

Ask A Genius 54 – Trump, the Golden Rule, and the Last 16 Years
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Scott: Back to the bigger picture, to zoom out, the Hollywood perspective is that there is the presentation of more power and influence than there is; whereas, in DC, it is the opposite.

Rick: Let's drop in the apposite quote, though not entirely appropriate, but needs to be said when comparing DC and Hollywood, 'DC is show business for ugly people.'

(Laugh)

Right now, when Trump tweeted Meryl Streep was overrated, you had a competition between an actor, Streep, who is relatively universally regarded as super competent and a decent person versus a guy who often acts as a bully and may, or may not, be competent because his financial and business behaviour are so sketchy that it is so hard to tell. People who are not in favour of Trump like to say that if Trump took the investments from his dad and made reasonable investments, then he would be as or more successful than he is with his real estate shenanigans.

Scott: With Trump, moral or immoral, ethical or unethical, he is good at getting what he wants.

Rick: Yea, we're about to find out if this loose-cannony, triumphy, bullshittyness will be successful in a president. We've never had this kind of huckster. This kind of PT Barnum character as president. It makes everybody nervous because it is tied to the Republican agenda for the most part, which isn't a kind agenda. It is an agenda that says that if everybody takes care of themselves then everything will be fine, and if not fine for you then maybe that is just too bad because we can't save everybody. It is not an everybody pulling together agenda.

Scott: From the Utilitarians to the Social Contract Theorists, or the modern ethical theorists, that hyper-individualist perspective goes against them.

Rick: It goes against the general principle and trend of the Golden Rule. The general direction of civilization, which is to be more inclusive. The Republicans base a lot of stuff on excluding, modern Republicans. The icky republicanism seen now is based on looking at the world and the social acceptance that has been growing for non-majority types and lifestyles, and having backlash against it.

Scott: To be fair, as a lot of the perspective you're speaking to is Left...

Rick: ...yea...

Scott: For some classical liberals, traditional conservatives, and modern libertarians, they are appalled with some of the things he has said and represents.

Rick: Yea, he might screw over the Republicans as much as the Democrats because he hasn't been historically tied to one party. He is tied to doing what he wants, saying what he wants. Any political stances that he has are either his private opinion or designed to get him what he wants.

It is a big experiment that is about to happen, whether a huckster businessman can direct the nation productively.

Scott: One thing is societies function on policies and leaders. Another thing is societies function without the top-down policies and leaders. So, things will be more difficult for some people, but things will still run. It won't be utopia, except maybe the super-rich, but it is not necessarily the end of the world as some insinuate or outright claim.

Rick: Democracy is durable. Over the past few years, you've had Bush as president for half of the time, who is considered by liberals to be one of the worst presidents ever. Then you have Obama considered by many conservatives to be one of the worst presidents ever, but there's a lot of bullshit to that argument.

If you look at the best presidents ever, Obama is probably ranked in the 70th percentile, where Bush is in the bottom quartile, but not among the worst. He wouldn't necessarily make it among the 5 worst presidents in history. He might make it somewhere between the 6th and 12th worst presidents. In any case, you have two presidents considered by two differing wide swathes of the country to be super bad, and America has survived that with its economy intact in terms of at least the stock and in terms first-level employment statistics.

Although, people like to argue, especially those that hate Obama, that the current unemployment rate is 4.7, which is good, but some like to argue it doesn't reflect 90 million people who have given up on finding jobs, which I'm sure has a large bullshit component to it. Anyway, we've survived 16 years of political strife and the country is functioning well. We're about to see whether we can survive at least another 4 years assuming Trump serves out his term of unqualified leadership at the presidential level and Republican control at all levels including the legislative and executive, and soon to be the judicial, but with a population that is more against the soon-to-be government than perhaps ever before.



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