

# PUBLIC

## How Bad Is It?

Trump, Rogan, and the End of America

LEIGHTON WOODHOUSE

MAR 31 · [PREVIEW](#)



SAVE



## How Bad Is It?

A New York City grand jury has indicted former President Donald J. Trump. We don't yet know the specific charges, but various media outlets are reporting he may face over 30 separate charges connected to the falsification of documents relating to payments Trump made to porn star Stormy Daniels before the 2016 election.

Naturally, pundits on the Left and Right see the event somewhat differently. "America's Banana Republic Era Is Here," declared The Federalist. Today "is a good day for America," celebrated The Atlantic, before hastily adding that the indictment was "also an American tragedy."

We find ourselves wondering — about this event and so many others these days — *How bad is it?* Is this the beginning of the end of the American experiment? The moment when we become Brazil or the Philippines? A nation that elects, then jails, and then re-elects its heads of state? Or will this moment serve as a wake-up call that things finally went too far, and we can now begin the long process of healing?

One reason to believe the whole thing might blow over relatively quickly is because, a) the alleged crime appears to be a misdemeanor and b) the

District Attorney of New York has promised to “not seek a carceral sentence other than for homicide or other cases involving the death of a victim” or other major or violent crimes, of which paying hush money could not possibly be one.

However, notes the Federalist’s Margot Cleveland, D.A. Alvin Bragg could prosecute Trump’s alleged crimes as a felony, or as multiple felonies, by arguing “that Trump caused the Trump Organization to falsely report the payments with the intent of committing tax fraud.”

Nobody knows. Experts, research shows, are no better at predicting the future than anyone else, and sometimes, due to their dogmatism, are much worse at it. The two of us keep thinking that the crime and homelessness crisis in San Francisco couldn’t get any worse and then, incredibly, it does.


## Rogan Teaser

A clip of Michael on Rogan talking about the Censorship Industrial Complex went viral within minutes of the show being uploaded.

"It became clear to us over time," said Michael, "that the U.S. Government had turned its propaganda and disinformation campaigns, that it had been waging abroad, against the American people."



**Chief Nerd**  
@TheChiefNerd

 Michael Shellenberger on the Moment the Twitter Files Investigation Revealed 'Something Seriously Sinister is Going On'

"It became clear to us over time that the U.S. Government had turned its propaganda and disinformation campaigns, that it had been waging abroad, against..."

<https://t.co/aQPtA5qNzK>



5:55 PM · Mar 30, 2023

9,567 Likes   3,258 Retweets

## Anti-Censorship Movement Grows



Michael testifying before Congress / Photo: Leighton Woodhouse

As Public readers know, Michael returned to Congress to testify again on the Censorship Industrial Complex, this time for a hearing about Big Tech

ensorship.

Then, yesterday, the former Attorney General of Missouri, Eric Schmitt, now a U.S. Senator, and the Attorney General of Louisiana, Jeff Landry, testified before Congress explaining that they had found the exact same thing as Twitter Files journalists:



**Michael Shellenberger**  
@ShellenbergerMD

"Biden & his team colluded with social media to censor \*truthful\* info on a scale never before seen.... The FBI planted false info to deceive social media into censoring Hunter Biden laptop... FBI had a 50% success rate in getting info censored." — Sen. [@Eric\\_Schmitt](#)



3:07 PM · Mar 30, 2023

10,535 Likes   3,452 Retweets

The day before that, Jacob Siegel, a former Army intelligence officer, published a brilliant, must-read history and denunciation, of the Censorship Industrial Complex with an accompanying Disinformation Dictionary.

“Siegel’s Tablet article is the enterprise effort at describing the whole anti-disinformation elephant I’ve been hoping for years someone in journalism would take on,” enthused Matt Taibbi, who interviewed Siegel about why he wrote it.



“One of the most damaging and dangerous things about this kind of runaway government secrecy — and this is something that people like Daniel Patrick Moynihan were warning about fifty years ago — is that it fosters a kind of derangement in the public,” said Siegel.

“At an even deeper and an even more fundamental level, once you involve people in the conspiracy, once you get them to go along with it, they will go along with it, not because they want to be conspirators, but because they’re convinced that they’re on the side of good... To get them to abandon that is to get them to admit that they’ve been made fools of, that they themselves were involved in an enormous deception. And I think that that’s very difficult for people.”

Then, yesterday, Martin Gurri published “Disinformation Is the Word I Use When I Want You To Shut Up,” in Discourse Magazine.

“Disinformation is just a jargon word with a subliminal meaning, thrown out by the mighty of the earth whenever they worry that they are about to lose an argument—something that happens with painful regularity these days. The word means, ‘Shut up, peasant.’ It’s a bullet aimed at killing the conversation. It’s loaded with hostility to reason, evidence, debate and all the stuff that makes our democracy great.”

Gurri published an infographic to accompany it:

## Disinformation Circle of Life

How the government partners with NGOs, the news media and big tech to control the web and stifle free speech



Meanwhile, our friends at Underground Advertising built a cool website, [CensorshipIndustrialComplex.org](https://www.censorshipindustrialcomplex.org), which summarizes all of the amazing research that's been done on the unAmerican monster that must die.

## Gender Trouble

About a third of the way through their conversation, Joe and Michael turned to the conversation of the trans person who killed six people at a Christian school on Monday. Joe said he thought the person was trans female. Michael said he thought the person was a trans male. It turns out they weren't the only ones who were utterly confused.

At first, the media referred to the Nashville school shooter, a trans man, as "she," which violates the First Woke Commandment against "misgendering." Many outlets used their birthname, Audrey, instead of their adopted name,

Aiden, in violation of the Second Woke Commandment against “deadnaming.”

Then, they started scrubbing pronouns from their stories altogether, awkwardly using “Hale,” “the attacker,” “the assailant” and “the shooter” in place of every possible “he” or “she.”

As Wesley Yang noted, The New York Times, which twisted its copy into pretzels to avoid the use of one of the most fundamental elements of English grammar, made a different choice last year, when it used the preferred pronouns of a serial killer of women.

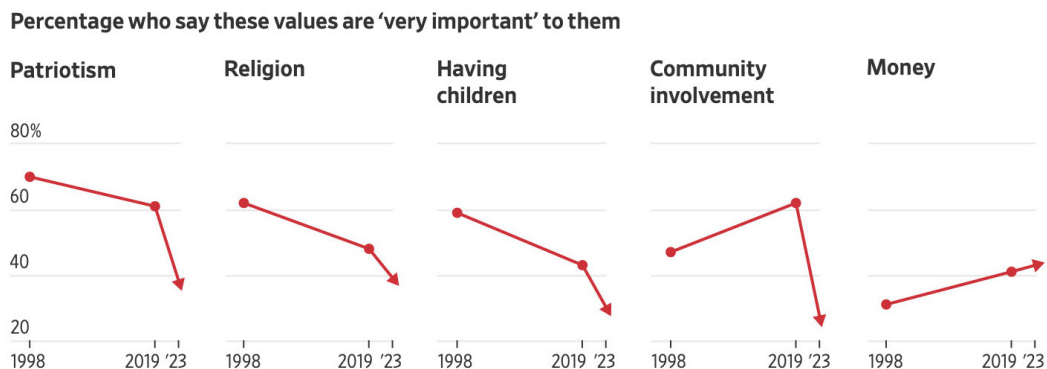
The media, Yang wrote, is just “making this shit up as they go along.” Everybody just arrives at these conventions through trial balloons and then, once an elite consensus is formed, pretends that these are ancient and sacred rules carved into tablets of stone.

In the end, there may be a loophole: Aiden/Audrey apparently used both names up to the day they killed three children and three adults.

## Some Trends We Hope Are Non-Linear

On Rogan, Joe said to Michael, “You’re just a really positive guy.”

The two of them were staring at this chart, which the Wall Street Journal published on Monday.



Source: WSJ/NORC poll of 1,019 adults conducted March 1–13, 2023; margin of error +/-4.1 pct. pts. Prior data from WSJ/NBC News telephone polls, most recently of 1,000 adults conducted Aug. 10–14, 2019; margin of error +/-3.1 pct. pts.



Even anti-American atheists might (*might*) not celebrate the plummeting share of Americans who say patriotism and religion are “very important” values to them, when they consider the impact on reproduction and community involvement over the last quarter century. Only Malthusian nihilists could take comfort in these trends.

But before we abandon all hope, remember what our Intro to Sociology professors taught us: some trends are non-linear. Just look at the rising value placed on community involvement between 1998 and 2020. That which goes up can go down and vice versa. Maybe we just need a good wake-up call, like the threat of becoming a banana republic.

## How Do You Say “Euphoric” in Dutch? ...

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