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The Blood Bag Economy



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Now that Trump and, as some have termed it, the brologarchy, are firmly in power, it might make sense to look at what conditions made this possible and where it might all lead. It's a bizarre and unsettling time for those of us who were screeching at the tops of our lungs about the misdeeds of the Democrats in power during the Biden administration. It's jarring– like you were pissed off before about a psychotic family member who enjoyed gaslighting you, but now you have an honest-to-goodness monster trashing your house, and he also might be interested in eating you.

But on the road to this place we now find ourselves at, it was as if a flaming pile-up of cars could be seen on the horizon, ahead in that expanse of highway. There was ample time to pull

over before reaching the steaming impassible knot of metal—to turn around, to take exits. These options were all in place before reaching the conflagration, but the car being driven by the corporate-controlled Democrats steamed forward. Biden had his lead foot on the accelerator, licking on that damn Aricept-flavored ice cream cone—all the crew in the backseat. Pelosi with her stock picks, Bernie with a very awkward reach around for his friend, AOC making mention of stopping at the billboard-advertised road-side attractions: “See THE THING.....a possible New Deal to make life a little better for the citizens.” But nothing more than a shrug from her as the billboards get passed by—she just wanted to make some noise. And, of course, Harris announcing, “I’m Speaking,” to nobody in particular; nobody is listening.

The liberal Democrats would have you believe that it was those who did not give unadulterated adoration to a genocider, to a man who couldn’t even give a quick and informal fundraising talk in private homes without a teleprompter—that somehow those individuals were the problem in their failed election, not the candidates or the entire rotten system. Once upon a time actual primaries were held that somewhat vetted candidates and in real-time advanced the individuals who might actually win. This is now a bridge too far for the Democrats, instead, they rely on bullying and obfuscation. Promises and hypocrisy. Decisions made privately and court-sanctioned that they are a private entity with every right to do so, never mind the consequences. They pick who will continue to do the corporate bidding, of course, nothing more, nothing less.

The Democrats campaign on the notion that the alternative will simply be the boogeyman, all the while, when said boogeyman wins, they sit with him and joke, showing just how much they believed that rhetoric they spewed. If they truly believed that Trump was the existential threat to democracy that they proclaimed, why on earth would you show up to normalize the royal ascension? A liberal Democrat would probably try to say, well this shows the inherent class of an Obama, of the Democrats, but does this make sense? Would one sit with any of the WW2 pantheon of fascist dictators and giggle and bond due to having “class”? This lack of backbone and palpable ethics reeks to voters and the result is evident.

I will admit for a micro-second when Harris lost, I felt the most disgusting feeling—that is, a feeling that made me embarrassed of my own pettiness. I had that very low-level, not enlightened lizard brain kick in.....it was like, “Well, there you go, you dumb fuckers—that’s what happens when you don’t listen to those of us on the left screaming about your shit candidates”. But that feeling is right up there with the kind of things you yell in an argument and immediately know you didn’t really mean them. Yes, you want consequences for the

disgusting corporate Democratic class, but those consequences will only fall on your fellow working-class citizens, even the ones muddled enough in their heads to think MAGA will somehow work out for them. Obama can joke and schmooze because his life won't change one bit with the onset of the brologarchy. It's all the same when you reach a certain level of wealth.

I do not see an effective change, of course, coming from the Democrats. They did a Hillary 2.0 insulting voters, placing Zionists to go speak in places like Michigan. As I've said before, it almost makes you wonder if they wanted to lose. Is this the game? Good cop/bad cop, but all cops, all the way down, not turtles. You get a shock and (awful) administration, then you get an "oh, we are trying to make it better, but our hands are just plain tired" placeholder subsequent administration. But the unrelenting momentum is that of enshittification (look it up, it's a word) and more difficult lives for all. The push-pull of the Democrat-Republican dynamic keeps almost everyone entranced and their eyes off the magician lifting the money, but this one won't give you a coin back from behind your ear. He even keeps that. Most liberal Democrats believe that Trump is the cause, rather than a symptom, of this very corrupt, up-to-the-highest-bidder society. They don't realize that toxic mold won't grow unless the conditions are pretty squalid.

So what will all of this mean? I suspect a lot of experimentation and then backpedaling after colossal failures. Of course, the end goal is that of privatization of largely everything, a rollback or complete destruction of environmental protections, and a large dollop of economic pain. All of this coupled with techno-surveillance state tactics going after more resources.

What do I mean by said techno-surveillance tactics? I think a wonderful and easily understandable example would be the continuation of the gig economy/surge pricing effect. Cory Doctorow did a marvelous job illustrating this aspect in his short piece "Nurses Whose Shitty Boss is a Shitty App". He describes "Shiftkey"—it's an app that healthcare workers sign up on to take specific shifts from random healthcare entities needing staff but not wanting to pay full-time employees —you know the ones with all those pesky needs like health insurance and sick leave. The app offers shifts, and the healthcare workers are presented with a wage offer for the open slots. The thing is, the app taps into commercially available financial data that lets it know how much money the nurse has in the bank and how much they owe. Then a variable amount of money is offered for the shift. Of course, this enables a low-ball offer when it is evident that the person is in dire financial straits. I think this is one of the best

examples of what this economy will try to get away with. A tax on poverty—it's always existed but now it's feeding on steroids and Chernobyl level radioactive waste.

So this is basically the utopia all the tech billionaires want. A series of city-states operating as separate entities of commerce with the workers operating in a similar manner, as a fluid collateral to be exploited as much as possible. The idea is for the worker to feel like they are in some sort of control in this Libertarian wet-dream economy, but in fact, these workers will be easily pushed into working in crummy situations and will be paid less if they are clearly desperate. This tech-bro dream system is not based on adequate reciprocity, but on aggressive “kick one when they are down” techniques. They would tell you this is just the natural course of things, but we all know how well this technique “works” as we watch our world go up in literal flames. The only reason humans have made it this long is because so many small groups over millennia have worked together and have come up with measures to control the worst impulses of their sociopathic members. But our world today celebrates these excesses and pathologies, making predatory apps like the one used by Shiftkey. Actual products built to screw over the healthcare workers taking care of sick and vulnerable people. It's magnitudes of predation.

Another example of the tech crossover to worker and citizen exploitation that is in the works is that of facial recognition software. Monopolistic entities like Kroger's plan to utilize these new toys. Though they deny they will use any sort of surge/individual pricing with this, the ability will most certainly be there to charge certain people extra using technology of this sort. It's enough of a threat that one of the few members of Congress with a spine, Rashida Tlaib, has raised the alarm for just these sorts of possible practices. To say this isn't possible or likely, one should re-read what entities like Shiftkey are doing and extrapolate. Of course, it's possible—and it's probable.

We are simply living through the Business Plot being enacted in the current day. Trump is the crowd-friendly (well, to the MAGA crowd, that is) symbol, but make no mistake that the real work of funneling the fruits of your labor is being hashed out in the form of these new apps and technologies. Workers will simply feel like they are in quicksand, that it just keeps getting harder and harder to keep up, but the clear reasons for such hardship won't be immediately obvious. It will be algorithms behaving parasitically by design, draining us and sustaining them. We will all be Brian Johnson's son. Blood bag Economies. I wouldn't be shocked to know we are referred to in such a manner within those circles. If you haven't heard about him, Brian Johnson is the tech-bro guy trying to live forever by, among other things, juicing his son for blood. So that's fun, right? And I don't have hope that the

Democrats will become anything beyond a less overtly racist/less anti DEI version of corporate power. They will be the ones patrolling vocabulary and clutching pearls, funding genocide and not mounting any sort of effective counter to reactionary policies.

I do feel the need to address that the all-out assault on DEI and don't forget A (accessibility) would not be going on in this same manner without the Trump administration pushing this cruel policy. This is one of the actual differences between the two parties. The Democrats definitely did not put in safeguards during times of super majorities however, most likely as a calculated risk for ongoing fundraising. But anyway, many individuals like disabled veterans voted in the very policymakers who will implement eugenics-type programs that simply try to shake off the non-productive (in their eyes) members of society— be it to more abject poverty or even death in terms of social murder by eliminating compassionate and supportive programs. It's easy to mock those who voted against their own interests but it is so important not to—we have to keep our empathy intact and realize that not everyone is able to see a charlatan even in the bright light. And for many of those people the last time they felt that they had an extra bit of extra money in their pockets was during the Trump Covid check era. I've heard that opinion voiced out loud in my red state often. It's no wonder since they have seen their lives get harder in the last four years that they have reached out to the “strongman” persona. It is the most predictable outcome—we have seen it over and over in history.

There is a large portion of the population who haven't advanced much beyond the dynamics of a dysfunctional parent-child relationship, and they see the whole world through that lens. Many of these people sidle up to movements like MAGA to try to feel powerful, to feel like they will make Daddy proud. It's easy to feel anger at them, but probably sympathy is the higher road to take. It's difficult though, because they are truly dangerous, being under the spell of a leader they don't question. They feel the intoxicating mix of anger towards the “other” and belonging to what they perceive as a supportive in-group. Of course, the neo-liberals can be just as deprived of rationality in their decision making, but it's more difficult to picture a NIMBY Democrat going all Hutu-Tutsi on your ass than the current crop in power.

But here we are, stuck living through these times; it's what we all have in common. Whatever fate is to befall the United States, it will likely accelerate toward more difficulty and misery for the working class. The fuel for much of this despair will be in the form of these extractive tech advances. They will hope that our apathy and listlessness will carry the day for them as we fall into this new paradigm. But I mention all of this because I think an important initial aspect of dissent will be to understand what is truly going on. Does Kroger's seem to be

targeting you for higher prices with noxious tech? Go to your local Farmer's Market, try to grow what you can, make alliances with those who already grow food. An app like Shiftkey is screwing you over? Refuse to work for them.

The only power we have right now is that of our pocketbooks and our labor. I suspect that events like ICE roundups will slow when our nation's food supply drops precipitously. Much of this will come down to what is profitable for those in power to be doing. The chaos works to help them get privatization, but there's a sweet spot I don't expect them to purposely exceed in terms of disruption. They still want the spice to flow, right?

Overall, I expect it will resemble a Dumpster/Cybertruck fire much of the time. Just an aesthetically unappealing mess. Try to avoid being collateral damage and live to fight another day—work and be kind in your immediate vicinity. And as always, it comes down to a need for fostering local connections. We have to stay informed about which monster company is trying to harvest us (probably all of them, but avoid the most egregious). We need to focus on mutual aid, all of those things that we definitely already know about. And probably the most important takeaway, if you get nothing else out of this piece..... DO NOT let Brian Johnson have any of your blood. He needs to make his own like the rest of us. That man is walking symbolism for what we are going through and putting up with in this, the already trying year of 2025.

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