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COLUMNIST

The Itchy Twitter Finger of Donald Trump and the Future of the GOP

By Carl Golden | December 22, 2020, 12:24 pm | in **Columnist** (<https://www.insidernj.com/category/columnist/>), **News** (<https://www.insidernj.com/category/news/>)



Despite having failed to prevail in any consequential legal challenge to overturn the presidential election, President Trump and his team of conspiracy theorist attorneys — egged on by hardcore supporters and advisers, members of Congress and an element of the media — have continued to insist he was re-elected overwhelmingly and his victory stolen by massive fraud and foreign interference.

Even the most devoted Trump disciples have come to the realization — albeit it reluctantly and bitterly — that the Biden Administration will assume office Jan. 20 and the ex-president will retire to plot a takeover of the Republican Party and his comeback in 2024.

He's made it abundantly clear he will not “go gently into that good night,” but from his redoubt in Florida will give in frequently to his itchy Twitter finger, raise millions of dollars, command as much media attention as possible and attempt to chart the future course of the party.

Given the apparently pointless strategy of litigation perseverance, it is reasonable to ask: “What is the end game here?”

Any hope that the Supreme Court will agree with the president and set aside the election in whole or in part vanished long ago.

The bizarre and dangerous demands that he invoke martial law, suspend the Constitution and remain in office were quickly consigned to the loony bin from whence they emerged.

Even a nascent movement to block the Congress from exercising its Constitutional duty to certify the election was dismissed by Republican Party leaders horrified at the prospect of becoming party to what amounts to a coup to seize power, a dramatic turn of events normally reserved for “Mission Impossible” films set in a banana republic.

Might the end game be a Trumpian strategy to assert a dominating influence over the yet to be written history of the 2020 presidential election?

Could the goal be to assure the Trump view of the election — fraud-riddled and worthy of a RICO violation — be given attention and veracity equal to the Biden view of a victory given him by a nation weary of the tumult, chaos and muddled policies of the past four years?

Trump is an individual obsessed with the acclaim of others, indulging in self-praise at every opportunity even when demonstrably unrealistic.

From his insistence that the audience for his inauguration in 2017 was the largest in history to his repeated claim that he accomplished more on behalf of African Americans than Abraham Lincoln, Trump lifted exaggeration and embellishment to new heights.

He thrives on the roar of the crowd, the chants of support from campaign audiences and the crush of television cameras following his every move while recording his every utterance.

His need for attention and adulation is the equivalent of the human species need for oxygen.

He gleefully and shamelessly diminishes his opponents by hanging derogatory nicknames on them. His vocabulary is stuffed with one or two-word descriptions of the intellectual shortcomings of his critics or anyone who disagrees with him.

It is not at all difficult, then, given his history and personal pathology that defeat at the hands of Joe Biden — the highest and most public rejection of his career — was so devastating and drew the intensity of vitriol embodied in his reaction.

Responding by creating a mythology for academics and scholars to study and accept in their works of history fits neatly into Trump's obsession with bending reality to his will.

The ongoing legal challenges to his failed re-election effort are an integral part of that strategy.

It is crucial to Trump's self-esteem to insert doubts about the legitimacy of Biden's election into the historical record. It is equally important to him that his defeat be presented as a classic case of victimization, that sinister forces at play robbed him of his rightful due and punished millions of Americans who cast votes for him only to see their desires stricken.

Various courts have found no merit in the lawsuits, dismissing them in occasionally harsh terms while pointing out to seasoned attorneys like Rudy Giuliani that rumor and hearsay are not the equivalent of hard evidence.

While stopping short of applying the term frivolous to the suits, the judges suggested the attorneys may return to court when they are able to submit substantive material to support their allegations.

Undeterred, the attorneys forged on, convinced a steady stream of litigation based on unfounded claims, anecdotal evidence and affidavits alleging first hand knowledge of illegal behavior by election officials is necessary to maintain the narrative that Trump was cheated out of a victory that he earned and deserved.

His corps of enablers and those who cling to the notion that votes cast electronically for Trump were hacked by foreign operatives and switched to Biden will continue to urge no letup in the legal challenges, believing that they undermine Biden's legitimacy and call into serious question the ability of government to conduct a scrupulously fair election process.

The greater the attention to the Trump attorneys' legal maneuvering and arguments, the greater their credibility in the eyes of historians who, it is hoped, will accord it equal weight with the Biden narrative.

Seventy- five years ago England's Prime Minister Winston Churchill, was turned out of office and was asked how he felt he'd be treated by history.

"History will be very kind to me," he responded, "because I intend to write it."

Trump, it would appear, plans to follow old Winnie's advice.

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