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What This Comedian Said Will Shock You

by Bill Maher



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**WHAT THIS
COMEDIAN SAID
WILL SHOCK
YOU**

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SIMON & SCHUSTER

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For the writers

I know Twitter is X now,
I don't care,
I call it Twitter and always will.

INTRODUCTION

Real Time with Bill Maher started in February 2003, on a network I was grateful had patience. Because it wasn't very good that first season, and one reason was: the ending of the show wasn't right. For some reason, I had the dumb idea to end *my* show with other people performing. New comics, who I wanted to present to America. Like I was Ed Sullivan.

I blame the pot.

Because, really, the big ending for your own show should not be a pass-off. If people are watching a show with your name in the title, finish it up with what you do best, which in my case is a straight-to-camera commentary on something people want to hear your take on. (Even if they don't know they want to hear it yet, but I'll get to that in a minute.)

And so I started doing that in the second half of 2003, our "second season." I'd basically done the same thing every Friday night when *Politically Incorrect* was on five days a week, and I always called such a monologue at the end of the show "the editorial." Some people still call it a new rule, because on *Real Time* it comes at the end of the "New Rules" segment and segues into it with a "New rule..." opening. But it's a completely different animal. New rules are short thoughts about anything—they can be silly, serious, of-the-week or timeless. The ones I reject sound like bad open-mic night.

But the editorial is a ten-minute thought piece, with laughs. Always with laughs. I've told my brilliant writers who work on it with me every week: you can be bad, I can always edit that out—just don't be earnest. Because anyone can be earnest, and usually when they are it kind of makes me puke. I define "earnest" as a) saying something obvious (or at least obvious to your tribe); b) not being funny about it; and c) acting like it's an issue that affects you personally way more than it does.

Real Time has always attempted to be a show about ideas. The people who know of it, but don't know *it*, talk to me about the show like we're investigative journalists;

we are not. We don't break stories, we break new ways of looking at stories. And that is especially true of the editorials—I always want them to introduce novel ways of thinking about something. These editorials do not aim to tell people what they want to hear, what they think they already know. They often start off getting people to say, “Yeah, you go, boy,” and halfway through have them saying, “Hey, wait a minute...” At least they do when I've done my job right. We are only Team Real on *Real Time*, not Team “This Party” or Team “This Philosophy.”

The twenty-first century in America has been a political nightmare because the partisan hate has reached a fever pitch. Yes, the two sides always opposed each other, but I remember the late twentieth century, and it wasn't this bad. We had a lot of people yelling at each other on TV in the nineties (quite a bit of it on my old show), but at least we could stand to sit in the same room.

Now what we have are factions that only want to hear the bits that allow them to feel superior to the deplorable people on the other side. People not only don't want to hear a countering view, they often want to make those offering it disappear—either actively, by canceling them, or passively, by ignoring them. I'm sure I've lost fans over the years for not toeing the line they wished I would toe; I do not miss them. This show is not for them. My show, and this book, is for those with an open mind and those who recognize that, especially now, there's ample crazy on both sides.

I wish it were not so. Things were easier for me, and it was easier for people to understand me, during the Bush-Obama years. Before wokeness, at first a noble directive to remain alert to injustice, morphed into an ugly authoritarianism, and often in support of bad ideas.

One reason I did this book is because it's almost impossible to understand where I'm coming from *without* it; it's not like one of those books where you can get the gist in a few excerpts. I'm sure watching *Real Time* can sometimes make it appear to viewers that I'm all over the map politically, and there's a reason for that—I'm serving many masters as the host of the show: on any one given night, depending on who I'm talking to—and sometimes debating with—one aspect of an issue can dominate the discussion and all the audience will hear is a sliver of what I'd like to say on that issue. I have to allow multiple guests to have their say, and also, in a freewheeling debate format, people just cut you off a lot before you can express the full scope of your take. Or we just run out of time and have to move on to the next topic—it is, after all, a show in which I'm trying to catch the audience up on what I think they should know

about what happened in that week; that is Job One. So philosophical coherence can get lost in all that, and this book hopes to remedy that.

But the danger is not equal—I've tried to be clear that I don't think it is. The things I never liked about Republicans, I still don't like: they're too religious; they're fiscal hypocrites who hate when America spends money it doesn't have, except when they're in office, and then it's always perfectly OK; they're largely in denial about racism; and they're insufficiently alarmed about the environment. We are losing an estimated 150 species a day, and I don't think they care.

And then they got worse. They added to that shitty mixtape the embracing of a sociopath, Donald Trump, and being largely accepting of the idea that a right-wing coup is a legitimate response to losing a presidential election. They seem to have adopted that unholy paradox from the Vietnam War: they had to “destroy the village to save it.” They think what the Left is doing is so fundamentally wrong for the country that they are willing to jettison the essence of the country—democracy—to save it. And you just can't have one party dominated by a policy of “Elections only count when we win them, because the other side is nuts.”

Even when the other side *is* nuts, it still must be handled within the democratic process. I understand the argument the Right is making: “Oh, we may be upending the norms of politics and government... perhaps we no longer understand what democracy is... but you on the left no longer understand what *humans* are... and you are upending even more fundamental norms, of life itself. For example, you don't seem to know what a woman is, and we just can't trust the country to people that divorced from reality.”

Yes, I get that argument. It's why I say in one of the editorials: “Let's get this straight: it's not me who's changed, it's the Left, which is now made up of a small contingent who've gone mental and a large contingent who refuse to call them out for it. But I will.”

This is a crucial point: wokeism in its current form is not an extension of liberalism, it is more often its opposite; it is not mostly an expanding of traditional liberalism but an undoing of it.

Tim Scott, running in 2023 as a Black Republican, sounded more like Obama talking about race when he was president than Obama or any Democrat does today. Democrats changed that, not me. There are hundreds of colleges with Black-only dorms and graduation ceremonies, which doesn't exactly seem to jibe with the spirit of diversity that I thought *we* thought was so important at college.

A common rebuttal to this from Democrats is, “Oh sure, there’s crazy stuff on the left, but it’s just a fringe, just a few crazies that don’t amount to anything significant.” I don’t know how to put this gently, so I’ll just say it: you’re wrong.

And this is the problem with being in tightly sealed information bubbles: they don’t show you anything that makes you aware of the stuff your side is doing that you actually might not like. Matt Taibbi put it well when he wrote, “Media firms work backward. They first ask ‘How does our target demographic want to understand what’s just unfolded?’” adding, “Media companies need to get out of the audience-stroking business.”

This is what I’m always trying to do: break through the bubbles. When people say to me, “You make fun of the Left more these days”... well, yes, they’re a lot funnier than they used to be, and I’m a comedian. But also: If I don’t, where else are liberals going to hear it?

Yale University has over 5,000 “administrators” (not professors), and Stanford in 2020 had 10,896 “managerial and professional staff” and 1,789 “administrative and technical staff.” Does that sound crazy to you? It sure does to me. That’s what’s going on at colleges these days, and it has fundamentally changed the nature of higher education. But are you going to hear about it on MSNBC? I doubt it.

There’s a children’s book called *Every Body*, which includes lines like “Before you were born, a group of white men started making up lots of ideas about bodies that weren’t true. They said that one kind of body was the best, and that being fat was bad and skinny was good. They were wrong, but lots of people listened to them.”

I’m sure there are people who applaud that, but to me, it showcases all that is wrong with the Left today: making everything racial, using children as frontline troops in culture wars and blithely denying patent realities: obesity *is* bad for your health.

The *Los Angeles Times* editorial page condemned a proposal to simply allow city authorities to prohibit homeless tents within five hundred feet of *schools*. (Not to be outdone, Oregon now fines *you* for the crime of asking the homeless to move off the street, possibly in front of where you’re trying to run a business.)

MrBeast is one of the biggest stars on YouTube, staging massive stunts that are often charitable giveaways that then pay for themselves when those stunts generate millions of views. In 2023 he did one entitled “Funded Cataract Surgery for 1000 People”—and for this *he* was the bad guy. A reporter for the *Washington Post* tweeted, “What needs curing is society’s view of disabled people,” that this was

“systemic ableism” and that MrBeast “seems to regard disability as something that needs to be solved.”

The *Atlantic* ran a piece entitled “Separating Sports by Sex Doesn’t Make Sense,” which included lines such as “Maintaining the binary in youth sports reinforces the idea that boys are inherently bigger, faster and stronger than girls in a competitive setting.”

The *Atlantic* is not fringe. Neither is the *Washington Post* or the *Los Angeles Times*, so please stop pretending the reality-challenged are a meaningless few. That boys are inherently bigger, faster and stronger than girls is not an “*idea*”—it’s an obvious verity. The *Atlantic* author talks of “researchers”—I assume writing in the *New England Journal of WTF?*—who hypothesize that “the gap they did find between boys and girls was likely due to socialization, not biology.”

This is madness. Separate dorms for separate races? Keeping homeless people *on* the street? Keeping blind people blind, operating on children’s genitalia more wantonly than any other nation now does, cheating women athletes out of winning in their sport? This is your idea of compassion? This is what you think liberalism is?

Please. Seeing is better than not seeing. Separating sports by sex makes perfect, obvious sense. Obesity is not good. Don’t present me with a menu of delirium and then call me a “conservative” because I don’t want to jump on the Crazy Train with you.

I know that some people think it’s me, that I’ve “taken the red pill.” This was another reason I wanted to do this book: it forced me to read over all the editorials we’ve done from 2003 till the strike shut us down in 2023, and it was very instructive. I knew *things* had changed a lot in twenty years—but had I? That was my special focus in researching myself.

And plainly, in the first decade of the show, the amount of space given to bashing Republicans and what they were doing wrong greatly exceeded the critiques of the Left—but that’s because the Left wasn’t doing anything particularly nutty or obnoxious. Obama was a one-man scorched-earth policy for comedy—which was great for the country, he wasn’t a buffoon—but tough on comedians, especially any right-wing comedian trying to find the funny in Nancy Pelosi. Even if you disagreed with her policies, she’s smart and tough—that’s not funny. We had Sarah Palin, a comedy gold mine. It wasn’t a fair fight.

But things change. They’ve changed a lot in the era *Real Time* has been on. I remember doing jokes about how fragile millennials were in the Bush-Obama years

and hearing guests on the show opine that the new generation coming up—Gen Z—was going to backlash all that. But it turned out, they didn't backlash at all. They supercharged it and brought new levels of oversensitivity, victim culture and sheer nonsense that I refuse to pretend is an extension of liberalism.

The fact that someone could believe that the obvious physical differences between the sexes derive from socialization speaks of a fundamental problem we have today: parents raise their kids as peers, telling them they're little geniuses, and then we all wind up pretending the predictable brain farts that would emerge from a child are actual debatable ideas. It reminds me of monarchical states where a five-year-old inherits the throne and then all the courtiers have to rationalize and carry out the whims of a toddler. Kind of like the Trump White House.

So if it seems like I don't like either side... kinda. I like individuals, but I believe when historians look back on this period in American history, they will not divide us into the camps into which we currently divide ourselves.

They will see the same pathologies and unappealing traits on both sides—traits that simply manifest themselves differently. We don't look back on the Romans or the Egyptians and talk about the subjects that brought down their reigns, even though surely they had their internal debates. Historians tend to talk about them *as a people* at a certain time in history and where their minds were collectively. I think they will write about us in the same way.

For example, I think future historians will characterize twenty-first-century Americans as anti-science. The denial about ecological collapse from the Right will strike them that way. But so will pregnant men and censoring the idea that Covid could have originated in a lab because that's "racist."

Both sides are smug. America is a very successful nation, and history shows that when a nation reaches an apex, there seems to be no way of preventing one deleterious side effect: it makes people act like spoiled, entitled assholes who forget what real hardship is and obsess about bullshit. Again, that manifests on both sides, just differently.

Large numbers on both sides will believe anything you send them in an email that denigrates the "other" side or supports their own. Both sides like to cancel people they don't agree with. Both sides are completely fact-free on a host of issues that they nevertheless speak about with great confidence. Although, importantly, with more dire consequences from those on the Right.

Yes, important point: the consequences of the Right's intellectual degeneration are worse both in the short term (we could lose America being run "the old way"—you know, with elections and the rule of law and stuff) and in the long term (we reach a tipping point from the environmental destruction, like if we kill *all* the bees). So there's that.

In 1994 I wrote a piece for *Playboy* magazine called "The Reluctant Conservative," which included this: "I'm more conservative than I ever thought I would be, but when I am I try to own up to the fact that it comes from cynicism about how effective government can really be. It comes from lost idealism, from my brain winning and my heart losing. I go with it when it would be stupid not to, but it's nothing to crow about. It should not be forgotten that being liberal is what a nation should aspire to, just as it is what a person should aspire to. Liberal means open-minded, willing to try new things, eager to get to the next place."

That's from thirty years ago, and I feel fundamentally the same. So I don't take very seriously this idea that I took some red pill. For five years, every Democrat I had on *Real Time* laughed at my "alarmism" when I said Trump would never concede losing an election but we saw how that turned out.

I've always tried to look at every issue, every candidate, every election, anew and dispassionately—it was simply my honest judgment that every Democrat for president was more sane, compassionate and practical than the Republican. I still think Al Gore and John Kerry would have been better than George W. Bush, that Obama was better than McCain or Romney would have been, and that Hillary would have been better, and Biden is better, than Trump.

But the Democrats are without a doubt a nuttier mess than they have ever been before. Here's Obama in 2018 talking about the excesses of his own side: "The average American doesn't think that we have to completely tear down the system and remake it. There are a lot of persuadable voters and... a lot of Democrats... who just want to see things make sense. They just don't want to see crazy stuff."

Ah, yes, the "crazy stuff" doctrine. And how to implement it in an age where the other side is even more dangerous. That's the challenge we find before ourselves as a nation, and the challenge I personally find in going out there every week without the protection of a "team." But the audience has been incredibly loyal, and for that I am eternally grateful. We have a great mutual trust built on love of honesty, not on "You can count on me to sing your tune."

Here's a snippet from the editorial I did on the occasion of turning sixty:

My relationship with the audience is the relationship of my life. Kids? I don't have time for kids, I've got to rewrite this editorial. It's always been where I put my energy. It's what I love most. That's my truth; that's the way I was born; that's what my body is telling me to do, and always has. It's why I've always treated the audience like they're my friend—and I mean a real friend. I trust them enough to say things they may not want to hear. We don't agree on everything, and we don't have to, because friends don't leave each other over that. We even fight sometimes, because honesty is love, and friends don't bullshit each other.

I know, you get that already. Or else you wouldn't be reading this.

1

PARTIES

UNQUALIFIED SUCCESS

Name almost any job: dental hygienist, rodeo clown, dog walker, mall Santa, chicken-sexer—they all demand some kind of definable skill set. The one exception is member of Congress.

You can be in jail and get this job. You can be deranged and get this job. If you have a heart attack, they just let your wife start doing it. All you need is a smile and a flag pin. I'd say all you need is a pulse, but dead people have been elected to Congress; much more is required of an immigrant taking the citizenship test. In forty-eight states you can't vote if you're *in* prison, but in every state, you can run for Congress *from* prison.

Unremarkable people can get a remarkable life in Congress, and that's what keeps the average backbencher sticking with party-dictated bullshit. It guarantees them something that's bigger than faith, family, country or objective reality: they get to keep the best job they could ever get with absolutely nothing to recommend their lazy, ignorant ass for it.

College degree? You don't even need a high school degree. Lauren Boebert didn't get one, and she sits on the Budget Committee. If she wasn't in Congress, she could probably get a shift at a truck stop, dusting the jerky.

But then she wouldn't have two paid-for offices, one in DC, one in her district. She wouldn't have a staff that answers the phone for her and kisses her ass all day. No one would put her on TV and ask her opinions. She couldn't go on exotic paid-for trips—I mean, fact-finding missions.

If you want to know what is so great that it can make someone say anything they're told to say, it's this: the title, the office, the staff, the attention, the good table at the restaurant. "Congressperson" is literally the only job in the world you can get with so much prestige and so many perks while being a complete doofus with absolutely no skills, knowledge or qualifications.

Mike Johnson, I guess, could mop up puke at the Sonic, but it would take him all day. But in Congress, puke-mopper Mike Johnson is a big deal. A man of respect. When he walks in and asks for the best table, they know what to say: "Sir, this is PetSmart, the Cheesecake Factory is next door."

A job in Congress is just so much better than racking the weights at CrossFit, which is what Marjorie Taylor Greene did before she set her crazy eyes on the prize. And once you've got the gig, it's yours for life. The reelection rate in the House for incumbents in 2022 was 95 percent—that's better job security than a pedophile priest has.

In 2022, a video went viral of a Walmart employee quitting her job very publicly. She got on the PA and let it all out: "Fuck this company, fuck this position, and fuck that big lazy bitch Chris Price, I fucking quit!" Texas representative Chip Roy also once told Congress to take *his* job and shove it. He said: "This institution is a sham. And we should adjourn and shut this place down."

But Chip Roy will never quit. Because there are no other jobs where a moron gets paid to ride around in a limo. Chip gets paid a hundred and seventy-five grand a year, free medical, a great pension, with half the year off, plus a million-and-a-half-dollars-a-year "allowance" for decorating the office, or, um, "sundries." Oh, also: Lobbyists blow him. And he gets to be on TV for doing nothing, which as we all know, is the American dream.

And by "doing nothing," I mean literally. Once you get elected, you don't have to actually do anything. There's no year-end performance review. Nobody calls you into an office and says, "I don't think this is working out." You have, essentially, no boss.

Well, except for the voters. That's the one thing you must do to keep all these perks coming: if your district is full of people who think the election was rigged, or vaccines have microchips in them, or men can have babies, you have to agree, and then repeat it in Congress. And they do.

Nancy Mace is a House member from South Carolina, the first woman to graduate from the Citadel. After January 6, she was outraged and stood up to her party, giving a dozen interviews in a single day condemning Trump. Soon after, she wouldn't even

talk about it. Then she voted to oust Liz Cheney for making the exact same case she herself had made.

A lot of people in America think she's a patriot, but she looks to me like a supplicant for the corner office. She supported an insurrection for the "likes."

OWNING THE FIBS

George Santos is the somehow-elected Republican House member from Long Island who represents a growing segment of American society: liars.

Now, if you're sort of hazy on the details of Santos's life, don't worry, so's he. When they film his biography, it'll start with "Based on a false story." He lied about his schooling, his career, his sexuality, his charity work—what kind of family raises a person like this? We don't know because he lied about them too. He lies like a goose shits—if he's not doing it that very moment, he's about to.

Santos said he attended the prestigious Horace Mann prep school; they have no record of him. Nor does NYU, where he said he got an MBA, or Baruch College, where he falsely claimed to have graduated in the top 1 percent of his class and starred on the volleyball team. I'd say you can't make this shit up, but he just made this shit up.

And it raises a lot of questions, starting with: If you're going to lie, why volleyball? He also claimed he ran an animal charity that neutered three thousand stray cats. He didn't, but again, what a strange thing to brag about.

OK, so it's easy to make fun of George Santos, but we shouldn't be missing the bigger picture with him—because this man has pioneered something completely new in American politics. Of course, we've seen liars before, but it was always about tacking from the fringes to the center of your own party—what Mitt Romney called "shaking the Etch A Sketch." Santos, however, is the first to realize that since we are all in our hermetically sealed media bubbles now, you can pretend to be everything to voters in *both* parties, and no one on either side will notice.

Some of Santos's lies appeal to far-right Republicans, like being all in on Trump's election denying. Or making the white power sign in the halls of Congress. Or claiming he was a Wall Street wunderkind who made millions working at Goldman Sachs, which, of course, he didn't, or that he was a luxury yacht broker, which, of course, he wasn't.

But Santos's district is not a Republican district: Biden won it by eight points. So how did a Trump-loving, election-denying white nationalist get elected in a Democrat-leaning district? Simple—he told them what they wanted to hear too.

Liberals love identity politics and victimhood, so George said he had a brain tumor. He also said he was one of the first New Yorkers hospitalized for Covid. He said he lost four coworkers in the famous Pulse nightclub shooting in 2016.

George has said he's from Brazil, which is overwhelmingly Catholic, but when he ran in New York he said he was Jewish and that his grandparents fled Ukraine to escape the Nazis. That's right, his Jewish Ukrainian forefathers escaped the Holocaust by being born Catholic in Brazil. His immigration policy is "We must stop people like me from getting into this country."

Also, he claims to be half Black, although I doubt it's the half that wears a blazer with a fleece vest. Oh—and he's gay. Or at least he is since he divorced the woman he was married to up until two weeks before the campaign started.

Yes, George knows where the sweet spots are with Democrats too. He once said, "I'm very much gay." What does that mean, "very much gay"? You have a blue checkmark on Grindr?

For Republicans, George bragged that he "personally attended the insurrection" on January 6 and tweeted hashtags like #DemsAreDestroyingAmerica. But that obviously didn't matter to plenty of Democrats in his district. What mattered is that he's a brave, sad, proudly gay, half-Black, Latino Holocaust victim. With a brain tumor. Vote for him? I'm surprised they didn't have him host the Oscars.

Everybody keeps asking, "How could a guy like this happen?" I'll tell you how: because no one cares anymore about substance. It's all tribalism. The only thing that matters is "Is he on our team?" "Is he doing our schtick?" Santos is just the first one to realize you could do both sides' schtick and get away with it because people have completely tuned out anything that doesn't already fit their narrative. Republicans love a winner, and Democrats love someone whose life story makes you want to kill yourself.

WORLD WAR ME

America in our current age suffers acutely from a particular disease of the mind, which is: everything proves what we already believed, and everything goes back to the thing we already hate. All issues today, from pandemic to war, become a stress test for our

reflexive partisanship: Can you take a vastly complex situation that is 100 percent *not* about your thing and somehow still make it about your thing? And our answer is: watch me.

Americans will put anything new in our mouths and nothing new in our heads. So naturally Republicans blamed Putin's invasion of Ukraine on Biden being the worst president ever, and Democrats blamed it on Trump's being the worst president ever. Which he was; there is that.

But I'm not sure I can follow Biden's logic all the way when he dragged January 6 into this by saying, "Look, how would you feel if you saw crowds storm and break down the doors of the British Parliament, kill five cops, injure a hundred and forty-five? Or the German Bundestag? Or the Italian parliament? I think you'd wonder."

OK, but if Putin thought Trump was really that supportive of him, why didn't he invade when Trump was in office? It's at least worth asking that question if you're not locked into one intransigent thought.

Nikole Hannah-Jones is the curator of the 1619 Project, which posits racism as the deciding factor in pretty much every single issue in America—or, apparently, anywhere. She said, "We should care about Ukraine. But not because the people appear white... all people deserve to be free and to be welcomed when their countries are at war."

Of course. Agreed. And the people there don't *appear* white—they are. Maybe it should be a reminder that when two of the whitest people in the world fight each other, racism is bad, but other things are bad too. It's not like an avocado, you don't have to put it in everything.

Republican presidential hopeful Nikki Haley knows why the mess in Ukraine happened: "The reason Ukraine is in this situation... is the United States has been completely and totally distracted... We have to stop this national self-loathing that's happening in our country." Of course! Self-loathing! I hate myself for not thinking of that!

Can you guess what Pat Robertson thought was behind the war in Ukraine? I'll give you a hint: in 1980, 1990, 2006 and 2020, Pat predicted the end of the world due to some troubling story in the news. So it wasn't out of character for Pat to say, practically with his dying breath, that Putin "went into the Ukraine, but that wasn't his goal. His goal was to move against Israel."

Because that's where the Bible says the world will end—in Israel. It's where Pat's flight to Jesusville departed from. By way of Ukraine. Who's booking this trip, Delta?

And then it gets really strange: QAnon John says, “I don’t see this ‘invasion’ of Ukraine as a ‘bad’ thing. I see it as a clearing out of a very corrupt center of operations for the Cabal.” Ah yes, the Cabal, that’s the pedophile ring of elitist baby-eaters that QAnon believes is the real problem in the world, and naturally when war breaks out, it’s really about that.

No wonder the government puts chips in the vaccine to track you people.

Vanity Fair wants you to know that “the fight for Ukraine is also a fight for LGBTQ rights,” and conversely Colonel Mitchell Swan, a Republican who ran for Congress in Georgia, said, “Allowing transgender individuals to serve sends a message to our adversaries that we are more focused on social experimentation than on the defense of our nation.”

I see. Transgender, that’s the key to the Ukrainian situation. Yeah, Putin was on the fence about invading, and then one night he was watching a *M*A*S*H* rerun and saw Corporal Klinger in a dress and said, “Send in the tanks!”

Fox News’s Monica Crowley’s obsession has always been cancel culture, and so naturally she said, “Between the fierce Ukrainian resistance and the sanctions... Russia is being canceled.” Wait, the Ukrainians shouldn’t resist an invasion because that makes them part of cancel culture? But isn’t *their* country what’s getting canceled?

Justin Bieber once visited Anne Frank’s attic in Amsterdam and wrote in the guest book: “Anne was a great girl. Hopefully she would have been a Belieber.” That’s what all these people sound like. Don’t take this personally, but don’t take everything personally. Ukraine is not mostly about your pet grievances—it’s about Vladimir Putin’s.

And Putin is bad—very, very bad. He pushes people out of windows and cheats at hockey. But he’s still better than the guy who brings every conversation back to Bitcoin. My pet cause is PETA, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, but I don’t think Ukraine got invaded because we haven’t neutered enough cats.

And I guarantee you that right now, somewhere, some guy who can’t get it up is telling a girl, “This never happened before Ukraine.”

PRUDE AWAKENING

In 2021, CNN described a night out with Republican congressman Matt Gaetz this way: “The partygoers, at times dressed in formal wear from a political event they’d just

left, mingled and shared drugs like cocaine and ecstasy. Some had sex.”

Wait a minute: Wild hotel-suite parties—shouldn't that be a Democratic thing? Shouldn't Democrats be the party of free love and fun and forgetting where you parked your car? Republicans can't be the “conservative,” stick-up-your-ass party and then take our drugs and fuck our women. JFK used to have nude pool parties in the White House. Now the politician who comes closest to carrying on that legacy is Matt Gaetz?

Republicans can't spend decades chastising liberals for being too permissive about sex and drugs and then be completely silent about their recent embrace of both.

And Gaetz isn't the only one: former Republican House speaker John Boehner now sells pot for a living—my old job. Marjorie Taylor Greene was reportedly into “polyamorous tantric-sex,” and Ashli Babbitt, the MAGA warrior who died storming the Capitol, turns out to have been in a throuple with her husband and another woman. And don't get me started on Trump.

Even their spiritual advisers are freaks. Jerry Falwell Jr. apparently likes to relax after a hard day at Bible college by watching the pool boy do the missus. I know Republicans are lazy and they love outsourcing, but come on. This is a long way from when his father made it a national issue that one of the Teletubbies was purple = gay, duh.

What happened? Republicans always sounded like Grover Norquist when he said of a Kansas congressman caught in a strip club: “Because Politico did an exposé on his lap dance with a naked lady in a strip club, he's not the kind of person you can ask your sister to vote for anymore.”

That's the Republican Party I know! So uptight they could grind diamonds in their ass. While liberals used their asses the way God intended: to smuggle drugs.

You could always count on Republicans to be the fuddy-duddies, the wet blankets, the bores. The “Moral Majority.” Nixon started the war on drugs, and Nancy Reagan never stopped spitting her stupid catchphrase “Just Say No” about it. Her husband had a commission to root out pornography. If it was fun, Republicans were against it.

They got apoplectic over Clinton getting a blow job. They invented abstinence-only education. Mitt Romney has never seen himself naked. John Ashcroft once covered the tits on a statue. Rick Santorum wears a sweater vest.

Newt Gingrich once said Democrats were “the party of total hedonism, total exhibitionism, total bizarreness, total weirdness.” Well, on a good night, yes. And

frankly, Newt, knowing that you believe what I did on an average Friday night was morally reprehensible just made it all the more fun.

I don't want to live in a world where liberals are the uptight ones and conservatives do drugs and get laid. Once upon a time, the Right were the ones offended by everything. They were the party of speech codes and blacklists and moral panics and demanding some TV show had to go.

And now that's liberals? Yes, it is. *We're* the fun suckers now, sucking the fun out of everything: Halloween, the Oscars, childhood, Twitter, comedy. It's like woke kids on campus decided to be all the worst parts of a Southern Baptist, and that's wrong. Because it's cultural appropriation.

If Democrats had always policed morality as hard as they do now, they'd be down a lot of heroes: no FDR, no JFK or RFK, no LBJ, no Clinton, no Martin Luther King Jr. Democrats are now the party that can't tell the difference between Anthony Weiner and Al Franken.

Or Katie Hill, an up-and-coming Democratic congresswoman from California who had to resign because, like Ashli Babbitt, she was found to be in a throuple. And pictured holding a bong, which was too much for our new puritanical Democratic Party. Quite the opposite, a woman in a throuple holding a bong should be the Democrats' logo: You're the throuple people, the bong people, the tantric sex gurus—not Matt Gaetz! You did fucking in the mud and bra burning and “turn on, tune in and drop out” before it was cool, and they're the party that won't bake wedding cakes for gay people. It's time to switch back.

Because frankly, you're not good at being us, and being you sucks.

PUNCH-DRUNK GOV

When someday soon an actual brawl breaks out on the floor of Congress, don't say I didn't tell you it was coming. And oh yes, it's coming—the kind of thing we've seen many times from all over the world. It could be its own show called *Parliament Fights*, where a perfectly normal debate in some country's legislative house devolves into an actual brawl.

When Americans see bad things happen overseas we always think, “It will never happen here.” We thought that about terrorism, and mask-wearing, and being one of those countries where people shit in the street.