

# The Trump Verdict Is a Turning Point for America

by Bruce Bawer

I was in second grade when an assassin's bullet tore apart the brain of the President of the United States. It was a different time. All but a tiny minority of us readily accepted the official story. It occurred to almost nobody to imagine that upstanding citizens like Gerald Ford, Allen Dulles, and Chief Justice Earl Warren would sign their names to a report that they knew to be, or suspected might be, a lie. When, in the years and decades that followed, independent investigators came out with books offering alternate theories about the assassination, some of us read them – I read a couple, with intense interest – and allowed ourselves to be diverted by what seemed like outrageously far-fetched scenarios involving one or more of the following possible culprits: LBJ, the CIA, the FBI, the Mob, Moscow, Havana, and the Texas oil barons. But when we finished reading the books, we set them aside and returned to what we thought was the real world, in which American government institutions and the mainstream American media were nothing less than trustworthy.



Not until the candidacy, the presidency, and the post-presidency of Donald Trump were millions of us awakened to the fact that there was indeed a Deep State, a swamp, a morally nefarious political and media and military-industrial establishment, whose membership was not confined to a single party and whose determination to hold on to its own power was

so all-consuming that it was capable of doing absolutely anything to destroy anyone whom it recognized as a threat to that power. Trump was that threat. Decades earlier, JFK, who had expressed an interest in reining in the CIA, had perhaps also been a threat. The difference, of course, is that in 1963 it was infinitely easier to hide high-level chicanery than it is in the age of the Internet. **(READ MORE from Bruce Bawer: [Twelve Corrupt Jurors](#))**

Instead of staging a murder in Dallas, the Deep State tried to bring down Trump with the death of a thousand cuts: the Steele Dossier, the “fine people” hoax, the Mar-a-Lago raid, the dismissal of Hunter Biden’s laptop as Russian disinformation by a small army of intelligence veterans, the drinking-bleach lie, the 2020 election fix, the insurrection narrative, the two impeachments, the high-profile, Soviet-style arrests of Trump allies like Roger Stone, and the innumerable lawsuits, each more absurd than the next. For some of us, the scales fell from our eyes early on. For others, apparently, it didn’t happen until May 30 of this year.

Hillary Clinton had gotten away with a litany of actual crimes of the utmost seriousness. Ditto Joe Biden. For years, Trump’s enemies in the judicial system had combed through his history of business activities in search of something he could be charged with. But even to the surprise of some of Trump’s greatest admirers, they found nothing. Somehow, in a long and storied career in big-time New York real estate – a notoriously dirty business – Trump had apparently failed to do anything worth prosecuting. So in the end they felt compelled to make stuff up – and to bend the rules of jurisprudence in pretty much every imaginable way. A judge so crooked that he came off like a mustache-twirling villain in a third-rate Victorian stage melodrama empaneled a jury of twelve Manhattanites – residents of a borough whose economy Trump helped rescue but an overwhelming majority of whose tonier residents hate his guts, in many cases for no other reason

than that, in their view, he's an outer-borough vulgarian – and presided over a disgusting sham of a trial that would have made Stalin blush. On May 30, Trump was convicted on 34 felony counts. And his enemies cheered. “Holy Cow, 34 for 45!” read the sickeningly flippant [headline](#) on the column by the *New York Times*'s execrable Maureen Dowd. Whether the whole thing had been legally legit or not meant nothing to them. In order to undermine a political enemy, their comrades had contorted the justice system, and for the likes of Dowd that was just plain dandy.

There's disillusion and there's disillusion. When I was a child I spoke as a child, and so on. I was raised to be a patriot. I grew up in [New York City](#) – but in Queens, in an unstoried neighborhood that, according to the quadrennial post-Election Day maps in the *New York Times*, always stood out from most of the rest of the borough by voting Republican, a neighborhood where even today almost everybody flies the flag on national holidays and gathers in the local park on the Fourth of July to recite the Pledge of Allegiance and sing the National Anthem. As a kid, I wasn't proud to be an American – being proud would have meant that being an American was some kind of achievement. No, I was honored. I was awed. Being born in the 20th century, in the freest country on earth, and in what was then the planet's largest and most extraordinary city, seemed to me the greatest privilege any human being since the Assyrian Empire could ever have experienced. I felt I'd triumphed in the lottery of life. If I was proud, I was proud of my country for having saved the world, not so many years before my birth, from the evils of Nazism and of the brutal Empire of Japan, and for, in my own lifetime, serving as the selfless protector of freedom in countries around the world. More specifically, I was proud of men like my uncle Harry Everett Thomas, Jr., who as a young man had been a bombardier in the U.S. Air Force, who after being shot down over Germany had spent several grueling months in a Nazi POW camp, and who ended up retiring as a Lieutenant Colonel. As

far as I was concerned, he had risked his life and scarred his soul in service to a sublime cause and a glorious republic.

To be sure, as I grew up, I increasingly recognized that no country, not even America, could live up to the more admirable chapters of its history at every turn. Movies like *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* and books like *Plunkitt of Tammany Hall* opened my eyes to the reality of rampant government corruption. Spending much of my childhood in the Deep South of the early 1960s, I was exposed to racism at its ugliest (as well as to the courage and nobility of ordinary people who took significant risks to oppose it). Humans, after all, are imperfect creatures, some of them quite terribly imperfect. What distinguishes Americans from other *homo sapiens* isn't that we're any better than other people; it's that we're gifted with a political system built on a Declaration of Independence that is unique in the nobility of its ideals and a Constitution that was brilliantly designed to rein in the worst of human impulses and encourage the best.

But it's one thing to revere our founding documents; it's another to buy into the naive belief that every one of the people who rule us shares our reverence for them and wakes up every morning determined to live by them. Alas, the Trump years made Plunkitt and his ilk, and the tough-as-nails Boss Jim Taylor in *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, look like rank amateurs. Nothing I had ever read or seen or heard of had prepared me for the sheer ruthlessness of the Deep State – the utter indifference to our country's founding values, the thoroughgoing disinterest in the truth itself – that underlay its cynical campaign to demolish [Donald Trump](#). And these people weren't just out to crush Trump – in the course of doing so, they were perfectly willing to topple the very pillars of American liberty.

But even for many of us who had spent years observing that anti-Trump campaign, the verdicts of May 30 represented a step beyond. For the first time ever, a former President had been

officially – and unjustly – marked as a felon. Plenty of his predecessors actually *had* committed felonies – the names LBJ, Clinton, and Obama come immediately to mind – but had never come close to being prosecuted, let alone convicted. “This is bigger than Trump. This is bigger than me. This is bigger than my presidency,” Trump said after the verdicts came down. He was right. What happened on May 30 marked the culmination of years of absolutely spectacular abuse of power by his enemies, and it was the ultimate confirmation that there are countless Americans in positions of high authority for whom their own sinecures in one branch of government or another mean infinitely more than the principles that they swore to uphold when they took those jobs. The schemes they have hatched over these past several years, and the grotesque travesty that went down in that Manhattan courtroom during the past few weeks, concluding on May 30, makes it blindingly – and, yes, painfully – obvious that America is no longer the country many of us thought it was and loved it for being. Is it possible that it hasn’t really been that country since November 22, 1963? (READ MORE: [Biden Is George III. Who Does That Make Trump?](#))

To find oneself thinking such things is to be drenched with grief. It makes one look back at one’s life and see all sorts of things in a very different light. Yes, for most of us America was and has been a land of freedom and of plenty. It has been a blessing to immigrants from all over the world who, coming to America with next to nothing in their pockets, have made successful careers, bought their own homes, and seen their children thrive. But for those who’ve come too close to uncovering the mischievous machinations of the permanent bureaucracy, it’s been a country in which the FBI could break into your home in the middle of the night, arrest you on trumped-up charges, tie up your life for years with endless lawsuits, and drive you into bankruptcy with legal fees – if not worse. America is a very beautiful house – the most beautiful house on the block – but its upper story is infested

with rabid rats that need to be dealt with.

But there is hope. One positive sign is that more and more former never-Trumpers have been moved by the injustices done to him by his enemies to reconsider their opinions of him and, indeed, of his whole long list of judicial entanglements. Another positive sign is that a great many deep-pocketed Americans have been motivated by the Trump verdicts to make huge donations to his presidential campaign. They realize – as more and more of us, thank goodness, are realizing – just how demonic the people pulling Biden's strings are, and just how little they care for the values on which this country was founded. And this swelling new assemblage of Trump supporters see that if this evil cabal isn't removed from power *prontissimo* and replaced by a government of, by, and for the people – and doesn't *that* sound quaint now? – the America envisioned by our Founders, and built up over the generations by our forefathers, will be lost forever.

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