

DEMOCRATIC CLUB OF WILLOW VALLEY

NEWSLETTER

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Addressing the Issues

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It's About Time

IT'S ABOUT TIME

America Is Finally Starting to See Trump for the Bullsh*t Artist He Is

He came to power through a relentless assault of lies.
But the debt owed to the truth is coming due.

Michael Tomasky/

November 24, 2025



ALLISON ROBERT/GETTY IMAGES

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It's About Time (cont'd)

From time to time, one of my old high school friends who is MAGA posts something like the following on Facebook: “Hey, libtards, you keep saying Donald Trump is dumb, but if he’s so dumb, how come he got elected president twice, overcoming your relentlessly corrupt attempts to steal the 2016 and 2024 elections, and escaped your nefarious deep-state schemes to put him behind bars?” This is supposed to be some kind of killer put-down that leaves people like me stammering.

The answer to how Trump has succeeded is really simple: He lies nonstop, and lying works. Sure, there are other factors in play—he tapped into and intensified a certain strain of profound proletarian resentment of liberal elites, and ... well, that’s about it. But mostly, it’s the lies.

Before I dig into this, let me define the word *lie* as I mean it here, since lies can take many different forms. The standard Trump lie is a simple blanket assertion of non-fact as fact. He does this many times a day. A notable if all-too-common example emerged last Saturday morning, when he “[Truthed](#)” (oh the layers of irony!) that he had “JUST GOTTEN THE HIGHEST POLL NUMBERS OF MY ‘POLITICAL CAREER.’” He sometimes veers into the deeper, more Goebbels-y lie of saying the exact opposite of the truth (Joe Biden stole the 2020 election), but most of his lies are of the more straightforward variety—up is down, black is white: the classics.

We tell ourselves that we live in a free society with a Fourth Estate that calls out lies and holds liars accountable. And furthermore, we teach our children not to lie and warn them of consequences should they do so. In such a society, lying should not work. So why does it?

It works on the public stage (private life is a different matter) because in that sphere, someone who lies all the time creates reality, or I should say “reality.” Think about it. Say four guys are sitting in a bar having a sports argument—talking about the upcoming college football playoffs, say. They begin by agreeing that Ohio State is the favorite because it is currently ranked number one in the polls, which it in fact is.

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It's About Time (cont'd)

But one of them says: No, Texas A&M is number one. The other three look at him like he's insane. They reach for their phones, they tap, tap, tap, and they show him the rankings. But he keeps insisting. Those polls are fake. It's Texas A&M. Everybody says so.

The conversation stalls. The liar has "won" the argument. Not in the sense that he is factually correct; he is not. But he has won in two senses. First, he has shut down what might have been a rational, interesting, spirited debate that proceeded from shared factual premises. Second, he has forced the other three to waste time and mental energy debating a proposition that is not remotely up for debate, and in the process has succeeded in making himself the center of attention and controversy whom everyone else talks about.

Well, you say, the other three could just ignore him, and in my example, it's possible that they could. But now imagine that these four and their views are highly regarded by the other 100 patrons in the bar—that they direct the conversation, and the others listen to them and follow their lead. And imagine further that over the years, our Texas A&M acolyte has won the intense loyalty of 40 or 45 of the other patrons, such that they too adopt the position that the Aggies are in fact number one. Now, the entire bar is enmeshed in silly, pointless controversy.

And finally, imagine one more thing. Imagine that our A&M partisan and his followers not only say of the Buckeye adherents that they are wrong. No! They accuse them of moral turpitude. They charge that believing that Ohio State is number one is a sign of confusion, weakness, depravity; un-Americanism, even. They do so with a singular conviction and vigor, enough that the 10 or 15 patrons in the bar who don't follow college football at all and don't know who's really number one emerge genuinely confused and perhaps even inclined to believe them.

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It's About Time (cont'd)

That's how lying in the public sphere succeeds. And, to reiterate, Trump tells many such lies a day. He talks to the press two or three times a day most days, which probably adds up to what, 45 minutes, an hour? Spitballing it at one lie every two minutes, which may well be low, that's around 25 factual lies a day. (This is commonly referred to as a "Gish gallop"—a torrent of lies that comes so relatively hot and heavy that the truth can't find a purchase.)

Who can keep up? No one can. I complain a lot about the mainstream media, and with good reason—they spent years repeating Trump's incessant lies in the interest of "fairness" (and they still do it too much). But this is one aspect of their task that even I concede is well-nigh impossible. A news outlet would need a staff of at least, oh, 15 people to really keep assiduous track of all that lying. No one can do that these days.

Besides which, it's human nature when confronted with a flood of lies to just give up at some point. Run up the white flag. If someone is telling you the sky is green and the grass is blue, at first you'll argue with him. Then you'll walk him outside to show him. But when he continues to insist on it, you'll give up.

This and nothing else is the secret of Trump's success. He wins by wearing honest people down. After 10,000 or 20,000 or 50,000 such lies, Trump has distorted "reality" wildly in his favor. And, crucially, he has an entire political party and multimillion-dollar propaganda outlets repeating and reinforcing the lies. He, and they, have convinced about 40 percent of the country that Ohio State isn't number one, metaphorically, and that you have to be a Communist to think so. And they've cast enough doubt in the minds of about 10 percent of the country so that they don't know what to think.

But here's the good news: I sense that this is finally changing.

I wrote above that Trump has an entire political party behind him. Well, not quite—now that's minus one. I'm not going to ladle praise on Marjorie Taylor Greene here, but I will give her this much: Whatever her motivations, she stood up to the guy.

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It's About Time (cont'd)

Ditto Tom Massie. Their actions are communicating to the MAGA base in a way no Democrat could that Trump is lying about Jeffrey Epstein in *some* way, shape, or form. The seed is thus planted in the collective MAGA mind that Trump might sometimes be full of beans.

There are other encouraging signs that the lies may no longer be working. The more Trump keeps bragging about the greatest economy in the history of the mind of God, the more people will see him as a conman. How anybody was dumb enough to believe last year that he could lower prices is another question, but for present purposes, he can't convince most people that they're not seeing what they're seeing when they go to the supermarket.

America may also begin to see this week the all-too-real consequences of his foreign policy lying. Trump has given Volodymyr Zelenskyy until Thursday to agree to the 28-point "peace" plan that he and his people drew up with the Kremlin that gives Ukraine almost nothing. If Zelenskyy hasn't agreed by Thanksgiving, Trump says, he's on his own. It's a morally repugnant position for a president of the United States to take, and while I'm not naïve enough to expect that most Americans care passionately about Ukraine, they *will* grasp the fact that Trump has spent two years lying repeatedly about how easy negotiating peace in that conflict would be.

Reality is finally starting to catch up with Trump. And so, to answer the MAGA crowd's Facebook question more fully: He only looks smart because his lies have overwhelmed a political culture that didn't know how to respond to them. If I were a Trump fan, I'd start worrying about what happens when that stops.

Michael Tomasky is the editor of *The New Republic* and the author of five books, including his latest and critically acclaimed [*The Middle Out: The Rise of Progressive Economics and a Return to Shared Prosperity*](#). With extensive experience as an editor, columnist, progressive commentator, and special correspondent for renowned publications such as *The Guardian*, *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, the Daily Beast, and many others, Tomasky has been a trusted voice in political journalism for more than three decades.

Bigot in the Oval Office

Sunday thought: The Bigot in the Oval Office

Like dictators before him, Trump's road to tyranny is paved with hate

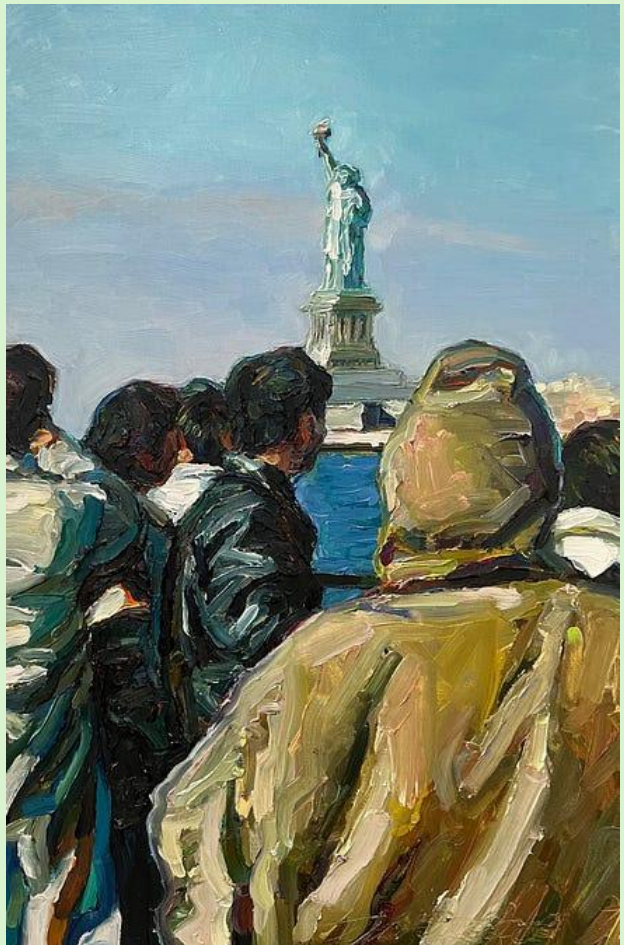
Robert Reich Nov. 30, 2025

This week's shooting of two National Guard members by a gunman identified the authorities as an Afghan national was horrific.

But Trump's response has been disproportionate and bigoted. He vows to "permanently pause migration from all Third World Countries." He intends to deport legal immigrants born in countries the White House deems "high risk."

He threatens to strip U.S. citizenship from naturalized migrants "who undermine domestic tranquillity." He plans to deport foreigners deemed to be "non-compatible with Western Civilization." He wants to detain even more migrants in jail — in the U.S. or in other countries — without due process.

Tim Folzenlogan, "Winter Liberty" (1991)



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Bigot in the Oval Office (cont'd)

In addition to the unconstitutionality of such actions, these threats stir up the worst nativist impulses in America — blaming and scapegoating entire groups of people for the act of one gunman.

Apart from Native Americans, we are all immigrants — all descended from “foreigners.” Some of our ancestors came here eagerly; some came because they were no longer safe in their homelands; some came enslaved.

Almost all of us are mongrels — of mixed nationalities, mixed ethnicities, mixed races, mixed creeds. While we maintain our own traditions, we also embrace the ideals of this nation.

Here’s how Ronald Reagan put it in a [1988 speech](#), in which he explained:

“I received a letter not long ago from a man who said, ‘You can go to Japan to live, but you cannot become Japanese. You can go to France to live and not become a Frenchman. You can go to live in Germany or Turkey, and you won’t become a German or a Turk.’ But then he added, ‘Anybody from any corner of the world can come to America to live and become an American.’”

A person becomes an American by adopting America’s principles, especially those principles summarized in the “self-evident truths” of the Declaration of Independence, such as “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” Carl Friedrich wrote that “To be an American is an ideal, while to be a Frenchman is a fact.”

As an immigrant friend once put it to me: “I was always an American; I was just born in the wrong country.”

I don’t think I’ve ever quoted Reagan before. He was wrong about so many things. Yet Reagan understood something fundamental to this nation that Trump doesn’t have a clue about: America is an idea — a set of aspirations and ideals — more than a nationality.

The only thing Trump knows is that he needs to fuel bigotry. His Straight White Male Christian Nationalism requires prejudice against anyone who’s *not*.

Like dictators before him, Trump’s road to tyranny is paved with stones hurled at “them.” His entire project depends on hate.



CIVIL DISCOURSE



The Moment to Pick a Side Has Come

Joyce Vance

Nov. 30, 2025

“You must refuse illegal orders.” That’s what was said in the video made by six Democratic members of Congress. Trump [accused them](#) of seditious behavior. The FBI [launched](#) an investigation.

Then, on Black Friday, the Washington Post ran with an [exclusive](#) story about the September 2, 2025, attack on a boat allegedly carrying drugs in the Caribbean, the first of a series of attacks that have involved strikes on at least 23 boats to date. The Post reported that in advance of the strike, “Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth gave a spoken directive, according to two people with direct knowledge of the operation. ‘The order was to kill everybody.’”

That’s what the special operations commander overseeing the attack did. After the initial hit, live drone feed showed two survivors clinging to the wreckage. The commander “ordered a second strike to comply with Hegseth’s instructions ... The two men were blown apart in the water.” The video Trump released later that day did not include the second strike.

The Post quoted Todd Huntley, a former military lawyer who had advised special operations on the illegality of the order: “Even if the U.S. were at war with the traffickers, an order to kill all the boat’s occupants if they were no longer able to fight ‘would in essence be an order to show no quarter, which would be a war crime.’”

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Hope is an Action (cont'd)

My colleague Ryan Goodman, Professor of Law at NYU School of Law and the founding co-editor-in-chief of [Just Security](#), an online forum focused on U.S. national security law and policy, will join us Sunday morning at 10:00 a.m. EST for an in-depth Substack live discussion of the issues raised here. Mark your calendars now and make sure you have the Substack App downloaded so you can join us for cutting edge legal analysis on this most important of issues. Ryan has been [tracking](#) these strikes and their legal implications since they first began. After the story broke in the Washington Post, he [tweeted](#), “Textbook war crime/extrajudicial killing.”

Earlier this month, The Guardian [reported](#) that Britain had stopped sharing intelligence on Caribbean drug running with the United States “amid concerns information supplied may be used to engage in lethal military strikes by American forces.” They specified that the cooperation was “paused shortly after the US began a campaign of lethal strikes in September,” but there was no explicit mention of the order Hegseth issued as the cause.

Friday evening at 5:42 p.m., Hegseth [tweeted](#):

“As usual, the fake news is delivering more fabricated, inflammatory, and derogatory reporting to discredit our incredible warriors fighting to protect the homeland.

As we’ve said from the beginning, and in every statement, these highly effective strikes are specifically intended to be ‘lethal, kinetic strikes.’ The declared intent is to stop lethal drugs, destroy narco-boats, and kill the narco-terrorists who are poisoning the American people. Every trafficker we kill is affiliated with a Designated Terrorist Organization.

The Biden administration preferred the kid gloves approach, allowing millions of people — including dangerous cartels and unvetted Afghans — to flood our communities with drugs and violence. The Trump administration has sealed the border and gone on offense against narco-terrorists. Biden coddled terrorists, we kill them.

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Hope is an Action (cont'd)

Our current operations in the Caribbean are lawful under both U.S. and international law, with all actions in compliance with the law of armed conflict—and approved by the best military and civilian lawyers, up and down the chain of command.

Our warriors in SOUTHCOM put their lives on the line every day to protect the Homeland from narco-terrorists — and I will ALWAYS have their back.”

Hegseth did not deny that two defenseless people were killed. We still do not know what, if anything, they were guilty of. Certainly, as they clung to the wreckage of a boat in the ocean, they did not pose an immediate threat to the United States. The lawful thing to do would have been to rescue and prosecute the men. Instead, per Hegseth’s instruction, they were executed.

Hegseth doubled down a few moments later, [tweeting](#), “We have only just begun to kill narco-terrorists.”

Jerry Henige reacts to his leadership award presented by the Democratic Club of Willow Valley Executive Board at the recent year-end event. This award was given in recognition of his sustained delivery of informative and thoughtfully delivered education series titled Understanding Our Democracy.



Coming Events

Understanding Our Democracy

Monday, January 20th at 10 AM
Cultural Center Education Room

Jerry is hoping to finalize a schedule for a guest speaker to cover “Disinformation”, a very important topic these days. He plans to do a session on “State & Local Taxes” and one on “Proportional Representation in our Election System”. But he must work out the schedules.

So, come join us ... you’ll know it’ll be one of these three!

Dems Club General Meeting

The next meeting will be held on
Tuesday, January 27th, 2026 at 1 pm

Our guest speaker will be Nancy Mannion who is running for the Democratic nomination to unseat
Lloyd Smucker.

Happy
Holidays



— AND A —
JOYFUL NEW YEAR