

'I JUST WANT TO FIND 11,780 VOTES'

We're waiting for the state of Georgia to finish counting ballots for the Ossoff vs. Loeffler and the Warnock vs. Perdue U.S. Senate races. I'm sure The New York Times' needle monitor has been bombarded with traffic. A number of pollsters are calling the races but I'm not going to pay them heed yet.

I'm too afraid of getting my hopes up too high given how many attempts Team Trump and the GOP have made to subvert U.S. elections.

While waiting for the final tallies, I want to look at the transcript from the audio recording of the teleconference between Trump and Georgia Secretary of State Raffensperger, particularly this excerpt:

TRUMP: ... And why can't we have professionals do it instead of rank amateurs who will never find anything and don't want to find anything? They don't want to find, you know they don't want to find anything. Someday you'll tell me the reason why, because I don't understand your reasoning, but someday you'll tell me the reason why. But why don't you want to find?

I don't know about you but it sounds like Trump is implying with the right persons permitted access to the ballots, the votes Trump needs to win Georgia would be "found."

He's implied he wants a fixer team to resolve his "missing votes" problem since Raffensperger can't or won't – how mobster-like, how corrupt.

There's just so much raw, naked criminality in this one phone call, beyond numerous lies Trump made.

There's solicitation of a crime – he clearly says he wants to "find" 11,780 votes, a number

representing at least one more than the margin by which Joe Biden won Georgia. Trump's insistent on this point, using the word "find" 23 times over the course of the conversation compared to his Chief of Staff Mark Meadows who says "find" twice but in context of an agreement, and attorney Cleta Mitchell who says "find" once while asking about FBI and Georgia Bureau of Investigation findings.

There's extortion – a threat of prosecution and other less specific injury implied against Raffensperger and GA SOS counsel Ryan Germany if the desired votes aren't "found."

I'm not the lawyer here at emptywheel, but it looks to me like Trump may have violated federal voting and election law 52 U.S. Code 20511 with his interference in a federal election, depriving or defrauding the residents of a State of a fair and impartially conducted election process.

Trump may have violated Georgia election law 21-2-604, Criminal solicitation to commit election fraud; a presidential pardon won't weasel him out of this one if GA attorney general Chris Carr or Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis find there's adequate reason to investigate and prosecute Trump.

Former federal prosecutor Renato Mariotti and Moms Demand Action activist Patti Vasquez discussed the tape with MSNBC Legal Analyst Joyce White Vance, former U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Alabama in their On Topic podcast. Vance pointed out there was an effort to put "lipstick on the pig," dressing up the phone call as if there was a legitimate lawsuit about which Trump and his campaign were seeking a settlement with the state of Georgia. But Vance had found no active suit.

Why this effort, including the appearance of an attorney – Cleta Mitchell of lawfirm Foley & Lardner – who wasn't really Trump's attorney nor his campaign's attorney, but compromised enough by her presence during the phone call that her

employment was terminated on Monday by Foley & Lardner? This looks deceptive as heck.

Why was White House Chief of Staff Meadows involved at all, discussing an implied agreement in the offing? Yet another Hatch Act violation by a Trump staffer we're supposed to swallow like a TicTac?

What really bothers me is the practiced ease with which Trump just rolled through this call. We know he tried to pressure Ukraine's president into investigating Hunter Biden to produce evidence of malfeasance by both Hunter and his father Joe Biden while Biden was VP during the Obama administration. The approach was similar though Trump used bait in the form of aid rather than a threat of prosecution as he did with Raffensperger and Germany. We have yet to see a word-for-word transcript of the 2019 Ukraine call, having instead a memo providing most of the context. Would the full transcript buried in a classified file system sound more like the Trump-Raffensperger call?

How many other calls like this past Saturday's has Trump made? How many in-person visits making similar solicitation and extortive attempts as well?

Did he use the same technique during that one golf game with Lindsey Graham after which Graham suddenly did an about-face toward Trump, becoming his lap dog?

Let's not forget that same lap dog also called Raffensperger about finding votes for Trump. Did his call sound like Trump's except Graham didn't tweet about it afterward?

I hope we're going to hear from other states soon whether they, too, were pressured to "find" votes.

And I hope each state pursues an investigation and prosecution where appropriate.

POOR DONALD TRUMP GOT DUMPED



h/t rocksunderwater (public domain)

Poor Donald Trump.

He's been having a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day, every day for about the last six weeks. He lost the election, then in his battle to overturn things in court he lost and lost and lost and lost some more, each time more bigly than that last. But the worst day, the most terrible horrible no good very bad day of them all, had to be last Sunday, when the Russian electronic spying operation using Solar Wind to hack into highly sensitive government and corporate networks became public.

There has been a lot written about the potential damage of the Solar Wind mess, both in terms of national security and corporate secrets, most of which is speculation. But there is one bit of enormous damage that is obvious, not at all speculative, but is getting no attention at all from anyone.

Along with the rest of the world, Donald Trump

just learned that he got dumped by Vladimir Putin.

*We almost made it up where they are
But losing your love
Brought me down hard
Now I'm just hanging, just getting by
Where expectations aren't that high, but*

*Here on cloud 8
A lotta nothing's going on
I'm just drifting day to day
Out here on my own
While up on cloud 9
I hear 'em party all the time
They don't hear my heart break
Down here on cloud 8*

Poor Donald. He just learned that Putin has been doing stuff behind his back, all while Putin has been telling him that he's Putin's BFF. It's been almost a week, and poor Donald still can't come to grips with it.

He's tweeted about getting the COVID-19 vaccines out ("Yay Me!") He's tweeted about the "fact" that he actually won the election and condemned everyone who has failed to have his back (Brian Kemp, he's looking at you). He's tweeted about bizarre public health theories ("masks and lockdowns don't work!"). He's tweeted about vetoing the defense bill in order to defend 19th century traitors. He's tweeted about Senator-to-be Tommy Tuberville, on whom he's pinning his hopes of overturning the election when the electoral college vote gets to Congress. He's tweeted against Mitch McConnell for arguing against this. But despite this flood of tweets, the one thing he can't bear to tweet about is being dumped.

And it's not just that he got dumped. It's that Putin cheated on him.

He cheated on Trump for months, privately whispering sweet nothings in his ear in their special phone calls, while working behind Trump's back. Worst of all, in Trump's mind the

hack tells Trump that Putin believed that Trump would lose, and Putin needed to take advantage of Trump's blindness while he could.

And it's not just that Putin cheated on him and didn't believe in him. It's that everyone *knows* that Putin cheated on him

Angela Merkel knows. Boris Johnson knows. Emmanuel Macron knows. Justin Trudeau knows. Xi Jinping knows. Kim Jong Un knows. Jacinda Ardern knows. Even Andrés Manuel López Obrador knows about it, and Trump is sure that everyone in Mexico is laughing at him. Even the nobodies who rule those shithole countries know, and they're laughing too. Putin made him look like a fool in front of everyone in the whole ~~cafeteria~~ world, and they're all laughing at him.

And it's not just that Putin made him look like a fool. It's that there's not a damn thing that Trump can do about it.

Everyone knows that Trump has been played, bigly. Trump can't run a PR operation to deflect things. He can't deny that it ever happened. He can't say that he dumped Putin and not the other way around. He can't pretend it doesn't hurt. And he can't keep everyone in the whole damn world from talking about it, and from laughing about him behind his back.

*While up on cloud 9
I hear 'em party all the time
They don't hear my heart break
Down here on cloud 8
They don't hear my heart break
Down here on cloud 8*

And before you think this is all a good laugh, and that Trump got what's been coming to him, I've got two words for you: John Hinckley. Something tells me that Trump does not take well to being dumped, being cheated on, and being held up before the world as a fool.

And that scares me.

THREE THINGS: ABOUT EMILY W. MURPHY, GSA ADMINISTRATOR

By now most of you know that the General Services Administration (GSA) *still* hasn't signed the the ascertainment determination letter which allows President-elect Biden's transition team to begin its work within the government to effect an orderly change over to the new administration from the outgoing Trump administration.

The lack of such a letter authorizing access to government resources by the transition team obstructs government funding for transition team salaries, allocation of offices, background checks and other vetting of cabinet level and other nominees.

In 2000 the dispute over Florida's votes and electors caused the GSA to sign the ascertainment determination later than previous transitions; the delay has been blamed as a factor leading up to the 9/11 attack.

Lack of a signed ascertainment determination now may also prevent the new administration from beginning work immediately on further development and implementation of plans to stem COVID. This may cost Americans' health and lives.

There's no good excuse for Murphy not to have signed this letter already since Biden had passed the necessary 270 votes as of November 7.

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It's important to keep Murphy's education and work history in mind with regard to her failure to sign the the ascertainment determination.

Murphy worked for three different chairs of the

United States House Committee on Small Business; she also worked in the Small Business Administration, and as Chief Acquisition Officer for the GSA. She's been around long enough to understand how transitions between administrations work.

Murphy can't blame the status of the last states' or lawsuits against states like Michigan, Nevada, and Pennsylvania for her decision to delay the letter. *She's an attorney* with a J.D. from University of Virginia School of Law; she can certainly read and understand the cases filed contesting the votes. All were evidence-free or fact-free, or just plain frivolous even to non-attorneys.

She's fully aware that Trump didn't have a leg to stand on with regard to the +20 suits filed.

She's also capable of understanding that the 2000 election cannot be used as an excuse for delaying the transition because the distribution of electoral votes was entirely different then – Florida was a must-win for both candidates. The 2020 election did not pan out that way at all.

Murphy's refusal to sign the the ascertainment determination must be seen as a deliberate act.

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Murphy has had an ongoing problem with the lease of the U.S. Postal Office building to Trump Hotels. While she inherited this problem from the previous administrator who bailed out of the role on Inauguration Day 2017 while leaving the issue open, Murphy has failed to resolve the obvious conflict of interest from the time she was appointed in September 2017 until now.

Again, Murphy is an attorney. She should know better.

Worse, Murphy may have misled – pick a euphemism here – the House about this situation while testifying under oath.

Adding insult to injury, Murphy refused to answer questions about the FBI's headquarters

relocation and Trump's possible involvement. She didn't claim executive privilege – this might be the lone point during her GSA tenure where she actually applied her law degree – but she flat out said she would “decline to discuss conversations that I may or may not have had with the president or his advisers.”

You may also have read Marcy's post about Mike Flynn's “wiped” phone; how odd that just two particular individuals who were subjects of an investigation had their GSA-issued phones wiped while the investigation was ongoing.

Again, Murphy's an attorney. She should understand readily what 18 U.S. Code § 1505 Obstruction of proceedings before departments, agencies, and committees means; she's perfectly capable of looking up 18 U.S. Code § 1519 Destruction, alteration, or falsification of records in Federal investigations and bankruptcy.

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The potential for loss of American lives to COVID which might be preventable if the Biden administration can move quickly places an emphasis on speed. Failing to act in a reasonable amount of time could be fatal to Americans who are denied assistance from their federal government because a government functionary refused to do the right thing.

It's enough to make one wonder if Murphy is a contender for charges of Honest Services fraud (18 U.S. Code § 1346 Definition of “scheme or artifice to defraud”). You may recall that Barb McQuade wrote about the possibility that Trump could be charged with Honest Services fraud with regard to his denial of funding for military aid already committed in the 2019 budget. In Murphy's case she is denying American citizens the right to timely response from the incoming presidency, at a possible cost of American lives.

If the Biden-Harris administration delivers on a truly independent Department of Justice, Murphy

should be worried.

Especially since she's an attorney who should know better.

Hope she's applied her J.D. to covering her butt when it comes to some no-bid contracts funded under the CARES Act related to COVID, though we have to ask ourselves if Murphy's obstructive behavior is intended not only to hurt the Biden-Harris transition, damage the public, and buy Trump more time to undermine American's faith in democracy, but protect Murphy's own ass.

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There have been increasing complaints over the last week about Murphy's intransigence and calls for her cooperation and compliance with the transition, including an ask by Joe Biden to sign the ascertainment determination letter because the transition is stymied in its effort to work on COVID to save lives.

Murphy, though, is having her imaged buffed though one would imagine this will be about as successful as shining a turd since she's continuing to neglect her oath to uphold and defend the Constitution, not kiss Trump's pasty ass.

NEW: People who have spoken to GSA Admin Emily Murphy say she's struggling with the weight of the election on her shoulders, feeling like she's in a no-win situation trying to follow what she sees as precedent to wait to ascertain, w/ @KristenhCNN <https://t.co/bpVaQ1c8py>

– Jeremy Herb (@jeremyherb) November 18, 2020

Nobody cares how you feel, Murphy, when their family members are suffering and dying for lack of federal aid which could be provided promptly by a more effective Biden-Harris administration.

The House has finally decided it needs to hear

from Murphy about the holdup:

House Dems demand immediate briefing with GSA Administrator Emily Murphy over her refusal to sign off on paperwork that would ease the transition process. In letter, Democrats are critical of the GSA's handling of the matter, and they say they will decide whether to hold hearing pic.twitter.com/9nWuxKdkHx

– Manu Raju (@mkraju) November 20, 2020

This follows her silence in response to a letter dated November 9 from House Dems asking why she was styming the transition. I sure hope they ask how someone who graduated from law school and worked as an attorney hasn't been able to work out from the last 45 transitions how the GSA should already have worked to ensure a peaceful transition of power.

Especially since Murphy has already been putting out feelers for a new job. How odd she hasn't yet been fired for this when Director of the Presidential Personnel Office Johnny McEntee has been terminating any federal employee who "who show disloyalty by job hunting."

Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW) has begun an investigation into Murphy's footdragging:

We're investigating how and why Trump appointee Emily Murphy has been allowed to stonewall the presidential transition process. <https://t.co/FJMtKH9pbT>

– Citizens for Ethics (@CREWcrew)
November 20, 2020

Pretty sure they're not going to like what they find because they've already been getting the runaround:

... For the last six months, the GSA and other government agencies have shown a

administration staffers, especially at the senior level, will face any difficulties in life after January 20, 2021. Will they have trouble getting a new job? Will they be treated like Alan Dershowitz ~~in the Hamptons~~ at Martha's Vineyard, and find themselves off the best invitation lists for the Villager's Dinner Parties?

On the one hand, these Trump folks make a good point: the fact that more than 70 million people voted for Trump indicates that this was not a top-to-bottom repudiation of Trump and everything he stood for. The fact that so many of the folks eyeing the 2024 GOP presidential nomination are embracing Trump and his quixotic challenges to the election result suggests that these staffers won't have a shortage of people looking to hire someone who has Been Inside The White House, even if it's Trump's White House.

But there's one thing that suggests they are still worried. There's one thing that suggests that they are looking over their shoulders. There's one thing that suggests that they are not as comfortable as their brave words declare them to be.

Here's a hint:

“ . . . said a White House official . . . ”

“ . . . some current and former Trump officials . . . ”

“ . . . One top official at the White House . . . ”

“ . . . Many top Trump advisers now say . . . ”

“ . . . said one of the president's closest advisers.”

“ . . . Interviews with numerous current

and former Trump officials reveal . . .

" . . . Most Trump officials feel . . ."

". . . as one Trump official called them . . ."

". . . said an administration official. . ."

". . . said a senior administration official . . ."

" . . . said a Trump adviser . . ."

" . . . said a Senate GOP aide . . ."

" . . . said a former senior administration official . . ."

To Politico's credit, they did manage to quote one person by name in this story: Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.

But back to those Trump staffers. For folks who are quite sure they will land on their feet, they are mighty nervous about putting their name next to their words. Maybe it's because of this:

"None of the Trump officials interviewed for this story seriously believed that Trump would prevail in the election, and it was taken as a given that they would all soon be looking for work outside the administration."

These unnamed Trump officials may not fear repudiation by the DC social circles for having been complicit in locking children in cages and taking them away from their parents, never to be reunited. They may not fear for their next job, despite enabling the feeble and fatal Trump administration response to the coronavirus pandemic. They may not fear poverty, because they've got their book deal lined up already.

But their unanimous unwillingness to allow their names to be used says they are afraid of something. Or should I say "someone"?

It's Donald John Trump, and he's not going away.

That is what worries these people. It's one thing to say "Look at the Dubya folks – they did just fine as their Iraq War stuff and market crash faded into history." But as long as Trump doesn't fade away, neither will their enabling of his policies. And deep down, they know that Trump is not going to quietly ride off into the sunset. Ever.

Be afraid, Unnamed Senior Administration Officials. Be very afraid.

[The post has been edited to correct the object of Alan Dershowitz's unrequited feelings. While it is possible the residents of the Hamptons may have just as much disdain for Mr. Dershowitz as the residents of Martha's Vineyard, that is not a matter of public record. We regret the error of not giving the residents of Martha's Vineyard their due.]

IT DIDN'T GO AWAY: COVID, COVID, COVID

Remember Trump's gaslighting the American public, telling them COVID would simply go away after the election because it was just a hoax?



Right.

It's still here. By Thanksgiving COVID will have taken more than a quarter million American lives if it continues to kill at a rate of 1,000 more per day.

This is the real hoax, playing out in front of us: Donald Trump is not a leader but a killer who has persistently tried to persuade us we're imagining these deaths as anything more than a campaign ploy.

The campaign's over and the cases and deaths are still mounting.

Fortunately we have a president-elect who is taking the pandemic seriously. Biden-Harris transition team has already issued a plan for combating COVID:

[BuildBackBetter.com/Priorities/COVID-19](https://www.buildbackbetter.com/Priorities/COVID-19)

While the plan is more of an executive summary at this point, work is already beginning on details:

Tomorrow: President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris will receive a briefing in Wilmington, Delaware from the transition COVID-19 advisory board, after which Biden will deliver remarks. They'll then hold briefings with transition advisors in the afternoon.

– Sarah Mucha (@sarahmucha) November 9, 2020

Doctors Rick Bright, Atul Gawande, Luciana Borio, and Michael Osterholm are expected to be named advisers for Biden's COVID-19 team.

This is what leadership and competency looks like when American lives are on the line. If nothing is done between now and Inauguration Day, at least another 73,000 Americans will die from COVID. It looks like Biden-Harris are taking this seriously and not treating it like a hoax.

There's one big wrinkle, though, not of Biden-Harris's making.

A single person at the General Services Administration is holding up the formal

transition process – a Trump appointee who has previously refused to answer the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee’s questions regarding Trump’s D.C. hotel which operates out of the old U.S. Post Office building.

Trump appointee at GSA declines to sign letter authorizing Biden transition –
The Washington Post
<https://t.co/DQ0PPNzbS5>

– Glenn Kessler (@GlennKesslerWP)
November 9, 2020

States are going to suffer for the foot dragging by this lone obstructionist, GSA administrator Emily Murphy, protecting Trump. Red states will be hurt in particular since they are suffering the greatest proportional numbers of COVID cases, in part due to Trump’s campaign rallies. These ten states currently lead in number of cases per million residents:

North Dakota – 79408 cases per million
South Dakota – 67231
Iowa – 49899
Wisconsin – 49356
Utah – 47075
Idaho – 46191
Nebraska – 44716
Florida – 44281
Tennessee – 42816
Mississippi – 42534

When weighed against each states’ population, some of these numbers are obscene. South Dakota’s Gov. Kristi Noem’s weak-sauce advocacy for personal responsibility in lieu of a mask mandate in the face of the Sturgis Motor Cycle Rally during August demonstrated she isn’t capable of leading and protecting her state.

Utah announced Sunday night it’s implementing new restrictions including mandatory masks Monday:

Stay tuned – Gov. Gary Herbert plans to announce new coronavirus restrictions at 9:30 p.m., as the state is in the middle of an intense and worsening surge of cases.<https://t.co/4Xpz4xIx0c>

– The Salt Lake Tribune (@sltrib)
November 9, 2020

Whether Utahns comply may depend on whether they believe what they are being told by both the state and federal government. At least Gov. Herbert sees ‘masks optional’ or personal responsibility doesn’t work.

For their sakes and their lives, let’s hope Utahns don’t wait for GSA’s Emily Murphy to do her goddamned job. Right now she’s endangering American lives.

ELECTION DAY COUNTDOWN: BETTER THAN 1 DAY LEFT [UPDATE-2]

[NB: Updates at the bottom of this post.
/~Rayne]

Old gag, I know...a couple hours left is better than a day left, amirite?

Oh, and a status report on *Cirque du COVID au chez Rayne*: the men in my house were tested at a drive-through. They waited three fucking hours in line behind at least 60 people.

This is absolutely absurd at this point in the pandemic, and it’s all Trump’s fault.

This country should have funded a skunkworks development program to create and distribute

rapid tests which could be done at home.

This country should have funded another skunkworks development program to create and distribute a test-and-trace program which would work cheek-and-jowl with the rapid tests.

There's just no goddamned excuse for this country – which could put the first humans on the moon in a veritable oversized tuna can using less total computing power than in a flip phone – not to have been challenged by its leadership to pull out all the stops to fight this virus and its spread.

But Trump is incapable of leadership. He is only capable of grasping greed and hate.

And this is the best he can do for a closing argument, “Fire Fauci!” The expert on infectious diseases a majority of Americans support?

Wow. Unbelievable, but of course believable. The closing argument is “Fire Fauci.” Well, at least it has alliteration.

– Dan Rather (@DanRather) November 2, 2020

Fire Trump.

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Sure most of you heard about Harris County, Texas, and the GOP contesting roughly 127,000 votes cast in early voting via drive-through.

The collective sigh of relief when known-partisan Judge Andrew Hanen ruled against the GOP:

... In his ruling from the bench, Hanen said he rejected the case on narrow grounds because the plaintiffs did not show they would be harmed if the drive-thru ballots are counted. He noted, however, that the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals could think differently if

the cases reaches it. The Republican plaintiffs are appealing the decision.

If he had ruled on the larger issues in the case, Hanen said, he would have rejected the request to toss out votes already cast. But Hanen said he would have shut down Harris County's drive-thru polling places for Election Day because the tents being used for the sites don't qualify as voting inside a "building," a requirement under state election law. ...

The Texas Supreme Court had already denied requests by Republicans to toss out drive-through ballots not once but twice.

The entire situation reeks of bad faith because local Republicans were involved in setting up the drive-through voting process, and the party didn't file a lawsuit until well after early voting had started.

No idea what will happen next during the appeal since everything in the year of Trump pandemic is unpredictable; the plaintiffs have now filed this evening.

□BREAKING: Texas Republicans appeal Harris County voting case to 5th Circuit. BUT—They are only seeking to block it for tomorrow (E-Day) no mention of past voting during early vote period.<https://t.co/ugntk4x2F9>

— Marc E. Elias (@marceelias) November 3, 2020

UPDATE – 11:45 P.M. ET – Jeez, just read this Twitter thread by Southpaw, who wrote in the first post, "The notice of appeal to the Fifth Circuit hit the district court docket before Judge Hanen's written order, which is a road map for the Fifth Circuit to reverse him without remand if it's so inclined." Why so sloppy when so much is on

the line?

Meanwhile, Tarrant County, TX needs more people to help count a record number of ballots.

Sure feels like Texas is on the verge of flipping blue. TV writer Ira Madison's Twitter account has been suspended after spoofing Beto O'Rourke, challenging Texans to swing the state, offering nudes in return. Much needed comic relief in Texas.

~ 2 ~

Barton Gellman wrote a grim piece for The Atlantic, on How Trump Could Attempt a Coup.

Seems like we'd see more movement toward this already than the non-scalable wall around the White House:

'Non-scalable' barrier goes up around White House before election
<https://t.co/Jarw8yW13r>
pic.twitter.com/haY5lx5mR0

— WFLA NEWS (@WFLA) November 3, 2020

Trump's campaign continues to ask for donations through December 14, claiming the money is needed for a protracted legal battle.

Is a long fight expected, or is this part of a set-up for a coup? Or is this just another scam and his base is too stupid to discern this?

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Trump won Michigan in 2016 by a whisker – a 10,000 vote margin, or roughly 2-3 votes per precinct across the state. There was a record undervote that year, with 80,000 voters choosing no candidate at all at the top of the ticket.

The race has been too close for my taste, running an average 6-7 point spread for Biden. Knowing hijinks were employed in 2016 with foreign influence operations and the vote unable to be recounted or forensically analyzed, it's

not out of the realm of possibility Trump and the GOP could pull some hanky panky here.

Especially since GOP proxies like the DeVos family and Mitch McConnell's PAC have dumped around \$40 million dollars into the senate race to prop up Trumpist John James against incumbent Gary Peters.

This morning the state began counting absentee ballots and GOP poll watchers made some stink to disrupt the process.

There's a ballot challenger here at TCF Center in Detroit where ballots are to be counted wearing a mask that looks like a horror movie mask, like from the Halloween/Friday the 13th movies.

Unclear who he is with.

pic.twitter.com/fP8MzruRf9

– Niraj Warikoo (@nwarikoo) November 2, 2020

They were ejected, one for disruptive behavior and the other for failing to wear a mask safely as required. Can hardly wait to see what crap they pull on Election Day.

In mid-October, Michigan's Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson barred open carry of weapons in polling places on Election Day due to concerns of voter intimidation. She was sued by several gun rights groups; the state's conservative-majority supreme court ruled against Benson five days ago. Benson appealed; the supreme court hasn't bothered to respond and it's already Election Day as I type this.

The feds are monitoring Detroit, Flint, Eastpointe, Hamtramck, Highland Park, Jackson, Shelby Township for voting rights violation, which seems like a joke since only Detroit, Flint, and Highland Park are minority majority communities.

The feds aren't watching two other known minority majority communities in which a former

GOP secretary of state tried to remove secretary of state offices obstructing voters' registration.

While a lot of media attention will fall on Texas, Florida, and Pennsylvania, something is clearly going on in Michigan since Trump had four campaign rallies since Friday in this state. Why the heavy investment? Is it really for John James' benefit? Or is there something else going on we can't see any more readily than we could in 2016?

At least activists have been working hard to motivate Michiganders to vote. Obama was in Flint this weekend and again on Monday with Joe Biden and Stevie Wonder in Detroit. Wonder made a "love letter" video to Michigan with the MeidasTouch.

Also note a late entry aimed at Michigan by the Biden-Harris campaign using Michigan-native Eminem's "Lose Yourself."

You only get one shot, do not miss your chance to blow
This opportunity comes once in a lifetime.

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Thank you if you've already voted. Put the pedal to the metal and ensure everyone else you know votes by the time the polls close tomorrow.

~ | ~

UPDATE-1 – 1:15 A.M. 03-NOV-2020 –

President Trump just said if he loses the election, he'll never come back to Michigan.

– Yamiche Alcindor (@Yamiche) November 3, 2020

Don't let the door hit you, Donald. Good fucking riddance to bad baggage.

~ | ~

UPDATE-2 – 1:35 A.M. 03-NOV-2020 –

This twitter thread is heartbreaking, just gutting. Never had to happen.

This was three weeks ago. Dad died this morning after six days on a ventilator.

Pursing herd immunity puts us all at risk of this. Please vote for Joe Biden tomorrow pic.twitter.com/l19Figh0FZ

– Bitter Script Reader

(@BittrScrpTReadr) November 3, 2020

He's right. Donald Trump murdered BSR's father.

Fire Trump.

WHO WILL BE FORCED TO WALK THE PLANK ON NOVEMBER 4TH?



Who will Trump force to walk the plank after the election?
(h/t Stacey Harvey for the image, [CC Attribution-

Win or lose, Donald Trump will be looking for vengeance once the election is over. Either he will lose, and want to punish those he deems responsible, or he will win and want to punish the folks he's had to put up with despite their failures to do what he wanted. One way or another, Trump will want to make certain people pay and pay dearly after the voting is over.

It might be to get rid of people who have angered him by not being sufficiently publicly loyal and submissive.

It might be to get rid of people who angered him by not being sufficiently good at making Trump look good before the election.

It might be to get rid of people who angered him by making him look bad, indecisive, or (gasp!) wrong.

It might be to get rid of people who stood up to him in private and made him back down on something, even if that backing down was only done in private.

It might be to get rid of people who stood up to him in public, and he had to simply take it at the time because Trump would have paid a price if he got rid of them when it happened.

Put me down for Trump demanding that the following people be forced to walk the plank:

- Doctors Tony Fauci at NIAID, Stephen Hahn at FDA, and Robert Redfield at CDC, along with HHS Secretary Alex Azar for not keeping these disloyal doctors in

line;

- Bill Barr for failing to deliver any indictments and convictions of any Bidens or Clintons, John Durham for dragging his feet on his reports that would have made that happen, Christopher Wray for being the FBI director and generally annoying, whoever approved letting Andrew Weissmann reveal that Manafort was breaking the gag order in his case by communicating with Sean Hannity, and a host of other US Attorneys who didn't behave according to Trump's rules;
- General Mark Milley for publicly apologizing for taking part in the infamous Bible-waving photo op created by driving protesters out of Lafayette Park with chemical agents, various generals and admirals who refused to back Trump's call to deploy US troops to American cities he didn't like, and Secretary of Defense Mark Esper for not keeping these military folks in line;
- Dr. Sean Conley, for not being more deceptive with the press around Trump's

COVID-19 status;

- Mark Meadows for undermining Conley's initial "he's doing great" press remarks, as well as for more generally not keeping the WH functioning smoothly (as if that were possible, given his boss);
- Mike Pompeo for failing to get Ukraine to do Trump's bidding, as well as for not keeping folks like Fiona Hill in line.

But I must admit this is an incomplete list. Who else do you think might be on Trump's Naughty List? Add your own thoughts in the comments.

Note: I also left off the list a bunch of folks like Mitch McConnell, Andrew Cuomo, Savannah Guthrie, and Cy Vance that Trump would demand walk the plank, but who remain outside his ability to make that happen. I also didn't include Ivanka, Jared, Don Jr, or Eric, as he can't fire his family. Though of course, he could disinherit them . . . for whatever that's worth.

ELECTION DAY COUNTDOWN: 2 DAYS, 2 MUCH 2 GO

Guess who was coughing all day yesterday, to the point I had a sore throat?

However I'm not coughing today, didn't run a temperature, so no idea if this is allergies, my

autoimmune disorder, or an extremely light case of COVID.

The men in my household aren't showing any symptoms so far, knock on wood.

Can't rule out symptoms may show up at any time or get worse, though. Another one of my kid's co-workers tested positive as did two customers who had close proximity to them.

It's a small cluster. A tiny clusterfuck all thanks to that tangerine asshat in the White House.

~ 3 ~

MAGAtroids are ramping up their terror attacks. Today they shut down the Garden State Parkway:

In New Jersey, a convoy of vehicles supporting President Trump has halted traffic on the Garden State Parkway. #NJ #Trump

pic.twitter.com/WxNlFNdPNz

– TalkRadio 77 WABC (@77WABCradio)
November 1, 2020

They also swamped the Mario M. Cuomo Bridge in New York City:

#MAGAdrag caravan of reportedly 2 thousand vehicles stretched out from Rockland County to Westchester County in New York, rallying for president Trump. They shut down Mario Cuomo Bridge in New York

Video by Yuki Iwamura (FNTV)
<https://t.co/MKhP0Go9IL>
desk@scootercaster.com
pic.twitter.com/GYHAs7Nph6

– @SCOOTERCASTER (FNTV)
(@ScooterCasterNY) November 1, 2020

Trump supporters basically shut down two of the busiest highways in the New Jersey-New York area, and without advance notice or any permit. Thankfully no other terror attacks took place which might have required the intervention of state and federal law enforcement's use of these roadways.

They also shut down Colorado state highway C-470 and northbound I-25, a federal highway:

Thousands Participate In 'MAGA Drag The Interstate' In Colorado

<https://t.co/kMW3UuTriN>

<pic.twitter.com/nTx0FR6dhv>

– CBSDenver (@CBSDenver) November 1, 2020

And the media has once again failed to characterize this for what it is – terrorism designed to disrupt infrastructure with intent to interfere with normal operations including the conduct of the election.

This tweet nails it:

What trump supporters see vs what the rest of the world sees

<pic.twitter.com/6harZ8w0Wk>

– M-A. StayFuckin'Legit 2daysTickTockMF
 (@BagdMilkSoWhat) November 1, 2020

If the flags were black and white and covered with slogans in Arabic, Dari, or Pashto, perhaps the media would have a different perception of these events. But because the media is wired to see these as wholly political events and therefore expressions of free speech, they don't call this terrorism.

No police showed up in either of these two states to force these "parades" to yield part of the roadway to regular traffic.

What exactly are police doing for public safety when, as in North Carolina, they spray teargas at and arrest participants of a march to get out the vote – including children and at least one journalist – because the police claim they were “blocking the roadway”? Yet New Jersey, New York, and Colorado didn’t use teargas or other irritants on participants intent on obstructing traffic.

One clue: note the race of the participants in these events.

~ 2 ~

Axios reported earlier that Trump will declare himself the winner if it looks like he’s leading in the polls before the end of the evening on Election Day. Trump has since denied this but he then whined about ballots coming in later (as they always have) and about governors of Democratic persuasion overseeing the conduct of the vote.

Which of course is total bullshit and another means to interfere with the vote. Polls won’t be closed in California, Alaska, Hawaii for at least 3-5 hours after polls in Eastern Time Zone, and in Alaska in particular Trump is polling behind Biden.

NPR’s Dominic Montanaro tweeted a thread (click on the link) explaining the vote won’t be final before midnight Eastern:

I’m not sure who needs to hear this, but here goes... final election results are NEVER known on Election Night. All the votes are NEVER counted by and on Election Night.

– Domenico Montanaro (@DomenicoNPR)
November 1, 2020

Historian Michael Beschloss puts it more simply:

We did not know Presidential winner for certain before midnight on election

nights in 1960, 1968, 1976, 2000, 2004, 2016. No one should pretend there would be anything historically unusual if that happens again in 2020.

– Michael Beschloss (@BeschlossDC)
November 1, 2020

Anything Donald Trump says on November 3 before midnight Eastern should be seen as electioneering at best and interference with/suppression of voting at worst. Any media outlet reporting what Trump says without caveats is aiding and abetting him in a “perception hack” meant to undermine our faith in the democratic process.

It’s bad enough that the major broadcast television networks carried this Trumpian scumbucket who propelled this same “perception hack.” What a bloody shame we have to reply on The Lincoln Project to call out this ethics-free chump:

For some reason, this talking thumb thinks counting all of the ballots = stealing the election.
pic.twitter.com/ztS0fMN56d

– The Lincoln Project (@ProjectLincoln)
November 1, 2020

~ 1 ~

There are other signs Trump already knows this isn’t going to turn out well for him.

The White House on lockdown: A federal law enforcement source tells NBC that beginning tomorrow, crews will build a “non-scalable” fence to secure the WH complex, Ellipse and Lafayette Square.

250 National Guardsmen have been put on standby, reporting to Metro Police officials.

– Geoff Bennett (@GeoffRBennett)

November 2, 2020

When we fire you, Trump, you'd best believe the eviction notice will be served and executed. We owe to the 231,000 Americans who died of COVID and the 3,000 Puerto Rican Americans who died from your deliberate neglect after Hurricane Maria to remove you, let alone the Americans who will die between now and your exit from the White House.

~ 0 ~

Thank you for voting if you've voted. Please help others over the next 48 hours to get out the vote. Make sure you touch base with friends and family to ensure they are prepared to vote if they haven't already.

ELECTION DAY COUNTDOWN: 3 DAYS, 3 THINGS

cough-cough

More on that later. It's very late on Day 3, need to get through these pronto.

~ 3 ~

The tangerine hellbeast will have a total of four rallies in Michigan between Saturday morning and Election Day. I wish I had sufficient lack of self-preservation to go to one of these events and shout at him, "Get out of my state, you diseased cretin!!!" but no.

A pity the Trump campaign hasn't taken the conservative Detroit News' hint – both its endorsement of Biden and its front page today:

With three days left, two headlines on one front page, illustrating perhaps the most dominant story of this election.
pic.twitter.com/vkw5W3NnBx

– Matt Viser (@mviser) October 31, 2020

A key reason Trump may be in Michigan so often – since his polling has been consistently behind Biden between 5-7% for a couple months – is that Trumpist senate candidate John James is within MOE of incumbent Democrat Gary Peters.

DeVos family and Mitch McConnell's PAC have dumped more than \$10 million combined into this race because it's closer than some of the incumbent Republicans' races.

Trump doesn't sound like he's convinced he can win. He's tired; he cut down his Friday night rally in Minnesota to 21 minutes, blaming the governor's COVID crowd limitations.

Maybe it's the small crowd. Maybe it's the cold. But this is the lowest energy I've ever seen the President be at a rally. He's blowing through his applause lines, just checking the boxes on his usual speech, like he's got somewhere to be. pic.twitter.com/iZyj6YSLLp

– Garrett Haake (@GarrettHaake) October 30, 2020

He was phoning it in. Have to wonder how that will affect James' chances if Trump can't produce higher energy for his base in Michigan.

~ 2 ~

Another key reason Trump is making four trips to Michigan sure looks like attempted mass murder by COVID.

New @Stanford study estimates that 18 Trump rallies have led to 30,000 COVID cases and 700 deaths

(via @AaronBelkin)
<https://t.co/zcR4yKwnE1>
<pic.twitter.com/1yaPivbYFS>

– Carl Quintanilla (@carlquintanilla)
October 31, 2020

You know Team Trump knows about this trend of increased confirmed cases and deaths. You know they're aware Michigan has had record case numbers since his 9/11 rally here.

Sure looks like malice aforethought. Add that to the damage to high volume sorting in Detroit's U.S. Postal office and it's a deliberate and deadly combination of voter suppression in this swing state he won by a mere ten thousand votes in 2016.

~ 1 ~

And one more key reason for showing up so often in Michigan is his incitement to violence. It's already spawned at least one seditious conspiracy against Michigan's Gov. Whitmer, a.k.a. "that woman in Michigan." He trash talked about her during the last visits he's made to this state.

Today he tweeted implicit support for an attack by Trump supporters on a Biden-Harris campaign bus in Texas. The attack showed up on a number of videos posted on Twitter:

These tactics have no place in Texas, my home state, and no place in America.

Please vote. Please volunteer this weekend. The future of our democracy is at stake. <pic.twitter.com/G004yg2vnJ>

– Dr. Eric Cervini (@ericcervini)
October 31, 2020

This attack was encouraged by Donnie Jr. with a wink-wink-nudge-nudge, according to the Daily Beast:

“Hey Laredo, Don Jr. here. I heard you had an awesome turnout for the Trump Train,” Donald Trump Jr., son of President Donald Trump, said in a video tweeted by Daily Caller contributor Kambree Kawahine Koa. “It would be great if you guys would all get together, head down to McAllen and give Kamala Harris a nice Trump Train welcome... let’s show them how strong Texas still is as Trump country.”

The FBI is looking into this. Not holding my breath that they’ll get right on this.

~ 0 ~

One last adder to the above three things given today’s terroristic attack on the Biden-Harris bus and Biden: this country is on the verge of systemic violence. This tweet thread notes how coverage of the violence we’ve been seeing incited by Trump and his supporters is not accurately described to the public:

The way that part of the American media are generically talking about the prospects for “post-elxn violence” evacuates all agency & responsibility from the architects of this climate of fear. It reminds me of the “ancient ethnic hatreds” myth from the Bosnian War.

– Jasmin Mujanović (@JasminMuj) October 31, 2020

The media is playing it safe using the same techniques it used when describing torture by the Bush administration – as “enhanced interrogation” – and not attributing it to the inciter or perpetrators.

Even when it’s state-sanctioned violence against the media, it’s not described as bluntly as it should be. This tweet about police in Graham, NC launching an unprovoked attack with pepper spray

on a GOTV march which had a permit is as blunt as it gets and it still doesn't quite convey the level of threat:

Graham NC, where police pepper-spray children and arrest journalists.<https://t.co/ASQUKDSG8E>

– Steve Brown (@WGRZ_SteveBrown) October 31, 2020

We should expect U.S. media to report both incitement and attacks using the same terms they employ when this kind of violence happens in other countries.

If you've already voted, thank you. Please help others get to the polls.

And prepare for anything over the next four to five days.

ELECTION DAY COUNTDOWN: 4 DAYS

After the phone call I just got, I have zero patience for language policing today. If you can't stomach f-bombs, hit the the exit now.

I am goddamned sick of this tangerine-tainted blowhard and his constant incitement to violence. I am FURIOUS at his malignancy – his trash-talking about anyone who is competent and capable while he systematically fails this country.

I am just so fucking fed up with having to worry about COVID because that slack-assed corrupt sponge can't be bothered to turn over the job of stemming the pandemic to competent people and instead finds every opportunity to siphon money off every thing he touches.

Wow, Rayne, you seem triggered..

You're goddamned right I'm triggered. My younger kid just called and told me their boss tested positive for COVID. They've been in contact with their boss several times this week indoors at a retail entertainment venue, though part of those times the boss or my kid was wearing a mask.

And my spouse was in contact with the same boss at least three times in the last week, indoors, not wearing a mask all the time.

One of my BFFs was also in contact several times with the same COVID-positive person, indoors, with and without a mask.

All three – kid, spouse, friend – will have to get tested. If any of them test positive, I have to get tested, and then I have to make a bunch of phone calls to people with whom we've been in contact.

I've had three different companies here in my house doing repairs this week – two teams didn't wear masks, one did.

My spouse met our other kid up north last weekend to go bow hunting, staying overnight with my elderly in-laws, one of whom is being treated for cancer. I dread telling my older kid about the potential exposure because they were just tested 10 days ago due to a workplace exposure; the test administrator injured my kid with the swab. Kid has a little PTSD after that episode and is reluctant to get tested any time soon.

Our financial advisor met my spouse after a multi-state road trip earlier this week – they're on their way back across the same states. This advisor is a self-employed small business owner, has kids at home who are in a K-12 public school.

My kid's COVID-positive boss is a small business owner – a first-time business owner who hasn't yet finished their second full year running this operation. The business may have to shut down

for two weeks depending on the rules covering their type of business.

Meanwhile, the utterly useless apricot-brained fuckwit is campaigning yet again in my state after causing a small spike in COVID cases when he campaigned here in September, spouting this kind of trash in front of his unmasked mouth-breathing base:

“Our doctors get more money if someone dies from Covid. You know that, right? I mean, our doctors are very smart people.” – Trump pushes a baseless conspiracy that greedy American health care workers are overcounting coronavirus deaths
pic.twitter.com/fsajGTvvN3

– Aaron Rupar (@atrupar) October 30, 2020

God damn it.

US COVID cases just surged past *9 million*

And Trump is claiming:

- COVID is not that bad (229K+ deaths)
- Doctors & hospitals are jacking up death tolls to make more money (No evidence of this)
- Too much attention is being paid to COVID (Infections are on the rise in 47 states)

– Yamiche Alcindor (@Yamiche) October 30, 2020

My kid’s boss, somebody we’ve known for years, one of my spouse’s friends, is now part of today’s COVID statistics.

For all I know my kid’s boss may have a second wave infection from the September campaign rally. Nobody is making money here off that wave of infection. Nobody will make money off the

second wave.

Unless you're an executive or stockholder of Regeneron up to this week's problems with phase 2/3 trials of COVID therapy drug remdesivir, that is. What a pity for Trump's Briarcliff member, Regeneron CEO Leonard Schleifer.

How the hell is this country supposed to return to normal if it never makes a sustained effort to stop COVID's spread?

How is the economy supposed to turn around when the one person who could apply the powers of the executive branch to effectively end the pandemic, persists in undermining the states' efforts, incites seditious acts against states, and actively spreads COVID by holding rallies which are not socially distanced or mask-mandatory?

How is this country supposed to simply muddle through without leadership to a safe and effective vaccine which may be one to two years away?

Vote that fucking hacktastic moron out of office in four days if you haven't already cast a vote.

Help others vote that stupid orange fuckweasel out of the White House if you have already voted.

Do it for the 228,701 Americans who have died from COVID, and all the families who have to put up with this unending COVID circus.