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## The Problem of Fake News. From the Left.

Todd Alcott · Wednesday, March 8th, 2017

*I* know Donald Trump is unfit to be president. *You* know Donald Trump is unfit to be president. The *majority of Americans* know Donald Trump is unfit to be president. *Most Democratic politicians* know Donald Trump is unfit to be president. Most *Republican* politicians know Donald Trump is unfit to be president. Most *world leaders* know Donald Trump is unfit to be president. *Vladimir Putin* knows, more than most people, Donald Trump is unfit to be president. Across the globe, *billions of ordinary people* know Donald Trump is unfit to be president. Most of *the current White House staff* knows Donald Trump is unfit to be president. Most of Trump's *cabinet*, in all likelihood, knows Donald Trump is unfit to be president. Perhaps, somewhere in the sticky filth-encrusted black pit of his soul, Donald Trump, *himself*, knows Donald Trump is unfit to be president.

This is not news.

What many liberals don't seem to understand is: none of that matters. Donald Trump is president, he will remain president, perhaps until 2020, perhaps until 2024, perhaps beyond. And there's nothing they can do about it.

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Every day, in forums both legitimate (*The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*) quasi-legitimate (Huffington Post) and openly partisan (ThinkProgress, Daily Kos, The Young Turks), liberals keep presenting headlines ranging from "Pause This Presidency!" to "Trump Speech Leaves GOP Encouraged, but Still Divided" to "A GOP revolt Threatens President Trump's Agenda" to "The Trump Experiment May Come To An Early Tipping Point" to "5 Reasons Why Saturday's Meltdown Likely Marked the Beginning of the End of Trump's Presidency" to "Nancy Sinatra Destroys Donald Trump With Her Kickass Tweets." Headlines like these, repeated with variations a thousand times a day, give the impression of a titanic wave of resistance to the abomination of the Trump Presidency. A reader paying attention to headlines like these would think that Trump's days are numbered, and dwindling to a precious few, and the White House will soon be stormed by a mob of outraged citizens led by Stephen Colbert, John Oliver, Lindsay Graham, John McCain, Elizabeth Warren and Madonna. Trump, they imagine, will be pulled screaming into the Rose Garden, where he will be drawn and quartered, and his head will be placed on a pike to be vilified by tourists.

That's not going to happen. Despite Nancy Sinatra's kickass tweets, Donald Trump remains

undestroyed.

Michael Flynn, who never should have been let anywhere near the White House, was compromised and forced to resign. “It’s all ending!” liberals cheered. “Trump will be out of office in a matter of days!”

Trump is still in office.

Jeff Sessions, who never should have been let anywhere near the White House, was found to have perjured himself. “He’s out!” crowed liberals. “Jeff Sessions Must resign!” demanded op-ed pages.

Sessions recused himself from Russia probes, and everything went back to normal (“normal,” of course, being a very fluid term here).

Then Trump made a ridiculous tweet about Obama “wiretapping” him. “The worm is on the hook! He’s wriggling!” trumpeted (sorry) my liberal friends.

The worm is not on the hook, because there is no hook. There is no mechanism to remove Trump from office. None. The founding fathers did not anticipate a Twitter-pated dimestore Mussolini falling into the accident of a hyper-partisan single-party-controlled Congress, Senate and Supreme Court. The news that liberals are reading, the stories about how the Trump presidency is on the brink of extinction, are fake.

I understand the impulse. When constructing a drama, the screenwriter creates a device called “the inciting incident.” At the beginning of the drama, the protagonist’s life is in equilibrium. Then the inciting incident happens, usually around page 10, which throws the protagonist’s life out of equilibrium. The viewer gets sucked into the story because the loss of equilibrium is so upsetting that they have to keep watching the drama until equilibrium is restored. In a great drama, the need to restore equilibrium becomes so intense, the viewer doesn’t even care how it’s restored, just so long as it’s restored. In *Hamlet*, for instance, equilibrium is restored when everyone is dead and the kingdom is taken over by hostile forces. Ahem.

In our White House drama, the equilibrium of the United States — nay, the world — has been utterly annihilated by one man, and, naturally, viewers are very, very upset. They need equilibrium to be restored. They need it so badly, they make up narratives on their own time about how the drama is going to end, like people writing *Game of Thrones* fan fiction, just to deal with the tension. “Mike Pence used a private email account! It’s all ending!”

SPOILER ALERT: It’s not all ending. It’s all continuing. And, I’m sorry to say, it’s not going to get better.

Mike Pence’s hacked email brings up another tributary of liberal fake news: moral outrage at Republican hypocrisy. Headlines like [“Six Times Jeff Sessions Talked About Perjury, Access and Recusal — When It Involved the Clintons”](#) or [“The GOP’s Hypocrisy in Shutting Up Elizabeth Warren”](#) or [“The Astounding Hypocrisy and Cynicism of the GOP”](#) or [“After Loving Wikileaks as a Candidate, Trump Decides He Doesn’t Like Leaks as President,”](#) state the obvious: there is a double standard when it comes to American politics. Democrats get investigated, impeached and driven from office over nonexistent infractions that no one cares about, while Republicans get to actually commit treason and don’t get a second glance. Every speech Obama ever gave was picked apart by conservatives for things they could twist to manufacture outrage, but if Donald Trump

makes it through a speech without sounding like a deranged lunatic and the liberal press fawns over him as though he's suddenly John F. Kennedy. Why did the liberal press delight at Trump's speech to Congress? Because equilibrium, for an hour, appeared to be restored. A president spoke like a president. He spoke horrifying nonsense about an anti-immigrant police state, but he spoke his hateful garbage in a manner recognizable as "presidential." Liberals sighed with relief because it appeared, briefly, that equilibrium had been restored to our national drama.

What liberals don't understand about hypocrisy is, conservatives don't care. They don't care about hypocrisy, they care about *winning*. The Republican version of "equilibrium" is "The wealthy possess all the wealth of the land and the poor people are slaves." I wish that were an exaggeration.

When Republicans don't respond to liberal moral outrage to their hypocrisy, liberals respond by raging louder, and repeating their rage in larger type.

But repeating outrage in the press does not change government policy. In these days when anyone can avoid headlines that displease, repeating outrage doesn't even reach the ears of those who need to hear it. Republicans don't care if liberals are outraged. No, wait, they do care. They *love* it.

All across our nation, Republican congressmen and senators held town hall meetings where their constituents shouted and screamed and raged and chanted at them. Liberals shared videos of these meetings far and wide. "It's happening!" they exclaimed. "It's all ending!"

It's not all ending. All those Republicans are still in office. And they will remain there.

Gerrymandering has given the Republicans a permanent majority in Congress. They're not going to be swept out of office in 2018 by a tidal wave of liberal righteous indignation. They're not going anywhere. That's the reason, in those town-hall videos, the Republican congressman stands on the stage impassively, arms folded, waiting patiently for the hysteria to subside. Because he knows his seat is not in danger. I'm sorry to say, the 2018 election will not change anything. Republicans control the White House, Senate, Congress, 38 state houses, and, soon, the Supreme Court. There is nothing stopping them from winning in 2018. No amount of outraged liberal tweets can change that. They will remain in power in 2018, and, likely, in 2020. They've spent decades gaming the system to prevent Democratic votes from counting. Now that they control the country, do you think they're going to ease up and make it more fair?

For over a decade, liberals of every stripe have been crowing about how the GOP is on its last legs, that it will soon be consigned to the dustbin of history, that it will fade away into obscurity. Donald Trump was right about one thing: everybody got it wrong. Liberal journalists, and, for that matter, Democratic politicians, forgot, over time, just how racist and stupid most of America is. Trump did not. He knew there were millions of Americans whose racism, hatred of liberals and anti-intellectualism outweighed even their own sense of self-preservation.

But surely, you say, Republican lawmakers must be patriots, right? Surely they can't stand by while Russia has installed a mole behind the desk of the Oval Office.

No, they're not standing by. They're cheering. They love it.

Why? Money.

Republicans are voted into office on the strength of corporate donations. They create policy to

benefit their corporate donors, in exchange for jobs with those donors when they leave public life. Now that Donald Trump is president, they can dispense with the job and openly take bribery. Who will prosecute them? Who would care? Hell, why not just take a job on the board of a corporation while remaining in office? Trump is doing it, why shouldn't everyone else?

Republican lawmakers love Trump because he has opened that money spigot wider than anyone else in history. Bribery and corruption are now the law of the land at the federal level. And Democratic lawmakers, bless their hearts, are after that same money. Which is why official Democratic reaction to Trump's daily profaning of the world stage never gets any more severe than a raised eyebrow or a clearing of the throat. Democratic lawmakers let Republicans get away with corruption and bribery in the hopes that some of that money will come to them. Money, whether it comes from Exxon or Rosneft, is still money.

The #1 priority for Washington Republicans is to get at that money. Their #2 priority is to anger liberals. I don't think they have a third priority.

Republicans' need to get at corporate money is completely separate from Trump's need to get at Russian money, or Chinese money, or the money of members of Mar-a-Lago, or any one of the other thousands of international business interests that provide him with easy bribery and/or money-laundering schemes.

The liberal thinks "Well, now that everyone knows that Trump is obviously guilty of so many things, certainly Republicans will abandon him to save their own skins." That, in fact, is the opposite of the case. The fact that Trump is guilty of so many things, and the fact that Republicans know he's guilty of so many things, means that they have to join his cause, and prosecute his agenda, 100%, with no breaking of ranks, in order to remain in power. In order to cut those taxes. In order to cut those benefits. In order to get at all that money.

As conservative thinker David Frum has noted, Trump has a secret. Or many secrets. To keep his secret, he must disempower all the elements of society that might discover his secret. To keep Trump in power, Republicans must become complicit in his actions or risk losing power themselves. It's really that simple. And they're not going to stop.

The United States is now 319 million people in an abusive relationship with a president. I understand that fake news is how people cope with that. But we need to wake up and see what's happening. Democrats cannot rescue the country, they have no power and little enough desire; Republicans will not rescue the country because their goal is not to rescue the country but to enrich themselves. The press will not rescue the country because they cannot. John Oliver can DESTROY Trump every week, Trump will remain in office and the wholesale slaughter of 70 years of American progress will continue unabated.

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