article on Trump's factual errors, in which the Times divided the errors into different categories.

If Trump were simply careless with facts, one would expect approximately half of his alleged facts to weaken his argument. But *all* of Trump's false or misleading facts are in the direction of improving his reputation or making a stronger argument for his desired change. That suggests Trump is deliberately citing wrong facts. Further, Trump repeatedly cites the same wrong facts, despite being corrected by journalists and commentators, which suggests Trump *intends* to cite wrong facts. To be blunt about it, Trump is a habitual liar.

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## Trump's Low Approval by Voters

When I was a physics student in 1970, I read a statistical analysis textbook that mentioned one could ask 100 people about the height of the Queen of Siam, then calculate an average and standard deviation. But then the textbook mentioned the problem is that Siam does *not* have a Queen. Since then I have not taken opinion polls seriously. <smile> There is *no* guarantee that the people polled will be well informed about Trump's performance. Let's be honest here — most people have neither the time nor the desire to spend hours each day reading *The Washington Post* or *The New York Times*. If some of the people polled are not well informed, then the poll has little significance.

Because professional politicians (e.g., members of the U.S. Congress) take opinion polls seriously, sustained low approval ratings for Trump might help persuade Congress to impeach and convict Trump.

A new president's approval rating in opinion polls typically starts at a relatively high value, perhaps expressing the hope of citizens. But then the president's approval rating slowly declines, as unpopular events occur. This initial high approval is often called a "honeymoon" by professional pollsters. But Trump is *not* a typical new president — he had *no* honeymoon. In early February 2009 the Gallup poll found a 64% approval rating for Obama, but in early February 2017 only a 40% approval rating for Trump. Trump's initial approval rating was not only the lowest of any president since 1953, but also Trump's initial approval rating was 21% less than the average for presidents in early February after their inauguration. [Gallup](#).

One can find details of opinion polls at:

- [Real Clear Politics](#) summaries of polls
- [Gallup](#)
- [Pew Research Center](#)
- [Quinnipiac](#).

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Here are some news articles on Trump's low approval in opinion polls during his presidency in 2018.

- "Trump ends 1st year with lowest average approval rating," [Associated Press](#); 16 Jan 2018. (The Gallup poll shows a current 38% approval rating for Trump, with a first-year average 39% approval rating. Trump's first-year average is the lowest of any U.S. president since opinion polls began in 1953.)
- An opinion poll of 170 current and recent members of the Presidents and Executive Politics section of the American Political Science Association ranked Trump as the worst president in U.S. history. Amongst Republican scholars who participated in the survey, Trump comes fifth from worst. [New York Times](#); [Politico](#); [CBS News](#). Unlike opinion polls of randomly chosen Americans, the participants in this poll are well informed.
- On 21 February 2018, a Quinnipiac University opinion poll showed Trump with a 37% approval rating. Only 30% of Americans "like Trump as a person". [Q.U.](#); [CNN](#).
- On 7 March 2018, [Politico](#) reported their new opinion poll that shows in a hypothetical election a "generic Democrat" beats Trump by 44 to 36%, with 19% undecided.
- On 18 March 2018, an NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll showed a slight increase in Trump's approval rating — 43%, an increase of 4% from January 2018. [Wall Street Journal](#); [Bloomberg](#).
- On 26 March 2018, a [CNN](#) opinion poll showed a 42% approval rating for Trump, the highest number in the past 11 months.
- On 23 April 2018, a [Gallup](#) poll found a 39% approval rating for Trump. Moreover, only 37% believe Trump should be re-elected, while 59% want a new president in 2020. [Washington Post](#).
- On 18 June 2018, a [Gallup](#) opinion poll conducted after the Kim/Trump summit in Singapore showed the highest approval rating for Trump's presidency: 45%, while 50% disapprove of Trump's job performance. [The Hill](#).



On 22 June 2018, a [CNN](#) opinion poll shows 42% of Americans favor impeaching Trump and then removing him from office, "including 77% of Democrats (not surprising) and only 9% of Republicans (even less surprising)."

- On 25 June 2018, a [Gallup](#) opinion poll showed Trump had returned to a 41% approval rating, while 55% disapprove of Trump's job performance. The decrease in approval was probably owing to Trump forced by bipartisan public condemnation to stop separating children from their illegal immigrant parents at the Mexican border. [Washington Post](#).
- On 23 July 2018, an [NBC News](#) Wall Street Journal opinion poll showed "Trump's overall job-approval rating in the poll stands at 45 percent among registered voters — up 1 point from June — while 52 percent of voters disapprove of his job." The 1% change is *not* significant, given the  $\pm 3.3\%$  margin of error.
- On 24 August 2018, the [Associated Press](#) reported "The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research finds 60 percent of Americans disapprove of Trump's work as president, compared with 38 percent who approve." Note that the sampling of public opinion occurred *before* 21 Aug, the day Cohen pled guilty and implicated Trump in two felonies and the day a jury found Manafort guilty.
- On 31 August 2018, the Washington Post-ABC News opinion poll found 60% disapprove of Trump's job performance, the highest disapproval in his presidency. Only 36% approve of Trump's job performance. [Washington Post](#).
- On 10 September 2018, CNN found "Overall, just 36% approve of the way the President is handling his job, down from 42% in August. Among independents, the drop has been sharper, from 47% approval last month to 31% now. That's 4 points below his previous 2018 low of 35% approval among political independents in CNN polling, and 1 point below his previous all-time low among independents in CNN polling, reached in November 2017. .... Trump has also lost ground on several personal attributes, most notably perceptions of his honesty: Just 32% say they see the President as honest and trustworthy, the worst read in CNN polling." [CNN](#).
- On 11 September 2018, [CNN](#) reported: "Eight high-quality polls have been completed over the two last weeks — and every single one of them has Trump's approval falling." The eight are: ABC News/Washington Post, CNN, Gallup, IBD/TIPP, the Kaiser Family Foundation, Quinnipiac University, Selzer & Co., and Suffolk University. There is an average decline of 3.2% in Trump's approval rating between the latest poll (completed on 28 Aug or later) and the previous poll for each of the eight.
- On 21 Sep 2018, [The Hill](#) reported their opinion poll on a re-run of the 2016 presidential election. Of those Americans choosing to vote in this poll, Hillary Clinton beat Trump 50% to 41%. My comment is sorry Americans: all votes final, no refunds, no do-overs. Furthermore, it is appalling that after 20 months of the Trump presidency, 41% of Americans still support Trump, but that number is consistent with opinion polls of Trump's job approval.

- On 23 Sep 2018, the [NBC News](#) and Wall Street Journal joint opinion poll shows "President Trump's job rating in the poll stands at 44 percent approve, 52 percent disapprove — essentially unchanged from August's poll." Also see [Wall Street Journal](#).
  - On 21 Oct 2018, the [NBC News](#) and Wall Street Journal joint opinion poll shows "Trump's job rating among registered voters stands at 47 percent approve, 49 percent disapprove.... That's his highest rating as president in the NBC/WSJ poll."
  - On 14 November 2018, a [Monmouth University](#) opinion poll shows a 43% approval rating for Trump, but only 37% of registered voters want Trump re-elected in 2020. [Politico](#); [The Hill](#).
  - On 26 November 2018, the weekly Gallup opinion poll for 19-25 November showed that disapproval of Trump's job performance again reached 60%, for the fourth time in his presidency and for the first time in the year 2018. The poll results have a margin of error of  $\pm 3\%$ , but this result is an increase of 7% in disapproval of Trump's job performance from the previous week. [The Hill](#); [CNN](#); [Newsweek](#).
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## Trump's Rude & Obnoxious Remarks

### Trump's "shithole countries"

On 11 January 2018, Trump had a burst of candor, when he declared in a White House Oval Office meeting with several U.S. Senators: "Why are we having all these people from shithole countries come here?" The shithole countries include Haiti, El Salvador, and African countries. Instead of allowing immigrants from shithole countries, Trump suggested allowing immigration from countries like Norway. [Washington Post](#); [Los Angeles Times](#); [Associated Press](#). On 15 January, Trump made an ad hominem attack on Senator Durbin, who attended the 11 January meeting. More on this outburst by Trump is [below](#).

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On the morning of 5 February, Trump attacked the ranking Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee.

Little Adam Schiff, who is desperate to run for higher office, is one of the biggest liars and leakers in Washington, right up there with Comey, Warner, Brennan and Clapper! Adam leaves closed committee hearings to illegally leak confidential information. Must be stopped!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:39 EST, 5 Feb 2018.

If Trump has evidence that Schiff is leaking classified information, then Trump should give the evidence to the FBI. Twitter is *not* the place to enforce the laws. Calling Schiff "little" is childish.

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### **Trump says Democrats are unamerican and treasonous**

On 5 February 2018, Trump went to the Sheffer Corporation in Blue Ash, Ohio — near Cincinnati — and gave a speech. Trump described the reaction of the Democrats to Trump's SOTU speech:

But you know, the other day — did anybody happen to see the State of the Union Address? Right? Okay. (Applause.) So I got good marks.

....

So that means they [Democrats] would rather see Trump do badly, okay, than our country do well. That's what it means. It's very selfish. And it got to a point where I really didn't even want to look too much during the speech over to that side. Because, honestly, it was bad energy. That was bad energy.

You're up there, you've got half the room going totally crazy, wild — they loved everything, they want to do something great for our country. And you have the other side [Democrats], even on positive news — really positive news, like that [lowest African-American and Hispanic unemployment in the history of our country] — they were like death and un-American. Un-American.

Somebody said, "treasonous." I mean, yeah, I guess, why not? (Laughter.) Can we call that treason? Why not? (Applause.) I mean, they certainly didn't seem to love our country very much.

But you look at that, and it's really very, very sad. So we have to keep it going because this country is turning, and it's turning much faster. And I said I'm going to do it, but it's happening faster than I thought.

Donald J. Trump, "Remarks by President Trump on Tax Reform," [White House](#), 5 Feb 2018.

The word "treason" is defined in the U.S. Constitution (Article 3, §3) to mean giving "aid and comfort" to enemies of the USA during a war. The word "treason" can *not* be properly applied to Democrats — or anyone else — because we are not at war.

Trump also called Democrats "un-American" just because they disagree with Trump.

Incidentally, while Trump was taking credit for a strong U.S. economy, the Standard & Poors 500 Index lost 4.1% of its value in a single day. [Reuters](#); [Washington Post](#).

Journalists criticized Trump for his inflammatory speech. [Cincinnati Enquirer](#); [Cincinnati Enquirer](#)(fact-check); [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [Associated Press](#); [Wall Street Journal](#)(subscription); [Washington Post](#)(6Feb).

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### **Trump says Chuck Todd is an SOB**

On 10 March 2018, Trump traveled to Pennsylvania to give a campaign speech in support of

Rick Saccone, the Republican candidate for the U.S. House of Representatives in the 13 March special election. Trump again criticized the news media:

President Trump attacked NBC host Chuck Todd at a campaign rally on Saturday [10 Mar], calling the news anchor a “son of a bitch.”

Trump mentioned Todd, who now hosts NBC’s “Meet the Press,” in mentioning a 1999 appearance on the show in which he spoke about needing to “take out” North Korea.

“A show now headed by ‘Sleepy eyes Chuck Todd,’” Trump said. “He’s a sleeping son of a bitch.”

"Trump rips NBC's Chuck Todd: 'He's a sleeping son of a bitch'," [The Hill](#), 19:29 EST, 10 Mar 2018.

Railing against much of the mainstream press, President Donald Trump continued to air his grievances with the media, honing in on NBC News anchor Chuck Todd.

"It's 1999, I'm on Meet the Press, a show now headed by sleepy eyes Chuck Todd," Trump recalled. "He's a sleeping son of a bitch. I'll tell you."

"Trump insults Chuck Todd again," [CNN](#), 20:48 EST, 10 Mar 2018.

The [Washington Post](#) published video.

Being called a "son of a bitch" is one of the worst insults in the English language. Many newspapers refused to print the actual insult, instead either omitting letters or using the abbreviation "SOB". Is this the kind of behavior that is acceptable from the president of the USA?

I searched Google and the White House website, but could not find a transcript of Trump's 10 March speech, so I am unable to quote Trump in context. [New York Times](#) and [CBS News](#) have many brief quotes from the speech.

Not only was Trump's 10 March speech offensive, but also it was full of factual errors. [Associated Press](#).

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### **Trump says Maxine Waters has a low IQ**

Insulting Chuck Todd was *not* the only rude remark in Trump's 10 March speech. Maxine Waters — a liberal Democrat in the U.S. House of Representatives — has been publicly calling for Trump's impeachment. Trump rudely attacked Maxine Waters in his 10 March speech: “And Maxine Waters, a very low IQ individual. Did you ever see her? .... She's a low IQ individual. She can't help it. She really is.” [The Hill](#); [CNN](#); [RealClearPolitics](#).

On 20 March 2018, Trump again attacked Maxine Waters, in a rambling paragraph that promised to keep the Republican majority in the U.S. House of Representatives, mentioned Rep. Waters wanted to impeach Trump, and promised to "keep the economy strong."

But we're going to defy the predictions once again. We will keep the House majority.

(Applause.) And we will keep fighting for the change the American people want and they deserve. The Democrats think they're invincible. I mean, I watch this Maxine Waters. You ever see Maxine Waters? (Laughter.) A low-IQ individual. (Applause.) Low IQ. "We will impeach him. We will impeach him." "But he hasn't done anything wrong." "It doesn't matter. We will impeach him." (Laughter.) This is what we're going to have. This is what we're going to have to fight against. It's easier just keep going good. We're going to keep the economy strong.

"Remarks by President Trump at the National Republican Congressional Committee March Dinner," [White House](#), 20 Mar 2018.

After the White House spokeswoman was asked to leave a Red Hen restaurant in Virginia (see [below](#)), Maxine Waters publicly called for people to harass Trump administration officials. (See e.g., [Washington Post](#); [CNN](#); [Los Angeles Times](#); [RCP](#)(video).) Trump responded with a tweet about Maxine Waters:

Congresswoman Maxine Waters, an extraordinarily low IQ person, has become, together with Nancy Pelosi, the Face of the Democrat Party. She has just called for harm to supporters, of which there are many, of the Make America Great Again movement. Be careful what you wish for Max!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 13:11 EDT, 25 June 2018.

Trump got his facts wrong. Waters did *not* call for "harm to supporters" of Trump. Waters called for harassment of Trump administration officials, such as Cabinet members.

On 28 June 2018, Maxine Waters canceled her appearance at two public events in Texas and Alabama, because of a death threat. [CNN](#); [Washington Post](#); [The Hill](#). The threats are presumably from supporters of Trump, which reminds us that Trump's obnoxious insults can have real consequences.

On 3 July, Trump made another ad hominem attack on Maxine Waters.

Crazy Maxine Waters, said by some to be one of the most corrupt people in politics, is rapidly becoming, together with Nancy Pelosi, the FACE of the Democrat Party. Her ranting and raving, even referring to herself as a wounded animal, will make people flee the Democrats!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 06:16 EDT, 3 July 2018.

Trump offers *no* evidence for his defamatory assertion that Waters is "one of the most corrupt people in politics".

Maxine Waters has served in the U.S. House of Representatives since 1990, which means she has accumulated seniority used to assign chairmanship of committees. If the Democrats become the majority party in the House in the 6 November elections, Maxine will likely become the chair of the House Banking Committee. On 3 November, Trump seems to have realized that he had been insulting a person who could frustrate his agenda.

Congresswoman Maxine Waters was called the most Corrupt Member of Congress! @FoxNews If Dems win, she would be put in charge of our Country's finances. The beginning of the end!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 06:54 EDT, 3 Nov 2018.

On 6 November, Maxine Waters was re-elected with 75% of the vote!

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### **Trump and Biden slug it out**

On 20 March 2018, former U.S. vice-president Joe Biden spoke at a University of Miami program on ending violence against women, where Joe said, if he were in high school, he would have "beat the hell out of" Trump. ABC News reported:

"A guy who ended up becoming our national leader said, 'I can grab a woman anywhere and she likes it,'" Biden said. "They asked me if I'd like to debate this gentleman, and I said 'no.' I said, 'If we were in high school, I'd take him behind the gym and beat the hell out of him.'"

"I've been in a lot of locker rooms my whole life," Biden continued. "I'm a pretty damn good athlete. Any guy that talked that way was usually the fattest, ugliest S.O.B. in the room."

"Biden says he would have 'beat the hell out' of Trump in high school for disrespecting women," [ABC News](#), 05:22 EDT, 21 Mar 2018.

CNN reported Biden's pugnacious remarks:

Former Vice President Joe Biden said he would "beat the hell out of" President Donald Trump if they were in high school over his crude comments about women.

"When a guy who ended up becoming our national leader said, 'I can grab a woman anywhere and she likes it' and then said, 'I made a mistake,'" Biden said Tuesday [20 Mar] of Trump, according to video of the remarks posted on Facebook by the University of Miami College Democrats.

"They asked me would I like to debate this gentleman, and I said no. I said, 'If we were in high school, I'd take him behind the gym and beat the hell out of him,'" said Biden, getting laughter and applause from the crowd at the University of Miami.

Biden was referencing the "Access Hollywood" video that surfaced in 2016 in which Trump was heard making lewd comments about women. Trump issued an apology, calling his comments "locker room talk."

Biden said Tuesday [20 Mar], "I've been in a lot of locker rooms my whole life. I'm a pretty damn good athlete."

He added, "Any guy that talked that way was usually the fattest, ugliest S.O.B. in the room."

....

.... The former vice president has made similar remarks before about Trump during the 2016 election.

"The press always ask me, 'Don't I wish I were debating him?' No, I wish we were in high school — I could take him behind the gym. That's what I wish," Biden said then at a campaign [rally](#) in Pennsylvania for Hillary Clinton.

"Biden says he would 'beat the hell' out of Trump if in high school," [CNN](#), 13:46 EDT, 21 Mar 2018.

So that's the democratic party position: beat the hell out of men who disrespect women and then call them an SOB. Well, Donald Trump did *not* like having a loathsome democrat beat the hell out of him, so Trump fired back at Biden.

Crazy Joe Biden is trying to act like a tough guy. Actually, he is weak, both mentally and physically, and yet he threatens me, for the second time, with physical assault. He doesn't know me, but he would go down fast and hard, crying all the way. Don't threaten people Joe!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 06:19 EDT, 22 March 2018.

So two of the most prominent 70-year old politicians in the USA behave like young children. Are we really heading toward solving problems in a boxing ring, with a nationally televised fight to the finish between Joe "slug 'em" Biden and Donald "grab 'em by the pussy" Trump?

On 22 March 2018, journalists had fun reporting on this debacle:

- "Septuagenarian smackdown? Trump, Biden trade fighting words," [Associated Press](#), reprinted in the [Miami Herald](#) and [Washington Post](#).
- "Trump Threatens Biden, Saying He 'Would Go Down Fast and Hard' if They Fought," [New York Times](#).
- Chris Cillizza, "3 big things revealed by Donald Trump's tweet that he could knock out Joe Biden," [CNN](#).
- "Trump and Biden are both openly fantasizing about who would win in a fistfight," [Washington Post](#).
- Dan Balz, "Biden vs. Trump: How low can you go?" [Washington Post](#).
- "Trump attacks 'crazy Joe Biden' after the former VP said he would have 'beat the hell out of' Trump for disrespecting women," [CNBC](#).

**My comments:** It is important to remember how this slugfest began. At a rally on ending violence against women, Joe Biden said he would like to go back 55 years — when Trump was in high school — and physically attack the future president of the USA. Does anyone see the irony in urging violence against men at a rally to end violence against women? Despite Biden's pugnacious threat, Trump *should* have ignored Biden. Instead, Trump is willing to fight for the right to sexually assault women. This is Trump's entertainment for the Plebeians, but it diminishes the office of the president of the USA.

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### Trump throws candy at Dr. Merkel

Dr. Angela Merkel — a former physics professor and currently the Chancellor of Germany for four consecutive terms — attended the G7 meeting in Quebec on 8-9 June 2018. Six of the world leaders at the G7 meeting were angry at the tariffs imposed by Trump.

On 20 June 2018, Eurasia Group President Ian Bremmer told CBS News about extremely rude behavior by Trump at the G7 meeting on 9 June 2018.

WATCH: [@IanBremmer](#) describes exchange between Chancellor Merkel and Pres. Trump at #G7 summit: "He stood up, he put his hand in his pocket... and he took two Starbursts candies out, threw them on the table and said to Merkel, 'Here, Angela. Don't say I never give you anything.'" CBS This Morning, [tweet](#), 10:02 EDT, 20 June 2018.

"Trump was sitting there with his arms crossed, clearly not liking the fact that they were ganging up on him," Bremmer said to the news outlet. "He eventually agreed and said OK, he'll sign it. And at that point, he stood up, put his hand in his pocket, his suit jacket pocket, and he took two Starburst candies out, threw them on the table and said to Merkel, 'Here, Angela. Don't say I never give you anything.' "

"The relationship is about as dysfunctional as we've seen between America and its major allies since the trans-Atlantic relationship really started after World War II," Bremmer continued.

Shortly after the summit, Trump refused to endorse the joint communiqué signed by the other G-7 members, rebuking Trudeau and threatening to impose further tariffs on the country. The president also earned a rebuttal from Merkel on Tuesday [19 June] after he criticized her country's immigration system, falsely claiming crime in her country was on the rise.

Aris Folley, "Ian Bremmer: Trump tossed candy to Merkel at G-7, said 'don't say I never give you anything'," [The Hill](#), 15:57 EDT, 20 June 2018.

Cited by [Washington Post](#); [The Independent](#); [Newsweek](#).

The final sentence from *The Hill* — about Trump's lies about the crime rate in Germany — is chronicled [above](#).

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### Trump condemns little restaurant in Virginia

On Friday evening, 22 June, Sarah Sanders — Trump's press secretary — was asked to leave the Red Hen restaurant in Lexington, Virginia. The reason that Sanders was asked to leave was that the staff and owner were uncomfortable with Trump's politics and Sanders worked for Trump. The Red Hen is a tiny restaurant, only 26 chairs, in a small town of 7000 residents. [Washington Post](#); [Associated Press](#)(23June); [Associated Press](#)(24June).

On 25 June, Trump condemned the Red Hen restaurant, *not* because the staff and owner were liberal Democrats who discriminated against Trumpites, but because the restaurant — which Trump never visited — was "filthy".

The Red Hen Restaurant should focus more on cleaning its filthy canopies, doors and windows (badly needs a paint job) rather than refusing to serve a fine person like Sarah Huckabee Sanders. I always had a rule, if a restaurant is dirty on the outside, it is dirty on the inside!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:41 EDT, 25 June 2018.

The [Washington Post](#) reported that the Red Hen was *not* in bad condition on the exterior. More telling is that Red Hen has better state health inspection reports than the restaurants in Trump's hotels in Washington, DC and Mar-a-Lago. See also [Roanoke Times](#).

Incidentally, Red Hen is a common name for restaurants. Ignorant Trump supporters harassed innocent Red Hen restaurants in other states, spreading the incivility. [Washington Post](#); [WTOP](#)(DC); [6ABC](#)(NJ); [Philly.com](#)(NJ); [CBS News](#); [ABC News](#)(Calif.). Trump's failure to mention the location of the Red Hen in his 25 June tweet may have contributed to his supporters attacking innocent Red Hen restaurants in other states.

My opinion is that the staff and owner of the Red Hen should have allowed Sanders and her family to eat there in peace. Sanders was not misbehaving in any way. But then Trump condemned the Red Hen with false statements, which worsened an already unpleasant episode. What began as a wrongful act by liberal Democrats quickly became a nasty fight in which Trump and his supporters also committed wrongful acts.

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### **Trump insults female journalists**

On 1 October 2018, Trump held a press conference in which he insulted a female journalist, Cecilia Vega of ABC News. The [Washington Post](#) quotes Trump as telling her: "That's okay, I know you're not thinking. You never do." The headline of Philip Bump's analysis in the [Washington Post](#) says "Trump eliminates the middleman [press secretary Sarah Sanders] in his war against journalists". See also: [Associated Press](#); [Politico](#); [NBC News](#).

Here are Trump's remarks in context, including a later remark that *all* journalists are Democrats (and therefore enemies of Trump):

[TRUMP:] Okay, question. Yeah. Go ahead. Sure. She's shocked that I picked her. She's like in a state of shock.

QUESTION [by Cecilia Vega]: I'm not. Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: That's okay. I know you're not thinking. You never do.

QUESTION: I'm sorry?

THE PRESIDENT: No, go ahead. Go ahead.

QUESTION: In a tweet this weekend, Mr. President, you said that it's incorrect to say

you're limiting the scope of the FBI investigation.

THE PRESIDENT: What does that have to do with trade? I don't mind answering the question. But, you know, I'd like to do the trade questions first.

QUESTION: It has to do with the other headline in the news, which is the Kavanaugh nomination.

....

[TRUMP:] But more importantly, in a sense, for her [U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein] to have waited that period of time — and now for you, Democrats — and I guess I'm including you too, the media, right. I consider you a part of the Democrat Party. But for you, for the Democrats to be talking about, "We want more time for the FBI" — if you wanted more time for the FBI, why didn't Dianne Feinstein bring this up?

"Remarks by President Trump on the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement," [White House](#), begins 11:19 EDT, 1 Oct 2018. [Retrieved 2 Oct at 20:17 EDT.]

It's not just female journalists who get insulted by Trump. On 16 October 2018, Trump called a woman "[Horseface](#)".

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### Trump endorses violence against journalists

In May 2017, Greg Gianforte, then a Republican candidate for the U.S. House of Representatives from Montana, grabbed a journalist from *The Guardian* newspaper in England, and slammed the journalist to the ground. Gianforte was subsequently convicted of misdemeanor assault. On the night of 18 October 2018, Trump was at a campaign rally in Missoula Montana, when Trump praised Gianforte for assaulting a journalist.

[Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [New York Times](#)(opinion); [Politico](#); [Reuters](#).

The following day, 19 Oct 2018, Trump said he had no regrets about praising Gianforte.

QUESTION: ... do you regret bringing up, last night at your rally, the assault on a reporter by a congressman?

THE PRESIDENT: No. Not at all. Not at all. That was different world. That was a different league, a different world. No.

He's just a great guy and he's a — he's — you know Greg [Gianforte] very well, right? That was a tremendous success last night in Montana, and Greg is a tremendous person. And he's a tough cookie. And I'll stay with that. It's a different — you're talking about a different world.

"Remarks by President Trump at Signing of Presidential Memorandum to Promote the Reliable Supply and Delivery of Water in the West," [White House](#), 19 Oct 2018.

Trump's lack of regret means Trump was *not* joking on 18 Oct.

Several news sources reported on Trump's lack of regret. [Reuters](#); [ABC News](#); [The Hill](#).

[The Guardian](#) issued a statement that explains what is wrong with Trump's endorsement of violence against journalists: “The president of the United States tonight applauded the assault on an American journalist who works for the Guardian. To celebrate an attack on a journalist who was simply doing his job is an attack on the first amendment by someone who has taken an oath to defend it.”

Additionally, civilized people do *not* physically hit people with whom they disagree. Trump has the values of a barbarian from many centuries ago.

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### Trump insults Adam Schiff

When Trump fired his Attorney General on 7 November, Trump appointed Whittaker to be acting attorney general. Adam Schiff, a senior Democrat in the U.S. House of Representatives, joined a chorus of politicians who said Whittaker's appointment is unconstitutional. On 18 November, Trump rudely retaliated against Schiff.

So funny to see little Adam Schitt (D-CA) talking about the fact that Acting Attorney General Matt Whitaker was not approved by the Senate, but not mentioning the fact that Bob Mueller (who is highly conflicted) was not approved by the Senate!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 13:01 EST, 18 Nov 2018.

Trump, who does *not* understand the U.S. Constitution, misses the point that the Attorney General is required to be confirmed by the Senate, while a Special Counsel (e.g., Mueller) is not required to be confirmed.

Some commentators politely said that Trump had misspelled Schiff's name, but I think Trump deliberately used a homonym for "shit". Ironically, on 16 November, Trump publicly [called](#) for journalists to treat the presidency with respect and decorum. But Trump hypocritically refuses to respect members of the U.S. Congress. See, e.g., [Associated Press](#); [Politico](#); [New York Times](#).

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### Conclusion to Trump's obnoxious behavior

**What's wrong with Trump's obnoxious tirades?** When Trump is criticized, he lashes out with an irrational, ad hominem tirade. This is childish behavior by Trump. The real concern is that Trump might do this to the leader of another nation and create an unnecessary military or diplomatic crisis. Another concern is that Trump is a poor role model for children and adults in the USA. Certainly, Trump's rants diminish the office of the president, by his uncivil behavior.

Back in January 2017, when I drafted the conclusion of my previous essay, I wondered: “It is unknown how Trump will react to the incessant criticism [as president]. However, the criticism will surely affect Trump's narcissistic craving for strong majority admiration.” By the end of June 2017, it was clear that, because Trump has neither the knowledge nor the experience to be president, he was accomplishing little and making problems worse. Trump's response was to criticize the news media for reporting his mistakes, failures, and character

flaws. Trump's leadership style that was tolerable when he led a privately-owned company is now unacceptable when he is president of the USA.

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## **“You're fired!” & Resignations**

In 2017, I had the impression that there was a higher turnover of personnel in Trump's administration than in most previous U.S. Presidents' administrations. Here is a list of departed persons:

1. Sally Yates, acting attorney general, fired on 30 Jan 2017 for refusing to defend Trump's first Executive Order on immigration. (On 6 March 2017, Trump himself revoked that flawed first Executive Order.)
2. Michael Flynn, national security adviser, resigned on 13 Feb 2017.
3. Katie Walsh, White House deputy chief of staff, resigned on 30 March 2017. [Politico](#); [Washington Post](#).
4. Kathleen "K.T." McFarland, deputy national security adviser, removed on 9 April 2017, [Bloomberg](#); [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#). On 19 May 2017, Trump nominated McFarland to be U.S. Ambassador to Singapore. [White House](#).
5. James Comey, director of FBI, fired on 9 May 2017.
6. Michael Dubke, White House communications director, resigned on 18 May 2017, [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#).
7. Walter Shaub, director of the Office of Government Ethics, resigned on 6 July 2016.
8. Sean Spicer, Press Secretary, abruptly resigned on 21 July 2017, [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#).
9. Michael Short, senior assistant press secretary, resigned on 25 July 2017. [Fox News](#).
10. Derek Harvey, member of the National Security Council, removed on 27 July 2017. [Washington Post](#); [Weekly Standard](#); [Reuters](#); [NBC News](#).
11. Reince Priebus, White House chief of staff, resigned on 27 July 2017. The resignation was publicly announced on 28 July at 16:49 EDT, when Trump [tweeted](#) that the Secretary of Homeland Security, John Kelly, would be the new White House chief of staff. Priebus, the former chairman of the Republican National Committee, had brought Katie Walsh, Sean Spicer, and Michael Short to the White House. Priebus — who represented the Republican establishment — was never accepted by Trump, who likes to upset the political establishment. [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [CNN](#).
12. Anthony Scaramucci, White House communications director, fired on 31 July 2017.

[Politico](#); [New York Times](#); [Associated Press](#). Scaramucci was hired on 21 July, and his ten-day tenure must be one of the shortest in White House history. Scaramucci distinguished himself with a string of profanities, expletives, and vulgar expressions on 26 July, see my essay for 2017.

13. Ezra Cohen-Watnick, member of the National Security Council, removed on 2 August 2017. [Washington Post](#); [Politico](#).
14. Stephen Bannon, Trump's chief strategist, fired on 18 August 2017. [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#); [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#).
15. Andrew Hemming, White House "director of rapid response" to journalists, resigned on 24 August 2017. Hemming was formerly employed by the Republican National Committee and brought to the White House by Priebus. [Politico](#); [CNN](#).
16. Sebastian Gorka, a White House counterterrorism adviser, resigned on 25 August 2017. [The Federalist](#); [CNN](#); [The Hill](#); [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#).
17. Keith Schiller, Trump's bodyguard and head of security at Trump Tower in New York City since 2004, announced in early September 2017 that he was quitting his job at the White House. Schiller had been a long-time confidant of Trump. Schiller allegedly quit because of the relatively low pay for government employees and because of disputes with the White House Chief of Staff, John Kelly. [CNN](#)(1Sep); [CBS News](#)(2Sep); [New York Times](#)(5Sep); [Bloomberg](#)(5Sep); [Washington Post](#)(9Oct).
18. Chuck Rosenberg, acting head of the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), resigned on 26 September 2017. The [New York Times](#) says Rosenberg was "disillusioned" with Trump. See also: [Politico](#); [Washington Post](#).
19. Tom Price, Secretary of Health and Human Services, resigned on Friday, 29 Sep 2017. Price had been widely criticized for spending approximately \$52,000 for his travel aboard private, chartered airplanes, instead of flying coach class on commercial airliners. Including costs of private travel for his aides, the total spent was approximately \$400,000. Moreover, Price spent over \$500,000 for travel to Europe and Asia on U.S. Military aircraft. [Associated Press](#); [New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#); [Politico](#)(21Sep); [Politico](#)(2Sep).
20. Dina Powell, deputy national security adviser, announced on 8 Dec 2017 that she would resign in January. [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [Wall Street Journal](#).
21. Omarosa Manigault Newman, director of communications for the White House Office of Public Liaison, announced on 13 December 2017 that she would leave on 20 Jan 2018. She also functioned as Trump's principal adviser on African-American issues. [The Hill](#); [Politico](#); [Washington Post](#). [CNN](#) reported: "... according to a White House official, Manigault Newman has had no access to Trump for months and is considered to be a non-stop problem in the West Wing." On 14 Dec, [ABC News](#) reported that Omarosa Manigault said: "I have seen things [in the White House] that have made me uncomfortable." On 14 Aug 2018, Omarosa had her revenge, when her

[book](#) was released for sale.

22. In the last week of December 2017, Trump terminated the service of all of the members of the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS. Trump did *not* explain his decision. [Washington Blade](#)(28Dec); [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#).
23. On 27 Dec 2017 — but first publicly announced on 12 Jan 2018 — John Feeley resigned as U.S. Ambassador to Panama. Feeley, a career diplomat, felt that he could no longer serve Trump. [Reuters](#); [Newsweek](#); [McClatchy](#). On 9 March, Feeley wrote in the [Washington Post](#) about why he could no longer serve Trump.
24. On 18 Jan 2018, Carl Higbie resigned as head of Corporation for National and Community Service, which operates AmeriCorps. [CNN](#) had published racist anti-black statements, anti-Muslim statements, anti-homosexual statements, and other offensive statements by Higbie in 2013, when he was host of a radio program prior to his appointment by Trump to head CNCS. [Washington Post](#); [Politico](#); [New York Times](#)(20Jan).
25. On 7 February 2018, Rob Porter announced his resignation as the White House staff secretary, after his two ex-wives accused him of physical abuse during their marriages. [New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#); [CNN](#).
26. On 9 February 2018, David Sorensen announced his resignation as a speechwriter for Trump, after allegations of his abuse of his ex-wife became public. Sorensen denied the allegations. Sorensen told *The Washington Post* he resigned because he “didn’t want the White House to have to deal with this distraction.” [Washington Post](#); [CNN](#); [Politico](#).
27. On 26 February 2018, Joseph Yun — the North Korean expert at the U.S. State Department — suddenly announced he would retire on 2 March after 32 years of service. Yun speaks Korean fluently and would have been extremely useful in negotiations with North Korea. The [Washington Post](#) reported: Yun's "departure reflects the widespread frustration within the State Department at diplomats' relative lack of power in the Trump administration, according to someone familiar with Yun's thinking." See also: [Yonhap](#); [CNN](#); [Reuters](#); [The Telegraph](#). For more on the significance of Yun's retirement, see my essay on [North Korea](#).
28. On 27 February 2018, journalists reported that Jared Kushner — Trump's son-in-law and an amateurish presidential adviser in the White House — had his top-secret security clearance revoked. [Politico](#); [New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#); [NBC News](#). On 23 May 2018, Kushner again had a top-secret security clearance. [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#).
29. On 28 February 2018, Hope Hicks resigned as White House Communications Director. She had worked for Trump for the past three years. [New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#); [Los Angeles Times](#). Her last day at the White House was 29 March 2018. [New York Times](#).



30. On 1 March 2018, Roberta S. Jacobson, Trump's ambassador to Mexico, announced she would resign on 5 May 2018. She spent 31 years working for the U.S. State Department. [New York Times](#); [Associated Press](#).
31. On 6 March 2018, Gary Cohn, Trump's top economic adviser, resigned. Cohn opposed the tariffs on imported steel and aluminum that Trump had announced a few days earlier. [New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#); [Politico](#).
32. On 13 March 2018 at 08:44 EDT, in a [tweet](#), Trump publicly sacked Rex Tillerson, the U.S. Secretary of State. [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [Associated Press](#). Tillerson's farewell speech is posted at the [U.S. State Dept.](#)
33. On 13 March, Stephen Goldstein, the undersecretary of state for public diplomacy, released a statement disputing the White House version of how Tillerson was fired. Trump immediately sacked Mr. Goldstein. [Associated Press](#); [Washington Times](#).
34. On 13 March 2018, the [Wall Street Journal](#) reported that Trump yesterday sacked his personal assistant, John McEntee, after McEntee's security clearance was revoked. Strangely, McEntee was immediately hired by Trump's re-election campaign. [The Hill](#); [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [Associated Press](#).
35. On 29 January 2018, Andrew McCabe announced he would retire as deputy director of the FBI on 18 March 2018, when he was eligible for a full pension. Trump had harshly criticized McCabe because in 2015 McCabe's wife was a Democratic candidate for State Senator in Virginia. [NBC News](#); [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#).

**On Friday night at 22:00 EDT, 16 March 2018**, former FBI Deputy Director Andrew McCabe was fired. McCabe was scheduled to retire on Sunday, 18 March, with full retirement benefits after 21 years of service at the FBI. [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [NBC News](#). Some of Trump's tweets about McCabe are quoted [above](#). On 23 March, the [Washington Post](#) published an op-ed by McCabe on his termination.

36. On 22 March 2018, John Dowd — Trump's principal personal attorney in special counsel Mueller's investigation — resigned. [New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#); [Associated Press](#); [The Hill](#).
37. At 18:26 EDT on 22 March 2018, Trump announced in a [tweet](#) that on 9 April John Bolton would become his new National Security Adviser, replacing Lt. General H.R. McMaster. [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#).
38. At 17:31 EDT on 28 March 2018, Trump terminated Veterans Affairs Secretary David Shulkin. [tweet1](#), [tweet2](#); [New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#). Hours later, Shulkin fired back with an opinion-editorial published by the [New York Times](#). As recently as 26 March, White House staff said Trump "does have confidence" in Shulkin "at this point in time". [Associated Press](#); [Washington Post](#).
39. On 8 April 2018, Michael Anton — National Security Council spokesman —

announced he would be resigning. [Politico](#); [The Hill](#); [Reuters](#); [New York Times](#)(Anton was the first person to leave in Bolton's house cleaning.).

40. On 10 April 2018, Thomas Bossert — Homeland Security adviser to Trump — resigned, as requested by the new National Security Adviser, John Bolton. [New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#); [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#).
41. On 11 April 2018, Nadia Schadlow — National Security Council deputy — resigned, as requested by the new National Security Adviser, John Bolton. Her last day at the White House will be 27 April. [The Hill](#); [Fox News](#).
42. On 2 May 2018, Ty Cobb — Trump's lead attorney in the special counsel investigation — decided to retire at 67 years of age. [New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#). Note that on 11 March 2018, Trump [tweeted](#): “The Failing New York Times purposely wrote a false story stating that I am unhappy with my legal team on the Russia case and am going to add another lawyer to help out. Wrong. I am VERY happy with my lawyers, John Dowd, Ty Cobb and Jay Sekulow. They are doing a great job and....” Dowd resigned on 22 March, and Cobb "retired" on 2 May. The [Washington Post](#) clarified that “The White House calls Ty Cobb’s exit a ‘retirement,’ but it sounds as though he was pushed.”
43. On 16 May 2018, Mark S. Inch — Trump's director of federal prisons for the past nine months — resigned. [New York Times](#)(18May); [New York Times](#)(24May).
44. On 5 June 2018, Kelly Sadler — a White House communications aide — was fired. On 10 May 2018, the [Washington Post](#) reported that Sadler was dismissive of U.S. Senator John McCain, who is dying of brain cancer. Sadler's disrespectful remark in a White House meeting was widely condemned. [CNN](#)(5June); [Associated Press](#); [NBC News](#).
45. On 19 June 2018, Joe Hagin — the White House deputy chief of staff for operations — announced he would leave the White House on 6 July 2018. [Associated Press](#); [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [Politico](#).
46. On 20 June 2018, Andrea Hall — the National Security Council expert on weapons of mass destruction — resigned. [Washington Post](#); [Reuters](#). During the Trump administration, the U.S. Government has been hemorrhaging talented people who have knowledge and experience on North Korea. For example, Joseph Yun resigned on 26 Feb 2018.
47. On 30 June 2018, Susan Thornton — Acting Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, and a career diplomat with more than 25 years of service — announced she was retiring at the end of July 2018. [Politico](#); [Reuters](#). With her retirement, the Trump administration lost another person with knowledge and experience on North Korea.
48. On 5 July 2018, Scott Pruitt — head of the Environmental Protection Agency — finally resigned after a long series of [scandals](#). [Associated Press](#); [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [Politico](#).

49. On 12 July 2018, Marc Short — Trump's liaison with the U.S. Congress — resigned. [Washington Post](#); [CBS News](#); [Politico](#).
50. On 12 July 2018, Jennifer Arangio — a senior director at the White House National Security Council for International Organizations and Alliances since January 2017 — was terminated by John Bolton. [Politico](#); [Reuters](#).
51. On 17 August 2018, Darren Beattie — one of Trump's speechwriters — was fired after it was discovered that Beattie had attended a conference in 2016 with "white nationalists". [CNN](#); [Washington Post](#).
52. On 29 August, Trump announced that Donald McGahn — chief White House attorney — would leave in the Fall of 2018. [Trump's tweet](#); [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [Associated Press](#). McGahn's last day in the White House was 17 October 2018. [CBS News](#); [Washington Post](#).
53. On 5 October 2018, Trump abruptly fired Jeff Tien Han Pon, the head of the Office of Personnel Management. Pon lasted a mere 7 months. [Washington Post](#).
54. On 9 October 2018, Nikki Haley — Trump's Ambassador to the United Nations — publicly announced that she had resigned on 3 Oct. She will continue to serve until her replacement is confirmed by the Senate sometime before 31 Dec 2018. [White House](#); [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#).
55. On 7 November 2018 — the day after the midterm elections — U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions resigned at Trump's request. [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [Associated Press](#). My comment is that Sessions abandoned his twenty-year career as a U.S. Senator from Alabama to be Trump's punching bag for almost two years.
56. On the afternoon of 14 November 2018, Mira Ricardel — John Bolton's deputy national security adviser — "departs the White House to transition to a new role within the Administration". [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [Associated Press](#); [Politico](#). Ricardel's departure was unusual in that Melania Trump, the president's wife, on 13 Nov, publicly called for Ricardel's termination. [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#).
57. On Saturday, 8 December 2018, Trump announced that his second chief-of-staff, John Kelly, would be leaving on 31 Dec 2018. [Associated Press](#); [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#).
58. On Saturday morning, 15 December 2018, Trump announced that Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke would leave the Trump administration on 31 Dec 2018. Zinke has been the subject of several ethics investigations. [Trump's tweet](#); [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [The Hill](#); [Associated Press](#).
59. On 20 December 2018, James Mattis — the Secretary of Defense — announced he would resign on 28 February 2019, because of disagreements with Trump on policy.

[Trump's tweet](#); [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [Associated Press](#); [The Hill](#).  
On 23 Dec, Trump fired Mattis on 1 Jan, and named an acting secretary of defense.  
[Trump's tweet](#); [Associated Press](#); [Washington Post](#).

60. On 21 December 2018, Brett McGurk — the U.S. envoy to the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIL — resigned in protest at Trump's decision to withdraw all U.S. troops from Syria. McGurk was first appointed by President Obama in 2015 and was retained by Trump. McGurk's resignation is effective 31 Dec 2018. [CBS News](#); [Associated Press](#); [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [Politico](#).

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### **General Remarks About High Turnover of Personnel in Trump's Government**

On 16 January 2018, the [Washington Post](#) reported that "Trump set a record for White House staff turnover in the first year."

On 1 March 2018, the [New York Times](#) reported: "The White House suffered a staff turnover rate of 34 percent during Mr. Trump's first year, a rate that would be unfathomable at nearly any for-profit enterprise. Even by political standards, it's off the charts — triple that of the Obama administration, and twice that of Ronald Reagan, the previous record-holder...."

On 2 March 2018, the [Associated Press](#) reported that resignations and FBI investigations "have Trump administration adrift".

On 16 March 2018 and subsequently updated, the [New York Times](#) published their list of "unprecedented" turnover at the top of the Trump administration.

On 2 July 2018, the [Associated Press](#) reported that 141 White House staff have resigned or been fired during the one year that ended on 30 June. That turnover of 37% is the highest of the past five presidents.

The high turnover of Trump appointees shows either (1) Trump's poor judgment about people or (2) Trump creating a work environment in which people want to quit.

In early March 2018, journalists had been reporting for three months that the National Security Adviser, H.R. McMaster, would be replaced. On 15 March 2018, the White House press secretary firmly denied those rumors:

Just spoke to @POTUS and Gen. H.R. McMaster — contrary to reports they have a good working relationship and there are no changes at the NSC.  
Sarah Sanders, @PressSec, [tweet](#), 22:12 EDT, 15 Mar 2018.

But just 7 days after this reassurance by Ms. Sanders, Trump replaced General McMaster.

On 9 October 2018, Nikki Haley publicly announced her resignation as Ambassador to the

United Nations. The plan was that Trump would promptly nominate a successor to Haley, and the Senate would confirm the successor before Haley departed at the end of December. On 9 October, Trump [told](#) journalists that he would name a successor to Haley "within the next two or three weeks. Maybe sooner." But Trump did not announce Haley's successor until two *months* later, on 7 December. [White House](#). And after a two-month search, Trump chose an U.N. Ambassador with zero experience in international diplomacy. Trump values personal loyalty more than he values either knowledge or experience. [NBC News](#); [Washington Post](#); [Los Angeles Times](#).

I want to avoid discussing policy matters, but it seems obvious that Trump has little respect for either expertise or experience, given his appointments and nominations. (See, e.g., [Washington Post](#).) It seems to be human nature to select friends and associates who have similar backgrounds and values. Because Trump has *neither* knowledge *nor* experience in government, Trump selects people with a similar lack of credentials. This creates two problems: (1) competent government employees are frustrated by incompetent managers, and (2) managers are in over their head, swamped by problems they can *not* solve. As a result, there is an exodus of both competent and incompetent government employees, and the high turnover in personnel leads to instability and delays.

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## Allegations of Sexual Misconduct

Several websites have posted a list of women who have accused Donald Trump of sexual misconduct. Trump denies these allegations.

- "A Running List Of The Women Who've Accused Donald Trump Of Sexual Misconduct," [Huffington Post](#), (21 women on 8 Dec 2017).
- "President Trump and accusations of sexual misconduct: The complete list," [Washington Post](#), (13 women on 22 Nov 2017).
- "Donald Trump's sexual assault allegations: The full list of women who have accused the President," [The Independent](#) in the U.K., (20 women on 4 Dec 2017).
- "The 19 Women Who Accused President Trump of Sexual Misconduct," [The Atlantic](#), (19 women on 7 Dec 2017).
- "Here's The List Of Women Who Accused Donald Trump Of Sexual Misconduct," [National Public Radio](#), (20 women on 6 Dec 2017).

On 22 March 2018, Trump inappropriately responded to Joe Biden's pugnacious remarks about Trump disrespecting women, as chronicled [above](#).

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**Stephanie Clifford, aka "Stormy Daniels"**

On 12 January 2018, *The Wall Street Journal* reported that Trump's personal attorney had paid \$130,000 in October 2016 to a porn actress to purchase her silence about consensual sex with Trump in 2006. Trump denies sex with her and also denies paying hush money to her. [Wall Street Journal](#); [New York Times](#).

On 13 February 2018, The [New York Times](#) reported "Michael D. Cohen, President Trump's longtime personal lawyer, said on Tuesday [13 Feb] that he had paid \$130,000 out of his own pocket to a pornographic-film actress who had once claimed to have had an affair with Mr. Trump." Bizarrely, Cohen claimed "Neither the Trump Organization nor the Trump campaign was a party to the transaction with Ms. Clifford, and neither reimbursed me for the payment, either directly or indirectly." Notice that Cohen's precise words leaves open the possibility that someone other than the Trump Organization or the Trump campaign reimbursed Cohen — possibly Trump personally reimbursed Cohen. The [Washington Post](#) had a news article with the title "Did Trump's lawyer just implicate Trump in the Stormy Daniels payment?" Normally, an attorney would obtain full payment in advance, deposit the money into an escrow account at a bank, and then pay fees or other money to a third party.

On 6 March 2018, Ms. Clifford sued Trump in Los Angeles Superior Court to void the 28 Oct 2016 contract between her and Trump, because Trump never signed the contract. The Complaint alleges that Trump's attorney, Michael Cohen, filed for arbitration in Los Angeles on 27 February 2018 to enforce the hush-money contract. [NBC News](#); [Los Angeles Times](#); [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [Associated Press](#).

On 7 March 2018, The [New York Times](#) reported that, on Cohen's request, on 27 February a private arbitrator granted a temporary restraining order that prevents Clifford from speaking about her relationship with Trump.

On 10 March 2018, Danny Cevallos, a legal analyst for NBC News, wrote an insightful [article](#) about this complicated case. While the contract might not be enforceable by Trump (because Trump did not sign), the arbitration clause may be enforceable, because Cohen did sign for corporation EC that paid the money to Clifford. Further, because Clifford signed the contract and because she accepted the \$130,000 payment, she is now arguably estopped from denying the validity of the contract. One complexity is that only Trump (not EC) has the right to compel arbitration, but Trump did not sign the contract.

I see a complicated public policy argument in this difficult case. Trump and Cohen are allegedly using a contract with pseudonyms to prevent public disclosure of Trump's alleged adultery. A judge might find it unconscionable to use the courts to enforce this contract. Because adultery is still a crime in many states, and because this contract — and the publicity on this subject matter — has a nationwide scope, the contract might be an illegal bargain. An injunction issued in California would have a nationwide effect.

On 16 March, Trump's attorney filed a motion to have this litigation transferred to federal court in Los Angeles. Additionally, Trump's attorney claims Clifford violated the nondisclosure agreement at least twenty times. If a judge agrees, then Clifford could owe Trump at least twenty million dollars in liquidated damages under the contract. [NBC News](#); [New York Times](#); [Los Angeles Times](#). On the other hand, a judge could find a million dollars per disclosure exceeded Trump's actual damages (i.e., was actually a nonenforceable



penalty), so the judge would refuse to enforce the million dollar liquidated damages clause in the contract.

On 25 March 2018, an interview with Ms. Clifford was broadcast on the CBS television program "60 Minutes". CBS posted the [transcript](#) of the interview.

On Monday morning, 26 March, Ms. Clifford amended her litigation in Federal court to allege that Cohen had defamed her in February 2018 when Cohen claimed she lied about sexual relations with Trump. [Washington Post](#); [Los Angeles Times](#).

On 5 April, Trump told journalists that he did *not* know that his lawyer paid \$130,000 to Ms. Clifford, and Trump did *not* know the source of the money. [Washington Post](#); [Wall Street Journal](#); [New York Times](#). Later, the White House posted a transcript of Trump's remarks:

QUESTION: Mr. President, did you know about the \$130,000 payment to Stormy Daniels?

THE PRESIDENT: No. No. What else?

QUESTION: Then why did Michael Cohen make those if there was no truth to her allegations?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, you'll have to ask Michael Cohen. Michael is my attorney. And you'll have to ask Michael Cohen.

QUESTION: Do you know where he got the money to make that payment?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I don't know. No.

"Remarks by President Trump in Press Gaggle en route Washington, D.C.," [White House](#), 16:22 EDT, 5 April 2018.

My comment is that Trump's disclosure helps Clifford argue that *no* contract was formed between Trump and Clifford, which is consistent with the absence of Trump's signature on the written contract. Trump should have refused to answer these questions from journalists. Nevertheless, Trump can claim he is *not* a party to the contract — despite the blank space for his signature — but only a third-party beneficiary of the contract.

On 9 April 2018, the FBI raided the office of Michael Cohen, Trump's long-time personal attorney, and seized records pertaining to Clifford. [New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#); [Wall Street Journal](#)(subscription). My comment is that it is highly unusual for law enforcement to raid an attorney's office and violate attorney-client privilege. If Cohen had assisted Trump in continuing or future activity that is either criminal or fraudulent, those activities are not protected by attorney-client privilege. If Cohen did something without Trump's knowledge, then that something is also not protected by attorney-client privilege.

At 18:06 EDT on 9 April, *The Washington Post* updated the article linked in the previous paragraph here, to report that Cohen is being investigated "for possible bank fraud, wire fraud, and campaign finance violations".



On 10 April, the [Associated Press](#) and [New York Times](#) reported the FBI was seeking records of Cohen's payments to Ms. Clifford, as well as records of third-party payments to Ms. McDougal.

On 26 April 2018, Trump was interviewed on "Fox & Friends" program:

TRUMP: Well, [Michael Cohen] has a percentage of my overall legal work — a tiny, tiny little fraction. But, Michael would represent me and represent me on some things. He represents me — like with this crazy Stormy Daniels deal he represented me. And, you know, from what I see he did absolutely nothing wrong. There were no campaign funds going into this — which would have been a problem. Because he's got other things. He's got businesses, and from what I understand they're looking at his businesses, and I hope he's in great shape.

Aaron Blake, "Trump's unwieldy 'Fox and Friends' interview, annotated," [Washington Post](#), 26 April 2018.

That is an important admission by Trump, that Cohen represented Trump in negotiating a nondisclosure agreement with Clifford, and paying hush money to Clifford.

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## 2-6 May 2018: Giuliani makes a mess

On the night of 2 May 2018, Rudolph W. Giuliani — the former mayor of New York City and a recent addition to Trump's collection of personal attorneys — appeared on a Fox News Channel program hosted by Sean Hannity. Giuliani said Trump reimbursed Cohen for the \$130,000 payment to Clifford. [Associated Press](#); [Washington Post](#)(2May); [Washington Post](#)(Aaron Blake on 3 May); [New York Times](#); [NBC News](#). The [New York Times](#) posted a transcript of Giuliani's disclosure. One wonders why Giuliani would go on nationwide television and reveal a fact that contradicted Trump's 5 April statement to journalists (quoted above), a fact that makes it appear that Trump knowingly paid hush money to Clifford. Giuliani claims Trump's payments are acceptable because Trump used his personal funds to reimburse Cohen, *not* "campaign money". Further, Giuliani disclosed that Trump reimbursed Cohen for the \$130,000 in a series of \$35,000 payments over many months. My comment is that the series of small payments may have been intended to confuse any future audit, which might be evidence of fraud or money laundering.

On the morning of 3 May, Trump made a series of three tweets:

Mr. Cohen, an attorney, received a monthly retainer, not from the campaign and having nothing to do with the campaign, from which he entered into, through reimbursement, a private contract between two parties, known as a non-disclosure agreement, or NDA. These agreements are.....

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 06:46 EDT, 3 May 2018.

...very common among celebrities and people of wealth. In this case it is in full force and effect and will be used in Arbitration for damages against Ms. Clifford (Daniels). The agreement was used to stop the false and extortionist accusations made by her about an affair,.....

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 06:54 EDT, 3 May 2018.

...despite already having signed a detailed letter admitting that there was no affair. Prior to its violation by Ms. Clifford and her attorney, this was a private agreement. Money from the campaign, or campaign contributions, played no roll [sic] in this transaction. Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:00 EDT, 3 May 2018.

Notice that Trump admits that hush money was paid to Clifford.

Trump suggests that paying hush money to Clifford had "nothing to do with the campaign" because Trump used his personal money, *not* campaign funds. How does Trump know this payment was legal? Trump himself is ignorant of law. Did Trump consult an attorney who is an expert on campaign finance law?

It seems obvious that the purpose of this hush money was to suppress information that might reduce Trump's chances of being elected president. The hush money was paid on 28 Oct 2016, just days before the presidential election, which timing is additional evidence that the purpose was to protect candidate Trump in the election. (If Trump wanted to protect his family, Trump could have negotiated Clifford's silence years earlier, perhaps in 2007 when the alleged adulterous relationship ended.) That purpose makes Cohen's payment to Clifford a gift that benefited Trump's presidential campaign. Trump later reimbursed Cohen for the payment to Clifford. Trump and Cohen failed to declare the payment to the Federal Election Commission.

Trump asserts that paying hush money is "very common among celebrities and people of wealth." Ok, but should presidential candidates be paying hush money? There is a problem with American Values here that Trump ignores. Trump not only had his attorney pay hush money, but also Trump concealed (i.e., lied about) the payment.

Trump says that Clifford was committing extortion. Given that Trump repeatedly makes false statements of fact, and given that more than a dozen women have accused Trump of sexual misconduct, I think Clifford is much more credible than Trump.

The style of Trump's three tweets is different from Trump's usual tweet style. One wonders if these tweets were drafted by an attorney for Trump to plagiarize.

Giuliani's public statements, based in part on conversations with Trump, may have destroyed attorney-client privilege, opening the door for prosecutors to question Trump and Cohen about the payment of hush money to Clifford.

See commentary by Dan Balz in the [Washington Post](#) that asks: "Does it bother anyone that President Trump has been caught lying? Does it bother anyone that this is not new? Does it bother anyone that the president has been shown to be a liar?"

See commentary by Peter Baker in the [New York Times](#) that says: "Whether called lies or misstatements, Mr. Trump's [history of falsehoods](#) has been extensively documented, but the string of factual distortions that came to light this week could come back to haunt him." Baker's article is titled: "New Revelations Suggest a President Losing Control of His Narrative".

Later on 3 May, Philip Rucker, Josh Dawsey, Robert Costa, & Ashley Parker reported in the [Washington Post](#) that “It has become standard operating procedure for Trump and his aides to deceive the public with false statements and shifting accounts.”

On 3 May, the [Washington Post](#) and the [New York Times](#) review the history of public statements by Trump, Cohen, and others about the hush money paid to Clifford.

On the morning of 3 May, Giuliani appeared on "Fox & Friends" television program and added more reasons for why the hush money was intended to influence the presidential election.

“Imagine if that came out on Oct. 15, 2016, in the middle of the, you know, last debate with Hillary Clinton,” Giuliani told Fox News’ “Fox & Friends,” of the \$130,000 payment made by Michael Cohen, President Donald Trump’s personal lawyer. [Giuliani said:] “Cohen didn’t even ask. Cohen made it go away. He did his job.”

Louis Nelson, "Giuliani: What if Daniels allegations came out during 2016 election?" [Politico](#), 08:47 EDT, 3 May 2018.

Same quotation from Giuliani reported in the [New York Times](#) and the [Washington Post](#).

On 4 May 2018, Trump told reporters that Rudy Giuliani disclosed wrong "facts".

THE PRESIDENT: I tell you what — Rudy is a great guy, but he just started a day ago. But he really has his heart into it. He’s working hard. He’s learning the subject matter. And he’s going to be issuing a statement too. But he is a great guy. He knows it’s a witch hunt. That’s what he knows. He’s seen a lot of them. And he said he’s never seen anything so horrible.

....

So Rudy knows it’s a witch hunt. He started yesterday. He’ll get his facts straight. He’s a great guy. But what he does is he feels it’s a very bad thing for our country, and he happens to be right.

QUESTION: When did you find out what the retainer was being spent on?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, you’re going to find out, because we’re going to give a full list. And people know. And virtually everything said has been said incorrectly, and it’s been said wrong, or it’s been covered wrong by the press — just like NBC and ABC yesterday covered the story wrong.

But you’ll be finding out. [interruption omitted] It’s actually very simple. It’s actually very simple. But there has been a lot of misinformation, really. People wanting to say — and I say, you know what, learn before you speak. It’s a lot easier.

"Remarks by President Trump Before Marine One Departure," [White House](#), 09:59 EDT, 4 May 2018.

See also [New York Times](#).

If Giuliani started work for Trump "yesterday" [i.e., 3 May], then *why* was Giuliani giving

interviews on television on the night of 2 May? Actually, Giuliani was hired by Trump on 19 April 2018, although it is not publicly known when Giuliani began work for Trump. (cites to hiring: [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#).) On the night of 2 May, Giuliani told the [Washington Post](#) that he had talked to Trump "probably four or five days ago." On another issue, Trump does *not* take his own advice to "learn before you speak."

On 4 May, Trump criticized journalists for reporting the continually changing story of Cohen paying hush money to Clifford.

QUESTION: Mr. President, why did you change your story on Stormy Daniels?

THE PRESIDENT: I'm not changing any stories. All I'm telling you is that this country is right now running so smooth. And to be bringing up that kind of crap, and to be bringing up witch hunts all the time — that's all you want to talk about. You're going to see —

QUESTION: But you said on Air Force One [on 5 April] that you did not know (inaudible).

THE PRESIDENT: No, but you have to — excuse me. You take a look at what I said. You go back and take a look. You'll see what I said.

QUESTION: You said, "No," when I asked you, "Did you know about the payment?"

THE PRESIDENT: Excuse me, you go take a look at what we said. But this is a witch hunt like nobody has ever seen before. And what they should do is look at the other side [Democrats], where terribly bad things have happened, where terribly bad things have been done.

But what I do want you to do is look at our economy. Today, we broke 4 percent [unemployment]; 3.9 percent we hit today for the first time in many, many years. We're really proud of it, and we'll talk to you folks later. But I will tell you — I will tell you this, I will tell you this: When Rudy made the statement — Rudy is great — but Rudy had just started, and he wasn't totally familiar with every — you know, with everything. And Rudy — we love Rudy, he's a special guy. What he really understands is that this is a witch hunt. He understands that probably better than anybody.

"Remarks by President Trump Before Air Force One Departure," [White House](#), 10:23 EDT, 4 May 2018. Text in brackets added by Standler.

My comment is that Trump made a rambling and ineffective reply to good questions. Trump asserted that the USA is "running so smooth[ly]", which is *not* a relevant response to the question. Trump attempted to deny what he had told journalists on 5 April. Trump told journalists to look at what Democrats had done, a second irrelevant response. Then Trump took credit for a low unemployment rate, a third irrelevant response. Finally, Trump blamed Giuliani for not being "totally familiar" with the facts of paying hush money to Clifford. Notice that Trump never answered the original question of why he changed his story about the hush money.

On the afternoon of 4 May, Giuliani issued a written statement that offers a new, improved

version of the Truth. Here is the entire statement by Giuliani:

This is intended to clarify the views I expressed over the past few days.

These are my views:

First:

There is no campaign violation. The payment was made to resolve a personal and false allegation in order to protect the President's family. It would have been done in any event, whether he was a candidate or not.

Second:

My references to timing were not describing my understanding of the President's knowledge, but instead, my understanding of these matters.

Third:

It is undisputed that the President's dismissal of former Director Comey — an inferior executive officer — was clearly within his Article II power. Recent revelations about former Director Comey further confirm the wisdom of the President's decision, which was plainly in the best interests of our nation.

"Full text: Rudy Giuliani issues statement clarifying his earlier remarks," [Politico](#), 14:26 EDT, 4 May 2018.

Gone is the bogus argument that Trump spent his personal funds, *not* campaign money, on the \$130,000 hush money. Now Giuliani properly focuses on Trump's (and Cohen's) intent. In the third point, Giuliani ignored that the president can *not* dismiss an executive for an unlawful reason, such as the president committing obstruction of justice when he dismisses an employee.

Now that the public knows some of the facts about paying hush money to Clifford, it is time for Trump to make a full disclosure, in an attempt to move past this scandal. Instead, Trump continues to conceal this transaction, with continuing lies and omissions. The concealment makes one suspect that there is more embarrassing material in this transaction that has not yet been publicly disclosed. On 5 May 2018, it is premature to discuss the legality of what Cohen and Trump did, because we do *not* know all of the legally relevant facts.

On Sunday morning, 6 May, Giuliani appeared on ABC News's "This Week" television program and told George Stephanopoulos, the host of the program:

STEPHANOPOULOS: But you acknowledge that Michael Cohen would tell the president this is what it's for?

GIULIANI: On October 15, 16, right before the election? \$130,000 payment when there were other — I did make clear — and I don't know what they are yet. I will know. There were other things involved that had nothing to do with Stormy Daniels. In other words, other amounts of money. This was not uncommon for him to do that.

So no, I would not — I would not — if I were him and I were the president's lawyer and I had done this in the past and it had worked out in the past, I would not go to him and bother him two weeks before the election with this thing.

....

STEPHANOPOULOS: And — and you've said he — this was a regular arrangement he had with Michael Cohen. So did Michael Cohen make payments to other women for the president?

GIULIANI: I have no knowledge of that but I would think if it was necessary, yes. He made payments for the president, or he conducted business for the president, which means he had legal fees, monies laid out, and expenditures, which I have on my bills to my clients.

....

GIULIANI: .... My issue is getting up to speed on the facts here. I'm about halfway there.

....

[Interview with Michael Avenatti, Clifford's attorney:]

STEPHANOPOULOS: You heard — you heard the whole [interview with Giuliani], what's your reaction?

AVENATTI: It's an absolute unmitigated disaster for Rudy Giuliani and the president. It's a train wreck. I can't believe that that actually just happened. I mean what we witnessed by Rudy Giuliani may be one of the worst T.V. appearances by any attorney on behalf of a client in modern times.

He now expects the American people to believe that he doesn't really know the facts, that as to every key question you asked, he hasn't communicated with the president about it. I mean this guy's all over the map over the last 72 hours on some very simple facts that should be very straightforward.

I think it is obvious, George, to the American people that this is a cover up, that they are making it up as they go along, they don't know what to say because they've lost track of the truth.

....

STEPHANOPOULOS: Do you have any evidence that President Trump knew in real time about this agreement about this payment?

AVENATTI: George, we have evidence that the president knew in the — in the months at least following the campaign of this payment, certainly knew it long before his statement on Air Force One in April of this year where he effectively stood there and lied to the American people about not knowing anything about this payment. And then of course Rudy Giuliani a few days ago goes out and contradicts that.

And now they're trying to claim that Rudy Giuliani doesn't know the facts. I mean, any attorney that's worth anything could have a 30 minute meeting or conversation with his client and get to the bottom of this. This is not a complicated matter that takes months or years to get to the bottom of, George. I mean, this is absurd.

STEPHANOPOULOS: One of the other points we made with Rudy Giuliani, he said he didn't have any knowledge of payments made by Michael Cohen to other women but he — but he couldn't rule it out either and has (ph) said that the payments might have been made if necessary. Do you have any evidence of any other — that any other women were paid by Michael Cohen or other agents of the president?

AVENATTI: Women have come forward and contacted our office, George, as I've stated in the past. And we haven't completed vetting those stories but I think at the end of the day, there's going to be evidence of such payments. But I think it's also important to go back and — and think about what we've just heard and what we've heard the last few days.

According to Rudy Giuliani, this was basically commonplace. The president had effectively an extramarital affair slush fund that was administered by Michael Cohen and that he would just be expected to take care of these things. They were a regular occurrence. I mean, that in and of itself should be very disturbing. Most people of means, most people of wealth and celebrity, they don't have extramarital affair slush funds and the suggestion is insulting.

"'This Week' Transcript 5-6-18: President Trump's personal attorney Rudy Giuliani and Stormy Daniels' lawyer Michael Avenatti," [ABC News](#), 09:54 EDT, 6 May 2018.

When asked if Cohen made payments for Trump to other women, Giuliani should have said "I do not know," and then stopped speaking. Instead, Giuliani speculated that Cohen made payments to other women "if it was necessary". Giuliani's speculation quickly evolved into a story that Cohen was operating a slush fund to pay hush money to multiple women.

Giuliani should be alone in an office, reading legal documents and reading evidence, and *not* appearing on television talk shows. Giuliani himself said he is "about halfway" "up to speed on the facts here."

In April 2018, Trump hired Giuliani to help end Mueller's investigation of Russian influence on the 2016 presidential election. But during 2-6 May 2018, Giuliani made substantial public statements on Cohen's payment of hush money to Clifford and Trump's payments to Cohen. Giuliani's public statements made matters worse for Trump, as described above. Giuliani also made bizarre public statements about when North Korea would release three U.S. citizens — a topic for the U.S. State Department, *not* Giuliani. On the morning of 3 May, Giuliani appeared on the "Fox & Friends" television program and said the three would be released later that day. [CNN](#); [CNBC](#). Giuliani was *wrong*, the three were not released on 3 May. On 5 May, Giuliani said the three "will be released over the next several days". [CNN](#); [Korean Broadcasting Service](#); [Yonhap](#). The South Korean news media treated Giuliani as a credible source, which he is not. Giuliani was *wrong* again about the release. Then on 7 May, the U.S. State Department issued a statement that said Giuliani did *not* speak for the Government on North Korea. (Original statement *not* available at U.S. State Dept. website.)



[Associated Press](#); [Washington Post](#)(AP); [NBC News](#).

Giuliani is clearly out-of-control (1) when Giuliani publicly spoke about the Clifford matter without knowing the facts, and (2) especially when Giuliani twice spoke about the release of the three U.S. citizens by North Korea. On 7 May, [Politico](#) was among the first to suggest that — unless Giuliani stops his erroneous public statements and harmful speculation — Trump will fire Giuliani: “... some aides said they expect the president to fire Giuliani if his behavior doesn’t change.”

Early on Tuesday, 8 May, the Associated Press reported:

President Donald Trump is growing increasingly irritated with lawyer Rudy Giuliani’s frequently off-message media blitz, which has included muddying the waters on hush money paid to porn actress Stormy Daniels and making claims that could complicate the president’s standing in the special counsel’s Russia probe.

Trump has begun questioning whether Giuliani, an old friend and former New York City mayor, should be sidelined from television interviews, according to two people familiar with the president’s thinking but not authorized to speak publicly about private discussions.

Trump also expressed annoyance that Giuliani’s theatrics have breathed new life into the Daniels story. It’s a concern shared by Trump allies who think Giuliani is only generating more legal and political trouble for the White House.

....

.... As for Giuliani, the president has not yet signaled to him to stop appearing on television but told a confidant recently that perhaps Giuliani should “be benched” — at least temporarily — if he can’t improve his performance.

Jonathan Lemire, "Trump considers benching Giuliani from doing TV interviews," [Associated Press](#), 03:30 EDT, 8 May 2018.

In April 2018, Giuliani took a leave of absence from Greenberg Traurig, the law firm that employed him. But on 10 May, in response to public comments by Giuliani on 6 May, the law firm told Giuliani to resign. *The New York Times* reported:

Mr. Giuliani suggested that such payments [i.e., hush money to Clifford] were common at his firm, even without the knowledge of the clients. “That was money that was paid by his lawyer, the way I would do, out of his law firm funds,” he said on Fox News. He added, “Michael [Cohen] would take care of things like this like I take care of this with my clients.”

The New York Times asked Greenberg Traurig about those remarks early this week. Shortly after Mr. Giuliani’s resignation was announced, the firm responded.

“We cannot speak for Mr. Giuliani with respect to what was intended by his remarks,” said a spokeswoman, Jill Perry. “Speaking for ourselves, we would not condone payments of the nature alleged to have been made or otherwise without the knowledge and direction of a client.”

Michael S. Schmidt & Maggie Haberman, "Giuliani's Law Firm Undercuts His Statements as They Part Ways," [New York Times](#), 10 May 2018.

My comment is that Greenberg Traurig repudiated Giuliani, because *no* ethical attorney would pay \$130,000 in hush money without the explicit knowledge and approval of the client.

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### Continuation of Clifford

On 8 May 2018, the [New York Times](#) reported that a company linked to Viktor Vekselberg, a Russian oligarch, paid at least a half-million dollars to Essential Consultants L.L.C., a shell company controlled by Michael D. Cohen. The money was allegedly paid beginning January 2017 and ending August 2017. Essential Consultants is Cohen's corporation that paid hush money to Clifford in October 2016. See also: [Washington Post](#); [Los Angeles Times](#); [Associated Press](#); [NBC News](#). The implication seems to be that Russians paid for some of the hush money that Cohen paid to Trump's alleged mistresses, but I see *no* evidence to support that speculation.

On 9 May, [NBC News](#) reported that the Swiss drug company Novartis paid Cohen US\$ 1.2 million for access to Trump, but Novartis received nothing.

On 11 May, the [New York Times](#) reported that American Telephone & Telegraph admitted that it made a "big mistake" in paying Cohen \$ 600,000 for advice about its proposed merger with Time-Warner cable television. The Trump administration opposed the merger.

*The Washington Post* interviewed "22 White House and Justice Department officials, witnesses, Trump confidants and attorneys connected to the [Mueller] probe" and then on 13 May provided insight into Trump's current thinking.

The Mueller operation, like the former Marine Corps platoon commander who leads it, is secretive and methodical. Ten blocks west in the White House, President Trump combats the probe with bluster, disarray and defiance as he scrambles for survival.

The president vents to associates about the FBI raids on his personal attorney Michael Cohen — as often as "20 times a day," in the estimation of one confidant — and they frequently listen in silence, knowing little they say will soothe him. Trump gripes that he needs better "TV lawyers" to defend him on cable news and is impatient to halt the "witch hunt" that he says undermines his legitimacy as president. And he plots his battle plans with former New York mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani, his new legal consigliere.

....

Giuliani met with Mueller five days after his hiring, on April 24, to try to understand issues ranging from the scope of a possible Trump interview to whether Mueller believes that Comey, whose firing by Trump triggered the probe, is a credible witness. Ashley Parker, Philip Rucker, Tom Hamburger, Robert Costa, & Matt Zapotosky, "'Buckle

up': As Mueller probe enters second year, Trump and allies go on war footing," [Washington Post](#), 15:20 EDT, 13 May 2018.

If Trump really believes he is innocent of collusion with Russians in the 2016 elections, and if Trump really believes he is innocent of obstruction of justice in firing Comey (and possibly other cases), then Trump should relax. Trump is obsessed with the Mueller investigation, instead of concentrating on being president. Trump is ignorant of law, and he has chosen Giuliani — a celebrity attorney (or as Trump says: "TV lawyer") — instead of an attorney with substantial, recent criminal defense litigation experience. As explained above, Giuliani has made matters worse for Trump.

Note that *The Washington Post* reports that Giuliani met with Mueller on 24 April, which contradicts Trump's public statement on 4 May that Giuliani "started yesterday". This is yet another example of Trump stating false facts.

On 16 May 2018, Trump's financial disclosure for 2018 listed his payment of less than \$250,000 to Cohen in 2017 to reimburse Cohen for payment to Clifford. Trump's payment *should* have been included on his 2017 financial disclosure form. [Washington Post](#). Trump has another problem. As the [New York Times](#) pointed out, "Rudolph W. Giuliani, Mr. Trump's lawyer, [said](#) this month that Mr. Cohen was paid \$460,000 or \$470,000 from Mr. Trump, which also included money for 'incidental expenses' that he had incurred on Mr. Trump's behalf." That leaves at least \$210,000 of Trump's payment to Cohen unreported on Trump's financial disclosure.

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### **21 Aug 2018: Cohen pleads guilty**

On 21 August 2018, Michael Cohen pled guilty to 8 felony counts, including 5 counts of income tax evasion and one count of bank fraud. What is relevant to this essay is that two of the counts were for campaign finance violations — payment of \$130,000 to Stephanie Clifford and payment of \$150,000 to Karen McDougal "for the principal purpose of influencing the election." The payment to McDougal was made by American Media Inc. (see [below](#)), but Cohen helped arrange that payment. Cohen's plea specifically states he violated the campaign finance statute "in coordination with and at the direction of" Trump. This is a huge legal problem for Trump personally, because Cohen implicated Trump in a violation of the campaign finance statute. Cohen is currently scheduled to be sentenced in December 2018. [DoJ-SDNY](#); [New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#); [CNN](#); [Wall Street Journal](#); [Associated Press](#); [Associated Press](#)(22Aug).

*The Washington Post* reported:

In January 2017, after Trump's election, [Cohen] sought reimbursement for the Daniels payment from Trump. Unnamed executives at the Trump Organization directed that Cohen be paid \$420,000, which would reimburse him for his payment, along with additional money for taxes and expenses and a \$60,000 bonus, filings said. One executive told another to falsely describe the fees as legal expenses and describe the first two monthly payments as a "retainer," according to court papers.

....

Lanny Davis, an attorney for Cohen, said in a [statement](#) .... "If those payments were a crime for Michael Cohen, then why wouldn't they be a crime for Donald Trump?" Devlin Barrett, Carol D. Leonnig, Philip Bump, & Renae Merle, "Michael Cohen says he worked to silence two women 'in coordination' with Trump to influence 2016 election," [Washington Post](#), 18:45 EDT, 21 Aug 2018. [Link to Davis' Tweet added by Standler.]

In the funniest tweet I have seen in a long time, Trump criticized Cohen:

If anyone is looking for a good lawyer, I would strongly suggest that you don't retain the services of Michael Cohen!  
Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 08:44 EDT, 22 Aug 2018.

After Cohen pled guilty to 8 felonies, it is automatic that the state of New York will disbar Cohen. Further, Cohen will be spending 2019-2022 in federal prison. So Cohen is *not* available as an attorney in the future. Note that Trump retained Cohen for more than ten years, showing Trump's inability to pick a good attorney. Back on 4 May 2018, [Politico](#) reported that Cohen is a graduate of the worst law school in the USA.

An hour later, Trump displayed his ignorance of law.

Michael Cohen plead guilty to two counts of campaign finance violations that are not a crime. President Obama had a big campaign finance violation and it was easily settled!  
Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 09:37 EDT, 22 Aug 2018.

"Are not a crime"?! Cohen admitted to violating The Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971, as amended, 52 USC §30101, et seq. Notice that Cohen (an attorney), Cohen's attorneys, prosecutors, and a judge all agreed there were violations of criminal law. Trump also misspelled "pled" in his Tweet.

On 19 Aug, Trump's current attorney famously [said](#) "Truth is not truth." Now Trump is saying "Crimes are not a crime."

On 22 August, the [Washington Post](#) explained Trump's series of lies about payments to hush two women. The *Post* concludes that on 22 August 2018: "After months of denial and deception, Trump was still not telling the truth." See also [FactCheck.org](#).

National Public Radio (NPR); [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); and [Bloomberg News](#) all criticized Trump's defense that Cohen did not commit any crime with their campaign finance violations. Trump authorized the payment of hush money to the two women for the purpose of influencing the election, and that purpose makes the payment a campaign contribution. Furthermore, the Trump Organization reimbursed Cohen's payment to Clifford, and American Media Inc. paid McDougal — but it is unlawful for corporations to make campaign contributions. Moreover, the maximum legal donation to a campaign is only \$2700.

On 24 August 2018, journalists revealed that the U.S. Department of Justice had granted immunity to Allen Weisselberg, chief financial officer of the Trump Organization, in exchange for his evidence in the case against Cohen. Weisselberg did *not* know of the true

purpose of Cohen's 12 monthly invoices for \$35,000 during 2017, which were (fraudulently?) described by Cohen as a retainer for his services in 2017, when they were actually reimbursement for payment of hush money to Clifford in Oct 2016. [Wall Street Journal](#); [NBC News](#); [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [Politico](#).

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### **8 Sep 2018: Trump withdraws litigation**

In a surprise move, on 8 September, Trump's attorneys moved to dismiss their litigation against Clifford for breach of contract. Trump admitted that the contract with Clifford was *not* valid. Trump also admitted that he was not a party to the alleged contract, because Trump never signed the contract. [Associated Press](#); [Washington Post](#); [CNN](#). I speculate that Trump's motivation was two-fold: (1) avoid depositions by Clifford's attorney (i.e., Avenatti) and (2) avoid paying damages to Clifford. Trump suing Clifford to enforce an invalid agreement is a good example of malicious prosecution by Trump.

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### **Trump hates Democrats**

On 24 Sep 2018, Michael Avenatti, publicly announced that he represented Julie Swetnick, who allegedly witnessed Trump's U.S. Supreme Court nominee, Brett Kavanaugh, sexually abusing girls in high school in 1982. At a press briefing on 26 September, Trump continued to defend Kavanaugh.

QUESTION: Mr. President, a reaction to the latest Kavanaugh allegations?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: I think it's ridiculous. It's a con game that they're playing. The Democrats are playing this game that is disgraceful. It's a disgrace to the country. And I think you're going to see it in the midterms. I think people are wise to it. It's just a con game.

....

If you look at this lawyer [Michael Avenatti] that just came out, he's a low life. He represented Democrats. Nobody ever talks about that. He's a Democrat lawyer. Not a very good one, but he's a Democrat lawyer.

"Remarks by President Trump and Prime Minister Abe of Japan Before Bilateral Meeting, New York, NY" [White House](#), 26 Sep 2018.

When Trump was inaugurated in January 2017, he became president of *all* Americans, even including Democrats. Trump is becoming increasingly partisan, and condemning Democrats who obstruct Trump's agenda.

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### **Defamation Case**

On 15 October 2018, a judge in federal trial court in California dismissed the defamation case against Trump brought by Clifford. The judge ruled that Trump's statements were protected

under the First Amendment as “rhetorical hyperbole”. The judge ordered Clifford to reimburse Trump for his legal fees in this case. [Associated Press](#); [Los Angeles Times](#); [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#).

Instead of being magnanimous after his total victory in court, Trump pursued a scorched earth policy toward Clifford.

“Federal Judge throws out Stormy Danials lawsuit versus Trump. Trump is entitled to full legal fees.” @FoxNews Great, now I can go after Horseface and her 3rd rate lawyer in the Great State of Texas. She will confirm the letter she signed! She knows nothing about me, a total con!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 11:04 EDT, 16 Oct 2018. [Retrieved at 15:27 EDT on 16 Oct.]

"Horseface" refers to Clifford. [The Hill](#); [NBC News](#); [ABC News](#); [Fox News](#); [Washington Post](#); [Los Angeles Times](#). [The Independent](#) mentions that Trump misspelled Clifford's stage name in his tweet.

Readers who want to know Clifford's reply can read the news articles cited in the previous paragraph. Trump has again shown his personal values by engaging in an *ad hominem* attack on Clifford, and starting a series of childish insults. [Above](#), I have collected other examples of Trump's rude and obnoxious statements about other people. Trump's "horseface" remark also shows Trump's lack of self-control of his emotions.

Commentators commonly mentioned that Trump has a history of being demeaning toward women. (See, e.g., [New York Times](#); [Associated Press](#); [Globe&Mail](#)(AP). Some of this history is chronicled in my previous [essay](#) on Trump, and in this essay.) While it is true that Trump has frequently disparaged a woman's appearance, my opinion is that Trump's insults should *not* be directed toward anyone — male or female.

On 28 November, Clifford publicly announced that her attorney, Avenatti, had filed the defamation litigation without her permission. [The Daily Beast](#); [New York Times](#); [NBC News](#). Why is this important? On 15 October, the judge dismissed her defamation litigation and ordered Clifford to reimburse Trump for his legal fees. But if Avenatti filed the Complaint without Clifford's permission, then perhaps Avenatti would pay Trump's legal fees.

On 3 December 2018, Trump's attorneys asked Clifford to reimburse Trump for \$ 340,000 in legal fees spent defending Clifford's frivolous defamation case. [Associated Press](#).

On 11 December, a federal judge in Los Angeles ordered Clifford to pay Trump's attorneys fees of \$ 292,000 plus \$1000 sanctions for filing frivolous litigation. [Associated Press](#); [Los Angeles Times](#); [New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#).

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### **9 Nov 2018: Trump personally involved in violation of campaign finance law**

On 9 November 2018, the [Wall Street Journal](#) reported that Trump was personally involved in payments of hush money to Cliffords and McDougal. The [Washington Post](#) reports on the

increasing evidence that Trump violated campaign finance laws. This revelation also means Trump and his spokespersons lied to the American people.

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### **29 Nov 2018: Cohen pleads guilty to perjury**

On 29 Nov 2018, Michael Cohen pled guilty to one count of perjury for his false testimony to Congress in 2017 about Trump's attempt to build a Trump Tower in Moscow during the 2016 political campaign. [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [Associated Press](#)(29Nov); [Associated Press](#)(30Nov).

[Fox News](#), Trump's favorite news source, reported this story. Then Fox News legal commentator, former New Jersey judge Andrew Napolitano, explained why Cohen's guilty plea is bad news for Trump.

Appearing on "America's Newsroom," Napolitano said Cohen's new guilty plea is "the tip of the iceberg," and the rest of the iceberg is in Mueller's office.

"I assure you — knowing the way the feds operate — that Michael Cohen has been extensively debriefed before he brought him into a courtroom to say anything, and they've probably already verified everything that he's given them."

....

As for what these developments mean for the length of the investigation, Napolitano said the Mueller probe could stretch "well into 2019."

"Judge Nap: Cohen Plea Is 'Tip of the Iceberg,' and Rest of Iceberg Is at Mueller's Office," [Fox News](#), 10:22 EST, 29 Nov 2018.

Trump's response to Cohen's guilty plea was to denigrate Cohen, after Cohen had represented Trump for more than ten years.

THE PRESIDENT: .... [Michael Cohen] was given a fairly long jail sentence. And he's a weak person. And by being weak, unlike other people that you watch — he is a weak person. And what he's trying to do is get a reduced sentence.

....

.... What [Michael Cohen is] trying to do — because he's a weak person and not a very smart person. What he's trying to do is end — and it's very simple. He's got himself a big prison sentence, and he's trying to get a much lesser prison sentence by making up a story.

....

QUESTION: If Cohen is such a bum, why did you hire him, have him on your payroll for 12 years, and have him do so much of your dirty work like paying off (inaudible)?

THE PRESIDENT: Because, a long time ago, he did me a favor. A long time ago, he



did me a favor.

"Remarks by President Trump Before Marine One Departure," [White House](#), 10:23 EST, 29 Nov 2018.

In a court filing on 30 November, Cohen's attorneys wrote that Cohen was in "close and regular contact" with Trump's attorneys, when Cohen prepared his false testimony to Congress. [Washington Post](#); [Politico](#). That may mean Trump's attorneys conspired with Cohen in committing perjury.

On Monday morning, 3 December 2018, Trump issued three tweets:

"Michael Cohen asks judge for no Prison Time." You mean he can do all of the TERRIBLE, unrelated to Trump, things having to do with fraud, big loans, Taxis, etc., and not serve a long prison term? He makes up stories to get a GREAT & ALREADY reduced deal for himself, and get.....

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 10:24 EST, 3 Dec 2018.

....his wife and father-in-law (who has the money?) off Scott Free. He lied for this outcome and should, in my opinion, serve a full and complete sentence.

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 10:29 EST, 3 Dec 2018.

My comments: Cohen paying hush money to women — a violation of campaign finance law on behalf of Trump — is definitely "related to Trump". Trump misspelled "Scot free". The president should never express an opinion on punishment (e.g., "full and complete sentence") in a current criminal case.

"I will never testify against Trump." This statement was recently made by Roger Stone, essentially stating that he will not be forced by a rogue and out of control prosecutor to make up lies and stories about "President Trump." Nice to know that some people still have "guts!"

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 10:48 EST, 3 Dec 2018.

Trump effectively contrasts loyal Roger Stone with "weak" Michael Cohen. Stone might receive a pardon from Trump, Cohen will spend years in prison.

The [Washington Post](#) explained why these three tweets could be obstruction of justice by Trump.

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### 12 Dec 2018: Cohen sentenced to 3 years in prison

On 12 December 2018, a federal judge sentenced Cohen to three years in prison. Cohen's prison term begins on 6 March 2019. [Associated Press](#); [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#).

On the morning of 13 December, Trump publicly commented on Cohen's guilty plea.

I never directed Michael Cohen to break the law. He was a lawyer and he is supposed to know the law. It is called "advice of counsel," and a lawyer has great liability if a mistake is made. That is why they get paid. Despite that many campaign finance

lawyers have strongly.....  
Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 08:17 EST, 13 Dec 2018.

....stated that I did nothing wrong with respect to campaign finance laws, if they even apply, because this was not campaign finance. Cohen was guilty on many charges unrelated to me, but he plead to two campaign charges which were not criminal and of which he probably was not...  
Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 08:25 EST, 13 Dec 2018.

....guilty even on a civil basis. Those charges were just agreed to by him in order to embarrass the president and get a much reduced prison sentence, which he did — including the fact that his family was temporarily let off the hook. As a lawyer, Michael has great liability to me!  
Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 08:39 EST, 13 Dec 2018.

Trump alleges "many campaign finance lawyers" say Trump is innocent, but Trump does *not* name any of them. Finally, Trump says Cohen should not have pled guilty to campaign finance felonies. But Cohen and his legal team had plenty of time to do legal research and conclude that Cohen really did violate campaign finance laws. It is not plausible that Cohen would plead guilty to two felonies just to "embarrass the president".

Trump misunderstands the "advice of counsel" doctrine. Some criminal statutes require the prosecution to prove that the defendant had actual knowledge that his act was unlawful. If the defendant was advised by his lawyer that the act was lawful, that is a defense to future criminal prosecution. Liability of an attorney to a client is an issue of legal malpractice, *not* "advice of counsel".

Notice that Trump never says what advice Cohen gave him.

After Trump previously publicly denied having knowledge of the hush money payments, Trump is *not* a credible witness.

On 14 December 2018, Cohen told journalists at [ABC News](#) that Trump *knew* hush money payments were unlawful at the time Trump authorized the payments. [Associated Press](#).

On Sunday, 16 December 2018, Trump tweeted:  
Remember, Michael Cohen only became a "Rat" after the FBI did something which was absolutely unthinkable & unheard of until the Witch Hunt was illegally started. They BROKE INTO AN ATTORNEY'S OFFICE! Why didn't they break into the DNC to get the Server, or Crooked's office?  
Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 09:39 EST, 16 Dec 2018.

Trump packed four false or misleading statements into one little tweet quoted above:

1. Calling Cohen a "Rat" is using mobster's language. Is Trump a mob boss?
2. The "Witch Hunt" was *not* "illegally started", it is perfectly legal.

3. The FBI did *not* "BROKE INTO AN ATTORNEY'S OFFICE" — the FBI had a search warrant issued by a federal judge.
4. There was no reason for the FBI to "break into" either the Democratic National Committee's office, or Hillary Clinton's office. Does Trump advocate the FBI illegally surveilling the DNC or Hillary Clinton?

See commentary at [Huffington Post](#); [Washington Post](#). This tweet by Trump is strong evidence that he lives in an alternative reality.

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### **Karen McDougal & *The National Enquirer***

On 20 March 2018, Karen McDougal filed litigation in state court in Los Angeles against American Media Inc., publisher of the *National Enquirer*. The litigation seeks to void a 6 Aug 2016 contract in which American Media paid her \$150,000 for the exclusive rights to her story. The *National Enquirer* never published her story, which may have been a favor to Trump. [New York Times](#); [CNN](#).

On 22 March 2018, Karen McDougal gave an hour-long interview to Anderson Cooper of CNN about her adulterous relationship with Trump that began in June 2006 and continued until April 2007, with Trump seeing her at least five times/month during those 10 months. McDougal was Playboy magazine's Playmate of the Year in 1998. [CNN](#); [CNN](#)(highlights); [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#).

On 18 April 2018, the litigation was settled, with McDougal released from the contract. [Los Angeles Times](#); [New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#). McDougal does *not* need to repay the \$150,000 that she was paid in 2016, which makes that payment appear to be purchasing her silence during the presidential campaign.

On 20 July 2018, it was publicly reported that Cohen had tape recorded conversations with Trump regarding possible payments to Karen McDougal. But neither Trump nor Cohen paid McDougal. [New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#); [Politico](#); [CNBC](#). The special master who reviewed evidence seized by the FBI in their raid of Cohen's office determined that the recording was protected by attorney-client privilege. But then Trump's legal team bizarrely waived that privilege. [CBS News](#); [CNBC](#). After Trump waived privilege, Trump complained in a [tweet](#) about being recorded by Cohen.

On 26 July, the [Washington Post](#) reported on false statements by Trump regarding his affairs with Karen McDougal and Stephanie Clifford: "In other words, the initial denials by Trump were 'fake news' — and the original reporting was correct."

On 21 August 2018, Trump's personal attorney, Michael Cohen, pled guilty to a campaign finance violation regarding payment to Karen McDougal. (See [above](#).)

On 23 August 2018, the [Wall Street Journal](#) and the [Associated Press](#) revealed that the U.S.

Department of Justice had granted immunity to David Pecker — CEO of American Media, Inc. (AMI), the publisher of the *National Enquirer* — in exchange for his evidence in the case against Cohen. Simultaneously, the Associated Press reported that the *National Enquirer* had a safe containing damaging information about Trump that they would not publish.

[New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#)(AP). On 30 August, the [New York Times](#) reported that Trump and Cohen discussed purchasing *all* of the unpublished stories that were unfavorable to Trump from American Media, Inc. back to the 1980s.

On 12 December 2018, federal prosecutors granted immunity to AMI, the parent company of *The National Enquirer*. AMI then admitted it paid hush money to McDougal to “suppress the woman’s story” and “prevent it from influencing the election.” [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#).

Prosecutor's deal with Pecker and AMI add additional evidence to Cohen's testimony against Trump. This additional evidence strengthens the campaign finance violation case against Trump.

Brian Stelter at [CNN](#) wrote an article on how *The National Enquirer's* support of Trump suddenly ended sometime around June 2018.

On 13 December 2018, [NBC News](#) reported that Trump was in the room in August 2015 when Cohen and Pecker discussed paying hush money to women who alleged sexual relations with Trump. That means Trump not only *knew* of the payments, but also was part of a conspiracy to commit campaign finance law violations.

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## Immigration Reform & the Wall

On 5 January 2018, the [Wall Street Journal](#) tells us that Trump wants \$18 billion to spend on the border wall during the next *ten years*. Trump wants \$1.6 billion to spend in 2018 for 60 miles of wall in Texas and 14 miles in San Diego. Trump bizarrely claims that rapists, murderers, and illicit drugs are pouring across the border, but he wants to take ten years to solve the problem.

Trump is asking U.S. Congress for the following as part of immigration reform:

1. allocate \$ 1.6 billion to spend in 2018 for part of Trump's wall along the Mexican border
2. end chain migration, in which immigrants in the USA can bring their family to the USA
3. end lottery for immigration visas
4. end "temporary protected status" for immigrants from El Salvador, Haiti, Sudan, and Nicaragua
5. in exchange, Trump is willing to continued the "Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals" (DACA) for children who illegally entered the USA.

On 11 January, U.S. Senators Lindsey O. Graham (R-S.C.) and Richard J. Durbin (D-Ill.)

told Trump that Congress would agree to part of what Trump wanted, but Congress would only give a 50% reduction in visas chosen by lottery and Congress wanted to continue the "temporary protected status". Trump angrily rejected that compromise.

On 11 January 2018, Trump had a burst of candor, when he declared in a White House Oval Office meeting with several U.S. Senators: "Why are we having all these people from shithole countries come here?" The shithole countries include Haiti, El Salvador, and African countries. Instead of allowing immigrants from shithole countries, Trump suggested allowing immigration from countries like Norway. [Washington Post](#); [Los Angeles Times](#); [Associated Press](#). [NBC News](#) reported that Trump's outburst made an immigration compromise more difficult to obtain. On 12 January, [Fox News](#) reported: "Trump blunder raises chances of shutdown" if a compromise is not reached before 19 January, when the current budget expires. Trump demands that the budget contain funding for his wall, while Congress is unwilling to fund the wall unless the wall is part of a grand compromise.

On the morning of 12 January, Trump denied he said "shithole countries".

The language used by me at the DACA meeting was tough, but this was not the language used. What was really tough was the outlandish proposal made — a big setback for DACA!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:28 EST, 12 Jan 2018.

Never said anything derogatory about Haitians other than Haiti is, obviously, a very poor and troubled country. Never said "take them out." Made up by Dems. I have a wonderful relationship with Haitians. Probably should record future meetings — unfortunately, no trust!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 08:48 EST, 12 Jan 2018.

When Trump says "made up by Dems", Trump is accusing Senator Durbin (D-Ill.) of lying. On the afternoon of 12 January, Durbin defended himself in the [Chicago Tribune](#). Trump will *not* record meetings in the White House, because then there would be physical evidence of stupid remarks by Trump. On 12 January, the [Associated Press](#) reports that Trump is unapologetic.

On the morning of 14 January, Trump added a little bit of drama with his criticism of Democrats:

DACA is probably dead because the Democrats don't really want it, they just want to talk and take desperately needed money away from our Military.

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 08:09 EST, 14 Jan 2018.

On 14 January at noon, the [Washington Post](#) published an article with the headline: "Hopes for immigration deal fade as Trump declares DACA 'probably dead'". At 22:13 EST, the [Washington Post](#) published a new article with the headline: "Trump says that he is 'not a racist,' denies souring chances for immigration overhaul by using vulgarity".

On 15 January, Trump made an ad hominem attack on Senator Durbin:

Senator Dicky Durbin totally misrepresented what was said at the DACA meeting. Deals can't get made when there is no trust! Durbin blew DACA and is hurting our Military.

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 15:28 EST, 15 Jan 2018.

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On 17 January, during a meeting with Democrats from Congress, the White House Chief of Staff, John Kelly, told the Democrats that some of Trump's campaign promises about immigration were "uninformed". Kelly specifically said we need only 700 miles of "physical barrier" along the border, *not* the entire 2100 miles. Kelly also specifically said Mexico would *not* pay for the wall, despite Trump's repeated promises in 2016 that Mexico would pay. On a Fox News channel broadcast, Kelly politely said Trump's opinion on the wall had "evolved". [Associated Press](#); [Fox News](#); [Washington Post](#)(18Jan).

On the morning of 18 January, Trump reacted to Kelly claiming Trump was "uninformed".  
The Wall is the Wall, it has never changed or evolved from the first day I conceived of it. Parts will be, of necessity, see through and it was never intended to be built in areas where there is natural protection such as mountains, wastelands or tough rivers or water.....

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 06:15 EST, 18 Jan 2018.

Trump asserts that his opinion is so rigid that the concept of the wall "has never changed", despite Trump hearing new facts or changing conditions. Trump was also clear in his campaign promises that the wall would be built along the *entire* border, but on 13 July 2017 Trump admitted he would build a wall along only 700 to 900 miles of the border. The shortening of Trump's wall is one change that Trump has made.

Trump finished his previous tweet:

....The Wall will be paid for, directly or indirectly, or through longer term reimbursement, by Mexico, which has a ridiculous \$71 billion dollar trade surplus with the U.S. The \$20 billion dollar Wall is "peanuts" compared to what Mexico makes from the U.S. NAFTA is a bad joke!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 06:25 EST, 18 Jan 2018.

We need the Wall for the safety and security of our country. We need the Wall to help stop the massive inflow of drugs from Mexico, now rated the number one most dangerous country in the world. If there is no Wall, there is no Deal!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 08:16 EST, 18 Jan 2018.

If we need the wall to prevent horrible things from happening, why did Trump include in the 2018 budget a mere \$1.6 billion for a tiny part of the new wall? Why not include \$22 billion for the entire wall? The wall will stop some illegal immigration. The wall will *not* stop illicit drugs from Mexico, because the drugs can be sent via mail or by drug cartel courier.

At midnight on Friday, 19 January, the U.S. Government shut down, as Congress was unable to agree on a budget. *The Washington Post* provided some insight into why the budget negotiations failed.

After the president ordered cameras out of the Cabinet Room that day [9 Jan], the group delved into the details [of immigration reform]. Kirstjen Nielsen, Trump's homeland security secretary, and her staff passed out a four-page document on the

administration's "must haves" for any immigration bill — a hard-line list that included \$18 billion for Trump's promised border wall, eliminating the diversity visa lottery program and ending "extended family chain migration," according to the document, which was obtained by The Washington Post.

But one person seemed surprised and alarmed by the memo: the president.

With Democrats and Republicans still in the room, Trump said that the document didn't represent all of his positions, that he wasn't familiar with its contents and that he didn't appreciate being caught off-guard. He instructed the group to disregard the summary and move on, according to one of the lawmakers in the room, speaking on the condition of anonymity to describe a private conversation.

"It's like the wedding where someone actually stands up and objects to the wedding," the lawmaker said. "It was that moment."

That meeting nearly two weeks ago, and the president's ambivalence, marked the beginning of yet another period of Trump-fueled tumult that helped push the federal government into a shutdown at midnight Friday. Pinging from one upheaval to the next — while clearly not understanding the policy nuances of the negotiation — Trump clashed at different times with Democrats and members of his own party, who grew increasingly exasperated with the president even as they sought to cast blame upon the other side.

....

"Negotiating with President Trump is like negotiating with Jell-O," Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.) complained on the Senate floor Saturday [20 Jan], some 12 hours into the shutdown. "It's next to impossible."

This account of Trump's divisive role in shutdown negotiations is based on interviews with more than a dozen lawmakers, White House advisers, government aides and Trump confidants, most of whom requested anonymity to discuss private negotiations.

....

As the shutdown loomed, the president grew more erratic. ....

[On the morning of 18 January, Trump [tweeted](#) "CHIP should be part of a long term solution, not a 30 Day, or short term, extension!" CHIP = Children's Health Insurance Program. Trump's] stance directly contradicted the strategy of congressional Republicans, who were attempting to use CHIP to lure reluctant Democrats into supporting the plan.

....

The president, however, did not seem to fully grasp just how problematic his CHIP tweet was for his own party. Minutes after tweeting his criticism, Trump spoke by phone with McConnell, according to people familiar with the conversation. Trump



praised the Republican bill, showed no reluctance when McConnell explained his plan to forge ahead with it and made no mention of his tweet, these people said. Trump also reassured House Speaker Paul D. Ryan (R-Wis.) that he liked the bill as it was.

The whole episode left congressional leaders puzzled: Why, they wondered, would the president tweet something negative about their legislation and rattle Republican lawmakers without ever raising concerns with them — and then act as if nothing had happened?

Ashley Parker, Josh Dawsey, & Ed O'Keefe, "'Negotiating with Jell-O': How Trump's shifting positions fueled the rush to a shutdown," [Washington Post](#), 14:53 EST, 20 Jan 2018.

The government shutdown is another failure for Trump, the self-proclaimed master negotiator and dealmaker. Trump also boasts of his intelligence and knowledge, yet Trump does *not* understand what he is trying to negotiate. Trump's inconsistent and apparently randomly changing positions are apparent in immigration reform, as well as in his positions on North Korea.

Trump's criticism of CHIP followed by Trump's ignoring his criticism reminds me of how Trump repeatedly insulted Kim Jong Un in North Korea, but then, in an 11 Jan 2018 interview with Reuters, Trump insisted he had a "very good relationship" with Kim. As *The Washington Post* said with CHIP, it was "as if nothing had happened".

On 21 January, the [New York Times](#) reported: "The president was either unwilling or unable to articulate the immigration policy he wanted, much less understand the nuances of what it would involve."

On the weekend and Monday, 20-22 January, White House staff and Republican leaders in Congress, urged Trump to keep a low-profile and *not* contact Democrats in Congress. [Associated Press](#); [Washington Post](#); [BBC](#) ("... Donald Trump was largely sidelined through the process."); [Politico](#). The strategy to sideline Trump — the self-proclaimed Master Negotiator and Dealmaker — was successful. At noon on Monday, the Democrats in the Senate caved and voted to continue the budget until 8 February. In exchange, Republicans who have a slim majority in the U.S. Senate will permit debate on continuing DACA.

On 19 January, Schumer told Trump that Democrats in the Senate would vote for funding Trump's wall in exchange for continuation of the DACA. Trump rejected that offer, because Trump wants more concessions from the Democrats. On 23 January, Schumer announced he was rescinding his offer. [Associated Press](#); [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#). Since Trump rejected Schumer's offer, Schumer was rescinding a dead deal, but Schumer hoped to appear tough to liberals who support more immigration.

On 25 January 2018, the [White House](#) issued Trump's demands on immigration reform:

1. create "\$25 billion trust fund for the [Mexican] border wall system, ports of entry/exit, and northern border improvements and enhancements."
2. continue DACA, with ten-year path to citizenship for 1.8 million illegal immigrants (including the 0.69 million who registered under the DACA)
3. end "extended" chain migration, in which immigrants in the USA can bring their

relatives to the USA. But allow immigrants to bring spouses and minor children into the USA.

4. end lottery for immigration visas

The [Associated Press](#) and [The Hill](#) reported that Trump's supporters were dismayed that Trump proposed granting citizenship to approximately 700,000 illegal immigrants in the USA.

Trump began an unnecessarily partisan attack on Democrats:

DACA has been made increasingly difficult by the fact that Cryin' Chuck Schumer took such a beating over the shutdown that he is unable to act on immigration!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 12:16 EST, 26 Jan 2018.

On 1 February, Trump called on Democrats to do something to continue the DACA.

March 5th is rapidly approaching and the Democrats are doing nothing about DACA. They Resist, Blame, Complain and Obstruct — and do nothing. Start pushing Nancy Pelosi and the Dems to work out a DACA fix, NOW!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 06:51 EST, 1 Feb 2018.

The Democrats just aren't calling about DACA. Nancy Pelosi and Chuck Schumer have to get moving fast, or they'll disappoint you again. We have a great chance to make a deal or, blame the Dems! March 5th is coming up fast.

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 22:32 EST, 1 Feb 2018.

On 5 February, Senators John McCain (R-Ariz.) and Christopher A. Coons (D-Del.) proposed a compromise on immigration, which Trump immediately rejected because it did not contain US\$ 25 billion in funding for Trump's wall. [Washington Post](#). Trump continued to blame Democrats for lack of a consensus on immigration reform in the following Tweet:

Any deal on DACA that does not include STRONG border security and the desperately needed WALL is a total waste of time. March 5th is rapidly approaching and the Dems seem not to care about DACA. Make a deal!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 09:36 EST, 5 Feb 2018.

Congress must pass a budget before midnight on 8 February 2018, or else the U.S. Government will shut down. The plan on 6 February is to pass another continuing resolution, to give Congress until 23 March to agree on a budget, but fund the military until 30 September. Trump's position is that the budget must authorize at least US\$ 25 billion for the Wall and other border security improvements. [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#).

On 6 February, Trump threatened another U.S. Government shutdown during a press briefing on efforts to deport the MS-13 gang that came from El Salvador. Trump rambled and repeated himself.

If we don't change [immigration legislation], let's have a shutdown. We'll do a shutdown. And it's worth it for our country. I'd love to see a shutdown if we don't get this stuff taken care of.

....

And if we have to shut it down because the Democrats don't want safety and — unrelated but still related — they don't want to take care of our military, then shut it down. We'll go with another shutdown.

....

QUESTION: Sir, do you get the sense that there will be a shutdown given the differences over this issue?

THE PRESIDENT: I would shut it down over this issue. I can't speak for everybody at the table, but I will tell you, I would shut it down over this issue. If we don't straighten out our border, we don't have a country. Without borders, we don't have a country.

So would I shut it down over this issue? Yes. I can't speak for our great representatives here, but I have a feeling they may agree with me. Okay? Thank you.

Donald J. Trump, "Remarks by President Trump at Law Enforcement Roundtable on MS-13," [White House](#), 6 Feb 2018.

On 9 February, the U.S. Government shut down for 9 hours until Congress could pass another continuing resolution for the budget. The issue of funding Trump's wall was postponed until 23 March, when a final budget is due. [Associated Press](#).

On 10 February, Trump attacked the Democrats again.

Republicans want to fix DACA far more than the Democrats do. The Dems had all three branches of government back in 2008-2011, and they decided not to do anything about DACA. They only want to use it as a campaign issue. Vote Republican!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 13:50 EST, 10 Feb 2018.

On 13 February, Trump tweeted:

Negotiations on DACA have begun. Republicans want to make a deal and Democrats say they want to make a deal. Wouldn't it be great if we could finally, after so many years, solve the DACA puzzle. This will be our last chance, there will never be another opportunity! March 5th.

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 05:52 EST, 13 Feb 2018.

On 14 February, The [New York Times](#) reported that Trump's 25 January demands were as far as Trump would compromise. Trump will veto any bill that fails to meet these demands.

On 15 February, the U.S. Senate rejected Trump's immigration reform bill by a vote of 39 to 60. The bill needed an additional 21 votes to be debated by the Senate. A bipartisan immigration reform bill was considered by the Senate, but it too failed. Two other immigration bills also failed. [New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#); [Politico](#); [Associated Press](#).

Again, Trump — the self-proclaimed Master Negotiator and Deal-Maker — sat on the sidelines during the debate in the U.S. Senate. As a result, Trump failed to get funding for his wall and Trump failed to get any of his desired immigration reform. According to Trump himself, murderers, rapists, and drug dealers will continue to pour across the Mexican border

into the USA.

On Friday, 16 February, Trump tweeted:

Cannot believe how BADLY DACA recipients have been treated by the Democrats...totally abandoned! Republicans are still working hard.

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 09:49 EST, 16 Feb 2018.

My comment is that the Republicans are enjoying the three-day weekend caused by Presidents' Day on Monday, 19 February. And Trump needs to be reminded that *he* ended DACA in September 2017.

On 14 February 2018, a 19 year old high-school dropout returned to his high school and killed 17 people with an assault rifle, in the third-worst school shooting in U.S. history. On 17 February, Trump compared the Democrats failure to enact gun control legislation in 2013 with the Democrats failure to extend the DACA.

Just like they don't want to solve the DACA problem, why didn't the Democrats pass gun control legislation when they had both the House & Senate during the Obama Administration. Because they didn't want to, and now they just talk!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 18:45 EST, 17 Feb 2018.

Note that Trump himself is opposed to gun control legislation, so his criticism of Democrats is hypocritical. Trump is lucky that Americans have a short-attention span, and that the 14 Feb school shooting pushed Trump's failed immigration reform out of the news.

On 17 February, the [Associated Press](#) exposed some of Trump's factual errors in blaming Democrats for the collapse of immigration reform.

On 23 February, Trump again tweeted about the failure of Democrats on DACA.

For those of you who are still interested, the Democrats have totally forgotten about DACA. Not a lot of interest on this subject from them!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 08:09 EST, 23 Feb 2018.

Unable to get funding from Congress for the wall, on 20 February Trump attempted to get the Mexican president to pay for the wall. El presidente was offended and canceled his planned trip to Washington, DC. [Washington Post](#).

On 21 February, the [Associated Press](#) reported that Trump will begin construction of a 3 km segment of the wall in downtown Calexico, California.

On 28 February, Trump issued a baffling Tweet:

I have decided that sections of the Wall that California wants built NOW will not be built until the whole Wall is approved. Big victory yesterday with ruling from the courts that allows us to proceed. OUR COUNTRY MUST HAVE BORDER SECURITY!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:29 EST, 28 Feb 2018.

See [Los Angeles Times](#) and the [Associated Press](#).

On 6 March 2018, the U.S. Government filed litigation in Federal court in Sacramento, seeking to invalidate state laws in California that protect illegal immigrants.

[Los Angeles Times](#); [New York Times](#). My comment is that — regardless of the immigration issues — the federal government should win this litigation, because immigration and citizenship are solely matters of federal law, and the U.S. Constitution (Article 6) says federal law "shall be the supreme Law of the Land". The same technical argument will also invalidate so-called "sanctuary city" laws, that purport to exempt a city from federal immigration law.

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Beginning on 1 February 2018, Trump issued a long series of tweets — some of which are quoted above — that criticize Democrats for abandoning the beneficiaries of DACA. In contrast to Democrats, Trump makes himself the champion of 700,000 illegal immigrants who entered the USA when they were children — *but* Trump demands concessions from Democrats (e.g., funding of Trump's wall along the Mexican border) before Trump will allow a path to U.S. citizenship for these beneficiaries of DACA. Here are some of Trump's tweets after 23 Feb 2018 and before 30 March 2018:

Dems are no longer talking DACA! "Out of sight, out of mind," they say. DACA beneficiaries should not be happy. Nancy Pelosi truly doesn't care about them.

Republicans stand ready to make a deal!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 16:18 EST, 24 Feb 2018.

It's March 5th and the Democrats are nowhere to be found on DACA. Gave them 6 months, they just don't care. Where are they? We are ready to make a deal!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 15:37 EST, 5 Mar 2018.

The Democrats do not want to help DACA. Would be so easy to make a deal!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 20:28 EDT, 19 Mar 2018.

DACA was abandoned by the Democrats. Very unfair to them! Would have been tied to desperately needed Wall.

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 08:26 EDT, 23 Mar 2018.

I find Trump's tweets to be strange. Illegal immigrants can *not* legally vote, so why would Trump pander to illegal immigrants? And U.S. citizens of hispanic ancestry are likely to vote for Democrats, because of Trump's immigration policies and Trump's bigotry toward immigrants from hispanic nations.

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The temporary government funding expires at midnight on Friday, 23 March. Congress waited until about 19 March to begin discussions of the budget. On the afternoon of 22 March, the U.S. House of Representatives passed their budget bill with a length of 2232 pages. That bill contains a paltry \$1.57 billion for repair of existing barriers along the Mexican border plus other border security measures — Trump had asked for \$18 billion for his wall over ten years and \$7 billion for other border security. [Washington Post](#); [Associated Press](#). At about 00:45 on Friday, 23 March, the U.S. Senate passed the same budget bill.

Instead of signing the bill on Friday morning, at 08:55 EDT Trump threatened to veto the bill because the bill: (1) does not mention the DACA recipients *and* (2) does not fund Trump's wall with Mexico. The veto would mean a U.S. Government shutdown, because many Representatives and Senators have already fled from Washington, DC for a two-week ~~vacation~~ recess. [tweet](#); [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [Politico](#).

At approximately 13:00 EDT on Friday, Trump finally signed the bill. Trump actually told journalists at the White House:

But I say to Congress: I will never sign another bill like this again. I'm not going to do it again. Nobody read it. It's only hours old. Some people don't even know what is in — \$1.3 trillion — it's the second largest ever. President Obama signed one that was actually larger, which I'm sure he wasn't too happy with either.

....

To prevent the omnibus situation from ever happening again, I'm calling on Congress to give me a line-item veto for all government spending bills. And the Senate must end. They must end the filibuster rule and get down to work. We have to get a lot of great legislation approved. And without the filibuster rule, it will happen just like magic.

"Remarks by President Trump at Signing of H.R. 1625," [White House](#), 13:25 EDT, 23 Mar 2018.

Trump is too ignorant about the U.S. Government to know that this is the way Congress routinely does business: imperfect bills with something for everyone to hate, tossed together with poorly considered last-minute changes that wreck any careful design. This particular budget bill was cobbled together without any committee hearings in Congress. Trump ignores the fact that the U.S. Supreme Court held the line-item veto is unconstitutional in *Clinton v. City of New York*, 524 U.S. 417 (1998).

Six hours later, Trump reiterated what he has said earlier in the day:

As a matter of National Security I've signed the Omnibus Spending Bill. I say to Congress: I will NEVER sign another bill like this again. To prevent this omnibus situation from ever happening again, I'm calling on Congress to give me a line-item veto for all govt spending bills!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 19:01 EDT, 23 Mar 2018.

On Thursday, 22 March, White House staff — Office of Management and Budget Director Mick Mulvaney and White House Legislative Affairs Director Marc Short — announced that Trump would sign the budget bill on Friday. Trump's unexpected veto threat shows that Trump is unpredictable and impulsive. Trump's sudden changes diminish his personal credibility, as well as make meaningless any assurances by White House staff. [Associated Press](#)(23Mar); [Associated Press](#)(24Mar); [New York Times](#); [Politico](#). This is another example that shows that Trump is unfit to be president.

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On 25 March, Trump made a cryptic tweet about his wall.

Because of the \$700 & \$716 Billion Dollars gotten to rebuild our Military, many jobs



are created and our Military is again rich. Building a great Border Wall, with drugs (poison) and enemy combatants pouring into our Country, is all about National Defense. Build WALL through M!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 06:33 EDT, 25 Mar 2018.

On 27 March, the [Washington Post](#) tells us that Trump is privately discussing using the military budget to pay for his new border wall that Congress did not fund. *The Post* and the [Associated Press](#) agree that "through M" at the end of Trump's tweet refers to the military. My comment is that Trump is again floating an unconstitutional proposal: only Congress can decide whether to fund Trump's wall, and only Congress can decide how much money to allocate to that wall. Instead of watching television, Trump should *read* the U.S. Constitution.

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On 28 March 2018, Trump tweeted a photograph of construction of a wall:

Great briefing this afternoon on the start of our Southern Border WALL!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 15:47 EDT, 28 Mar 2018.

But Trump lied to the American people again. The Associated Press reported:

Actually, no new work got underway. The photos showed the continuation of an old project to replace 2 miles of existing barrier.

....

... the photos Trump tweeted were misleading. They showed work that's been going on for more than a month on a small border wall replacement project in Calexico, California, that has nothing to do with the federal budget he signed into law last week.

The Calexico project that began Feb. 21 to replace a little more than 2 miles (3.2 kilometers) of border wall was financed during the 2017 budget year. A barrier built in the 1990s mainly from recycled metal scraps is being torn down and replaced with bollard-style barriers that are 30 feet (9.1 meters) high.

Hope Yen & Jill Colvin, "AP FACT CHECK: Trump departs from reality on wall, Amazon," [Associated Press](#), 31 Mar 2018.

See also 2 April version at [Associated Press](#).

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Trump had given Democrats six months to make a deal that would restore DACA. The Democrats failed. On Easter, 1 April 2018, Trump permanently closed the door on restoring DACA.

Border Patrol Agents are not allowed to properly do their job at the Border because of ridiculous liberal (Democrat) laws like Catch & Release. Getting more dangerous.

"Caravans" coming. Republicans must go to Nuclear Option to pass tough laws NOW.

NO MORE DACA DEAL!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 09:56 EDT, 1 April 2018.

A half-hour later, Trump threatened to end NAFTA if Mexico did not stop the flow of migrants to the USA.



Mexico is doing very little, if not NOTHING, at stopping people from flowing into Mexico through their Southern Border, and then into the U.S. They laugh at our dumb immigration laws. They must stop the big drug and people flows, or I will stop their cash cow, NAFTA. NEED WALL!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 10:25 EDT, 1 April 2018.

On 2 April, Trump again demanded that Mexico stop the flow of migrants to the USA.

Mexico has the absolute power not to let these large “Caravans” of people enter their country. They must stop them at their Northern Border, which they can do because their border laws work, not allow them to pass through into our country, which has no effective border laws.....

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:02 EDT, 2 April 2018.

...Congress must immediately pass Border Legislation, use Nuclear Option if necessary, to stop the massive inflow of Drugs and People. Border Patrol Agents (and ICE) are GREAT, but the weak Dem laws don’t allow them to do their job. Act now Congress, our country is being stolen!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:10 EDT, 2 April 2018.

DACA is dead because the Democrats didn’t care or act, and now everyone wants to get onto the DACA bandwagon... No longer works. Must build Wall and secure our borders with proper Border legislation. Democrats want No Borders, hence drugs and crime!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:17 EDT, 2 April 2018.

Honduras, Mexico and many other countries that the U.S. is very generous to, sends many of their people to our country through our WEAK IMMIGRATION POLICIES. Caravans are heading here. Must pass tough laws and build the WALL. Democrats allow open borders, drugs and crime!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 20:12 EDT, 2 April 2018.

So when is Trump going to show some leadership and convince Congress to fund his Wall? Blaming Democrats — currently the minority party in both houses of Congress — is an inadequate excuse. If Mexico's border laws really work, why are caravans of people from Central America (e.g., Honduras) entering the southern border of Mexico?

On 3 April, Trump continued his tweets:

The big Caravan of People from Honduras, now coming across Mexico and heading to our “Weak Laws” Border, had better be stopped before it gets there. Cash cow NAFTA is in play, as is foreign aid to Honduras and the countries that allow this to happen. Congress MUST ACT NOW!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 06:49 EDT, 3 April 2018.

Congress can *not* act *now*, because they are in the second week of a two-week vacation. On 3 April, the [Associated Press](#) reported that the caravan of migrants has stopped in southern Mexico.

At noon on 3 April, Trump remarked to journalists at the White House about Mexico.

Mexico — if you look at the caravan of thousands of people coming across — I told Mexico, look, you have a cash cow in NAFTA. NAFTA has been great for Mexico; it has not been good for the United States. A lot of businesses have closed down because of NAFTA. You look at empty plants all over the place — and this is from years ago — and they still haven't recovered. NAFTA has been a terrible deal for the United States. We're renegotiating the deal right now, but it will still be good for Mexico and for Canada.

And when this caravan came in — and this is a caravan of a lot of people coming in — in this case, from Honduras. If it reaches our border, our laws are so weak and so pathetic, you would not understand this because — I know how strong your laws are at the border. It's like we have no border because we had Obama make changes. President Obama made changes that basically created no border. It's called catch-and-release. You catch them, you register them, they go into our country and we can't throw them out. And, in many cases, they shouldn't be here. In many, many cases, they shouldn't be here. And after they get whatever happens over the next two or three years, they're supposed to come back to court. Almost nobody comes back to court. They're in our country, and we can't do anything about it because the laws that were created by Democrats are so pathetic and so weak.

So I told Mexico — and I respect what they did — I said, look, your laws are very powerful; your laws are very strong. We have very bad laws for our border, and we are going to be doing some things — I've been speaking with General Mattis — we're going to be doing things militarily. Until we can have a wall and proper security, we're going to be guarding our border with the military. That's a big step. We really haven't done that before — certainly not very much before.

But we will be doing things with Mexico, and they have to do this, otherwise I'm not going to do the NAFTA deal. NAFTA has been fantastic for Mexico, bad for us. We've had our car plants moved to Mexico — many of them. We make tremendous numbers — millions of cars in Mexico that years ago didn't exist. They closed in Michigan, they closed in Ohio, they closed in other places. Now they're starting to move back. Because of what we've done with regulation and with taxes, they're starting to come back into our country in a big way.

But I told Mexico very strongly: You're going to have to do something about these caravans that are coming up. And I just noticed that the caravan now, which is toward the middle of Mexico coming up from Honduras, is breaking up very rapidly. That's because Mexico has very strong immigration laws, as we should have. We should have those laws. We don't have — we have immigration laws that are laughed at by everybody. And it's going to be changed. We need the wall, we need the protection, and we have to change our immigration laws at the border and elsewhere.

So Mexico has — at this moment, it seems they've broken up large numbers of that particular caravan. And we'll see what happens. But we're prepared at our border. We cannot have people flowing into our country illegally, disappearing, and, by the way, never showing up to court. So the court case will be set for two years or three years, if you can believe this, and they never show up, for the most part. Very rarely do they

show up.

....

QUESTION: Mr. President, it seems as though the caravan is starting to irritate you.

PRESIDENT TRUMP: No, the caravan doesn't irritate me. The caravan makes me very sad that this can happen to the United States, where you have thousands of people that decide to just walk into our country, and we don't have any laws that can protect it. And the wall, because of the Democrats, has been delayed — which we've started the wall.

Just so you understand, we have \$1.6 billion. We're fixing and building brand-new walls in certain areas. And we're doing a lot of work on walls. We have \$1.6 billion, and we're starting brand-new sections of walls. But we need to have a wall that's about 800 miles — 700 to 800 miles of the 2,000-mile stretch. We have a lot of natural boundaries.

"Remarks by President Trump Before a Working Lunch with Heads of the Baltic States," [White House](#), 12:12 EDT, 3 April 2018.

The [Associated Press](#) reported at least three factual errors in Trump's remarks.

Trump was vague when he said: "we're going to be guarding our border with the military." At night on 3 April, the [New York Times](#) reported that Trump would use the National Guard to secure the Mexican border. *The Times* said: "President Barack Obama sent 1,200 [National Guard troops] in 2010 and President George W. Bush dispatched 6,000 in 2006, while governors of border states have done the same when faced with large inflows from the south."

On 5 April 2018, the [Washington Post](#) reported that Trump was making *false* assertions that his wall was being constructed.

On 26 May 2018, the [Associated Press](#) tell us that Trump continues to assert that the rate of illegal immigration has declined more than 40% during his presidency, while the Truth is that the rate of illegal immigration has increased by 20% from January 2017 to April 2018.

### **June 2018: immigration debacle**

In April 2018, the Trump administration quietly began a new policy of separating illegal-immigrant parents from their children. [New York Times](#)(20April). On 15 June 2018, the U.S. Government admitted it had separated 1,995 children from 1,940 illegal immigrant parents at the border with Mexico from 19 April to 31 May 2018. [Reuters](#). It is long-standing policy to separate criminal adults from their children.

Beginning approximately 5 June 2018, there was a chorus of outrage from conservative and liberal politicians, as well as religious leaders, that condemned Trump's policy of separating children from their parents. [New York Times](#)(5June); [Washington Post](#)(5June);

[Washington Post](#)(13June).

On 14 June, Attorney General Jeff Sessions gave a [speech](#) on the topic that mentioned the Bible: “I would cite you to the Apostle Paul and his clear and wise command in Romans 13, to obey the laws of the government because God has ordained them for the purpose of order.”

More than 630 Methodists filed a complaint in their church against Sessions.

[New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#).

After a series of false or misleading statements by the Trump administration, on 20 June, Trump signed an Executive Order that ended the policy of separating children from their parents. [Washington Post](#)(14June); [Washington Post](#)(19June); [New York Times](#)(19June); [Washington Post](#)(20June); [New York Times](#)(20June).

During 11-16 June 2018 — the week of the overhyped Kim/Trump summit in Singapore — Republicans in the U.S. House of Representatives discussed two immigration bills. The first was a hard-line bill, [H.R.4760](#), sponsored by Robert W. Goodlatte of Virginia; the second was a so-called compromise bill, [H.R.6136](#). [New York Times](#)(12June); [Washington Post](#)(15June); [New York Times](#)(15June).

Trump believes there is one thing worse than illegal immigrants that "infest" the USA, and that is the loathsome Democrats in Congress.

Democrats are the problem. They don't care about crime and want illegal immigrants, no matter how bad they may be, to pour into and infest our Country, like MS-13. They can't win on their terrible policies, so they view them as potential voters!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 09:52 EDT, 19 June 2018.

On 19 June, Trump met at the Capitol with a group of Republican congressmen to discuss immigration. Trump refused to endorse one bill, saying he would sign either bill that passed Congress. [New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#); [CNN](#); [Politico](#).

On 20 June, Trump met at the White House with a group of Republican congressmen to discuss immigration. The [White House](#) posted a transcript of the 24-minute meeting. Trump said almost nothing of substance.

It is not surprising that Trump, who had *no* experience in government when he was elected president, fails to show effective leadership in Congress. It is particularly appalling that Democrats were excluded from the meetings with Trump on 19-20 June, and Democrats were not involved in drafting either of the two bills.

On 21 June, Trump continued his nasty attacks on Democrats.

Democrats want open Borders, where anyone can come into our Country, and stay.

This is Nancy Pelosi's dream. It won't happen!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 10:38 EDT, 21 June 2018.

In remarks to journalists before a cabinet meeting, Trump blasted Democrats:

My administration is also acting swiftly to address the illegal immigration crisis on the southern border. Loopholes in our immigration laws, all supported by extremist, open-border Democrats — and that's what they are. They're extremist, open-border

Democrats. If you look at Nancy Pelosi and you look at Chuck Schumer, you'll see tapes where they wanted to have borders — they needed borders for security — just a short while ago. A number of years ago, I see Chuck Schumer — “We must have borders.” Hillary Clinton — “We must have borders. If people penetrate our borders, we must get them out of our country.” Now, all of a sudden, they're big open-border people. It's a whole big con job. In the meantime, people are suffering because of the Democrats.

....

And they [Democrats] generally stick together. I respect them for that. That's about it. Their policies stink. They're no good. They have no ideas. They have no nothing — the Democrats. All they can do is obstruct, and stay together, and vote against, and make it impossible to take care of children and families and to take care of immigration.

"Remarks by President Trump at Cabinet Meeting," [White House](#), 11:55 EDT, 21 June 2018.

Trump repeated his statement about "extremist, open-border Democrats" in a tweet:

My Administration is acting swiftly to address the illegal immigration crisis on the Southern Border. Loopholes in our immigration laws all supported by extremist open border Democrats...and that's what they are — they're extremist open border Democrats....

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 13:02 EDT, 21 June 2018.

On Thursday, 21 June 2018, the U.S. House of Representatives scheduled a vote on the two immigration bills. H.R.4760 was [defeated](#) by a vote of 231-193. Then the House leadership postponed the vote on H.R.6136 until 22 June, and later postponed the vote until sometime next week. [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#).

Republicans are 55% of the U.S. House of Representatives, so they should be able to smoothly pass legislation. Instead, the dysfunctional — and effectively leaderless — Republicans repeatedly fail.

Trump torpedoed the House's immigration bills with two tweets. The first tweet came on Thursday, 21 June:

What is the purpose of the House doing good immigration bills when you need 9 votes by Democrats in the Senate, and the Dems are only looking to Obstruct (which they feel is good for them in the Mid-Terms). Republicans must get rid of the stupid Filibuster Rule — it is killing you!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 09:08 EDT, 21 June 2018.

The Republicans currently have 51 votes in the U.S. Senate, while it takes 60 votes to end a filibuster. Trump said it was futile for the House to do good work when the Senate would reject the House bill.

The second tweet came on Friday, 22 June:

Republicans should stop wasting their time on Immigration until after we elect more Senators and Congressmen/women in November. Dems are just playing games, have no intention of doing anything to solves this decades old problem. We can pass great

legislation after the Red Wave!  
Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:06 EDT, 22 June 2018.

Assuming the Republican majority in the U.S. Senate increases after the November 2018 elections, the new Senators do not appear until January 2019.

Commentators on how Trump ruined immigration reform:

- "On immigration, Trump keeps making life absolutely miserable for Republicans in Congress," [Washington Post](#), 20 June 2018.
- "Trump questions the 'purpose' of House immigration bills only hours before critical votes," [CNBC](#), 21 June 2018.
- "How Donald Trump killed the immigration bill with 1 tweet," [CNN](#), 22 June 2018.
- "Trump undercuts House GOP: Don't waste time on immigration," [Associated Press](#); 22 June 2018. ("GOP leaders said they'd press on anyway, but [Trump's] comments further damaged their attempt to win over wavering lawmakers for a measure already facing likely defeat.")
- "Trump betrays House Republicans on immigration," [Politico](#); 22 June 2018.
- "Republicans fume after Trump's latest immigration tweet undermines House talks," [Washington Post](#), 22 June 2018.
- "Trump sabotages GOP plans in Congress. Again." [Associated Press](#), 22 June 2018. ("It's hardly the first time the president has abandoned his allies in a moment of need. Over and over, Trump has proven himself a saboteur, willing to walk away from promises and blow up a deal, undermining the GOP agenda in Congress.")

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On Sunday, 24 June, Trump suggested immediately returning all immigrants to their homeland without a judicial hearing in the USA.

We cannot allow all of these people to invade our Country. When somebody comes in, we must immediately, with no Judges or Court Cases, bring them back from where they came. Our system is a mockery to good immigration policy and Law and Order. Most children come without parents...

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 11:02 EDT, 24 June 2018.

....Our Immigration policy, laughed at all over the world, is very unfair to all of those people who have gone through the system legally and are waiting on line for years! Immigration must be based on merit — we need people who will help to Make America Great Again!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 11:08 EDT, 24 June 2018.

Trump shows he does *not* understand the current immigration laws. Currently, with the possibility of refugee status, a judicial hearing is necessary to determine eligibility as a

refugee and to give "due process" to immigrants. Congress would need to remove refugee status before we can immediately return all immigrants to their homeland. [Washington Post](#); [ABC News](#). When Trump mentions "Law and Order", it is only a slogan. Trump does *not* understand law, and he openly disagrees with the U.S. Constitution, statutes, and regulations.

On Wednesday, 27 June, a vote was scheduled in the U.S. House of Representatives on the compromise immigration bill, H.R.6136. Trump again changed his opinion and now supported the compromise bill.

HOUSE REPUBLICANS SHOULD PASS THE STRONG BUT FAIR  
IMMIGRATION BILL, KNOWN AS GOODLATTE II, IN THEIR AFTERNOON  
VOTE TODAY, EVEN THOUGH THE DEMS WON'T LET IT PASS IN THE  
SENATE. PASSAGE WILL SHOW THAT WE WANT STRONG BORDERS &  
SECURITY WHILE THE DEMS WANT OPEN BORDERS = CRIME. WIN!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 08:39 EDT, 27 June 2018.

Someone needs to tell Trump that all upper-case letters in cyberspace is equivalent to yelling. Yelling is rude behavior.

On 27 June at 13:50 EDT, [H.R.6136](#) was defeated by a vote of 121 to 301. *All* of the Democrats voted against this bill, along with 48% of Republicans.

On 30 June, Trump tweeted:

I never pushed the Republicans in the House to vote for the Immigration Bill, either GOODLATTE 1 or 2, because it could never have gotten enough Democrats as long as there is the 60 vote threshold. I released many prior to the vote knowing we need more Republicans to win in Nov.

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 15:17 EDT, 30 June 2018.

As [Politico](#) observed, Trump's 30 June tweet is false, because it contradicts Trump's 27 June tweet in all upper-case letters. Trump is inconsistent over a three-day span. Apparently, Trump is rewriting history to avoid the fact that he supported a bill that failed by a massive number of votes. The explanation may be that Trump's narcissistic character flaw requires him to always win, so he needs to rewrite history to conceal his defeats.

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On 29 July 2018, Trump again tweeted that he was willing to shut down the U.S. Government if Congress did not fund Trump's wall.

I would be willing to "shut down" government if the Democrats do not give us the votes for Border Security, which includes the Wall! Must get rid of Lottery, Catch & Release etc. and finally go to system of Immigration based on MERIT! We need great people coming into our Country!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 09:13 EDT, 29 July 2018.

Notice that Trump does *not* meet with representatives and senators to build a consensus. Instead, Trump threatens a shutdown if Congress fails to please Trump.

On Monday, 30 July 2018, Trump reiterated his threat of a shutdown.

QUESTION [by Saagar Enjeti of the Daily Caller]: Thank you, Mr. President. To



follow up on what you were saying about the shutdown, sir, are you saying that you would be willing to shut the government down in September if it does not fully fund \$25 billion worth of your border wall and also deliver all of the immigration priorities that you listed in your tweet? Or are you leaving some room for negotiation there?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: I'll always leave room for negotiation. But this has been many years; this isn't just Trump administration. We're new. This has been many years, even decades. We have immigration laws. We have border security. We have all sorts of things going on that are — it's disgraceful. We are doing a phenomenal job. We're setting records. But we have laws that don't work. So we're working around those laws, and it's unfortunate.

I have to take my hat off to the Border Patrols, for the law enforcement, to ICE, which really has been maligned by the Democrats. The job they do — they go into these MS-13 nests — nests of bad, bad people — killers, in many cases. And they go in there fearless, and they do an incredible job. And they get them out. They either go to jail or they get out of the country. So I want to just take my hat off to ICE and the brave people that have really been maligned by the Democrats.

We need border security. Without a border, as this gentleman can tell you also — because the Prime Minister really was — it was a very big factor in his win, and other people's win in Italy — but it was a big factor in my win. We need border security. Border security includes the wall, but it includes many other things. We have to end the lottery. We have to end the chain. The chain is like a disaster. You bring one person in, and you end up with 32 people. We have to end these horrible catch-and-release principles, where you catch somebody, you take their name, and you release them. You don't even know who they are. And then they're supposed to come back to a court case, where they want us to hire thousands of judges. The whole thing is ridiculous. And we have to change our laws, and we do that through Congress.

So I would certainly be willing to close it down to get it done. As you know, we are already approving things in various bills, including we're going to be taking care of the military. We always put the military and law enforcement very high. But I would be certainly willing to consider a shutdown if we don't get proper border security. Thank you.

"Remarks by President Trump and Prime Minister Conte of Italy in Joint Press Conference," [White House](#), 30 July 2018.

The current funding authorization expires at midnight on 30 September. On 30 July, [ABC News](#) reminds us that there are only 11 legislative days before the end-of-September deadline. That is not enough time to negotiate a compromise on a complicated issue like immigration reform. Furthermore, a government shutdown in early October might affect the Congressional elections on 6 November.

On Tuesday, 31 July, Trump again reiterated his threat of a shutdown.

I don't care what the political ramifications are, our immigration laws and border security have been a complete and total disaster for decades, and there is no way that the Democrats will allow it to be fixed without a Government Shutdown...

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 13:33 EDT, 31 July 2018.

...Border Security is National Security, and National Security is the long-term viability of our Country. A Government Shutdown is a very small price to pay for a safe and Prosperous America!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 13:33 EDT, 31 July 2018.

On 5 September 2018, Trump was again threatening a shutdown.

QUESTION: Mr. President, shutdown: yes or no?

QUESTION: Can you rule out a shutdown?

THE PRESIDENT: If it happens, it happens.

QUESTION: If it happens, it happens?

THE PRESIDENT: If it happens, it happens. If it's about border security, I'm willing to do anything. We have to protect our borders. If we don't protect our borders, our country is not going to be a country. So if it's about border security, I'm willing to do what has to be done. Thank you very much.

"Remarks by President Trump in Meeting with Republican Congressional Leadership," [White House](#), 15:35 EDT, 5 Sep 2018.

On 13 September 2018, Congress passed a funding bill for a few government agencies and agreed to continue current funding until 7 December for the remainder of the U.S. Government. Congress postponed consideration of Trump's wall until after the election on 6 November. [Associated Press](#); [The Hill](#). On 10-14 September, Trump was focused on hurricane Florence and Trump seemed to ignore the fact that his wall was still *not* funded. On 13 September, it remains unknown whether Trump will shut down the Government over the failure to fund his wall. [Washington Post](#). Trump is known to make threats (e.g., shutdown) but then fail to implement those threats — Trump routinely bluffs during negotiations.

On 20 September, when the budget process in the U.S. Congress is running better than usual, Trump is upset that Congress is postponing funding for his wall.

I want to know, where is the money for Border Security and the WALL in this ridiculous Spending Bill, and where will it come from after the Midterms? Dems are obstructing Law Enforcement and Border Security. REPUBLICANS MUST FINALLY GET TOUGH!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:43 EDT, 20 Sep 2018.

The [Washington Post](#) and the [Wall Street Journal](#); wondered if Trump will cause a government shutdown in 10 days. If Republicans in states along the Mexican border vote to fully fund Trump's wall, then the hispanic citizens will vote for Democrats, which could give Democrats a majority in the U.S. Congress.

On Wednesday, 26 September 2018, Trump decided to sign the partial funding bill that postpones a decision about funding Trump's wall until after the 6 November election. Trump said: "We'll keep the government open. We're going to keep the government open."

[White House](#); [Washington Post](#); [Associated Press](#). My comment is, once again, Trump was caught bluffing. Trump is unreliable: when he says he will do something, we have no idea if he is bluffing.

On Friday, 28 Sep 2018, Trump signed the partial funding bill. In his signing statement, Trump said: "Unfortunately, the radical Democrats refuse to support border security and want drugs and crime to pour into our country." [White House](#); [Washington Post](#).

### 16 Oct 2018: caravan

On 16 Oct 2018, Trump tweeted about a caravan of approximately 3000 migrants from Honduras who were traveling north on foot, and intending to illegally enter the USA:

The United States has strongly informed the President of Honduras that if the large Caravan of people heading to the U.S. is not stopped and brought back to Honduras, no more money or aid will be given to Honduras, effective immediately!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 09:05 EDT, 16 Oct 2018.

We have today informed the countries of Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador that if they allow their citizens, or others, to journey through their borders and up to the United States, with the intention of entering our country illegally, all payments made to them will STOP (END)!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 21:19 EDT, 16 Oct 2018.

On 17 October, Trump tweeted:

Hard to believe that with thousands of people from South of the Border, walking unimpeded toward our country in the form of large Caravans, that the Democrats won't approve legislation that will allow laws for the protection of our country. Great Midterm issue for Republicans!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 09:45 EDT, 17 Oct 2018.

On 18 October, Trump tweeted:

I am watching the Democrat Party led (because they want Open Borders and existing weak laws) assault on our country by Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador, whose leaders are doing little to stop this large flow of people, INCLUDING MANY CRIMINALS, from entering Mexico to U.S.....

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:25 EDT, 18 Oct 2018.

....In addition to stopping all payments to these countries, which seem to have almost no control over their population, I must, in the strongest of terms, ask Mexico to stop this onslaught — and if unable to do so I will call up the U.S. Military and CLOSE OUR SOUTHERN BORDER!..

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:35 EDT, 18 Oct 2018.

....The assault on our country at our Southern Border, including the Criminal elements and DRUGS pouring in, is far more important to me, as President, than Trade or the USMCA. Hopefully Mexico will stop this onslaught at their Northern Border. All

Democrats fault for weak laws!  
Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:45 EDT, 18 Oct 2018.

Who caused this caravan? According to Trump, it was Democrats!  
Can you believe this, and what Democrats are allowing to be done to our Country?  
Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 16:04 EDT, 18 Oct 2018.

Trump retweeted a [tweet](#) that reported: “MIGRANT CARAVAN: Two federal police-filled planes w/anti-riot gear landed near the Mexico/Guatemala border this morn [17 Oct] (vid source: Policia Federal de Mexico).”

Thank you Mexico, we look forward to working with you!  
Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 18:51 EDT, 18 Oct 2018.

At a campaign rally in Missoula, Montana on the night of 18 October, Trump blamed Democrats for the caravan:

Trump: Now we’re starting to find out, and I won’t say it 100 percent, I’ll put a little tiny question mark at the end — a lot of money’s been passing through people to come up and try and get to the border by Election Day, because they think that’s a negative for us. — They [Democrats] wanted that caravan, and there are those that say that caravan didn’t just happen, it didn’t just happen.

Meg Kelly & Salvador Rizzo, "A grainy video from Guatemala sparks Trump conspiracy theory," [Washington Post](#), 19 Oct 2018.

*The Washington Post* article cited in the previous paragraph explains that there is *no* evidence that Democrats caused this caravan. See also: [The Guardian](#); [CNN](#); [New York Times](#).  
Blaming Democrats for the caravan is another delusion by Trump.

On 20 October, Trump tweeted an invitation to Democrats (Chuck Schumer and Nancy Pelosi) to negotiate an immigration deal with him.

If the Democrats would stop being obstructionists and come together, we could write up and agree to new immigration laws in less than one hour. Look at the needless pain and suffering that they are causing. Look at the horrors taking place on the Border.

Chuck & Nancy, call me!  
Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 10:35 EDT, 20 Oct 2018.

Trump does *not* understand how to draft legislation if he thinks he could do it in "less than one hour".

On 20 October, Trump spoke to journalists before he departed from Elko Nevada:  
QUESTION: Back on Mexico, have you ever considered completely sealing off the U.S. border with Mexico?

THE PRESIDENT: So if it doesn’t work out on the border, what I want the Democrats to do — the beautiful thing of what’s happening is the Democrats are watching, on television, in this case, probably better than reading it — because you visually see what’s going on at the border. And all of the Democrats that have made it impossible — they’ve obstructed and they’ve resisted — they’ve made it impossible to do anything because the immigration laws are so bad.

And I could sit down with Chuck Schumer and Nancy Pelosi, and in one hour I could have an agreement done that would solve all of the things that you're watching that are so vicious and violent, where soldiers from Mexico are being injured, badly, by people. And I could solve this in one hour with Nancy Pelosi and Chuck Schumer. But they don't want to, but I think now they do, because I think it's a terrible political point for Democrats.

QUESTION: (Inaudible) consider completely sealing off the border, like having no one be allowed to (inaudible)?

THE PRESIDENT: I would call in military and I would seal off the border. I would close up the border. If that happens, and if that continues to move forward, the caravan we're talking about — which is, I think, a manmade caravan, if you want to know the truth; I think some bad people started that caravan. More importantly, or maybe almost as importantly, you have some very, very bad people in the caravan. You have some very tough criminal elements within the caravan.

But I will seal off the border before they come into this country, and I'll bring out our military, not our Reserves. I'll bring out our military.

"Remarks by President Trump Before Air Force One Departure," [White House](#), 15:54 EDT, 20 Oct 2018.

On the morning of 21 October 2018, the migrants had evaded the Mexican federal police, swelled to approximately 5000, and were continuing northward to the U.S. border. [Associated Press](#).

On 21 October, Trump responded to the crisis:

Full efforts are being made to stop the onslaught of illegal aliens from crossing our Souther Border. People have to apply for asylum in Mexico first, and if they fail to do that, the U.S. will turn them away. The courts are asking the U.S. to do things that are not doable!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 15:11 EDT, 21 Oct 2018.

Of course, the caravan crisis is the fault of Democrats. Trump will never blame himself for failing to persuade Congress to fund his 30-foot high wall along the Mexican border.

The Caravans are a disgrace to the Democrat Party. Change the immigration laws NOW!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 15:14 EDT, 21 Oct 2018.

In the preceding tweet, Trump said Congress should change the immigration laws "NOW!" Does Trump understand that Congress is in recess until 13 November? In an unrelated issue, on 20 October, Trump promised tax cuts *before* November, although tax cuts are not possible then, because Congress is in recess. [Washington Post](#); reprinted in [Chicago Tribune](#).

On Monday morning, 22 October, Trump issued three tweets about the caravan. His second of three tweets again blamed Democrats. His third tweet indicated he was not bluffing about reducing foreign aid to Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala.

Sadly, it looks like Mexico's Police and Military are unable to stop the Caravan heading to the Southern Border of the United States. Criminals and unknown Middle Easterners are mixed in. I have alerted Border Patrol and Military that this is a National Emergency. Must change laws!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 08:37 EDT, 22 Oct 2018. [Trump misspelled "emergency".]

Every time you see a Caravan, or people illegally coming, or attempting to come, into our Country illegally, think of and blame the Democrats for not giving us the votes to change our pathetic Immigration Laws! Remember the Midterms! So unfair to those who come in legally.

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 08:49 EDT, 22 Oct 2018.

Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador were not able to do the job of stopping people from leaving their country and coming illegally to the U.S. We will now begin cutting off, or substantially reducing, the massive foreign aid routinely given to them.

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 08:57 EDT, 22 Oct 2018.

Above, in the first tweet on 22 Oct, Trump asserted that "Middle Easterners" are included in the caravan. The [Associated Press](#) found *no* evidence to support Trump's assertion. In 2017, Trump had several failed initiatives to exclude Muslims from the USA.

At night on 22 October, Trump again attacked Democrats.

Today's Democrat Party would rather protect criminal aliens than AMERICAN CITIZENS — which is why the Democrats must be voted OUT of OFFICE!  
#JobsNotMobs <http://Vote.GOP>

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 22:30 EDT, 22 Oct 2018.

"Mobs" in the preceding tweet refers to the Republican characterization of protesters at the confirmation of Justice Kavanaugh.

On Tuesday morning, 23 October, the [Associated Press](#) tells us that the caravan has expanded to approximately 7200 people.

On 25 October, the [Washington Post](#) reported on "a caravan of phony claims from the Trump administration". Also on 25 October, the [Associated Press](#) tells us that Trump still has *no* plan for what to do when the thousands of migrants reach the U.S. border.

On Friday, 26 October, the Department of Defense announced it would send 800 soldiers to the U.S.-Mexico border. [New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#); [Wall Street Journal](#).

On Monday, 29 October, the number of soldiers to be sent to the Mexican border was increased to 5200. [Associated Press](#); [Washington Post](#); [Wall Street Journal](#).

On 26-29 October, it was reported that the number of migrants in the first caravan has dwindled from approximately 7000 to approximately 4000. Blisters on feet, sickness, exhaustion, disillusionment all take their toll on the migrants. Some of the migrants may remain in Mexico. [New York Times](#); [Associated Press](#); [Washington Post](#)(AP); [Washington Post](#)(1Nov).

On 29 October, Trump called the migrant caravan an "invasion".

Many Gang Members and some very bad people are mixed into the Caravan heading to our Southern Border. Please go back, you will not be admitted into the United States unless you go through the legal process. This is an invasion of our Country and our Military is waiting for you!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 10:41 EDT, 29 Oct 2018.

### **Trump promises to end birthright citizenship**

On 30 October, Trump was interviewed by Axios, in which Trump asserted that he could use an Executive Order to change the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, where U.S. citizenship is automatically conferred on anyone born in the USA.

President Trump plans to sign an executive order that would remove the right to citizenship for babies of non-citizens and unauthorized immigrants born on U.S. soil, he said yesterday in an exclusive interview for "Axios on HBO," a new four-part documentary news series debuting on HBO this Sunday at 6:30 p.m. ET/PT.

Why it matters: This would be the most dramatic move yet in Trump's hard-line immigration campaign, this time targeting "anchor babies" and "chain migration." And it will set off another standoff with the courts, as Trump's power to do this through executive action is debatable, to say the least.

Trump told "Axios on HBO" that he has run the idea of ending birthright citizenship by his counsel and plans to proceed with the highly controversial move, which certainly will face legal challenges.

- "It was always told to me that you needed a constitutional amendment. Guess what? You don't," Trump said, declaring he can do it by executive order.
- When told that's very much in dispute, Trump replied: "You can definitely do it with an Act of Congress. But now they're saying I can do it just with an executive order."
- "We're the only country in the world where a person comes in and has a baby, and the baby is essentially a citizen of the United States ... with all of those benefits," Trump continued. "It's ridiculous. It's ridiculous. And it has to end." (More than 30 countries, most in the Western Hemisphere, provide birthright citizenship.)
- "It's in the process. It'll happen ... with an executive order."

Jonathan Swan & Stef W. Kight, "Exclusive: Trump targeting birthright citizenship with executive order," [Axios](#), 30 Oct 2018.

See also: [New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#); [Associated Press](#)(fact-check); [Fact Check](#).

On 31 October 2018, Trump again asserted that he could use an Executive Order to



extinguish U.S. citizenship for people born in the USA when their parents were *not* U.S. citizens.

THE PRESIDENT: Birthright citizenship is a very, very important subject. In my opinion, it's much less complex than people think. I think it says it very loud and clear in the Constitution that you don't have to go through the process of whatever they're talking about. And, by the way, this is not a Constitutional amendment. You don't need a Constitutional amendment for birthright citizenship.

QUESTION: Who told you that?

THE PRESIDENT: I believe that you can have a simple vote in Congress, or it's even possible, in my opinion — this is after meeting with some very talented legal scholars — that you can do it through an executive order. Now, I'd rather do it through Congress, because that's permanent. But we can certainly do it through — I really believe we can do it through executive order.

....

With that being said, I think Congress will ultimately act, but I may very well do it by executive order. Just so you understand: A person comes in, was never in our country before, has a baby, and now, all of a sudden, the baby is a United States citizen. And through chain migration and other things, many other people come in, through the baby. It's ridiculous.

"Remarks by President Trump Before Marine One Departure," [White House](#), 31 Oct 2018.

I am astounded that Trump believes he can amend the U.S. Constitution with an Executive Order. The U.S. Constitution (at Article 5) specifies the ways the Constitution can be amended, and an Executive Order is *not* mentioned in the Constitution.

It is not entirely clear whether Trump is recently talking so much about immigration (1) because he intends to excite his followers to vote in the 6 Nov election or (2) because he sincerely believes in this proposed immigration reform. The fact is that, nearly two years into the Trump presidency, Trump has been unable to persuade Congress to vote for Trump's immigration reforms.

Trump's stupid promise to end birthright citizenship with an Executive Order faded away after the 6 Nov election, and was forgotten in December 2018.

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### **Trump's concern about the migrant caravan was pure politics**

On 2 November, the [Associated Press](#) exposed the factual errors in Trump's hyperbole about immigration.

On the afternoon of 8 November, the [Washington Post](#) noticed that Trump had not mentioned the migrant caravan since the 6 Nov election. Before the election, the caravan was a frequent topic of Trump's public speeches. This change might indicate that Trump's mention of the migrant caravan was pure politics. On the other hand, the migrants are currently resting in

Mexico City, and demanding free bus travel to the U.S. border.

Again on 13 November, the [Associated Press](#) noticed that Trump had stopped talking about the migrant caravan after the 6 November election. On 13 Nov, the migrants are currently approaching the U.S. border at Tijuana and a few migrants are already in Tijuana.

On 14 November, the [New York Times](#) published a news article about Trump forgetting about the migrant caravan: “There was little dispute, even before Election Day, that Mr. Trump was exploiting the caravan for political purposes.”

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### **Trump threatens government shutdown**

On 15 November, in a meeting with Republicans from the U.S. Congress, Trump said if his wall along the Mexican border is not funded, then he might shut down the government on 7 Dec. Trump wants at least \$5 billion for construction of his wall during 2019. Democrats have agreed to only \$1.6 billion for construction of Trump's wall in 2019. [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#).

On 17 November, Trump told journalists:

QUESTION: Mr. President, are you going to shutdown if don't get funding for your border wall?

THE PRESIDENT: We're talking about the boarding wall — the border wall. We're talking about quite a big sum of money, about \$5 billion. And I think, probably, if I were ever going to do a shutdown over border security — when you look at the caravan, when you look at the mess, when you look at the people coming in — this would be a very good time to do a shutdown.

I don't think it's going to be necessary because I think the Democrats will come to their senses. And they don't come to their senses, we will continue to win elections. "Remarks by President Trump Before Marine One Departure," [White House](#), 07:25 EST, 17 Nov 2018.

See also: [Washington Post](#).

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### **Trump criticizes liberal judges**

On 9 November 2018, Trump announced a change in rules that would ban illegal immigrants from applying for asylum in the USA. [White House](#)("fact sheet"); [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#).

Trump's rule change is *not* an Executive Order, but was published at 83 Federal Register 55934 (9 Nov 2018).

On Monday night, 19 November 2018, a U.S. District Court judge in San Francisco granted a temporary restraining order that prohibits the Government from enforcing Trump's rule

change. The judge declared: “Whatever the scope of the President’s authority, he may not rewrite the immigration laws to impose a condition that Congress has expressly forbidden.” [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#). Trump unilaterally attempted to ignore words in a federal statute, 28 U.S.C. § 1158(a). It is elementary law that the president can *not* rewrite statutes, only Congress can do that. Trump's attempt shows his ignorance of law.

Sarah Sanders, Trump's press secretary, issued a statement about the judge's temporary restraining order:

At this very moment, massive numbers of aliens are arriving at our southern border, threatening to incapacitate our already overwhelmed immigration system. Yet now, a single district judge has issued a nationwide temporary restraining order preventing the executive branch from performing its Constitutional duty to enforce our borders and control entry into the United States. This decision will open the floodgates, inviting countless illegal aliens to pour into our country on the American taxpayer’s dime. The court’s ruling is contrary to well-established Federal law, the Attorney General’s and Secretary of Homeland Security’s discretion under the Immigration and Nationality Act, and the President’s own Constitutional and statutory authority. This temporary injunction is yet another example of activist judges imposing their open borders policy preferences, which are rejected by the overwhelming majority of the American people, and interfering with the executive branch’s authority to administer the immigration system in a manner that ensures the Nation’s safety, security, and the rule of law. We will take all necessary action to defend the executive branch’s lawful response to the crisis at our southern border.

Sarah Sanders, "Statement from the Press Secretary," [White House](#), 20 Nov 2018.

Trump reacted to the judge's ruling, just before Trump departed from the White House for the Thanksgiving holiday at Trump's resort at Mar-A-Lago in Florida.

QUESTION: What is your reaction to the fact that your asylum policy has been put on hold?

THE PRESIDENT: The which policy?

QUESTION: Your asylum policy has been put on hold.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, you go the 9th Circuit and it’s a disgrace. And I’m going to put in a major complaint because you cannot win — if you’re us — a case in the 9th Circuit and I think it’s a disgrace.

When people file — every case gets filed in the 9th Circuit because they know — that’s not law. That’s not what this country stands for. Every case that gets filed in the 9th Circuit, we get beaten. And then we end up having to go to the Supreme Court, like the travel ban, and we won.

The 9th Circuit — we’re going to have to look at that. Because every case, no matter where it is, they file it — practically, I mean practically — for all intents and purposes — they file it in what’s called the 9th Circuit. This was an Obama judge. And I’ll tell you what, it’s not going to happen like this anymore.

Everybody that wants to sue the United States, they file their case in — almost — they file their case in the 9th Circuit. And it means an automatic loss no matter what you do, no matter how good your case is.

And the 9th Circuit is really something we have to take a look at because it's — because it's not fair. People should not be allowed to immediately run to this very friendly circuit and file their case. And you people know better than anybody what's happening. It's a disgrace.

In my opinion, it's a disgrace what happens with the 9th Circuit. We will win that case in the Supreme Court of the United States.

"Remarks by President Trump Before Marine One Departure," [White House](#), 15:11 EST, 20 Nov 2018.

My comment is that, while it is true that the Ninth Circuit has many liberal judges, it is also true that the Ninth Circuit has a border between Mexico and both California and Arizona, where many illegal immigrants enter the USA. Filing a Complaint in the jurisdiction where the problem occurs is routine litigation procedure. Trump criticized the Ninth Circuit, which is an appellate court, while the judge who issued the temporary restraining order is a judge in a U.S. District Court, which is a trial court. But the real issue here is that Trump is being very disrespectful of the judiciary.

John Roberts, the Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, issued a statement that was an extraordinary rebuke of Trump's remarks about the Ninth Circuit and so-called "Obama judges". I looked at the Supreme Court's website on 24 November, but I could not find the text of Roberts' statement. A search of Google likewise did not return a link to the full-text of Roberts' statement. Here is what CNN quoted:

We do not have Obama judges or Trump judges, 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.

John Roberts, quoted by Eli Watkins & Joan Biskupic, "Trump slams chief justice after Roberts chides the President," [CNN](#), 21 Nov 2018.  
Same at [New York Times](#).

Trump used Twitter to reply to Chief Justice Roberts:

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. It would be great if the 9th Circuit was indeed an "independent judiciary," but if it is why.....

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 15:51 EST, 21 Nov 2018.

.....are so many opposing view (on Border and Safety) cases filed there, and why are a vast number of those cases overturned. Please study the numbers, they are shocking. We need protection and security — these rulings are making our country unsafe! Very dangerous and unwise!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 16:09 EST, 21 Nov 2018.

"79% of these decisions have been overturned in the 9th Circuit." @FoxNews A terrible, costly and dangerous disgrace. It has become a dumping ground for certain lawyers looking for easy wins and delays. Much talk over dividing up the 9th Circuit into 2 or 3 Circuits. Too big!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 17:17 EST, 21 Nov 2018.

Justice Roberts can say what he wants, but the 9th Circuit is a complete & total disaster. It is out of control, has a horrible reputation, is overturned more than any Circuit in the Country, 79%, & is used to get an almost guaranteed result. Judges must not Legislate Security...

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:21 EST, 22 Nov 2018.

....and Safety at the Border, or anywhere else. They know nothing about it and are making our Country unsafe. Our great Law Enforcement professionals MUST BE ALLOWED TO DO THEIR JOB! If not there will be only bedlam, chaos, injury and death. We want the Constitution as written!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:30 EST, 22 Nov 2018.

Our highly trained security professionals are not allowed to do their job on the Border because of the Judicial Activism and Interference by the 9th Circuit. Nevertheless, they are working hard to make America a safer place, though hard to do when anybody filing a lawsuit wins!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 18:07 EST, 22 Nov 2018.

Republicans and Democrats MUST come together, finally, with a major Border Security package, which will include funding for the Wall. After 40 years of talk, it is finally time for action. Fix the Border, for once and for all, NOW!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:41 EST, 23 Nov 2018.

News articles on Trump's reaction to the temporary restraining order, including Trump's reaction to criticism by Chief Justice Roberts:

- "Roberts, Trump spar in extraordinary scrap over judges," [Associated Press](#), 21 Nov 2018.
- "Rebuking Trump's criticism of 'Obama judge,' Chief Justice Roberts defends judiciary as 'independent'," [Washington Post](#), 21 Nov 2018.
- "Chief Justice Defends Judicial Independence After Trump Attacks 'Obama Judge'," [New York Times](#), 21 Nov 2018.
- "Trump slams chief justice after Roberts chides the President," [CNN](#) 21 Nov 2018.
- "AP FACT CHECK: Trump's judicial comments appear misinformed," [Associated Press](#), 23 Nov 2018.

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**Trump's continuing shutdown threat**

On Saturday, 24 November, the [Washington Post](#) reported that Trump made a deal with Mexican President-elect Andrés Manuel López Obrador that migrants will stay on the Mexican side of the border.

Migrants at the Southern Border will not be allowed into the United States until their claims are individually approved in court. We only will allow those who come into our Country legally. Other than that our very strong policy is Catch and Detain. No "Releasing" into the U.S...

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 18:49 EST, 24 Nov 2018.

....All will stay in Mexico. If for any reason it becomes necessary, we will CLOSE our Southern Border. There is no way that the United States will, after decades of abuse, put up with this costly and dangerous situation anymore!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 18:56 EST, 24 Nov 2018.

But on 25 November, the [Associated Press](#) reported that the incoming Mexican government denied making a deal with Trump.

On Sunday, 25 November, some of the migrants proved that Trump was correct about criminals amongst the migrant caravan. Some of the hispanic criminals threw rocks at the U.S. Border Patrol. As the hispanic criminals attempted to illegally enter the USA, the U.S. Border Patrol fired tear gas at the criminals. [Associated Press](#); [Union-Tribune](#) in San Diego; [Washington Post](#).

On Monday, 26 November, Trump tweeted:

Mexico should move the flag waving Migrants, many of whom are stone cold criminals, back to their countries. Do it by plane, do it by bus, do it anyway you want, but they are NOT coming into the U.S.A. We will close the Border permanently if need be. Congress, fund the WALL!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 06:19 EST, 26 Nov 2018.

On 26-28 November, Trump again threatened to shut down the U.S. Government if Congress did not authorize \$5 billion for the construction of Trump's wall along the Mexican border before 8 Dec 2018. [Washington Post](#)(26Nov); [New York Times](#)(27Nov); [Politico](#)(28Nov); [Fox News](#)(28Nov).

On the night of 30 November 2018, former president George Herbert Walker Bush died. Although Bush is scheduled to be buried on 6 December, Congress immediately proposed a one-week extension for the federal budget. The proposed new budget deadline may be midnight 14 Dec. [Washington Post](#). [The Hill](#) reports that failure to agree on funding for Trump's wall could cause a shutdown of the Government. Congress is scheduled to adjourn for the Christmas holiday on 14 Dec, which makes further extensions difficult. A new Congress, including those elected on 6 Nov, will convene in early January 2019. Democrats will have a majority in the House in January, making it even more difficult for Trump to obtain funding for his wall.

On 3 December, Congress intends to extend the budget deadline until 21 December. [Washington Post](#).

On 6 December, the day after G.H.W. Bush's funeral, both the House and Senate passed short-term funding bills that extend the deadline until midnight 21 December. Also on 6 Dec, Nancy Pelosi, the leader of the Democrats in the House, publicly rejected funding for Trump's "immoral, ineffective and expensive" wall. [Washington Post](#); [Associated Press](#).

On 7 December, Trump signed the short-term funding bill. [Washington Post](#). That postpones Trump's threat of a government shutdown until 21 December.

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### Another Error by Trump

On Tuesday morning, 4 December 2018, Trump tweeted a good reason to build his wall, except that his fact about illegal immigration costing the USA \$250 billion/year is *wrong*.

Could somebody please explain to the Democrats (we need their votes) that our Country losses 250 Billion Dollars a year on illegal immigration, not including the terrible drug flow. Top Border Security, including a Wall, is \$25 Billion. Pays for itself in two months. Get it done!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 11:22 EST, 4 Dec 2018.

Trump misspelt "losses", it should have been "loses". As usual, Trump does *not* cite a source for his alleged fact of \$250 billion/year in loss. The [Associated Press](#) reported "it remained unclear Tuesday where Trump had found that number, which is dramatically higher than previous estimates." Finally, it is *not* clear why Trump says the wall "pays for itself in two months". If one takes the estimated \$25 billion cost of the wall and divides that into the erroneous \$250 billion/year cost of illegal immigration, the wall seems to pay for itself in 1.2 months. [PolitiFact](#) also found Trump's \$250 billion/year cost was false, and at least twice credible estimates.

On Tuesday, 11 December 2018, Trump was scheduled to meet with the leaders of Democrats in the House and Senate, Nancy Pelosi and Chuck Schumer.

.....I look forward to my meeting with Chuck Schumer & Nancy Pelosi. In 2006, Democrats voted for a Wall, and they were right to do so. Today, they no longer want Border Security. They will fight it at all cost, and Nancy must get votes for Speaker. But the Wall will get built...

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:30 EST, 11 Dec 2018.

....People do not yet realize how much of the Wall, including really effective renovation, has already been built. If the Democrats do not give us the votes to secure our Country, the Military will build the remaining sections of the Wall. They know how important it is!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:42 EST, 11 Dec 2018.

The Truth is that *none* of Trump's wall has been built, because Congress has not allocated funds for the construction of Trump's wall. (See, e.g., [Associated Press](#); [New York Times](#).) Trump continues to lie to the American people about the construction of his wall. The [Washington Post](#) listed Trump's false claim about ongoing construction of his wall as one of Trump's 14 most frequent false statements. Existing fences and walls are being repaired, but



construction has not begun on Trump's proposed wall.

Trump threatens to have the military build his wall. That seems like an attempt to thwart the will of Congress, something that will anger Congress.

On 11 December, Nancy Pelosi and Chuck Schumer met with Trump in the White House. In a sign that this meeting was more theater than serious negotiation, Trump allowed television cameras to be present for the first 18 minutes of the meeting. Predictably, the parties were intransigent. The Democrats offered to allocate \$1.3 billion for "border security", *none* of which could be spent on Trump's wall. Trump declared he would shut down the U.S. Government at midnight on 21 Dec, unless Congress allocated at least \$5 billion for construction of part of Trump's wall. As a side issue, it is unknown whether Trump has enough votes in the House to pass a bill containing \$5 billion for Trump's wall. [White House](#); [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [Associated Press](#); [Associated Press](#)(fact-check); [CNN](#).

On 11 December, an Islamic terrorist attacked a Christmas market in Strasbourg France. (See the description in my [essay](#) on Syria and Islamic terrorism.) Trump reacted to this Islamic terrorist attack with one tweet:

Another very bad terror attack in France. We are going to strengthen our borders even more. Chuck and Nancy must give us the votes to get additional Border Security!  
Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:34 EST, 12 Dec 2018.

I personally support Trump's proposed wall along the Mexican border, but Trump makes a weak argument for his wall with the above tweet about an Islamic terrorist attack in France. If one takes Trump literally, he is saying a wall along the U.S./Mexican border will prevent Islamic terrorists from France from entering the USA. What Trump is probably trying to say is that *all* immigrants bring crime, poverty, and disease — which is blatantly false. One of Trump's flaws is that he does *not* know how to persuade intelligent people to support his proposals.

Congress took a long weekend: adjourned on Thursday, 13 December and will reconvene on mid-day Monday, 17 December. Congress is waiting for Trump to make an offer. (The House website says the House will reconvene at 11:30 on 17 December, while the Associated Press says "The House is taking an extended five-day weekend, returning Wednesday [19 Dec] night.") [Associated Press](#); [Washington Post](#)(AP).

On 15 December 2018, an [Associated Press](#) fact-check exposed Trump's erroneous facts about immigrants with contagious diseases, arresting ten terrorists in the migrant caravan, Mexico paying for the wall, and Trump's continuing false claim that parts of his wall have already been built.

On Monday, 17 December 2018, Congress is waiting to hear Trump's plan, but Trump is silent. Trump has *not* met with Democrats about funding for his wall since 11 December. Trump has *not* responded to two written proposals that Senator Schumer submitted last week. [Politico](#); [The Hill](#); [Associated Press](#); [Washington Post](#). My comment is that this is an appalling lack of leadership by Trump.

On Tuesday, 18 December 2018, White House Press Spokeswoman, Sarah Sanders, backed away from shutting down part of the U.S. Government on Saturday. Sanders said: "We're disappointed in the fact that [the Senate has] yet to actually vote on something and pass something." Sanders mentioned unspecified "other options" to fund Trump's wall.

[White House](#)(transcript); [Washington Post](#); [Associated Press](#); [Politico](#).

On the night of 19 December, the U.S. Senate passed a continuing resolution that would fund the Government through 8 February 2019. The Senate's bill contains *zero* money for Trump's wall. [NBC News](#); [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#).

On 19 December, there was a chorus of conservative political commentators who objected to Congress yet again postponing funding of Trump's wall. Ann Coulter called Trump "gutless" and said Trump's presidency was "a joke presidency that scammed the American people." Coulter went on to say that if Trump did not build the wall, then she would not support Trump's re-election in 2020. [Daily Caller](#); [Associated Press](#); [The Hill](#); [Fox News](#). In addition to Coulter's articulate expression, there was support for a shutdown from Rush Limbaugh, Breitbart, Matt Drudge, and Sean Hannity. [Politico](#); [Limbaugh](#)(18Dec).

That criticism of Trump by conservative commentators may have motivated Trump to announce on 20 December he would veto the Senate's continuing resolution, because it contained no appropriations for his wall. Unfortunately, Friday, 21 December, is the last day for Congress to avoid a shutdown. [The Hill](#); [Washington Post](#); [Associated Press](#).

On the night of 20 December 2018, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a spending bill that includes \$ 5.7 billion for Trump's wall. The vote in the House was 217 for and 185 against. *All* of the Democrats voted against Trump's wall.

On Friday, 21 December 2018, Trump issued a series of tweets about his threat to shut down the Government if his proposed wall is not partly funded.

The Democrats, whose votes we need in the Senate, will probably vote against Border Security and the Wall even though they know it is DESPERATELY NEEDED. If the Dems vote no, there will be a shutdown that will last for a very long time. People don't want Open Borders and Crime!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:24 EST, 21 Dec 2018.

Shutdown today if Democrats do not vote for Border Security!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:31 EST, 21 Dec 2018.

The Democrats now own the shutdown!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 10:07 EST, 21 Dec 2018.

Trump is factually wrong again. On 11 December, after some goading by Senator Chuck Schumer, Trump declared:

I am proud to shut down the government for border security, Chuck, because the people of this country don't want criminals and people that have lots of problems and drugs pouring into our country. So I will take the mantle. I will be the one to shut it down. I'm not going to blame you for it.

"Remarks by President Trump in Meeting with Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer and House Speaker-Designate Nancy Pelosi," [White House](#), 11 Dec 2018.

Actually, there are *two* guilty parties here. First, Trump issued an ultimatum to fund at least \$5 billion for his proposed wall, or Trump would shut down part of the U.S. Government. While I personally support Trump's wall, Trump's ultimatum is the *wrong* way to operate the Government. Second, the Democrats are intransigently opposed to any funding for Trump's wall, which is another wrong way to operate the Government.

On Friday morning, Senator Schumer — leader of the Democrats in the Senate — declared the House's funding bill to be dead on arrival in the Senate. [Washington Post](#); [The Hill](#).

With neither Trump nor the Democratic leadership willing to compromise, part of the U.S. Government shut down at midnight Friday, 21 December 2018. My opinion is that the Democrats should see the \$5.7 billion as the price of avoiding a shutdown, and stop focusing on Trump's wall.

Incidentally, on the night of 23 December, I looked at the House of Representatives homepage. Clicking on a link to "recent votes" returned a 13 Dec vote as the most recent, although it is 10 days old. Congress is doing a poor job on keeping itself and citizens informed of text and technical details of proposed legislation.

Trump's proposed wall in 2016-2017 was a concrete wall that had a height of 30 feet. On 18 Dec, Trump revealed a new design that had steel slats:

The Democrats, are saying loud and clear that they do not want to build a Concrete Wall — but we are not building a Concrete Wall, we are building artistically designed steel slats, so that you can easily see through it....

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 20:13 EST, 18 Dec 2018.

On 21 Dec 2018, Trump tweeted a sketch of the new design that had parallel steel slats.

A design of our Steel Slat Barrier which is totally effective while at the same time beautiful!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 17:14 EST, 21 Dec 2018.

An advantage of the "steel slat barrier" is that law enforcement on the U.S. side of the wall can see illegal immigrants on the Mexican side. One wonders if the "steel slat barrier" will withstand strong winds (e.g., hurricane) better than a solid concrete wall. Steel slat barriers were amongst the prototypes tested in 2017. [NBC News](#) revealed that it was easy to cut through the steel slats.

### **22 Dec 2018: The Trump/Pelosi/Schumer Shutdown**

On Saturday, 22 December, the House recessed at noon and most members returned to their home state. Also on Saturday, the Senate adjourned at 15:17. The Senate will reconvene on Thursday, 27 December. Those decisions probably mean that an end to the shutdown comes *after* 27 December, and maybe after the new Congress convenes on 3 January 2019.

[Associated Press](#); [Washington Post](#); [CBS News](#).

On 22 December, Trump issued a pair of tweets that mixed two unrelated issues:

I am in the White House, working hard. News reports concerning the Shutdown and Syria are mostly FAKE. We are negotiating with the Democrats on desperately needed Border Security (Gangs, Drugs, Human Trafficking & more) but it could be a long stay. On Syria, we were originally...

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 11:18 EST, 22 Dec 2018.

....going to be there for three months, and that was seven years ago — we never left. When I became President, ISIS was going wild. Now ISIS is largely defeated and other local countries, including Turkey, should be able to easily take care of whatever remains. We're coming home!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 11:30 EST, 22 Dec 2018.

Trump mentioned wrong facts in his second tweet. Obama ordered the first 50 U.S. troops into Syria in Oct 2015, *not* "seven years ago".

On 24 December, Trump alleged that he had issued a contract for another 115 miles of his wall.

I am in the Oval Office & just gave out a 115 mile long contract for another large section of the Wall in Texas. We are already building and renovating many miles of Wall, some complete. Democrats must end Shutdown and finish funding. Billions of Dollars, & lives, will be saved!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 17:24 EST, 24 Dec 2018.

On 26 December, while in Iraq, Trump told journalists about issuing a contract for 115 miles of wall.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, you know — as you know, we've already built a lot of wall. We're building a lot more, you know, just through the normal budget. And we fixed a tremendous amount of wall — many miles. Sarah can give you the numbers. Sarah Sanders can give you the numbers. But we've fixed a lot of wall, and we've renovated it. It's very, very good. It's as good as new. And, you know, many, many miles of that.

And we've also built new wall a lot. But we just gave out a contract that, when it's all completed out, it'll be 115 miles. That's a lot. We're talking about 500 to 550 miles. And this will be — just this one contract is 115. I'm going there — I assume you're coming with me — on probably the end of January, a little bit before the State of the Union. I think we're going to do it before the State of the Union Address. I'll be going to Texas, and we're going to be sort of having a long — we'll have a long groundbreaking, because it covers a lot of territory. But we're going to have a groundbreaking for the wall.

"Remarks by President Trump in Briefing at Al Asad Air Base | Al Anbar Province, Iraq," [White House](#), 26 Dec 2018.

What is Trump talking about? Trump does *not* issue contracts, especially for items *not* in a budget approved by Congress. Any contract for Trump's wall would come from the Department of Homeland Security. Congress has approved funding for *none* of Trump's wall. See, e.g., [Associated Press](#). Trump is delusional again. Note that Trump's tweet literally said that the contract itself has a length of 115 miles.

On the morning of 27 December, Trump asserted that most of the U.S. Government employees affected by the shutdown were Democrats. Trump offered *no* evidence for his assertion, so we should assume that Trump simply imagined this alleged "fact".

Have the Democrats finally realized that we desperately need Border Security and a Wall on the Southern Border. Need to stop Drugs, Human Trafficking, Gang Members & Criminals from coming into our Country. Do the Dems realize that most of the people not getting paid are Democrats?

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:06 EST, 27 Dec 2018.

This concern about government employees furloughed without pay, and essential government employees working without pay, is propaganda. In past shutdowns — and surely also in this current shutdown — when Congress ends the shutdown, Congress will retroactively pay the government employees.

On Friday morning, 28 December, Trump issued a series of four tweets about his threat to close the U.S./Mexican border if Democrats do not fund Trump's wall. Also, Trump added a demand that the Democrats in Congress vote to change the immigration statutes.

We will be forced to close the Southern Border entirely if the Obstructionist Democrats do not give us the money to finish the Wall & also change the ridiculous immigration laws that our Country is saddled with. Hard to believe there was a Congress & President who would approve!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:16 EST, 28 Dec 2018.

....The United States loses sooooo much money on Trade with Mexico under NAFTA, over 75 Billion Dollars a year (not including Drug Money which would be many times that amount), that I would consider closing the Southern Border a "profit making operation." We build a Wall or.....

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:42 EST, 28 Dec 2018.

In the preceding tweet, too bad Trump did not learn the difference between "loses" and "loses" when he was in school.

.....close the Southern Border. Bring our car industry back into the United States where it belongs. Go back to pre-NAFTA, before so many of our companies and jobs were so foolishly sent to Mexico. Either we build (finish) the Wall or we close the Border.....

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:49 EST, 28 Dec 2018.

.....Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador are doing nothing for the United States but taking our money. Word is that a new Caravan is forming in Honduras and they are doing nothing about it. We will be cutting off all aid to these 3 countries — taking advantage of U.S. for years!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 08:06 EST, 28 Dec 2018.

The U.S. House of Representatives held a two-minute session on 27 Dec, then adjourned until 31 Dec 2018. The Senate convened for three minutes on 27 Dec, then adjourned until a pro forma session on 31 Dec 2018. With most Congress members in their home state for the holidays, there is little hope of solving the shutdown problem until after 3 Jan 2019.

Trump canceled his plans to spend Christmas and New Year's at his resort in Mar-A-Lago Florida. Trump futilely waited in the White House for Democrats in Congress to come negotiate with him.

I am all alone (poor me) in the White House waiting for the Democrats to come back and make a deal on desperately needed Border Security. At some point the Democrats not wanting to make a deal will cost our Country more money than the Border Wall we are all talking about. Crazy!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 12:32 EST, 24 Dec 2018.

I am in the White House waiting for the Democrats to come on over and make a deal on Border Security. From what I hear, they are spending so much time on Presidential Harassment that they have little time left for things like stopping crime and our military!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 10:52 EST, 29 Dec 2018.

On the morning of 31 December, Trump tweeted that Democrats should immediately return to Washington, DC and vote for Trump's wall.

I campaigned on Border Security, which you cannot have without a strong and powerful Wall. Our Southern Border has long been an "Open Wound," where drugs, criminals (including human traffickers) and illegals would pour into our Country.

Dems should get back here and fix now!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 08:29 EST, 31 Dec 2018.

I'm in the Oval Office. Democrats, come back from vacation now and give us the votes necessary for Border Security, including the Wall. You voted yes in 2006 and 2013. One more yes, but with me in office, I'll get it built, and Fast!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 10:37 EST, 31 Dec 2018.

On 1 Jan 2019, Trump begged the Democrats to make a deal.

Border Security and the Wall "thing" and Shutdown is not where Nancy Pelosi wanted to start her tenure as Speaker! Let's make a deal?

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 14:02 EST, 1 Jan 2019.

On 30 December 2018, during an interview with the [Los Angeles Times](#), White House chief of staff John Kelly revealed that "But we left a solid concrete wall early on in the administration, when we asked people what they needed and where they needed it." That means the word "barrier" is more appropriate than "wall". [Associated Press](#); [New York Times](#); [Fox News](#).

On 30 December 2018, Trump falsely asserted that there was a 10-foot wall around Obama's house in Washington, DC.

President and Mrs. Obama built/has a ten foot Wall around their D.C. mansion/compound. I agree, totally necessary for their safety and security. The U.S. needs the same thing, slightly larger version!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 16:59 EST, 30 Dec 2018.



The 10-foot wall around Obama's house is complete fiction. There is an ordinary chain-link fence in front of Obama's house, but *no* wall. *The Washington Post* notes that "the front steps [of Obama's house] are open to the sidewalk." Obama does *not* live in a "compound". This is another example of a delusional Trump living in an alternative reality. [Washington Post](#); [The Hill](#).

Trump's delusion about the wall around Obama's house was debunked by *The Washington Post*. Despite the revelation of Truth, three days later Trump repeated his false statements about the wall around Obama's house at a Cabinet meeting.

There's a reason why politicians and wealthy people build walls around their houses and their compounds. President Obama recently built a wall around his compound.

There's a reason for it. And I don't blame him.

"Remarks by President Trump in Cabinet Meeting," [White House](#), 12:04 EST, 2 Jan 2019.

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## How Trump makes decisions

A number of commentators have observed that Trump tends to adopt the position of the last person who Trump hears on an issue. See, e.g.,

You can say this for President Trump: Unlike most other politicians, he's totally at peace with changing his mind at any given moment, with very little explanation.

We've also noticed that some of his biggest flip-flops on a key issue of his issue happen immediately after he's talked to a person directly involved on the other side. Amber Phillips, "Want to change Trump's mind on policy? Be the last one who talks to him." [Washington Post](#), 28 April 2017.

... [Trump] is so prone to having his mind changed that any Friend of Canada in the Oval Office, be it Ivanka or someone else, is liable to have her work undone by the next person to brief him, or by a talking head on Fox News.

Many people who have dealt with Mr. Trump report that his position on an issue tends to align with that of the last person he spoke to.

"Globe editorial: When at the NAFTA table, avoid the Jell-O," [Globe&Mail](#), 22 Jan 2018.

... the picture that emerged over the weekend, some Democrats who met with the president were part of saying this, Senator Lindsey Graham [R-S.Car.], that the president was there, but he was basically listening to the last person he talked to, that he would say one thing to a senator, I agree with you, and then he would be swayed by his staff members who have a much more restrictionist view of immigration than he does. Judy Woodruff, "Trump 'willing to have a conversation about citizenship' for DACA recipients, says White House official" [PBS](#), 22 Jan 2018.

See U.S. Senator's Sasse's remarks on 28 Feb 2018, quoted [above](#).

This method leads to Trump taking inconsistent and incoherent positions, as he listens to different people at different times. Because Trump reads very little, and because Trump has a



tenuous understanding of facts, Trump is vulnerable to being influenced by people who he hears.

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## Conclusion

In retrospect, toleration of Trump began to decline on 21 Aug 2018 when his former personal attorney, Michael Cohen, pled [guilty](#) and implicated Trump in two felonies. Toleration of Trump declined again on 4 September 2018, when journalists reported on advance copies of Woodward's [book](#). And on 5 September, an anonymous senior government official wrote a devastating [op-ed](#) in *The New York Times*. In December 2018, when Mueller filed documents in court for the sentencing of Cohen and Manafort, more information became public about Trump's possible criminal acts.

If Trump were simply careless with facts, one would expect approximately half of his alleged facts to weaken his argument. But *all* of Trump's alleged facts are in the direction of improving his reputation or making a stronger argument for his desired change. That suggests Trump is deliberately citing wrong facts. To be blunt about it, Trump is a habitual liar.

There are four ways that Trump misuses facts:

1. Apparently, Trump decides on his opinion, then creates fictitious "facts" to support his opinion. When one ignores Trump's fictitious "facts", Trump's assertions have *no* factual basis. That makes Trump's opinions based on fantasy or delusions.
2. Sometimes Trump relies on "facts" asserted by an unreliable source, usually by a guest or anonymous source on the Fox News channel. Repeating false facts shows a lack of critical thinking by Trump, and a failure to have his staff check the alleged facts before the president repeats those false facts.
3. Additionally, Trump creates fictitious "facts" to boast about a strong majority admiration for him, which some psychiatrists have suggested is a narcissistic character flaw.
4. When a journalist reports the Truth that embarrasses Trump, Trump condemns the journalist's report as "fake news". Trump's reaction not only dismisses the Truth, but also establishes journalists as "the enemy of the American people". By making journalists the enemy, Trump establishes himself as the champion of the American people.

Each of these four misuses of facts is a defect in Trump's thought process.

Worse, months after journalists have exposed the errors in Trump's so-called "facts". Trump continues to cite the same discredited "facts". Trump's refusal to learn from his mistakes shows his disdain for the Truth.

Furthermore, I presented examples of Trump making an inflammatory accusation without

citing any facts (not even citing fictitious "facts"), and without citing any sources. At colleges with decent academic standards, students are required to write term papers with footnotes and a bibliography, to teach the students how to think like an educated person. Assertions without reasons are worthless. Trump is clearly unfit to be president when he can not distinguish fact from fiction.

Trump repeatedly asserted that journalists are failing to report important news (e.g., voting fraud, Islamic terror attacks, high murder rate in the USA). As journalists exposed Trump's errors and mistakes, Trump responded by repeatedly characterized journalists as "dishonest" and providers of "fake news". Trump's war with the news media is not only unbecoming to the president, but also gives journalists incentive to expose Trump's factual errors.

A number of commentators have observed that Trump tends to adopt the position of the last person who Trump hears on an issue. See [above](#). This method leads to Trump taking inconsistent or incoherent positions, as he hears different people at different times.

In my opinion, it is incredibly dangerous to have a president of the USA — in charge of a powerful military with a large arsenal of nuclear weapons — who has a defective thought process.

I believe Trump is unfit to be president, because he can not distinguish between delusions and facts. Trump should be impeached and removed from office. But that probably will not happen in 2019, because of the difficulty in finding a 2/3 majority in the U.S. Senate to convict Trump.

### **Proposed Constitutional Amendment**

The U.S. Constitution specifies only two requirements for the U.S. president: he must be born in the USA and he must be at least 35 years old. We need an Amendment to the Constitution to also specify that any candidate for president or vice-president have served either at least six years in the U.S. Senate, at least four years in the U.S. House of Representatives, *or* at least one full term as governor of any state in the USA. That requirement would have several benefits:

1. give candidates either experience at the highest levels of the U.S. Government, or experience as a governor working with a legislature.
2. develop a track record that will clearly expose candidates who are unable to work successfully in government.
3. expose candidates who have a character flaw, personality disorder, or some other condition that makes them unfit to be president.

Note that *all* of the U.S. presidents between 1961 and 2016 pass this proposed test. It is *not* an unusual test.

### **Reform Electoral College**

Additionally, Congress should consider replacing the Electoral College with direct popular vote. The Electoral College gives too much weight to states with a small population (e.g., Wyoming, Vermont). The real reason, of course, is Hillary Clinton won the popular vote in 2016.

On the other hand, perhaps a better solution is to return the Electoral College to its original purpose: voters would elect local Electors, and the Electors alone would decide who would become president and vice-president. In the 2016 election, voters in the USA had access to abundant information about Trump's narcissistic character flaw, Trump's inability to cite facts, and Trump's absolute lack of experience in government — but voters elected Trump anyway. What does that say about voters? In my opinion, Trump's victory says voters were either poorly informed or lacked critical thinking skills. That conclusion makes the direct popular vote an unreliable way of choosing a president.

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## Removal of Trump from Presidency

There are three possible ways to remove a U.S. president from office:

1. **Impeachment** by U.S. House of Representatives and conviction by U.S. Senate. (U.S. Constitution, Article I, §3, clause 6)
2. **Declaration of Inability** (U.S. Constitution, 25<sup>th</sup> Amendment, §4) by either:
  - A. the Vice-President and a majority of the Cabinet members
  - B. "or of such other body as Congress may by law provide".
3. **Resignation** by the president.

Of the three ways, in 2017 I thought resignation was the most likely for Trump. After a year or two, Trump may become frustrated with Congress and the Judiciary blocking his programs. At some point, Trump might resign and return to being a real-estate mogul. But at the end of 2018, Trump seemed to enjoy being president.

Moreover, Trump will surely become tired of relentless criticism by journalists, commentators, politicians, and opinion leaders. Trump has never before worked in a government, where criticism from someone is routine. This is also Trump's highest profile job in his 70 year life. For both reasons, Trump is experiencing high levels of stress from criticism during the years 2017 and 2018.

Back in January 2017, when I drafted the conclusion of this essay, I wondered: "It is unknown how Trump will react to the incessant criticism. However, the criticism will surely affect Trump's narcissistic craving for strong majority admiration." By July 2017 it was clear that Trump was failing as president. Trump's response was to criticize the news media for reporting his mistakes, failures, and character flaws. Trump's leadership style that was tolerable when he led a privately-owned company is now unacceptable when he is president of the USA.

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## **Bills in U.S. House of Representatives on removal of Trump**

Rather than split this section between my 2017 and 2018 essays on Trump, I am repeating here what I wrote in 2017, then adding new material in 2018.

### **6 April 2017: Raskin**

On 6 April 2017, Jamie Raskin — a former law professor at American University in Washington, DC and now a member of the U.S. House of Representatives from Maryland — filed [H.R. 1987](#) to form a commission of 8 physicians and 2 former government officials to examine Trump's fitness to be president, under the 25th Amendment.

#### **News about Raskin's bill**

- Jenna Portnoy, "Is Trump unfit to serve? This congressman has a bill for that." [Washington Post](#), 12 May 2017. (Jamie Raskin's bill.)
- John Bowden, "More Dems sign onto bill to impeach Trump," [The Hill](#), 1 July 2017. (Bill proposed by Rep. Jamie Raskin on 6 April 2017, now has 25 [co-sponsors](#).) See also [NBC News](#)(3July).

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### **12 July 2017: Sherman**

On 12 July 2017, Brad Sherman — Democrat from the San Fernando Valley, California — filed the first articles of impeachment in the U.S. House of Representatives, [House Resolution 438](#). Sherman alleged that Trump's firing of Comey obstructed justice.

#### **News about Sherman's bill**

On 12 July 2017, Brad Sherman filed the first impeachment article against Trump. [Washington Post](#); [The Hill](#).

Sherman's statement at his House website said:

Every day Democrats, Republicans, and the entire world are shocked by the latest example of America's amateur President. Ignorance accompanied by a refusal to learn. Lack of impulse control, accompanied by a refusal to have his staff control his impulses. We're no longer surprised by any action, no matter how far below the dignity of the office — and no matter how dangerous to the country.

But the Constitution does not provide for the removal of a President for impulsive, ignorant incompetence. It does provide for the removal of a President for High Crimes and Misdemeanors.

Brad Sherman, "Congressman Sherman Introduces Article of Impeachment: Obstruction of Justice," [House](#), 12 July 2017.

Sherman's statement at his House website concluded:

.... I am introducing Articles of Impeachment to begin a long process to protect our country from abuse of power, obstruction of justice, and impulsive, ignorant incompetence.

*Ibid.*

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### 18 Aug 2017: Lofgren

On 18 August 2017, Zoe Lofgren — a liberal Democrat from San Jose California — filed [House Resolution 497](#) that “urges the Vice President and the Cabinet to quickly secure the services of medical and psychiatric professionals to examine the President....”

#### News about Lofgren's bill

On 18 August 2017, Zoe Lofgren introduced a draft Resolution in the U.S. House of Representatives that called on Trump to get a psychiatric examination. [Mercury-News](#); [The Hill](#). Lofgren told *The Mercury-News* that her bill “probably will not pass, but it will stimulate a conversation”. Lofgren was wrong: there was *no* conversation as a result of her bill.

Part of Lofgren's statement at her House website said:

Does the President suffer from early stage dementia? Has the stress of office aggravated a mental illness crippling impulse control? Has emotional disorder so impaired the President that he is unable to discharge his duties? Is the President mentally and emotionally stable?

Today, U.S. Representative Zoe Lofgren (D-Calif.) introduced a resolution that urges the Vice President and Cabinet to have the President examined by medical and psychiatric professionals to assist them in determining whether the President is unfit and unable to fulfill his Constitutional duties. Section 4 of the 25th Amendment of the United States Constitution outlines this obligation.

Zoe Lofgren, "Lofgren introduces resolution urging Vice President and Cabinet to fulfill duties under 25th Amendment," [House](#), 18 August 2017.

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### 11 Oct 2017: Green

On 11 October 2017, Al Green — a Democrat from Houston, Texas — announced articles of impeachment in the U.S. House of Representatives. In a speech on the House floor, Mr. Green asserted the following grounds for impeachment:

- I. Trump has "produced a demonstrable record of inciting white supremacy, sexism, bigotry, hatred, xenophobia, race-baiting, and racism by demeaning, defaming,

disrespecting, and disparaging women and certain minorities."

- II. "Trump ... did betray his trust as President and bring shame and dishonor to the office of the Presidency by associating the majesty and dignity of the Presidency with causes rooted in White supremacy, bigotry, racism, anti-Semitism, White nationalism, and neo-Nazism"
- III. "Trump ... did engage in perfidy by making the widely reported claim that 3 to 5 million people voted illegally in the 2016 Presidential election and, further, expending tax dollars to establish a commission to investigate his claim"
- IV. "Trump ... did betray his trust as President, bringing shame and dishonor to the office of the Presidency by encouraging law enforcement officials to violate the constitutional rights of suspects in their custody and control"

Al Green, "Notice Of Intention To Offer Resolution Raising A Question Of The Privileges Of The House," 163 *Congressional Record* at H7928-30 (11 Oct 2017).

#### **News about Green's first bill**

On 11 October 2017, Al Green read his draft bill that called for the impeachment of Trump. After reading his draft articles of impeachment on the House floor, Mr. Green did *not* offer his draft bill. 163 *Congressional Record* at H7935. On the night of 1 December 2017, Mr. Green still had *not* submitted his bill for consideration. [House](#).

Part of Al Green's statement at his House website said:

Today, I rise to use the constitutionally prescribed political process of impeachment to speak truth to the most powerful man on earth, the President of the United States of America.

I do so knowing that the public has been led to believe that a President must commit a crime to be impeached, which is not true. If any President persisted with the lie that "Hitler was right," he would be, and should be, impeached not for a crime, but for betraying his trust as President.

I do so knowing that many, of my contemporaries will criticize my actions. Some will castigate me, others may desire to do something more dastardly with hopes of suppressing all embers of courage that might inflame others to speak truth to power or the powerful.

Ultimately, to again quote Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., I will do that which is "neither safe, nor politic, nor popular." I will do that which is right and let others do what they may and allow history to judge us all."

Al Green, "Congressman Al Green's Statement on Impeachment," [House](#), 11 Oct 2017.

Note that Mr. Green cites *no* authority to support his assertion that a president can be impeached for "betraying his trust as President". Mr. Green's final paragraph is self-serving praise for himself. The Democratic party leadership in the House wants to wait for the results

of the FBI investigation before considering impeachment. [Washington Post](#); [The Hill](#); [Politico](#).

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### **15 Nov 2017: Cohen**

On 15 November 2017, Steve Cohen (D-Tenn.) introduced his articles of impeachment — with co-sponsors Al Green (D-Tex.), and four other Democrats. Cohen gave a lengthy and detailed recitation of five grounds for impeachment, a small part of which is quoted here:

#### **I. OBSTRUCTION OF JUSTICE**

Trump ... has prevented, obstructed, and impeded the administration of justice, and has to that end engaged personally, and through his subordinates and agents, in a course of conduct or scheme designed to delay, impede an investigation, and to conceal information sought by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in the course of its investigation into Russian interference with the 2016 United States Presidential election, including any possible collusion between Russia and Donald J. Trump's campaign.

The means used to implement this course of conduct or scheme included one or more of the following acts:

....

In all of this, Donald J. Trump has obstructed the administration of justice. In so doing he has undermined the integrity of his office, brought disrepute on the Presidency, and betrayed his trust as President in a manner subversive of constitutional government, to the great prejudice of the cause of law and justice and to the manifest injury of the people of the United States.

Wherefore Donald J. Trump, by such conduct, warrants impeachment and trial, and removal from office.

#### **II. VIOLATION OF THE FOREIGN EMOLUMENTS CLAUSE (Article I, Section 9 Of The United States Constitution)**

In his conduct while President of the United States, Donald J. Trump, in violation of his constitutional oath to faithfully execute the office of President of the United States and, to the best of his ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States, as well as his constitutional obligation to take care that the laws be faithfully executed, accepted, without the consent of Congress emoluments from foreign states in the following manner:

- Donald J. Trump refused to divest, place into a blind trust, or otherwise give up his ownership interest in his worldwide business holdings since becoming President.



Donald J. Trump refused to release his tax returns, with the intent to conceal the exact nature of his holdings from Congress and the American people.

- Donald J. Trump acknowledged, through his personal attorney, that his businesses receive funds and make a profit from payments by foreign governments, and would continue to do so while serving as President.

....

In all of this, Donald J. Trump has undermined the integrity of his office, brought disrepute on the Presidency, and betrayed his trust as President in a manner subversive of constitutional government, against the cause of law and justice and to the manifest injury of the people of the United States.

Wherefore Donald J. Trump, by such conduct, warrants impeachment and trial, and removal from office.

### **III. VIOLATION OF THE DOMESTIC EMOLUMENTS CLAUSE (Article II, Section 1 Of The United States Constitution)**

In his conduct while President of the United States, Donald J. Trump, in violation of his constitutional oath to faithfully execute the office of President of the United States and, to the best of his ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States, as well as his constitutional obligation to take care that the laws be faithfully executed, accepted, emoluments from the United States in the following manner:

- Donald J. Trump refused to divest, place into a blind trust, or otherwise give up his ownership interest in his worldwide business holdings since becoming President.
- Donald J. Trump refused to release his tax returns, with the intent to conceal the exact nature of his holdings from Congress and the American people.
- Donald J. Trump has an ownership interest in the Mar-a-Lago Club in Palm Beach, Florida.
- Donald J. Trump has an ownership interest in the Trump National Golf Club in Bedminster, New Jersey.
- Since becoming President, Donald J. Trump has visited Mar-a-Lago in Palm Beach, Florida, at least seven times, and has visited the Trump National Golf Club in Bedminster, New Jersey, at least five times.
- ....

By accepting emoluments from the United States in the form of payments for

goods and/or services at businesses in which Donald J. Trump has an ownership interest, Donald J. Trump violated article II, section 1 of the U.S. Constitution.

In all of this, Donald J. Trump has undermined the integrity of his office, brought disrepute on the Presidency, and betrayed his trust as President in a manner subversive of constitutional government, against the cause of law and justice and to the manifest injury of the people of the United States.

Wherefore Donald J. Trump, by such conduct, warrants impeachment and trial, and removal from office.

#### **IV. ABUSE OF POWER — UNDERMINING THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE FEDERAL JUDICIARY AND THE RULE OF LAW**

In his conduct while President of the United States, Donald J. Trump, in violation of his constitutional oath to faithfully execute the office of the President of the United States and, to the best of his ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States, as well as his constitutional obligation to take care that the laws be faithfully executed, has engaged in activities that undermine the independence of the Federal judiciary.

- [citing examples of Trump's public criticism of 2 federal judges: James Robart and Gonzalo P. Curiel]
- On August 25, 2017, before Joe Arpaio had been sentenced, or his conviction had been appealed, and without consulting the Justice Department, Donald J. Trump pardoned Joe Arpaio for his commission of criminal contempt of court.

In all of this, Donald J. Trump has sought to undermine the independence of the Federal judiciary and the rule of law, repeatedly attempted to upset the careful constitutional balance of power between the judicial and executive branches. By pardoning Joe Arpaio's willful violation of a Federal court order, Donald J. Trump has offered encouragement to others to disobey Federal court orders with which Donald J. Trump may disagree. He has brought disrepute on the Presidency, and has acted in a manner subversive of constitutional government, to the great prejudice of the cause of law and justice and to the manifest injury of the people of the United States.

Wherefore Donald J. Trump, by such conduct, warrants impeachment and trial, and removal from office.

#### **V. UNDERMINING FREEDOM OF THE PRESS**

In his conduct while President of the United States, Donald J. Trump, in violation of his constitutional oath to faithfully execute the office of the President of the United States and, to the best of his ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States, as well as his constitutional obligation to take care that the laws be faithfully executed, has engaged in activities that

undermine the freedom of the press guaranteed by the First Amendment to the Constitution.

- Donald J. Trump repeatedly called press organizations “fake news” including, on February 15, 2017, when he tweeted, “The fake news media is going crazy with their conspiracy theories and blind hatred. @MSNBC & @CNN are unwatchable. @foxandfriends is great!”.
- On February 17, 2017, Donald J. Trump tweeted, “The FAKE NEWS media (failing @nytimes, @NBCNews, @ABC, @CBS, @CNN) is not my enemy, it is the enemy of the American People!”.
- Donald J. Trump has repeatedly attacked members of the press, including as a candidate on August 7, 2015, when he commented about Fox News Channel anchor and Presidential debate moderator Megyn Kelly saying, “you could see there was blood coming out of her eyes, blood coming out of her whatever”.
- On June 29, 2017, Donald J. Trump tweeted, “I heard poorly rated Morning Joe speaks badly of me (don’t watch anymore). Then how come low I.Q. Crazy Mika, along with Psycho Joe, came to Mar-a-Lago 3 nights in a row around New Year’s Eve, and insisted on joining me. She was badly bleeding from a face-lift. I said no!”.
- On July 2, 2017, Donald J. Trump tweeted “#FraudNewsCNN#FNN” and circulated a video of him violently wrestling a man covered by a CNN logo, which, according to the Reporters Committee on Freedom of the Press, was a “threat of physical violence against journalists ... [and] beneath the office of the presidency”.
- On May 10, 2017, Donald J. Trump’s White House barred American reporters from witnessing his meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and Russian Ambassador to the United States Sergey Kislyak in the Oval Office, but allowed a Russian photographer to document the meeting.
- In January 2017, Donald J. Trump’s transition team considered a plan to relocate the press corps from the White House press room to the White House Conference Center near Lafayette Square or to space in the Old Executive Office Building.
- In June 2017, Donald J. Trump’s administration prohibited video recordings of White House press briefings.
- On October 11, 2017, Donald J. Trump tweeted, “Fake @NBC News made up story that I wanted a ‘tenfold’ increase in our U.S. nuclear arsenal. Pure fiction, made up to demean. NBC=CNN!” and “With all of the Fake News coming out of NBC and the Networks at what point is it appropriate to challenge their License? Bad for country!”.

- On October 11, 2017, Donald J. Trump also tweeted, “Network news has become so partisan, distorted and fake that licenses must be challenged and, if appropriate, revoked. Not fair to public!”.
- On October 11, 2017, Donald J. Trump told reporters in the Oval Office, “It is frankly disgusting the way the press is able to write whatever they want to write, and people should look into it.”.

In all of this, Donald J. Trump has sought to undermine the freedom of the press guaranteed by the First Amendment to the Constitution, brought disrepute on the Presidency, and has acted in a manner subversive of constitutional government, to the great prejudice of the cause of law and justice and to the manifest injury of the people of the United States.

Wherefore Donald J. Trump, by such conduct, warrants impeachment and trial, and removal from office.

Steven Cohen, "Impeaching Donald J. Trump, President of the United States, of high crimes and misdemeanors," [House Resolution 621](#), 15 Nov 2017.

#### **News about Cohen's bill**

On 15 November 2017, Steve Cohen (D-Tenn.) — joined by Al Green (D-Tex.) and four other Democrats — introduced one set of five articles of impeachment. [The Hill](#); [Politico](#); [Associated Press](#).

Cohen's press release said in part:

The time has come to make clear to the American people and to this President that his train of injuries to our Constitution must be brought to an end through impeachment. I believe there is evidence that he attempted to obstruct an investigation into Russia's interference with the U.S. presidential election and links between between Russia and the Trump campaign, most notably the firing of FBI Director James Comey. The president's blatant refusal to separate himself from his businesses has led to clear instances of conflict of interest that appear to violate both the domestic and foreign emoluments clauses. And his attacks on 'so-called' judges and 'fake news' have undermined public confidence in the judiciary and the press. It's time for Congress to take action to stop this reckless and harmful behavior by removing Mr. Trump from office and to defend and uphold the Constitution of the United States.

Steve Cohen, "Members Introduce Articles of Impeachment," [House](#), 15 Nov 2017.

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#### **6 Dec 2017: Green**

Around noon on Wednesday, 6 December 2017, Al Green posted a second draft of his articles of impeachment at his website. I have copied the following text from the official version at the Library of Congress website. I inserted a bulleted list of Green's supporting facts.

Resolved, That Donald John Trump, President of the United States is unfit to be President and is impeached for high misdemeanors, and that the following articles of impeachment be exhibited to the Senate:

Articles of Impeachment exhibited by the House of Representatives of the United States, in the name of itself and of the people of the United States, against Donald John Trump, President of the United States, in maintenance and support of its impeachment against him for high misdemeanors committed as President constituting harm to American society to the manifest injury of the people of the United States:

#### ARTICLE I

In his capacity as President of the United States, unmindful of the high duties of his high office and the dignity and proprieties thereof, and of the harmony and courtesies necessary for stability within the society of the United States, Donald John Trump has with his statements done more than insult individuals and groups of Americans, he has harmed the society of the United States, brought shame and dishonor to the office of President of the United States, sowing discord among the people of the United States by associating the majesty and dignity of the presidency with causes rooted in white supremacy, bigotry, racism, anti-Semitism, white nationalism, or neo-Nazism on one or more of the following occasions:

- On August 15, 2017, Donald John Trump made a widely published statement characterizing a group of anti-Semites, bigots, racists, white nationalists, and Ku Klux Klansmen who rallied in Charlottesville, Virginia, as “very fine people”.
- On August [October?] 7, 2017, hate groups returned to Charlottesville, Virginia, at the statue of Robert E. Lee, the Confederate general, chanting “You will not replace us!” Since this event on October 7, the President has made many widely published statements about many things including, the National Football League, but has not made one widely published statement condemning the hate groups for returning to the place where an innocent person lost her life at the hands of hate.
- On November 29, 2017, Donald John Trump shared 3 videos posted by a leader of a British political party considered by many to be an extremist group. ....

In all of this, the aforementioned Donald John Trump, by his statements, unmindful of the high duties of his high office and the dignities and proprieties thereof, and of the harmony, respect, and courtesies necessary for stability within the society of the United States, has undermined the integrity of his office, has sown discord among the people of the United States, has brought disrepute, contempt, ridicule and disgrace on the Presidency, has acted in a manner antithetical to the cause of a just society, has betrayed his trust as President to the manifest injury of the people of the United States, and committed a high misdemeanor in office.

Therefore, Donald John Trump by causing such harm to the society of the United

States is unfit to be President and warrants impeachment, trial, and removal from office.

## ARTICLE II

In his capacity as President of the United States, unmindful of the high duties of his high office, of the dignity and proprieties thereof, and of the harmony, and respect necessary for stability within the society of the United States, Donald John Trump has with his statements done more than simply insult individuals and groups of Americans, he has harmed the American society by publicly casting contempt on individuals and groups, inciting hate and hostility, sowing discord among the people of the United States, on the basis of race, national origin, religion, gender, and sexual orientation, on one or more of the following occasions:

- On January 27, 2017, Donald John Trump issued Executive Order 13769 providing for a partial shutdown of immigration from mainly Muslim countries, to fulfill a campaign promise that read as follows: “DONALD J. TRUMP STATEMENT ON PREVENTING MUSLIM IMMIGRATION (New York, NY) December 7th, 2015 — Donald J. Trump is calling for a total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States until our country’s representatives can figure out what’s going on”, thereby casting contempt upon Muslims, inciting hate and hostility, and sowing discord among the people of the United States on the basis of religion.
- On July 26, 2017, Donald John Trump made a public statement substantially as follows: “After consultation with my Generals and military experts, please be advised that the United States Government will not accept or allow Transgender individuals to serve in any capacity in the U.S. Military. Our military must be focused on decisive and overwhelming victory and cannot be burdened with the tremendous medical costs and disruption that transgender in the military would entail”, and thereby casting contempt on transgender individuals, inciting hate and hostility, and sowing discord among the people of the United States on the basis of gender.
- On September 23, 2017, Donald John Trump made a public statement substantially as follows: “Wouldn’t you love to see one of these NFL owners, when somebody disrespects our flag, to say, ‘Get that son of a b-i-t-c-h off the field right now, out, he’s fired? He’s fired!’” thereby casting contempt on professional football players who engaged in constitutionally protected protests pertaining to allegations of police misconduct with regard to racial minorities, as well as casting contempt on the professional players’ mothers by calling the mothers “b-i-t-c-h-e-s”, effectively calling these mothers dogs, thereby inciting hate and hostility, and sowing discord among the people of the United States on the basis of race and gender.
- On September 30, 2017, Donald John Trump made a public statement substantially as follows: “They want everything to be done for them when it should be a community effort”, in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria thereby

casting contempt on Puerto Rican citizens of the United States, inciting hate and hostility, and sowing discord among the people of the United States based on national origin and race.

- On October 3, 2017, Donald John Trump made a public statement substantially as follows: "I hate to tell you, Puerto Rico, but you've thrown our budget a little out of whack because we spent a lot of money on Puerto Rico, that's fine, we've saved a lot of lives", but Donald John Trump did not make similar comments about Texas or Florida in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey or Hurricane Irma, treating the Puerto Rican citizens of the United States disparately, thereby casting contempt on Puerto Ricans, inciting hate and hostility, and sowing discord among the people of the United States based on national origin and race.
- On October 19, 2017, Donald John Trump made a public statement substantially as follows: "The Fake News is going crazy with wacky Congresswoman Wilson (D), who was SECRETLY on a very personal call, and gave a total lie on content!", thereby casting contempt on an African-American Member of Congress, inciting hate and hostility, and sowing discord among the people of the United States based on gender and race.
- On October 21, 2017, Donald John Trump made a public statement substantially as follows: "I hope the Fake News Media keeps talking about Wacky Congresswoman Wilson in that she, as a representative, is killing the Democrat Party!" thereby casting contempt on an African-American female Member of Congress, inciting hate and hostility, and sowing discord among the people of the United States based on gender and race.
- On October 22, 2017, Donald John Trump made a public statement substantially as follows: "Wacky Congresswoman Wilson is the gift that keeps on giving for the Republican Party, a disaster for Dems. You watch her in action & vote R!" thereby casting contempt on an African-American female Member of Congress inciting hate and hostility, and sowing discord among the people of the United States based on gender and race.

In all of this, the aforementioned Donald John Trump has, by his statements, brought the high office of President of the United States in contempt, ridicule, disgrace and disrepute, has sown discord among the people of the United States, has demonstrated that he is unfit to be President and has betrayed his trust as President of the United States to the manifest injury of the people of the United States, and has committed a high misdemeanor in office.

Therefore, Donald John Trump, by causing such harm to the society of the United States, is unfit to be President, warrants impeachment, trial, and removal from office. Al Green, "Impeaching Donald John Trump, President of the United States, of high misdemeanors," [House Resolution 646](#), 6 Dec 2017. (posted on Internet morning of 8 Dec 2017).



On 6 December 2017 at 13:34 EST, Al Green (D-Tex.) forced a vote in the U.S. House of Representatives on his two articles of impeachment. The vote was 364 to 58, in favor of refusing to consider his articles. A total of 58 Democrats — 31% of the Democrats who voted on this issue — voted for Green's articles of impeachment. Another 4 Democrats voted "present", the equivalent of abstaining. [Washington Post](#); [Politico](#); [Associated Press](#). My comment is that, because Mr. Green released his draft articles of impeachment just one hour before the vote, few members of the House had read the articles on which they voted.

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### 19 Jan 2018: Green

On 19 January 2018, Al Green offered a third version of his resolution to impeach Trump, this time with only one Article.

Resolved, That Donald John Trump, President of the United States, is

- unfit to be President,
- unfit to represent the American values of decency and morality, respectability and civility, honesty and propriety, reputability and integrity,
- is unfit to defend the ideals that have made America great,
- unfit to defend liberty and justice for all as extolled in the Pledge of Allegiance,
- is unfit to defend the American ideal of all persons being created equal as exalted in the Declaration of Independence,
- is unfit to ensure domestic tranquility, promote the general welfare and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity as lauded in the preamble to the United States Constitution,
- is unfit to protect government of the people, by the people, for the people as elucidated in the Gettysburg Address,

and is impeached for high misdemeanors, and that the following article of impeachment be exhibited to the Senate:

Article of Impeachment exhibited by the House of Representatives of the United States, in the name of itself and of the people of the United States, against Donald John Trump, President of the United States, in maintenance and support of its impeachment against him for high misdemeanors committed as President constituting harm to American society to the manifest injury of the people of the United States:

### ARTICLE I

In his capacity as President of the United States, unmindful of the high duties of his high office, of the dignity and proprieties thereof, and of the harmony, and respect necessary for stability within the society of the United States, Donald John Trump has with his bigoted statements done more than simply insult individuals and groups of Americans, he has harmed the American society by attempting to convert his bigoted statements into United States policy and by associating the presidency and the people of the United States with bigotry on one or more of the following occasions:

- On January 27, 2017, Donald John Trump issued Executive Order 13769 providing for a partial shutdown of immigration from mainly Muslim countries to fulfill a bigoted campaign promise that read as follows: “DONALD J. TRUMP STATEMENT ON PREVENTING MUSLIM IMMIGRATION (New York, NY) December 7th, 2015 — Donald J. Trump is calling for a total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States until our country’s representatives can figure out what’s going on,” thereby attempting to convert a bigoted campaign promise into United States policy, associating the presidency and the people of the United States with bigotry, thereby casting contempt upon Muslims, inciting hate and hostility, and sowing discord among the people of the United States on the basis of religion.
- On July 26, 2017, Donald John Trump made a public statement substantially as follows: “After consulting with my Generals and military experts, please be advised that the United States Government will not accept or allow Transgender individuals to serve in any capacity in the U.S. Military. Our military must be focused on decisive and overwhelming victory and cannot be burdened with the tremendous medical costs and disruption that transgender in the military would entail,” thereby attempting to convert his bigoted statement into United States policy, associating the presidency and the people of the United States with bigotry, thereby casting contempt on transgender individuals, inciting hate and hostility, and sowing discord among the people of the United States on the basis of gender.
- On August 15, 2017, Donald John Trump made a widely-published statement characterizing a group of anti-Semites, bigots, racists, white nationalists, and Ku Klux Klansmen who rallied in Charlottesville, Virginia, as “very fine people,” thereby associating the presidency and the people of the United States with bigotry.
- On October 7, 2017, hate groups returned to Charlottesville, Virginia, at the statue of Robert E. Lee, the Confederate general, chanting “You will not replace us!” after having chanted in their August Charlottesville rally that “Jews will not replace us!”. Since this event on October 7, the President has made widely-published statements about many issues, including the National Football League, but has not made one widely-published statement condemning the hate groups for returning to the place where an innocent person lost her life at the hands of hate.
- On January 11, 2018, Donald John Trump held a meeting with a bipartisan group of Congressional leaders that focused primarily on legislation that would provide a statutory protected status for individuals brought to the United States without documentation. At this meeting, as has been widely-published, Donald John Trump made references to people from s-h-i-t-h-o-l-e (or s-h-i-t-h-o-u-s-e) countries. He also questioned why we need more Haitians or people from African countries, proclaiming that we should take them out. Donald John Trump then suggested that Norwegians were better suited to be immigrants to this

country, thereby casting contempt on citizens and noncitizens who were welcomed here by previous Presidents due to natural disaster and civil unrest, thereby attempting to convert his bigoted statements into United States policy, associating the presidency and the people of the United States with bigotry, inciting hate and hostility, and sowing discord among the people of the United States on the basis of national origin.

In all of this, the aforementioned Donald John Trump has, by his statements, brought the high office of President of the United States in contempt, ridicule, disgrace and disrepute, has sown discord among the people of the United States, has demonstrated that he is unfit to be President, and has betrayed his trust as President of the United States to the manifest injury of the people of the United States, and has committed a high misdemeanor in office.

Therefore, Donald John Trump by causing such harm to the society of the United States is unfit to be President and warrants impeachment, trial, and removal from office.

Al Green, "Impeaching Donald John Trump, President of the United States, of high misdemeanors." [House Resolution 705](#), 19 Jan 2018. [Bulleted lists added by Standler.]

#### News about Green's third bill

On 12 January 2018, Al Green said he would again demand impeachment of Trump next week, after Trump referred to African nations and Haiti as "shithole countries". More facts on this mistake by Trump is [above](#). [Texas Tribune](#); [Houston Chronicle](#); [The Hill](#).

On 17 January 2018, Al Green gave a five-minute speech on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives, where he said:

... it is within my power as a Member of the Congress of the United States of America to bring Articles of Impeachment against this President for what he has done. I have done it before, and I will do it again and again and again. I will not allow it to happen unchallenged. .... We must take a stand against this President and his bigoted comments.

Al Green, "INJUSTICE ANYWHERE IS A THREAT TO JUSTICE EVERYWHERE," 164 *Congressional Record* H418 (17 Jan 2018).

The speaker pro tempore cautioned Mr. Green: "Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President." That caution ended Mr. Green's speech.

Two days later, on 19 January 2018, there was a vote in the House of Representatives on Green's third attempt to impeach Trump. A total of 66 Representatives — all Democrats — voted for Resolution 705, 8 more than voted for Green's second attempt. A total of 355 Representatives voted against Green's Resolution 705. [House](#). The [Washington Post](#) was one of the few newspapers to cover Green's third attempt.

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In my opinion, Raskin's bill and Cohen's bill are the best of these bills. Those two bills should receive hearings in the House Judiciary Committee, but will be blocked by the

Republican majority. The refusal of the Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee to schedule hearings on any of these bills is consistent with the purely partisan refusal of the Senate Judiciary Committee in 2016 to schedule hearings on the confirmation of Obama's appointee to the U.S. Supreme Court, which I documented [here](#).

Sherman's bill is very narrow, with only one ground for impeachment. Lofgren herself recognizes that her draft Resolution has zero chance of passing. In my opinion, at least part of Green's proposals do *not* meet the Constitutional grounds for impeachment.

On 2 Jan 2019, I searched the legislative database at the U.S. Congress, but there had been *no* impeachment Resolutions introduced since Green's third try on 19 Jan 2018. There are two huge obstacles to impeaching Trump in 2018. First, the Republicans have a strong majority in the House of Representatives, which makes it difficult to impeach Trump. Second, 2/3 of the U.S. Senate would need to vote to convict Trump, and that is *not* going to happen in 2018.

In January 2019, the Democrats will have a majority in the U.S. House of Representatives. That means — assuming all Democrats vote in lock-step — that is possible to impeach Trump. However, Republicans will still have a majority in the U.S. Senate, so conviction would be very unlikely, unless Trump does something much worse than what is publicly known in December 2018.

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## Bibliography on Trump Unfit to be President

Rather than split this bibliography between my 2017 and 2018 essays on Trump, I am repeating here what I wrote in 2017, then adding new material.

The following politicians, mental health professionals, and commentators have suggested that Trump is *unfit* to be president:

- David L. Brooks, "No, Not Trump, Not Ever," [NY Times](#), 18 Mar 2016. ("Trump is perhaps the most dishonest person to run for high office in our lifetimes. All politicians stretch the truth, but Trump has a steady obliviousness to accuracy.")
- Barack Obama, "Remarks by President Obama and Prime Minister Lee of Singapore in Joint Press Conference," [White House](#), 2 Aug 2016. ("Yes, I think the Republican nominee [Trump] is unfit to serve as President. I said so last week, and he keeps on proving it. ..., the fact that he doesn't appear to have basic knowledge around critical issues in Europe, in the Middle East, in Asia, means that he's woefully unprepared to do this job. And this is not just my opinion. I think what's been interesting is the repeated denunciations of his statements by leading Republicans, including the Speaker of the House and the Senate Majority Leader, and prominent Republicans like John McCain.")

Callum Borchers, "The latest media obsession: 'Could there be something ... neurologically wrong' with Donald Trump?," [Washington Post](#), 3 August 2016.

- Charles Krauthammer, "Donald Trump and the fitness threshold," [Washington Post](#), 4 August 2016. (Quoted in my 2017 essay.)
- 50 former Republican National Security Officials, "A Letter From G.O.P. National Security Officials Opposing Donald Trump," [NY Times](#), 8 Aug 2016. ("In our judgment, Mr. Trump has none of these critical qualities. He is unable or unwilling to separate truth from falsehood. .... He lacks self-control and acts impetuously. He cannot tolerate personal criticism.")
- David L. Brooks, "The View From Trump Tower," [NY Times](#), 11 Nov 2016. ("... [Trump's] main problem is going to be his own attention span, ignorance and incompetence. .... [Trump] will probably resign or be impeached within a year.")
- David L. Brooks, "The Internal Invasion," [NY Times](#), 20 Jan 2017. ("We've never had a major national leader as professionally unprepared, intellectually ill informed, morally compromised and temperamentally unfit as [Trump].")
- Jennifer Rubin, "Trump's emotional tailspin was predictable," [Washington Post](#), 24 Jan 2017. ("That reality — the rotten poll numbers, the low turnout at his inauguration, the massive turnout at worldwide protests, his widely panned appearance at the CIA and his press secretary Sean Spicer's disastrous debut with the White House press corps on Saturday [21 Jan] — seems to have thrown the narcissistic ex-mogul into an emotional tailspin. .... The obsession with replaying the election and concocting a phony excuse for losing the popular vote reminds us that despite mockery for constant lying, Trump cannot help himself. He lies because reality won't conform to his narcissistic view of the world.")
- Rachel Hosie, "'Malignant Narcissism': Donald Trump displays classic traits of mental illness, claim psychologists," [The Independent](#) in U.K., 30 Jan 2017.
- "Rep. Maxine Waters: Trump's actions 'leading himself' to impeachment," [CNN](#), 6 Feb 2017.
- Kathleen Parker, "Trump's two-year presidency," [Washington Post](#), 20:03 EST, 10 Feb 2017.
- Lance Dodes, Joseph Schachter, & 33 other mental health professionals, Letter, "Mental Health Professionals Warn About Trump," [NY Times](#), 13 Feb 2017. ("Mr. Trump's speech and actions demonstrate an inability to tolerate views different from his own, leading to rage reactions. .... We believe that the grave emotional instability indicated by Mr. Trump's speech and actions makes him incapable of serving safely as president.")
- E.J. Dionne, Jr., "Admit it: Trump is unfit to serve," [Washington Post](#), 19:30 EST, 15 Feb 2017. ("Senators such as John McCain and Lindsey Graham seem to know it is

only a matter of time before the GOP will have to confront Trump's unfitness.")

- Cristina Marcos, "Kentucky Dem lawmaker questions Trump's mental health," [The Hill](#), 22 Feb 2017. ("Trump is 'totally unfit for the office he serves in,' [Rep. John] Yarmuth (D-KY) said in remarks to a local NAACP chapter.... 'He is, in my opinion, a dangerous president. I'm not sure of his mental state, but I know that he doesn't portray someone who is in control of his faculties,' Yarmuth said in comments first highlighted by [CNN](#).")
- Jacquie Slater, "Mental Health Professionals call for Trump to be removed from office," [WTNH](#), 20 April 2017. (Conference of approximately two dozen mental health professionals at Yale School of Medicine. Dr. John Gartner: "Worse than just being a liar or a narcissist, in addition [Trump] is paranoid, delusional and grandiose thinking and he proved that to the country the first day he was President.") Also see [The Independent](#).
- George F. Will, "Trump has a dangerous disability," [Washington Post](#), 19:36 EDT, 3 May 2017. ("It is urgent for Americans to think and speak clearly about President Trump's inability to do either. This seems to be not a mere disinclination but a disability. It is not merely the result of intellectual sloth but of an untrained mind bereft of information and married to stratospheric self-confidence." "... it is up to the public to quarantine this presidency by insistently communicating to its elected representatives a steady, rational fear of this man whose combination of impulsivity and credulity render him uniquely unfit to take the nation into a military conflict.")
- Patricia Mazzei, "Miami lawmaker was first Republican to suggest Trump could be impeached," [Miami Herald](#), 16:20 EDT, 17 May 2017. (Rep. Carlos Curbelo of Florida became the first Republican in Congress to publicly suggest the impeachment of Trump, *if* it is true that Trump told Comey to end the investigation of Flynn.)
- Cristina Marcos, "First Republicans talk possibility of impeachment for Trump," [The Hill](#), updated 15:38 EDT, 17 May 2017. (Rep. Justin Amash of Michigan became the second Republican in Congress to publicly say, *if* it is true that Trump told Comey to end the investigation of Flynn, then Trump should be impeached.)
- Klaus Brinkbäumer, editorial, "It's Time to Get Rid of Donald Trump," [Der Spiegel](#), 19 May 2017. ("Donald Trump is not fit to be president of the United States. He does not possess the requisite intellect and does not understand the significance of the office he holds nor the tasks associated with it. He doesn't read. He doesn't bother to peruse important files and intelligence reports and knows little about the issues that he has identified as his priorities. His decisions are capricious and they are delivered in the form of tyrannical decrees. .... As has been demonstrated hundreds of times, he is a liar, a racist and a cheat. .... And one of the media's tasks is to continue telling things as they are: Trump has to be removed from the White House. Quickly. He is a danger to the world.")
- Paul Ryan, the leader of the Republicans in the U.S. House of Representatives, on 8 June 2017 explained why Trump had repeatedly made serious mistakes with the FBI

Director, Comey: “The president’s new at this. He’s new to government, and so he probably wasn’t steeped in the long-running protocols that establish the relationships between DOJ, FBI and White Houses. He’s just new to this. .... I’m not saying it’s an acceptable excuse. It’s just my observation.” [Washington Post](#); [NBC News](#); [The Hill](#).

- On 16 August 2017, Tony Schwartz — the ghostwriter or co-author of Trump's famous book, *The Art of the Deal* — predicted that Trump would resign before the end of 2017. [Tweet](#): “The circle is closing at blinding speed. Trump is going to resign and declare victory before Mueller and congress leave him no choice.” [Tweet](#): “Trump's presidency is effectively over. Would be amazed if he survives till end of the year. More likely resigns by fall, if not sooner.” See also: [CNN](#); [Time](#).
- Bob Corker, the chairman of the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and a leading Republican in the Senate, publicly blasted Trump on 17 August 2017: “I do think there need to be some radical changes. The president has not yet ... been able to demonstrate the stability, nor some of the competence that he needs to demonstrate in order to be successful, and we need for him to be successful.” [The Hill](#); [Politico](#); [Washington Post](#); [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#). On 1 October 2017, Corker said “I stand by those comments” on 17 August. [NBC News](#).
- Alexander Burns & Jonathan Martin, “McConnell, in Private, Doubts if Trump Can Save Presidency,” [New York Times](#), 22 Aug 2017. (“Mr. McConnell has fumed over Mr. Trump’s regular threats against fellow Republicans and criticism of Senate rules, and questioned Mr. Trump’s understanding of the presidency in a public speech. Mr. McConnell has made sharper comments in private, describing Mr. Trump as entirely unwilling to learn the basics of governing.”)
- Rachel Chason, “James Clapper questions Trump’s fitness, worries about his access to nuclear codes,” [Washington Post](#), 04:51 EDT, 23 Aug 2017. (Former Director of National Intelligence under Obama says: “I really question [Trump's] ability to be — his fitness to be — in this office.”) Also see: [CNN](#).
- John McCain, op-ed, “John McCain: It’s time Congress returns to regular order,” [Washington Post](#), 20:21 EDT, 31 August 2017. (Calling Trump “a president who has no experience of public office, is often poorly informed and can be impulsive in his speech and conduct.”)
- On 12 October 2017, Congresswoman Maxine Waters — a Democrat from Los Angeles, California — said on CNBC that Trump was “unstable” and should be impeached. [YouTube](#)(video); [RCP](#)(video); [The Hill](#).
- Jeannie Suk Gersen, “How Anti-Trump Psychiatrists Are Mobilizing Behind the Twenty-Fifth Amendment,” [New Yorker](#), 16 Oct 2017. (The group of mental-health professionals, “called Duty to Warn, claims that Donald Trump ‘suffers from an incurable malignant narcissism that makes him incapable of carrying out his presidential duties and poses a danger to the nation.’”)



- On 24 October 2017, U.S. Senator Bob Corker (R-Tenn.) criticized Trump, see quotation in my 2017 essay. Then U.S. Senator Jeff Flake (R-Ariz.) criticized Trump, see quotation in my 2017 essay.
- Maggie Haberman, Glenn Thrush, & Peter Baker, "Inside Trump's Hour-By-Hour Battle For Self-Preservation," [New York Times](#), 9 Dec 2017. (Quoting Nancy Pelosi, leader of the Democrats in the U.S. House of Representatives: "The bigger problem, the thing people need to understand, is that he was utterly unprepared for this. It would be like you or me going into a room and being asked to perform brain surgery. When you have a lack of knowledge as great as his, it can be bewildering.")
- James Hamblin, "Is Something Neurologically Wrong With Donald Trump?," [The Atlantic](#), 10:56 EST, 3 Jan 2018. (Notes some symptoms of neurological decline in Trump, calls for evaluation of Trump by neurologists.)
- Sunlen Serfaty & Ryan Nobles, "Yale psychiatrist briefed members of Congress on Trump's mental fitness," [CNN](#), 4 Jan 2018. (On 5-6 December 2017, Dr. Bandy X. Lee — an Assistant Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at Yale School of Medicine — briefed some members of the House and Senate on Trump's fitness to be president. Dr. Lee said: "As [Trump] is unraveling he seems to be losing his grip on reality and reverting to conspiracy theories. There are signs that he is going into attack mode when he is under stress. That means he has the potential to become impulsive and very volatile.") See also [Politico](#); [The Hill](#).
- Bandy Lee, "Trump is now dangerous — that makes his mental health a matter of public interest," [The Guardian](#), 6 Jan 2018. ("Past violence is the best predictor of future violence, and [Trump] has shown: verbal aggressiveness, boasting about sexual assaults, inciting violence in others, an attraction to violence and powerful weapons and the continual taunting of a hostile nation with nuclear power. .... [Trump's] cognitive function, or his ability to process knowledge and thoughts, has begun to be widely questioned. Many have noted a distinct decline in his outward ability to form complete sentences, to stay with a thought, to use complex words and not to make loose associations.")
- Dan Balz, "Trump does more damage to himself than his opponents ever manage to do," [Washington Post](#), 13 Jan 2018. ("[Trump's own words] reinforce a portrait of a president who ..., often lacks clarity of his own views or the details of issues he is negotiating, and who projects an image that regularly flies in the face of standards long applied to those who occupy the Oval Office.")
- John Bowden, "Ex-CIA chief: Trump 'unstable, inept, inexperienced, and also unethical'," [The Hill](#), 2 March 2018. (Former CIA Director John Brennan said in an interview on [MSNBC](#) that Trump is "unstable, inept, inexperienced, and also unethical".)
- Philip Rucker, Ashley Parker, & Josh Dawsey, "'Pure madness': Dark days inside the White House as Trump shocks and rages," [Washington Post](#), 16:26 EST, 3 March 2018. ("Trump is now a president in transition, at times angry and increasingly

isolated. He fumes in private that just about every time he looks up at a television screen, the cable news headlines are trumpeting yet another scandal.”)

- John Wagner & Seung Min Kim, "‘Like a pinball machine’: Lawmakers struggle to negotiate with an erratic Trump," [Washington Post](#), 17:16 EST, 4 March 2018. (Rep. Peter T. King (R-NY) compared Trump's negotiating style to a pinball machine. The Post said: "After more than a year of the Trump presidency, members of Congress have learned to brace themselves for unpredictable, confusing and often contradictory positions from the [president]....")
- Max Greenwood, "Lieu: Trump 'intentionally lying,' unfit for office," [The Hill](#), 11:53 EDT, 15 Mar 2018. ([Above](#), I quoted some of a 14 March speech by Trump. Ted Lieu (D-Calif.), a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, [tweeted](#) about that speech by Trump: “This is more evidence that Trump is unfit for the revered office in which he sits.”)
- Jacqueline Thomsen, "Retired four-star Army general: Trump ‘serious threat to US national security’," [The Hill](#), 19:56 EDT, 16 Mar 2018. (Retired U.S. Army General Barry McCaffrey [tweeted](#): “Reluctantly I have concluded that President Trump is a serious threat to US national security. He is refusing to protect vital US interests from active Russian attacks. It is apparent that he is for some unknown reason under the sway of Mr Putin.”)
- Maggie Haberman, "Newly Emboldened, Trump Says What He Really Feels," [New York Times](#), 18 March 2018. (“A dozen people close to Mr. Trump or the White House, including current and former aides and longtime friends, described [Trump] as newly emboldened to say what he really feels and to ignore the cautions of those around him.”)
- Aaron Blake, "What ‘DO NOT CONGRATULATE’ says about Trump — and the peril of meeting Kim Jong Un," [Washington Post](#), 06:31 EDT, 21 Mar 2018. (“[Trump's 20 Mar telephone call with Putin] crystallizes Trump’s tendency to eschew basically any expert guidance — even on issues of huge import.”)
- Mark Landler, & Julie Hirschfeld Davis, "After Another Week of Chaos, Trump Repairs to Palm Beach. No One Knows What Comes Next." [New York Times](#), 23 Mar 2018. (“Aides said there was no grand strategy to the president’s actions, and that he got up each morning this week not knowing what he would do. Much as he did as a New York businessman at Trump Tower, Mr. Trump watched television, reacted to what he saw on television and then reacted to the reaction.”)
- Philip Rucker & Robert Costa, "‘Tired of the wait game’: White House stabilizers gone, Trump calling his own shots," [Washington Post](#), 15:00 EDT, 31 Mar 2018. (Trump's moderate advisers have resigned or been fired, which leaves Trump free to act impulsively.)
- Joe Garofoli, "Feinstein calls Trump erratic and unfit. But she’ll try to work with him," [San Francisco Chronicle](#), 19:08 PDT, 3 April 2018. (U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein told

the *Chronicle*: “I do not believe he is a good president. I do not believe he is fit to be president. I do not believe that we have the stability in the executive office that we need to have. I think there’s an erratic behavior there that is deeply concerning.”)

- "Congresswoman Maxine Waters' Advice for President Trump: 'Please Resign'," [Time](#), 25 April 2018. (Maxine Waters: “Please resign, so that I won’t have to keep up this fight of your having to be impeached because I don’t think you deserve to be there.”) See also [The Hill](#).
- John Brennan, "John Brennan: I will speak out until integrity returns to the White House," [Washington Post](#), 31 May 2018. (Brennan — director of the Central Intelligence Agency from March 2013 to January 2017 — said: "Mr. Trump, however, has shown highly abnormal behavior by lying routinely to the American people without compunction, .... [Trump's] strategy is to undercut real, potential and perceived opponents; his focus is to win at all costs, irrespective of truth, ethics, decency and — many would argue — the law. .... Most worrisome is that his use of falsehoods, his mean-spirited and malicious behavior, and his self-absorption will be emulated by many young Americans — indeed, young people globally — who look to the president of the United States as a role model.")
- Fareed Zakaria, "Trump’s true talent isn’t negotiating. It’s marketing." [Washington Post](#), 24 May 2018. (“By now it is obvious Trump is actually a bad negotiator — an impulsive, emotional man who ignores briefings, rarely knows details, and shoots first and asks questions later. .... [Trump] has the confidence, bravado and skill to market failure as success.”)
- Michael Kruse, "‘He Pretty Much Gave In to Whatever They Asked For’," [Politico](#), 1 June 2018. (Trump had two early real-estate triumphs: (1) converting the "decrepit" Commodore Hotel to Grand Hyatt in 1980 and (2) Trump Tower. Then Trump started ignoring details and became a celebrity. “Trump was, and still is, they say, a confident, competitive, aggressive, impulsive, zero-sum, win-at-all-costs, transactional, unpredictable, often underinformed and ill-prepared, gut-following, ego-driven, want-it-and-want-it-now negotiator.”)
- David Smith, "Trump goes it alone: running the White House not like a president, but a CEO," [The Guardian](#), 3 June 2018.
- Justin Wise, "Sanford: Trump is being allowed to lie without consequences," [The Hill](#), 15 June 2018 (Mark Sanford on NBC Meet the Press: “There is no seeming consequence to the president and lies and ... it is going to have incredibly harmful consequences in the way that we operate going forward, ....”). Later, [NBC News](#) posted a transcript of the interview with Sanford.
- John Harwood, "Trump, again and again, describes a world detached from reality," [CNBC](#), 22 June 2018.
- Christina Zhao, "TRUMP'S 'ART OF THE DEAL' CO-AUTHOR SAYS THE PRESIDENT IS LOSING HIS MIND: 'WE ARE IN A TRUE EMERGENCY',"

[Newsweek](#), 16 July 2018. (Schwartz: "We are in a true emergency. [Trump] lives now inside his own version of reality almost 100 percent of the time and that reality has almost nothing to do with reality as the rest of us know it.")

- George Will, "This sad, embarrassing wreck of a man," [Washington Post](#), 17 July 2018. (Will: "Precision is not part of Trump's repertoire: He speaks English as though it is a second language that he learned from someone who learned English last week. So, it is usually difficult to sift meanings from Trump's word salads.")
- Christine Todd Whitman, op-ed, "Calling my fellow Republicans: Trump is clearly unfit to remain in office," [Los Angeles Times](#), 22 July 2018. (Whitman is the former governor of New Jersey and former administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. Whitman: "President Trump's disgraceful performance in Helsinki, Finland, and in the days since is an indication that he is not fit to remain in office. .... [Republicans need to] ... demonstrate the leadership our country needs by calling on the president to step down.")
- Bandy X. Lee & Tony Schwartz, "Inside the Mind of Donald Trump," [Politico](#), 27 July 2018. (Qualities Trump displays: "paranoia, grandiosity, lack of empathy, and pathological deceit. .... His frequent lies reveal his need to redefine reality when the truth doesn't serve his needs.")
- Jason Le Miere, "WILL DONALD TRUMP BE IMPEACHED OR RESIGN? ODDS SUGGEST PRESIDENT'S FUTURE IS PRECARIOUS AMID MIDTERMS, OMAROSA TAPES," [Newsweek](#), 18 Aug 2018.
- Michael Kruse, "'He's Unraveling': Why Cohen's Betrayal Terrifies Trump," [Politico](#), 22 Aug 2018. (Trump lacks loyalty to people who serve him for years.)
- Tom Steyer, opinion, "Republicans, Save Your Party by Impeaching the President," [Wall Street Journal](#), 15:23 EDT, 26 Aug 2018. ("... the movement to impeach Mr. Trump and remove him from office isn't partisan. It's patriotic. After all, if it succeeds, the Oval Office will still be occupied by a Republican until at least January 2021. .... Mr. Trump demonstrated his unfitness for office long before Mr. Cohen implicated him in a federal crime.")
- "Former President Jimmy Carter: Trump 'is very careless with the truth' ," [CBS News](#), 28 Aug 2018. (Carter: "I think it's well-known that the incumbent president is very careless with the truth.")
- Stephen Collinson, "Trump sees treason from within," [CNN](#), 01:55 EDT, 6 Sep 2018. ("Damaging twin portraits of the President in a New York Times op-ed and Bob Woodward's new book are using the words of current top officials to fracture the mythology of vanity and bombast, conmanship and intimidation of Trump's personality cult. .... [Woodward's] deeply reported account exposes profound disdain for the President among senior officials who are said to view him as an "idiot" with a fifth-grade education who the world needs protecting against.")

- Bandy K. Lee, "Thousands of mental health professionals agree with Woodward, NYT op-ed author: Trump is dangerous," [Salon](#), 8 Sep 2018. ("[The anonymous *New York Times* op-ed and Woodward's book describe] psychological symptoms reflective of emotional compulsion, impulsivity, poor concentration, narcissism and recklessness. .... We tried to warn that [Trump's] condition was worse than it appeared, would grow worse over time and would eventually become uncontrollable. .... My current concern is that we are already witnessing a further unraveling of the president's mental state, especially as the frequency of his lying increases and the fervor of his rallies intensifies.")
- Philip Rucker, "'Full Trumpism': The president's apocalyptic attacks reach a new level of falsity," [Washington Post](#), 4 Nov 2018. ("President Trump is painting an astonishingly apocalyptic vision of America under Democratic control in the campaign's final days, unleashing a torrent of falsehoods and portraying his political opponents as desiring crime, squalor and poverty.")
- Jennifer Rubin, "Trump is cracking," [Washington Post](#), 13:45 EST, 12 Nov 2018. ("In sum, we should continue to tally Trump's constitutional offenses just as we keep a running count of his lies. However, these offenses are part of a bigger picture of a failing president and a party incapable of breaking with him.")
- Josh Dawsey & Philip Rucker, "Five days of fury: Inside Trump's Paris temper, election woes and staff upheaval," [Washington Post](#), 20:02 EST, 13 Nov 2018. (After Republicans lost their majority in the U.S. House of Representatives, Trump was in a bad mood. Trump was rude to the leaders of the United Kingdom and France.)
- Jennifer Rubin, "A frightful portrait of a president out of control," [Washington Post](#), 10:15 EST, 14 Nov 2018. ("... the people who work most closely with Trump know best how emotionally, intellectually and temperamentally unfit he is for the job. .... Trump will get worse under pressure. .... [Republicans in Congress] would rather excuse the conduct of an unbalanced and hysterical commander in chief than move to limit his powers (e.g., reassert that a first strike is an act of war requiring congressional authorization, claw back power to enact tariffs).")
- "Trump's mood takes a foul turn: 'He's pissed — at damn near everyone'," [CNN](#), 14 Nov 2018.
- "Former Nixon WH lawyer: Congress will have 'little choice' but to begin impeachment proceedings," [CNN](#), 8 Dec 2018. (On 7 Dec, John Dean said: "I think what this totality of today's filings [by Mueller] show that the House is going to have little choice, the way this is going, other than to start impeachment proceedings.")
- "NY Rep.: If it's proven Trump directed Cohen payments, would be 'impeachable offenses'," [CNN](#), 9 Dec 2018. (Jerry Nadler — who will become chairman of the House Judiciary Committee in January 2019 — told CNN that, if proven, Trump directing Cohen to pay hush money to women would be an impeachable offense. Nadler said that did *not* imply that the House would impeach Trump. Nadler said: "But, certainly, they would be impeachable offenses, because, even though they were committed before

the president became president, they were committed in the service of fraudulently obtaining the office.”) [transcript](#)

- "Schiff says Trump faces 'real prospect of jail time' after leaving office," [CBS News](#), 9 Dec 2018. (Adam Schiff — who will become chairman of the House Intelligence Committee in January 2019 — told CBS News that Trump faced a real possibility of criminal conviction for campaign finance violations and spending time in prison.)
- "Where Are We in the Trump-Russia Story?; Media Minefield in Mueller Coverage." [CNN](#), 9 Dec 2018. (Carl Bernstein — a journalist who helped end the Nixon presidency — said: "There's something much more important than just impeachment going on, and that is the fact that Donald Trump for the first time in his life is cornered. As a businessman, he always could bully his way out of a corner. He always could buy his way out, cheat his way out. He is boxed in by Mueller and the people around him know that he is.")
- "Democratic Rep. Heck: 'This is the beginning of the end for the Trump administration'," [CNN](#), 12 Dec 2018. (Denny Heck — a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, who sits on the House Intelligence Committee — said: "I'm prepared to say something I've never said: The writing's on the wall, the walls are closing in and this is the beginning of the end for the Trump administration.")
- Jonathan Lemire & Eric Tucker, "As protectors abandon Trump, investigation draws closer," [Associated Press](#), retrieved at 11:20 EST, 13 Dec 2018. ("President Donald Trump has now been abandoned by two of his most powerful protectors — his longtime lawyer [Cohen] and the company that owns the National Enquirer tabloid — bringing a perilous investigation into his campaign a step closer to the Oval Office.")
- Chris Megerian & Eli Stokols, "After nearly two years in the White House, Trump's lies start catching up with him," [Los Angeles Times](#), 16 Dec 2018. ("Henry Pontell, a professor at John Jay College in New York City and an expert on white-collar crime, said Trump fits a familiar pattern of wealthy, successful people who come to believe they can get away with creating their own versions of reality.")
- Editorial Board, "The last lines of defense against Trump," [Washington Post](#), 22 Dec 2018. (First line of defense was Congress, but Paul Ryan (Speaker of the House) and Mitch McConnell (Senate Majority Leader) both failed. Second line of defense was Tillerson, Mattis, McMaster, ..., who are now gone.)
- Philip Rucker, "‘A rogue presidency’: The era of containing Trump is over," [Washington Post](#), 17:46 EST, 22 Dec 2018.
- Zeke Miller, "Analysis: Trump, Republicans flirting with a political split," [Associated Press](#), 22 Dec 2018. ("Trump is ending the year with his political vulnerabilities exposed, unwilling or unable to forge consensus and catering to a narrow base that he hopes will recreate his improbable 2016 election victory.")
- Michael R. Bloomberg, "Trump Rings in the New Year in the Worst Possible Way,"

[Bloomberg News](#), 23 Dec 2018. (Bloomberg: "Each of these mistakes [resignation of Mattis, government shutdown, stock market decline] has a common denominator: Trump's recklessly emotional and senselessly chaotic approach to the job.")

The statements of commentators and politicians cited above show that voters in the U.S. had ample information before the election in 2016 that Trump was unfit to be president. During 2017, only a few politicians had the courage to publicly condemn Trump's bizarre behavior as president. But in December 2018, politicians began to abandon supporting Trump.

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