

Talking Turkey

The 'Big Lie' Is the Gift That Keeps on Giving — for a Man With No Shame

By JIM SMITH

We learned last week that Donald Trump conned his small-donor followers out of \$250 million on the pretext that the money would be used by an “election integrity committee” to fund challenges to Joe Biden’s election, when in fact no such committee existed and none of the money was even used for ballot recounts. It went to his hotels, the Jan. 6th rally, and mostly to his political campaign. His donors are, simply, suckers, reminding me of how he said that he loves uneducated voters and his “deplorables.” (Yes, although he attacked Hillary Clinton for using that term, he used it himself to describe his rightwing and racist followers.)

Whether or not he intended to use it long-term, when Trump saw the fundraising potential of the Big Lie, he decided to double down on it. Money, however, is not the only way the Big Lie has paid off for him.

Because his supporters believe anything Trump tells them and have been

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inoculated to dismiss any fact-checking as “fake news” paid for by the likes of George Soros, the Big Lie has generated the kind of misguided enthusiasm that could propel the Trump Party (formerly the GOP) to victory. The Democrats don’t yet have as much get-out-the-vote enthusiasm, and turnout is what wins any election. Besides, will getting the most votes even matter?

Steve Bannon brilliantly conceived a precinct strategy built upon the Big Lie and has already showed impressive success in getting Trump’s true believers to take over grass roots Republican precinct committees and school boards and to win nominations for the Secretaries of State who run elections.

The Supreme Court, with its 6-3 conservative (and Catholic) majority is dismantling abortion rights and the separation of church and state. Five of those six were nominated by presidents who did not win the popular vote.

The Trump Party is following the playbook of fascist movements in the past, convincing supporters that any fact-checking by mainstream media is part of the conspiracy against their beliefs because those media are owned by the “radical socialist Democrats.”

The latest strategy is to include a mention of Snopes and Factcheck.org within their emails, warning readers that they “will tell you this is not true, but don’t believe them!”

How can that many Americans be so easily conned into believing what the rest of us know to be obvious untruths?

Have we passed the tipping point in the rightwing takeover of our country? We’ll know that for sure if the Trump Party takes control of both the U.S. Senate and the House of Representatives and wins Secretary of State races in battleground states. That’s all that’s required to steal the 2024 presidential election. After all, the US Constitution does allow for state legislatures to go against the popular vote and send their own electors to the Electoral College.

If they pull that off, Americans will be “up in arms” *figuratively*, but they will be outgunned *literally* by the storm troopers armed with AR-15 rifles, so I suspect it won’t matter. Death threats and the threat of violence are highly effective political tools.

Consider the following item from Heather Cox Richardson:

Today, June 20, 2022, a Republican candidate for the Senate in Missouri,

disgraced former governor Eric Greitens, released an advertisement threatening those Republicans he considers too moderate, the so-called Republicans In Name Only... In the ad, Greitens is armed with a shotgun and flanked by military personnel as they burst into a house. “Today, we’re going RINO hunting,” he says. “The RINO feeds on corruption and is marked with the stripes of cowardice,” he continues. “Join the MAGA crew. Get a RINO hunting permit. There’s no bagging limit, no tagging limit, and it doesn’t expire until we save our country.”

Of course, it’s the Trumpers who are the true RINOs. The above excerpt is a tacit acknowledgement that only the non-Trump Republicans can save us, but will they? On June 6, 1954, Boston attorney Joseph Welch brought down Sen. Joseph McCarthy with his televised line, “Have you no decency, sir?” When will other Republicans join Rep. Liz Cheney and speak out? When will they defy the death threats, stand up and say, “Have you no shame, sir?”

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