



Stop Drinking the Political Kool-Aid, America: Voting Will Not Save Us

We've got to face it. Politics have entered a new stage, the television stage. Instead of long-winded public debates, the people want capsule slogans—"Time for a change"—"The mess in Washington"—"More bang for a buck"—punch lines and glamour.— *A Face in the Crowd* (1957)



John Whitehead

We are one year out from the 2024 presidential election and as usual, the American people remain eager to be persuaded that a new president in the White House can solve the problems that plague us.

Yet what is being staged is not an election.

It's a con game, a scam, a grift, a hustle, a bunko, a swindle, a flimflam, a gaffle, and a bamboozle, and "we the people" are nothing more than marks, suckers, stooges, mugs, rubes, or gulls.

We're being duped into believing that this mockery of a choice between two candidates who are equally unfit for office actually translates to having some say in how the government is run.

To the contrary, this particular con game is part of a long-running, elaborate scam to keep the Deep State in power and leave the populace deluded, distracted and incapable of demanding accountability, transparency and decency from the government and its cohorts.

[Politics is entertainment.](#)

It is a heavily scripted, tightly choreographed, star-studded, ratings-driven, mass-marketed, [costly](#) exercise in how to sell a product—in this case, a presidential candidate—to dazzled consumers who will choose image over substance almost every time.

This year's presidential election, much like every other election in recent years, is what historian Daniel Boorstin referred to as a "[pseudo-event](#)": manufactured, contrived, confected and devoid of any intrinsic value save the value of being advertised. It is the end result of a culture that is moving away from substance toward sensationalism in an era of mass media.

As author Noam Chomsky rightly [observed](#), "It is important to bear in mind that political campaigns are designed by the same people who sell toothpaste and cars."

In other words, we're being sold a [carefully crafted product](#) by a monied elite who are masters in the art of making the public believe that they need exactly what is being sold to them, whether it's the latest high-tech gadget, the hottest toy, or the most charismatic politician.

Politics is a reality show, America's favorite form of entertainment, dominated by money and profit,



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imagery and spin, hype and personality, and guaranteed to ensure that nothing in the way of real truth reaches the populace.

After all, who cares about police shootings, drone killings, SWAT team raids, asset forfeiture schemes, private prisons, school-to-prison pipelines, overcriminalization, censorship or any of the other evils that plague our nation when you can be sucked into an alternate reality so emotionally charged and entertaining as to make you forget that you live in a police state.

But make no mistake: Americans only *think* they're choosing the next president.

In truth, however, they're engaging in the illusion of participation culminating in the reassurance ritual of voting. It's just another [Blue Pill](#), a manufactured reality conjured up by the matrix in order to keep the populace compliant and convinced that their vote counts and that they still have some influence over the political process.

Stop drinking the Kool-Aid, America.

The nation is drowning in debt, crippled by a slowing economy, overrun by militarized police, swarming with surveillance, besieged by endless wars and a military industrial complex intent on starting new ones, and riddled with corrupt politicians at every level of government.

All the while, we're arguing over which corporate puppet will be given the honor of stealing our money, invading our privacy, abusing our trust, undermining our freedoms, and shackling us with debt and misery for years to come.

Nothing taking place on any Election Day will alleviate the suffering of the American people.

The government as we have come to know it—corrupt, bloated and controlled by big-money corporations, lobbyists and special interest groups—will remain unchanged. And “we the people”—overtaxed, overpoliced, overburdened by big government, underrepresented by those who should speak for us and blissfully ignorant of the prison walls closing in on us—will continue to trudge along a path of misery.

Corporate greed will continue to call the shots in the nation's capital, while our elected representatives will grow richer and the people poorer. And elections will continue to be driven by war chests and corporate benefactors rather than such values as honesty, integrity and public service. Just consider: it's estimated that [more than \\$10 billion will be spent on the elections this year](#), yet not a dime of that money will actually help the average American in their day-to-day struggles to just get by.

And the military industrial complex will continue to bleed us dry. Since 9/11, we've spent more than [\\$8 trillion to wage wars abroad](#). Although the U.S. constitutes barely 5% of the world's population, America boasts almost [40% of the world's total military expenditures](#), spending more on the military than the next 10 biggest spending nations combined. Even with America's military might spread thin, the war drums continue to sound as the Pentagon polices the rest of the world with [counterterror activities in 85 countries](#).

Americans should be mad as hell.

Many of our politicians live like kings. Chauffeured around in limousines, flying in private jets and eating gourmet meals, all paid for by the American taxpayer, they are far removed from those they represent. Such a luxurious lifestyle makes it difficult to identify with the “little guy”—the roofers, plumbers and blue-collar workers who live from paycheck to paycheck and keep the country running with their hard-earned dollars and the sweat of their brows.



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Conveniently, politicians only seem to remember their constituents in the months leading up to an election, and yet “we the people” continue to take the abuse, the neglect, the corruption and the lies. We make excuses for the shoddy treatment, we cover up for them when they cheat on us, and we keep hoping that if we just stick with them long enough, eventually they’ll treat us right.

People get the government they deserve.

No matter who wins the presidential election next year, it’s a sure bet that the losers will be the American people.

As political science professor Gene Sharp notes in starker terms, “Dictators are not in the business of allowing elections that could remove them from their thrones.”

The Establishment—the shadow government and its corporate partners that really run the show, pull the strings and dictate the policies, no matter who occupies the Oval Office—are not going to allow anyone to take office who will unravel their power structures. Those who have attempted to do so in the past have been effectively put out of commission.

So what is the solution to this blatant display of imperial elitism disguising itself as a populist exercise in representative government?

Stop playing the game. Stop supporting the system. Stop defending the insanity.

Washington thrives on money, so stop giving them your money. Stop throwing your hard-earned dollars away on politicians and Super PACs who view you as nothing more than a means to an end. There are countless worthy grassroots organizations and [nonprofits](#) working in your community to address real needs like injustice, poverty, homelessness, etc. [Support them](#) and you’ll see change you really can believe in in your own backyard.

Politicians depend on votes, so stop giving them your vote unless they have a proven track record of listening to their constituents, abiding by their wishes and working hard to earn and keep their trust.

Stop buying into the lie that your vote matters. As I make clear in my book [Battlefield America: The War on the American People](#) and in its fictional counterpart [The Erik Blair Diaries](#), the only thing you’re accomplishing by taking part in the “reassurance ritual” of voting is sustaining the illusion that we have a democratic republic.

What we have is a dictatorship, or as political scientists Martin Gilens and Benjamin Page more accurately term it, we are suffering from an [“economic elite domination.”](#)

A healthy, representative government is hard work. It takes a citizenry that is informed about the issues, educated about how the government operates, and willing to make the sacrifices necessary to stay involved, whether that means forgoing Monday night football in order to attend a city council meeting or risking arrest by picketing in front of a politician’s office.

It takes a citizenry willing to do more than grouse and complain. We must act—and act responsibly—keeping in mind that the duties of citizenship extend beyond the act of voting.

As Justice John Josephus Grant warns in the 1943 film [A Stranger in Town](#):

As citizens, we carry a burning responsibility. It means that when we elect men to public office, we cannot do it as lightly as we flip a coin. It means that after we’ve elected them, we can’t sit back and say: “Our job is done. What they do now doesn’t concern us.” That



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philosophy of indifference is what the enemies of decent government want. If we allow them to have their way to grow strong and vicious, then the heroic struggle which welded thousands of lovely towns like this into a great nation means nothing. Then we're not citizens, we're traitors. The great liberties by which we live have been bought with blood. The kind of government we get is the kind of government we want. Government of the people, by the people and for the people can mean any kind of government. It's our duty to make it mean only one kind - uncorrupted, free, united.

ABOUT JOHN & NISHA WHITEHEAD:

Constitutional attorney and author John W. Whitehead is founder and president of The Rutherford Institute. His latest books [The Erik Blair Diaries](#) and [Battlefield America: The War on the American People](#) are available at www.amazon.com. Whitehead can be contacted at johnw@rutherford.org. Nisha Whitehead is the Executive Director of The Rutherford Institute. Information about The Rutherford Institute is available at www.rutherford.org.



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