

ON FASCISM

AUTHOR INTRODUCTION

Dear Book Supporter,

First of all, a heartfelt 'thank you' for helping me bring my book out into the world. I wanted to write you a note to help you better understand my book and why it is so vital in our turbulent times.

Our fervent belief in the myth of American Exceptionalism persuades us that we are uniquely immune to the activation of authoritarianism. Some of us contend that we are different from people in every other country in the world.

We are not.

To understand one of the root causes of polarization in America today, we must set aside the fairytale story of American history.

Since America's founding, there's been a perpetual tug of war between our aspiration toward a more perfect union and the authoritarian impulses that have coursed through our polity and politics. These two competing forces—and the differing visions of America they yield—have been with the nation since the founding.

American history is riddled with examples of moments when authoritarian fascism and its concomitant pathologies were ascendant; instances when too many Americans obeyed, or looked the other way. In the book, I examine twelve of these examples, explain their relevance, and extract the historical lesson each one teaches today in the world of Trump. Applying these lessons to our civic life now is critical to the survival of democracy. Authoritarian activation is the gateway drug to democracy's demise.

More than 200 years ago, leaving Independence Hall on the final day of the convention that produced the Constitution of the United States, Benjamin Franklin was asked by a bystander, "What type of government had the delegates created?" "A Republic, if you can keep it," he responded.

Franklin's cautionary response is as pertinent today as it was then. Our answer now depends on how well and quickly we recognize the authoritarian awakening that is today reshaping America, and how we can rise up to stop it.

Denial will not save American democracy, but coming to terms with our history might.

Sincerely,

Matt



TOGETHER, WE CAN REALIZE E PLURIBUS UNUM.

**HOW AUTHORITARIAN ARE YOU?
TAKE THE QUIZ TO FIND OUT!**

THE 12 LESSONS

LESSON 1

America Enlightened or Authoritarian? Lincoln vs. Douglas

LESSON 2

Fomenting Fear: Inauguration Day 2017 and the Paranoid Style

LESSON 3

All Lies Matter: The Father of Hate Radio and Deep-State Conspiracies

LESSON 4

Gagging the Press, Quashing Dissent: Seditious Libel, 1798

LESSON 5

Taking What Is Rightfully Ours: America's Lebensraum and the "Treaty" of New Echota, 1835

LESSON 6

Using Fear and Violence to Control and Subordinate Others: The United States of Lyncherdom

LESSON 7

The Driving Out: Chinese Persecution, Exclusion, and Massacre

LESSON 8

Fear as a Path to Power: The Palmer Raids

LESSON 9

Galvanizing Group Identity: A Nazi Demonstration of True Americanism

LESSON 10

Silence of the Law: The Internment of American Japanese and the Ugly Abyss of Racism

LESSON 11

Fear Breeds Repression; Repression Breeds Hate; Hate Menaces Stable Government: Senator Joe's Enemies from Within

LESSON 12

The Surveillance Society and the Big Lie: Total Information Awareness

"Authoritarian demagogues and a frightening portion of the public have always been willing and eager to tear away the balance pole of reason and push democracy into the abyss. By showing the failures of the past and the present, this accessible, alarming, and insightful work is a much needed reality check and counterweight to the resurgent extremism of our times."

—Brian Baird, PhD and former congressman for Washington's 3rd district

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