



Written by [D. Michael DeRidder](#) on May 31, 2024

Sequoia Capital Partner and Democrat Donor: “I Just Donated \$300k to Trump”

In response to former President Donald Trump’s guilty verdict in the “hush money” trial, Shaun Maguire — a partner at venture-capital firm Sequoia Capital — announced on X that he donated \$300,000 to Trump’s presidential campaign. Maguire’s announcement, titled “I just donated \$300k to Trump,” was around 3,600 words and explains the events that led to his departure from the Democratic party — going from a Hillary Clinton campaign donor in 2016, to now supporting Trump.

Maguire began his statement:

Back in 2016 I had drunk the media Kool-Aid and was scared out of my mind about Trump. As such I donated to Hillary Clinton’s campaign and voted for her. By 2020 I was disillusioned and didn’t vote — I didn’t like either option. Now, in 2024, I believe this is one of the most important elections of my lifetime, and I’m supporting Trump.

Maguire’s business partner, Elon Musk, stated he agreed, [responding on X](#):

I think you’re right

Maguire’s [full statement posted on X](#):

I just donated \$300k to Trump. I’m prepared to lose friends. Here’s why.

Back in 2016 I had drunk the media Kool-Aid and was scared out of my mind about Trump. As such I donated to Hillary Clinton’s campaign and voted for her.

By 2020 I was disillusioned and didn’t vote — I didn’t like either option.

Now, in 2024, I believe this is one of the most important elections of my lifetime, and I’m supporting Trump.

I know that I’ll lose friends for this. Some will refuse to do business with me. The media will probably demonize me, as they have so many others before me. But despite this, I still believe it’s the right thing to do.

I refuse to live in a society where people are afraid to speak.

The 2016 Election

I’m going to start off with something provocative, but I think it leads to a different take on the most controversial Trump issue, which is obviously January 6th. So here goes nothing.

I believe the 2016 election was manipulated to hurt Hillary Clinton and to help Donald Trump.

Hillary Clinton herself believes this, she has denied the 2016 election result dozens of times, and still does to this day. Plot twist: I agree with her! Look into Guccifer 2.0 which was the “hacker group” that strategically leaked her emails (through Wikileaks) in a drip campaign at just the right moments. Turns out it was the Russian GRU. And remember all those fake news and bot farms? These incidents are the tip of the spear — some of the *publicly* known



incidents. There was extreme manipulation happening during the 2016 election.

Before proceeding, [please watch at least 30 seconds of this video](#). It's "24 straight minutes of Democrats denying election results."

Russia (and others) interfering in the 2016 election was nothing new, this happens in every election, everywhere in the world. Obviously.

But for me, as someone that used to work in National Security, Russia's implicit support for Trump made me deathly afraid of him getting elected as President.

I was wrong, and Russia miscalculated. President Trump turned out to be a master of foreign policy and particularly strong towards Russia. If you've never seen it before, [please watch this two minute clip from Trump at a NATO breakfast 5 years ago](#).

If you're too lazy, Trump told Germany that they're a) owned by Russia via their energy dependence b) financing Russia's war machine by buying their energy c) not investing enough in defense, investing only 1% of GDP, which was below the 2% NATO commitment, meanwhile the US was investing 4.2% of GDP. And yet the world said he's owned by Russia?

For other Trump foreign policy wins, he: a) signed the Abraham Accords b) successfully put Iran in the penalty box, which the Biden administration immediately unwound and c) he helped India see the dangers of having their comms networks controlled by China resulting in Huawei and TikTok bans there.

My "radicalization" towards the center

August 16th, 2021 was the day I knew I could never support Joe Biden or any of the senior officials in his administration. This was the day that [Afghans fell to their deaths](#) from US C-17 airplanes at the Kabul International Airport, or KAIA as ISAF forces referred to it.

Back in 2012 I deployed to Afghanistan working for DARPA. I used to fly out of KAIA at least weekly, usually taking a Blackhawk to Bagram Airfield (BAF), but sometimes jumping on a C-130 down to Kandahar (KAF).

I'm not going to go into all of the details here, but this was personal for me — as it was for anyone that served in Afghanistan. Most have the wrong impression of what happened there. Afghanistan wasn't Iraq. And real progress had been made. It took roughly 15 years to stabilize most of Afghanistan, but the ISAF coalition had gotten it to the place that little girls were going to school in Kabul, sometimes walked there by their mothers who weren't even wearing Burkas anymore. All of this was unimaginable a decade prior.

And then there's the strategic aspect. The US's most strategic base in Afghanistan was Bagram Airfield. Unless you've been there it's impossible to imagine how strategic this base is, and how easy it is to defend. Nestled in a remote valley at the foothills of the Himalayas. Within a couple hour flight of China and Iran, and a few minute flight to Pakistan. I believe this airfield could have been held for 50+ years with 50,000 men. A similar scale to the US permanent forces stationed at Ramstein Air Base in Germany or the US bases in Okinawa, Japan.

We gave up one of the most strategic air bases in the world, and arguably stability in Kabul, for political gain — to be able to say that President Biden ended the War in Afghanistan. And we did it in the most incompetent manner possible, literally with people falling from our



airplanes. Everyone I have spoken with that served in Afghanistan knows this.

Global instability

It wasn't just Afghanistan, I believe that the Biden administration has had some of the worst foreign policy in decades. And this has manifested in two major Wars breaking out during their administration, with Russia's invasion of Ukraine and Iran's proxy attack against Israel.

Was the timing just bad luck? I don't believe so. I believe that a weak America leads to a chaotic world.

The failed Afghanistan pull-out showed the weakness of the Biden administration. They failed to adapt to changing facts on the ground, chiefly the Afghan army putting up no resistance as the Taliban drove towards Kabul. If the US can't adapt quickly in a theater where we're already active, how can it react quickly to a blitz in a new theater, Ukraine? Granted the Russian's botched their blitz, miscalculating the weather, almost certainly to keep China happy as they hosted the Olympics in Feb 2022.

The most damaging foreign policy has been the Biden administration's approach to Iran. Biden resuscitated Obama's braindead Iran doctrine. Somehow believing that the theocratic Islamic Regime could be turned towards the West.

But it's much worse than this. After Hamas' attack against Israel on October 7th, Iran took credit for planning the attack publicly. Moreover, Iran was so bold that their proxies carried out over [300 attacks against US bases and Naval ships](#). Many of the attacks haven't been disclosed or publicized. At least 4 US soldiers have been killed in these attacks. *And yet somehow despite this, the Biden administration has been rewarding Iran by unfreezing their funds, mourning the death of President Raisi and hamstringing Israel in its proxy battle.*

This level of weakness is unprecedented in my opinion. The US has been kissing the ring of its attacker, literally while attacks against our Armed Forces are carried out. If you start looking, it's hard to see anything other than Iranian foreign influence in the Biden administration, [such as what Semafor reported on](#), and which was effectively buried by our mainstream media.

The Biden administration has been a dream come true for foreign adversaries, and a nightmare for US allies. Trusting of enemies, and fickle with friends.

Israel

To anyone that follows me on X you know that I'm a staunch Israel supporter and also Zionist. I believe that Israel is one of America's most important allies in the world. Unfortunately, in a post-Snowden world, Israel is now arguably the world's top cyber power. And it's a critical intelligence ally for any US operations in the Middle East. It's also becoming an advanced weapons partner, co-developing the hypersonic missile defense system Arrow 3 and also Iron Dome + Iron Beam.

The Islamic Regime in Iran terrorizes its own people and their proxies terrorize the entire region. Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia has been modernizing at an exceptional pace. Somehow the Biden administration has chosen to cuddle up to Iran while driving Saudi Arabia and Israel away. This is unforgivably disastrous policy in my opinion.



Double standards

The next topic that has boiled my blood are the double standards and lawfare that Trump has faced. Here are some examples:

- Classified documents: Hillary Clinton, Joe Biden, Mike Pence and Donald Trump were all caught with classified documents. Only Trump was indicted. Either it's a crime for all of them or none of them. All of the arguments about quantity of documents or obstruction are distractions to justify a double standard.
- The Border Wall: remember how Trump was villainized for promoting a border wall? Biden resumed building sections of it after pausing them, which the legacy media has been very quiet about.
- Election denialism: yes, Trump denied the 2020 election results. But as we [linked to above](#), so did Hillary Clinton and Joe Biden regarding the 2016 results. As have hundreds of other politicians since 2000. Either they're all election deniers, or none of them.
- Corruption charges: every inch has been searched for Trump corruption while Joe Biden's involvement with foreign countries (through Hunter) have been swept under the rug. [Here are some examples](#).
- Three strikes for thee but not for me: Joe Biden was the architect of the 1994 Crime Bill, which most attribute as the source of the mass incarceration we saw over the next two decades (especially amongst black communities). Crack cocaine in particular was treated harshly when combined with the 1986 Anti-Drug Abuse Act. [Watch this video](#). Hunter Biden would be locked up for life if the same rules were applied to him that Joe Biden imposed on thousands of others.

This is just the tip of the double standard iceberg.

Lawfare

This is too broad of a topic to go into detail here, but suffice to say I've spent hundreds of hours following the trials and researching the charges against Trump. This has been another radicalizing experience. I understand that normally when there's smoke there's fire, but in this case I think when there's smoke there's lawfare.

To anyone with a curious mind, I implore you to go deep on any of the charges against Trump, whether civil or criminal. Here's a very quick summary of some of the fishy aspects:

- Election Interference Case: Jack Smith was appointed Special Counsel to prosecute Trump. Jack Smith previously got the Governor of Virginia convicted of corruption charges... WHICH WERE THEN UNANIMOUSLY OVERTURNED BY THE SUPREME COURT. Basically Jack Smith misled the Jury. Why would you choose Jack Smith to be the Special Counsel for this case? Maybe if all you're trying to do is to get charges to stick before an election, even if you know they'll be overturned subsequently by the Supreme Court?
- The Classified Documents Case: once again Jack Smith is the Special Counsel.
- Georgia Election Interference: The Fulton County DA, Fani Willis, has a history of corruption. It turns out that the outside lawyer she selected to prosecute Trump ... is someone she was having a romantic relationship with, Nathan Wade. [Wade's Law firm made about \\$700k after Willis appointed him](#). This was concealed. Wade has since



resigned from the case but Willis is still involved.

- The Hush Money Case: The key witness, Michael Cohen, is a proven liar. His testimony has been filled with contradiction after contradiction.
- Bank Fraud: Trump was ordered by Judge Engoron to pay over \$350M in civil judgment that he committed bank fraud. This whole case reeked of corruption. This was an incident where no harm had been done: the banks had already been fully repaid with interest. The most important point in the case was Judge Engoron arguing that Mar-a-Lago was worth only between \$18M and \$27.6M when Trump had said it's worth between \$426.5M and \$612M. Judge Engoron tried to compare apples to oranges, with an appraised value vs market value for a property that is very clearly worth something close to Trump's range.
- Sexual Assault / E Jean Carroll: the background to this case was almost unbelievable. In simple terms, a woman in 2019, E Jean Carroll, came out and said that 20+ years prior, in the late 1990s, Donald Trump had sexually assaulted her. The statute of limitations on this case had expired more than a decade prior to her claims. But the state of New York did something unprecedented and opened a one year window where people could file claims for sexual abuse going back to exactly the window when E Jean Carroll accused him. So that's point #1, there was lawfare around the statute of limitations. Point #2 is that the case was highly irregular and ultimately the Jury determined that Trump *did not rape E Jean Carroll*, despite her claims. But they did determine that he sexually assaulted her (a lesser charge than rape.)

All of these cases are too complicated for most to follow, almost by design. As someone that has been following the cases closely, I've had the opposite reaction of what was intended: a) every single case seems to have had impropriety and b) after going through Trump's entire life, if these are the worst things they can find, then he did less wrong than I otherwise would have assumed.

Fairness is one of my guiding principles in life and simply, these cases haven't been fair for Trump.

Where do I disagree with Republicans?

The number one area is abortion. This is obviously a lightning rod issue. As someone with libertarian leaning views, I believe the Republicans have the wrong stance around imposing their views on others. That said, I think Democrats misunderstand the constitutional argument that this should be a states issue.

Domestic policies

Other than abortion, I believe that President Trump and the Republicans have been better on most domestic issues. Look at the quality of life in Red States such as Florida and Texas vs that in Blue States like California, Oregon and New York. I used to live in San Francisco and now live in Los Angeles. The crime and homelessness is out of control.

Trump was villainized for his stance on building a border wall, but we've had about 10M illegal immigrants cross into the US already during President Biden's tenure.

The Democrats have been trying to regulate technology — especially open source AI and crypto in ways that incentivize the best builders to build outside of America.



25 years ago I believe the Far Right was vastly more dangerous than the Far Left. But today I believe the Far Left, and especially Antifa, is more dangerous. Our attention and maintenance was on the Far Right while we ignored the Far Left.

The 2020 election and January 6th

Now onto the elephant in the room, the 2020 election. The topic so taboo that if you talk about it you're immediately cancelled. I'm willing to wade into this fire — some of us need to be willing to.

I believe America has conflated two issues: the 2020 election itself and January 6th.

Just as Hillary Clinton and dozens of other democrats claimed the 2016 election was stolen (which I agree with). I believe there was a similar scale, or even more interference in the 2020 election. We need to be able to talk about this, so that we can fix the problems. Democracy doesn't work without secure elections. But it also doesn't work without peaceful transitions of power. Both are essential.

I believe there was extreme election interference but I don't believe January 6th was the right response. Bear with me.

So what was going on during the 2020 election?

I held a Top Secret (TS/SCI) clearance for about 7 years and used to work in information warfare, and also cybersecurity. I've seen nation-state tactics that most can't imagine. It is from this lens, and through access to lots of non-public information, through which I viewed the election.

If you go back to the 2020 election, arguably the most sophisticated cyberattack in history was taking place. This was the [SolarWinds supply chain attack](#). This attack was so sophisticated that it's impossible to know exactly what it was used for. And much of what we do know has never been reported.

Washington has an interesting phenomenon where when something incredibly damaging is learned, people oftentimes clam up and refuse to deal with it. I've seen this first hand multiple times now.

But we also have things like the Hunter Biden laptop scandal, which the FBI was in possession of for roughly a year before the election, and despite it being easy to verify its authenticity, the FBI was actively telling Facebook and Twitter that it is fake news and they recommended banning sharing of the [NY Post article about it](#).

But there were so many other issues. Not least of which was a global pandemic that almost certainly leaked from a Chinese lab, but we weren't allowed to talk about that. Nor the mail-in ballot issues.

Many point to the 2020 election and say "there's no smoking gun evidence so therefore there was no interference!" My retort is that there's not *public* evidence and in general the DoD/IC is afraid to push too far on the issue, knowing how damaging it would be to find interference. There's things I can't say.

The end result is a 2020 election where Biden and Trump combined received 155.5M votes vs the 128.8M combined for Hillary and Trump in 2016. That's 26.7M more votes in 2020



compared to 2016. That's a 20% increase in voter turnout in a period where the population only grew by a few percent. In an election where people weren't inspired by either candidate. And where there was more voting friction than ever before due to COVID-19.

Personally I don't think it's fair for Hillary Clinton to be able to claim the 2016 election was stolen, but Donald Trump to be indicted for the same thing.

Regarding the January 6th protests. I don't agree with them. Even if an election is stolen I think the correct democratic response is to accept it, have peaceful transition of power, and then to fight like hell on the backend to make sure it never happens again.

Regarding Trump's involvement in January 6th. The clearest thing he did was deny the election results, but again, so did Hillary Clinton. So if this isn't a crime in and of itself, then what else did he do?

The rest is fuzzy. There is conflicting testimony, especially around when the National Guard was requested. On the one hand you had the testimonies of General Charles Flynn and Lt. General Walter Piatt. But on the other side you have the [testimonies of Colonel Earl Mathews](#), Trump's Chief of Staff Mark Meadows and The Head of the Capitol Police at the time, Steven Sund. The media reports on Trump's January 6th involvement in absolute terms but again, if you go deep, it's unclear. For me, if Trump actually asked for the National Guard to be ready to go during January 6th it's a major counterpoint against the allegations that he was inciting an insurrection.

Summary

In 2016 there were two primary reasons I voted for Hillary (and was deathly afraid of Trump)

#1) Russia helped him in the election by hurting Hillary. This made me susceptible to the media narrative that he's owned by Russia and will be a foreign policy disaster.

#2) Candidly the clip where he said "I grab them by their pussy" deeply bothered me.

These two things built a pattern in my mind that Trump was out of control.

But now with the benefit of hindsight, revisiting these two points:

#1) To my shock, I believe Trump was one of the best foreign policy Presidents in decades, and during the most complex period in almost a century, as the East rises, which leads to a changing set of rules.

#2) That clip still sits in the back of my mind, but I personally consider the double standards and lawfare against Trump to be 10x worse, and 10x more dangerous for our Democracy.

What's next?

Do I agree with Trump on everything? Of course not. The area where I disagree with Republicans the most is on Women's rights. And I'm sure I'll disagree with some of Trump's policies in the future.

But in general I think he was surprisingly prescient, such as with the border wall, and he was also a masterful negotiator, such as with the Abraham accords.

There's a real chance President Trump is convicted of felony charges and sentenced to



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prison. Bluntly, that's part of why I'm supporting him. I believe our justice system is being weaponized against him.

If abortion is your most important issue, then I get it, vote for Biden. If any other topic is your most important issue, then do your homework and investigate the manipulation I outlined above.

Given the two choices, I believe President Trump is overwhelmingly the stronger candidate. Again, this is something I couldn't have imagined saying in 2016.

Conclusion

Speak up. Don't be silenced. Freedom of speech is worth nothing if you're afraid to use it. We can't let cancel culture win.

There's no greater country in the world than America. But America has had a bad decade. America is blessed with a robust constitution, abundant natural resources and diverse people. The way out from here is by focusing on our strengths, which are liberalism and hard work. We need to start building again.

Best of luck to President Trump.

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**Note that everything in this post reflects my personal views and not the views of my employer. I work in Silicon Valley which traditionally leans very far left. I'm lucky to work at a place that tolerates spirited debate and independent thinking. If the truth is in the middle, it's impossible to find it without sharing our ideas and debating each other.*



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