Twitter Thread by Bruce "Snarking and Barking" Bartlett



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I have been on this earth since 1951 and have to say that 2020 was the worst year I ever experienced. Not personally; being retired and a misanthrope with a loving wife made the lockdown fairly easy. I got covid but it was a mild case. So compared to others, I had it easy.

But I cannot think of a worse year than 2020 for most other people. I remember the polio epidemic of the 1950s, but I also remember competent public health officials who kept it under control.

I remember the Kennedy assassination and the awful year of 1968 when we lost Bobby and Dr. King, and the cities burned. (I lived not far from Newark and grew up in Detroit.) But those events left no serious, lasting scars on society. Neither did Watergate in 1974.

Probably the most personally painful events of my adulthood were the gas lines of the 1970s. But at least they didn't kill anyone, just caused a lot of inconvenience. The years since the 1970s were mostly okay as far as the nation and society were concerned except for 9/11,

which tuned out to be more of triumph over adversity than a tragedy. I could not have imagined that less than 20 years later we would kill as many as died on that day every day and the president would do absolutely nothing about it. Even more shockingly,

millions of Americans honestly believe that the pandemic is phony and they blithely spread infections to friends and family as if it is the patriotic thing to do. The utter insanity is beyond my ability to understand. Nothing frightens me more than being forced to deal with

an irrational person. I never imagined that close to half of my fellow Americans were irrational, ready to spread death among the population--including themselves--as some kind of statement of principle for which they are willing to kill and even die themselves.

I am adrift without a compass under such circumstances. I'm a writer and a policy analysts. The only weapons I have are logic and facts. Yet they seem worthless today. The entire Republican Party has become the Know-Nothing Party and are proud of it and to be associated with

violent, racist and authoritarian groups that can only be compared to the Nazis of 1930s Germany. Never in American history have such groups wielded such power and influence as they have today.

It is a very great disappointment to me that that my industry, the media, has done such an extraordinarily bad job of reporting and articulating the causes of our present malaise. The most extraordinary events, such as the deaths of thousands every day, are reported with clinical

detachment--no emotion, no outrage, no blame for those clearly responsible. This is insane. Worse, the media simply report the most absurd lies, conspiracy theories, and crackpot ideas emanating from the Republican Party as if they are just business as usual.

Only very rarely has the media been willing to state the simple truth that our president lies about almost everything, from trivialities to matters that will lead to mass deaths. The media consistently downplay his criminality and that of his party, which has stolen billions

in aid to help those suffering from the pandemic. Yet the administration still cannot get lifesaving vaccines to the people who need them--they sit in warehouses waiting for someone to authorize their distribution. In a sane world. vaccinations would be going on 24/7.

I am at a loss to articulate how deep my confusion & disbelief are at this sad state of affairs. I couldn't imagine it was even possible pre-2017. If I hadn't lived through it & seen it with my owns eyes I wouldn't think it was possible in the world I have lived in for 69 years.

I feel as if I've been magically transported back into the Middle Ages, where some imbecile son of a king has absolute power but lacks the intelligence, education or temperament to wield that power except in some arbitrary manner completely unrelated to the needs of his kingdom.

This is why 2020 is the worst year of my life. No other year since 1951 has been as dismal, deadly or so lacking in optimism, uplift or common decency. Yes there are individual acts of courage and charity--I am in awe of the dedication of doctors and nurses fighting covid.

But as a nation, we have failed to rise to the occasion. The only similar failure I can think of was the failure to confront slavery and racial discrimination. But at least we knew those things were wrong even if we lacked to political will to fix them for too many years.

Now I'm depressed that the bulk of pour citizens just blindly accept death itself as just another cost of living in a modern world, rather than as a challenge that can be conquered if we all pull together. We did this during World War II and on other occasions in our history.

But we seem incapable to doing it today. Why, I don't know. Trump and McConnell, as evil as they are, are not the root cause. The root cause is passivity and a lack of leadership among those that don't drink the Kool Aid of stupidity and insanity on a daily basis.

The sane, competent remnant in government, the media and in our own communities let us down by coping, normalizing, and downplaying just how abnormal the times are and the complete and utter failure of our public institutions to do the jobs they were created to do.

I apologize for ranting. But this is the last day of the year and needed to get this off my chest so I can start fresh tomorrow. Never before have I been so happy to welcome a new year. 2020 has been the worst I have ever experienced. 2021 has to be better.