

**IN EXTREMIS:**

**HOW THE RADICAL RIGHT  
WINGERS ARE FOLLOWING  
EACH OTHER OFF THE END  
OF THE EARTH.**

**Allan Rodgers**

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September 2024

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In the covers of all my books about the right wing, I have used geometric figures shaped to set off the space for the books' titles. This year, it is a rectangle. You may ask whether the rectangle has any significance for the contents of this book. It does. WRECK, the first part, describes the status of the Republican party. TANGLE captures the extremes by which the right wing conducts its activities in ways that have no cohesion or consistency.

## INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

“The problem with political jokes is that they get elected.” Sent to me by Mary Tracy.

“Why pay money to have your family tree traced? Go into politics and your opponents will do it for you.” Author unknown. Sent to me by Mary Tracy.

“Instead of giving a politician the keys to the city, it might be better to change the locks.” Doug Larson, sent to me by Mary Tracy.

“Those who stand for nothing will fall for everything” Alexander Hamilton.

“When scientific power outruns moral power, we end up with guided missiles and misguided men. Martin Luther King Junior, quoted in How America Hides the Human Toll the Military Makes. Norman Solomon.

“Most of the things worth doing in the world had been declared impossible before they were done.” Justice Louis Brandeis, quoted in a Ralph Nader article in the 8/15/23 Progressive Populist.

Here we are again, giving you the same comical and critical views about the right wing in this country and some ideas about how to reverse America’s 40-year fall of things we cherish. The title of this book combines the right wing’s push toward authoritarianism and its fact- absence fantasies. These kinds of beliefs are not new. When Europeans and others were exploring the rest of the world, some thought that the earth was flat. This mistaken view got them the name, Flat Earthers. That derisive name was occasionally given to people with outlandish but completely unsupported beliefs. To my surprise, I found that the Flat Earth kinds of beliefs still persist This is explained in April 22 and 24, 2024 articles called “How Gullible Are You?” by Manvir Singh. According to this theory, the planet is not round such as a disk- like frisbee. The subject of the article built one of these discs and eventually died when it crashed. Others have taken up the cause and in modern times call themselves The Truthers. The article describes how this group organizes its followers and focuses its attention in this country.

A related but more modern group is the flat taxes crowd. Since the US adopted a federal income tax early in the 20th century it has a graduated tax scale so that those with higher incomes pay a higher percentage of their income in taxes. This

follows the commonsense wisdom that those who earn more should bear a higher tax burden and those with lower incomes a smaller comparative share. But for many years people with money have pushed hard to lower the top brackets for individuals and corporations. They have gradually (this is not an intentional pun) succeeded in lowering the top rates greatly. This is all comprehensively explained in an article in the April 25, 2024 Inequality.org, by Sam Pizzigati. "The Flat- Taxers are winning the class war. When the richest get a free ride the rest of us get flattened." The Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy has a 5/9/24 email report - The flat tax shows why bad policies are a problem everywhere.

This book is much longer than the past books I've self- published. For the past 10 years I have given some samples of astute comments and some broad opinions about what's going on and what changes are promising. There is an increasing number of new articles that focus on many subjects. I also include chapters by two other writers who have written about their own subjects. Frank Virnelli, a Winchester friend and retired physician, contributes a long story about America's foreign policy, particularly during the Cold War. My brother, David K. Rodgers, has a piece on race. In last year's book I largely took a break from reporting on Donald Trump except for an orange face cartoon. In this book, he's back, in a long presentation of the names people call him and many zingers about what he's up to. Before that, I have a spoof ruminating over what would happen if the adherents of the Nazi -like beliefs were to change their names to not-sees. There are more intensive articles on immigration and the US Supreme Court. At the end of the book, I give you a report on items of current interest and some good ideas for where we ought to go. Before getting into the chapters of the book, I highlight the two areas of right wing activity which commentators have written particularly eloquently about, at the national and state levels.

#### - National

The right wing has at last surfaced a more detailed plan about what they will do if Trump wins the presidency in November of this year. The first explanation is a 2/27/24 article by Thom Hartmann, MAGA's plan to "legally" steal the 2004 election. According to Hartmann, this plan takes advantage of the remaining looseness of the laws and protections for electing the president when the election is close.

Hartmann has also written a 2/8/24 email - The Republican Party and their billionaire backers plot against America: the GOP's bet is that if they keep things broken and bad enough long enough then people will demand a dictator who can

get things done.” He spells out how this dictatorship can take place and what it will do.

Stephen Harper wrote a Common Dreams email of 5/12/23- The GOP have a very anti- American agenda. Issue by issue, Harper identifies the major issues the right wing plans to address and what these changes will do to the people who, according to polling, disagree strongly with the right wing plans.

Christopher Broncheri has a 5/11/23 article in Common Dreams: Nazi Germany and the contemporary Republican Party, in which he analyzes the differences and similarities between the Republican Party and Nazi Germany. Although not exact, the similarities are frightening.

### States

Seven states have been in the lead with reactionary activities. Some 12 to 14 states, mostly in the South, have also been adopting authoritarian programs. The best compilation I’ve seen is by Lawyers Defending American Democracy, issued on 12/18/23. According to this analysis, “... anti- democratic impulses have spread and are already having a profoundly negative impact on the democracy we collectively cherish and the rule of law that is foundational to protecting a society from injustice.” The article includes a state- by state list of what states are doing in such areas as ballot access; fair treatment of all members of society; respect for individual autonomy; an accessible free and high quality education; fact- based decision making; appropriate restraints on the exercise of state power; supporting confidence in public and private institutions, businesses and associations; and governmental respect for systemic checks and balances.

Examples of these policies abound

- 25 election deniers are in offices overseeing elections in 19 states. Fair Fight email of 4/13/24.
- Jim Hightower in an email of 2/8/24, reveals that 15 states have turned down federal funding for low-income children.
- According to a Heather Cox Richardson email report 4/29/23, at least 10 states have plans to weaken child labor laws
- A Common Dreams email of 3/8/24 describes a new state law in Florida which prohibits local governments from requiring local workplaces to give water breaks and other cooling measures. Florida had some time ago denied the furnishing of water and food to people in long lines waiting to vote.

With that cheery news, let's proceed to subjects that are brighter even though threatened with aggressive changes.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This is the 11th book I have self- published during the past 11 years. It's been a fun run. I hope it has been the same for you. My prior books and how to get them are listed at the end piece on About the Author.

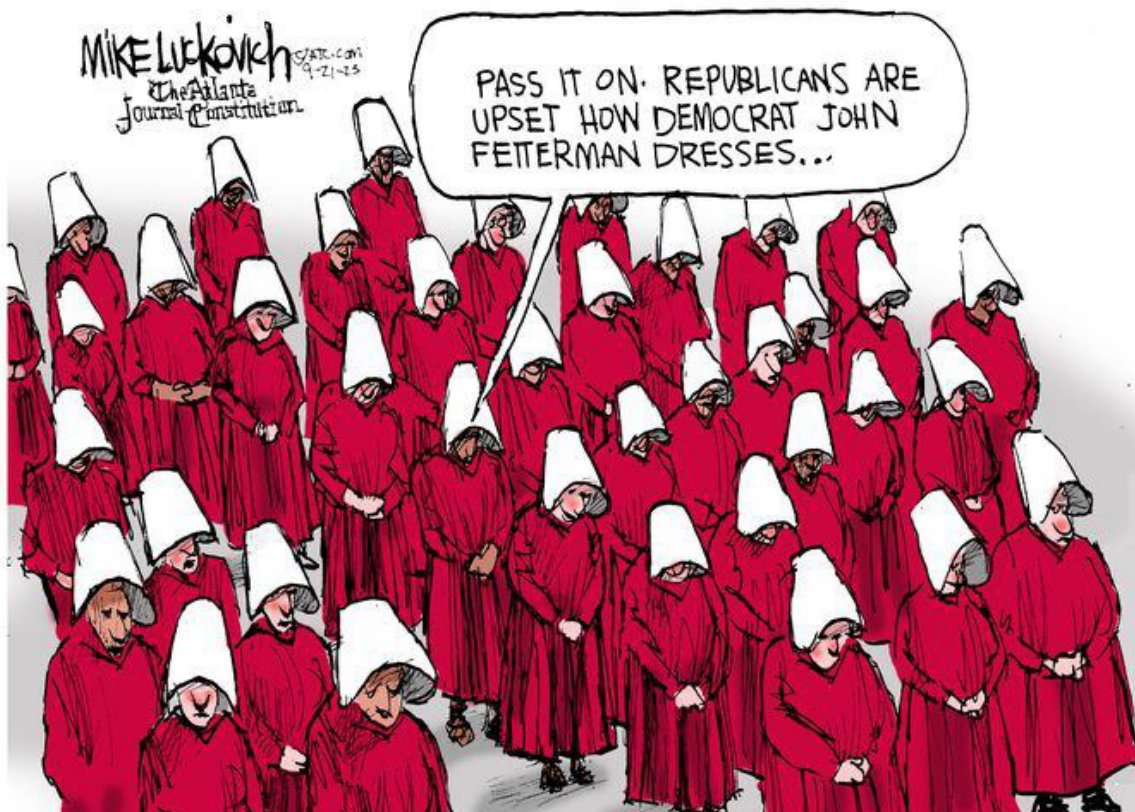
I dedicate this book to the memory of Carolyn Harder, my longtime friend who died unexpectedly on March 22 of this year. She and I shared many interests, such as music, the arts and travel She was big hearted and thoughtful, and a skilled conversationalist. I'm not sure she agreed with my opinions on politics, but she was fully supportive of my writing and activism. She was loved and admired by many.

Many people have contributed articles and ideas. I've mentioned them with the material I've used. Particularly helpful were Judy Summersby and Gale Halpern. I also benefit greatly from all the books I've read, too numerous to list here, and for the news and opinion emails and articles from such sources as Common Dreams, the Brennan Center for Justice, Heather Cox Richardson, Robert Reich, Thom Hartmann and Daily Kos. May they survive the failings of print media and continue to enlighten us about what we should do to turn this country around. Finally, my longtime producer, Gale Halpern, was unable to work on this year's book. My printer, AlphaGraphics, stepped in to oversee the production, printing and distribution. The text has been prepared by me on a speech recognition program and forwarded to AlphaGraphics. Thanks to my computer consultant, Walter Hubbard, for setting me up to do this. Hurrah for them!

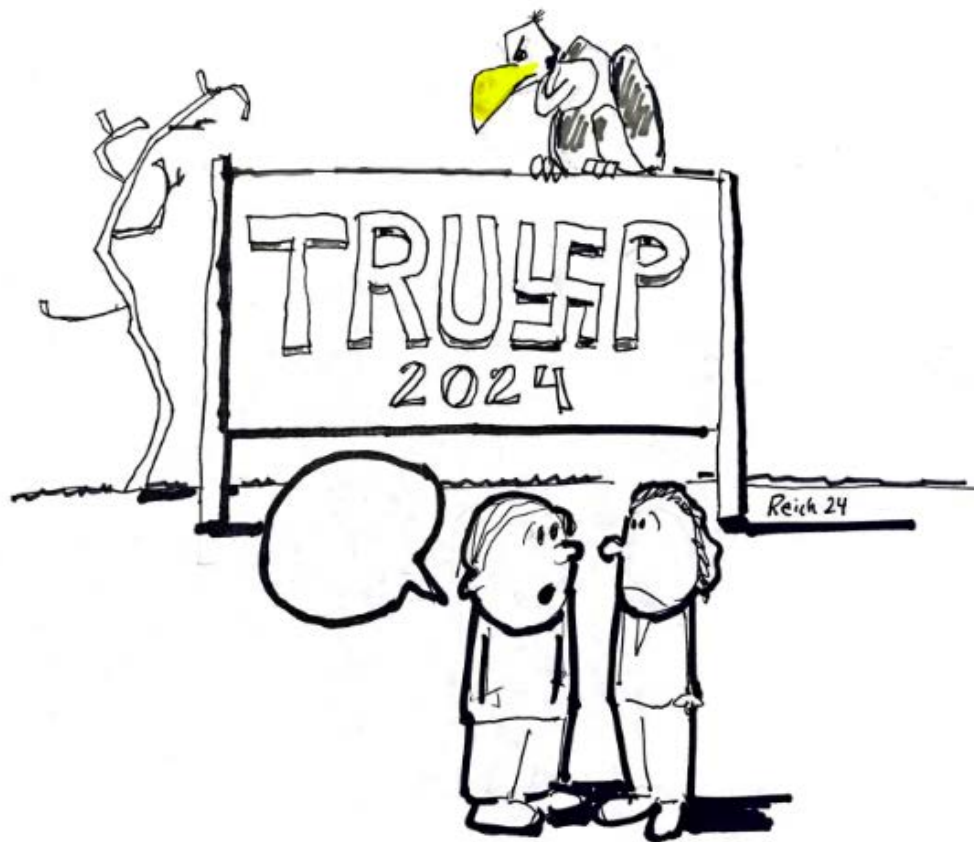
## 2) STICKS AND STONES CAN BREAK YOUR BONES, BUT NAMES CAN LOSE ELECTIONS

"The communists will get you if you don't watch out" Allan Rodgers and many others.

"Nothing spoils a good story like the arrival of an eyewitness." Mark Twain - sent to me by Mary Tracy.



A Cartoon by Mike Luckovich



*"I always knew we would replace the bald eagle with something more fitting, but I admit I did Nazi this coming."*

(Congratulations, Elikeiamfive).

Runner-up:

*"If only there were a sign."*

(Congratulations, Steve\_a50).

Cartoon by Robert Reich

I received a tip off from a friend who attended a Republicorrupt election strategy meeting early in 2024. The meeting was called by top Trump election officials worried that the Trump reelection effort was being undercut by the by the names they and their supporters were attaching their activities. The meeting was chaired by Quo Vadis, who was looking for directions about how the campaign was going. Also present were the following: Praying Mantis, representing the Christian Nationalists; Pro Terminator, representing the part of the right wing which always recommends force as the first option; Doctor Toothaker, of Transcendental, representing the private health wing of the campaign; Capitalist Joe, representing those who say the right wing should never capitulate on anything; and Hair Stockenhausen, representing the barbers and salon owners.

Quo Vadis described the problem the campaign was having as a result of names of their constituent group supporters. Even Trump himself has been using names that cause us trouble with the electorate. We have to make some major changes in how we describe ourselves.

The biggest problem is that some of our supporters are proud to call themselves Nazis. All the repetition in the world is not going to rid us of the picture of our brown shirts bringing Nazism to America. I have a proposal for this. We will all agree never to use the word, Nazi, again during the campaign. Instead, we will call ourselves the Not-Sees. This change gives us the best of both worlds. Those who are diehard Nazis can feel comfortable with Not Sees instead because it sounds so much like Nazi. The rest of us can hide behind the new term because it gives us plausible deniability (like they do in military circles) that we support Nazis and their programs.

That's not all of the name changes we should undertake. We've had the fascist label pinned on our movement and this is catching on fast. We should eliminate the word from our description of our programs but that will not be nearly enough. Instead, we should call the movement "slowcists", to show that we are proceeding at a measured pace with our ideas.

Then there are other names some of us have used, maybe in an effort to impress our leader. So, I propose that we change Hitler to Missler (or Missile), Fuhrer to Fury (to recognize his fiery temper) and Goebels to Gerbils (since he looks like one). Other changes could include Mussolini to Muscles-Leana , to recognize that with his large muscles and all the medals he has awarded himself he leans whenever he is upright; Himmler to Hurler, because he aims his ammunition at his enemies, particularly at women; and Von Ribbentrop to Ribbontrope, because with all the ribbons he wears it is sometimes hard to recognize him, and Adolf Eichman, who we

will call Acheman because he always complains about his pains and calls people he doesn't like a "pain in the ass". So, you get the point. Any questions?

"Yes", said Doctor Toothaker. "How are we going to enforce this new language? There are many groups out there which support our leader and operate pretty independently. Are they going to grouse about having their speech curtailed? After all, we prize our right to free speech to get our propaganda accepted".

"No" said VADIS. "We control most of the big time money that that goes into your campaigns. If people or groups don't like it, we turn off the money spigot. As we know, money trumps speech every time.

### 3) TO HELL WITH RONALD REAGAN, OR CONTROVERSIAL COMMENTS ON THE COLD WAR, BY FRANK VIRNELLI

Monday Club paper January 31, 2024

Frank Virnelli

To Hell with Ronald Reagan

or

Controversial Comments on the Cold War

In the 1980's an American and a Soviet were discussing the pros and cons of their systems of government. The American tried to explain the advantages of a free-market system where the rights of citizens are respected. He said *"For example, I can stand in front of the White House and yell 'To Hell with Ronald Reagan' and nothing would happen to me."*

The Russian scratched his head and said, *"What's the big deal about that? Nothing would happen to me if I stood in Red Square all day long shouting 'To Hell with Ronald Reagan.'"*

Last year I was in my partner's house on Martha's Vineyard and noticed a book on the kitchen counter called 'Daughter of the Cold War'. The author was Grace Kennan Warnecke, the daughter of George Kennan. Kennan was the diplomat who first suggested the

containment policy that was adopted by the US to control Soviet aggression following WWII.

I picked up the book and was fascinated to read about the author's very interesting life. She was born in Riga, Latvia in 1932 where her father was training to become one of the first American diplomats to serve in Moscow since Wilson had severed relations with Russia after the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. FDR was planning to reestablish relations with the Soviet Union and the Foreign Service had sent a team of its officers to Latvia and Estonia, nations that we recognized that had many residents who had previously lived in Russia. Kennan was a young officer who had first been sent to Berlin to learn Russian. He met a young Norwegian woman there and they were married after a brief courtship. Following his wedding, Kennan was assigned to Latvia and Grace was born there nine months later.

In her youth, the family moved frequently and Grace often spent long periods of time with relatives or family friends. She attended many different schools by the time she was a teenager, she had been in schools that taught in five different languages. In Moscow, her father decided that she should attend a Russian public school in order to

have a more complete immersion into the language and culture of Russia. She sat in the back of the class for months before she understood what the teacher was saying. It wasn't until she attended Radcliffe that she spent more than two years in one school.

As an adult she had a variety of jobs that included working as an art critic, a journalist, and a professional photographer, while she was raising her three children. She eventually gained enough confidence to leave a domineering, extremely critical husband and used her linguistic and business experience to start a service managing exchanges with the USSR. She worked with different partners to develop her business. Her first business partner made only one trip to Moscow and Leningrad with her. The woman was appalled by the conditions and couldn't get past the body odor of many of the Russians they met. Grace explained that frequent bathing wasn't easy when multiple families often shared a single bathroom in the crowded buildings where most of them lived, but the woman refused to make another trip with Grace.

Grace escorted many groups to both Moscow and Leningrad. Her numerous clients included a documentary film maker whose film was too honest in its portrayal of

life in the Soviet Union and it caused difficulties for her when she applied for her next visa. She escorted a number of well-known individuals including several members of the Kennedy family. She had a particularly interesting trip with Joan Baez that I'll mention later.

After the fall of the Soviet Union, she spent over eight years in former Soviet states working both as a businesswoman representing a wide variety of clients and as a leader of non-profit projects run by American NGO's. These projects involved developing 'business incubators' where residents of the former Soviet states were taught how to run their own businesses. Her work included over four years working in the Ukraine with Winrock, a very impressive organization founded by Winthrop Rockefeller that has done excellent work in many developing countries. The Ukraine project, with Grace as its first director, had significant success helping women who had had no previous exposure to free enterprise learn how to develop their own businesses.

Her famous father died in 2005 at the age of 101. In going through his papers, she was stunned to find a copy of an old letter that he had written to her children when she was experiencing financial difficulties while trying to develop her business in the USSR. He asked them to

provide financial support for their mother, since he was not in a position to help her himself.

The letter read:

*"I do not regard her present situation as primarily her own fault. She has worked very hard. She has carved out for herself a remarkable and unique place in the pattern of private Soviet-American exchanges. She knows her business. She has more friends and contacts in Russia than anyone else in the game. And when she has met with ingratitude or has found herself exploited, as so often happened, she has always bounced back with great courage and with that special sort of gallantry for which we all love her."*

This was particularly meaningful to Grace since she had always felt that her father tended to be a chauvinist who thought that the primary role of women should be to support their men.

When Grace completed her work in the Ukraine, she bought a house on Martha's Vineyard with two of her children. Through mutual friends, I had the opportunity to meet her and we had some very interesting conversations. I enjoyed hearing about her adventures in the former Soviet Union. She told me that when Joan

Baez asked her to escort her to Moscow, she knew that Joan was an outspoken supporter of Jewish residents who were having difficulty leaving the USSR in order to emigrate to Israel. Before they left the US, Grace emphasized to Joan that she could not take anything of value with her and give it to Soviet citizens to help them emigrate.

However, when they were landing in Moscow, Grace became suspicious that Joan was hiding something important in her guitar case. She was terrified that they might both be arrested if authorities found illegal items. Fortunately, they were met at the airport by one of Grace's influential friends and he enabled them to avoid a customs exam. Later, when they met the head of the Jewish group and he realized that Joan was trying to give them financial assistance, he flatly refused any help. He was only too aware of the risk if they were caught. Grace later found out that Joan had hidden \$30,000 in her guitar case and had been determined to pass it on to the group.

Grace seemed to be surprised that I was so interested in her book. We had some very pleasant conversations and she never seemed to tire of answering my questions. At age 91 her memory was remarkable.

Discussing the Cold War reminded me of the fear that gripped the country after the Soviets exploded their first 'nuclear device' in 1949. I was 10 years old and I can remember watching films demonstrating how to get under a school desk to help survive a nuclear attack. People boasted about the bomb shelters in their backyards and many months they could survive with the supplies that they had stored in them. I sometimes felt that it was just a matter of time before a bomb was dropped.

I realized that I knew little about important details of the Cold War and I knew that it had had a significant impact on my early years. I don't know when I stopped worrying about a nuclear attack but, when I had to interrupt my medical training to serve on active duty in the Navy, I learned a lot more about how much the Cold War affected American foreign policy.

From 1965 to 1967, I spent two years as a medical officer working in the Naval Station Hospital in Argentia, Newfoundland. Argentia was the site of a famous meeting of FDR and Churchill where they signed the Atlantic Charter and worked out plans for the Lend Lease

Program to help support the British prior to US entry into the War.

Argentia is on Placentia Bay where huge convoys would organize before making the extremely dangerous crossing of the Atlantic with critical supplies for Britain and the USSR. I was there 20 years after the last convoys had sailed and the submarine nets had been removed, but Argentia was still considered to be an important part of America's defense system.

I thought that it was interesting that Argentia had the largest Bachelor Officers Quarters in the US Navy. The nine-story structure was the tallest building in the province when it was built shortly after the War. It was built to house the crews of the four-engine Constellations, large spy planes with multiple radar domes bulging above and below their bodies which earned them the nick-name 'pregnant camels'. At least one plane was in the air at all times on every leg of the Distant Early Warning line, better-known by its acronym, the DEW line, that stretched across the Arctic from the Aleutians to Scotland. When I arrived in 1965, spy satellites had recently replaced the Constellations, but Argentia was still considered to be important because it had a top-secret unit that was called simply 'The Naval

Facility'. This was part of a submarine detection system that extends along the coastlines of both the US and Canada and a much more sophisticated version is currently being developed across the Pacific to prepare for the threat of China's navy.

The system has sophisticated monitoring devices on cables on the ocean floor that can detect the slightest movement of the quietest submarines. The Navy now operates the system from two bases, one on each coast. Its existence wasn't made public until the end of the Cold War in 1991. The other top-secret area of the Naval Station was a site which was supposed to have nuclear missiles prepared to be launched on a moment's notice.

Another officer and I were once arrested by military police for accidentally riding our bicycles into a restricted area. We had two of my children, ages three and four, riding in seats on the back of the bicycles. We were released with a reprimand that, as far as I know, did not become part of my military record. However, knowing how rigid the Navy can be, it may have been the reason I was turned down when my senior medical officer recommended me for a special citation for my work as Scoutmaster of the Station Boy Scout troop. I'll never know.

I read an excellent book called 'The Wisemen' written by Walter Isaacson and Evan Thomas that focuses on six men who played invaluable roles in the administrations of presidents from FDR to LBJ. The six men included Averill Harriman, an outstanding, long-serving diplomat who was head of the Lend-Lease Program and the only one of the six to be elected to public office when he served as governor of New York. The second was George Kennan, Grace's father and a respected diplomat and foreign policy expert who spent much of his career at the Institute for Advanced Studies in Princeton, NJ after he was recruited by its director, Robert Oppenheimer. The third was Charles Bohlen, also an outstanding diplomat who served as an ambassador in many capitals including Moscow and Paris. Grace called him 'Uncle Charles'. The fourth was Dean Acheson, Truman's Secretary of State, and a key figure in developing the Marshall Plan, NATO and the UN. His autobiography was immodestly entitled "Present at the Creation". He drew particular attention from McCarthyites, partly due to his undisguised disdain for outspoken, ignorant people. After a particularly long grilling by the House Un-American Activities Committee, one of the Republican Congressmen complained that he had an unfair advantage. He knew more about the material than they did. The last two were John McCloy

and Bob Lovett, businessmen who, when called upon, served many vital roles in government. FDR's Secretary of War, Henry Stimson, selected them to be his top assistants to prepare for and fight WWII.

The authors describe the service of the six under FDR and Truman as the 'Golden Age of American Diplomacy'. It's very interesting to me that FDR selected many Republicans for key positions in his administration, including John Winant, the outstanding ambassador to England who replaced Joe Kennedy, Henry Stimson, probably the best Secretary of War in US history, and both of Stimson's remarkable assistants, McCloy and Lovett. Stimson called them his 'Golden Twins'. McCloy has written that, on occasion, when the conversation wandered into New Deal politics, he had to remind FDR that he was a Republican. I asked Grace about the book and she commented that the authors treated the businessmen better than the diplomats.

The starting date of the Cold War is controversial but the policy of containment was first outlined by George Kennan in his 8,000 word 'Long Telegram' sent from Moscow to Washington in February, 1946. Kennan was then the acting-ambassador to Moscow while Averill Harriman was in Washington. When he was asked to give

his opinion of US-Soviet relations, Kennan decided to tell Washington exactly how he felt. The telegram started by describing how tsarist Russia was almost paranoid in its fear an invasion. He had carefully evaluated Stalin's behavior since he had taken control of the USSR from a gravely-ill Lenin in 1924. Lenin did not want Stalin to be his successor, but he was powerless to prevent it.

Kennan knew that Stalin would try to take control of as much of Europe as he could and he recommended a policy of containment by the Western Powers. I have read that very few documents have had more influence on American foreign policy than the version of this telegram that was later published in Foreign Affairs magazine with a simple X in place of the author's name. Kennan had been advised that it would be inappropriate for a State Department officer to use his name on this type of publication. The month after the famous telegram, Churchill gave his 'Iron Curtain' speech. Some feel that Stalin's paranoia about US intentions traces back to Woodrow Wilson, who not only severed ties with the Bolsheviks but sent 8500 US troops to Eastern Russia in 1918. These unfortunate soldiers spent 18 months in Siberia supporting the White Russians during the Civil War that followed the Russian Revolution.

The Cold War dragged on for over four decades with multiple proxy-wars and a number of frightening episodes that reached the brink of nuclear war. There were several close calls but probably none more dangerous than the Cuban Missile Crisis.

When Stalin died in 1953 there was hope that East-West relations could be significantly improved. Unfortunately, the Soviet leaders who followed Stalin were narrow-minded, poorly educated men who lacked the ability to significantly change Soviet policy.

Four men; Molotov, Malenkov, Beria and Khrushchev struggled for control. Malenkov, who was probably the most moderate of the group, temporarily gained control. He contacted Bohlen, who was then the US ambassador in Moscow, and told him that he was interested in meaningful negotiations with the US. Bohlen sent a message to John Foster Dulles, Eisenhower's Secretary of State, stating that he felt that the Soviets were sincerely interested in dialing down the tension between the two super-powers. Dulles didn't bother to reply.

Soon after, Beria, Stalin's former chief of police, was arrested and then Dulles called Bohlen home for talks. Bohlen met with Dulles and again told him that he felt

that Malenkov's request for negotiations was sincere. Dulles' reply was to show Bohlen a passage that he had underlined in a book that Stalin had written, entitled 'The Problems with Leninism'. He told Bohlen that he believed that, based what Stalin had written, there would be a bloody battle for power and that the Communist regime would fall. Bohlen told him that Stalin was dead and he didn't believe that what he had written had anything to do with the current situation. Dulles ignored him and refused to respond to Malenkov's request.

Years later, Bohlen stated that he felt that a great opportunity had been lost and that he should have gone directly to Eisenhower, but his respect for the office of Secretary of State had kept him from going behind Dulles' back. Small people on both sides managed to maintain the distrust that allowed the Cold War to continue for forty years.

Khrushchev eventually out-maneuvered his opposition and took control. He made some significant changes in the rigid Soviet system including loosening of police-state tactics and he improved the standard of living by increasing spending on consumer goods. He also managed to develop a promising relationship with

Eisenhower and became the first Soviet leader to visit the US.

In 1956, many Hungarians, encouraged by an over-zealous Voice of America into believing that the US would come to their aid, tried to free Hungary from Soviet control. Khrushchev tried to settle the situation peacefully, but the violence got out of control and conservative generals over-reacted and sent tanks into Budapest. Many of the freedom fighters lost their lives and relations with the West took a serious turn for the worse.

Three years later a promising summit meeting was scheduled in Paris. Eisenhower had cancelled U-2 flights over the Soviet Union years earlier, while he tried to improve relations with the Soviets, but Allen Dulles convinced him that one more flight should be made to be sure that the US did not have a 'missile-gap'. He assured Ike that the Soviets still didn't have the ability to reach the 80,000-foot flight path of the U-2 with their antiaircraft missiles. Eisenhower reluctantly agreed to allow the flight. When the U-2 went down the summit was cancelled.

The fear of Communism was fed by the demagogue, Joe McCarthy, who was assisted by his mentor, Roy Cohn.

Cohn convinced McCarthy that his outrageous lies would be believed by most people if he repeated them often enough. The fear of Communism made it very difficult for diplomats to deal with the Soviets and contributed greatly to an irrational arms race. The paranoia on both sides led to disastrous mistakes and was a major factor that led to our involvement in Vietnam.

Cohn later became the mentor of Donald Trump who proved to be a very receptive student. Cohn became a wealthy man, but his unethical methods resulted in the disgrace of losing his license to practice law. Unfortunately, his influence lives on.

History has shown that the CIA, under the leadership of Foster Dulles' brother Allen, had a remarkably negative influence on American foreign policy early in the Cold War. In 1953 Eisenhower initially wanted to give financial support to Mohammad Mossadeqh, a Western-educated intellectual who had been elected president of Iran's new democracy. Early in his presidency, Mossadeqh realized that the US was paying Saudi Arabi three times as much for its oil as Britain was paying Iran. The British refused to renegotiate with Iran, and Mossadeqh decided to nationalize the petroleum industry. Despite the fact that Mossadeqh has never been shown to have had

Communist sympathies, the British and the Dulles brothers convinced Eisenhower that only a Communist would nationalize his country's oil industry. Eisenhower reluctantly agreed to support Dulles' recommendation to overthrow Mossadegh, as long as the US role was not revealed. The CIA shipped \$220,000 in cash to Iran to hire a bunch of thugs to remove Mossadegh from power. He offered little resistance and the corrupt Shah was restored to his throne.

The Shah used his secret police ruthlessly to eliminate any potential competitors and was able to remain in power until 1979 when he was overthrown by Ayatollah Khomeini. Most Americans couldn't understand why Iranians hated America as intensely as they did. The US had altered the course of Iranian politics by replacing a democratically-elected leader with a ruthless tyrant. This eventually resulted the establishment of a theocracy that continues to be a bitter enemy of the US and a major threat to world peace.

The following year, the democratically-elected president of Guatemala, Jacobo Arbenz, was overthrown and a leader who had been selected and supported by the CIA was installed. This action triggered a vicious civil war that lasted 40 years and left 40,000 dead. Most of the deaths

were the result of government death squads that would often eliminate every resident of towns suspected of harboring rebels.

There are reports that Fidel Castro, who was then in prison for his role in trying to overthrow Batista, was appalled by the CIA intervention in Guatemala and America's willingness to remove any leader that it didn't like. Experts believe that this action had a strong influence on Castro's decision to make Cuba a Communist state.

These were considered to be the successes of the CIA. The Bay of Pigs fiasco finally forced Allen Dulles to resign.

It was later revealed that countless men who had fled the Communist takeover of their countries were recruited by the CIA and sent back to their home countries to work as spies. This took place in many Eastern European and Asian countries. Very few of these men were ever heard from again. They were often met on arrival by Communist agents and immediately eliminated. The mole in the CIA, Aldrich Ames, and the British agent, Kim Philby, had remarkable access to American intelligence and kept the KGB well informed.

The CIA had very little success in developing effective agents behind the 'Iron Curtain' and was unable to predict any significant Soviet moves.

Tim Weiner has written an excellent book about the dismal record of the CIA, entitled "A Legacy of Ashes". The title was taken from Eisenhower's reference to the CIA that he was passing on to Kennedy. Evan Thomas reviewed the book in the NYT. He ended the review by stating:

*"One may wonder: Is an open democracy capable of building and sustaining an effective secret intelligence service? Maybe not. But, with Islamic terrorists vowing to set off a nuclear device in an American city, there isn't much choice but to keep trying."*

When Gorbachev came to power in 1985, he was the first Soviet leader since Lenin to have been university-educated. The Russian economy was a disaster. The country was almost totally dependent on petroleum exports to pay for military and civilian spending. He felt that the Warsaw Pact countries should be free to elect their own leaders and choose their own form of government. Reagan had little problem convincing Gorbachev that the Berlin Wall was a symbol of the failure of an economic system that did not allow its

citizens to run their own businesses or own private property.

A group of respected scholars have specialized in Cold War and Soviet studies. These include Winchester resident, Robert Legvold. Bob is a friend who published a book, 'Return to Cold War' in 2016. In a review of his book, Condoleezza Rice, who is currently director of Stanford's Hoover Institution, states:

*"Robert Legvold is an extraordinary scholar with a long history of expertise in US-Russian relations. He was a giant in the field when I was a very young Soviet specialist." Referring to his book, she adds, "He lives up to his reputation as one of the best Russia experts of our age."*

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, these scholars had been optimistic that Russia, with Western assistance, would be able to develop into a democracy with a successful market economy and respect for human rights. Many thought that it might become an invaluable ally. Unfortunately, Gorbachev was unable to handle the chaos that followed the breakup of the USSR and he was overthrown. Yeltsin was initially able to stabilize the country, but could do little to prevent the development of

a system where a small group of oligarchs were able to accumulate vast wealth while most of the population was impoverished.

Yeltsin struggled to improve the standard of living with limited success. He had a problem with alcohol and was in poor health and made the decision to hire an efficient young bureaucrat, Vladimir Putin, as his assistant.

Grace had once had a meeting with Putin. She represented a client who requested that she meet with the charismatic mayor of St Petersburg, Anatoly Sobchak, to promote his project. She was able to schedule a meeting, but, at the last minute, she was notified that the mayor had been unexpectedly tied up and she was shunted off to the deputy mayor, Vladimir Putin.

She described the meeting in her book and I quote:

*"I had read that Putin came from the KGB. I walked into the office of a compact blond man with chilling blue eyes. We were alone. All I could think of was how I wouldn't want to be on the other side of an interrogation by him. He had none of the Sobchak's charm, and I was not successful in getting what my client wanted. If someone had told me that I had just talked for thirty minutes with*

*the future president of Russia, I would have thought the person delusional."*

Putin later became Yeltsin's vice president and then was his choice to succeed him as president of the Russia. I believe that Yeltsin's decision has turned out to be a Russian tragedy.

I have had discussions with Bob Legvold about both the original and the new Cold War, focusing on the clumsy Western diplomacy that followed the collapse of the USSR in 1991. He and a number of his colleagues feel that poor policy decisions, particularly NATO's extension into former Warsaw Pact countries, seriously undermined relations with Russia in its struggle to develop into an open, free-market society with respect for individual rights.

When Putin became president, he was obsessed with restoring Russia's role in world politics and maintaining a buffer zone of former Warsaw Pact countries. Bob feels that the West shares some of the responsibility for Putin's aggression, particularly by NATO's reaching out to Georgia and the Ukraine as possible future members at their summit meeting in Bucharest in 2008.

Experts agree that Putin has become a ruthless, narcissistic dictator, but many believe that a more diplomatic policy may have allowed cooperation on critical issues including nuclear policy, climate control, management of the Arctic and terrorism.

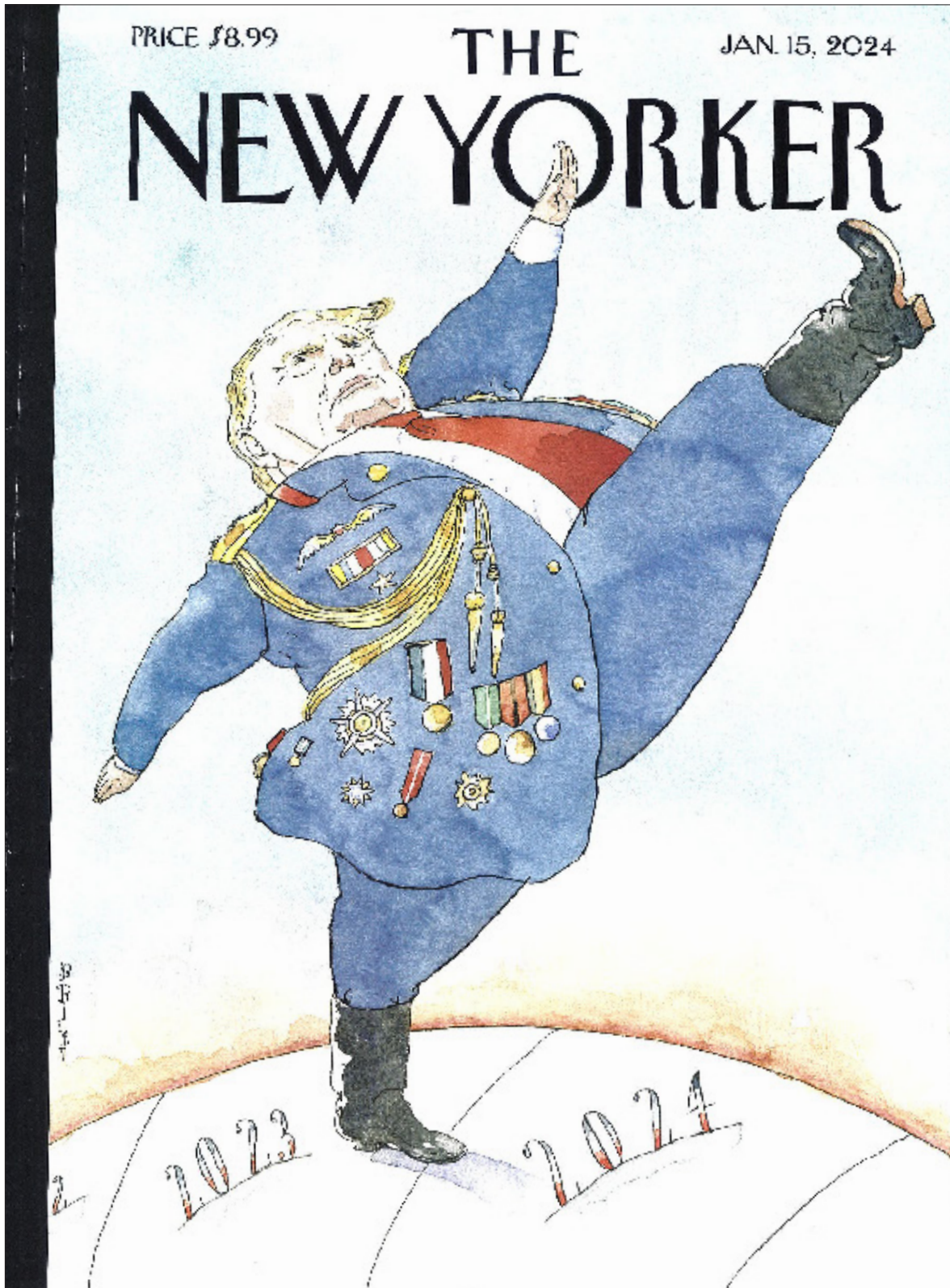
Bob believes that Putin's escalation of his Ukrainian invasion two years ago was made in the belief that Russia would rapidly take over the entire country and there would be little response from Western powers beyond additional sanctions which would not be respected by many countries including China and India. There are now few scholars who anticipate an early end of the Ukrainian War. Most of them agree that the best result that one can expect would be to have Zelensky and Putin agree to a Korea-type armistice, accepting Russian control of the territory that it currently occupies. It is estimated that this senseless war has already resulted in more than half a million civilian and military casualties.

It's worth noting that the South Korean leader Syngman Rhee had to be forced by his Allies to accept the 1953 armistice that ended the Korean War. After peace was established in Korea, South Korea built a remarkable economy that is currently 57 times as large as that of North Korea. Hopefully the Ukraine will be able to reach

a settlement and, with Western help, rebuild its infrastructure and develop a robust economy similar to that of South Korea.

At the present time, Russia, with close to twice the area of any other country, has an economy significantly smaller than that of South Korea. Without new leadership, its economy is likely to continue to struggle and conditions for the long-suffering Russian people will not improve.

4) TRUMPLESTILTSKIN: NO MATTER WHAT HIS NAME,  
HE ALWAYS HAS NO SHAME





A Cartoon by Mike Luckovich



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THE

JUNE 10, 2024

# NEW YORKER





During the year I collect articles and other materials on a variety of subjects. When ready to start writing, I decide what topics to address and what articles to include. I decided that this year I would write about Donald Trump in depth (that's the space he usually occupies) because he dominates the news so much. I ended with an 8-inch pile of materials. The problem is not where to start but where to end.

#### A. Names

I start with the amazing list of names Trump has accumulated over the years. I'll then include sections on his cognitive decline, his foreign connections, his serial fraud, Trumpism and his plans if elected president. Not since Ronald Reagan has a president earned such mockery. My favorite quote about Reagan was when Dean Acheson called him an "amiable dunce". But Trump has succeeded I receiving unfavorable comments many times over. Here is a catalogue of some of them

I start with the March 14, 2024 email from Heather Cox Richardson, one of my favorite writers.

“An even greater potential con”

“Political conning is Trump’s genius”

“The clearest and most terrifying danger to America and the world”

“Utter stupidity in every dimension”

Robert Reich, another of my favorite writers.

3/2/24 email. “Who’s Vladimir Putin’s best friend in the world?”

2/12/24 email. “Trump’s cesspool of muck”

2/11/24 email. “ An existential disgrace to the country.”

3/14/24 email. “ The dumbest goddamn student I ever had,” a Wharton School of Business School professor. Also, “He has the attention span of a fruit fly”.

Reich also catalogues what some of Trump’s staff members called him.

“A f.cking moron.” Rex Tillerson, Secretary of State.

“A dope.” National Security Advisor H.R. McMaster.

“An idiot” Many staff and Rupert Murdoch

“Dumb as sh.t.” Chief Economic Advisor Gary Cohen.

“Remarkably stupid.” Reich

“Crime boss with pardon power” 12/31/22 email from People’s Choice for President.

“For him, obstruction of justice is a way of life” . 4/18/24 email from Mark Green, quoting John Bolton.

Thom Hartmann, in a Common Dreams 1/4/24 email. “Trump and his political allies, fools and bullies all.”

Hal Crowther article in the 3/1/24 2024 Progressive Populist with many of the same comments on Trump, most of which are from staff and supporters of Trump.

“a self- promoting crook”

“an idiot who has become the favorite laughingstock of the local disc jockeys”

“An orange-haired top crested 300-pound sideshow attraction”.

“a hometown horror”

“He has no principles, none. It’s business and cruelty. Donald’ cruel”.

“The world’s most dangerous man”

“A phony, a fraud. Deeply weird.”

“An existential threat to democracy”

“A consummate racist, and he constantly engages in reckless conduct that puts his political followers at risk”

“A person who adores autocratic and murderous dictators. A person that has nothing but contempt for our democratic institutions, our constitution and the rule of law.”

“We don’t take an oath to a wannabe dictator”

“By the time I left the White House, I was convinced he was not fit to be president. I think it is a danger for the United States if he gets a second term.

“This completely lawless, ignorant foul-mouthed President.”

“The thing about Donald Trump is that he lacks the character and the moral center we desperately need again in the White House”

“A complete dolt. I laughed. I cringed. I was astonished at how a person could reach adulthood knowing so little about history, geography, literature, spelling.”

Here is a limerick written by Judy Summersby on 6/13/23.

"There once was a man named Trump

His heart was as hard as a stump

He'll go see the judge

They won't eat some fudge

They entered the trial with a grump"

I also have many descriptions of Trump's character in my past books. The dates listed are the years the books were published.

### 2018

A quote about Trump's narcissism.

"Trump is a born- again cretin. This is one of my own invention.

An article entitled: Pardon me but I'm the president and I can do anything I want. (Regrettably, the lawless U.S. Supreme Court has now bought into that).

Trump is a controversial idiot"

Trump is a vulgar man of the lowest character"

Rick Reilly's book, Commander in Cheat: How Golf Explains Trump

Trump acts like a "professional clown"

Trump is an "omnipotentate"

Trump and those who oppose improvements in healthcare: Medi-evilists.

2019

"A motherf...er"

### 2020

The Trump Kakistocracy. "A system of government which is run by the worst, least qualified or most unscrupulous citizens"

Trump is a “ludicrous leader”

Tricky Trumpsters

Trump as the waster in chief. More sewage disposal plants and landfills should be named after him. Trump Dumps

## 2021

“That scoundrel”

Donald Trump is a modern Rumpelstiltskin”

Trump is in errant ringmaster

“Trump’s White House is a madhouse boat trip”

“The White House will be occupied by a downright fool and a completely narcissistic moron.” H. L. Mencken

“Trump’s indifference amounts to negligent homicide”

## 2022

Trump is evil

Trump is a “narcissistic dolt”

“Trump is a Titanic figure: he takes everyone else down with him”

Trump is the “ignoramus in chief”

“Trump is an inveterate lawbreaker with a focus solely on himself to the exclusion of everyone else and the public good”

“Trump is heedless of the law and protocols of the office and fixed entirely on himself and his political future”

“It hard to describe how little he knows.”

“The anti- Christ.”

2023

"The orange menace"

"Seize Trump's passport -there is no greater flight risk than a con flagging every crime imaginable"

Have you had enough? I imagine that there are many unfavorable comments about Trump which I have not listed here. I have some more of them at the end of this chapter.

### B. Trump's Mental Condition

I make no pretense that I am particularly knowledgeable about mental illnesses. I did take a course on psychology at college for my science elective, but that was long ago (1954 - 55) and we have learned much since then. But you don't have to be an expert to know that something is very wrong with Trump. For starters, he frequently slurs his monologues about his nutty ideas with the phrase, " only I know." I recently watched a rebroadcast of Lawrence O'Donnell in which he played some of Trump's speeches in 2016, in one of which he apologized for having said some incorrect things in his speech. Then O'Donnell said that he and his colleagues had scoured Trump's speeches and concluded that that was the only instance which they could find where Trump had apologized for anything. This is man who, according to tracking by the Washington Post, had committed more than 30,000 lies during his presidency.

A recent analysis online on the David Packman show featured a Cornell psychologist named Harry Siegel. While he said he was not a psychiatrist or neurologist, he identified trends in Trump's speeches over time that led him to conclude that Trump's brain capacity is fast getting worse. Others have written about Trump's "negative decline." Heather Cox Richardson, in her 1/20/24 report, describes a conference in New Hampshire at which Trump mixed up the names of public officials and some key events. A Daily Beast article of 1/5/24 is headlined: Trump's mind melts down in bizarre E. Jean Carroll posting blitz. Robert Reich has a 12/18/23 email with the following title: What about Trump dementia? The media should be reporting on his growing persecution complex and cognitive impairment" Reich also wrote, in a 12/18/23 email: Warning(if you need it). Trump is nuts and he'll do anything - anything to win."

Much of this behavior stems from his unbroken narcissism. Everything revolves around him and only around him. Some consequences of this are close to being

insane. Trump still claims that the 2020 election was stolen from him despite there being no evidence that this happened. Robert Reich, his 8/31/23 email, describes Trump's "bonkers" plan to impeach Biden. The House Republicans meekly went ahead with this and impeached Biden despite there being no evidence that Biden had committed any impeachable offense. The Senate quickly disposed of that without even a vote or debate because it was so groundless. A Daily Kos email of 12/7/23 describes a former Trump staff member's testimony in court that Trump was a "feather-triggered fascist with a volcanic temper."

More recently in the New York trial of Trump for paying off women and others in a 2016 attempt to squash news about his sexual escapades, Trump couldn't contain himself from calling court witnesses and employees nasty names. The judge finally imposed a gag order on Trump. So far, Trump has been found in contempt for 9 violations of this order and fined \$9,000. Other instances of violations of these orders are pending. A good article on this continuing saga is in the 2/22/23 email from Daily Kos.

People for the American Way has weekly series of articles on Trump called Trumpastrophies. Its 5/17/24 email has a story about Trump's erratic behavior when his staff proposed improvements to our country's infrastructure. He walked out of several staff meetings and never produced even a draft for the analysts. Finally, Democrats in Congress, working against total opposition by Republicans, passed solid infrastructure bill in 2023.

A People For the American Way email of 5/26/24 describes how Trump went off to the rails criticizing the media and the high tech companies in terms that showed his ignorance of the 1st Amendment and the media's role. Everything he doesn't like he calls "fake news" or "the enemy of the people." The last news I will call to your attention is from a Common Dreams email of 6/5/24: Unhinged Trump floats improving postal fees.

The last aspect of this sorry story is Trump's and the Republicorrupts' attacks on Joe Biden's health. At 80, Biden looks somewhat more frail and sometimes moves more slowly than he used to. But at other times, such as in his 2024 State of the Union address, by all accounts he projected enthusiasm in his hour-long speech. Trump and the Republicorrupts have done what they always do when under attack on an issue in which they're vulnerable. They attack back using the same criticisms as they are receiving. This is the psychological condition called projection, a form of mental illness. In my 2014 book, I wrote an article about this condition, calling it group projection. This proclivity was analyzed in a 10/30/23 article by Michael

Bender and Michael Gold of the New York Times: “How Trump’s verbal slips could weaken his attacks on Biden’s age.”

The comparison between Biden’s and Trump’s health and mental acuity were recently the subject of comments on the first debate between Biden and Trump. The mainstream media focused almost exclusively on Biden’s failing performance. It did not mention that nearly all of Trump’s comments were lies or shady with the truth. As a result, Biden got criticism for his health and Trump did not. The consequence, in part, is that Biden has now said he will not be a candidate for president this year, and he has endorsed Vice President Kamala Harris in his place. This turns the tables on the health issue. Harris will soon turn 60 and Trump is 79. Now, the questions about Trump’s suitability predominate.

### C. Trump’s History of Fraud

“The bigger he falls, the more he appalls.” Allan Rodgers.

During the past year I’ve collected so many items about Trump that I can’t cover the subject without making this an overly long book. For example, I have lots of material on such subjects as Trump’s love of dictators and authoritarian leaders of other countries, Trumpism as a dangerous movement, his plans if elected President this November and his possible conviction of criminal and civil transgressions. But I’ve decided to focus the rest of this chapter on the causes that govern his racism, which runs through all his activities.

I suspected from the outset that Trump’s businesses have been riddled with lies and fraudulent transactions, most of them dealing with huge debt he has incurred. This includes reliance on foreign oligarchs, particularly from Russia, and large loans usually described in veiled terms and subject to constant denials. This may account for his personal support for Putin and things Russian. After many disclosures and investigations, he has been indicted on 99 counts of criminal fraud in four courts. The details of these are well documented in an 8/19/23 email from Indivisible. An 8/2/23 email from Lawyers Defending American Democracy describes in great detail the case in DC. Here is a partial list of the most significant fraud by Trump and his acolytes that has been identified.

- Robert Reich, in his email of 5/10/24, has listed items of Trump that are for sale by Trump, saying “with Trump, everything for sale.” He also relates that he told group of oil, gas and other fossil fuel representatives that if they raised \$1 billion for his campaign, he would reverse all the major energy regulatory

changes instituted by the Biden administration. This startling story is also reported in the 5/9/24 email of Common Dreams. A Common Dreams email of 5/10/24 estimates that if this bargain goes through, big oil will reap many times over the billion dollars. Is this bribery? Looks as if it is close to it. But the U.S. Supreme Court has recently held that this kind of transaction does not violate the federal anti- bribery laws unless the bribe is paid before the transaction in question is accomplished.

- Trump constantly bad mouths the mainstream press because they report stories and give opinions that he doesn't like. So, Daily Kos reported in a 11/2/23 email that Trump has filed a "frivolous" \$1.5 billion lawsuit against 20 media outlets.
- A 6/20/23 email from Common Dreams describes a Trump hotel deal with the leaders of the country, Oman, which has led experts in ethics to sound the alarm.
- Trump is facing court judgments that he committed fraud against a woman who said she was raped. According to the story reported in the 9/27/23 Boston Globe, the court imposed fines totaling \$450 million and permitted Trump to raise money to pay the judgment by getting a bond or selling some of his assets. The Appeals Court softened this by lowering the amount of the bond, but at this writing it is still not clear that Trump can satisfy the conditions. This is reported in The Hill's 3/19/24 email, which says that getting the bond would require the "fire sale" of properties, and the Nexstar Media email of 3/10/24 said that losing the properties seized would devastate Trump.
- Heather Cox Richardson's 8/9/23 report describes Trump lawyer Kenneth Chesebrough's proposal to reverse the 2020 election by bringing forward alternate electors in swing states where the Trump people claimed there was major fraud. Trump adopted this plan but his efforts to challenge the election because of fraud were turned down in some 60 lawsuits he filed
- Daily Kos reported in an 8/18/23 email that Trump had announced that he had an "irrefutable" report of voter fraud in Georgia during the 2020 election. He later announced at a press conference that his lawyers told him to submit the report in the fraud case brought by Georgia officials. So far as I know, the report never surfaced.

- A Daily Kos email of 8/20/23 lists 12 pending civil court actions against Trump, in addition to the four criminal cases, which “threaten Trump’s finances.”
- Daily Kos reported in its 8/29/23 email on the California State Bar’s devastating report on ethical violations by John Eastman, one of Trump’s lawyers, which “contains bad news for Trump as well.”
- A Daily Kos 11/3/23 email details the instances at which Trump took in \$160 million from “foreign sources and influence peddling” while president. He had refused to place assets in trust, as all past presidents have done, and continues to be actively involved in his businesses. Democrats on the House Oversight Committee, Common Dreams reports, concluded that Trump’s businesses raised \$91.8 million from foreign governments during his presidency, according to an analysis of just four of Trump’s many businesses. It concluded that these were a violation of the US Constitution’s Emolument Clause. Trump characterized the Emoluments Clause as “phony”. Heather Cox Richardson’s 1/5/24 report gives the details of this report.
- A Common Dreams email of 1/28/24 reports that a court- appointed master in the New York civil action against some of Trump’s business practices concluded that a claimed \$48 million dollar loan “never existed.”
- In his 2/16/24 email, Robert Reich points out that Trump can be liable for fraud even though no one was harmed by it. Reich said: “He was never a successful businessman. He was always a con artist”.
- A Nexstar Media email of 2/19/24 analyzes Trump’s ability to pay all of the \$450 million civil judgment against him, with interest of \$87,000 accumulating each day. The article speculates about the possible sources of payment.
- In his 5/2/24 email, Robert Reich says: “Yes - but, seriously, is Trump now openly embracing fascism?”
- A Common Dreams email of 6/4/24 by Stephen Harper explains a fascist Donald Trump and asks whether Trump’s lawyers can represent him and at the same time comply with lawyers’ ethical rules.
- Robert Reich, at it again, describes in his 6/5/24 email the “Trump - Musk thugocracy”.

- Robert Reich, in his 6/2/24 email, asks what Trump's connection really means? The politics of Mar-A-Lago.

D- Heather Cox Richardson, in her 5/12/24 email, reports on the history of the American cowboy. She writes about "how Trump and his allies have distorted the cowboy image until it has become a poisonous caricature of the values his defenders claim to champion."

- The looming question this year is whether Republicans, following Trump, will accept the 2024 presidential election results if Trump loses. So far, the answers are no. A Boston Globe article of May 12, 2024, Will GOP lawmakers accept election results, explores this question.
- Common Dreams published an email on 5/24/24, an analysis showing Trump's escalated talk of a "rigged" 2024 election.
- A Boston Globe 5/22/24 column by Scott Lehigh writes about "the misplaced notion that Donald Trump is a business whiz"
- A scary article by Thom Hartmann in the Progressive Populist of 6/1/24 : Would dictator Trump kill his rivals? Trump has unleashed far more psychopaths and it's going to get uglier here in America in ways people today can't imagine.
- A Daily Kos email of 4/24/24 cites a 2016 US Today report that Trump has been involved in 4,085 lawsuits during the past three decades.
- The Washington Post and other media outlets have reported that during his presidency Trump has told at least 450 documented lies.

The definitive account of Trump's serial fraud career is Maggie Haberman's 500 page 2023 book, Confidence Man.

Well, have you had enough? There is lots more, and new stories are coming to light on a regular basis. How do we combat the Trump life of unmitigated evil? One way is to keep doing what I have tried to do in this chapter. As Daily Kos put it its 1/3/23 email: to beat Trump, mock Trump. Make him the laughingstock he deserves to be by labeling Trump and MAGA supporters as "Weirdos." This is a word used to label people as strange or perverted, but is also a term used by younger people, whose votes are critical for the Democrats to gain. We'll see how this works out: It has happened as of early August. Trump doesn't get riled up when he is called nasty

names because that's what he also does. But he hates to be laughed at. Now, the Democrats have something to use to make them look ridiculous. Judy Summersby sent me an August 3, 2024 article from The Guardian: This one word trick might win Democrats the election.

My college roommate, Jock Brooks, recently sent me an article from the British Writer's Press. This is the best description of Trump and his mega maggot base I've read. It is dated 4/26/24. Jock and I attended English public schools between secondary school and college, so we appreciate the erudition and persuasiveness of the best English writers. Here are some quotes from this article. "... he has no class, no charm, no coolness, no credibility, no compassion, no wit, no warmth, no wisdom, no subtlety, no sensitivity, no self-awareness, no humility, no honor, and no grace." "While Trump may be laughing, he has never said anything wry, witty or even fairly amusing, not once, not ever." "...he doesn't even seem to understand what a joke is - his idea of a joke is a crass comment, an illiterate insight. a casual act of cruelty.

"If Frankenstein decided to make a monster assembled entirely from Trump's flaws - he would make a Trump"

## **5) THE RIGHT WING'S CRUEL CAMPAIGN TO TURN IMMIGRANTS INTO ELIMIGRANTS.**

My first book in this series of books was self- published in 2014. its title is: 1984 Has Come and Gone, But the Right Wing is Creating Orwell's World. The first subject in this book was about the crackdowns on immigrants in Arizona. This is a spoof about the anti- immigrant governor of Arizona. One of her supposed actions was to issue a directive that wherever in the state's publications the word, "immigrants" appears it would be replaced by the word, elimigrants" I quoted her as saying: " This change ... reminds people at every turn that the state wants to banish immigrants from every facet of state government".

Since the publication of that book in 2014, I've not seen any examples of any branch of government banning words or other items from public discussions. In recent years right wing government agencies have come close, with their book-burning and critiques of ideas they don't like. But on 5/16/24, up popped an email from Common Dreams with an article entitled: " Don't say climate. DeSantis signs bill removing references from state law." The bill erases most references to climate change in state law, deprioritizes it in state decision- making and eases regulations for natural gas pipelines while banning offshore wind installations in state waters. Florida is one of the most environmentally sensitive areas in the country. I suppose the twisted idea behind this is that if people don't hear about it those who run the state and the institutions causing the threats to the environment can go on doing as they please.

Ten years have passed and the Republicorrupts still have as their goal to deport all of the some 11,000,000 undocumented immigrants in this country. They also want to close all the borders so that many fewer people can get into our country. See Heather Cox Richardson's 5/23/24 report for a history of our tortured and torturous history of our treatment of immigrants, migrants and indigenous peoples. On 5/12/24, the Boston Globe published a summary history of our treatment of those natives and newcomers entitled "Oldcomers entitled Racism, Riots and Murders". This history included the Chinese Exclusion Act passed by Congress during the mid-19th century despite the important work that Chinese workers did in completing the transcontinental railroad. Some 100,000 people of Japanese heritage were placed in camps located in mountain states during World War Two.

The Republican hard right has not always been anti-immigrant. It supported early 20th century waves of immigration. Here is a quote from one of the Republican leaders. He gave a speech in 1989 in which he said the following:

“Support for immigration has worked well. We lead the world because, unique among all nations, we have traced our people, our strengths, from every country and every corner of the world. And by doing so we continuously strengthened and enriched our nation... Thanks to each wave of new arrivals to this land of opportunity, we’re a nation forever young, forever bursting with energy and new ideas and on edge, always leading the world to the next frontier. This quality is vital to our future as a nation. If we ever close the door to new Americans, our leadership in the world would soon be lost.” Quoted in Heather Cox Richardson’s 3/29/24 email report. So, can you guess who said that? It was Ronald Reagan, of all people.

But, it is fair to say that in recent years the Republicorrups have treated immigration as a political football, refusing to cooperate in improving a system that has been broken for many years and making clear that they will do nothing to solve things because they think it will be their top issue in the upcoming 2024 election.

Even when groups from both major parties work to draft new legislation, the efforts are vetoed by the Republican Party. More recently, Senate Republicans agreed to include more border controls as part of several changes that funded such things as aid to Ukraine and Israel. A bipartisan group came up with a proposal, but as soon as it was made public Donald Trump nixed it and the Republicans turned tail against it. Trump was candid (for once) in saying that Republicans should not cooperate in any immigration improvements and save this issue for the electoral campaign.

Here are some news items and opinions that illustrate their behavior.

- In an article in the 5/15/24 Progressive Populist, Ted Rall describes the horrendous treatment of immigrants, especially their children, who arrive at the US - Mexico border. The title is: Biden’s Secret Border Agenda- Migrants Fill our Baby Gap. As I will say later, there is much to be said for having more open borders to make up for the population losses that we are suffering.
- Florida, again in the reverse vanguard of bad policy, has recently passed a law prohibiting Chinese citizens from buying property in the state. In her 5/7/24 report, Heather Cox Richardson explains also that three dozen states are considering laws that restrict Chinese arrivals, even those with citizenship, from purchasing land, businesses or housing.

- A 4/20/24 email from No Dem Left Behind, describes how the recent influx of immigration was caused by Trump's anti-immigrant policies.
- One example of a bipartisan attempt to bridge the differences between the two sides, a 500 page Dignity Act. was unveiled in 2023. See the email from Netflix Media of 5/26/23. Well, the effort drew support from some members of both parties, but it went nowhere because of opposition from the radical right.
- From time to time reports emerge of abuses by the US Border Patrol. An example of this in the Common Dreams email of 8/2/23 details a " shocking pattern" of abuse by US agents at the Mexican border.
- A Progressive Caucus email of 1/24/24 catalogues all of the developments on immigration then pending, as well as reports by experts and advocates from advocacy groups. This convincingly shows that something major needs to be done by Congress. None of these proposals have gone anywhere.
- In his usual salty language, in his email of 1/30/24, Robert Reich writes: "BS on the border: Trump's biggest issue in the campaign is neofascist Bupkis"
- People for the American Way, in its series of articles entitled Trumpastrophies, has a 4/7/24 email article, laying out the career of Stephen Miller, the rabid anti- immigration racist largely responsible for Trump's backward and cruel immigration policies during his presidency.
- In the 8/4/23 email from The Hill, two immigration experts review the Republicorrups' efforts to make immigration and border control their issues that can enable them to win the 2024 election.
- In her 10/17/23 email report, Heather Cox Richardson describes Trump's deplorable practice of separating immigrant children from their families.
- A Daily Kos email of 11/11/23 headlines the New York Times report on Trump's vile plan for mass deportation and prison camps for immigrants.
- The US Constitution and federal law say that the responsibility to enforce the immigration laws belongs to the federal government. In recent years border states with Mexico have passed laws and policies that use state military to keep people from entering the country. In her 1/13/24 email, Heather Cox Richardson describes one of these laws, focusing on Texas. She says that Texas

has spent more than \$100 million of its own tax money sending immigrants here legally to other states because they are awaiting decisions on their asylum claims.

- Ruth Conniff, in the February / March 2024 issue of *The Progressive*, describes the state and local policies on immigrants and what they mean.
- In her 2/9/24 email, Heather Cox Richardson follows the history of the US internment of Japanese residents in prison camps during World War II as a build up to reminding people that Trump says he will respect this precedent if he is elected.

### *Myths about immigration and the nonexistent proof that immigrants harm the US.*

Anti- immigration zealots have a long history of making claims with little or no factual basis. These claims have been decisively disproven, yet they keep spouting their claims. Here are some examples of this.

- Republicans have recently claimed that that non-citizens have been illegally voting. The Brennan Center on Justice issued a 4/25/24 email report busting the myth of non-citizen voting, pointing out that this ban is the law federally and in every state. The Center described this phenomenon as the “Vanishing Ruse” and said that Republican moves to file new legislation are an obvious stunt to divert voters’ attention from races in which they are vulnerable.
- House Republican corrupts introduced a petition to impeach Alejandro Mayorkas as the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security for supposedly not doing his duty to protect the border with Mexico. Producing no credible evidence, the House voted along party lines to impeach him and sent the resolution to the Senate. Needless to say, the Senate deep-sixed it without any debate.

This sorry episode was an obvious retaliation for the two prior impeachments of Donald Trump, and was reported on in depth in an article in the 2/26/24 *New Yorker*.

- The *Boston Globe* of 12/21/23 has a review of a book, *How Immigration Really Works: the Facts About the Most Divisive Issue in Politics*, by Hein de Haas. It debunks “ myths about border crossings.”

- Robert Reich, as usual, is on the case. In his 1/9/24 email, The five biggest Trump regulatory lies about illegal immigration, he describes how “Trump and his GOP lackeys are fueling dangerous nativism.” He lists, and decisively refutes, the following lies.

They claim Biden doesn’t want to stem illegal immigration and has created an “open border”

They blame the drug crisis on illegal immigration.

They claim that undocumented immigrants are terrorists.

They say undocumented immigrants are stealing American jobs.

They claim undocumented immigrants are responsible for more crime in America than others.

Reich forcefully and convincingly refutes all these falsehoods.

- The Brennan Center cites studies refuting that immigrants cause more crime than citizens. The opposite is true, the studies conclude. See the Brennan Center emails of 5/29/24 and 6/6/24.

### *The Benefits of Immigration*

Studies that have explored the impact of immigration on the US have concluded that it brings major benefits. Overall, our US population has been declining in recent years, particularly among those who would fill low wage jobs. Immigration has filled these needs. This is illustrated by research described in a Boston Globe article in its edition of 2/20/24 entitled “Immigrants Integral to Economy, Report Finds.” This is reinforced by an Economic Policy Institute email of 2/20/24, reporting that immigrants are not hurting the US born workers. The report concludes as follows: “As these six facts show, the idea that immigrants are making things worse for US born workers is wrong. The reality is that the labor market is absorbing immigrants at a rapid pace, while simultaneously maintaining record low unemployment of US-born workers.” To the same effect are a Moms Rising email of 2/29/24 describing a report from the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office and a Boston Globe of 2/27/24 column by Marcella Garcia- Borders Reinforce the Value of Immigrants.

Another falsehood peddled by the right wing is that immigrants cost us large amounts of tax expenditures, far more than they pay in taxes. This is not true, as shown in a report of 6/2/24 by Data-Driven, which concludes that immigrants pay far more taxes than the value of services they receive through tax money.

There are many proposals for improving the nation's immigration policies and practices. Particularly valuable is a recent Migration Policy report, Top Immigration Issues in 2023, forward to me by Frank Virnelli. This is a complex field and there are many ways to improve it, large and small. A 1/29/24 email from the National Immigration Law Center describes a Biden administration policy change to permit immigrant workers who report dangerous or abusive workplaces to seek temporary relief from deportation while they pursue their claims. The Center reports that this policy change has been "transformative."

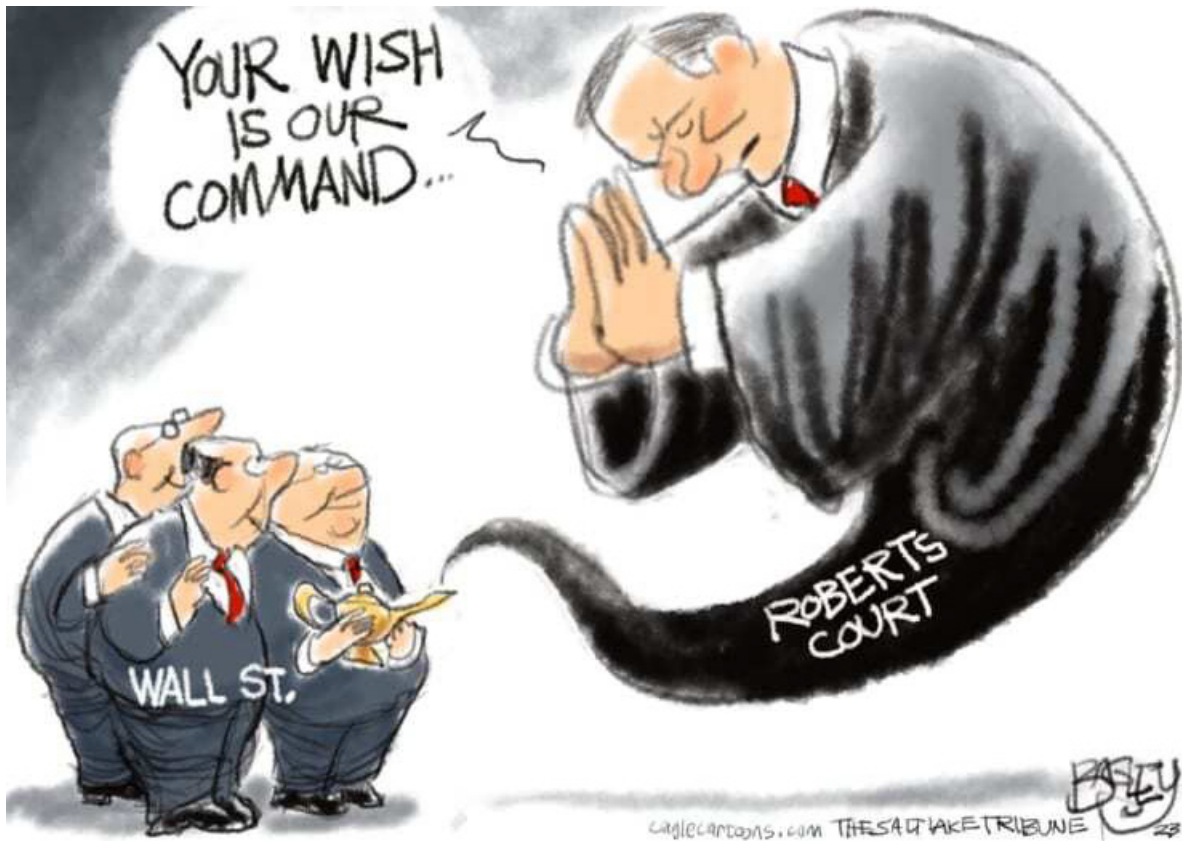
Maybe we should be much more ambitious. The Nation, in its 3/24/24 issue, has an article by John Washington giving strong arguments for open borders worldwide.

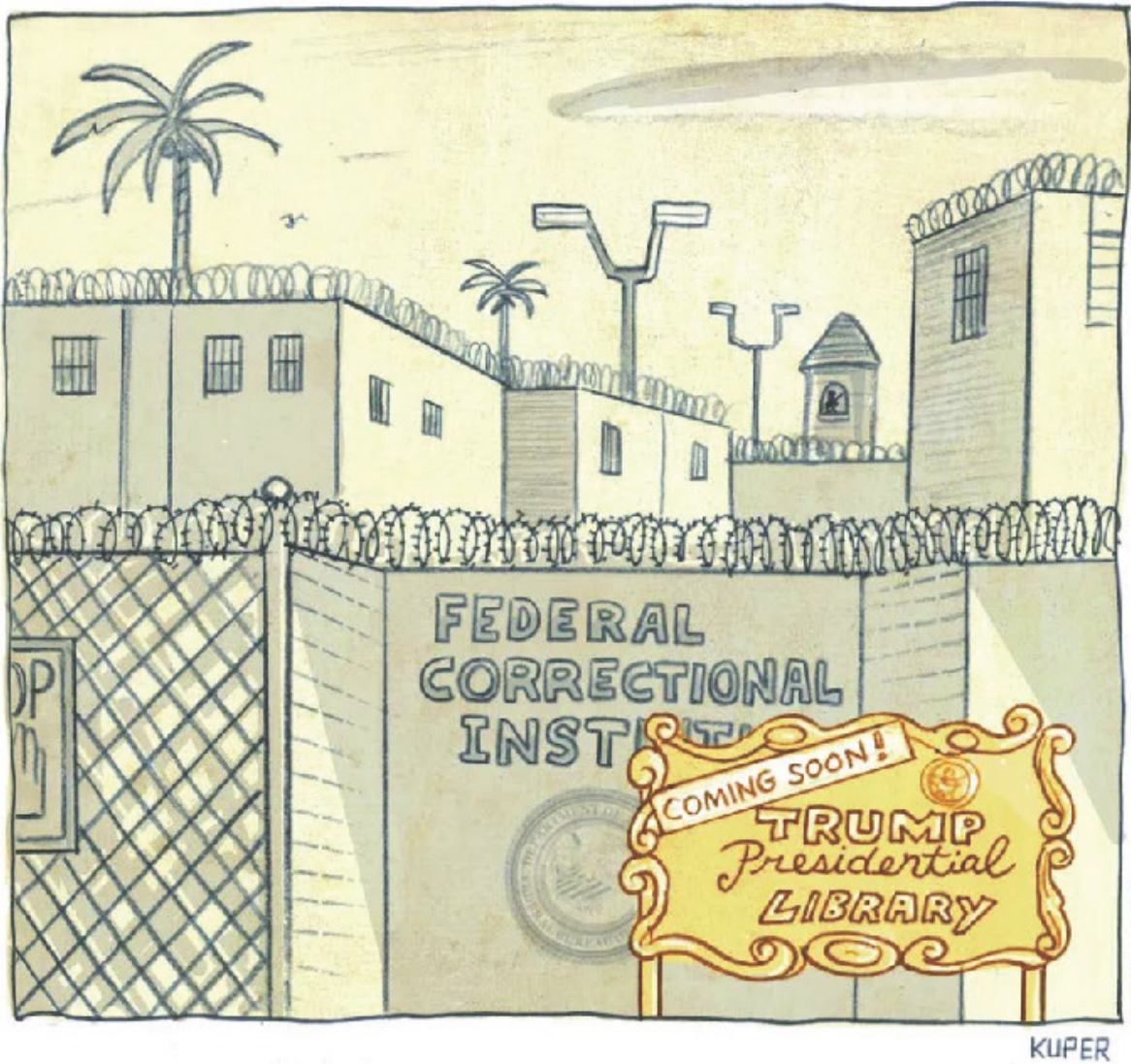
**6) THE US SUPREME COURT:  
THE GENTEEL CORRUPTION GETS WORSE.**





A Cartoon by Mike Luckovich





(Image credit: Peter Kuper/ Copyright 2023 Cagle Cartoons, Inc.)

As a practicing lawyer I was heavily involved in court reform issues in Massachusetts. This experience makes me ever more incensed at the transformation of what should be one of our most venerable and admired institutions, the US Supreme Court, into an unbelievably result-oriented and corrupt body. Responsibility for this is an organized and secretive right-wing movement to add its zealous supporters to the Court and to carry out a seemingly unstoppable campaign to turn back history and the law of 100 years. In my 2022 book, *All the Rage*, and 2023 book, *The GOP Platform*, I wrote at length about this growing corruption. The 2022 article was called: *The Most Remote Court in the Land: Where Will It Land?* The 2023 article was entitled (this word fits them accurately): *Courtly Behavior by Our Version of Royalty Now Dominates the US Supreme Court*. They both described episodes of ethical laxness, particularly by Justices Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito. With this chapter I update you on these scarcely believable activities.

#### *A. Updates on US Supreme Court Right Wing Justices' Activities.*

In my 2023 book, I described the ethical lapses of the right wing US Supreme Court Justices (Thomas and Alito and Chief Justice Roberts) until mid- 2023, and some of the comments on them.

- The most startling new disclosure is that Justice Alito flew an upside down American flag from his residence a few days after the January 6th, 2021 riot and until shortly before President Biden's inauguration. When asked about it, he said that his wife did it in retaliation for some anti- Trump signs erected on a neighboring house. This flag placement is commonly used by extreme right wingers, such as at the January 6 riot.

The inverted American flag is not the only one used by Alito that has recently been exposed. A Boston Globe- New York Times story of 5/22/24 and Heather Cox Richardson's 5/23/24 email describe the "appeal to heaven" flag as one used by right wing zealots to accompany their marches and displays. It was used by some of the 2021 rioters with the flags on poles employed to beat their opponents, applying a kind of flagellation. It also was flown from time to time at the vacation home of a prominent American, Justice Samuel Alito.

The reaction to these disclosures has been swift and strong. The Boston Globe story in its May 18, 2024 edition and editorial of May 21, 2024 reported on the story and pointed out that Alito had yet to recuse himself from any US Supreme Court cases involving Trump or the January 6th riot. Heather Cox Richardson said the same thing in her 5/18/24 email. Common Dreams, in its 5/21/24 email, said that, at the

least, Alito should recuse himself from participating in those cases. The Brennan Center for Justice said the episode “makes the case for term limits for justices”, per an email of 5/21/24. A Common Dreams 5/17/24 email reported on the reaction of Senate Judiciary Chair, Dick Durbin: “The Court has ethical issues of its own making, and Justice Alito and the rest of the Court should be doing everything in their power to regain public trust. Supreme Court justices should be held to the highest ethical standards, at the least”. Others said the offending justices should be held to term limits or should resign, and that Congress should pass the Supreme Court Ethics, Recusal and Transparency Act. Free Speech for People in a MoveOn column goes further and says that Alito must be removed from his position. See Free Speech emails of 5/17/24 and 5/21/24.

But Alito’s recent interview with the Wall Street Journal revealed that he thinks the Congress has no authority to do anything at all to regulate the Supreme Court. See the Censored entry of 7/28/23. This has yielded a storm of protest. US Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, in her 4/22/23 and 7/23/23 emails, was astounded and appropriately expressed criticism. Many other groups have joined the crescendo of criticism. See the thoughtful article by Dennis Aftergood in the Lawyers Defending American Democracy email of 6/6/24; the Common Dreams email of 6/3/24; the Truth Dig email of 5/30/24; and the People for American Way email of 5/30/24.

The response to Alito’s surfacing of his allegiance to Trump has been to ask whether he should be sitting on cases implicating Trump. A Los Angeles Times column of 8/2/23 asks: Why does Justice Alito keep making things worse for the Supreme Court?. Rhode Island US Senator Sheldon Whitehouse, in September of 2023, filed a formal complaint with Chief Justice Roberts asking him to investigate Alito for “violating several canons of judicial ethics” See the Common Dreams email of 9/5/23. Alito has thus far said he will not recuse himself from cases implicating Trump. See the Nexstar Media email of 9/8/23.

The second major ethical malefactor on the Court has been and still is Clarence Thomas.

He has continued to enjoy many undisclosed perks from wealthy right wing funders and conservative groups, such as the Heritage Foundation. These are too numerous to go into in detail.

In early June of 2024, the justices filed their annual ethics reports. The only one missing was that of Justice Alito, who asked for and got an extension. In his report,

Justice Thomas disclosed two episodes of large gifts in 2019, which he said he had inadvertently omitted before. These were an organized trip to Bali, Indonesia and a stay at Bohemian Grove, a wealthy man only retreat in California. A Fix the Court database showed that between 2009 and 2023, the justices received a total of 672 gifts, valued at \$6,100,000. Thomas had by far the most gifts received, with a total of more than \$4 million. Most of his trips were financed by Harlan Crow, a billionaire from Texas who had cases at the Supreme Court that implicated his businesses.

The conclusion I draw from these episodes is that Thomas is in the back pockets of right wing moneybags, and has refused to recuse himself from cases that stand to benefit these people.

Thomas also refused to remove himself from a case asking whether states can disqualify candidates from the presidential ballot violations of the law. He was implicated in this matter because his wife's heavy participation in the "Stop the Steal" effort to overturn the 2020 presidential election. See the Common Dreams email of 2/8/24, which urges that Thomas resign. That participation is all the more egregious because the court went beyond the facts of this case from Colorado and said that only Congress could take action under the Constitution's Article 14, Section 3, thus apparently ruling out any such action by a court or agency. This dictum was wholly unnecessary to decide the case before them, and presumably ruled out any possible disqualifications by any body other than Congress. This gratuitous pronouncement was roundly criticized by many experts in the field of constitutional law. See, for example, Robert Reich's March 4, 2024 email: "The most troubling aspect of today's Supreme Court decision" and the comments by well-known retired conservative Federal Judge J. Michael Luttig, in a 3/4/24 email from CNN. US Representative Jamie Raskin, a constitutional law teacher and House presenter of the case for Trump's impeachment for his part in the January 6th, 2021, riot, called for Thomas' recusal, which he ignored.

See the Common Dreams email of 12/31/23 for several more revelations about Thomas' continuing pattern of ethical violations that have been documented before. A Boston Globe article of 8/6/23 revealed that a well-to-do Thomas "friend" bought a \$267,230 recreational vehicle for Thomas, for which it looks as if he never received reimbursement from Thomas. This transaction was also called out in a Common Dreams email of 10/26/23. The Progressive Courts Pac email of 5/10/24 says the 38 (and counting) of Thomas' vacations were paid for by billionaires and few of them were reported by him. A Common Dreams email of 10/2/23 reports that Thomas failed to recuse himself from participating in a case in which one of his benefactors would be affected. Another email of 9/22/23 from Common Dreams reported that

a Pro Publico story revealed that Thomas had secretly attended at least two donor events sponsored by the Koch right wing network whose purpose in holding the events was to encourage large donors. The Pro Publico lengthy article may be found in a 9/22/23 email.

Here is the the right-wing network. A 9/11/23 Reuters email goes into more depth on Thomas and his wife, Ginny. A rabid pro-Trump advocate. she engaged in activities along these lines for some 12 years earlier in league with Leonard Leo, head of the Federalist Society. This is also explained in the MoveOn email of 9/26/23. US Senator Sheldon Whitehouse of Rhode Island, who has long been on U.S. Supreme Court's case, expanded this history in his 7/27/23 email. Finally, a Boston Globe article of 3/7/24 by columnist Kimberly Atkins Stohr ( a lawyer) says that Thomas should have recused himself from being the deciding vote in the Colorado case, in which the Court decided that a state court cannot enforce Section 3 of the 14th Amendment to the Constitution, voting on a case in which Thomas's wife was centrally involved in Trump's campaign to throw out Biden's 2020 victory in the presidential election.

### **B. The Supreme Court's Misuse of History**

The Supreme Court misuses history in its damaging decisions. Experts have bitingly criticized the right-wing majority of Supreme Court justices for relying on outmoded historical events to justify their decisions. Historians have been alarmed by this misuse of past events that are either wrongly described or are inappropriate to modern cases. This has led the Brennan Center for Justice to form an Historians Council on the Constitution to comment the Court's misuse of history. See the Center's email of 1/17/21

### **C. Judge Shopping**

The secretive campaign by the extreme right wing to take over our courts has produced many (over 200 ) right wing lawyers who Trump chose for federal judicial positions. These appointments were first vetted by the Federalist Society and others for their ideological purity, and were rushed through confirmation by the US Senate in narrow votes. Many of these were found to be unqualified by the American Bar Association but that advice, which had been heeded by nearly all past Presidents, was ignored. Once in office, these judges were highly sought after by right wing lawyers and organizations seeking to advance their challenges to democracy. Judge shopping in the federal courts is not new. I and my colleagues did it when we could. In Boston, judges were assigned to cases In a rotating order. When we went to court

to file a case, we would wait in the clerk's office until the name of a judge we wanted came up in the rotation and was announced by the Clerk. We then immediately rushed up to the counter and filed our case. That ploy could have been eliminated if the court varied the order or did not announce the next judge beforehand.

The judge shopping I'm writing about largely takes place in the South and Southwest, where the judges appointed by Trump are particularly partial toward right wing causes. Once on the bench, these judges were highly sought after by lawyers and right-wing organizations wanting to advance their challenges to democracy. Many lawyers and judges were incensed that this was happening. The Judicial Conference of the United States, composed of federal judges, which makes rules for federal courts (no US Supreme Court Justice is a member) early in 2024 issued a new policy requiring "random case assignment" to stop these practices. See the Progressive Court's email of 5/25/24. Predictably, the Republicorrupts seriously objected to the new policy, calling it "judicial legislation," echoing their complaints in past years against US Supreme Court decisions supporting democracy. See the Common Dreams email of 3/15/24. Another reaction against the new policy came from an unexpected source. The Chief Judge of the US District Court for the Northern District of Texas, where much of this judge shopping has been taking place, wrote a letter saying his judges would not follow the new policy. See the Progressive Court's email of 5/25/24. The Brennan Center for Justice's Michael Waldman added a more tolerant explanation of this judge shopping practice, in the Brennan Center's 3/19/24 email.

Rhode Island Senator Sheldon Whitehouse, in his 3/19/24 email, describes another facet of court case corruption, the filing of amicus briefs in federal court cases. Amicus briefs are filed by groups which don't disclosed their funders, including in one case a brief under a fictitious name. Whitehouse says the Judicial Conference plans to clear up this scheme.

#### *D. The US Supreme Court's Dwindling Reputation.*

Articles revealing the pattern of corruption and demanding action are now legion. Here are the headlines of some of these.

- Michael Waldman, president of the Brennan Center for Justice, wrote a 2023 analysis of the Court, pointing out much of the history I have described.
- Robert Reich's 5/23/24 email, is entitled: The Supreme Court's Partisan Hacks.

- An article by Dick Polman in the 6/1/24 Progressive Populist says: “The Supreme Court, its credibility in tatters, is goose- stepping for Trump in slow motion”.
- A Common Dreams email article of 5/23/24: US Supreme Court accused of “full on gutting of the equal protection clause”.
- The Brennan Center’s email by Michael Waldman says: “Alito’s upside-down flag signals that our constitutional system is in extreme danger”.
- A Boston Globe 5/24/24 article by Kimberly Atkins Stohr: “The Supreme Court is a practical threat to our democracy”.
- A Nexstar Media email of 8/9/23: Historic US Supreme Court case could imperil the entire U.S. tax code.
- The Lever email report of 12/15/23: Billionaires are bankrolling judges’ luxury travel.
- In a supposed response to ethics complaints, the Supreme Court issued its own code of ethics in November of 2023. It was weaker than the code that applies to other federal judges because, among other things, it has no enforcement process and does not require justices who recuse themselves from a case or don’t recuse themselves to explain the reasons why. A Daily Kos email of 11/14/2023: The many flaws in the Supreme Court’s new code of ethics, explains this in greater detail.
- A Brennan Center email of 11/14/23: A code of ethics designed to fail.
- Robert Reich, in an email dated 11/14/23, opines why the Supreme Court’s new ethics code is neither a code nor about ethics.
- A Daily Kos email of 1/20/23, by Joan McCarter, says: “The force behind Trump’s stacked Supreme Court is stinkier and more corrupt then we knew.”
- Jim Hightower, in his 10/3/23 email, calls the Court a Supreme Court of ethical weasels.
- A Common Dreams email of 10/30/23 reports that national advocacy groups representing over 400,000 signatures call on Congress to do something effective about the Court’s corruption.

- Common Dreams, in a 11/2/23 email, discloses that the Senate Judiciary Committee plans to subpoena three of the financial contributors to the right wing justices after they had refused to appear before the Committee voluntarily.
- The Washington Spectator email of 12-27 23 has a long article: “Hard right billionaires are spending lavishly to reshape state and federal courts”.
- Common Dreams has an email dated 10/20/23: A Memo for Chief Justice John Roberts; Clean up Your Court.
- Jim Hightower in his 10/18/23 report, says: “ Meet Leonard Leo, the Capo Behind the Supreme Court Coup.”
- Demand Progress’ 10/13/23 email says: Supreme Court poised to hand \$30 billion to corporations they own stock in.
- In last year’s book, I wrote about the Supreme Court’s “shadow docket,” cases in which they issue temporary orders or dispositive decisions with no briefing, public hearings or argument and the summary opinion gives little or no reasoning. A 9/23/21 email from Harvard Law School Today describes a panel discussion about this issue.
- A Daily Kos email of 10/11/23 describes a Pro- Publico article: We don’t talk about Leonard: the man behind the right’s Supreme Court super majority.
- The Progressive of October / November, 2023, has a long analysis by Bill Blum: A Supreme Court Accountable to No One.
- Robert Reich says in an email of 10/3/23 that Clarence Thomas must recuse himself from today’s CFPB case. He has a direct conflict of interest. A Common Dreams email of 9/18/23 points out he did not do so.
- A Common Dreams email of 9/27/23: These Supreme Court Justices (Roberts and Alito), have personal investments in companies that could reap billions in upcoming ruling. They did not recuse themselves.
- A Daily Kos 9/14/23 email: Alexandria Ocasio- Cortez calls out Alito’s “extraordinary corruption”.

- A Common Dreams 9/8/23 email has a thorough expose and says Congress must act to end corruption within the US Supreme Court.
- A Common Dreams 4/30/24 email: The Supreme Court justices colluding with Trump to “catch and kill” insurrection case. Its right-wing justices are eager to support Trump’s senseless arguments on presidential immunity.
- Bill Moyers.com, in a report dated 10/21/20, lays out the history of the right wing movement to pack the Court with extreme right wingers, and calls it a shadow network.
- A Common Dreams 6/16/23 email: “bombshell” internal docs highlight flaws in student debt case now before the Supreme Court. Robert Reich in a 7/3/23 email, says that the Supreme Court is calling illegal the President’s policy excusing student debt, “the Supreme Court’s worst new ruling you never heard of.” It expands the legal standing doctrine to allow many more people to challenge laws when they have minimal or no stake in the litigation.
- The Lever has an article in its 6/20/23 email: The Supreme Court’s next gift for its billionaires, in a case that questions the constitutionality of a tax on wealth.
- Nexstar Media has an email of 6/7/24: The Supreme Court’s slow walk on Trump immunity is playing with fire.
- The Boston Globe, in a 7/29/2024 opinion columnist by David Daley, describes how John Roberts, the Chief Justice, engineered the elimination of a federal requirement of preclearance of changes in voting laws in states (mostly in the South) that had historically engaged in discrimination in voting. Daley describes how Roberts made up new doctrine, reversing prior precedents upholding the preclearance procedure. This made no sense historically or otherwise. As a result of this court decision, the states involved have gleefully adopted limitations and restrictions on voting in federal elections.

#### **E. What is to be done about all this shocking behavior?**

It’s clear that the Court is not going to solve any of these problems. It has pointedly refused to respond directly to any of these improprieties at issue, issued a toothless set of ethical principles that does not require a justice to disclose a conflict of interest if there is a recusal, or to explain the failure to recuse in a pending case. In fact, so far as we know, there have been very few recent recusals and not for any of the more obvious conflicts of interest that do exist. So, expect stonewalling by the Court.

There is the Judicial Conference, which I have noted previously in this book asked federal district courts to stop the judge shopping that the right wing has been using, but the Conference can only issue guidance and has no enforcement authority. As we have seen with the response of one of the Texas jurisdictions in which the judges most frequently have tolerated this practice have said they will ignore the guidance.

Continuing up the ladder, perhaps the Justice Department could investigate. Alexandria Ocasio- Cortez, in a Common Dreams email of 8/11/23, called for a “DOJ probe of Clarence Thomas’ blatant disregard for judicial ethics.” I do not have any news that the Justice Department has responded, and in any event I assume the Supreme Court will not cooperate with any attempt to do this.

Next is Congress. The US Senate, which has jurisdiction over congressional confirmation of judges, can investigate and several calls have been made that it should do so now. A Boston Globe editorial of 3/22/24 said: “If federal judges don’t follow policy to curb judge shopping Congress should make them do it.” A Common Dreams email of 5/23/24 reports that Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez calls for a Senate probe of Alito’s insurrection- linked flags. Senator Sheldon Whitehouse has been particularly active in recent years, sponsoring a Supreme Court ethics bill in the Senate and participating in several Senate investigations. See his email of 11/14/23. A Common Dreams email of 5/24/24 for an article: Top Senate Dems call on Roberts to back Alito’s recusal in Trump cases. Senator Whitehouse also weighed in on a 5/24/24 email discussing Alito’s flying right-wing flags at his two houses. But the Court has already signaled in many ways, and explicitly by Alito, that the Congress has no power to regulate the Supreme Court. And anything that Democrats cook up will surely be blocked by the Republicorrupts.

Beyond this, there are several possible avenues to pursue. The first has already been underway in the Biden administration, to nominate and get confirmed federal judges with open minds and different life experiences. Biden has already had proposed some 200 of his nominations of federal judges. They are an amazingly talented group. That’s as many judges as Trump got through in his four-year term. That trend needs to be continued throughout the rest of Biden’s term and beyond if the Democrats win the Presidency and the Senate in the November election.

There are two more longer- term changes that could turn things around. Some advocates say that Congress should impose term limits on federal judges, including those on the Supreme Court. Michael Waldman of the Brennan Center proposes this in the Center’s 8/20/23 email and in his recent book, *Supreme Majority*. Assuming that the imposition of term limits on already sitting judges is constitutional, this

could shorten the terms of some of the current Supreme Court judges. Of course, that would apply to the judges that we favor as well. This is ameliorated somewhat by the proposal that judges do not lose their judgeships after the terms have expired, but can be assigned for duty elsewhere in the federal courts Waldman favors this as the best solution, for changes in the future. The Boston Globe has an 8/4/24 editorial explaining how this would work and would be constitutional.

Another proposal is to expand the number of justices on the Supreme Court from 9 to 13. If the Democrats win the Presidency and the Senate in 2024 we would likely get 4 new justices who would side mostly with our positions with the three present justices creating a 7-6 majority on the court. And added justification for doing this would be to couple it with increases in the number of other federal judges, which are badly needed. Progressive Courts, which among other changes favors expansion, points out in its 1/21/24 email that since the last expansion of the Supreme Court to 9 took place in 1869, the number of District Courts has expanded greatly and the caseloads in federal courts have mushroomed.

But Waldman thinks expansion is second best to imposing term limits because it leaves the right wing judges in place and we can't be sure that we will get a president who will appoint competent judges. So, we should support term limits and shine the lights on the continuing transgressions of our current judges to increase the movement for term limits.

## 7) NEITHER WHITE NOR BLACK, BY DAVID K. RODGERS

In our discussions about race, the commonly used terms “white”, “black”, “colored” and “non- white”, condition and distort our very perceptions. As a simple test, we can place one of our hands on a sheet of white or black paper and ask ourselves whether our skin color is either white or black. Clearly in both cases it will be neither. All human skin colors range

in a spectrum of brown, from light pink to deep brown. Words are like fossils, and the terms white and black carry a heavy load of cultural associations and meanings which, in the case of race, present a false duality that interferes with more important features we share.

To understand why our species shows such variations in skin color around the world, we need to look at our evolution over several million years. Beginning in East Africa as one of several closely related primates, we developed in several identified ways that, taken together, allowed us to migrate to very different climates. Pursuing this line of speculation, our change from being primarily vegetarian to a carnivore was very important, expanding our diet so we could live in colder environments. Strictly speaking, as primates we did not have the teeth or claws to kill other animals or stomach the intestines to digest raw meat. But with our hands and their thumbs we had the ability to hunt animals successfully by inventing tools of wood and stone as well as making fires to cook the protein so that it would be better utilized by our bodies. Our upright positions allowed us to run after prey when hunting, which probably resulted in a significant reduction of our body heat in a hot climate to avoid overheating, a definite evolutionary advantage. The development of our vocal cords and language made it possible for us to communicate with each other far beyond that of any previous animal, which made group hunting more effective.

It is important to note that primates have light color skin underneath their fur. Human beings who remained or migrated to the Equatorial regions of the world therefore needed to adapt to intense sunlight with browner skin pigmentation. Hence we find people in Africa, Southern India, Southeast Asia, New Guinea, Australia and in Central and South America have the brown skin protection appropriate to the tropics, evolved independently. For example, people in Southern India can be as deep brown as people in Africa but they are Caucasian. Similarly in New Guinea and Australia people have some physical characteristics like Africans but they developed separately. A curious case is that of people in Central America into the Andes, who migrated to those areas in relative recent times (from 18,000 to

30,000 years ago, dates uncertain) from Eastern Siberia to the Western Hemisphere during the Pleistocene then evolved browner complexions. Those who moved to more northern temperate climates in Asia and Europe remained lighter in color and undoubtedly made clothing from animal skins to compensate for the loss of insulating hair.

Other physical adaptations to varying climates include tightly curling hair textures to give better protection to the head from the sun in tropical areas, while in more northern zones a modified eyelid evolved to deal with blowing snow and bright sunlight reflected off snow, facial hair was minimized (exhaled breath freezes on beards in extreme weather) and a somewhat shorter stature was adapted to reduce heat loss. All three elements probably were the result of the advancing and retreating great glaciers during the Pleistocene period In Asia.

From these perspectives, let us rethink our vocabulary about race, instead emphasizing the continuity of brown as virtual fact. Focusing on what we have in common rather than relatively superficial differences should lead us to see our shared humanity. One of the tragic consequences of racism is the incapacity to perceive the beauty of human beings all around the world, blinding ourselves to the amazing aesthetic permutations of people evolving in different climates over hundreds of thousands of years. We need to transcend tribal exclusiveness and celebrate our beautiful shades of brown.

David K. Rodgers was born in Rochester NY (1942), attended the Loomis School and Yale University, was in the Peace Corps in India for two years and then went to architecture school at the University of Pennsylvania. His main work has been as a mason, a reviewer of arts for a local paper and as a collector. He lives in East Craftsbury, Vermont.

## 8) SHORT TAKES - WHAT ELSE IS GOING ON?

When I first started to write about the wrong wing in 2014, there were comparatively few writers covering their activities. This in part was attributable to the secrecy by which the right wing was carrying things out. But the number of outstanding writers covering the right wing has increased greatly. These include Robert Reich, Heather Cox Richardson and Thom Hartmann, who I have cited extensively in this book. Comparatively small journals and magazines have ramped their investigative journalism extensively. Examples are *Common Dreams* and *Indivisible*. This is very exciting, but it also poses a dilemma for someone like myself who is trying to follow and catalogue it all. I'm on the email alert lists of many of these individuals and activist groups.

Several books ago, I decided to highlight the events that I didn't have room to include as extensive subjects by ending my books with two chapters of short items worth mention. In this chapter, these are what I call Short Takes. In the next chapter, I cover Good Ideas. Please excuse the length of these two chapters, but there is so much to mention in a book of this kind.

### A. Mainstream Media Gives Undue Play to Right Wingers.

Much recent attention has been given to the role, whether intentional or not, of the corporate media given to Trump and his supporters. Here are some articles explaining this.

- In the *Progressive Populist* of 5/15/24, Thom Hartmann sounds the alarm about the corporate assumption of ownership over all major media organizations, print and electronic. He points out that a major factor in the rise of fascism under Hitler and Mussolini was that they took over control of the media. One device which the media has used in the Trump era is "both sidism." In a bow to so-called objective reporting, whenever the right wingers say something outrageous, a media outlet comes up with examples of the Democrats doing much the same thing. Usually what the media emphasizes is unsupported positions taken by the right and cherry picking some examples of Democrats doing similar things. The answer to this is that the media should not be reporting the right wing's bloviating at all. Here are some articles that discuss this.

- Daily Kos email of 11/24/23: All horse manure, no substance: the nation's major papers continue to endanger democracy.
- Robert Reich's email of 11/27/23: Four ways the mainstream media is greatly helping Trump and his Republican allies.
- Robert Reich's email of 5/26/23: Don't be taken by corporate media: the GOP only manipulates the debt ceiling disaster.
- Robert Reich email of 1/2/24: Why is mainstream media failing to report accurately on the upcoming election?
- Robert Reich email of 1/3/24: Corporate media keeps door wide open for Trump's fascist return: Every time the mainstream media reveals another move by the Republican Party toward authoritarianism, they project out some superfluous fault in the Democratic Party in order to provide "balance" It's nonsense and it is dangerous.
- In another sign of things possibly to come, Roots Action Education Fund reports in an email of 4/22/24 that the New York Times recently issued a new policy banning words thought to be inflammatory, such as "genocide" and "climate disaster"
- Another dangerous sign against the freedom to write honestly is the looming trend of right-wing media organs to try to snuff out smaller journalist efforts that the media barons oppose. A Common Dreams email of 5/24/24 describes how Elon Musk, the richest person in the world and owner of the X and other media outlets, sued Media Matters for America, a small critic of big media, in an obvious effort to put them out of business.

### **B. Where is this Country Headed?**

Many thoughtful people have explained our downward spiral for the past 40 years and suggested how we should reverse it. Here is some of the literature on this.

- Common Dreams email of 5/17/24 by Thom Hartmann: US oligarchs started one civil war. Could they do it again? The ideology of Republican Party and the stranglehold of powerful corporations on our political system overall have transformed America from a democracy into a late-stage oligarchy, and the point of no return is now visible.

- Robert Reich email of 5/13/24: America's second civil war? It's already begun.
- People for the American Way 5/12/24 email, part of its weekly Trumpastrophe series, relates in detail the many ways Republicorrupts have suppressed and try to suppress the votes of groups who are unlikely to vote for them. Thom Hartmann, in a Common Dreams email of 3/7/24, says: Warning: the great voter purge of 2024 is already underway.
- Stock buybacks by corporations having excess cash, largely because they have government subsidies, favorable tax laws and the ability to raise prices at will, benefit themselves instead of developing new products, paying new benefits to their workers and providing benefits for their communities. Robert Reich, in his 5/6/24 email, explains these consequences in a piece entitled Stock Buybacks are Lethal, Literally.
- Large oil and gas companies have for many years covered up environmental damage caused by their operations. Robert Reich, in his 4/30/24 email, reports on a scathing indictment of big oil and gas lies unveiled at a Senate hearing.
- The radical right last fall unveiled a long ( 900 page) memo describing what a new Trump administration plans to do if Trump becomes President again, called Project 2025. It is a cesspool of changes designed to wipe out all the progress toward democracy which the US has made for the last century. A 4/30/24 Washington Spectator article headlines it as follows: How Project 2025 will destroy public education and multi racial democracy.
- Dana Milbank, in the Progressive Populist of 6/15/23, describes this as the day free- market Republicans become Soviet economic planners.
- We are being watched and graded internationally. A Common Dreams email of 11/3/23 reports: UN human rights body issues scathing report on some 36 US violations.
- A Common Dreams email of 9/22/23: Democratic senators sound alarm over Koch- based plot to "eviscerate" regulatory state.
- For many years the right wing has quietly been trying to persuade states to call a constitutional convention to completely redraft the US constitution.

Tom Hartmann has a 12/23 email: “The secret GOP plot to change our constitution slithers forward.”

- Thom Hartmann’s analysis in his 11/24/24 email: The billionaires got organized. The people didn’t. The rest is history.
- Robert Reich, in his 1/12/24 email, describes how the oligarchy shrank America’s middle class. This is part eight of his series called Why America’s Capitalism is So Rotten.

### C. Health Care

The US is the only developed country in the world that does not have a centralized coordinated system for delivering and paying for health care. Instead, we have a fragmented series of partial programs, many of which are led or dominated by private interests whose priority is to make money. As a result, our health care is by far the most expensive and our health care outcomes are way behind those of most major countries. Here is a sampling of what is not right (or rather what is wrong).

- Nursing homes are now largely run by for-profit organizations as part of Wall Street’s encouragement of private investment firms to buy private market businesses and non-profits, empty them of benefits for themselves and shortchange the patients and employees. The Lever has a long expose of their practices.
- The Boston Globe of 4/22/24 has an article about the settlement of a Massachusetts lawsuit challenging poor treatment of patients in nursing homes, under which the state pays to have patients reimbursed for leaving.
- Heather Cox Richardson, in her 4/24/24 report, describes new regulations by the Biden administration to improve practices at nursing homes.
- During the pandemic, Congress, to its credit, directed states not to perform redeterminations of Medicaid eligibility. When the worst of the pandemic was over, Congress let that directive lapse. A lot of states, particularly in the South, took the opportunity to purge the roles of many who were still eligible. Common Dreams published two articles on this despicable behavior. In a 6/20/23 email it called this “ a true scandal and should be covered as such”. Outrage over Medicaid purge grows. And its 7/15/23 report says: Medicaid purges now impact at least 2.1 million people, including many children.

- In the February / March issue of The Progressive, there is an article by Chris Cook, a friend of my son, John, about weaponizing San Francisco, describing how a reactionary movement led by high tech companies, is “manipulating urban crimes ( including in health care) for political gain.”
- The biggest reason why individuals file for bankruptcy is because of medical debt. The National Consumer Law Center has an email dated 5/7/24: CFPB report confirms: credit reporting of medical debt is a racial justice issue.
- A Public Citizen email of 5/8/24, a speakout on greed in health care, lists the roles of for- profit private agencies in the delivery of health care.
- A Common Dreams email of 7/28/23 points out that the US tax code unfairly benefits the retirements of the wealthy, including access to health care.
- During the George W. Bush presidency, the top Republicans passed an amendment to Medicare called Medicare Advantage. The program is run largely by private for- profit corporations and has been the subject of many studies showing that it is a major scam. Thom Hartmann has an email of 5/29/24: Why are any of us paying for the scam that is Medicare Advantage.
- On a brighter note, Common Dreams has a 6/5/24 email: We can get there; Medicare for All advocates sees resurgence in national movement.”

#### *D. Guns - We have this all Backwards*

- Killings by guns in this country have included mass murders, spreading even to the schools, because gun zealots have been succeeded in getting the US Supreme Court to recognize a constitutional right to carry and use guns and they are flooding all decision-makers opposing any change in the gun laws. A TomDispatch email of 6/6/23 says that gun adherents are combining gun rights and religion. Occupy Dems, on 5/11/24, published an article reporting that California Governor Gavin Newsom has proposed a constitutional amendment to regulate guns.

#### *E. Postal Service*

I have written in my past two books about the long- term Republicorrupt attempt to take the Postal Service private. The longer the leader of this is the Trump-appointed Director, Louis de Joy is in office, the better the chances that the Service, long admired as a venerable institution, is at risk of being seriously damaged.

Nexstar, Let's Kill the US Postal Service says right wingers have had a long-term strategy to gut the Postal Service and eventually to turn it over to private business. Trump- appointed Louis de Joy has been the point person for this effort, but the new administration has not replaced him as Director, although they could if they could get two members of the Postal Service Board confirmed by the Senate and move to fire deJoy. Four comments show how the Service is deteriorating under deJoy.

- Jim Hightower's email of 4/11/24: Why are we letting greedhead ideologues kill our Post Office?
- Demand Progress email of 4/27/24: Sign the petition. Louis de Joy's USPS is a complete mess.
- Jim Hightower's email of 5/7/24: Gutting our post offices. Oh what a joy.!
- Common Dreams email of 2/8/24: We won't be silenced: protesters decry de Joy at UPS meeting.

#### *F. Poverty and Homelessness*

After all the blame shifting and victim bashing by the right wing about the causes of poverty and homelessness, there are finally a definitive analyses that show that poor people themselves are not causing their condition. Here are some of these.

- Robert Reich email 9/14/23: New proof that poverty is a policy choice by those who make policy.
- Common Dreams email of 4/22/24: Liberal justices grill attorney in Supreme Court case on criminalizing homelessness. Ultimately, the US Supreme Court held that local communities can ban homeless people from sleeping on the streets.
- Daily Kos email of 1/14/20: work requirement for food assistance led to more hunger and no additional jobs in West Virginia.
- Thom Hartmann email of 4/22/24: How Reaganomics fueled America's homeless crisis.
- Inequality.org email of 4/2/24, by Sam Pizzigati : Meet the secretive rich funding efforts to keep others poor. (these people oppose experiments to test out universal income proposals).

- The effort to do in Social Security:

For many years self-described conservatives have proposed schemes to cut back on or transform Social Security to an investment program run by Wall Street. This campaign is strongly opposed by a large majority of Americans, but it keeps coming back. Here are some recent articles on this topic.

- Robert Reich email of 4/24/23: The real reason Social Security is going broke.
- Common Dreams email of 6/8/23: Why billionaires hate Social Security.
- Common Dreams article of 7/14/23 by Nancy J. Altman, one of the most prominent experts on Social Security: President Biden has the power to transform the Social Security debt. Here's how.

In fact, both Social Security and Medicare could be extended for many years through the simple step of eliminating the percentage cap on payments by individuals to the Social Security fund which is presently at \$165,000. The cap means that any income above \$165,000 is not covered by a tax on the excess amount. Dropping the ceiling would produce a flat tax, which conservatives have been arguing for with the federal income tax for years. Yet, they oppose this change. This inconsistency in positions shows that they are only interested in limiting taxation for themselves, not supporting consistent policy across income streams.

- Christians Join Nationalists in Republican Party
  - Robert Reich, in his 7/13/23 email, asks: Why does Christian Nationalism now define the Republican Party?
- The Republican's manufactured crisis

Robert Reich, in a 10/5/23 email, describes five crises and how the Republicans use these crises to take people's minds off what is really happening. They speak of "Woke" ideas, transgender people, "critical race theory" "couch potatoes (i.e. the poor); and "out of control government spending."

- The Pugnacious Activities of Big Oil and Gas Companies.

It Is almost beyond belief but that despite the serious damage oil and gas do to the climate, big oil and gas keep pushing for more and immediate production.

Ralph Nader has an article in the Common Dreams email of 7/9/23: Oil and Gas Companies are Forging a Suicide Pact with Mother Earth.

*E. The world of surveillance is outpacing our ability to control it.*

- I have written in several of my past books about facial recognition systems and how they are bound to discriminate against people of color and other “different” people.
- Gale Halpern sent me an article of 6/29/20 from Motherhood. Detroit police chief: facial recognition software misidentifies 96% of the time.
- Surveillance is starting to be used in schools. The ACLU examines this trend with alarm in an email of 10/8/23: We investigated the shocking world of school surveillance.
- Judy Summersby sent me a 2/7/22 article by the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space: Origins of the State Surveillance Industry.
- The Boston Globe of 6/11/20 had this article: Surveillance Technology Used by Police Gets Fresh Scrutiny After Nationwide Protests, Looting.

*G. The US as Weapons Provider.*

- A Common Dreams email of 5/13/23: US sold weapons to roughly 60% of the world’s authoritarian nations in 2022: analysis.
- Led by that dolt of a governor of Florida, some states are starting to consider forming their own state armies. Daily Kos has an 11/20/23 report on what Florida has already done. It warns that DeSantis’ private army is a potential hotbed of extremism.

*H. How the Powerful Use Their Power.*

There are many reasons why there is so much inequality between the wealthy and poor people in this country. I have collected many articles on this subject and they are legion (not American Legion, thank you). Here are some examples.

- Chuck Collins and his colleagues at Inequality.org have been writing about this subject for many years. His latest work focuses on billionaire

philanthropists who park their money with donor advised funds, getting federal tax deductions at the time of each gift, and then they are slow to give this money to charities. In his report, he calculates that the scheme in effect is a \$111 billion taxpayer subsidy to wealthy philanthropists.

- Common Dreams has a 4/25/24 email describing the loss of funding for public programs if the right-wing Project 2025 goes into effect.
- An Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy (ITEP) 2/29/24 report concludes: Corporate tax avoidance remains widespread under Trump's tax law of 2017.
- Common Dreams has a report by Senator Elizabeth Warren in its 4/27/23 email: Going for gold: Warren report details revolving door between Capitol Hill and war profiteers.
- Investing Daily's Scott Chen has an article: Why CEO pay matters to stock performance, in which he concludes that higher CEO pay correlates with stock under- performance.
- An ITEP report of 5/3/24 describes how the Trump tax law gutted our corporate tax system.
- A Public Citizens 4/18/24 email gives the details on why billionaires should be made to pay their taxes.
- Chuck Collins of Inequality.org, in his 10/15/23 email, cites a Boston Globe article of 10/4/23 on a report by Equality showing that taxpayer costs of expanding Hanscom Field, near Boston, will mainly benefit wealthy people with private jets.
- A Roosevelt Institute brief of 12/14/23 concludes that the US tax code encourages market concentration and excess shareholder payouts.
- Jim HighTower's 9/26/23 email report describes a thundering herd of Barbarians robbing Oklahoma City taxpayers.
- A 10/3/23 email from Americans for Tax Fairness concludes: "nearly 1000 millionaires owe \$38 billion in Texas."

- Jim HighTower's 9/28/23 email says - Let's get rich: billionaires are nuts.
- Jim Hightower, in his 4/18/24 email, is his usual hilarious self with his piece: Where is George Orwell today? Texas!

I. haven't said enough in this book about the huge housing crisis. A Common Dreams email of 4/8/24 makes up for that. Jayapal, Sanders and Kama say the U.S. housing crisis must be "at the top of our agenda."

Even Joe Biden is getting into the action. A Common Dreams email of 7/15/24: Targeting Corporate Landlords, Biden to Unveil National Rent Control Plan.

J. The ultra-right revealed its Project 2025 plan to ruin America. A Common Dreams email of 4/8/24 has its reply: Progressives unveil 10 point agenda to prevent fascist takeover in 2024.

- Mark Summer, in the 9/11/23 Daily Kos email, tells us about why Republicorrupts "want to defund the IRS".
- Mark Summer is at it again in the 9/14/23 email of Daily Kos: Republicans are using long-debunked scams to fuel impeachment inquiry. Needless to say, the inquiry was deep sixed without a debate by the Senate.
- Recent research has led several commentators to conclude that policies instituted by Republicorrupts in conservative- leaning states are causing many more deaths than in the states not run by their party. See the 10/8/23 email from Daily Kos: Red state conservatives are dying, thanks to the people they vote for. And the Progressive Populist in a 1/1/24 article by Thom Hartmann: If Democrats Ran Red States, fewer people would die.
- Senator Elizabeth Warren has an email dated 6/8/24: How to Stop Wall Street Looting, in which she describes her Stop Wall Street Looting Act, which would curb private equity from taking over shaky businesses and driving them into the ground after most of the assets were plundered.
- Robert Reich has a #2 on his Debunking Myths series, in his 6/7/24 email: The myth that "government obstructs the free market."
- Robert Reich finds another name for Trump Republicans who are making up nonexistent crises. He calls them "nothing burgers".

- Do you remember Richard Nixon? Well, here he is in a cartoon of 6/1/24 sent to me by Mary Tracy. He ignores that he has been outclassed by you know who in the presidential crookedness contest. See the attached 6/10/24 cartoon entitled "I am not a crook by comparison"



Cartoon by Tyson Cole

## **9) GOOD IDEAS: WHAT IMPROVEMENTS WOULD STRENGTHEN OUR DEMOCRACY?**

I've included this feature in some of my recent books, in an effort to cheer you up after the tales of corruption and evil which make up most of my writings. This time, there is much more to call to your attention. Increasing numbers of writers and activist groups are speaking out and backing far- reaching proposals to fix what ails us. So much needs to be done. Here are many examples of programs, large and small, that we must pursue.

### **A. Saving Journalism**

- Much attention has been paid to the fast- diminishing numbers of newspapers, journals and even online media and the dumbing down of media which has been taken over by owners whose first priority is making money. Common Dreams has a 2/2/24 analysis of why the market, not to mention the billionaires, cannot save journalism.
- Jim Hightower has an 8/10/23 piece: New Life for Local Newspapers.

B. The acute housing crisis has produced many suggested solutions. Here are some ideas.

- Senator Jeff Merkley of Oregon, in a 2/2/24 email, has proposed legislation to keep hedge funds out of buying media and milking them for profits.
- Rep Alexandria Ocasio- Cortez and Senator Bernie Sanders are the main sponsors of the Green New Deal legislation to combat the effects of climate changes and have filed a bill to apply the Green New Deal activities to public housing, according to their Common Dreams email of 3/21/24.
- The cost crunch to renters has spurred proposed federal rent control tenant protections, backed by 30 US economists, as reported in a Common Dreams email of 8/4/23.
- A Harvard Crimson article of 5/9/24 says that the City of Cambridge, Mass is considering abolition of single-family zoning. Sent to me by Diab Jerius.

C. An email from The Hill of 2/12/24 describes how Congress can address

budget deficits by cutting back on the large amounts of federal tax expenditures.

D. The Brennan Center for Justice has a 2/2/24 email explaining its work to improve the fairness of state courts and their decisions.

E. Senator Jeff Merkley, in an 11/30/24 email, describes the benefits of eliminating the US Senate filibuster.

#### F. Healthcare

Our health care financing is completely broken. This has widely and fairly led to many suggestions for improvements. The big one is Medicare for All, a single source for delivery and payments bill introduced many years ago by Senator Bernie Sanders and others. He describes it in his email of 1/30/24. There are other proposals.

- A Common Dreams email of 5/8/24 describes Sanders and others bills to “tackle medical debt crushing US workers”
- A Common Dreams email of 7/25/24 says: “Health Over Wealth: New Bill Would Crack Down on Private Equity in US Healthcare.”
- The aftermath of COVID has not alleviated questions about what caused the plague and who was responsible for it. A necessary step is to comprehensively plan to combat another such emergency. A Common Dreams email of 3/16/24 describes the investigative work underway on this topic.
- The consolidation of drug companies into a small number that have cornered the market and has hurt the very people they claim they are benefiting. A Common Dreams 6/15/23 email asks: why should drug companies like Merck and Eli Lilly’s exist?
- Jim Hightower in his 12/14/23 report, asks: Why is my doctor unionizing?
- John Nichols, the intrepid columnist for The Nation, in the magazine’s 12/25/23 issue, has an article: Local news has been destroyed. Here’s how we can revive it. Build back better.

G. The Brennan Center for Justice report of 11/23-24: The answer to Citizens United ( the US Supreme Court decision opening the floodgates for huge amounts of money for elections from wealthy and corporate donors) has become a corrupting reality. The two solutions it identifies are public funding of elections and full

disclosure of donors. The Brennan Center also has a 5/16/23 email: New York strikes a blow against Citizens United.

- In recent years increasing attention has been focused on the activities of “billionaires.” Years ago, attention was directed at millionaires. With the gargantuan increases in income and wealth, it is possible to talk about those who now take in billions. The way things are going, we will soon be talking about trillionaires. Here are some stories about what people think we should do to reduce the influence and confluence of billionaires.
- In his email of 1/10/24, the ever-colorful Jim Hightower has an article: Let’s send all billionaires to Mars. That reminds me that in one of my earlier books I suggested that all CEO’s should be sent to other countries with far cheaper costs.
- Robert Reich, in his 10/26/23 email, asks: Do billionaires have a right to exist?
- An article by Marjorie Kelly in the 10/15/23 Progressive Populist describes how we are going to end wealth inequality.
- A Common Dreams email of 7/26/23 and an Inequality.org email of 8/23/23 describe the Oligarch Act, introduced in Congress by the Patriotic Millionaires to “break the vicious cycle of unchecked wealth accumulation by imposing a wealth tax on the very wealthy.”
- A Common Dreams email of 4/25/24 reports that the top 620 Nation Ministers back a 2% wealth tax on global billionaires.
- An email of 5/5/24 by Inequality.org describes the Corporate Tax Dodgers Prevention Act introduced in Congress by Senator Bernie Sanders and Rep Jan Schakowsky.
- Thom Hartmann, in an email report of 2/22/24, says: “Restoring the 52% corporate tax bracket would make America stronger.”
- A 2/2/24 Common Dreams report informs us of the early results of tax collections from a Massachusetts constitutional amendment taxing the rich to pay for education and transportation needs. In the first year and a half it raised \$1.5 billion for these purposes. In the first two years it has yielded \$2 million, twice what was estimated.

- Inequality.org's Sarah Anderson has a 2/5/24 article: Tell the SEC; stand up to greedy CEOs on the stock buybacks.
- Common Dreams has a 1/22/24 email describing legislation filed in Congress "to attack disease of corporate greed". I wrote about this in my 2014 book, saying that the disease of greed will get out of hand when the doctors who were supposed to treat it caught the disease themselves.
- Common Dreams, in an email of 2/2/24, describes a bill introduced in Congress that would prevent billionaires from donating to dark money groups tax free.

H. Rampant poverty is a condition that most other developed nations have largely solved, but not the good old USA. Not only is our incidence of poverty much higher than other nations, but the well-being of our poor people falls way below those of other nations. Some states and localities have run pilots on universal income distributions, with amazingly positive results. Here are several articles about this.

- Roots Action has a 12/19/23 report on a bill that would update the federal poverty line "so that it more accurately reflects the cost of living". The federal poverty line was established in the late 1950s and has not been updated since then, and is widely thought to understate the real level of poverty by at least 50%.
- Thom Hartmann has an 11/1/23 email analyzing Bernie Sanders' Universal Basic Income proposal. If it works for billionaires' children, why not the poor?
- Senator Edward Markey has a similar proposal, and others have written President Joe Biden in support, as reported in a Common Dreams email of 10/11/23, asking him to include in his election campaign a provision establishing a Bill of Rights for fundamental rights of the people that are not already included in our laws.

US Rep Ro Karma, an astute representative in Congress from California, according to a Bold Progressive email of 12/18/23, says that Democrats should build an economic rights platform, which he calls "progressive capitalism." This is close to what I have suggested in my 2023 book.

- Jim Hightower, in his email of 11/2/23, asks: instead of utility greed, how about an energy sanity society.

I. Robert Reich has published a series of articles arguing that truth as a common good is the primary value we should search for instead of the other values spouted by the right wing and others. You can read about his reasoning in his 10/6/23 and 10/20/23 emails.

- Left Action, in its 10/6/23 email, asks a good question: If Trump insists Mar A Lago is worth 1.5 billion dollars ( as he has boasted) then it should be taxed locally at that real estate tax rate.
- Inequality.org has a 10/4/23 email detailing some of the excesses of the super wealthy. They call it HEIR Pollution”.
- Nexstar Media published an email on 10/5/23 proposing a coalition government as an alternative to the chaos in Congress.
- Take on Wall Street has a 7/27/23 email: Let’s take back bonuses from executives who caused the collapse of their banks.
- Judy Summersby forwarded to me a copy of a letter to the Boston Globe of 9/17/23 by Joseph Gerson, advocating for diplomacy with China based on the notions of common security instead of confrontation.
- A Common Dreams email of 9/13/23 reports that progressive groups have unveiled a “rural new deal” to reverse decades of economic decline”
- A thorough study of 8/9/23 by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities concludes that “state taxes have a minimal impact on people’s interstate moves”
- Senator Elizabeth Warren issued a 7/28/23 email describing her proposal to create a Digital Consumer Protection Commission.
- Common Dreams has an email of 7/25/23 saying: “ Advocates applaud House push to restore voting rights to formerly incarcerated people.”
- Moms Arising has a 7/27/23 email proposing that Congress pass the People’s Response Act, which addresses Public Safety Week in minority communities.
- Ralph Nader wrote a 7/9/23 article asking progressives to get more backbone and oppose the “corporatists”.

- Common Dreams published a 6/9/23 email: Dems unveil Debt Ceiling Reform Act, to prevent future GOP hostage- taking. Common Dream's 5/25/21 email explains why legal scholars detail that this measure is abundantly constitutional.
- Common Dreams has a 5/23/23 article: Minnesota Dems set bar for state legislation, passing nearly everything on the transformational agenda of the Democrats.
- Billmoyers.com, at the end of 2023, published a podcast by Heather Mc Ghee: How American Racism Has a Cost for Everyone.
- Reverend Dr. Liz Theodores has an 11/8/23 article in a 1/8/21 email by TomDispatch: When are we were going to talk about the outrageous cost of not passing the Build Back Better Act?
- A Common Dreams email of 5/19/23: 66 House progressives call on Biden to invoke 14th Amendment to thwart GOP hostage taking of the federal budget.
- There are many people working on adopting reparations for black people and others who have been discriminated against. Nexstar Media describes one of these in a 5/17/23 email: Black leaders push for new resolution on reparations. The Boston Globe has a 7/11/24 opinion piece on this subject: US has a history of paying reparations. Why won't it pay black Americans?
- A Common Dreams email of 3/12/24 describes Bernie Sanders' 32-hour week of work proposal.
- Common Dreams' 5/2/23 email says: U.S. House members unveil a members' stock trading ban, a bipartisan Restoring Faith in Government Act. To quote Alexandria Ocasio- Cortez, "When members have access to classified information, we should not be trading in the stock market on it."
- We Defend the Vote has a 4/12/24 email, applauding singer Taylor Swift for her plea for her fans to register to vote, pointing out that some 35,000 people registered to vote in response to her urging.
- Some strong criticism of student protests has raised alarms about the consequences for the country. A Common Dreams email of 5/16/24 says: higher education lessons with authoritarianism feared.

- In the Progressive Populist of 6/1/24, Sarah Anderson of Inequality.org reports: House progressives unveil 2025 agenda to inspire action for a more equitable nation. She points out that the Congressional Progressive Caucus now has more than 100 members.
- A Common Dreams email 4/30/24: UN Tax convention presents historic opportunity to create well-being for all.
- Inequality.org, on 4/10/24, published an email describing a national priorities project report on what our federal tax payments are funding. Much of this money goes to fund the military, national security and benefits to the wealthy.
- Inequality.org has an email report about the housing crisis, saying that over half of our people can't pay for the cost of an emergency of more than \$1000. One of their proposed solutions is a rent credit for those who are paying more than 30% of their income for housing.
- Climate Hawks Vote reports in a 5/7/24 email that Vermont is the first state to pass a climate Superfund law.

## CONCLUSION



Amid all that is going on and going wrong, what do we make of all of this? I end this book by explaining three recent instances in which Trump is coming apart, and citing three very thoughtful articles that begin to show the way for us.

Donald Trump has shown in recent times that his mental health is failing. When Joe Biden was President, he and the Republicorrupts could somewhat plausibly claim that Biden's health was somewhat worse than Trump's. But now that Trump is facing a candidate who is some twenty younger than he is, public attention has moved more intensively to an examination of Trump's fitness to be President. Here are three examples of this.

- Robert Reich has a Substack email of 8/1/24, recounting Trump's talk at the National Association of Black Journalists, in which he made racist remarks about Kamala Harris, The piece is called: Trump's Meltdown, the Bigot revealed.
- At a recent rally in Florida, Trump is quoted as saying that if people elected him President, they would no longer have to vote in the future. This is reported in the Common Dreams email of 7/27/24.
- The Democrats have recently hit upon a name for Trump and his MAGA supporters-Weirdos. Judy Summersby recently sent me an article from 8/3/24 The Guardian: This one weird trick might win Democrats the election.

Here are some particularly inspiring things said recently.

- Robert Reich, in his 5/20/24 email, asked what Americans really know about Trump and Biden? He suggests that Trump supporters are not going to change their minds about him despite the continuing detestable actions he takes and words he spews out. He also is somewhat mystified that the good things Biden has done are not, by and large, getting through to the electorate. After Trump's conviction on all 34 counts in the New York criminal trial, the polls showed no change between the two candidates. In fact, Trump raised more than \$50 million in campaign contributions right after the convictions. Reich proposes that the Democrats give much more emphasis to the progress the country has made under Biden.
- Ezra Levin, Co- Executive Director of Indivisible, has a 5/26/24 thoughtful and eloquent piece entitled: Fight or surrender, exploring what we must do to prevent Trump from being elected President.
- Thom Hartmann has an astute 8/17/23 email: Beyond the indictments, we must do more to protect US democracy under Trump. Hartmann's prescriptions are well thought out and appropriately emphatic.

Let's get to work on this, in whatever way we can. Our democratic values depend on it.



### **About the Author**

Allan Rodgers is a graduate of Princeton University and Harvard Law School. During most of the 1960s he was an associate at the Boston law firm of Hill & Barlow and an Assistant Attorney General of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. In March of 1969, he became the Executive Director of the Massachusetts Law Reform Institute in Boston, a statewide legal advocacy center helping poor people. He retired from that position at the end of 2010.

Allan continues to engage in activities—active and armchair, local and statewide and national—for the betterment of our society and country. He is an ex officio member of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court’s Access to Justice Commission and a member of the Winchester Housing Partnership Board. He also advocates by way of petitions and alerts from wonderful national and regional groups that work on public issues. He reads and collects many books and articles (and cartoons) during the year, making notes for use in his future writings.

Since his retirement from MLRI, Allan has written and self-published books annually.

- November 2013: *Rap-Ups Of A Retired Reformer: Stories About How Legal Services Advocates Transformed the Laws for Poor People in Massachusetts*, about the successes of legal services advocates in changing the laws. This 200-page book is available by contacting Allan at arodgers08 @comcast.net for the electronic file or hard copy or at <https://www.masslegalservices.org/Rodgers-Rap-Ups> for the PDF file.
- May 2014: *1984 Has Come And Gone, But The Right Wing Is Creating Orwell's World: Twelve Satires on Some Living Satires*, a 45-page book.
- May 2015: *More Tales About The Wrong Wing: How They Ignore the People and Continue Their Crusade to Take Over This Country*, another book of satires, 58 pages.
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