

The Great Election Fraud: Will Our Freedoms Survive Another Election?

[The Great Election Fraud: Will Our Freedoms Survive Another Election?](#)

by [John W. Whitehead](#), [The Rutherford Institute](#)

August 18, 2020

“Never has our future been more unpredictable, never have we depended so much on political forces that cannot be trusted to follow the rules of common sense and self-interest—forces that look like sheer insanity, if judged by the standards of other centuries.” — Hannah Arendt, The Origins of Totalitarianism

And so it begins again, the never-ending, semi-delusional, train-wreck of an election cycle in which the American people allow themselves to get worked up into a frenzy over the misguided belief that the future of this nation—nay, our very lives—depends on who we elect as president.

For the next three months, Americans will be dope-fed billions of dollars’ worth of political propaganda aimed at keeping them glued to their television sets and persuading them that 1) their votes count and 2) electing the right candidate will fix everything that is wrong with this country.

Incredible, isn’t it, that in a country of more than 330 million people, we are given only two choices for president? How is it that in a country teeming with creative, intelligent, productive, responsible, moral people, our vote

too often comes down to pulling the lever for the lesser of two evils?

The system is rigged, of course.

It is a heavily scripted, tightly choreographed, star-studded, ratings-driven, mass-marketed, [costly](#) exercise in how to sell a product—in this case, a presidential candidate—to dazzled consumers who will choose image over substance almost every time.

As author Noam Chomsky rightly [observed](#), “It is important to bear in mind that political campaigns are designed by the same people who sell toothpaste and cars.”

In other words, we’re being sold a [carefully crafted product](#) by a monied elite who are masters in the art of making the public believe that they need exactly what is being sold to them, whether it’s the latest high-tech gadget, the hottest toy, or the most charismatic politician.

This year’s presidential election, much like every other election in recent years, is what historian Daniel Boorstin referred to as a “[pseudo-event](#)”: manufactured, contrived, confected and devoid of any intrinsic value save the value of being advertised.

After all, who wants to talk about police shootings, SWAT team raids, asset forfeiture schemes, private prisons, school-to-prison pipelines, overcriminalization, censorship or any of the other evils that plague our nation when you can tune into a reality show carefully calibrated to appeal to the public’s need for bread and circuses, diversion and entertainment, and pomp and circumstance.

But make no mistake: Americans only *think* they’re choosing the next president.

In truth, however, they’re engaging in the illusion of

participation culminating in the reassurance ritual of voting. It's just another [Blue Pill](#), a manufactured reality conjured up by the matrix in order to keep the populace compliant and convinced that their vote counts and that they still have some influence over the political process.

It's all an illusion.

The nation is drowning in debt, crippled by a slowing economy, overrun by militarized police, swarming with surveillance, besieged by endless wars and a military industrial complex intent on starting new ones, and riddled with corrupt politicians at every level of government.

All the while, we're arguing over which corporate puppet will be given the honor of stealing our money, invading our privacy, abusing our trust, undermining our freedoms, and shackling us with debt and misery for years to come.

Nothing taking place on Election Day will alleviate the suffering of the American people.

Unless we do something more than vote, the government as we have come to know it—corrupt, bloated and controlled by big-money corporations, lobbyists and special interest groups—will remain unchanged. And “we the people”—overtaxed, overpoliced, overburdened by big government, underrepresented by those who should speak for us and blissfully ignorant of the prison walls closing in on us—will continue to trudge along a path of misery.

With roughly 22 lobbyists per Congressman, corporate greed will continue to call the shots in the nation's capital, [while our so-called representatives will grow richer](#) and the people poorer. And elections will continue to be driven by war chests and corporate benefactors rather than such values as honesty, integrity and public service.

Just consider: while billions will be spent on the elections

this year, not a dime of that money will actually help the average American in their day-to-day struggles to just get by.

Conveniently, politicians only seem to remember their constituents in the months leading up to an election, and yet “we the people” continue to take the abuse, the neglect, the corruption and the lies. We make excuses for the shoddy treatment, we cover up for them when they cheat on us, and we keep hoping that if we just stick with them long enough, eventually they’ll treat us right.

When a country spends [billions](#) of dollars to select what is, for all intents and purposes, a glorified homecoming king or queen to occupy the White House, while [tens of millions of its people live in poverty](#), nearly [18 million Americans are out of work](#), and most of the country and its economy remain in a state of semi-lockdown due to COVID-19 restrictions, that’s a country whose priorities are out of step with the needs of its people.

Then again, people get the government they deserve.

No matter who wins the presidential election come November, it’s a sure bet that the losers will be the American people *if all we’re prepared to do is vote*.

As political science professor Gene Sharp notes in starker terms, “Dictators are not in the business of allowing elections that could remove them from their thrones.”

To put it another way, the Establishment—the shadow government and its corporate partners that really run the show, pull the strings and dictate the policies, no matter who occupies the Oval Office—are not going to allow anyone to take office who will unravel their power structures. Those who have attempted to do so in the past have been effectively put out of commission.

So what is the solution to this blatant display of imperial

elitism disguising itself as a populist exercise in representative government?

Stop playing the game. Stop supporting the system. Stop defending the insanity. Just stop.

Washington thrives on money, so stop giving them your money. Stop throwing your hard-earned dollars away on politicians and Super PACs who view you as nothing more than a means to an end. There are countless worthy grassroots organizations and nonprofits working in your community to address real needs like injustice, poverty, homelessness, etc. Support them and you'll see change you really can believe in in your own backyard.

Politicians depend on votes, so stop giving them your vote unless they have a proven track record of listening to their constituents, abiding by their wishes and working hard to earn and keep their trust.

It's comforting to believe that your vote matters, but Franklin Delano Roosevelt was right: "Presidents are selected, not elected."

Despite what is taught in school and the propaganda that is peddled by the media, a presidential election is not a populist election for a representative. Rather, it's a gathering of shareholders to select the next CEO, a fact reinforced by the nation's [archaic electoral college system](#). In other words, your vote doesn't *elect* a president. Despite the fact that there are [218 million eligible voters](#) in this country (only half of whom actually vote), it is the electoral college, [made up of 538 individuals](#) handpicked by the candidates' respective parties, that actually *selects* the next president.

The only thing you're accomplishing by taking part in the "reassurance ritual" of voting is sustaining the illusion that we have a democratic republic.

In actuality, we are suffering from what political scientists Martin Gilens and Benjamin Page more accurately term an [“economic elite domination”](#) in which the economic elite (lobbyists, corporations, monied special interest groups) dominate and dictate national policy.

No surprise there.

As an in-depth Princeton University study confirms, democracy has been replaced by oligarchy, a system of government in which [elected officials represent the interests of the rich and powerful](#) rather than the average citizen.

We did it to ourselves.

We said nothing while our elections were turned into popularity contests populated by individuals better suited to be talk-show hosts rather than intelligent, reasoned debates on issues of domestic and foreign policy by individuals with solid experience, proven track records and tested integrity.

We turned our backs on things like wisdom, sound judgment, morality and truth, shrugging them off as old-fashioned, only to find ourselves saddled with [lying politicians](#) incapable of making fair and impartial decisions.

We let ourselves be persuaded that those yokels in Washington could do a better job of running this country than we could. It's not a new problem. As former Senator Joseph S. Clark Jr. acknowledged in a 1955 article titled, [“Wanted: Better Politicians”](#): “[W]e have too much mediocrity in the business of running the government of the country, and it troubles me that this should be so at a time of such complexity and crisis... Government by amateurs, semi-pros, and minor-leaguers will not meet the challenge of our times. We must realize that it takes great competence to run a country which, in spite of itself, has succeeded to world leadership in a time of deadly peril.”

We indulged our craving for entertainment news at the expense of our need for balanced reporting by a news media committed to asking the hard questions of government officials. The result, as former congressman Jim Leach points out, leaves us at a grave disadvantage: “At a time when in-depth analysis of the issues of the day has never been more important, [quality journalism has been jeopardized by financial considerations](#) and undercut by purveyors of ideology who facilely design news, like clothes, to appeal to a market segment.”

We bought into the fairytale that politicians are saviors, capable of fixing what’s wrong with our communities and our lives, when in fact, most politicians lead such sheltered lives that they have no clue about what their constituents must do to make ends meet. As political scientists Morris Fiorina and Samuel Abrams conclude, “In America today, there is a [disconnect between an unrepresentative political class and the citizenry it purports to represent](#). The political process today not only is less representative than it was a generation ago and less supported by the citizenry, but the outcomes of that process are at a minimum no better.”

We let ourselves be saddled with a two-party system and fooled into believing that there’s a difference between the Republicans and Democrats, when in fact, the [two parties are exactly the same](#). As one commentator [noted](#), both parties support endless war, engage in out-of-control spending, ignore the citizenry’s basic rights, have no respect for the rule of law, are bought and paid for by the corporate elite, care most about their own power, and have a long record of expanding government and shrinking liberty.

Then, when faced with the prospect of voting for the lesser of two evils, many simply compromise their principles and overlook the fact that *the lesser of two evils is still evil*.

Perhaps worst of all, we allowed the cynicism of our age and

the cronyism and corruption of Washington, DC, to discourage us from believing that there was any hope for the American experiment in liberty.

Granted, it's easy to become discouraged about the state of our nation. We're drowning under the weight of too much debt, too many wars, too much power in the hands of a centralized government, too many militarized police, too many laws, too many lobbyists, and generally too much bad news.

It's harder to believe that change is possible, that the system can be reformed, that politicians can be principled, that courts can be just, that good can overcome evil, and that freedom will prevail.

Yet I truly believe that change is possible, that the system can be reformed, that politicians can be principled, that courts can be just, that good can overcome evil, and that freedom can prevail but it will take each and every one of us committed to doing the hard work of citizenship that extends beyond the act of voting.

A healthy, representative government is hard work. It takes a citizenry that is informed about the issues, educated about how the government operates, and willing to make the sacrifices necessary to stay involved.

Most of all, it takes a citizenry willing to do more than grouse and complain.

The powers-that-be want us to believe that our job as citizens begins and ends on Election Day. They want us to believe that we have no right to complain about the state of the nation unless we've cast our vote one way or the other. They want us to remain divided over politics, hostile to those with whom we disagree politically, and intolerant of anyone or anything whose solutions to what ails this country differ from our own.

What they don't want us doing is presenting a united front in

order to reject the pathetic excuse for government that is being fobbed off on us.

So where does that leave us?

We'd better stop hanging our hopes on a political savior to rescue us from the clutches of an imperial president.

It's possible that the next president might be better, but then again, he or she could be far worse.

Remember, presidential elections merely serve to maintain the status quo. Once elected president, that person becomes part of the dictatorial continuum that is the American imperial presidency today.

If we are to return to a constitutional presidency, "we the people" must recalibrate the balance of power.

The first step is to start locally—in your own communities, in your schools, at your city council meetings, in newspaper editorials, at protests—by pushing back against laws that are unjust, police departments that overreach, politicians that don't listen to their constituents, and a system of government that grows more tyrannical by the day.

As I make clear in my book [*Battlefield America: The War on the American People*](#), the only thing that will save us now is a concerted, collective commitment to the Constitution's principles of limited government, a system of checks and balances, and a recognition that they—the president, Congress, the courts, the military, the police, the technocrats and plutocrats and bureaucrats—answer to and are accountable to "we the people."

This will mean that Americans will have to stop letting their personal politics and party allegiances blind them to government misconduct and power grabs. It will mean holding all three branches of government accountable to the

Constitution (i.e., vote them out of office if they abuse their powers). And it will mean calling on Congress to put an end to the use of presidential [executive orders, decrees, memorandums, proclamations, national security directives and legislative signing statements](#) as a means of getting around Congress and the courts.

As historian Arthur Schlesinger Jr. concludes:

["I would argue that what the country needs today is a little serious disrespect for the office of the presidency; a refusal to give any more weight to a President's words than the intelligence of the utterance, if spoken by anyone else, would command... If the nation wants to work its way back to a constitutional presidency, there is only one way to begin. That is by showing Presidents that, when their closest associates place themselves above the law and the Constitution, such transgressions will be not forgiven or forgotten for the sake of the presidency but exposed and punished for the sake of the presidency."](#)

In other words, we've got to stop treating the president like a god and start making both the office of the president and the occupant play by the rules of the Constitution.