

VERBAL BURLESEQUÉ

RANTS ECOLOGICALLY POWERED BY CRITICAL THINKING

JOHN ROTTEN SEX PISTOL – ALL IN FOR TRUMP 2020

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So, John Lydon aka Johnny Rotten (Sex Pistols, Public Image Ltd) came out earlier this month in an interview with the BBC saying he will vote for Donald Trump in the upcoming election.

Lydon, like myself, is an English born, naturalized American citizen now living in the US. Having US citizenship allows us to vote, unlike green card holders who are taxed without representation. He lives in California and I live up the west coast in Washington state. We are both working musicians who come from an English punk rock background. But what planet is Lydon living on? Talking out of his bad clown pants to put it mildly ...



Lydon suggested that Trump had improved the lives of Americans by tackling unemployment rates and keeping the US economy running, and that his 'character flaws' can be overlooked so long as he keeps the economy running.

The situation on the ground is actually very different, though having distanced himself from his London working class roots, it seemingly remains invisible to Lydon in his Los Angeles bubble. As Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, an Assistant Professor in the Department of African- American Studies at Princeton University, succinctly put it, Trump's handling of Covid-19 resulted in "millions falling into poverty, millions on the edge of eviction, millions going hungry, millions losing their healthcare (whilst) this megalomaniac dime store dictator puts his knee of the neck of a nation."

John Lydon has been seduced by the number #1 Republican propaganda juggernaut about how great the US economy is doing, meaning the stock market and GDP. In other words, Lydon is really not paying attention and is getting his 'news' from the echo chamber of the mainstream media who almost exclusively employ economically conservative experts to talk about the wonders of the free market economy of magically solving everybody's problems all at once.

At the same time, the same mainstream media simply does not invite any content which actually questions the primacy of US brand predator capitalism. Exhibit A: the rapid mass mobilization of what we might call the 'Wall Street always wins' ticket of Republicans, corporate Democrats and the mainstream media after Bernie Sanders won the Nevada primary in February 2020. In other words, their first job was to get rid of any candidate who questioned capitalism—and meant it—by running on a platform of re-ordering the economy by actually redistributing wealth.

This *voodonomics*, tabulating the fortunes of the obscenely wealthy as a measure of economic success of a country is basic propaganda for the bi-partisan neoliberal agenda which has seen wealth inequality skyrocket over the past four decades of denial. It is precisely why you never see poor people interviewed on mainstream news and why the presidential debates never talk about poverty, because poverty is one of the numerous red flags that trickledown economics, simply does not and has never worked as advertized. In other words, the economy simply does not, and is not meant to work for most people.

Another pertinent red flag would be the current situation of record climate fires in Lydon's California, and the second worst year of climate fires here in my Washington state, both the result of predator capitalism's unrestrained worst excesses. And the reason why climate change is so little discussed in the

corporate owned mainstream media? Because to do so would undermine the central plank of free market voodooconomics, by revealing that not only does capitalism not solve societal problems, but it deliberately exacerbates them for short term profit. You would think Lydon, living in California would see this with his own eyes, or at least smell the smoke? Apparently not.

Back in 2017 in an interview with the *Independent* newspaper in the UK Lydon signaled his shift from 'kind of being opposed' to Trump in 2016 to expressing support for Trump saying that "What I dislike is the left-wing media in America are trying to smear the bloke as a racist and that's completely not true." Lydon here again fell for the propaganda, and frames the discussion by reiterating the talking points pioneered in recent times by the Murdoch Fox News led corporate media i.e. left wing = bad, right wing posing as the 'reasonable' center = good.

That Trump was a racist in 2016 and remains ever more adamantly so in 2020 is beyond all reasonable doubt, with his deliberate daily dog whistles and bull horn cries to rile up the fascist tendencies of his electoral base. In the same 2017 interview Lydon also expressed support for the right-wing UK politician Nigel Farage and explained his switching from an anti-Brexit to a pro-Brexit position claiming 'the working class have spoken.' Lydon has always sought to position himself as a curmudgeonly 'chaos agent' in favor of 'shaking things up.' However, his apologizing for right wing politicians, ostensibly as the means to getting the working class actively engaged in politics again, not only ignores the fact that working class dissent has existed throughout the decades of neoliberalism, but also emboldens nationalist politicians to be more brazen in the deployment of divide and rule fascist politics.

Given his anti-establishment background, his working class roots and the fact that he is a well travelled musician we might have hoped for more from Johnny Rotten, but in 2020 he seems to be a case study of someone whose consent has been manufactured.

At the end of the 2020 interview with the BBC Lydon gave his own rationale. "Yes of course I'm voting for Trump. A bad person or not. I don't want a politician running the world anymore ... You want a businessman? A business man is a challenge to me ... cos I could definitely do with some, quite a few tips to run my own a little more efficiently."

Trump being a businessman whose hotel and casino businesses have filed for bankruptcy six times between 1991 and 2009, and a businessman who is currently \$420million in debt to some unknown party/parties. Trump's most over inflated and oft repeated claim about himself is how he has steered the US economy to the new heights of Making America Great Again. The Covid-19 pandemic, put an actual dent in this strategy, but nonetheless did nothing to limit the precedence Trump and the GOP making these same 'Masters-of-the-Universe-that-is-the-Economy' claims. And there is nothing more like being a politician than governing by stealth.

Trump ran on a winning platform in 2016 described by Steve Bannon as "Drain the Swamp. Lock Her Up. Build A Wall," ie Trump successfully played the role of the 'chaos agent' falsely purporting to be man-of-the-people, to 'shake things up.' And whilst he may have shaken the etiquette of Washington DC niceties, his populism was a cover for actually being a ruthlessly effective Trojan Horse for predator capitalism. In 2020 the propaganda is working again at least on John Lydon.

The fact that this kind of propaganda still has traction is testament to the long standing and deliberate neoliberal strategies, of ever-increasing prices for basic necessities, whilst keep most of us entrapped in jobs with extending hours and declining wages. And if we have any free time left, we are seen as easy meat for being manipulated by entertainment disguised as 'news,' where a carnival barker clown sucks all the oxygen out of any meaningful analysis by his daily antics. The desired result leaving us prey to the headline soundbites that sway votes, such as the self-defeating lie upon the lies that 'Republicans' are best adapted to maintaining the above mentioned fabled economy. In Lydon's case it seems to be seeing Trump as a fellow chaos agent that has done the trick in securing his vote.

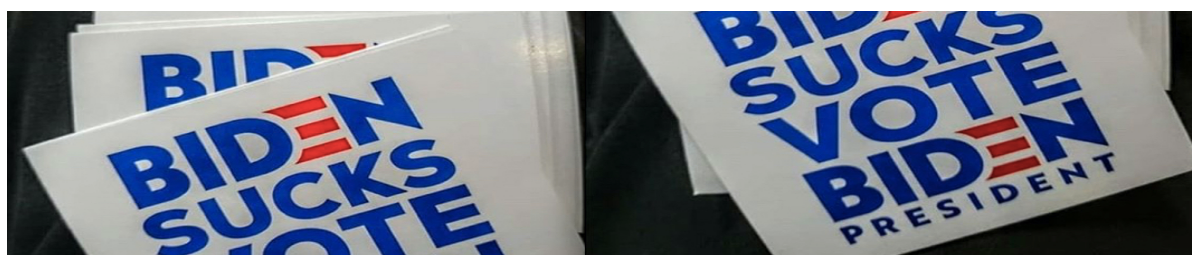
Ever since Bill Clinton won an election in 1992 on a platform of "It's the economy stupid!" the Republicans adopted the message as their own, with 24/7 broadcasting, boasting their own mastery of all things 'economy' as a cover for their actual 'on steroids' operations of funneling the wealth upwards by any means necessary. Of course, Corporate Democrats also do this in earnest, and bear much responsibility for Trump's rise, not least by abandoning the working class in favor of their political donors, began in 2017, and have continued since to enable many of Trump's worst excesses. However, the GOP Republicans have a

ruthless streak that often successfully, but falsely, targets the Democrats as predestined to ruin the fabled economy by raising taxes. Again, Lydon evidently buys into this GOP framing.

And so, the always flawed, but sometimes functioning version of democracy that has existed in the US received a body blow in 2016, with the triumph of all of the above GOP propaganda in the real terms of getting just enough working class voters in swing states to vote against their best interests and install Trump in the first place.

In this context, the actual political situation on the ground here in US is that as soon as the establishment rallied to gift Joe Biden the nomination over Bernie Sanders in the Democratic primary, the neoliberal 'Wall Street always wins' model, assured itself that it will win the 2020 election. However, to ignore, as Lydon does, the fact that in Trump and the GOP we have seen a president and party openly embrace and advocate for the kind of 'fascist regime' Lydon once envisioned in the Sex Pistols song, "God Save the Queen."

So, I say to John Lydon, wise up, search beyond the headlines (and Fox News anger points) and remember where you came from. Or, as the memes currently circulating have it: "Biden Sucks! Vote Biden." (anonymous), and "I'm voting for Biden because I'd rather fight to dismantle the two-party system under a capitalist oligarchy than under a militarized fascist regime." (Blake Mundell). Or, as Dr Cornel West succinctly put it: "An anti-fascist vote is NOT an endorsement of the Democratic party."



So, with none of the illusions that many people had at the start of the Obama presidency in 2008, having since had the hope for change dashed a thousand times over, we start fighting Biden and Harris on day one.

