

The Convulsed Republic: The Shooting of Donald Trump

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Global Research, July 14, 2024

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#)

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As a nation, the United States, as if we did not already know, is convulsed. Paranoid and divided, giddy with conspiracy and deranged by a fear of totalitarian seizure, hyper partisan and hostile to debate and any loose definition of facts (this condition afflicts the entire political spectrum), the only thing missing so far was this: an assassination attempt on a presidential candidate.

Till now, we were seeing the cruel spectacle of an aged president visibly and publicly being mauled, a wounded beast let out on safari in order to be hunted by all manner of trophy hunting punditry. Joe Biden has mumbled and fumbled his way through a haze, even as his stage managers desperately try to operate the strings. With each day, another Democratic lawmaker is expressing concern that he voluntarily yields to a fitter model.

In this whole business, the presumptive Republican nominee, Donald Trump, has remained unusually reticent. Let the Democrats keep finding the rope, and the rest will follow. Then came the shots at a rally held in Pennsylvania on July 13.

Cue to the event. Videos aplenty to choose from. Faint gunshots register in the background. Trump seems to grab his head and proceeds to fall to the ground. Secret Service agents form a scrum. Trump is then lifted, blood streaking his head, seemingly from a grazing wound. A moment of near martyred glory follows: Trump, pausing the agents, salutes to the crowd.

"I knew immediately that something was wrong in that I heard a whizzing sound, shots, and immediately felt the bullet ripping through the skin," he [stated](#) in a post on Truth Social. "Much bleeding took place, so I realized what was taking place."

The shooter in question is said to have been shot by the Secret Service, making this the first attempt to assassinate either a president or presidential candidate since an effort was made on Ronald Reagan's life in 1981. One spectator was also killed, with two others "critically injured". "It is incredible that such an act can take place in our Country. Nothing is known at this time about the shooter, who is now dead," stated Trump.

President Biden, in condemning the attack, [told reporters](#) that "the idea - the idea - that there's political violence, or violence in America like this, is just unheard of, it's just not appropriate."

Far from this being incredible, such acts of violence speckle and blood US politics. Candidates have been previously gunned down in cold blood. Presidents, whether going to the theatre or appearing in public motorcades, have been very publicly assassinated.

Within minutes, the metre on the political gauge was ticking, making Trump sound like an oppressed jihadi warrior. These are the effusive [words](#) of Texan Gov. Greg Abbott: "They try to jail him. They try to kill him. It will not work. He is indomitable." The state's Attorney General Ken Paxton [sounded](#) forbiddingly biblical: "The world is evil. Praise God that President Trump was able to walk away on his own. Praying for his complete healing and that this person is captured immediately."

Republican Florida Senator Rick Scott also [gave an inkling](#) about how the shooting will be processed in the political mix. "Democrats and liberals in the media have called Trump a fascist. They've compared him to Hitler. They've tried to lock him up. They tried to remove his Secret Service protection." This was nothing less than "an assassination attempt by a madman inspired by the rhetoric of the radical left."

While the US is a republic proud of overthrowing a supposedly tyrannical monarch, it sports one unassailable kingdom: that of conspiracy. With its vast court, it exercises a curious tyranny over the mind. All can fall for it. There are those who will assume, and already have, that Trump staged his own shooting for the sheer convenience of it all. Nothing he will say will convince them otherwise, seeing that his relationship with truth is estranged beyond repair.

On the other side, there will be a narrative that lone shooters in these instances never exist. Behind the gun is a long cast shadow of the Establishment: the intelligence community, law enforcement, and other dark annexes of the Deep State.

As both Trump and Biden have been seen by their respective detractors as satanic guarantors of doom should they return to the White House, the moderates have a mere sliver to work with. The tedious words of "existential threat" are used as wounding weapons to excoriate opponents.

Despite such cheap language, the United States has previously endured an effort to constitutionally and tangibly divide it, leading to a Civil War that continues its haunting reach. It has also survived the assassination of its political figures, in large part because the Republic, at some point, took less interest in representative politics than politics bought. It was a point Gore Vidal proved relentless on: Why run for office when you can buy its occupants?

A mad patient, an inspired experiment, a cruel manifestation, a sprawling empire, the

republic will continue surviving, even in decline, overseen by corporate boardrooms and unelected figures. “The lesson,” the *Financial Review* [remarked](#) optimistically, “is that American democracy has proven itself resilient.” Despite making the usual error about a political system that is distinctly not democratic – the Founding Fathers hated the idea of a fully represented demos – the paper is unlikely to be proved wrong. A spell of febrile lunacy, however, is likely to follow first.

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