

Looks like it's time for a new hat



When I “returned” to blogging recently, I vowed to stay away from politics. These are momentous times, so I’m going to bend that vow just a wee bit and talk a little tangentially to politics. Specifically, why it looks like it’s time for a new hat.

Looks like it's time for an old cartoon

When I first came up with the idea for this post, Rocky and Bullwinkle came immediately to mind for one specific moment: Bullwinkle performing his magic act.

Of course, since it’s a silly 60’s cartoon, the act goes all wrong and what he pulls out from the hat is frightening, prompting the title line on this post.

While in the shower this morning, I realized that Rocky and Bullwinkle are always bedeviled by Boris and Natasha – two Russian spies. Oops.

Further, as I sat down to type this, it dawned on me that the title could be a double meaning, in that a certain hat is synonymous with the current resident of the Oval Office.

I wish I was that clever, but these are just blind squirrel moments. I'll take 'em, though, and claim my subconscious is just that smart.

Look! Elephant!

I may be one of the few people who enjoyed an Arnie movie called "Last Action Hero". In it, Arnie attempts to carry a dead body out of a funeral (for said dead body). He manages to distract the entire attendance (all mobsters) by shouting, "Look! Elephant!"

You hadda be there.

So, that's where my post is really going. The art of misdirection, a magic user's best tool.

Already, and in the ensuing weeks, there will be many people telling you to "look over there" at this piece of misdirection or other. It will come from all sides. Left, Right, Foreign.

These are important and critical times for America. Times which have occurred only thrice before in our 240+ years.

You need to stay on your toes and pay attention to the facts. And the facts are actually out there.

I hope you don't take my word for it

I hope you don't take *anyone's* word for it. You don't need to.

Some of the key information was released by Trump and his White House. Can't claim fake news or deep state on that. I urge you to read it. It's short. Less than a half hour for both, probably.

Then, keep in mind this one point: It is against the law to accept foreign aid in an American election.

That's all. Simple law. Easy to understand. Doesn't become untrue just because a candidate prefers not to agree with it. Try that one on the next traffic cop that stops you.

Laws are important. They are there to protect, to enforce and, if broken, to punish. To change them requires an act of Congress. No single individual, great or small has that power.

I would like you to do us a favor though

Here's the operative line. It's in the readout released by the Trump White House. Not CNN. Nor MSNBC. Not even Hillary Clinton. Trump White House.

Now, if you've heard any news at all about this, you've been bored to tears by this phrase "quid pro quo". It's basically, "something for something". The old, you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours.

Some defenders of the call will say, nowhere does Trump explicitly say that. But, c'mon, none of us are that literal. We know what people mean by what they say in a conversation.

The Ukraine president brings up buying defense weapons and *the very next line* from Trump is "I would like you to do us a favor though".

And the favor is, go look up dirt on my possible presidential election opponent. Um, yeah, doesn't sound like a scratch my back at all. Nup.

And, as we found out in the last section, that would be a crime. No wiggle room there.

In my humble opinion

If you're a locked-in partisan supporter of Trump, you can skip this section. You won't agree with my points anyway.

I see various ways to read the summarized call notes released by the White House, ranging in severity:

Cheater – can't win the election by himself, so he has to get foreign people to help him

Bully – small, poor country fighting for its survival must do what big American country says

Bribery – hey, give me what I want and I'll give you millions of dollars of military aid

National Security – my reelection is more important than the safety of your country...or of the American soldiers and European allies your country helps to create a buffer from Russian aggression and invasion (see Crimea).

None of those are very flattering. Some of those are criminal. All of those are dangerous.

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These are terrible times. From whatever lens you view them through.

But, these are also amazing times. We are witnessing now, the enacting of the safeguards our founding fathers put into our great democratic experiment to guard against personal excesses.

Everyone is going to come at you with opinions. A very few will actually come at you with facts.

You don't have to believe any of them. You can find all this out for yourself. Avoid talking heads and opinion shows. Read the few documents out there. And do some thinking on your own.

You may decide I'm wrong. You could decide I'm not harsh enough. Tune out the regular channels and stay out of predictable partisan corners.

All I'm hoping is that you don't fall for the misdirection. I think you'll agree that it looks like it's time for a new hat.