



# The Hancock County Democrat

## Hancock County Democratic Party

### The Mendacious Mr. Trump



According to the Washington Post Fact-Check, as of day 1,226 (May 29, 2020) of America’s nightmare, Donald Trump has made 19,127 false or misleading claims. There can be no doubt the man is a pathological liar. He even lies when the truth would serve him better. Deceit is part of his psyche.

Let us visit a few Trumpisms from the last few days, but first I will revisit an old favorite, “We had the greatest economy in history of any country, not just ours. The greatest in history.” Even discounting the recent hit to the economy due to the coronavirus, this is not true. By just about any important measure, the economy under Trump did not do as well as it did under Presidents Dwight D. Eisenhower, Lyndon B. Johnson, or Bill Clinton.

President Donald Trump has made false

### Bruce Workman

statements and implications about how three Democratic officials responded to violent protests that followed George Floyd’s death in police custody in Minneapolis:

- Trump said the mayor of Washington, D.C., “wouldn’t let the D.C. Police get involved” during a turbulent protest outside the White House. The Secret Service said the local police were involved.
- Trump urged Philadelphia officials to call in the National Guard to help stop looting — hours after they had already done so.

Trump said Minneapolis had been too slow to bring in the National Guard, and again got the timeline wrong.

Mr. Trump has also made unsubstantiated claims about voting by mail. After California announced that they every registered voter would receive a mail-in ballot for the November election, (continued on page 2)

### Who is to blame? Me Too!

### Bruce Workman

I frequently hear that it is only a few rogue cops who are to blame for the excessive force cases and that most police officers are honest and upright public servants. Surely, they cannot be held at all responsible for the spate of murders of black citizens over the years .

I would argue that they are very much accountable. Our police forces have been a fraternity. The mere mention of a relative

“on the job” can make a traffic ticket go away or be alleviated. As part of this “brotherhood” police officers remain silent or testify on behalf of the rogue cops. The unofficial motto is. “You lie and I’ll swear to it.” But does culpability end there?

Despite a recent ill-advised Supreme Court decision, most of us know that racism is still alive and thriving in America (continued on page 2)

#### Inside this issue:

Minneapolis, the Corona-	<b>3</b>
Mattis on Disunity	<b>5</b>
Cartoon	<b>7</b>
Inside Story	<b>3</b>
Inside Story	<b>4</b>
Inside Story	<b>5</b>
Inside Story	<b>6</b>

## The Mendacious Mr. Trump continued

Trump falsely said, on Twitter and at the White House, that the ballots would go to “anyone living in the state, no matter who they are or how they got there” and “people that aren’t citizens.” He has repeatedly made the unsupported claim that mail-in voting would be “substantially fraudulent.” Experts have said that voter fraud via mail-in ballots is rare, though more common than, the extremely rare, in-person voting fraud.

Much to the dismay of Timothy Klausutis, widower of former Joe Scarborough intern, Lori Klausutis, Trump has not backed off evidence-free conspiracy about the former congressman’s involvement in her death. I am sure falsely accusing someone of murder is a violation of Twitter’s user agreement that would get you or me permanently banned, but he rants on and even the hint of control causes him to try to invoke powers he doesn’t

possess. He seems to believe that free speech only applies his freedom to lie.

For the first three years of his presidency, he was allowed to lie freely. Only recently has the media, including the White House press corps, begun to call him out on his blatant fabrications. He responds much like a toddler getting caught in a lie. He stands by his lie and accuses the accusers, calling them ‘nasty people’, peddling ‘fake news’ for a “failing” news outlet. I am waiting for the day when he goes full baby and calls a reporter a ‘poo-poo head.’

All of which begs the question, ‘Why does anyone still believe anything he says?’ Much like vultures regurgitating carrion, the resident right-wing lunatics repeat his prevarications verbatim in letters to the editor of the Courier.

## Who’s to blame? continued

If we have lived in rural America, we may have been a part of it. My grandmother was racist, but due to almost complete absence of diversity in Findlay in the late 50s, she directed most of her antagonism toward Catholics. When I inquired as to the reason, I was told it had something to do with Gold Star Mothers. Who knew there was politics in a Gold Star Mothers group? Other than that, I do not recall much racism in Findlay. That could be due to my young age or the general lack of opportunity..

Moving to rural Indiana is where I first encountered a genuine racist culture and in a pre-teen desire to fit in, I went along with it. There was a sizeable population of black people in Fort Wayne, a mere 20 miles away, but the extent of the diversity in Auburn was two Hispanic families who were interrelated. I will have to exonerate my parents at this point as they did not participate in this portion of my education. They were aware of the community in which we found ourselves and quietly

adapted with those who were not openly racist. It is a little harder as a child due to exposure to a wider array of families and the desire to never be singled out. We were terrified of black people. There were many apocryphal tales of what happened to those who ventured into the “wrong” parts of Ft. Wayne and of course we believed them. Yes, I am guilty of using the n-word on occasion..

I did not meet my first black person (I remain unaware of the PC name for those whose flesh tones are darker than my own) until my brief stint in Bloomington, Indiana where I shared a dorm floor with several. I remember my complete inability to convince a neighbor down the hall that the country singer, Charlie Pride was a black man. “There ain’t no brother singing that redneck shit!” My time at Indiana University may have been longer had I not indulged heavily in the demon marijuana..

(Continued on page 3)

## Who's to Blame? (continued from page 2)

Do you remember the television mini-series, “Roots”? I can remember thinking, “damn, I hate those white folks!” When confronted with the results of active racism, I am enraged and realize those stories I heard when I was a child were actually born of white fear. They were projections of what the racist whites felt was their due. This fear still pervades white guilt today. If you were somehow able to read minds, you would find that a critical part of the psyche of the white supremacists is that if they become the minority, they will be mistreated in the same way they have terrorized minorities. Racism is cowardice..

Much later, while attending a macroeconomics class in Detroit, where I was one of six white students in a class of 30+, we were asked to introduce ourselves, recount our backgrounds, and mention what role race had to play in our life. I mentioned that I had lived in a

lot of places, which is true, but conveniently forgot my time in Indiana and moved straight to saying relations were good in Southgate, where John Conyers had recently become our Congressman.

Maybe we all are a little to blame for these murders of black men and women by agents of law enforcement. We tend to neglect the incidents in much the same way as the police fraternity. We are the ones who vote to acquit out of fear of those sworn to protect us. I believe I have put racism behind me forever. I am still not completely comfortable in situations where I am in the racial minority. I still suffer from bouts of white, liberal guilt. I hope I can get over it and get to the point where I not outraged by the mistreatment of black people, but I am outraged by the mistreatment of my fellow human beings.

## Minneapolis, the Coronavirus, and Trump's Failure to See a Crisis Coming Jelani Cobb Mother Jones

Like the coronavirus crisis, the riots following George Floyd's death stemmed not from treacherous unknowns but from the Trump Administration's failure to learn from even the most recent past..

There, yet again, were the flames. Before the furious conflagrations erupted in Minneapolis, the final weeks of May had already seemed like the answer to a grim math problem: What is the product of a crisis multiplied by a crisis? The official mortality count of the COVID-19 outbreak in the United States swept toward a hundred thousand, while the economic toll had left forty million people out of work. It was difficult to countenance how so much misery could come about so quickly. But on Memorial Day we became video witnesses to the horrific death of George Floyd, at the hands of the Minneapolis Police Department. By Friday, the looted shops, the charred buildings and cars, the

smoldering Third Precinct—these were evidence of what the world looks like when a crisis is cubed.

These seemingly disparate American trials are not unrelated; they're bound by their predictability and by the ways in which the Trump Administration has exacerbated them since they began. In March, the President claimed that “nobody knew there would be a pandemic or epidemic of this proportion,” and he has echoed that sentiment throughout the course of the emergency. But virtually everyone paying attention to public health saw something like the novel coronavirus coming. In less than two decades, we have seen epidemics of the SARS, MERS, Ebola, and H1N1 viruses. The Obama Administration created a National Security Council Directorate to mitigate (continued on page 4)

**“On Friday, Trump tweeted that the protesters in Minneapolis were “thugs”—a term with deep-rooted racist connotations “**



Illustration by João Fazenda

## Minneapolis (continued from page 3)

the impact of such events; the Trump Administration largely disbanded it.

On Friday, Trump tweeted that the protesters in Minneapolis were “thugs”—a term with deep-rooted racist connotations—and later noted that the military was present in the city. “When the looting starts,” he warned, “the shooting starts.” This situation, too, is part of a long-building problem whose warning signs have gone unheeded by the current Administration. Progressives have widely criticized the 1994 Crime Bill, which was spearheaded by Joe Biden, but an element of that legislation has been underappreciated. The 1992 Los Angeles riots broke out after the acquittal of four police officers who had violently assaulted Rodney King (an incident that was also captured on video). As has often been the case with riots, the chaotic fury in Los Angeles was not simply a response to one incident but an accretion of anger at innumerable issues with a police department which had gone unaddressed for years. The Crime Bill authorized the civil-rights division of the Department of Justice to intervene in the instance of chronically troubled departments, by negotiating consent decrees that laid out specific reforms to be followed, and provided for monitors to oversee their implementation. Like the precursors to the coronavirus, Los Angeles—and later Ferguson and Baltimore—was an indicator of how such problems could play out without intervention. But, in this area as well, the Trump Administration has functioned like a building contractor who can’t recognize a load-bearing wall.

In July, 2017, in an address to law-enforcement officers in Suffolk County, New York, Trump told them to use more force when taking suspects into custody. “Like when you guys put somebody in the car and you’re protecting the head,” he said. “You

can take the hand away, O.K.?” The following May, Attorney General Jeff Sessions, in a speech to the National Association of Police Organizations, said that the Justice Department “will not malign entire police departments. We will not try to micromanage their daily work.” That November, as one of his last acts on the job, Sessions issued a memorandum that severely curtailed the civil-rights division’s ability to pursue decrees with police departments. This meant that, in communities plagued with bad policing, resentments could accrue unchecked by any higher authority until they reached their detonation points. Those detonations tend to resemble the streets of Minneapolis this week.

On Thursday, in a press conference that was short on developments or new information, Erica MacDonald, the U.S. Attorney for the District of Minnesota, said, “To be clear, President Trump as well as Attorney General William Barr are directly and actively monitoring the investigation in this case.” But what, precisely, does that mean? Barr presides over a civil-rights division that has been stripped of its chief mechanism for creating compliance among police officers. In the past five years, the Twin Cities area has seen three other controversial police shootings: of Jamar Clark, in 2015; of Philando Castile, in 2016; and of Justine Damond, in 2017. Each of these fatal incidents featured a victim of a different racial background from the officers involved, and each was highlighted as an example of police misconduct. Like the COVID cases that emerged in Seattle at the beginning of the year, Minneapolis is a study in the importance of foresight and planning, and an example of what happens when neither of those things occurs.

Continued on Page 5)

## Minneapolis (continued from page 4)

The President posted his “the shooting starts” tweet early on Friday morning, just hours before Officer Derek Chauvin, who had knelt on George Floyd’s neck for eight minutes, was taken into custody and charged with third-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter. Twitter, in an unprecedented move, labelled Trump’s tweet a violation of company policy against “glorifying violence.” A Presidential threat to have the United States military shoot civilians is the opposite of leadership, the antithesis of wisdom—a comment as ill-advised and as detrimental to the public well-being as recommending injecting disinfectant or self-prescribing hydroxychloroquine.

Our problems generally do not stem from treacherous unknowns; they’re the result of a failure to make good use of what is known already. In July, 1967, after a brutal police raid at an after-hours bar in Detroit, that city exploded in retaliatory violence. A month later, Martin Luther King, Jr., gave a speech to the American Psychological Association, in which he described riots as “durable social phenomena” that arise in conjunction with discernible conditions—acts of lawlessness that mirror the excesses of those charged with upholding the law. Leaders cannot predict the future, but they can be cognizant of the immediate past, and the possible dangers it suggests. They cannot be clairvoyant. They need only be intelligent.

## As Mattis was criticizing Trump for being unwilling to unify the country, Trump was proving him right Philip Bump Washington Post June 4, 2020

Former defense secretary Jim Mattis was obviously well aware of the significance of the analogy he drew in criticizing President Trump’s lack of interest in serving as a unifying force.

“Donald Trump is the first president in my lifetime who does not try to unite the American people — does not even pretend to try,” Mattis wrote. “Instead, he tries to divide us.”

“Instructions given by the military departments to our troops before the Normandy invasion reminded soldiers that the Nazi slogan for destroying us ... was ‘Divide and Conquer,’ ” Mattis later added. “Our American answer is ‘In Union There Is Strength.’

“We must summon that unity to surmount

this crisis — confident that we are better than our politics,” he continued.

Comparing someone’s views, however indirectly, to those of Nazi Germany is enormously fraught, as anyone reading this understands. It’s often a rhetorical trump card, if you will, meaning it’s also overplayed — so much so that there’s an informal tenet of online conversation that any debate will inevitably terminate with a comparison to Nazism.

That Mattis nonetheless drew the comparison — from his position of authority and in this context — is remarkable.

His point is accurate. The United States is predicated both in the abstract and literally upon unity; we are not the States of America. (continued on page 6)

**“Donald Trump is the first president in my lifetime who does not try to unite the American people — does not even pretend to try.”**



## As Mattis Criticizes Trump (continued from page 5)



**Caption describing picture or graphic.**

**The Hancock County Democrat**

But Mattis wasn't simply calling upon Americans to hang together. He was reinforcing the obvious point that Trump sees no political or personal advantage in trying to do so — and so doesn't try.

We could articulate a number of points in support of that claim: His insistence on policy proposals aimed at his political base. His immersion in culture wars elevated by his most fervent supporters. His focus on leveraging his power most explicitly on behalf of the people who voted for him. His feral disparagement of those who criticize him. His reliance on friendly news outlets for communicating with the public.

But, to that last point, we can also let Trump address the question himself. On Wednesday, even as news of Mattis's condemnation was spreading, an interview of Trump produced by the conservative outlet Newsmax was published. The interviewer? Trump's former press secretary Sean Spicer — yielding just as much rigor as when your kid interviews you about your job for their sixth-grade social studies class.

“When I was with you as press secretary, Chief Ryan Owens was killed in action,” Spicer said at one point. “I was in the Oval Office with you when you called his wife. You spoke to her in such a heartfelt way to comfort her. You provided that emotional stability that she needed at the time.”

Sometimes an interviewer leads with such a gentle introduction in hopes that the subject will be at ease, allowing the question to more easily knock them off balance. Sometimes, it's because the interviewer is a sycophant.

Regardless, Spicer's actual question got

to the point Mattis was trying to highlight.

“Do you think that right now the nation needs you to express that same sort of comfort and healing that some people need to heal right now?” Spicer asked the president.

This is the unity question, in the most frictionless possible example. Will you use your platform and the power of your office to help the country heal — in other words, to help close the fissure that exists? To unite both sides?

A normal president would begin with “of course,” and move forward from there. You can probably generate 60 words of vague consolation off the cuff that would suffice to make everyone content, if not resolve the issue.

But Trump didn't try. He wasn't elected to bridge the divide with Democrats; he was elected to knock down any Democrat or liberal or elite within range.

So we get this: “I think the nation needs law and order,” Trump said, “because you have a bad group of people out there, and they're using George Floyd” — who was killed in police custody in Minneapolis when an officer knelt on his neck — “and they're using a lot of other people to try and do some bad things. And what we do — and we have it totally under control.”

He wasn't done.

“But you have Democrat, in many cases — in all cases Democrat, super-liberal mayors,” Trump continued. He disparaged the mayor of Minneapolis (whom he later mocked for crying) and gave himself credit for ending violence and vandalism in the city. “We took that mess — it was a total mess! (continued on page 7)

## As Mattis Criticizes Trump (continued from page 6)

We brought in the National Guard. We took care of it. Now, it's very good. If you look at that area, it's very good."

"So, yeah, we need healing," he said, "but we also need strength, and we need toughness, and we need law and order. We need it all. But we do need healing."

We need healing — but apparently you're going to have to look somewhere else for it.

That Trump was sitting down with Spicer in the first place reflects part of the problem. Trump rarely exposes himself directly to criticism, surrounding himself with acquiescent figures in his administration and largely avoiding public appearances in which he might face unsupportive people.

Trump encounters negative responses to his action most frequently (if not exclusively) through the media, through his momentary dalliances with CNN and MSNBC and in objective coverage he sees in The Washing-

ton Post and other newspapers. He doesn't modify his position or appeal to his political opponents in part because he faces no pressure to do so. He doesn't engage with those he disagrees with because he either ignores them or simply categorizes them as enemies. That he's president without ever having to engage seriously with Democrats taught Trump that he could serve that way, too — and he has.

At the end of the interview with Spicer, his former employee asked the president if there were hires he'd made that he regretted (besides former attorney general Jeff B. Sessions). Trump didn't mention Mattis because he hadn't yet seen Mattis's comments about him. When he did see Mattis's comments, he threw out a few tweets of the predictable sort.

Trump did not contest Mattis's criticism of his failure to unify the country. How could he?

**"So, yeah, we need healing," he said, "but we also need strength, and we need toughness, and we need law and order. We need it all. "**



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*Our mission is to support, promote, build and perpetuate the Democratic Party in Hancock County, Ohio, by recruiting, screening, and training qualified Candidates, raising funds, registering voters, distributing literature, advertising, and doing other such appropriate activities.*

## WE'RE ON THE WEB

<https://hancockcountydems.org>

## A Community Conversation scores big

Along with the Black Heritage Library and Multicultural Center, the Hancock County Democrats hosted a Community Conversation last evening. The Zoom meeting was at capacity, but some technical issues kept the entire event from being broadcast on Facebook Live. All in all, it was a great success and lots of new information was shared and hopefully some new connections were made. The last half of the meeting can be

viewed at <https://www.facebook.com/HancockDemsOH/>. A link to the entire recording should be made available today.