

The Almost First 100 Days

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The Doors' second LP, [Strange Days](#), featured a song, [People Are Strange](#).

Strange days indeed as one considers the world around us (More on that later.).

I strategize. I plan. Not all the time but certainly when things matter.

Sometimes, for some matters, I might need to think fast, almost to the point of brinkmanship.

But you expect those things to occur not too often because you plan; you think things out; you anticipate, often in concert – common cause – with others.

When considering my assessment of the almost first 100 days of the administration of “Real Donald Trump” (his twitter handle is [@realDonaldTrump](#)), I see an administration in crisis mode – more in reaction than thoughtful deliberation.

Some argue that campaigns and governing remain distinct; and that excellence at one mode often fails to equate in the other. I never bought into that. The constituencies may differ somewhat but not as much as one thinks.

The only distinction involves an incoming official and his/her team's knowledge and experience of the processes of governing.

I recall in a mayoral campaign how we developed briefing papers that outlined the functions of the various agencies and departments and boards; that occurred early on, well before the primary and general elections.

It aimed not to aid in the transition if the campaign proved successful but in demonstrating a handle on governing to justify a candidate's worthiness.

Nothing of the sort seemed to occur with Team Trump.

I often raise the notion of knowing enough to know what you know not at all.

In the case of this administration one gets the feeling of "Being There," the Jerzy Kosinski book later made into a movie starring the late Peter Sellers.

Unlike the "Chauncey Gardiner" character, most Americans and many abroad get no benign feeling but a borderline fear.

So let me start with a nod to my good friend Bob O. Bob Olivari attends more than a few events involving our constitution and loves to raise the sanctity of that document. That document remains our saving grace.

What really sets the United States apart as a nation of laws involves how laws protects us from the corrupt, the incompetent, the unknowing, the dangerous; it imposes limits and thus things can go bad but not worse. It becomes our saving grace.

And that's important as we assess the first 100 days, or today 90% of that run.

What always bothered me about politics involved folks looking the other way if someone in the right place would help move an agenda.

Thus we start with GOP Senators, House Members and activists who might not think well of the president, his ethics, his competence, etc.

These GOP stalwarts see Trump as a tool to appoint certain kinds of judges – think Justice Gorsuch, and to sign off on certain pieces of legislation and policies.

We saw that with the hit on funding Planned Parenthood which likely leads to many more abortions as a result of a diminution of family health planning.

So we get MORE abortions not less because of this action by abortion opponents.

To borrow from The Donald: Very Smart! Yeah right.

We did not see it when a repeal of ObamaCare failed.

We do not see any plan to change tax codes – I refuse to call anything that injects regressivity into the IRS code, reform.

People in the administration may be individually competent but the overall team takes the title of Jimmy Breslin's, "Can't Anybody Here Play This Game?"

A good executive builds a good team; that did not yet happen.

Maybe it'll occur down the road but nothing to date suggests that outcome anytime soon.

It's an accidental administration.

In City & State this week, an old friend, Bruce Gyory, recalled the comment of Professor Richard Neustadt, the author of *Presidential Power*, one of the great books about how a President can succeed. Professor Neustadt wrote, "The Presidency is no place for amateurs."

Perhaps a saving grace of sorts involves all the eyes on the doings of this administration where Ignorance, Lies, Bad Policy rule the day.

The same attention – actually much more so – given Trump campaign during the election in daily cable and print news media coverage puts the foibles of Team Trump in our daily consciousness.

Thus what helped propel Trump's election – free coverage, now keeps this administration somewhat in check, even if Team Trump does not realize it.

Watch the news, read the papers in print or on line. Cable twitter, Facebook never cease in covering the administration.

Many things the administration and GOP may seek to undo, especially on the environmental side may play out in court or just a rule-making process that could take us to the new administration that appears likely according to current polling.

The budget process and the Hastert rule that requires majority of the majority rule make it hard for a divided GOP house of representatives to reach any consensus on difficult issues.

Further we learn how language matters. Apparently more American found fault with ObamaCare but many of the same folks appear very happy to rest secure with coverage under the Affordable Care Act.

Indeed, watch if Secretary of Health and Human Services Tom Price takes any actions that weakens Health Care delivery under an act that basically followed Romney Care and many nods to GOP imperatives despite their refusal to support it.

If Secretary Price acts, expect to see a great public clamor in support of single payer/ Medicare for All health care system.

By the way, my research and writing on single payer demonstrates it offers more cost effective care than the current system.

In many ways, media and commentators appear to lower the bar on expectations of this Presidency.

The many faux pas.

Just consider some:

*The call to Taiwan during the transition.

*The recent call of congratulations to Turkey's president who may be on his way to a dictatorship.

*Two failed roll outs of immigration bans via executive orders turned back by the courts.

*Non-repeal of ObamaCare.

*Devin Nunes and the president's false "wiretapping" accusations against President Obama.

*Mis-stating up the deployment of the Carl Vinson aircraft carrier.

*All the back-biting of staff playing out in the media.

*The conflicts of interest, including Ivanka Trump and Jared Kushner.

*He repeatedly demonstrates an extraordinary lack of knowledge about foreign affairs.

*Trump antagonized the leaders of nations allied to the United States: Mexico, Australia and Germany

*The diplomatic mess with Australia one of our best allies over refugees.

*The threats to Mexico.

*talking wiretapping with Angela Merkel

*Suggesting the U.S. confiscate Iraqi oil.

Here's more:

*The refusal to release tax returns.

*The Inaugural audience size dispute – Why?

*The ties with Russia and its influence of the election results – though last fall I made clear and a new book supports my view that the Clinton campaign still lost the election.

*And I did not raise the false equivalencies- Trump hits Obama on golf but the current president already spend more time on the links than his predecessor.

*Or the argument that millions voted illegally in last November's election.

The Washington Post reported that during Trump's first 63 days in office, he only made 317 "false or misleading claims."

Through March 30 – 32 press briefings took place and some two-thirds --22 of 32 – were dominated by President's Tweets.

We can only hope for some professionalism but with the lowered bar, it remains doubtful.

Let's continue to watch, remain vigilant and speak out.

So I leave you with some applicable movie title's:

The Gang That Couldn't Shoot Straight

Swamp Fever

The Madness of King George (Jerry Kremer)

From Russia With Love

Animal House

Silence of the Lambs

Land of the Lost

Thank you. Questions?