

Trump Must Recover

by Bill Herbst

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The title of this commentary refers to the most obvious and blatant perspective, namely and in my strongly-held opinion, that President Trump must recover from the Coronavirus. When I write that Trump “must” recover, I’m not predicting that he will, since his claimed improvement from symptoms of the virus may be only temporary. I’m merely stating my overall wish: I’d prefer that Trump not die from COVID-19.

As I’ve written before, my feelings about Donald Trump have made a mockery of my half-century of effort to evolve in the direction of universal compassion. That’s been hit home to me unavoidably over the past three years, but never more so than right now. The sad truth is that I loathe Donald J. Trump with a passion.

My revulsion for Trump began as disgust when I first learned of his sorry-ass existence and crass misadventures in the 1980s and evolved over the ensuing decades into intense enmity as Trump publicly called for the execution of the Central Park 5, created his bullshit persona of “successful businessman” on *The Apprentice* (which I never watched, not even once) then kick-started the whole Obama birther movement. Not that I was ever a big fan of Barack Obama — I wasn’t — but Trump’s eager participation in the rise of faux-populist, right-wing insanity showed me just how deranged so many Americans really were and still are.

In the immortal words of that sack of shit Lindsey Graham, Trump is a “*race-baiting, xenophobic religious bigot,*” not to mention a lifelong criminal, a hedonistic jerk with no class, a predatory narcissist, a serial rapist, and among the worst living excuses for a human being currently drawing breath. No, my wanting Trump to recover from Coronavirus is not because of any concern on my part for his well-being or reduced suffering. My guilty confession is that I’d like Trump to suffer in about a thousand different ways. Thank heaven I’m in no position to torment and torture him, because I can’t trust that I wouldn’t.

For the record, I have less hateful feelings about the various other administration officials, staffers, and Congressional representatives who have succumbed recently to infection with COVID-19 (with more discovered each day). Those jerks contracted the virus because of the Republicans’ adamant refusal to take the pandemic seriously. Their denial and arrogance were stunning at first, back in March, but after eight months has become predictable and banal, not to

mention lethal to hundreds of thousands of Americans. Frankly, I don't care if any of those idiots gets well or dies. But I want Trump to survive.

Put simply, I hope for Trump's recovery so he can't wriggle off the hook to escape the hard, human justice that he so richly deserves after a lifetime of criminality. I want Trump to be held accountable for who he's been and what he's done.

The question of justice in the universe has always bothered me, an issue about which many of the world's major religions have weighed in. For instance, Christianity counsels that *"Judgment is mine, sayeth the Lord."* I'm not sufficiently well-versed in Christianity to know exactly what God's version of justice is — *Judgment Day? Heaven-Hell-Purgatory? Refusal by St. Peter to allow unrepentant sinners to enter within the Pearly Gates?* All I know for certain is that we're supposed to forgive and leave the justice of judgment up to God.

From Buddhism/Hinduism, we get the idea of "karma." Technically, the word translates into English roughly as "action," but it's understood by New-Agey-inclined Americans more as "reaction," much like Newton's Third Law of Motion: *"For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction."* So, I think of the popular conception of karma as being *"reaping what is sown,"* — having what we put out come back to us — which effectively implies that *"we get what we deserve."* Less personally, karma resonates to the more general idea that *"what goes around comes around."*

Yeah, maybe. That's a comforting perspective, for sure, especially for people on the losing end of the spoils, but I have my doubts.

I look around at the world — the real world of materiality and human experience — and I don't see any consistent inclination toward justice. Yes, we do our best with The Rule of Law, legal courts, and systems of morality, but they don't seem to do the trick, at least not consistently or well. Loopholes abound. Too many of the guilty get away with their nefarious deeds, especially among the privileged. Some gangsters die peacefully in their beds after long lives of thievery and murder, apparently untroubled by pangs of conscience. Many people (not all, but many) seem full of crap forever, without a shred of self-awareness or regret.

I guess that's one of the many possible reasons why so many of my friends and clients are drawn to a belief in reincarnation: *"You may not get justice or what you deserve in this particular life, but just wait..."* Again, my reaction is maybe.

I don't know, perhaps it's just me, but my perception of injustice in the world rubs me the wrong way. Big time.

During the active phase of his illness (and after), will Trump try to turn this episode to what he regards as his personal advantage and political gain? Of course he will. He already has. That includes downplaying the seriousness of the virus and accentuating his pose as the Infallible and Omnipotent Strong Man.

And yet, Trump also portrays himself as the Ultimate Victim of cruel and unfair treatment by others. Those two presumptions don't naturally go together, but they co-exist, commingle, and alternate moment-by-moment (flipping from one to the other in an instant) within the duality of Trump's seriously disturbed Gemini Sun. He is seemingly untroubled by the contradiction, and perhaps even unaware of it.

Re-entering the White House on Monday after leaving Walter Reed Hospital in a performance reminiscent of Mussolini, Il Duce Trump removed his mask and breathed on other human beings two feet away. Hell, at least Typhoid Mary didn't know that she was a carrier. COVID Trump knows that he's infected and doesn't care. Why? Because all that matters is Reality TV and Trump's being the star of the show. Other people's actual lives are of no importance to him at all.

I swear, it makes me embarrassed to be human. Baby Trump cannot entertain even the possibility of responsibility or humility, much less their reality. He suffers from "hubris syndrome," a condition of disturbed leadership coined in neurology to describe the dehumanizing personality distortion caused by wielding excessive power (*Google the term for a fuller description of the syndrome*).

If anyone deserves some serious comeuppance, it's Donald J. Trump. Yeah, I know that many people take refuge in the notion of Trump's life being empty and superficial. They believe he's deeply insecure and driven to over-compensate with egomania, and that behind the performance he's not a happy camper. Well, perhaps, but Trump seems quite capable of maintaining the self-deception that he's not only fine, but perfect. On top of that, as the toxic icing on the Trump cake, a hundred million Americans believe Trump's act and accept his vitriol and lies — all of them — without hesitation. While much of that approval falls under the heading of "*the-enemy-of-my-enemy-is-my-friend*," it serves only to confirm just how hateful and vindictive so many Americans are. (And yes, apparently I am, too. Trust me, I see the contradiction. That's part of why I acknowledge that the unforgiving polarization between different groups of Americans is reaching the point of civil war...)

In spite of all this, I still want Trump to recover. Not to minimize his personal suffering, nor even for the good of a country that is seriously lost in illusion. Instead, I'd like Trump to stick around long enough that maybe, just maybe, he can be brought to justice, publicly shamed, and forced to pay for his crimes. I hold out no hope for any atonement on Trump's part, since I regard him as incapable of conscience or remorse, but I want that scumbag prosecuted, convicted, and locked up for the rest of his life.

The first step in that effort is to vote out Trump and every other Republican in November.