Twitter Thread by Radley Balko

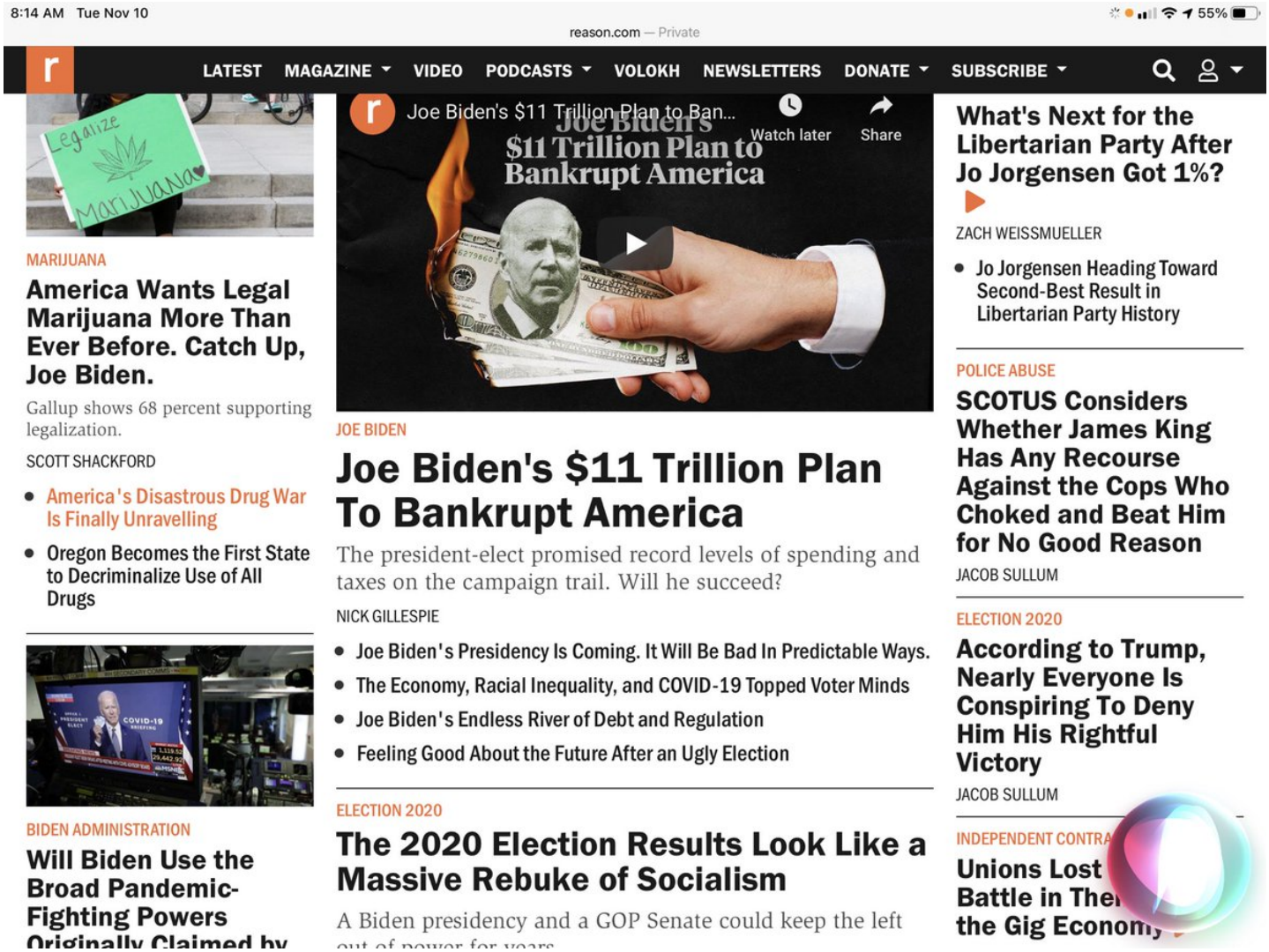


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So shortly after the 2016 election, I pointed out how odd it was that the Reason homepage was dominated by stories either mocking and ridiculing the left for being fearful of what was to come, or articles about how Trump might actually be good for libertarians.

> 1. You know I love you, @reason, but I'm not getting your homepage right now. Lots of mocking the left, lecturing people who are scared...
>
> — Radley Balko (@radleybalko) November 15, 2016

Now, in 2020, we have one party so upset about the election, they're openly fomenting a crisis of democracy. Here's the Reason homepage today. There's one article about all of that. There's a hell of a lot more about the threat posed by Joe Biden. And more riciduling the left.



I'm picking on Reason. And I'll add that there are people there who have sufficiently grasped the threat the last four years, despite the general editorial direction of the magazine. But it really underscores the disappointment I've had with my fellow libertarians in general ...

... in the Trump era. We're supposed to be the alarmists. Proudly! We're supposed to the ones who overreact when government overreaches. Because alarmism is a hell of a lot better than complacency. And history tells us that governments tend not to give powers ...

... back once they've claimed them. In the Trump era, too many libertarians not only stopped being alarmists, they spent most of their time scolding and ridiculing the people who were. I mean, it's still bizarre to me that the philosophy that ...

... wants to abolish the FBI, CIA, DEA, BATF, and DHS (among others) generally only had scorn for "defund the police." The police are never going to be abolished. Yet instead of embracing the momentum, forging alliances, and converting it into useful reform, many libertarians ...

... belittled the activists pushing "defund" as impractical, radical, pie-in-the-sky. *We* are supposed to be radical, impractical, pie-in-the-sky!

A big part of this is that many libertarians still see the left as a bigger threat than the right. I'm baffled by this given...

... the last four years, and what's happening right now. With the exception I guess of regulation and (sort of) taxes, Trumpism has devoured all the areas in which libertarians are supposed to have common ground with the right.

Part of it is also probably stems from the fact...

... that libertarians disdain politics and Sorkinesque visions of government, and Trump has made a farce of all of that. That's fine. I get it. We shouldn't turn to politics to solve all our problems. But we do need to acknowledge that simply choosing to ignore politics comes ...

... from a position of — dare I say it — privilege. If you're DACA, or have family who is undocumented, or have lived here for 20 years under TPS, you can't just "live an apolitical life." We seem to get this when it's a small business owner worried about Biden's regulatory ...

... policy. We seem far less able to empathize with people protesting racism in policing, or ICE abuses, or CBP brutality. This administration wants to zero out refugee intake, unleash the military on protesters, and has openly said any election Trump doesn't win is ...

... fraudulent. (I could go on.) Yet I've had Trump supporting libertarians — prominent ones — tell me over the last two years the real threat to liberty right now is Antifa, or a Black Lives Matter leader who once said she's a Marxist.

I'm glad Biden's win means libertarians...

... will go back to being alarmists. But given the approach too many libertarians took during the Trump years, I suspect it's going to be even more difficult to get people to listen.

And I can't really blame them.