

A Brief History of Hopium

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With all these decades and—in the case of the oldest democracies—centuries of broken political promises, you'd think that the public would have caught on to the game by now. But, if anything, recent events have revealed that people are becoming *more* addicted to this politician-peddled hopium even as the lies and broken promises become ever more ridiculous.

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Transcript

Deus ex machina (or, “god from the machine”) refers to a plot device whereby the hero of a story is saved from some terrible fate by the sudden intervention of a god. The term comes from ancient Greek drama, where the god would literally be brought onto the stage using a machine like a crane or a riser.

The convention of a god appearing on stage to save the main character was [popularized by Euripides](#) over 2500 years ago and it has continued to pop up throughout the centuries, even in Shakespeare, who has Hymen, the Greek god of marriage ceremonies, appear at the end of *As You Like It* to marry the play's heroes and “make conclusion / Of these most strange events.”

The plot device is still used to this day. Now, instead of a god intervening to save the day, some miraculous event, object, character or ability appears from nowhere to save the

day. Think of the deadly, unstoppable Martians in Wells' *War of the Worlds*, for example, felled not by the combined artillery of the world's militaries, but by ordinary bacteria. Or think of the t-rex at the end of *Jurassic Park*, appearing out of nowhere to save the heroes from the velociraptors.

These are not just stories we tell ourselves. These are reflections of our thoughts about the world. They reveal our desires and beliefs, and they set up expectations for how the world really works. In the end, *something* will appear out of nowhere to help the good guys win and vanquish the bad guys once and for all. That's how it *always* works. Right?

Two and a half thousand years ago, that *something* was a god. But in the modern world, we're too sophisticated to believe that a god will swoop in and save the day. No, today the *deus ex machina* isn't a god. More often than not, it's a politician.

ANNOUNCER: *Blackrod, on her way to summon the MPs. The monarch's representative. And in the tradition, will have to knock on the door of the House of Commons.*

VOICE: *Close the door.*

BLACKROD: *Mr. Speaker, the Queen commands this honourable House to attend Her Majesty immediately in the House of Kings.*

SOURCE: [State Opening Of Parliament '21, Queen reads Klaus Schwab's speech \(11May21\)](#)

Since the age of kings and queens gave way to the age of presidents and prime ministers, an increasingly secular public has stopped looking for divine intervention to save the nation from calamity and instead begun praying for salvation from the demigods of the modern age: politicians.

Every election cycle, the public hears how this politician

will deliver the nation from its economic woes or that politician will restore a country to its former greatness. In 1916, Woodrow Wilson was re-elected as president of the United States on the back of his popular campaign slogan, “He Kept Us Out of War.” But like all of the presumptive political saviours of the democratic age—in which popularity contests determine who seizes power and the public is swayed by the nicest sounding promises—Wilson, too, promptly broke his word. Just five months after his re-election, he oversaw US entry into the First World War and gave his now [famous speech](#) assuring the public that getting the US *into* war was necessary to make the world “safe for democracy.”

Similarly, Lyndon B. Johnson won election in 1964 promising to limit America’s involvement in Vietnam.

LYNDON B. JOHNSON: Some others are eager to enlarge the conflict. They call upon us to supply American boys to do the job that Asian boys should do.

SOURCE: [LBJ campaign, Vietnam 1964](#)

But this, too, was just another swiftly broken promise by yet another political “saviour.”

JOHNSON: Air action is now in execution against gunboats and certain supporting facilities in North Vietnam.

SOURCE: [President Johnson’s Vietnam Address, 8/4/64. MP498.](#)

Laughably, even George W. Bush “[won](#)” the election in 2000 promising a humble American foreign policy and a vow to only fight short, winnable wars with well-defined objectives.

GEORGE W. BUSH: But I’m gonna be judicious as to how to use the military. It needs to be in our vital interest, the mission needs to be clear and the exit strategy obvious.

SOURCE: [Bush vs. Gore: The second 2000 presidential debate](#)

BUSH: *On my orders coalition forces have begun striking selected targets of military importance to undermine Saddam Hussein's ability to wage war.*

SOURCE: [President Bush Announces Start of Iraq War](#)

But this pattern is not just about war and it is not specific to any particular country. Throughout the world, politicians have won elections promising to deliver the inherently undeliverable.

What Australian could forget Bob Hawke's promise to eliminate child poverty in three years?

BOB HAWKE: *By 1990 no Australian child will be living in poverty.*

SOURCE: [By 1990 no Australian child will be living in poverty](#)

And what Greek could forget when Alexis Tsipras was swept to power with a strong populist mandate to stand up to the European Union in the midst of the sovereign debt crisis.

ALEXIS TSIPRAS (VIA INTERPRETER VOICE OVER): *I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for this great victory. I feel vindicated because the Greek people gave us a clear mandate to continue the struggle to raise up our people's dignity.*

SOURCE: [Greece election: Alexis Tsipras hails 'victory of the people' – BBC News](#)

Instead, Tsipras immediately sold the nation further into debt by accepting the terms of a punishing €85bn "bailout" package that even Syriza's own members called a betrayal of the

party's promises.

REPORTER: *One day ahead of an essential parliamentary vote to secure his country's bailout deal from eurozone creditors, Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras is here trying to quell a rebellion inside his ruling coalition. Mr. Tsipras is meeting with MPs from his own Syriza party, some of whom are very disappointed and upset about a deal which includes far more austerity than the package rejected by voters at a referendum just more than a week ago*

SOURCE: [Tsipras Moves to Stop Rebellion in Ruling Coalition](#)

In fact, with all these decades and—in the case of the oldest democracies—centuries of broken political promises, you'd think that the public would have caught on to the game by now. But, if anything, recent events have revealed that people are becoming *more* addicted to this politician-peddled hopium even as the lies and broken promises become ever more ridiculous.

In 2008, this endlessly escalating wave of political insanity seemed to reach a crescendo as it dashed upon the shores of the presidential campaign of Barack Obama.

BARACK OBAMA: *There's something happening when people vote not just for party that they belong to but the votes . . . the hopes that they hold in common. [. . .] We are ready to take this country in a fundamentally new direction. That's what's happening in America right now. Change is what's happening in America!*

SOURCE: [Barack Obama: Yes We Can](#)

It may seem ridiculous in 2021 that the mere words “yes we can” and “hope and change” could have sold not just the American voters but the people of the world on Barack Hussein Obama, a junior US senator whose greatest legislative accomplishment up to that point was [sponsoring a bill to](#)

[rename a post office in Illinois.](#)

But, in hindsight, that was exactly what was so effective about the entire “hope and change” campaign. After eight years of neocon carnage—amid the tumult of the ongoing fiasco in Iraq, in the shadow of the rising police state at home, and in the face of the revelations of corporate accounting fraud and banking malfeasance that culminated in a global financial crisis—the public was desperately hoping for change.

OBAMA: We will remember that there is something happening in America. That we are not as divided as our politics suggest. That we are one people. We are one nation. And together we will begin the next great chapter in the American story with three words that will ring from coast to coast from sea to shining sea: “Yes we can!” Thank you, New Hampshire. Thank you!

SOURCE: [Barack Obama: Yes We Can](#)

It didn’t matter that Obama, like every other conman to swindle the majority of the population in the great popularity contest we call democracy, lied about every one of his major campaign promises.

It didn’t matter that he lied about closing Guantanamo.

OBAMA: I have said repeatedly that I intend to close Guantanamo and I will follow through on that.

SOURCE: [60 Minutes: Obama Reiterates Promise To Close Guantanamo Bay, End Torture](#)

OBAMA: It is true that I have not been able to close the darn thing because of the Congressional restrictions that have been placed on us.

SOURCE: [President Obama Holds a Press Conference](#)

It didn't matter that he lied about ending the war of terror.

OBAMA: And that is why as president I will make the fight against Al Qaeda and the Taliban the top priority that it should be.

SOURCE: [Barack Obama on Afghanistan and Pakistan](#)

ANNOUNCER: The Obama administration knowingly gave US taxpayer dollars to an al Qaeda affiliate in Sudan, a joint 24 News Middle East forum investigation reveals.

SOURCE: [EXCLUSIVE: Obama Administration Gave US Aid Money to Al Qaeda Affiliate in Sudan](#)

It didn't matter that he lied about ending the illegal wiretapping of Americans.

OBAMA: This administration also puts forward a false choice between the liberties we cherish and the security we provide. I will provide our intelligence and law enforcement agencies with the tools they need to track and take out the terrorists without undermining our Constitution and our freedom. That means no more illegal wiretapping of American citizens.

SOURCE: [10 Questions: Warrantless Wiretaps](#)

OBAMA: I came in with a healthy skepticism about these programs. My team evaluated them. We scrubbed them thoroughly. We actually expanded some of the oversight, increased some of the safeguards. But my assessment and my team's assessment was that they help us prevent terrorist attacks.

SOURCE: [President Obama Defends N.S.A. Surveillance Programs | The New York Times](#)

None of his broken promises matter, because it was never about

any actual, concrete action. If the mass hysteria that swept over the public in 2008 was about achieving tangible results, the Nobel committee would not have awarded Obama the Nobel Peace Prize less than one year into his first term in office, while he was still waging wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and expanding Bush's drone war into Pakistan.

THORBJORN JAGLUND: The Norwegian Nobel Committee has decided that the Nobel Peace Prize for 2009 is to be awarded to President Barack Obama for his extraordinary efforts to strengthen international diplomacy and cooperation between peoples.

SOURCE: [Obama Winning The Nobel Peace Prize Too Premature](#)

No, it was never about *action*. It was about providing the audience of the political spectacle the scene that they were waiting for. The next political messiah is wheeled onto the stage, he waves his hand and makes everything better, and everyone goes back to their daily struggles for the next four years. The ritual is complete.

Indeed, after thousands of years in which heads of state were worshipped as literal gods on earth or, more recently, as divine appointees, it should come as no surprise that popular presidents and prime ministers are almost always portrayed with recourse to religious iconography. The common trope of photographing presidents with the "halo" of the presidential seal around them is nothing new.

But even taking that history into account, the religious frenzy that Obama's appearance on the national political stage caused was, in retrospect, undeniably strange.

OBAMA: Who is Barack Obama? Contrary to the rumors that you've heard, I was not born in a manger. I was actually born on Krypton and sent here by my father Jor-El to save the planet Earth.

SOURCE: [Obama at the Alfred E. Smith Memorial Dinner 10/16/08](#)

In the hysteria of the 2008 campaign, Obama wasn't received by the public as a political candidate with a series of policy prescriptions for improving the country. He was the god from the machine, the deus ex machina who could appear on stage and bless everyone with his absolution.

Obama was not just [Superman](#) but the [God of All Things](#), a [Heaven Sent](#) shining [New Hope](#) bathed in angelic light who was the literal [Second Coming](#).

JAMIE FOXX: First of all, give an honour to God and our Lord and Savior, Barack Obama!

SOURCE: [Jamie Foxx Give Honor To God And Our Lord & Savior Barack Obama](#)

And by the time the public finally snapped from their reverie and realized that, after all, Obama was just another politician . . .

PIERS MORGAN: Why is Obama facing so much opposition now? Why is he struggling so much to really fulfill the great flame of ambition and excitement that he was elected on originally in 2009?

BARBARA WALTERS: Well, we've touched on it to a degree. He made so many promises. We thought that he was going to be—I shouldn't say this at Christmas time, but the next Messiah.

SOURCE: [Barbara Walters: We thought Obama was going to be the next Messiah](#)

CONTESSA BREWER: The former director of the Norwegian Nobel Institute says he regrets awarding the Nobel Peace Prize to President Barack Obama in 2009.

SOURCE: [Former Nobel secretary says Obama prize was a mistake](#)

CENK YOGURT: *He lied! It's not subtle, He said "There will be no spying on citizens who are not suspected of a crime." He lied. There is spying on all of us and we're not suspected of a crime. Barack Obama is a liar! Can I make it clearer?*

SOURCE: [The Young Turks – Obama Is BIG BROTHER And He's A LIAR !](#)

. . . it was too late. Obama had already served his role as the next political saviour and, having served that function, he could be discarded like yesterday's newspaper.

For those who believed that the 2008 campaign was the apotheosis of the Hope and Change routine, this was the end of the line for this political charade. Looking at the process from a rational perspective, one could be forgiven for thinking that the public had learned its lesson and that no politician would be able to bamboozle the public like that again as long as the Obama legacy was in living memory.

But this is not a rational process, and those who believed that could not have been more wrong.

Lest there be any confusion that the public was being prepared for another deus ex machina ritual, this time the god descended onto the political stage via a literal machine, [a golden escalator](#). And, from his dais, this god, too, brought the good tidings to the cheering crowd: the country is saved once again!

DONALD TRUMP: *Ladies and gentlemen, I am officially running for President of the United States and we are going to make our country great again! ["Rockin' in the Free World" plays while Trump awkwardly bobs his head. Trump signals for the music to be faded down.] It could happen.*

SOURCE: [Donald Trump Presidential Campaign Announcement Full](#)

Speech (C-SPAN)

The next day, it was revealed that the scene was a literal stage play. The adoring crowd were not grassroots supporters of Donald Trump who all spontaneously decided to wear the same Trump t-shirts and awkwardly pose with their “[homemade](#)” signs for the cameras, but, as an [FEC investigation](#) later confirmed, [literal actors paid \\$50 each](#) by the Extra Mile Casting agency on behalf of their client, [Gotham Government Relations & Communications](#).

But it didn’t matter. Like all the iterations of the President Messiah script that came before, Trump’s Make America Great Again psychodrama was already having its intended effect on the population.

In some ways, MAGA was a mere repeat of the Obama Hope and Change template. Here, too, candidate Trump promised the moon that President Trump steadfastly failed to deliver.

He did not drain the swamp.

DONALD TRUMP: And we are going to drain the swamp of corruption in Washington, D.C.

SOURCE: [Drain the swamp? Trump is het moeras – #TrumpUpdate 119](#)

TRUMP: We’re here to celebrate the swearing in of America’s new Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo.

SOURCE: [Trump appoints Pompeo](#)

TRUMP: We are going to DRAIN . . . THE . . . SWAMP!

SOURCE: [Trump begins to ‘drain the swamp’](#)

WOLF BLITZER: President-Elect Trump has named the former New

York City Mayor, Rudy Giuliani, to lend his expertise on cybersecurity.

SOURCE: [Trump appoints Giuliani](#)

TRUMP: It is time to drain . . . the swamp.

SOURCE: [Trump: Ethics reform package will 'drain the swamp...](#)

TRUMP: Gina is tough, she is strong, and when it comes to defending America, Gina will never, ever back down. I know her.

SOURCE: [Trump appoints Haspel](#)

He did not end the wars.

TRUMP: And look at the mess we have. We've destabilized the middle east and it's a mess.

SOURCE: [Trump: 'we've destabilized the Middle East and ...](#)

TRUMP: A short time ago I ordered the United States Armed Forces to launch precision strikes on targets associated with the chemical weapons capabilities of Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad.

SOURCE: [Trump announces strikes on Syria](#)

TRUMP: Obviously, the war in Iraq was a big, fat mistake. Alright?

SOURCE: ["The War in Iraq was a Big, Fat Mistake": Trump & Bush Spar over War & 9/11](#)

TRUMP: The consequences of a rapid exit are both predictable and unacceptable.

SOURCE: [Trump's speech on Afghanistan](#)

He did not stand up to medical-industrial complex.

TRUMP: Just the other day: Two years old, two and a half years old, a child—beautiful child—went to have the vaccine and came back and a week later got a tremendous fever, got very, very sick, now is autistic.

SOURCE: [Candidate Trump talks about vaccine/autism link](#)

TRUMP: Well, I hope we're going to have a vaccine and we're going to fast track it like you've never seen before.

SOURCE: [President Trump launches Operation Warp Speed](#)

Just like Obama, Bush, Clinton and every other political “saviour” of the modern era, Trump broke his promises at will, knowing—as a reality TV star who had long shown himself to be a consummate performer—that governing was not his real role in this stage play. He had come to entertain the audience and “save” the country, not deliver on promises.

And, like the Obame Messiah, Trump, too, took on the role of divine redeemer of the nation, second only to Christ himself.

TRUMP: Somebody said to me the other day, ‘you’re the most famous person in the world by far.’ I said, “no I’m not.” They said, “yes, you are.” I said, “no.” They said, “who’s more famous?” I said, “Jesus Christ.”

SOURCE: [Trump says Jesus Christ is more famous than him](#)

Trump, Trump assured us, was loved by the Jewish people in Israel like the “[second coming of God](#).” And once again the president was being portrayed as “[heaven sent](#),” a man chosen by God Himself to lead America back to the promised land.

RICK PERRY: *And I shared it with him. I said, Mr. President, I know there are people that say you said you were the chosen one and I said, "You were." I said, "If you're a believing Christian, you understand God's plan for the people who rule and judge over us on this planet in our government."*

ED HENRY: *And lest people on the left attack Rick Perry, he pointed out to me he believes Barack Obama was sent by God as well. He said for that moment and that time. He said he thinks for this moment and this time, Donald Trump was sent by God to do great things.*

SOURCE: [Rick Perry Calls Donald Trump The Chosen One Sent By God To Rule Over Us](#)

Or, as the internet users who helped build the momentum for the Trump train during the 2016 campaign put it in their [popular meme](#), Trump was the [God Emperor](#), a [GEOTUS](#) who would smite the wicked and own the libs.

Yes, the Trump script seemed to be a mere rehash of the Obama script. But it was not.

You see, this was not the same plot as Hope and Change. Make America Great Again had a more exciting storyline. In the MAGA stage play, the god from the machine was *himself* in trouble and needed saving from the powerful, evil forces that were ganging up against him. And this time, the god himself would be saved by *his own* god from a machine. This script involved an incredible *double* deus ex machina!

The god that would save God Emperor Trump, however, was not a political figure at all, but a shadowy, anonymous entity. And the machine that delivered him was not a golden escalator, but an online message board.

The "Q Anon" phenomenon began on October 28, 2017, when "Q"—a user of the "politically incorrect" board of 4chan, the

anonymous imageboard website—made [a post](#) claiming that a massive military operation was underway to arrest Hillary Clinton and bring down the cabal of evil politicians that was filling the swamp of Washington:

HRC extradition already in motion effective yesterday with several countries in case of cross border run. Passport approved to be flagged effective 10/30 @ 12:01am. Expect massive riots organized in defiance and others fleeing the US to occur. US M's will conduct the operation while NG activated. Proof check: Locate a NG member and ask if activated for duty 10/30 across most major cities

Within days, the anonymous poster was assuring his 4chan followers of the [imminent indictment](#) of Clinton campaign insiders John Podesta and Huma Abedin. And on [November 2nd](#), less than a week after the initial post, the poster was calling himself “Q Clearance Patriot” and claiming that “over the course of the next several days you will undoubtedly realize that we are taking back our great country.”

On POTUS' order, we have initiated certain fail-safes that shall safeguard the public from the primary fallout which is slated to occur 11.3 upon the arrest announcement of Mr. Podesta (actionable 11.4). Confirmation (to the public) of what is occurring will then be revealed and will not be openly accepted. Public riots are being organized in serious numbers in an effort to prevent the arrest and capture of more senior public officials. On POTUS' order, a state of temporary military control will be actioned and special ops carried out.

In every way, these early “Q Drops” exemplify the QAnon phenomenon that it spawned. They pick up on the language and code words of classified government operations, like “[Mockingbird](#)” and “[Q clearance](#).” They pretend to impart insider information about high-level political events, even

predicting specific events on specific dates, like the arrest announcement of Podesta and the beginning of a military coup. And they pose a series of vague rhetorical questions ("Why does Potus surround himself w/ generals? What is military intelligence? Why go around the 3 letter agencies?") that feel important without providing any specific knowledge or insight.

It did not matter that none of this poster's specific predictions or declarations came to pass. Eventually, an entire movement would arise dedicated to reading, parsing and spreading the Gospel of this new god from the machine that they called "Q."

As Q's notoriety grew, so, too, did the grandiosity of his predictions, promises and pronouncements. Followers were [told](#) to expect "False flag(s)" and that there would be "fireworks" but that the president would be "100% insulated." They were [exhorted](#) to "TRUST [Attorney General Jeff] SESSIONS" and assured that [Feb. 1, 2018](#) would be the "[D]ay [O]f [D]ays." They were [promised](#) a "parade that will never be forgotten" on November 11th of 2018. They were [assured](#) that Mark Zuckerberg was stepping down as chairman of Facebook. July 2018 would be the month "the world discovered the TRUTH," with Q [asserting](#) that there would be "conspiracy no more."

Of course, every one of these pronouncements was categorically wrong. But, as Q [taught his followers](#) to believe, "Disinformation is real" and "Disinformation is necessary," so these false predictions were in fact signs that Q was telling the truth.

It didn't make sense. It didn't have to. All it had to do was fill the viewers of the unfolding political spectacle with hopium, the belief that this new god from the machine was going to swoop in with his Q Clearance compatriots and save the day at the last moment.

Remarkably, that belief persisted even *after* the last moment.

DAVE HAYES: Q is having them focus on something over there while something over there is actually going on. That's the necessary part of the disinformation.

SOURCE: [Q Anon Posts Debate & Discussion With Praying Medic \[Rare Interview & Question\]](#)

MICHAEL FLYNN: Donald Trump will continue to be the president of the United States for the next four years. There's no doubt in my mind. When I'm asked on a scale of one to ten, "What's the scale that you put that trump will be the next president?" I say: "Ten." Without a doubt, that is the truth.

SOURCE: [ALEX JONES AND MICHAEL FLYNN: AMERICANS' DNA IS 1776](#)

STEVE PIECZENIK: What happened was we marked watermarked every ballot with what's called the QFC blockchain encryption code. In other words, we know pretty well where every battle is, where it went and who has it. So this is not a stolen election. On the contrary. We reversed the entire game of war along the lines of Sun Tzu, The Art of War.

SOURCE: [ACTUAL INTERVEIW Dr Steve Pieczenik DHS watermarked every ballot with QFS Blockchain Encryption](#)

SGT REPORT: I just want to acknowledge, because I've gotten a lot of emails today from people who are feeling absolute desperation. They think this thing is over, and that President Trump is not going to be able to do anything to stop it. I want to remind you of Sun Tzu's Art of War: Make your opponent think you're weak. Look weak. Be strong. We've got 72 hours to save the republic. It's not over until the fat lady sings.

SOURCE: [HELLSCAPE: 72 HOURS TO SAVE THE REPUBLIC](#)

X22 REPORT: Wait until you see the election audit results. Remember: multiple states now are visiting Arizona. You think this is just gonna stop with Arizona? No, this is where

it begins.

SOURCE: EP. 2501B – TRAP SET, THESE PEOPLE ARE STUPID, DO YOU SEE THE STORM FORMING, PANIC IN DC

It is not hard to see why Q became so popular. Like every good *deus ex machina*, Q promised to deliver the audience of the current political drama exactly what they wanted: an entertaining, exciting and satisfying resolution to the play, delivering the hero (Trump) from evil (the Democrats) just in the nick of time. It is not coincidence that “[Enjoy the show](#)” and “[Get the popcorn](#)” became favourite phrases of Q and the QAnon followers. This was, after all, just that: a show. A scripted drama designed to play on the psyche of the audience.

But if this *was* a script, what was the point? It’s easy to understand the presidential version of the *deus ex machina* script: it keeps people voting and participating in a system that will continue on with an agenda regardless of who is occupying the Oval Office. But what was the point of the Q Anon script? Who was the intended audience of *this* psychodrama and what effect did it have on them?

The clue comes in Q’s constant exhortations for his follower to *trust*. [Trust Sessions](#). [Trust Grassley](#). [Trust POTUS](#). [Trust the plan](#).

The terminology—as well as the methodology—of the Q operation evokes [Operation Trust](#), a Soviet counterintelligence program in the 1920s that took over a pro-monarchist organization, the “Monarchist Union of Central Russia.” The Soviets used operatives within the organization to persuade members that they should *not* engage in militant activity against the government because a plan was underway for internal anti-Bolshevik forces to topple the regime. Trust the plan. In this case, “trusting the plan” got members of the opposition either put on trial and sent to the gulags or blackmailed into working for Soviet intelligence.

Q certainly *did* pacify many with his constant entreaty to “trust the plan.” Q also rallied people time and time again to support the policies, operations and personnel of the very deep state that they were supposedly fighting against. Suddenly Jeff Sessions, [Bill Barr](#), [John Bolton](#) and other long-time members of the political establishment were the good guys in this elaborate drama. [99% of the agents](#) at the CIA, FBI, DOJ and NSA were “patriots” who “serve[d] with distinction” and thus needed to be supported. The decades-long neocon dream of invading Iran became, in the eyes of Q followers, a [good and noble cause](#).

But even beyond the pacification of those who would otherwise be resisting the government, the “Q Army” of self-styled “[Digital soldiers](#)” provided the very foil that the deep state needed to move to the next step of their counter-insurgency program: The crackdown on “domestic terrorism.”

JACKSON PROSKOW: While QAnon has become tied to the president, it has also caught the attention of the FBI, along with a growing number of other fringe theories. In an internal memo, the bureau warns some of those conspiracy theories will likely motivate some domestic extremists to commit criminal—sometimes violent—activity.

SOURCE: [FBI Warns Of Potential For More Violence From QAnon Followers](#)

PETE WILLIAMS: The FBI says January’s riot at the Capitol was a turning point for the conspiracy movement, QAnon, with some followers dropping out, disappointed that the promises of the person behind it—known as “Q”—haven’t come to pass. But others, the FBI says, may become so frustrated they turn more to violence, such as “harming perceived members of the cabal such as Democrats and other political opposition.”

SOURCE: [FBI warns conspiracy theories fuel domestic terrorism](#)

JEREMY BASH: *But i think the reality is is that what you're seeing—all this activity by the FBI, by law enforcement to go after and arrest people—that's all great, but that's all right of the boom. And in intelligence you really want to be left of the boom; you want to be way out ahead of the events. And I think we're going to have to reset our entire intelligence approach to these white supremacist militias, these dangerous ultra-nationalist organizations. I think we're going to have to look at a greater surveillance of them. The FBI is going to have to run confidential sources. We're going to have to penetrate these plots long before they present a violent threat to our democracy if we want to have any hope of stopping these in the future.*

SOURCE: [Former CIA official Jeremy Bash, now of NBC News](#)

TRUMP: *The demonstrators who infiltrated the capital have defiled the seat of American democracy. To those who engaged in the acts of violence and destruction: you do not represent our country. And to those who broke the law: you will pay.*

SOURCE: [A Message from President Donald J. Trump](#)

And now, after years of being told to “get the popcorn” and “enjoy the show,” the Q Anon movement is slowly beginning to realize that they were had. Worse, the very intelligence agencies and military that they had so fervently hoped would swoop in and save the day are the very agencies that are now swooping in to round them up.

But Q Anon was by no means the first time that hopium has been injected into the veins of the conspiracy research community.

In the 1990s, a power industry teaching consultant named [Harvey Francis Barnard](#) developed a proposed set of reforms for America's monetary and tax system that he called the National Economic Security and Recovery Act, or [NESARA](#). He

self-published a book outlining his proposal, sent copies to members of Congress, started an institute to promote the idea and, in 2000, published his proposal on the internet. At that point, NESARA became the centerpiece of an elaborate hoax promulgated by an online charlatan calling herself "The Dove of Oneness."

In [this story](#), the NESARA bill is a miracle: it abolishes income taxes, forgives mortgages, zeroes out credit cards and declares peace. Even more miraculous: in a stunning move only known to The Dove of Oneness, the bill had been secretly passed by Congress and was due to take effect on September 11th, 2001, which is why the World Trade Center was destroyed. But, like every good drama, this story, too, had a *deus ex machina* to keep Dove's internet audience hanging on and enjoying the show: the [White Knights](#), "an underground group of good guys [. . .] who were in high positions within all these institutions, who were fed up with the *status quo* and were planning a *coup d'état* that was going to happen 'very soon.'"

Just as with Q, the cult that grew around the NESARA myth with its White Knight gods from the machine promised specific events on specific dates. Every time a prediction failed to happen, followers were reassured that the long-promised coup had been delayed so that the White Knights could better prepare the public for the pandemonium that would ensue when they swoop in to save the day. In the meantime, followers could get the popcorn and enjoy the show, knowing that all their debt would soon be forgiven and that peace on earth was just around the corner.

And the name of that book in which Barnard first laid out his NESARA proposal? [Draining The Swamp](#).

Yes, the *deus ex machina* story is trotted out every few years under different guises. A secret order of ninjas is preparing to assassinate the evil Illuminati and bring peace to the world. A secret stash of trillions of dollars is about to be

shared out with the people of the world, ending all poverty. A cosmic realignment is going to take place on December 21st, 2012, raising humanity to a higher level of consciousness and ending all strife and suffering. An anonymous 4chan poster is leaking classified information about a good military coup that's going to restore order and drain the swamp.

The message is always the same: Get the popcorn and enjoy the show. The god is coming from the machine to save you. Just wait.

It is no great shame to be fooled by hopium at least once. Everyone has trouble distinguishing genuine hope from synthetic hopium when they first encounter it.

***JAKE TAPPER:** Moving on, one of your former close aids recently said, you “engaged in conspiracy theories, including perhaps the 9/11 attacks, were coordinated with the CIA and that the Bush administration might have known about the attacks ahead of time.” Have you ever expressed—*

***RON PAUL:** Wait, wait, wait. Don't go any further than that. That's complete nonsense.*

***TAPPER:** Not true?*

***PAUL:** Yeah. I never bought into that stuff. Never talked about that.*

***TAPPER:** OK.*

***PAUL:** Conspiracy? Of Bush knowing about this? No. Come on. Come on. Let's be reasonable. That's just off the wall.*

***SOURCE:** [This Week ABC January 1, 2012 8:00am-9:00am PST](#)*

Over and over we see the same story play out. The crowd begins to lose interest in the political stage play. They begin to suspect that it's fake. That reality is taking place somewhere

off stage and out of sight. They begin to realize that they are not spectators at all, but active participants with the ability to shape the world around them. And then along comes a god from a machine peddling hopium and the audience goes back to enjoying the show.

None of this is to denigrate the religious instinct that compels humans to look for a saviour from the heavens. On the contrary. Those with religious faith should be the *most* offended by this god from the machine script that sees their most cherished, divine beliefs cynically played on by would-be political rulers masquerading as gods.

Of course the hopium peddled by these fake gods is enticing. It's designed to be. It plays on one of our greatest capacities as human beings: our capacity for hope. Our belief that we *can* make the world a better place and that we are *not* condemned to forever wait for the god from the machine to deliver us from our problems.

But hopium is not hope. Like opium, which binds to opioid receptors in the brain to provide temporary pain relief, hopium is a synthetic, manmade construct which provides us with the simulacrum of hope. And, like opium, hopium can disrupt our lives, pacify us into inactivity, and make us suffer withdrawals in its absence.

No, we must not abandon hope itself. As part of the triumvirate of faith, hope and charity, hope is a virtue to be cherished. Genuine hope is the rocket fuel that humans use to propel themselves towards their goals. Without hope, there would be no motivation to do anything to improve our situation.

But *that* is the difference. Hope compels us to go out there and try to improve our situation. Hopium, on the other hand, convinces us that someone else has taken care of the problem. That we can just sit back, get the popcorn and enjoy the show.

Like the dope peddler on the street corner, the politicians and hucksters are always ready to satisfy their mark with a dose of hopium. And the public, more often than not, is only too happy to take it.

But hopium is a deadly drug and the god from the machine is nothing but a cheap stage trick. Nothing will change until we stop enjoying the show and realize that we are not spectators watching history unfold from the sidelines. *We* are history's actors, and, propelled by genuine hope, we can and will change the world.

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