

Unfortunately, Voters Aren't "the Adults in the Room"

On Election Day, 1976, I was eight days away from turning 10 years old. As my morning school bus passed the lone polling place in my tiny town, I leaned out the window and yelled, at the top of my lungs, "Vote for Carter!"

I had three reasons for supporting Jimmy Carter. I'd like to think that the biggest one was that I had actually read and agreed with his campaign book (*Why Not The Best?*) — yes, really, I had somehow scraped up a couple of dollars in change to buy a paperback no normal 9-year-old would have been interested in — but realistically the other two reasons were far more compelling.

First, Gerald Ford was bald. Yes, I was just that petty.

Second, a couple of years before, I had turned on the TV before school to find *Captain Kangaroo* preempted by coverage of Richard Nixon's resignation, permanently poisoning my mind against Tricky Dick and anyone associated with him.

No, I didn't really understand the issues at play, or the policy differences between the two candidates, or what the heck "Watergate" was. Did I mention I was nine years old?

Looking at the election-related discourse in America today, I'm unfortunately not seeing as much logic or reason out of the political establishment than 9-year-old me was able to muster 44 years ago.

Donald Trump and the Republican Party want me to know that Joe Biden has been "captured by the radical left." Last time I checked, Biden was the candidate of the center-right Democratic Party. If there's a left in American electoral politics, it's the Green Party. If there's a radical left, it's the Libertarian Party. Biden, I'm told, would "de-fund" police and offer amnesty to millions of undocumented immigrants. Both of those are libertarian positions which he doesn't, sadly, seem to actually hold.

Joe Biden and the Democratic Party want me to know that Donald Trump colluded with Vladimir Putin to rig the 2016 election (a claim for which no credible evidence has emerged after four years of investigations), is trying to do so again (ditto on the evidence), allowed COVID-19 to ravage the country (he thankfully has constitutionally limited powers to do much about that, but he's exceeded those powers in the same ways, although not as much, as Biden promises to), and may be AKSHUALLY HITLERRR!

Even more unfortunately, I hear friends and relatives regurgitate both sets of nonsensical pablum as they metaphorically lean out the school bus window to yell "Vote for [insert name of terrible candidate here]!" And worst of all, THEIR school buses stop at the polling

places and let them off to vote.

“Democracy,” H.L. Mencken wrote, “is the theory that the common people know what they want, and deserve to get it good and hard.”

On the evidence, he wasn't wrong. Of those Americans who bother to vote, 90% or more will probably vote for one of two circus clowns, for all the wrong reasons.

If you plan to vote this November, please consider growing up first.