

[An Appalled Republican Considers the Future of the GOP](#)

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[New York Times - The American Abyss](#)

[The Atlantic Article -- Senator Ben Sasse on QAnon and the future of the GOP](#)

- Capitol Riot came dangerously close to extinguishing our democracy
- The choice actions of a few brave officers saved the lives of many lawmakers who could have been harmed by insurrectionists
- First time Capitol has been ransacked since 1812
- Sasse describes the rioters as “invaders attempting to disrupt a constitutionally mandated session of Congress, kidnap the vice president, and somehow force him to declare Trump the victor in an election he lost”
- The violence that took place on January 6 was not a peaceful protest gone wrong, nor a few bad apples
 - It was the culmination of years of propaganda and violent rhetoric that has been largely ignored, or even sometimes encouraged by Republican elected officials
- In order to move forward, Republican party faces a choice
 - “Can either be the party of Eisenhower or the party of Alex Jones”
 - Republicans can either side with the violent mob or with the police, can no longer preach law and order while flirting with dangerous conspiracy theorists
- Marjorie Taylor Greene is example of the “New Republicans”
 - She has been quoted saying anti-semitic remarks and has been involved with various white supremacist groups
 - When she ran for office, Party leadership chose to stay on the sidelines rather than denounce her and possibly lose a Republican seat.
 - In Congress, she has already begun to make a fool of the Republican party, announcing plans to impeach President Biden on his first day in office
- If GOP wants to remain in the political mainstream, Republicans must take a stand against the lies and treachery that has come to define the party over the last four years
- Sasse outlines 3 “maladies of the right”,
 - America’s Junk Food Media Diet
 - For the past 20 years, the media we consume has become more and more divisive as companies have formed around specific political agendas, so that one only watches news channels whose perspective they already agree with
 - Outlets rally their viewers around specific causes, such as OANN and Fox news with the “Stop the Steal” lie
 - Sasse describes these networks as “a machine of grifters turning clicks into cash by telling their audiences what they wanted to hear”

- Has gotten to the point where somewhat respected media channels that have millions of viewers every night were spreading false information, dangerous lies that fueled the violence on January 6
- America's institutional collapse
 - Decline in popularity of establishment officials fueled a rise in populism on both the left and the right
 - Culminated in the Republicans putting forth a nominee who had been a democratic voter and donor for most of his life and the democrats coming close to nominating someone who refused to even join the party until he ran for president (Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders)
 - Failure of conventional politicians to address their constituents' needs has created an opportunity for outlandish populists to take control of the political fray
 - Traditional space for conversations has been eroded by social media platforms
 - Key parts of political life has been outsourced to areas controlled not by the government, but by private companies
 - Big tech has allowed conspiracy theorists to thrive on their platforms with little to no consequences
- America's Loss of Meaning
 - Since WWII, Americans have become less patriotic
 - Less common values that unite us, more divisive domestic issues
 - Tied to loss of faith? America used to have "soul of a church" but as a country we have been ditching religion faster than ever before
 - This has aided the spread of conspiracy theories
 - Give more meaning to mundane political processes
 - "Not just fighting Democrats, fighting child sex trafficking!"
 - Many religious leaders have exacerbated this issue
 - "Made for TV evangelism" abandoned its conscience for political/economic gain during the Trump Era
 - Supports policies and people that go against Christian values

[History Will Judge the Complicit](#)

- Draws comparisons between Trumpism and East German Communism
- Different ideologies, similar methods of permeation into society and spreading rhetoric, creating a state of fear but with no legitimate consequences for speaking out
- Contrasts two Germans from the same background who fell on opposite sides of the ideological spectrum during the Cold War with Mitt Romney and Lindsey Graham.
- Graham served in the Air Force and had a deep commitment to America and its allies
 - Was perceived as a proud centrist and split with his party on many key issues during the Obama era
 - Ran against trump briefly in the 2016 Republican Primary, calling him a "jackass" and stated that his policies and rhetoric was xenophobic
- Mitt Romney came from much different background
 - Mormon with strong ties to Utah but originally from Michigan, moved to Boston and worked in private equity

- Became very wealthy from Bain and Company, the firm he became the President of in 1990
- In 1994 decided to run for Senate of Massachusetts as a Republican, switched from Independent to be on the Republican ticket
- Lost but ran for governor in 2002 as a non partisan centrist and won
- Advocated for universal health care similar to Obamacare
- Ran for Republican presidential nomination in 2008 but lost
- Ran again in 2012 and won, however he lost the general election to Obama
- Both Graham and Romney were loyal Republicans that were centrist and skeptical of the radical, right-wing element of their party
- Both initially disagreed with Trump, stood against everything that they believed in
 - Graham was a proponent of Globalism and the US's role as a world leader
 - Trump spoke of "America First" and disengaging with our allies
 - Romney devoted to democratic traditions and respectful politics, both ideas Trump scorned
- Both men could not stand to support Trump, Romney wrote in his wife and Graham voted for a 3rd party candidate
- Many would think that Graham's small-town, middle class, upbringing and time spent in the Armed Forces would make him stand up to Trump more than Romney, who has been at the forefront of the Republican establishment and represented big-city, big-money, interests
- Instead, the opposite happened, and Graham has consistently stood with Trump over 4 years of constant actions deemed by most to be reprehensible.
- On the other hand, Romney has stuck strong to his moral compass and stood up for what he believes in, breaking with both his president and his party on many vital issues, culminating in him voting to impeach President Trump in 2018. (Romney is expected to vote to impeach the now former president again in the coming weeks)
- During his tenure, Trump waged an assault on our democracy that tested the consciences of all who stood beside him
- Used the constant stream of lies that came from his office to spread propaganda; in a similar way to Communists in Eastern Europe (Trump Inauguration crowd size/Colorado potato beetle)
- Point isn't to make people believe the lie, it's to make people fear the liar
- Small, petty lies at first, so ridiculous that people don't even dwell on them
- Gradual erosion of right and wrong, by the time one realizes how damaging the rhetoric that they're pushing is, it's too late
- Trump was a phony, pretending to be standing with the little guy while giving tax cuts to the wealthy and deregulating industries, enriching himself and other billionaires while his base suffered
 - Rhetoric, not policy victories, was what he gave to his most enthusiastic supporters
 - Pushed "America First", harming our relationship with allies while cozying up to foreign dictators and other strongmen that he inspired to be (Not America First but Trump first)