

DUMB AND HATE IN THE TIME OF TRUMP – A TRUE STORY

By Professor Wallace Ford

Introduction to the Introduction

What follows are excerpts from journal that began as a series of commentaries about the vagaries of political life in the United States in 2020. Given the dystopian nature of the Trump presidency, his reelection could fairly be said to mark the end of America as we have come to know it – certainly anything that one might be considered to be passably good about this nation.

I had this bright idea of writing a daily journal observing the twisting, churning tides of political fortunes that, by the end of March 2020, would determine the eventual Democratic nominee who would either defeat the Demon That Is Trump or would enable his continued reign of terror and stupidity – hence the working title – “The Most Important Month in the History of the United States – Maybe”.

And then the pandemic exploded and the concern was no longer just what would happen if Trump were reelected. It became very clear early on that this man was going to get us all killed if we didn't look out.

And so, a journal that begin as a sociopolitical series of observation took an unexpected turn into a collective journey to the brink of cataclysm and you can follow the serpentine path that Fate has provided for this country in real time.....what happens next is anyone's guess. Indeed, your guess is as good as mine.

Introduction

To begin a book with such a presumptuous title certainly reflects on the author. I will take full responsibility for being presumptuous. After all, I thought that Humphrey would beat Nixon and if you have been reading my Point of View blog at www.thewallaceford.com you will find that I wrote that Hillary would certainly beat Trump *on the night before the election*. I also picked Carter to beat Reagan and Dukakis to beat Bush.

It might be helpful to argue that I have to be right sometime, after all I did pick Obama to beat both McCain and Romney – and I will freely admit that those choices were aspirational as opposed to being rational. Yet, as I begin this journal on March 1, 2020, I can't help but feeling that the concatenation of time and circumstances has resulted in the prospect of the reelection of Donald J. Trump as having the potential to obliterate the foundation of many of the key institutions of the United States government...

..... But as February 29, 2020 came to a close, signaling the end of Black History Month and accentuating the quadrennial Leap Year oddity, it would seem that the next 31 days are hugely

important. By midnight on March 31st the presumptive Democratic candidate will be known. Whether he/she will emerge from Milwaukee in July as the nominee will remain to be seen. But while this process goes forward we know that Trump will be waiting and the world will not.

Afghanistan, Iran, Coronavirus and climate change are just some of the factors that will scramble any predictions of what challenges await this country and this nation. But the next 31 days will be important in any event.

March 2, 2020

.....the Trump presidency is like a Grade Z horror movie where the monster never dies. Incredibly, while virtually cloaked in corruption and impeachment and creeping instability that resembles mental disability, Trump had the best week of his presidency last week. And somehow, the Democrats continue to act as if this is just another presidential election in yet another election cycle.....even though that is clearly not the case.

Consider that last week Trump was acquitted – not exonerated by the Kangaroo Senate that is in thrall to their Great God Trump. That faux exonerated should have done nothing to boost Trump's standing. His State of the Union – game show – tantrum should have confirmed for all who care that this man is unfit for the office of President of the United States. And of course, his Friday Massacre, firing and demoting members of his administration who testified as to the truth regarding his outrageous misconduct, allowed Trump to channel his inner Caligula.

Yet, incredibly, by the end of last week Trump had the highest approval ratings since he became president. And just as incredibly, the Democrats managed to mangle the Iowa Caucus and move on to the New Hampshire primary sniping and heaving body shots at each other until it would seem that it doesn't matter who gets the Democratic nomination in Milwaukee in July as the "winner" will just get to play a role in the remake of "Trump v. Hillary."

March 3, 2020

And now it is Super Tuesday. It takes 1991 delegates to get the Democratic nomination at the convention in Milwaukee in July. There are 1440 delegates at stake today and as the morning began it looked like it is going to be a Biden – Sanders matchup with Warren and Bloomberg trying to find a way to get in the ring with them.

One interesting note – three of the remaining four candidates are 78 years old – at 68 Elizabeth Warren is the aging Baby Boomer and the other three are.....the last gasp of the oldest Boomers? Such are the strange times in which we live.

March 4, 2020

And now the cage match begins. Joe Biden ran the table yesterday, winning in so many states that all of a sudden he is starting to look like Joe Inevitable, except in Bernie Land. Bernie Sanders will have a formidable position in the race once the California returns come in, but with

Biden winning literally all over the country, the prospect of a Sanders presidency has dimmed more than a little bit.

March 5, 2020

Meanwhile, the coronavirus has shut down all the schools in Japan and Italy. If Germany is next it will seem like some kind of cosmic revenge on the Axis Powers of World War II. And exactly when do schools start closing in the United States?

And exactly when is Trump actually going to say something fact-based when it comes to dealing with this possible pandemic? Here's a hint – don't hold your breath – that is, unless someone sneezes near you.

March 7, 2020

It is said that Albert Einstein developed mathematical equations that proved that time is elastic. I am certain that Einstein forgot more about the Theory of Relativity than I will ever know. But I do know that the past seven days are living proof of the elasticity of time.

After all, could it just be seven days ago that Joe Biden's candidacy had one foot in the grave and the other on a banana peel? Could it be just seven days ago that the nation was bracing itself for the Bloomberg Brigade charging onto the field of play and readily dispensing with all the pretenders to the Democratic nomination? And could it be that one week ago there were clear and cognizable paths to victory that were sustaining the candidacies of Amy Klobuchar, Pete Buttigieg and Elizabeth Warren?

And then Biden won 10 of the 14 Super Tuesday states, in many instances by insane margins. And this on top of his 30 point margin of victory in South Carolina. And while Sanders certainly won the other four states (Bloomberg garnering American Samoa as a reward for his \$500 million campaign), by the time the Super Tuesday dust had settled he was no longer the leading candidate nor was he the presumptive candidate.

March 10, 2020

The science fiction-like drama and trauma of the coronavirus outbreak has added another level of urgency to March 2020. In point of fact the pandemic should be an apolitical event. But it seems almost inevitable that, if a natural disaster were to be visited upon these United States, Donald Trump would clearly and brilliantly illustrate why this may indeed be the most important month in American history.

The fact that even in the face of a health emergency that could affect millions of Americans and kill thousands of Americans, Trump continues to demonstrate a stunning lack of connection to the truth or even facts. His ignorance would be stunning under any circumstances, but the fact that he gladly and proudly cloaks himself in ignorance should frighten even the most avid advocate for more conservative judges.

In the aftermath of the Hurricane Katrina disaster in New Orleans we saw the incompetence of the administration of George W. Bush exposed for the entire world to see. But once the incompetence was exposed we did not see Bush act as if there were no American refugees in the Superdome.

As the coronavirus begins to sharpen its lethal scythe and contemplates an attack on a third of a billion Americans, Trump is worried about “the numbers” and the stock market, and not of the plague that could possibly await us. We can only hope that this country is lucky because if we are depending on Trump for our safety we might as well start shopping for hemlock right now.

March 11, 2020

The morning begins with the acknowledgement that Bernie Sanders took a worse beating from Joe Biden than it seemed last night. At least Sanders won North Dakota – but Biden won Idaho, and even Washington State, which was supposed to be Sanders territory, was split right down the middle with Biden – which translates as another win for Biden.

There are two critical questions that need to be addressed sooner than later. First, how much longer will Sanders stay in the race? In a “normal” political environment there might be some rationale for him waiting until the convention prior to endorsing Biden and releasing his delegates. But by now everyone must realize that this is not a “normal” political year. And every day that some people perceive Sanders as a viable candidate is another day that the Democratic Party is not fully united in a mission to get Trump out of 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue come January of 2021.

March 12, 2020

Considering the existential importance of the 2020 presidential election, an eerie quiet has settled over the Democratic campaigns. It may be due to the fact that Joe Biden has delivered everything but the *coup de grace* to Bernie Sanders’ candidacy and that now the only question will be whether Sanders can be less graceless than he was in 2016. But somehow it feels that there is something more.

Perhaps it is the fact that Sanders still has a puncher’s chance of snatching victory from the jaws of defeat if.....if Elizabeth Warren endorses him. If Joe Biden has a total meltdown in the debate on Sunday. If Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez gives an epic campaign speech that finally mobilizes the seemingly somnolent youth vote that Bernie Sanders swears is waiting to carry him to the nomination in Milwaukee. But somehow it feels as if there is something more.

And, of course there is. The fact that we are now living in a global pandemic caused by the coronavirus has cast a pall over everything from the NBA to upcoming nuptials. From Harvard to Harlem and from Rome to Singapore, there is fear in the air –everywhere.

And as bad as the threat of what a 21st century plague might look like, the stunning stupidity and inimitable ignorance of Donald Trump justifies all fears. His performance and that of his administration finally illustrates how incompetent this man is – and always has been.

There has always been a concern as to what would happen to this country, and this planet, if a real crisis occurred while Donald Trump was president. There have been crises of his own creation – see North Korea and the Mexican border as exhibits A & B. But now there is a real world disaster looming and Trump is being exposed for the hapless hack that he is.

March 14, 2020

The day begins with coronavirus and ends with coronavirus. In between there are two items of note. First, it appears that Trump and his enablers have counter intuitively seized upon this pandemic as an opportunity to bolster his reelection campaign. Today's press conference featured all kinds of people including Trump, Mike Pence (and what was HUD Secretary Ben Carson doing there?) and virtually anyone who had anything to say about the pandemic except Diamond and Silk.

March 15, 2020

And.....one other observation.....what is it about toilet paper? An unscientific survey of stores in New York City, and news reports from across the country indicate quite clearly that Americans are buying toilet paper in such incredible quantities that one would think that dysentery, and not coronavirus, was about to afflict every man, woman and child in this country.

There are many necessities that will be important in a total shutdown of the villages, towns and cities of America. Food, toiletries and necessary medications are obvious. But a two year supply of toilet paper?

When historians examine the Pandemic of 2020 I am hopeful that someone will discover why Americans suddenly felt the need to have enough toilet paper – no matter what.

March 16, 2020

The day begins with memories of last night's Grumpy Old Men Face Off. The Democratic Party presidential debate with no studio audience had the feel of an argument in a not too busy nursing home where no one was really paying attention. Simply put, it was not a good look for the Democrats and certainly not likely to inspire enthusiasm among anyone not receiving a Social Security check.

Probably the biggest news from last night is that Biden committed to having a woman as his running mate. That is a bold move on his part and a commitment that he just has to keep. The question will be whether he will continue to bold and have a Black woman and acknowledge the diversity that is the base of the Democratic Party. We shall see.

March 17, 2020

We all need to keep in mind that a mere 16 days ago what had been the most competitive and diverse presidential primary race in the history of the republic morphed into a race between two elderly white men. And then the Biden-Sanders race has been elbowed into a barely lit corner of the national consciousness due to the coronavirus and the spectacular mismanagement of the ensuing pandemic by the Trump administration, starting with Donald (“I give myself a ten”) Trump.

And so, by tomorrow, these questions will be in the forefront of political observers before everyone rushes back for the latest news regarding the pandemic that some fear might kill two million Americans:

1. Will Joe Biden seize the definitive lead as the likely Democratic candidate?
2. If that is case will Bernie Sanders concede or will he follow a scorched earth path to Milwaukee thereby insuring a debacle that will warm the heart of Republicans from coast to coast?
3. And finally, will there even be a convention in July if the coronavirus pandemic is still raging throughout the country, as many epidemiologists predict?
4. And if there cannot be a convention in Milwaukee, then what?
5. And last, but certainly not least, will Trump use his presidential powers during this declared State of National Emergency to impact the election. Delaying the November 3rd election, for example? And if that seems improbable please note that the Republican governors of Ohio and Florida have already given him the playbook.

And it isn't even noon yet.

It's time to fasten our seatbelts.

March 18, 2020

And now Trump is referring to himself as a “wartime president” which to him has a nice Patton-like ring to it. But when we think of wartime presidents we know that Lincoln didn't know about the Confederate attack on Fort Sumter two months in advance. We know that Franklin Roosevelt knew of the threat of a Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and did not tell the American people that it was a “hoax.” And we know that in the year before 9/11 George W. Bush did not cut the budget for American intelligence and defense operations.

But now, in the Age of Trump, we know that Trump was given information to the effect that the coronavirus – which he sees is important to call the “Chinese virus” – represented a clear and present danger to the United States. And we now know that not only did he do nothing, Trump

actually created an alternative universe of thought which persists to this day. In this universe there is either no such thing as the coronavirus or if there is such a virus, it cannot affect the American people. And if it does affect the American people, the virus will dissipate “miraculously” (Trump’s exact words),

March 19, 2020

As the coronavirus continues its seemingly inexorable march across the planet, we watch the drama play out in America. And now, in the wealthiest country in the history of the planet, the United States Center for Disease Control announced that due to a shortage of surgical masks doctors and other health care workers have been advised to use.....wait for it.....wait for it.....bandanas and scarves(!!!!!!).

The facts – the United States manufactures approximately 1.5 billion masks annually. It is anticipated that as the coronavirus pandemic spreads there will be a need for 3 billion masks.

And here is where Trump and his enablers come in. In January it was known that the coronavirus would impact this country. In January and February Trump was referring to the pandemic as a “hoax” or a malady that would “miraculously” disappear here in the United States

March 20, 2020

The day begins with the news that California governor Gavin Newsom has shut down the entire state. Over 40 million people are being required to shelter at home and we have to know that this is just another step in the direction of a total national shutdown.

Even so, Trump falsely claims that a “cure” is close to being approved by the Food and Drug Administration. It is a claim that the FDA denies within the hour. And one has to wonder how long Trump can continue to spew lie after lie in this life and death scenario before even his enablers and most ardent supporters turn on him.

It is a question worth considering, even though the answer is clear – for his most ardent supporters and enablers, the answer is never. They will clearly follow Trump off the existential cliff that this pandemic represents.

March 21, 2020

What we know from the present is that after being elected, Trump and his enablers and supporters have attempted to intentionally and systematically dismantle many of the democratic norms of the American government. While Trump does not have an articulated vision like Hitler, he does seem to revel in the chaos and disharmony that he has created. And like a stupid child who plays with matches, he is capable of causing a national conflagration well beyond his vision or intention.

Which is why it is so important that the Democratic National Committee not underestimate Trump (as they did in 2016) and realize that he is definitely capable of using an extended pandemic as a reason to continue the National Emergency that he has already and postpone the November 3rd. There is no doubt that virtually all of the 31 Republican governors of this country would go along with this ploy, especially if Trump is significantly behind in the polls.

And then what?

Do the Democrats whine and cry and go the Supreme Court which has a majority of Trump appointees and sympathizers? Do the 19 Democratic state governors and the District of Columbia hold elections anyway and declare the winner to be the President-elect?

These are questions which would have seemed bizarre and otherworldly if they were presented in 2016 and Barack Obama was president. But this is 2020 and Donald J. Trump is president. And if we have learned anything from this travesty of a president, he is capable of any outrageous conduct.

The Democrats need to be prepared.

March 22, 2020

Every midday press conference by the White House Coronavirus Task Force is a theater presentation which seems to be organized as a mini-rally to praise Trump. There is the additional goal of trying to present some semblance of the truth to the American people while Trump steadfastly adheres to his mistaken belief that the pandemic is a personal attack making his crisis management skills permanently crippled.

And then today's press conference doesn't take place until early evening. Who knows why?

And that is when Trump seemed to think that when millions of Americans have lost or are losing their jobs, and tens of thousands of small businesses are shuttering by the hour, it would be a good time to lie once more and claim that he has lost billions of dollars by being president.

Presumably, the point is that the American people need to understand the tremendous sacrifice he has been making by being president. Aside from the fact that his business career is littered with the carcasses of multiple failed and bankrupt enterprises, and that there are contractors and bondholders who are awaiting their Trump money into eternity – what could be on the mind of this megalomaniac to make him think that this would be the time to speak about his imaginary personal wealth?

March 23, 2020

At some time in the middle of the night (when does this man ever sleep? And is narcissistic insomnia even a disease?) Trump sends out a tweet to the effect that if the current strategies

being employed to combat the coronavirus aren't working we must just accept the fact that some people are going to die and get people back to work in any event.

It is a fact that this goes against all serious medical knowledge. More importantly, we are witness to an inhumane world view that reflects something very dark and desolate in the soul of this man. We are also witnessing what an impatient child looks like when he grows up and has never learned the qualities of patience and perseverance.

March 24, 2020

There is finally whispering out loud regarding whether or not there will even be an election in November if Trump decides to upend the current American democracy using the coronavirus pandemic as a fig leaf for his naked grab for autocratic power.

March 25, 2020

Today began with the news that Spain has more coronavirus deaths than Italy or China....they are using an ice skating rink in Madrid as a morgue. And meantime, Trump is announcing that Americans can go back to church on Easter Sunday, two weeks and three days from today.

Meanwhile the Senate has passed a \$2 trillion economic stimulus bill. Americans will soon be getting checks in the mail along with small businesses and large corporations. And one has to wonder, if \$2 trillion is a down payment on the damage being caused by the pandemic, how bad will it really be? The streets and malls and airports and train stations and theaters are already empty. But the hospitals are full.

March 26, 2020

As appalling as it is to contemplate, Trump continues to press for an "opening" of the U.S. economy on Easter Sunday – some ten days from today. Trump continues to spew this sewage of stupidity despite the very clear message from statements from every person who has a medical degree or a PhD in epidemiology that this is a horrible idea.

The idea that, in the middle of a pandemic, which will not have peaked by Easter Sunday, millions of Americans should engage in social contact on a massive scale amounts to a set of instructions that would make the Jonestown Massacre look like a tailgate picnic. But did that deter Trump from trying to take this country on the Highway to Hell?

And so.....at yet another Trump Tele-Rally, aka the White House Coronavirus Task Force briefing, Trump managed yet another tour de force. He began by naming the heads of state who attended the G-20 pandemic conference call – mangling the pronunciation of names and countries with reckless abandon like a bumper car on steroids. And he did this for reasons that probably no one will ever know.

And then.....Trump not only doubled down on his Easter Basket Wish.....that the restrictions on social contact and business that are strangling the economy would not evanesce. Just in time for Easter. He said this despite the fact that every scientist and doctor worth her/his degree has stated that we have not even reached the peak.

It was clear that Dr. Anthony Fauci and Dr. Deborah Birx were trying to make sure not to bite their tongues too hard lest blood start trickling down their chins while Trump continued to weave his Web of Lies. And when their turn came to speak they basically dismissed everything Trump said by using fact, statistics and science.

And the question remains.....does it even matter? There are too many polls that indicate that more than 40% of the American public thinks that Trump is doing a good job managing the nation's response to the pandemic. Some polls have his pandemic performance approval ratings as being over 50%.

And a final question for the day ---- who are these people?

March 28, 2020

The only real news that matters today is that in an offhand remark on his way to the Marine helicopter flight to the Norfolk naval base, he said that he was considering establish a quarantine on the states of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut. He repeated that he was considering this strategy when he arrived in Virginia to attend the launch of a naval hospital ship that was headed to New York City.

It appears that the germ of this clearly unconstitutional bit of strategy (there is something called the 10th Amendment, for one thing) came from a telephone conversation that he had with the Florida Governor Ron DeSantis (coincidentally a Republican) who was complaining about New York residents coming to Florida for the winter and bringing the COVID-19 virus with them.

March 29, 2020

The day begins with Trump continuing to bash governors that aren't "appreciative" of his imperial beneficence in providing aid to their states, singling out Governor Jay Inslee in Washington State and Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer, whom Trump referred to as "that woman." The idea that governors representing the people of the United States need to kiss his ass in order to gain aid in the midst of an historic pandemic is so foul and disgusting as to be unbelievable and pornographic – except that the Megalomaniac in Chief is incapable of disconnecting his own bloated persona from his responsibilities as president.

And then.....there was the White House Coronavirus Task Force press briefing. And this one was a *tour de force* even by Trump standards. First he walked back his earlier announcement that he wanted to lift restrictions on the American economy by Easter by stating that the restrictions on social mobility should be extended to at least April 30th. And then he uttered lie number 1

million (who's counting at this point) by stating that his earlier announcement was always "aspirational."

He then went into a classic rant, pin balling from one subject to another imagined grievance. He actually said that if "only" 100,000 Americans died during this pandemic his administration will have done a good job. This was said in connection with a statement by Dr. Anthony Fauci that 2-3 million Americans could die without the steps being taken by the federal and state governments.

The way in which Trump threw out the 100,000 fatality number so casually put a laser-like focus on the extent to which Trump is devoid of any empathy for the lives of anyone not named Trump – and that's being generous. Yet Trump and his enablers will continue to tout his leadership – and Mike Pence continues to be the oldest cheerleader in history. Yet the fact that any U.S. President could consider the loss of 100,000 lives as the indicia of a good job should disqualify him from reelection. But we know that it will not.

March 30, 2020

The day begins with the reaction to Trump's totally unfounded accusation that New York City hospital workers are stealing medical supplies – particularly gloves, masks and gowns. Diving even deeper into the pool of ignorance in which he dwells, Trump simply cannot understand why these hospitals need so much Personal Protection Equipment – PPE.

And that is because he does not understand that hospital workers use and discard PPE regularly to avoid spreading the coronavirus. Basic hospital procedures which Trump cannot understand. Hopefully someone on the Coronavirus Task Force can explain these protocols to this man so that he doesn't continue to attack and insult people who exhibit more courage in one hour than Trump has in his entire life.

And so the speculation continues as to what the pandemic is doing to the presidential election process. The Democratic Party primaries are either on hold or are a momentary afterthought as all Americans are focusing on literal life and death issues. There isn't a lot of space for Joe Biden or Bernie Sanders to say much of anything about their policies and vision and there simply aren't any more rallies or campaign events on which potential voters can focus.

Biden and Sanders have clearly stated the obvious, that as president they would rely on science and medicine and not bluster and lies. But any specific critiques aren't helping the Americans who are suffering.

March 31, 2020

As the Democrats try to find a way to make their presidential nomination process relevant in the midst of a global pandemic, there are some interesting reflections to be considered regarding the

epic mismanagement of Trump and his enablers. But one of the most overlooked aspects of Trump's behavior relates to his treatment of the governors of the United States.

He has now stated on repeated occasions that governors need to show him some "appreciation" if they expect his administration to be helpful. This quid pro quo is redolent with the stench of his dealings with.....Ukraine. Clearly, the transactional nature of any of these dealings is directly connected to his transactions during his less than stellar business career.

But we should remember that even though the Ukraine was in the middle of a literal firefight with Russia, Trump thought that Ukraine's distress was an opportunity to squeeze the person across the table for a "favor" in exchange for already allocated military aid. And, as we all know now, that favor involved an effort to smear and besmirch his presumed opponent for the presidency, Joe Biden. And we all know how that worked out.

And now, amazingly, Trump is pulling the same stunt with the governors of 50 states and 5 territories – representing over a third of a billion Americans – who are in the midst of a never before seen public health crisis that could result in the deaths of millions of people in a worst case scenario. And what does he want in exchange for the maximum level of federal assistance? It's called "appreciation."

And what does appreciation look like? We could ask Ron DeSantis, the governor of Florida who would kiss the manure off of Trump's boots if he were asked to do so. His constant worship of Trump has resulted in the state of Florida not having a ventilator deficit at the moment. And his constant worship resulted in Trump almost imposing quarantine on New York because he complained that too many New Yorkers were bringing the COVID-19 virus to his home state.

Parenthetically, it should be noted that this is the same Florida governor who recently allowed a ten day spring break bacchanal to occur on his state's beaches despite the advice and warnings of public officials. And this is the Florida governor whose state is late to the game in imposing social distancing on its residents.

But we digress.

Intermission

And that was just the month of March.

Since then we have been virtually inundated with lies and madness spewing from Trump and his minions like a fire hose from Hades. Perhaps not amazingly things did get worse and there is no telling when they will get better.

It has been said, "this man is trying to get us all killed", and it may be that truer words were never spoken.