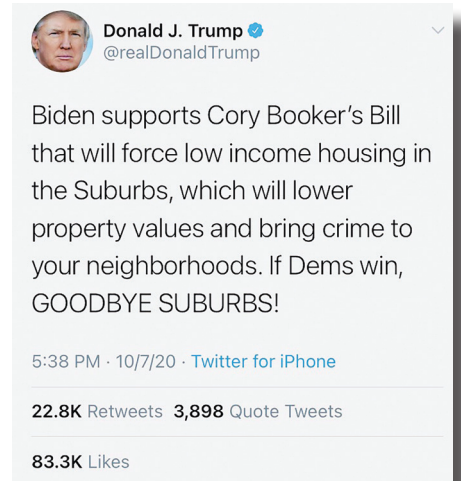




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IT'S TIME



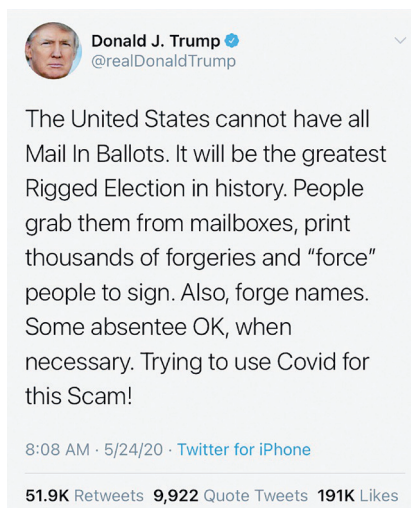
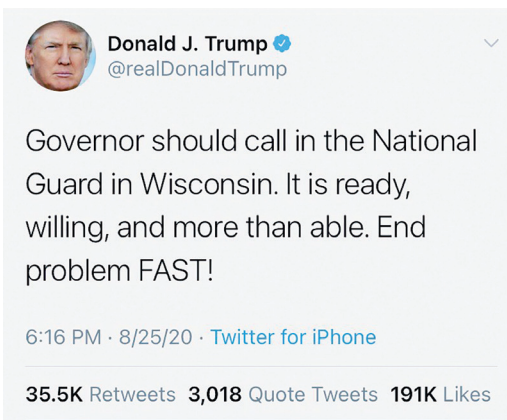
TO STOP



IGNORING



FASCISM



IN THE WHITE HOUSE

A word to the wise: never ignore the warning signs of an emerging fascist.

I was 11 years old when Donald Trump was elected. He pledged to fortify our borders against the immigrants he blamed for crime in our country. He fanned resentment against certain religious and ethnic groups. He vilified the press and openly fantasized about taking revenge on his opponents. He demeaned entire regions and demographics, making it clear he only spoke for those who pledged loyalty to him.

The warning signs were all there.

Not enough voters saw them.

I was only 11, but I saw something wrong with where this was going, where Trump wanted to take us. I saw deepened divides and ignorance and unwillingness to read anyone else's story.

Above all else, I saw a self-centered man who had no intention to work for everyone. Who openly mocked people with disabilities and stood accused of rape, racism, and fraud. This man was about to become the leader of the nation where I was still growing up. I was terrified.

I'm 15 now. I'm still terrified.

Many Americans say that Trump shouldn't be compared to fascist leaders of the past. The common argument seems to be that Trump cannot truly be compared to dictators like Hitler or Mussolini, and that to do so is to blatantly ignore history.

It is indisputable that Trump has not reached the pure evil of those leaders, and many of them are on a level that he most likely won't reach. But that doesn't mean he isn't also awful, or that he can't also cause irreparable damage to our country. If we as a nation ignore the warning signs of an emerging fascist leader as we have done in the past, we will only walk further down the path of authoritarianism. We're four years into Trump's presidency, and what he has done and attempted to do in those four years is disturbing and problematic and should be treated as such.

Fascism combines authoritarianism, ultra-nationalism, and the demonizing of minorities and "outsiders." We know the threat fascist leaders pose; we've fought them before.

If Trump was an emerging fascist then, he's a full-blown fascist now.

Recently, the president has been using federal troops to quash largely peaceful protests, and then parading a story of mob violence that only he can save us from. This is a dangerous threat to our free speech as a nation and should

not be ignored. Not only does this pose a direct threat to the lives of protesters, it also is direct propaganda. When protests get violent and deadly because of military involvement, Trump uses the situation to prove that those who disagree with him are inherently "un-American," and furthers this mindset that all protesters of a certain type are "thugs."

From the beginning, he has preached American superiority. Trump wants us to believe that America is forever superior, and when things go wrong, he won't hesitate to blame it all on specific demographics of people. This form of scapegoating only results in persistent divisions between people and endless discrimination.

Trump has a very odd habit of cozying up to dictators and corrupt leaders – he praises international leaders like Vladimir Putin, Kim Jong Un, Recep Erdoğan, Rodrigo Duterte, János Áder, and Jair Bolsonaro, who all use authoritarian tactics to varying degrees, and who govern countries that are not our primary allies. Meanwhile, Trump leaves our actual allies high and dry, dipping in and out of crucial

international agreements and refusing to make decisions that would benefit someone else.

Perhaps most dangerous of all, Trump has managed to pit his base against everyone else, creating an "us versus them" narrative. He winks at white supremacists, never denouncing them as terrorist groups, despite their repeated attacks against minority groups. He makes it clear that if you do not agree with him, he does not work for you. If your needs

are anywhere outside of his own, he does not work for you.

He does not work for any of us who believe Black Lives Matter, love is love, and science is real, or for my grandmother, who suffers from cancer and could die if she contracts COVID-19, or for my generation, who will have to deal with the consequences of our current climate degradation, or for any of us in the West, as we witness our worst wildfires yet and desperately need serious efforts to address the climate crisis.

Trump works for himself, promoting values that do not belong to the rest of us. That is what he fights for, not us.

He would like for us to believe that he is the savior we need.

Instead, he is a fascist working against our country and against our people.

The signs are there.

They've always been there.

And it's time to pay attention.

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