

“The Yeezy Effect”: Rapper Kanye West Joins the U.S. Presidential Race

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Global Research, July 13, 2020

Region: [USA](#)

In-depth Report: [U.S. Elections](#)

“Because when we win, it’s everybody’s birthday.” – Kanye West, [Forbes](#), July 8, 2020

The political absurd has become all modish. With US President Donald Trump turning the White House into his own circus of personalised woe and expectations, other candidates are stepping up to the plate. Make way for Kanye West, whose union of utter vacuity with Kim Kardashian has done much to keep the glossies, blogs and “influencers” rolling in anti-cerebral slush. This time, media outlets have not fallen for the trap they did with Trump, treating his bid for the commander-in-chief position as a sham lunatic’s act not worth covering.

There is even a streak of commentary finding West’s announcement a source of concern rather than mirth. Natasha Lindstaedt [ponders](#) the glass darkly on “the qualities of the celebrity” that tend to be “poorly suited to the duties of governing”, though they can “attract the necessary attention from the media without any prior political accomplishment.” Such figures can be “charismatic” and “anti-establishment” but constitute “a sign of political decline in democracies and wide frustration with professional politicians who voters feel disillusioned and distant from.”

That said, what else can be made of this challenge? West was formerly cosy with Trump who, with other “no-bullshit” characters, as he called them, inspired him to become a footwear magnate and Adidas pinup. “It’s called the Yeezy effect.” During a visit to the Oval Office in 2018, [he spoke](#) of brimming masculine admiration.

“I’m married to a family where there’s not a lot of male energy going on. There’s something about it.”

Putting on the Make America Great Again cap “made me feel like Superman. That’s my favourite superhero. You made a Superman cape for me.”

In some clumsy effort at irony, or irony very much after its brutal slaying, West [called](#) it

“a protest to the segregation of votes in the Black community. Also, other than the fact that I like Trump hotels and the saxophones in the lobby.”

But West is never one to keep adoration or admiration consistent. Eventually, he gazes at the mirror and lets his ego bleat for recognition. On July 4, he made his [announcement](#), fittingly via a tweet, that he would be throwing himself into the electoral contest.

“We must now realize the promise of America in trusting God, unifying our vision and

building our future.”

The stool water that counts for his especially fluid platform can be gathered in [an extensive interview](#) with *Forbes*. He was “taking the red hat off”. His new political movement will be called “the Birthday Party”. Should he find his miraculous way to the White House, he intends using the model put forth by the movie *Black Panther*, which he conceded had not gone down well with a “lot of Africans”. There,

“the king went to visit that lead scientist to have the shoes wrap around her shoes. Just the amount of innovation that can happen, the amount of innovation in medicine - like big pharma - we are going to work, innovate, together.”

There are other points of rambling. Vaccines are “the mark of the beast” which shows where he stands about finding, let alone applying, one for coronavirus. Planned parenthoods, he suggests, “have been placed inside cities by white supremacists to do the Devil’s work.”

Much of West’s challenged opinions count as emetic discharge. His analysis of the electoral contest is not exactly sharp, though many would find his assessment of Joe Biden’s candidacy hard to disagree with. “I’m not saying Trump’s in my way, he may be a part of my way. And Joe Biden? Like come on man, please. You know? Obama’s special. Trump’s special. We say Kanye West is special. America needs special people that lead. Bill Clinton? Special. Joe Biden’s not special.”

It has become almost mandatory to reiterate the political credentials of West, shallow as they are, by recalling his 2005 intervention during the “Concert for Hurricane Relief” held in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. In a fashion similar to Trump, he decided to go off script.

“Yo,” [he told](#) comedian Mike Myers, with whom he was sharing the stage, “I’m going to ad-lib a little bit.”

This led his direct remark that “George Bush doesn’t care about black people.”

The logistical obstacles are probably insuperable, though West insists with typical, scattergun incoherence that he is “speaking with experts, I’m going to speak with Jared Kushner, the White House, with Biden.” He lacks any campaign or electoral machine, though he has the support of Elon Musk and a running mate in mind, a Wyoming preacher by the name of Michelle Tidball. Tidball claims to be a “Biblical life coach” with something of a mental health background. (The line between patient and coach is not a clear one.) One of her golden nuggets [of wisdom](#) on how to handle mental illness is making your bed and doing the dishes.

The paperwork, and deadlines, are both daunting and retarding. The Federal Election Commission must be tackled. Certain battleground states, such as North Carolina and New Mexico, are already closed to registering candidates for the ballot. If West is intending to run as an independent as opposed to seeking the nomination of a political party, thousands of signatures across the US will need to be collected before registration periods end in August and September. This would have to take place in a political environment conditioned by coronavirus.

As a spokesperson for the FEC [put it](#) in a rather businesslike tone to *Billboard*,

“Candidates who’ve won the presidency tend to have gotten into the race much sooner than this.”

To date, there has been no evidence that West has touched the paperwork, though there is, for pure entertainment value, a Form 2 filing [featuring](#) “Ye West”, whose address is optimistically listed as 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. (That’s certainly one way to do it.) Apparently, that candidate is self-funded and running for the Libertarian party. Jo Jorgensen, the party’s official candidate, may not see any hilarity in this.

Fatuity in politics is not necessarily a handicap. Trump gave the US the first Twitter presidency, bypassing official channels with cyber gobbets of rage to his supporters. Like West, he is an egomaniac with dollops of insecurity. In attaining victory in 2016, Trump turned the highest office in Freedom’s land into a grotesque reality show, a process that also implicated his opponents. West’s bid, even if it is unlikely to go far, is oddly fitting.

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