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### What I've Learned Since I Lost My Mind

Before you start reading this let me be clear. You do not have to read this. I'm not asking you to. I wrote this for myself, mainly. No need to tell me this is poorly written. I know. I'm sure there are grammatical errors also. I've known for a long time I probably have an undiagnosed learning disability. My goal in writing this down is a hope that I can organize and explain to you and myself why I did what I did and decide what we will do over the next 60 or so days. To be clear upfront I don't think anyone is going to let an actor or a comedian tell them who to vote for despite the fact that the current President is essentially both an actor and a comedian. However, I'd be lying if I didn't say I want to change some minds. Of course I do, I feel strongly about what is going on in our country. I'll get to that shortly, but I also don't believe I'm an expert on politics or how the world works. I'd much rather be making jokes about some strange food I ate in Estonia.

So let's set the stage. On the Thursday night I went on a twitter rant about the RNC and Trump. (I did) I must have been drunk? (I wasn't) I was angry, cursing (I was) while tweeting out things that contradicted everything I stood for as a so-called "clean Catholic comedian" (I disagree). In reality, I've made jokes about Trump in my last three specials and have repeatedly expressed support for gay rights and Black Lives Matter on social media. Regardless of any of that I am perceived as apolitical. That is somewhat intentional. I learned early in my stand-up career people don't want to hear about politics from me. I knew me talking politics wasn't changing any minds and was only alienating half of the audience.

Okay, fine- so why now? The answer is simple. Trump is a great salesman. Possibly the best salesman I've seen in my lifetime. I don't care how many businesses he has driven into the ground or contractors he's screwed over. Trump is charming, funny and comes

across as sincere. I watched Trump speak on Thursday night like I had many times before. I knew he was going to lie. I even knew some of the lies he was going to say. By the way, I'm not naïve. I understand all politicians lie or bend the truth. When Bill Clinton said, "I feel your pain" I gagged a little, but I did figure his heart was in the right place. I may lose you on this, but I believe MOST politicians are motivated by the best intentions. I might not have agreed with Bill Clinton, George W, or Jimmy Carter on a lot of things but I do believe they had the best intentions. I don't think Trump does. This isn't just a feeling. This is something I've known for a long time.

So if I believe I won't sway any voters, why speak out like I did? Honestly, I feel I had no choice at this point. I think Trump is ruining and possibly has already ruined my country. For me this isn't a debate about the size of government, taxes, health care or even abortion. I miss the days when those were the topics I would discuss with friends. I feel a responsibility to coming generations, my children but selfishly I didn't want to explain to my grandchildren that I didn't fight to stop Trump. Maybe they will see that I stood up for decency, rule of law, and equality. That's way more important to me than selling out an arena. Additionally, please understand I'm no saint. I can be lazy, selfish and grumpy but somehow that works in the entertainment industry. Come to think of it, that seems to work pretty well for politicians, too. I also believe many of the people who support Trump are good, decent people that have been fed lies and misinformation (yes, from Fox News and conspiracy theorists). It's obvious I'm not going to change a loyal Trump voter's mind but on Twitter Thursday night I was trying to reach a different group. Having grown up in a small town in the Midwest and having traveled the around the country for last 20 years I know there are people that really don't like Trump but they do like what Trump is selling. Like many of these people I do feel the "flyover states" are condescended to by the coastal folks. These people own or work for a small business destroyed by Covid. They have friends and siblings that are police officers and youth ministers. They believe in equality and truly care about their neighbor. These people know Trump is a con man but in the end they simply want what is best for the their community and the people they love. Nobody wants anarchy. I realized Thursday night if these people were frightened enough by Trump and the GOP lies, they would pinch their nose and vote for Trump. Maybe by stepping out of my presumed lane I could help inspire them to do what they already know is right and consider what they are actually voting for rather than feel they had no other choice than to vote for Trump. Did I make a difference? I don't know.

So let's go over what I've learned since I lost my mind or "My Thursday Night Tweet Storm."

- It felt liberating. Obviously, I can only speak for myself, but I know many of us are tired of censoring everything we say so we don't offend our politically correct friends but this also applies to our passionate Trump friends, relatives and peers. There was a time when civil political disagreement took place, even if you vehemently disagreed. It's like after Thanksgiving 2016 we all decided to let the crazy relative decide the discourse and context of every argument. It was refreshing to let four years of frustration boil over and offer some straight talk on what Trump has done to our country or our democracy.
- There are bots. A lot of them. On Thursday night I knew I would anger some followers with what I was saying and was prepared for their feedback. There was tons. I assumed some of the feedback was from bots. Not that I necessarily understood the technology, I knew that there were computer generated messages sent to me by an algorithm. On Friday night rather than talking to everyone on Twitter like I did on Thursday I thought it might be constructive if I directed my reasons of why Trump needs to go to one person. I noticed a woman @bekebrede had tweeted at me "You just lost a lot of fans". I proceeded to tweet a bunch of things to her hopefully trying to be funny and persuasive. Eventually another person on twitter saw my series of tweets to her and informed me that the woman I was tweeting at was in fact a bot. While equally hilarious and frightening, this was revealing to me. Why was I the target of bots? Was it a Russian bot? A Trump bot? Is Trump a bot?
- Hollywood is Pedophile ring. Through numerous messages I learned that while Trump wished Epstein's partner/groomer "Well", the Democrats are the ones who are supposedly pro-pedophile. It became abundantly clear that many, many people really do believe Hollywood and the entertainment industry is an enormous pedophile ring. I know that sounds absurd, but I received dozens of messages from people convinced this was true. That isn't as much of a fringe belief as you might think. Pizzagate wasn't a one off. It was the tip of the iceberg.
- Republican talking points work. One person's entertainment is another person's fact. As funny as some might find the reasoning of Republicans, Trump supporters really do believe that Biden is a radical and/or a Trojan horse for America being turned into a Socialist state. As ridiculous a Biden/Harris ticket being super left may sound to my Progressive friends the feedback I received on all

social media platforms would indicate that the Trump messaging is working great. And let's not forget we laughed Trump all the way into the White House in 2016. That's why I think we shouldn't make that same mistake twice. The stakes are too high.

- Career Suicide/ Career Move. As with many of the messages I received, the accusations were often contradictory. Many people announced that my career was over while some thought my tweets were a career stunt to bolster my career. If it were a stunt, I would have done it years ago. I fully did expect and still do expect my career to take a hit but as I mentioned earlier, I'm okay with that. Some people actually think I was paid or coerced into tweeting out those commonly known facts about Trump and the GOP. For those of you that think this was a publicity stunt please remember there is no work to pander for as an out of shape, straight Catholic, clean comedian/father of 5 I learned a long time ago I'm not going to be "the sexy choice" or "the tastemaker's darling. I do however understand this suspicion which is why I have turned down all press requests surrounding my Twitter rant. I'm posting this on my socials in hopes of reaching one those rare undecided voters who might still be following me.

- Threats – The image that is connected to this post is one of the many messages I received that are quasi threatening or flat out threatening. I have friends that have received much worse and I'm sure this guy is just engaging in some bluster. We all know Trump is not a unifier but remember he and his cronies stoke hatred and violence. He may say he is the Law and Order candidate, but he wants chaos so can pretend to provide security. I'm not saying that both Kenosha shootings wouldn't have happened with a different President I'm just saying there would have been leadership to solve the issue rather than capitalize on it.

- It's about Trump: It doesn't matter that Trump and his folks are breaking laws, trying to kill Obamacare, pre-existing conditions or that his handling of the pandemic was disastrous, to Trump voters he is THEIR guy. More importantly he's "THEIR president" and disagreeing with them is a personal insult. For many Trump voters this isn't about any other issue except Trump himself. To me that is not only weird but kind of scary.

I'm still digesting the whole experience (and still apologizing to my wife, Jeannie, for my profanity) but if you are still on the fence I encourage you to vote not for who I want you to vote for but for who your grandchildren would be proud you fucking voted for. (Sorry, Jeannie.)