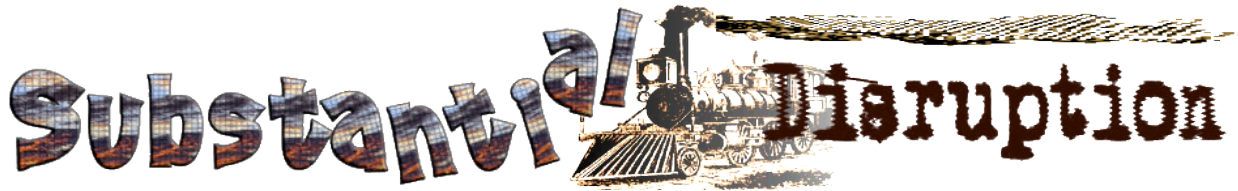


# Substantial Disruption



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## Stupid Kills as Stupid Does

By Mike Tully

The Trump political movement is boiling down to its skeletal essence. History is written in ink, blood, and fire, and 2020's wildfire is rendering the Trump cult like tissue in a cauldron. The flesh on the cult skeleton consisted of independents who couldn't warm up to Hillary Clinton, suburban voters who traditionally voted Republican and reluctantly decided to support their party's nominee, and voters of all categories who preferred a boat-rocker to a well-worn political figure whose "sell buy" date seemed to have passed. All that flesh boils off in 2020's cauldron, leaving only the bony core – the Trump cult.

This is the essence of the Trump cult: stupid masses led by a madman.

Stupidity can have a contagion effect. That is why Trump and his cult wield influence beyond their numbers. Otto von Bismarck [once described politics](#) as "the art of the possible." But it can also be "last refuge of the scoundrel," as [Samuel Johnson termed](#) what he regarded as the phony patriotism of a political rival. The Trump movement, beaten and dragged by the gale force of history, only walks upright because it is aided and abetted by scoundrels. Mitch McConnell knows that Trump is a sociopath. So do Martha McSally and other Republican senators who fear Trump's cultists so much they pledged their souls as a down payment on political survival. Meanwhile, people die needlessly.

As I write this, a cable news network is reporting that more than 4.7 million Americans have been diagnosed with Covid-19 and more than 157,000 have died. [According to Johns-Hopkins](#), the United States, with four percent of the world's population, accounts for nearly 26 percent of its cases. We have suffered more than 22 percent of the planet's Covid-19 related deaths. The United States is about three-fourths the size of the European Union, but reports [nine times as many cases](#) on a daily basis. Much of the world has closed its borders to Americans because we have become a global pathogen.

Jonathan Swann of *Axios* [recently asked Trump](#) about the United States' climbing death toll, which is averaging a thousand or more fatalities every day. "They are dying, that's true," Trump replied. "And it is what it is." Stupid kills as stupid does. So does sociopathy.

Trump and Covid-19 dance a death tango to the tune of Nero's fiddle. No disease has ever enjoyed such an effective patron. "It's going to disappear," he declared on February 27<sup>th</sup>. "One day it's like a miracle—it will disappear." Earlier that same month he stated, "when we get into April, in the warmer weather—that has a very negative effect on that, and that type of a virus," and said it would dissipate in the heat. The United States recorded nearly two million new Covid-19 cases in July. It's hot in July. The President has routinely downplayed the virus and lied about it. The list of presidential fabrications on Covid-19 is too long for this blog post. You can read a [compilation of his lies and distortions](#) in *The Atlantic*. Trump lies, an American dies.

The United States has the world's most advanced medical technology and some of the most brilliant scientists and doctors on the planet. Trump could call upon the Center for Disease Control and Prevention and the Food and Drug Administration for assistance, but ignores them. He has the power to invoke the Defense Production Act to mass produce critical diagnostic testing and personal protective equipment, but mysteriously refuses to do so. Instead of following science, he follows science fiction. He promotes hydroxychloroquine as a cure for Covid-19 in the face of overwhelming evidence that it not only fails to cure the disease, it puts some victims at risk of serious complications, [such as cardiac arrhythmia](#). Cult followers believe his claims and that belief [cost at least one of them his life](#).

Trump recently cited an authority for supporting his contention that people should take hydroxychloroquine, despite the danger: Dr. Stella Immanuel. She appeared in a video with other doctors – or at least people dressed as doctors – and pushed hydroxychloroquine. “I can tell you this, she was on air along with many other doctors,” Trump told reporters. “They were big fans of hydroxychloroquine and I thought she was very impressive.” *The Daily Beast* has [written about Dr. Immanuel's claims](#), “including those about alien DNA and the physical effects of having sex with witches and demons in your dreams.” Social media platforms quickly deleted Dr. Immanuel's video quackery and she was not amused. “Immanuel responded in her own way,” wrote *The Daily Beast*, “declaring that Jesus Christ would destroy Facebook's servers if her videos weren't restored to the platform.” Very impressive. And batshit crazy.

This is where we are at as a nation. The confluence of evil and stupidity is the alchemy of avoidable death. Trump's “let them eat hydroxychloroquine” madness is aided and abetted by a cult following that believes everything he says, by craven Republican politicians who fear Trump's twitter account like a cat fears a vacuum cleaner, and by white-coated lunatics like Dr. Immanuel. As the rest of the world battles the coronavirus with medical weaponry, the U.S. brings disorganization, quackery, delay and duplicity.

Mary Trump, the President's niece and respected clinical psychologist, refers to him as [a likely sociopath](#). *Healthline* [defines sociopaths](#) as people who “can't understand others' feelings. They'll often break rules or make impulsive decisions without feeling guilty for the harm they cause.” Sociopaths say things like “it is what it is” when confronted with the reality that their actions, or inactions, get people killed.

Stupid kills as stupid does – especially when led by a sociopath.