

## #1380 The Coup Attempt We Saw Coming Years in Advance

**JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT:** [00:00:00] Welcome to this episode of the award-winning Best of the Left podcast, in which we shall learn about the slow motion coup that we've known was coming since 2016. The baseless lawsuits, the absurd claims, and the perpetual grift, always the grift. Clips today come from *All In* with Chris Hayes, *The Brian Lehrer Show*, *CounterSpin*, an episode of *Check Your Blind Spot*, *On the Media*, *The Benjamin Dixon Show*, *The Bugle*, and *The Dollemore Daily*.

### Coup Cosplay: Chris Hayes On Trump, GOP Trying To Pretend Biden Didn't Win - All In with Chris Hayes - Air Date 11-10-20

**CHRIS HAYES - HOST, ALL IN:** [00:00:29] As you know, we are nearing the final vote tally. President-elect Joe Biden defeated Donald Trump in the 2020 presidential election actually quite decisively. The numbers show Biden with state leads that are not going to be overcome by recounts. Certainly not in five different States he flipped. Biden is likely to end up with 306 electoral votes, but from the perspective of a popular legitimacy, what did the American people say on Tuesday? He is probably going to win by four points. Is up by four and a half million votes with millions more to come in from States like California, New York. He might end up winning by six or 7 million votes.

Now there have been numerous drawn out narrow elections in American history, starting with the election of 1800 and the 2000 election. It's been talked about over and over we're for the past week. Back in 1876, the election was so close. It was decided by Congress. This is not one of those elections. Hear me loud and clear.

That's not what we're dealing with right now. What we are dealing with is one of the two major parties refusing to accept a Democratic party victory as legitimate. And the message has been sent from Trump and Trump TV on down for months now, the only way Democrats could win would be by cheating.

And so now we are faced with this extremely dangerous and unnerving bizarre middle space where the best that can be said is that Trump, the Republican party and their allies would try to overthrow the democratically elected government and steal the election if it were closer, if they could figure out the right way to do it, but it's just not close enough for them to do it this time.

Some Republicans are acting like Trump's behavior is a big joke. One senior Republican official told the Washington Post quote, "what is the downside for humoring him for this little bit of time? No one seriously thinks the results will change. He went golfing this weekend. It's not like he's plotting how to prevent Joe Biden from taking power on January 20th, he's tweeting about filing some lawsuits. Those lawsuits will fail. Then I'll tweet some more about how the election was stolen and then I'll leave." I mean, that's probably true. And yet, earlier today, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo at, of all things, the inauguration of

the Center for Freedom and Democracy at the Ronald Reagan Institute from the podium, the state department loves to use to lecture other countries about accepting the results of elections, did this:

**UNKNOWN REPORTER:** [00:02:46] Is the State Department currently preparing to engage with the Biden transition team, and if not, at what point does it delay, hamper a smooth transition or pose a risk to national security?

**SECRETARY OF STATE MIKE POMPEO:** [00:02:56] There will be a smooth transition to a second Trump administration, right? We're ready.

**CHRIS HAYES - HOST, ALL IN:** [00:03:05] Was that a joke? It's a bad joke or maybe it's not a joke. I don't know.

Well leaders from around the world who understand who won our congratulating president-elect Biden. Trump and the Republican party to continue to do things like file an insanely frivolous lawsuit in Pennsylvania that wants to retroactively invalidate all mail-in votes in Pennsylvania. For real. See the actual suit they're filing.

Georgia's entire Republican delegation, all of the elected office holders in Congress, sent a letter to the Republican secretary of state in Georgia, who they are mad didn't oversee an election that stopped Democrats from voting, and they allege serious allegations of voting irregularities with no evidence whatsoever. And those voting irregularities somehow only impacted the Republican candidates who did not win outright.

Now, keep in mind, this includes a bunch of people who were just reelected [who wrote] that letter. They're saying their elections were fine and legitimate, but the other races where Democrats did better are illegitimate.

So far only four senators have congratulated president-elect Biden on his victory. Retiring Senator Pat Toomey of Pennsylvania, just moments ago, saying that he thinks that Biden's gonna win. You have the General Services Administration arm of the federal government refusing to fork over the money necessary for office space to begin the transition. The Washington Post reports the White House has told federal agencies to plan for the Trump administration's budget proposal for next year. You have Attorney General Bill Barr setting up an interestingly worded, but really quite disquieting note about the Department of Justice stepping into an election before results are certified to look into voter fraud. That led to the resignation of the director of the election crimes branch, who was a direct decorated Justice Department veteran.

And then perhaps most worryingly, a day after firing defense secretary Mark Esper, Trump has moved a series of loyalists into critical positions throughout the Pentagon. As NBC News political editor Benjy Sarlin pointed out, the emerging argument of the, yes, the president, his allies want to overturn the results of an election and would do so in a heartbeat if federal possible, but it's not like they actually can, is not exactly very reassuring for the future of democracy. At a certain point if you're just trollingy pretending to be engaged in a coup, when do you cross over to actually trying for a coup?

Speaking at a press conference this afternoon, president-elect Biden dismissed the Republican attempts to de-legitimize the election.

**PRESIDENT-ELECT JOE BIDEN:** [00:05:33] The ability for the administration in any way by failure to recognize our win, does not change the dynamic at all and what we're able to [do]. I just think it's an embarrassment, quite frankly. The only thing that, uh, how can I say this tactfully? I think it will not help the president's legacy.

**CHRIS HAYES - HOST, ALL IN:** [00:06:04] It's not going to work and they're not winning. They are losing. Badly. And flailing. But what they are doing is wildly destructive and nihilistic, even.

It's no surprise we've ended up here or that so much of the Republican party, all of it, and I mean like the whole conservative architecture and all the lawyers, these law firms like Jones Day that are participating in it, and all the staffers, all the people that are part of this enterprise are going along with it. I mean, it has been a core belief of the conservative movement, and many in the Republican party, for literally more than a decade, that there just is no such thing as legitimate democratic rule by the Democratic party, they can't legitimately win.

I mean, let's remember. The reason Donald Trump became a national figure in conservative politics was his elevation of a deranged conspiracy theory that the last Democratic president who won a resounding victory was actually secretly illegitimate. And everyone from Mitt Romney to Fox News played along because they didn't want to upset the people in the base. Let them have this.

## **Suppressing The Vote Didn't Work For Trump. Will Throwing Out Ballots? - Brian Lehrer Show - Air Date 11-9-20**

**BRIAN LEHRER - HOST, THE BRIAN LEHRER SHOW:** [00:07:00] Let me get your take on the sort of nightmare scenario that I was laying out at the top of the segment, where they delay things so much that they can't satisfy the count or complete a count because it's all tied up in court by the deadline for all the states, which is December 8th, and then the state legislatures get to designate the electors.

Here's a clip from 60 minutes last night of Republican attorney Ben Ginsburg, who goes there after being asked what these lawyers are doing pursuing cases for Donald Trump that don't seem to have any merit.

**BEN GINSBURG:** [00:07:43] This could be an instance of trying to slow down counts in individual states in the hopes that those states don't complete their job of certifying election results in time for the electoral college to meet. And then he would go back to something else he's talked about, which is telling legislators to go and vote Trump slates, even in states that were won by Biden.

**BRIAN LEHRER - HOST, THE BRIAN LEHRER SHOW:** [00:08:11] So, I don't know if you were watching television last night, professor Hasson, but that certainly gave people shudders when it showed up on 60 minutes as an argument. And then CNN, later last night, was going big with that as a possibility that the Trump campaign is considering.

Could you describe that scenario? First of all, this is a scenario that almost nobody listening now has ever heard of. What is this about December 8th and conditions under which state legislatures can negate the apparent majority vote of the people?

**RICHARD HASEN:** [00:08:47] Well, let me start off with my bottom line, which is, I don't think this is going anywhere. I think that was Ben just trying to come up with a plausible explanation for what the Trump end game might be if they actually had thought this through.

So the constitution says that when it comes to presidential electors, each state gets to set the manner for choosing presidential electors. Every state in the United States has chosen the manner to have a popular vote and in all but two states, the popular vote winner gets all the electoral college votes, in two states it's partly divided by congressional district. So everyone's made a choice already, every state legislature, to give this power to the voters.

Now there's a provision in the federal law called the Electoral Count Act, which says that if a state fails to make a choice by the time that they're supposed to, which is this early December date, if there's been a failure, then the state legislature can step in and can appoint a slate of electors. So you'd have to have some kind of failure of the system.

Right now, we are barreling ahead towards certification and Pennsylvania is one of the States that certifies on the early side, every state has their own timetable. California's on the later side, it has a lot of ballots. Mail ballots it takes them weeks to count those. Once there's certification, then the choice is made, who the electors are and then that will eventually be transmitted from the state's governor to Congress and the votes will be counted on January 6th.

You'd have to have a really compelling reason to stop the count to stop the certification and you'd have to come forward with some plausible basis for that, and so far, none of these lawsuits are presenting anything like the kind of evidence you would need to stop vote counting, and somehow delay it for a month to prevent the the certification of the vote and eventual choice of electors and transmission of electors to Congress.

**BRIAN LEHRER - HOST, THE BRIAN LEHRER SHOW:** [00:10:51] So that sounds reassuring, but for example, in an era of tribal politics where no matter how outrageous a thing Trump does, Lindsay Graham and Mitch McConnell, and a lot of other people seem to get behind it, and the same may be true about state legislators in Pennsylvania, I don't know. Why couldn't the Trump campaign file a suit on the day before the deadline in Pennsylvania to certify the vote, and then go to the legislature and say, "well, the court hasn't resolved the election yet so there is no resolution." and have politics take it from there?

**RICHARD HASEN:** [00:11:33] Well, first of all, a couple of Republican legislative leaders wrote an op-ed over the weekend and said, we're not choosing the electors, this is for the people to do. So they've taken it off the table. I don't know if that's true for the legislators in Michigan, and if you can think of another state that has a Republican legislature, that Biden won, but at least in Pennsylvania they've taken it off the table.

Lindsey Graham saying really irresponsible things and I'm quite concerned about it because I think it's an attempt to delegitimize the Biden presidency, but you can't run into court the day before certification and say, "Hey, wait, wait, wait." There's a legal doctrine called laches and another one called estoppel and basically the idea is if you have a chance to raise a

claim, you don't wait to the last minute, especially in an election, you've got to move very quickly. And that's been a problem with a lot of these claims that the Trump campaign has made. In Nevada, for example, they try to attack the use of machines that verify signatures, but they waited until they were almost done with the counting when they knew that these machines were in use for years.

So you don't get to just come into court and just throw it against the wall and see what happens. You've got to have a showing of diligence on top of everything else. There's a lot of worry and I certainly understand it, but I would say Mitch McConnell has not been going along with Lindsey Graham and saying we should try to throw this to the legislature. McConnell has just said we should go through the legal process and make sure that everything is in order.

## **Steven Rosenfeld on Vote Counting - CounterSpin - Air Date 11-6-20**

**JANINE JACKSON - HOST, COUNTERSPIN:** [00:13:16] It is November 5th and the New York Times front page tells me that Joe Biden sees a path to victory. The reason it's just a path I'm to understand is that Donald Trump is still mounting challenges to vote counts. Trump of course, announced in advance that, "as soon as that election is over, we're going in with our lawyers".

But Republicans didn't just start going in with their lawyers. In particular, since the gutting of the voting rights act in 2013, they've used the courts to provide cover for the kind of voter suppression they feel favors them. They've played these cards face up for so long, it's hard to see why anyone would credit Trump's current legal maneuvers as anything other than what they are—frank attempts to hold onto power, no matter what.

But here we are and where we need a press corps that defends democratic functions unflinchingly even, or especially, if it's the president attacking them. What we've got is, along with some strong and useful reporting, a lot of normalizing inanity. Like CNN's John Avlon telling viewers to "keep cool and remember that the right to vote is really the fight to vote." Come again?

Things are changing as we speak, but joining us to talk about where we're at is journalist Steven Rosenfeld. He's the editor and chief correspondent of Voting Booth, a project of the Independent Media Institute. He joins us now by phone from San Francisco. Welcome back to *CounterSpin*. Steven Rosenfeld.

**STEVEN ROSENFELD:** [00:14:49] Thank you, it's a pleasure to be here.

**JANINE JACKSON - HOST, COUNTERSPIN:** [00:14:51] Well, as we record on November 5th, Trump hasn't let go of the strategy of what the press called legal challenges, which I feel is kind of fancy language for what's happening. Without asking you to break down each individual case what should we understand about the nature of the legal arguments being employed?

**STEVEN ROSENFELD:** [00:15:14] Well, sure. There are two big points to make about this without getting lost in the details. The first is that most of what Trump and the Republican

Party are going after are small technicalities in the process of the way that ballots are handled or processed before they're counted and then counted. And what's really remarkable about these, and I've been looking at this today, is that the number of ballots that they might be able to throw out, if they are even lucky to succeed and we can say in a second, why they may not be lucky, it's really small and it's not likely to jeopardize or change the outcomes in these elections.

It's likely to generate a lot of doubt that could be blown up like molehills into mountains for their ongoing disinformation, but in terms of the litigation it's been incredibly small minded and kind of sloppy. It should have been filed days ago, but was only filed yesterday or even today, today being Thursday.

So in terms of the narrative or the legal arguments, there are only a few. There's really Bush v Gore 2.0, which means they're claiming that like ballots are not being treated in a like manner. What does that mean? It means the counties, aren't doing the same thing, step-by-step, as other counties. And when you have states like Pennsylvania where different counties have different voting technology and they have different training for poll workers and all things don't get done like robots. So that's an old claim and is not gotten that much traction.

The next one, which is a little bit more consequential because there are four Supreme Court Justices, conservatives, who said this is a way you can come back to us, was basically claiming that only state legislatures have the authority to regulate elections. And they say this comes out of the Federal Constitution, articles I and II—time, place, and manner, that's the phrase. The problem with that is that it basically ignores everybody else. So who's everybody else? Governors, secretaries of state, state constitutions, state Supreme Courts. But we will see how that might come into play.

Where it would come into play in this election is in Pennsylvania and North Carolina and Minnesota. The deadline to accept ballots that were postmarked by Tuesday, election day, was extended, but not by the legislature. So the question is, are those ballots going to be disqualified? And in Pennsylvania they're being separated, they're being handled separately to basically put them in a pile that doesn't jeopardize the rest.

And then the third and final area where they're making these really nit-picky kinda claims is they're basically claiming that we're not being allowed to see the process or watch the process, or, oh my gosh, we weren't there when a ballot that came in that had coffee spilled on, it was duplicated so therefore everything else can't be trusted.

So the big picture here is, and I'm trying to write about this today actually, is the numbers of ballots that could be thrown out if they're successful, they're really nibbling around the edges. So what is this mostly doing? It's mostly building up evidence to try to discredit the results in the disinformation and social media and the propaganda world.

**JANINE JACKSON - HOST, COUNTERSPIN:** [00:18:46] And speaking of propaganda and into media, when Donald Trump said he was going to try to stop vote counting, stop them counting votes in Pennsylvania and Michigan, the Washington Post said that that move threatens the ability of people to exercise their rights? The foundations of representative government? No, it, "threatens to draw out the final stages of the contest against Joe Biden." That blahzay language, the reporting of the shutting of poles in Black neighborhoods, of lying

robocalls, of fake dropboxes, of hijacking the USPS, reporting all of that as though it were a strategy and not an outrage, I think, also goes towards ensuring more of the same.

**STEVEN ROSENFELD:** [00:19:33] I think you're right about that. We've become so, I don't want to say normalized, maybe numbed is a better word to these kinds of tactics as if, well, this is just the way elections are run. The thing that's really crazy about this, with these kinds of claims, I mean there was something in the paper today, the Justice Department had a memo, they might send armed guards in, the truth is ever since the Republicans went after the Voting Rights Act and they gutted it, Supreme Court gutted in 2013, there is even less federal authority to even be present. Now these elections are state regulated, they are not regulated by the federal government with the exception of the amendments that say women can vote and people aged 18 and stuff like that.

So the thing is they have less authority than they ever had. Most of the authorities they do have are to enforce civil rights laws, which this administration obviously is not interested in doing. But these kinds of threats and they get to the front page of the New York Times. That's what's crazy about this because it just sucks up the oxygen for a more creating context. What would that context be by the way? It would basically say, for example, these lawsuits are incredibly rinky dink.

Let me give you one example. A friend of mine who was an election attorney was called to help represent the city of Detroit because they were sued, that lawsuit was filed yesterday, to try to stop them from counting the votes. It was filed after the counting had stopped already. So this morning they're only trying to go back as a court, they being the Republicans, to say, oh, no, we want to amend the suit so we're suing the county because it's the county that certifies or makes the results official. So it's that ham handed.

But in the meantime they're just making all this noise about how unfair, and how it's being stolen, this, that, and the other, and the press could be a little clearer on what really matters here.

## Check Your Blindspot - Air Date 11-13-20

**ANNOUNCER:** [00:21:33] It's time once again, to play America's favorite political game show!

**STUDIO AUDIENCE:** [00:21:40] Check! Your! Blindspot!

**JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, CHECK YOUR BLINDSPOT:** [00:21:49] That's right, it's Check Your Blindspot, brought to you and powered by our sponsor, the Ground News app, the first ever news comparison platform that provides readers with objective data about the underlying political bias in all public news stories. The Ground News app features the Blind Spot, which highlights news stories that just aren't being covered by one end of the political spectrum or the other. So I use the Blind Spot to quiz contestants on theirs. With us today is our reigning champion, Amanda from Boston. Welcome back to the show.

**AMANDA FROM BOSTON - CONTESTANT:** [00:22:22] Thank you! And it sounds like we have a great crowd today. Really feeling the energy there.

**JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, CHECK YOUR BLINDSPOT:** [00:22:26] They're pretty excited. Yeah. I'm going to tell you about news stories, and you're going to tell me which side of the political spectrum is blind to them. Are you ready?

**AMANDA FROM BOSTON - CONTESTANT:** [00:22:35] I am.

**JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, CHECK YOUR BLINDSPOT:** [00:22:36] And, again, this week we're going to skip right past all the voter fraud lawsuits, because we know how that's going. So let's dive in and get ready for Round One.

In whose political blind spot is this story: Ben Rhodes says Biden having phone calls with foreign leaders about agenda they're going to pursue.

So this is former Obama deputy national security advisor, Ben Rhodes, saying Monday that Joe Biden is already speaking with foreign leaders as if he's the next president, a move that some believe to be a breach of the Logan Act.

**AMANDA FROM BOSTON - CONTESTANT:** [00:23:14] I'm going to go ahead and say, this is in the left's blind spot. [Dinging, cheering: Yay!] I figured that if Joe Biden is doing anything presidential right now, the right is up in arms about it.

**JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, CHECK YOUR BLINDSPOT:** [00:23:27] Absolutely. Absolutely. So when I saw this story, I thought, boy, that sounds really familiar. So I did a quick search for violations of the Logan Act 2016, 2017. Right? Slate wrote in January, 2017, just before the inauguration, asking the question, is it normal that Trump's NSA pick Michael Flynn called to the Russian ambassador?

This, this warrants some backstory. So from the article, after explaining in lots of detail that Michael Flynn was in contact with the Russian ambassador, they said, "As for the Logan Act, which prohibits private US citizens from engaging in unauthorized freelance diplomacy, Flynn probably doesn't have to worry about going to jail for his phone call to Kislyak.

**AMANDA FROM BOSTON - CONTESTANT:** [00:24:16] Hmm. You just had to worry about some other stuff he did.

**JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, CHECK YOUR BLINDSPOT:** [00:24:18] He did have to worry about some other stuff he did. But then they filled in some additional background information, saying the last major instance where a threat of the Logan Act was discussed publicly was when Senator Tom Cotton and others wrote to the government of Iran in 2015, promising to cancel the Obama administration's nuclear deal, a fairly blatant attempt to undermine the administration's foreign policy. There were no legal or political consequences for that.

Other major examples include when Richard Nixon's team reportedly urged South Vietnamese officials to scuttle peace talks organized by the Johnson administration, promising them a better deal under the new administration. A nice dirty trick just before the election. Right. And in 1980, the Washington Post reported that Jimmy Carter's ambassador to El Salvador criticized president-elect Ronald Reagan's advisors for undermining him by promising a shift in US policy toward the country, then sliding into civil war.

So the verdict from this article is: meetings between the president-elect's team and foreign officials are normal. Right. Negotiations that undermine a sitting president's foreign policy

are not unprecedented, but remain highly controversial and not normal. So the question is really, did these conversations have anything to do with what's happening now or undermining Trump or simply just talking purely about the future?

**AMANDA FROM BOSTON - CONTESTANT:** [00:25:53] And promises in the future would be bad, but just talking about the future is okay. Right. Is that the impression? Okay. All right.

**JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, CHECK YOUR BLINDSPOT:** [00:26:02] So with one correct answer, let's move on to Round Two.

In whose political blind spot is this story: Trump backers tricked into joining Gay Communists for Socialism on Facebook.

Thousands of Donald Trump supporters have unwittingly found themselves in a Facebook group called Gay Communists for Socialism after being tricked by its creators into joining what they thought was a pro-Trump stop-the-steal election group.

**AMANDA FROM BOSTON - CONTESTANT:** [00:26:35] And then they changed the name?

**JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, CHECK YOUR BLINDSPOT:** [00:26:36] Exactly.

**AMANDA FROM BOSTON - CONTESTANT:** [00:26:38] [Laughs] Oh, that's great. Um, well, Hmm. It's tricky because once I could be really outraged about this and the other side could be reveling and how funny it is, which is what I've been doing it for. Um, I'm going to say it's in the right's blind spot. [Dinging, cheering: Yay!]

**JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, CHECK YOUR BLINDSPOT:** [00:26:57] It is indeed in the right's blind spot. And another note on it is that the new banner image is Obama and Biden doing their famous run through the White House, except with Photoshopped gay pride flags in their hands. And

**AMANDA FROM BOSTON - CONTESTANT:** [00:27:13] O those socialists, right? Biden and Obama .

**JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, CHECK YOUR BLINDSPOT:** [00:27:16] And the administrator of the group after changing the name, tried to calm down the 60,000 plus member group by claiming that he had renamed the group in order to avoid Facebook censorship. This seems to assuage many members' fears, convincing them the group was a pro-Trump trolling masterwork.

**AMANDA FROM BOSTON - CONTESTANT:** [00:27:38] Oh yeah, because they're deep. There's a lot of layers.

**JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, CHECK YOUR BLINDSPOT:** [00:27:41] So they continued engaging in the group thinking, no, no, no, we have to call ourselves Gay Communists for Socialism.

**AMANDA FROM BOSTON - CONTESTANT:** [00:27:50] I'm really glad the left is getting good at trolling.

**JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, CHECK YOUR BLINDSPOT:** [00:27:55] And with two correct answers, let's see if we can go three for three with Round Three.

And our third question, just be clear it's not a trick question, but it is an international story. So broaden your mind for this one. Okay. And whose political blind spot is this story? Macron (president Macron of France) urges EU border changes as he warns terror attacks are "European reality." So French president Emmanuel Macron said Tuesday that extremist attacks are a European reality and the European Union must tighten the screws on weak spots like external borders and the Internet after two deadly extremist attacks in France and another in Austria in recent weeks.

**AMANDA FROM BOSTON - CONTESTANT:** [00:28:41] Woof. That's really tough. I'm going to say it's in the left's blind spot? [Correct! Clapping]

Well done. Yeah. Yeah. Obviously it's not that the left is not going to be aware of this at all, but the right is dominating the international press on this. My interpretation is: cracking down on immigration? Yes, please.

Uh, uh huh. Yeah. Borders. Yeah, that's what, that's what had me going in that direction.

**JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, CHECK YOUR BLINDSPOT:** [00:29:12] So well done with a score of three correct answers and none incorrect. Once again, winner and still champion, Amanda from Boston. Thanks for playing. [Cheers]

That wraps it up for today. It's important to mention that all of today's commentary and analysis is ours alone, and definitely not that of the staunchly unopinionated Ground News app. If you'd like to try their service, get a discount on their premium features, and let them know we sent you, go to [ground.news/best](https://ground.news/best).

As always, whether for traffic safety or media literacy, never forget to...

**STUDIO AUDIENCE:** [00:29:48] Check! Your! Blindspot!

## **Last Grasp, Last Gasp - On the Media - Air Date 11-6-20**

**BOB GARFIELD - HOST, ON THE MEDIA:** [00:30:17] Thursday evening with his margins in Georgia and Pennsylvania closing, president Trump once again attributed looming defeat to the doing of bad things.

[CLIP]

**PRESIDENT TRUMP:** [00:30:29] They want to find out how many votes they need and then they seem to be able to find them. [END CLIP]

**BOB GARFIELD - HOST, ON THE MEDIA:** [00:30:34] Trump actually has been peddling the voter fraud rigged election myth for years. Even after winning the Electoral College in 2016, he alleged widespread Democratic Party mischief. Here was White House aide Steven Miller in February 2017.

[CLIP]

**STEPHEN MILLER:** [00:30:49] This issue of bussing voters into New Hampshire is widely known by anyone who's worked in New Hampshire politics. It's very real. It's very serious. [END CLIP]

**BOB GARFIELD - HOST, ON THE MEDIA:** [00:30:59] This time around when, as predicted, Trump's election night red wave gradually revealed itself as a mirage, he jumped up on that table he had so carefully set.

[CLIP]

**PRESIDENT TRUMP:** [00:31:09] If you count the legal votes, I easily win. If you count the illegal votes, they can try to steal the election from us. [END CLIP]

**BOB GARFIELD - HOST, ON THE MEDIA:** [00:31:21] What Trump never explained is how the Democrats were supposed to have pulled off the caper. John Mark Hansen is professor of political science at the University of Chicago. He has studied precisely what would be required to steal a presidential election. John, welcome to the show.

**JOHN MARK HANSEN:** [00:31:36] I'm glad to be here.

**BOB GARFIELD - HOST, ON THE MEDIA:** [00:31:38] OK, let's just say that I want to subvert the will of the people and rig a presidential election. Uh, easy peasy, right?

**JOHN MARK HANSEN:** [00:31:46] No, not necessarily. You're not going to do it by recruiting yourself and a few friends to vote a couple of times or even three or four or five or 10 times. So you're going to have to -.

**BOB GARFIELD - HOST, ON THE MEDIA:** [00:31:57] Just organize a massive conspiracy is all.

**JOHN MARK HANSEN:** [00:32:00] Yeah. For instance, in Pennsylvania in 2016, there were 6.2 million ballots cast. And, you know, suppose that you're willing to kind of cut it close a little bit and you say, well, let's sort of make sure that Biden's going to win by getting him one percent more of the vote. So 62,000 votes. That's a lot of votes.

**BOB GARFIELD - HOST, ON THE MEDIA:** [00:32:20] How do we go about doing that?

**JOHN MARK HANSEN:** [00:32:22] One possibility is that you decide you're going to get a thousand of your best friends and you're somehow going to convince them that they should be willing to risk prosecution and imprisonment and the loss of their reputations. You also have to reassure them that out of the thousand people that you've recruited to help you in this effort, nobody's actually going to open their big fat mouth. There are a lot of criminal conspiracies out there that get undone because somebody wants to brag about it or somebody has a guilty conscience or something. So you're going to have to make sure that you can trust and everybody else can trust all thousand of your confederates.

**BOB GARFIELD - HOST, ON THE MEDIA:** [00:32:58] OK, if you want to obsess on details like that, that's fine. I'm not going to stop you. So you're basing this on the idea of having a thousand friends each willing to trump up 62 ballots. But what if instead of doing that, I just get, let's say, 20,000 friends to vote once by mail, once in person, and maybe once at another precinct where they used to live; one person, three votes times 20,000.

**JOHN MARK HANSEN:** [00:33:29] You'd have to persuade all 20000 people that they should take the risk of actually casting a second or a third ballot, because the chance of their being detected goes up the more times they vote. So I would think that people would be pretty hesitant to do something like that. In terms of people who are registered in more than one

place, I doubt that you know 20,000 people who are registered in two different places and even there they would risk discovery. And certainly if you're talking about 20,000 people doing it, someone is likely to be discovered as having voted in two different jurisdictions.

**BOB GARFIELD - HOST, ON THE MEDIA:** [00:34:02] Now, I know that because people's signatures tend to change over time, mine has certainly mutated, many jurisdictions are being less rigorous about demanding perfect matches. In that environment, you know, can I get any ballot through?

**JOHN MARK HANSEN:** [00:34:18] In terms of mail-in ballots, the risk is not so much that your signature will not match, but rather that jurisdictions oftentimes will ask for identifying numbers. So in Pennsylvania, you either have to submit your driver's license number, your state ID number, or the last four digits of your Social Security number. And it's getting a hold of those numbers and matching those numbers is going to be the problem.

**BOB GARFIELD - HOST, ON THE MEDIA:** [00:34:40] But it's also easy just to get a thousand driver's licenses, no?

**JOHN MARK HANSEN:** [00:34:43] Uh, not so easy.

**BOB GARFIELD - HOST, ON THE MEDIA:** [00:34:45] I must say. I rather resent your negativity. What about rigging the game during the counting process? Like Trump said on Wednesday morning, somehow finding all these votes after the polls have closed. Can't that be done like sneaking in an extra zero or two or moving a decimal point or even substituting computer data with fake counts that I've sneaked in on a thumb drive?

**JOHN MARK HANSEN:** [00:35:12] Well, your chances are better, but there are still quite strong safeguards against doing something like that. One is that most jurisdictions allow partisan observers to actually watch as the ballots are being counted and as the ballots are being tallied and as the tallies are being reported to the central office. And they have an opportunity to say, you know, I don't like that. That's not the way that things are supposed to be going. Even if there aren't any partisan observers, you still have the problem of how you're going to report all those extra votes without someone thinking, boy, that's sure an awful lot of votes being reported from that particular jurisdiction. They only usually report 300,000 votes and now they're reporting 360,000 votes. And that's kind of suspicious.

**BOB GARFIELD - HOST, ON THE MEDIA:** [00:35:56] You know, I'm sorry. I just think you're naive because what you don't know is that I am a pretty good coder. I managed to change everybody's phys ed grade at Aaron Burr High School to an A plus. So, why can't I just break into the county system and just have my way?

**JOHN MARK HANSEN:** [00:36:14] This is something that election officials have been worried about quite a lot. And so they've invested quite a lot in trying to maintain security. As you're probably aware, in 2016, there were actually some hacker attacks on county election offices or attempts at hacks on county election offices, particularly from Russian sources. And they seem to have been uniformly unsuccessful. So there's been a lot invested in trying to maintain the integrity and the security of the vote reporting system and the vote recording system. But even beyond that, again, how would you necessarily do it in a way that wouldn't appear suspicious? Various jurisdictions, various counties, they tend to vote pretty similarly from year to year. It would really, really be unusual to see a 20 percent change in a vote or an

addition of 50,000 votes, so you've got the problem of how you're going to do it without someone noticing when it goes up to the next stage.

**BOB GARFIELD - HOST, ON THE MEDIA:** [00:37:11] Look, John, I've laid on the irony with a trowel, and it's probably getting tedious for the audience at this point. So can I just ask you very plainly - the scenario that President Trump and his proxies are suggesting, is it remotely possible to have taken place with the kind of safeguards that each state has built in the election process going back, you know, a century?

**JOHN MARK HANSEN:** [00:37:37] No, this would just require, to use Joseph McCarthy's words, a conspiracy so immense as to make it nearly impossible to be detected and really expensive and risky for everybody involved.

## **On November 14th & Beyond, Prepare to Stop a Coup in America via Refuse Fascism & Protect the Results - Activism**

**AMANDA HOFFMAN - ACTIVISM:** [00:37:50] You've reached the activism portion of today's show. Now that you're informed and angry, here's what you can do about it. Today's activism: On November 14th and Beyond, Prepare to Stop a Coup in America

The first thing I'm going to tell you to do today is go read Naomi Klein's latest article in The Intercept called "Now We Have To Fight Trump's Tin-Pot Coup - And Biden's Worst Instincts." In the piece, Klein lays out five possible reasons why Republicans are echoing Trump's baseless election fraud talking points. The last reason she lists is that there could be an actual thought-through plot for a coup. Klein notes that the risk slim, but not nil.

Regardless of whether you think Trump's "coup-talk" is empty bluster, the public threat of a coup in America should be enough for us to call it out and prepare for how to stop it. This is a messaging war that we have to win.

Refuse Fascism has planned mass protests nationwide on Saturday, November 14th - and more will likely be planned. You can sign their pledge to the world that you refuse to accept a fascist America and find a protest near you or organize your own at [RefuseFascism.org](https://RefuseFascism.org).

Additionally, Protect the Results is still ready and waiting and has moved out some of the dates of their protests. They now range from November 14th to December 1st and beyond, depending on the event. Go to [ProtecttheResults.com](https://ProtecttheResults.com) to find an event or organize your own.

As we watch this all play out, remember the signs of a coup from the Waging Nonviolence article we highlighted a few weeks ago.

We know it's a coup if the government:

- Stops counting votes - Trump already lost that battle
- Certifies someone a winner who didn't get the most votes - they are currently working on this; or

- Allows someone to stay in power who didn't win the election - they are strongly signaling this is their intent.

Most coup attempts are secret then happen quickly, but Trump's slow-walking style means we are able to prepare and that gives us - the people - an upper-hand.

As Klein points out, unrest in one of the world's largest economies is not good for capitalists and they are the ones actually in control. So, in an irony no one can enjoy, it may be the capitalist monsters who get Trump and Republicans to stop the power grab. But they will only pull those strings if they see that an uprising is inevitable; we need to give a preview to assure them that it absolutely is.

The segment notes include all the links to this information as well as additional resources, and, as always, this and every activism segment we produce is archived and organized under the activism tab at [BestoftheLeft.com](http://BestoftheLeft.com).

So, if preventing a coup in America is important to you, be sure to tell everyone you know about Preparing to Stop a Coup in America on November 14th & beyond so that others in your network can spread the word too.

## **Donald Trump's Plan to Steal the Election from Joe Biden and How We Stop Him - The Benjamin Dixon Show - Air Date 11-11-20**

**BENJAMIN DIXON - HOST, THE BENJAMIN DIXON SHOW:** [00:40:16] Donald Trump is attempting to overturn the results of the election and install himself into power against the will of the American people. What we are experiencing in this country has gone far beyond Donald Trump just being a sore loser. The president is rolling out a full-blown strategy to attempt to steal the election from Joe Biden and steal democracy from the American people who have resoundly spoken that he is only to be a one-term president. Now this is not hyperbole. This is not hysteria or conspiracy. This is exactly what Donald Trump is telling us he is going to do. The president said on Twitter, "People will not accept this rigged election." He went on to say, "We will win!"

Well the results are already in, Mr. President, and you've lost.

The president went on to say, "Watch for massive ballot counting abuse and just like the early vaccine, remember I told you so."

So he's already shifting the goalpost, stating that what you need to be concerned about is ballot counting abuses. Now it would be one thing if Donald Trump was by himself asserting that the election was not over, but he isn't. He has the support of some leading voices in the Republican party. Listen to Ted Cruz as he gives his support to Donald Trump:

**SEN. TED CRUZ:** [00:41:37] ... of violations of law. The right standard is that every single legal vote that was cast should be counted. But any votes that were illegally cast shouldn't be counted.

**BENJAMIN DIXON - HOST, THE BENJAMIN DIXON SHOW:** [00:41:47] South Carolina, Senator Lindsey Graham adds to Donald Trump's conspiracy theory:

**SEN. LINDSEY GRAHAM:** [00:41:52] This is a contested election. The media doesn't decide who becomes president. If they did, you would never have a Republican president for forever. So we're discounting them. If Republicans don't challenge and change the US election system, they'll never be another Republican president elected again. President Trump should not concede.

**BENJAMIN DIXON - HOST, THE BENJAMIN DIXON SHOW:** [00:42:13] And even the Senate majority leader, Mitch McConnell adds on to this idea of illegal and legal balance:

**SEN. MITCH MCCONNELL:** [00:42:20] In at least five states, the core principle here is not complicated: in the United States of America, all legal ballots must be counted. Illegal ballots must not be counted.

**BENJAMIN DIXON - HOST, THE BENJAMIN DIXON SHOW:** [00:42:37] Donald Trump and Republicans have found their talking point that they are going to repeat over and over and over again, no matter how untrue it is. And that talking point is the idea of legal and illegal ballots. The idea that some ballots were legal and some ballots were illegal. Republicans are repeating this talking point about legal and illegal ballots because they understand that that gives them the ability to frame the conversation. And so long as they're able to frame the conversation in the national discourse, in the national media, then they can control the terms of the debate. And this is the most important tool for them to be able to move the ball towards Donald Trump actually remaining in power. Republicans believe that any vote cast for Joe Biden was illegal and that only votes cast for Donald Trump are legal.

Number two, Donald Trump and the Republican party are using testimonials from Republican operatives as if they are evidence in and of themselves of voter fraud.

**ANNOUNCER:** [00:43:43] Did, Sean, we keep hearing the drum beat of where is the evidence. Right here, Shawn. 234 pages of sworn affidavits.

**BENJAMIN DIXON - HOST, THE BENJAMIN DIXON SHOW:** [00:43:51] What they aren't telling you is that the people who filled out these affidavits are Republican apparatchiks. They are Republican operatives who are desperate to find a way to overturn this election.

Republicans repeatedly use this phrase "sworn affidavit" because it conveys a connotation of legality and therefore it must be true. And therefore it must be investigated.

But I want you to take a look at this clip from Laura Ingraham on Fox News so that you can see just the extent to which these claims these so-called affidavits are really ridiculous.

**LAURA INGRAHAM:** [00:44:30] You saw something suspicious -- we're going to get right into it tonight -- happening on the side of a Biden/Harris van in the parking lot of the polling station. Now walk the audience through what happened.

**UNKNOWN SPEAKER:** [00:44:45] I went out to go for a walk on my break. The Biden van was parked along this stretch, and I could see these people hand over what appeared to be white envelopes, just hand over onto this table. And as I got closer the envelopes were being torn open, and as I got closer, I thought those are ballots.

**LAURA INGRAHAM:** [00:45:05] But you didn't say anything. You didn't say anything when you first saw it? I mean, how close are you to be able to see a ballot?

**BENJAMIN DIXON - HOST, THE BENJAMIN DIXON SHOW:** [00:45:11] This level of absurdity and, to be quite frank, treachery is what we're really up against.

Take in consideration the Lieutenant Governor of Texas. He has put out a bounty of a million dollars to find evidence of voter fraud.

Number two, Republicans are desperately trying to find anything to overturn the results of the election and when they can't find anything legitimate, they will outright lie and make it up, including in these so-called affidavits.

Number three, Donald Trump is attempting to use the judicial system in order to overturn the results of the elections. And he's expecting loyalty from his judicial appointee. Let me say this upfront, Donald Trump does not have a case, a legal case, but that hasn't stopped them from filing lawsuits. In fact, it became so embarrassing that a conservative appointed judge embarrassed one of Donald Trump's lawyers in a hearing about the accusation of voter fraud. And what's more, Donald Trump's attorneys themselves have admitted that they don't have a case because there's no voter fraud. Take a look at these transcripts of the proceedings in Donald Trump's Pennsylvania lawsuit: the court stated, "I understand. I'm asking you a specific question and I am looking for a specific answer. Are you claiming that there is any fraud in connection with these 592 disputed ballots?" Donald Trump's attorney stated, "To my knowledge at present, none." "Are you claiming that there's any undue or improper influence upon the elector with respect to these 592 ballots?" Goldstein, Donald Trump's attorney, says, "To my knowledge at present, no." So Trump's own attorneys understand that he does not have a legal case. So that begs the question, why is he pursuing it? Well that's because Donald Trump expects that at some point he can expect to get some loyalty reciprocated from some of his judicial appointees.

Number four, Donald Trump intends on using Republican-led legislatures, state legislatures across the country to simply ignore the results of the election and appoint electors who will cast their votes for Donald Trump.

**MARK LEVIN:** [00:47:24] Article two, section one, clause two of the Constitution provides as follows, I quote in pertinent part: " Each state shall appoint in such manner as the legislature thereof may direct, the number of electors equal to the whole number of senators and representatives to which the state may be entitled in Congress." In other words, The state legislatures determine how to select their electors. Isn't that what that means?

**BENJAMIN DIXON - HOST, THE BENJAMIN DIXON SHOW:** [00:47:49] Now, so obviously, Mark Levin is intentionally misinterpreting the Constitution, but that doesn't stop the fact that they want to try this, and that there are Republican legislatures across this country who quite frankly have signaled that they're willing to give it a try.

But to be sure, a state legislature cannot appoint its preferred slate of electors overriding the will of the people after the election. For more than a century, all 50 States have followed the democratic practice of appointing their electors based on popular elections. Now, this doesn't mean that they won't try. In fact, they are signaling across the country, they being Republican-led legislatures, are signaling that they are willing to give this a go.

They have the backing of conservative media and they absolutely have the backing of the president of the United States.

Number five, Donald Trump has instructed key departments to not cooperate with the Biden transition team. In particular, Donald Trump's appointee to the General Services Administration, Emily Murphy, has refused to sign off on the documents that would recognize Joe Biden's team as the transition team and Joe Biden as the president-elect. Even more dangerous, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo acknowledged the fact that he believes that there will be a second term of Donald Trump, completely ignoring the will of the people.

**SECRETARY OF STATE MIKE POMPEO:** [00:49:23] There will be a smooth transition to a second Trump administration

**BENJAMIN DIXON - HOST, THE BENJAMIN DIXON SHOW:** [00:49:26] and perhaps abs more egregious, if not equally egregious, the Attorney General William Barr has launched investigations into alleged voter fraud. Now this move was so flagrant that one of the top officials at the Department of Justice resigned as a direct result of it. The New York Times reported that the head of the voter fraud investigations at the department, Richard Pilger stepped down from his post hours after Barr's announcement.

So the president of the United States is not only using talking points and propaganda. He's not only using the media. He's not only willing to use state legislatures to overturn the will of the people. He's also showing that he's leveraging the federal government itself as his own personal tool to ignore the will of the people and to steal this election from Joe Biden.

Number six, and at the Pentagon where Donald Trump cannot find loyalty, he is firing key players and replacing them with loyalists.

This is extremely dangerous. Listen, quote: These are dictator moves, defense officials alarmed, as Trump installs more loyalists at the Pentagon. Four defense officials, including Mark Esper, the Defense secretary, and James Anderson, the acting Undersecretary of Defense for Policy, have either resigned or been sacked since Trump lost the presidential election. Anderson was replaced by Anthony Taha, a retired US Army brigadier general who made false claims about president Barack Obama, including that he was a "terrorist leader," according to CNN. Quote, this is scary. It's very unsettling, one defense official told CNN, adding "these are dictator moves." Representative Adam Smith, the chairman of the House Armed Services Committee said the next few months could be "downright dangerous."

## **Mass protests may need to force Trump from office - The Bugle - Air Date 11-4-20**

**NATO GREEN:** [00:51:19] This scenario of the early returns looking good for Trump, and then Trump declaring victory before all the votes were counted, there is a word for it which is coup d'état, or as we say in Spanish, golpe de estado, which literally translates as punching the state, which is how it feels right now. And so there were a lot of people on the American left, thousands and thousands have been preparing for this moment, unions that have been talking about having a general strike to shut down the country in the event that Trump tries to refuse to count every vote or refuse to concede defeat and recognize the results. And I have to say, I wish that it was a more resounding repudiation, but the scenario of Trump

losing and then mass protests having to force him to leave office is pretty fucking exciting to me.

We've seen it happen all over the world in Chile, Thailand, Iraq, there's all these countries, right now in Poland, where millions of people take to the streets and they are able to drive an illegitimate and unpopular regime from power. And the key detail, the key thing that you have to remember to win these moments tactically is it's not just about mobilizing and protesting, but it's about specifically not going home. And a man of my age, that's difficult because I have reached the age where I have to pee more regularly and so I, at some point I have to figure out how to find a loo.

This is what you need to do is when you set up your overthrow the government Facebook event, usually you'll have a Facebook event where it's like, the rally goes from noon to two, and then we're going to go get a burrito and then go home and watch Netflix. But if you want to overthrow the government you need to have no end time. It needs to be the rally starts at noon on Thursday and then continues until Trump is perp walking in handcuffs directly into Guantanamo. That's the fucking plan right now.

And Buglers, I want you to know that you have a part to play. You have a historic destiny that only you can deliver in this moment, which is as we speak, people like me are all over the United States, figuring out ways to have strategic disruption, what they call nonviolent resistance, civil resistance, targeted non-cooperation, to shut down key choke points in the economy, to force an economic crisis so that Trump leaves. And Trump has a golf course in Scotland and if Andy and Nish and Mark and Tiff, and the other members of the UK based, what you might call The Bugle Expanded Cinematic Universe went to Scotland, occupied the Trump golf course in Scotland for a masks on, socially distant, live taping Bugle episode to shut down the Trump golf course and do a pun run until the regime falls. I think that could do the trick.

**ANDY ZALTMAN - HOST, THE BUGLE:** [00:54:21] Well, I'm up for that. Certainly.

**NISH KUMAR:** [00:54:24] It would be my honor to express solidarity for our siblings in America, by taking a dump in a sand trap. And I'm not saying that because that's something I've thought about doing before, and this is a convenient excuse for it.

## **Trump Has CHECKED OUT as President to Attend to His Full-Time Gig as a Grifter! - The Dollemore Daily - Air Date 11-12-20**

**JESSE DOLLEMORE - HOST, THE DOLLEMORE DAILY:** [00:54:36] I've received dozens of emails from Donald Trump and his team from Laura Trump and Eric Trump and all of the idiots, trying to get me and millions of other Americans on their mailing list to give them money to ostensibly fund the election lawsuits that are to come. We're going to talk about that.

That's not what it's about, but we shouldn't be surprised by this. Donald Trump has been on the grift from the beginning when he first ran for president in 2015 saying that he was going to pay for his own campaign. He didn't need anybody's money. I'm really rich, he said.

**PRESIDENT TRUMP:** [00:55:17] I'm really rich. I'll show you that.

**JESSE DOLLEMORE - HOST, THE DOLLEMORE DAILY:** [00:55:21] And we learned, of course, that wasn't the case. He didn't self-fund his campaign. Obviously we're getting campaign emails begging for money because he's a liar and a grifter and a scamster and a fraudster.

Washington Post just posted an opinion piece by Dana Milbank. And he talks about the grift that continues. In the article, he says this:

"Trump has used the presidency itself for enrichment. So there's no reason to think an election defeat would stop him. He has funneled vast amounts of taxpayer dollars and political supporters' funds to his hotels, golf clubs, and various properties around the world. Over the years, he has used his charity for self benefits. He has had favorable treatment by foreign governments. And he has had hundreds of millions in debt forgiven by his creditors. As the Post's David Fahrenthold wrote last month, Trump's properties have billed taxpayers at least \$2.5 million for such things as \$7,000 for a dinner, \$6,000 for flowers, \$17,000 monthly for a cottage, up to \$650 a night for hotel rooms, a thousand dollars for drinks for the White House staff, and even \$3 for drinking water."

It's a grift. It is a way for Donald Trump to enrich himself.

Because it is unlikely that Donald Trump has actually a billionaire. If he were, he would release his tax returns and let everybody know; that's his nature, he's a braggart.

But now that he's not being president anymore and trying to fund election lawsuits, he is sending out these emails. Look at these emails. This isn't even all of them. Dozens and dozens and dozens of Trump election fraud emails, from he and the nepotistic team, the idiots he's put in charge, and they all lead to this website, the official election defense fund website. And, it's got all the style of Donald Trump, graphically. It's a mess.

But it contains this particular fine print at the bottom. That's a lot of fine print. And when you zoom in on the fine print, this is what you learn, if you read it. 60% of each contribution first to Save America, up to \$5,000/5,000, then to Donald John Trump for President's recount account up to a maximum of \$2,800/5,000. So unless you give them over the maximum, that money is going to Donald Trump's new PAC, which he is going to use to control the agenda and the members of the Republican party. The other part of this is 40% of each contribution to the RNC's operating account up to a maximum of 35, five/15,000. And here's where the grift really comes into focus. Any additional funds, any additional, will go to the Republican National Committee for deposit in the RNC's legal proceedings account or headquarters account up to a maximum of these amounts.

So the money that they're begging for in the dozens and dozens and dozens and dozens of emails that they're sending out to millions of Americans, their own supporters, all that money, unless you're Daddy Warbucks and given over the limit, the money, all of it's going to go to Donald Trump's PAC and just to the general fund of the RNC. It's not specifically going to fund these lawsuits that they are purportedly going to file. Because this isn't about actually changing the outcome of the election. This is about a cash grab for Donald Trump and a little bit for the RNC, but more over for Donald Trump.

Reading from the Washington Post, "'It's a straight up bait and switch,' Paul S. Ryan, the vice president of policy and litigation at Common Cause tells me. 'Such email solicitations target small donors. So for the overwhelming majority of people contributing, none of their money will end up in the recount accounts or be used for otherwise challenging the election. Rather, rather, it will be used to extend Trump's influence over the Republican National Committee during the Biden presidency and to build up his leadership PAC, which amounts to a slush fund for Trump's personal use. There is no limit" -- listen to this part, this is very important. And Donald Trump's surely knows the details and the limitations and the regulations surrounding his fundraising. This part is important -- "there is no limit to how much Donald Trump can pay himself or any member of his family under Save America,' Ryan notes."

That is what Donald Trump is trying to do here: raise as much money, crowd funding, his supporters, likely hardworking Americans, just trying to get by in this disaster of Donald Trump's pandemic response. And they're going to be given him money that he's going to be using to fly around, to pay himself, to pay his family members. Just like he's done while he's been president. The grift continues.

## Summary

**JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT:** [01:01:48] We've just heard clips today, starting with Chris Hayes on *All In* explaining the emptiness of the GOP refusing to accept the results of the election. *The Brian Lehrer Show* explored the nightmare scenario of delaying certification until GOP run state legislatures could overthrow the will of the public. *CounterSpin* sorted through many of the lawsuits being filed by the Trump campaign. We heard our latest episode of *Check Your Blind Spot*. *On the Media* looked at what it would take to steal an election in the U.S. And *The Benjamin Dixon Show* went down the list of ways the GOP is attacking the election and disrupting the transition.

That's what everyone heard, but members also heard it two bonus clips, including *The Bugle* explaining that the strategy for overthrowing a government through protest must include not having an end date to your events. And *The Dollemore Daily* broke down the grift behind Trump contesting the election because they're using those donations intended to help fight fraud to pay off debts and create a Trump family slush fund. Least surprising end to the Trump presidency ever.

For non-members, those bonus clips are linked in the show notes and that they're part of the transcript for today's episode, so you can still find it if you make the effort, but to hear that and all of our bonus content delivered seamlessly into your podcast feed, sign up to support the show [bestoftheleft.com/support](https://bestoftheleft.com/support) or request a financial hardship membership, because we don't make a lack of funds or to hearing more information, and every request is granted —no questions asked.

And now, we'll hear from you.

## The progressive spark is beginning to smoke - V from Central New York

**VOICEMAILER - V FROM CENTRAL NEW YORK:** [01:03:28] Hello Jay!, this is V from Central New York. A couple of years ago, 2018 to be exact, I called and I was a bit critical of one Alexandria Ocasio Cortez. And I also offered some advice, which I'll get to in a second, but I am a man and I admit when I am wrong. I was completely wrong about her and my original criticisms of the progressive left and why they elevated her so much, I think while my heart was probably in the right place, those criticisms were not warranted. I am becoming increasingly a fan of AOC, and of Rashida Tlaib and the entire squad. I believe they are the seed of something powerful that is likely to sweep over this country over the coming decade.

That stated, on the advice that I gave, I said that progressive's needed to have a very elongated view and not to kind of rest on the victory that she offered. And I am convinced that that bit of advice was correct. There was about to be a fight in this country, the likes of which I don't believe most of us realize is coming. Even I didn't realize it was coming.

Recently I finished, actually the beginning of the year, I finished the book *Goliath* by Matt Stoller. And just today I was listening to the first chapter in, I think his name is Rick Perlstein, I think, but the book is called *Invisible Bridge* and I'm starting to get an understanding of the forces that are allied against the mere notion of progressivism, the concept of progressivism, and how much it scares them.

We are starting to see the beginning tremors of this fight and considering progressive minded Democrats won more seats in the House of Representatives, you have some people in the media while they're criticizing left-wing ideology and thought, they are willing to admit that the fact that neo-liberals lost seats while progressives gained, it kind of suggests that the country is in a different mood.

So progressives need to now ready themselves because the wealthy knows that the spark which started with Occupy Wall Street, carried on into Black Lives Matter, carried on into pushing forward AOC and Rashida Tlaib and the like, that spark is starting to actually smoke and that fire is catching and they have no answers on countering it. So they may resort to whatever they're going to resort to and I think we need to be prepared for that.

Great show. Great show. Great show. Keep up the work. Peace to you and your listeners.

## **Pay to Play, the velvet rope economy - Alan from Connecticut**

**VOICEMAILER - ALAN FROM CONNECTICUT:** [01:07:40] Hey, Jay!, it's Alan from Connecticut calling in. I think I'm all caught up now. Uh, so you can start making new episodes.

Anyway, I was listening to your repost of 1339 and it was talking about how Trump was interfering with legal precedences and doing what he does, you know, normally is to change the way things happen to his way. And I was thinking, that's standard business operating for corporations, you know, it's, Hey, my son needs a job, you know? Hey, can you give him a hand? Can you give them a job? Or it's Ivy league schools, if you're an alumni yourself, your kids are much more likely to get in then if you're not.

And so it's just a different version of pay-to-play. And we see it throughout everything. We just don't necessarily aware of it. I mean, gosh, Disney World. If you go to Disney World,

there's the Fast Pass line. And if you have the money to pay, I mean, just a regular ticket is outrageous, but if you want to spend a little bit more, you don't have to wait in line with these other peasants. That's the way I look at it. I mean, it's outrageous. But we've allowed this to happen in day-to-day business. It's the grocery store. If you have the club membership or you have the grocery store card, you get the things that are on sale, but if you don't have the card, you don't get that discount.

I mean, it's the same kind of thing over and over and over again. It's marketing, it's sales, it's connections. It's all of that. But it's a culture that causes a disconnect between two groups of people, that gives one group of people an advantage, and that's the basis. And it's like it's everywhere.

Anyway, that was my thought and my initial reaction. So keep doing what you're doing. Wash your hands and Hey, Hey, let's be careful out there.

## Final comments on the Velvet Rope Economy

**JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT:** [01:10:04] Thanks for listening everyone. Thanks to Deon Clark and Erin Clayton for their research work for the show. Thanks to the monosyllabic, transcriptionist trio, Ben, Dan and Ken for their volunteer work, helping put our transcripts together. Thanks to Amanda Hoffman for all of her work on our social media outlets and activism segments.

And thanks to all those who called into the voicemail line or wrote in their messages to be played as VoicedMails. If you'd like to leave a comment or a question of your own to be played on the show, you can record a message at (202) 999-3991. Or write me a message to [jay@bestoftheleft.com](mailto:jay@bestoftheleft.com).

Now just a quick response to Alan from Connecticut. There are a couple of elements at play there. The sort of crony capitalism was one of them. The "please get my son a job" sort of capitalism. That that's one aspect of it. But the other that you're really touching on, and I don't know if you've heard of this before and didn't use the term, but what I think you're looking for is called "the velvet rope economy."

And rather than explain it, let me just play a short clip from CNN back in March:

(Clip)

**MICHAEL SMERCONISH - HOST, CNN:** [01:11:15] For years, Bernie Sanders has been championing the cause of income inequality and wealth disparity. There's no more vivid an example of that than how the response to coronavirus is playing out. As the virus expands worldwide, millions of working Americans find themselves left behind, unable to stock up on price-gouged supplies, missing work, having to find childcare.

Meanwhile, there are reports of the wealthy getting access to private tests, escaping problem zones by chartering private jets and retreating to isolated vacation homes. One company, Private Fly, told us this kind of business is up 30% for them. And everyday clients are airlifting their entire families from, say, Spain to a holiday home on the Cayman Islands to quote, sit it out.

And if that doesn't make you feel safe, there are always doomsday bunkers. One company, Vivos, which has 5,000 of them worldwide, told us that compared with last year, serious inquiries are up a thousand percent; sales are up 350 to 400%.

Joining me to discuss, the perfect guest Nelson Schwartz who covers economics for the New York Times and has written a very timely and terrific book. It's called *The Velvet Rope Economy: How inequality became big business*. Nelson, this virus and the response, it sort of embodies everything I took away from your book.

**NELSON D. SCHWARTZ:** [01:12:36] It really does. Michael. It's pretty amazing the way people can jump the line, even when there's a national emergency, like the coronavirus.

**MICHAEL SMERCONISH - HOST, CNN:** [01:12:44] What example comes to your mind from this particular situation? What are you seeing that is indicative of the velvet rope economy?

**NELSON D. SCHWARTZ:** [01:12:53] I spoke to one concierge doc who had the foresight to stock up on virus swabs a few weeks ago before the emergency reached American shores. And now he can offer tests and he's going to offer drive-through testing for the virus in Silicon Valley. So you just drive your car up, maybe your Tesla, if you will, and you get a viral swab and you can get the results back in a few days. And meanwhile, a lot of other people are waiting.

**MICHAEL SMERCONISH - HOST, CNN:** [01:13:22] So in the book, you go through sporting events, you go through tourism, you go through insurance, you go through education and you give examples of the velvet rope economy. As I read, I said to myself, I'd never put it all together before, but isn't this the way that it's always been. What's changed. If anything?

**NELSON D. SCHWARTZ:** [01:13:43] I think something's new. I mean, you see this velvet rope economy in areas where at least years ago you had the pretense to a more egalitarian system. I'm thinking education, I'm thinking healthcare. I mean, you're seeing it now. In travel you always had first and second class. But now you have nine different lines to board a plane, and it really comes to the fore in moments of crisis like this, like with the coronavirus.

I spoke to the builders of these bunkers. They told me the phone does not stop ringing. The one guy who builds bunkers and safe rooms, he has to turn his phone off at night so he can get some sleep it's ringing so much. And meanwhile, people are leaving the city, leaving Manhattan and going to second homes in the Hamptons or Greenwich and kind of trying to get away from it all while the rest of us deal with the realities of being here.

**MICHAEL SMERCONISH - HOST, CNN:** [01:14:31] Is it possible to balance egalitarian interests and capitalism? I mean, in the book you talk about not wanting to get rid of sky boxes, but you want to preserve the ability of a kid at Yankee Stadium to be able to get a signature, an autograph.

**NELSON D. SCHWARTZ:** [01:14:47] I think you can. The Green Bay Packers do a great job of it. I mean, they've got luxury boxes, but still the fans have great seats and they, when they re-did the stadium a few years ago, they didn't go whole hog velvet rope. They kept a lot of great seats for ordinary fans. You take Southwest and the airline industry, no classes, and it's the most profitable airline in US history.

It shows you, you can do a more egalitarian system, something fair for the rest of us and still make a decent profit.

**MICHAEL SMERCONISH - HOST, CNN:** [01:15:17] Nelson, another aspect of coronavirus, much in the news this past week, cruise ships. And in the book you analyze the different classes in cruise ships. What I thought was really interesting, again, nothing new about there being differentiation in classes, think of the Titanic, but the amount of psychology that has gone into, for example, whether people were paying less should get an eye view into those who are paying more, and it's all by design that they do get that glimpse, so that they will be inspired to spend more in the next go round. Another example of the velvet rope economy.

**NELSON D. SCHWARTZ:** [01:15:54] Yeah. I found it really fascinating as a reporter to discover these things that you might not notice until someone points them out. Like on Royal Caribbean, you've got two different restaurants. You've got the Windjammer and you've got the Coastal Kitchen. Windjammer's for everyone. Coastal Kitchen is only for suite guests. It has frosted glass windows. But to get to the Windjammer, you've got to walk by those frosted glass windows on Coastal Kitchen and see it. And you can see where you can't go. And the idea is that creates a marker that you'll aspire to in the next cruise, you're going to trade up.

**MICHAEL SMERCONISH - HOST, CNN:** [01:16:28] Final, quick question, I hope. Are you fearful of where the divisiveness that sometimes springs from the velvet rope economy leads?

**NELSON D. SCHWARTZ:** [01:16:37] That's my concern. And that's something I try to really address in the book, is this sense that we're not all in it together. And I think this coronavirus national emergency is really going to be a test of whether we're a cohesive society, that where everyone looks out for one another, or whether it's each man for himself. And I think we're going to find out.

(Clip ends)

**JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT:** [01:16:56] So to me, that's one of those concepts that it's a bit of a Rosetta Stone, a translation device that you can apply lots and lots of places where you can then realize, Oh right, it's that same phenomenon happening here again. What, why is this screwed up here? Oh right. It's that same system in place. Capitalism has figured out how to profit from and monetize whatever the situation is. In many cases, it is inequality. So, okay, so we have inequality; let's figure out how to monetize that even more.

But the important thing to remember is that capitalism isn't just genius at figuring out how to monetize whatever the current situation is playing by whatever the current set of rules is. What it is particularly genius at is infiltrating the rulemaking process so that they can rewrite the rules to their own benefit. And that's what we really need to be on the lookout for.

As always, keep the comments coming in at (202)999-3991, or by emailing me to [jay@bestoftheleft.com](mailto:jay@bestoftheleft.com).

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