

# NATIONAL REVIEW

## The demon doctor and us

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By now you've heard of Stella Immanuel, the doctor who warns of having sex with demons. (She is dead right about that: It's bad for your health.) The *Daily Beast* published an article about her, [here](#). ("Beast"?) She has unorthodox views on the coronavirus and its treatment. ("Hello, you don't need a mask.") She was the star of a video that went viral.

Yeah, I know: "viral."

President Trump circulated this video on Twitter. He later called Dr. Immanuel "an important voice." He said she was "spectacular," which she certainly is, in a sense. The president's son Donald Jr. said the video was "must watch."

According to the *Beast*, the Immanuel video was "embraced" by Turning Point USA, Diamond & Silk, and other elements of TrumpWorld.

It's easy to make light of all this. But allow me to turn serious for a moment.

For 50 years, William F. Buckley Jr. labored to separate conservatism from kookery. (He had to deal with a lot of kookery when he began his career, and throughout it.) Is that effort faltering?

When young people today — who have never heard of WFB — look at TrumpWorld, do they think, "This is conservatism"?

Pardon the nostalgia, but when I was coming of age, the major conservative politician was Ronald Reagan. Before *him*, it was Barry Goldwater. Before *him*, it was Robert A. Taft. The major conservative writers — the ones whom I drank in — were WFB, Irving Kristol, Thomas Sowell, Paul Johnson, Norman Podhoretz, George Will, et al.

That was ConservativeWorld, at least as I saw it. It was very attractive, intellectually and stylistically. In its ideals as well.

How about now? This is one of the things I wonder about, and worry about. If young Americans equate conservatism with Trump, Trumpism, and TrumpWorld, who can blame them?

- President Trump, down in the polls, and battling serious headwinds, has now suggested a delay in the election. As many have pointed out, this country held a presidential election in the middle of a civil war.

Back in April, Joe Biden said, “Mark my words, I think he is going to try to kick back the election somehow, come up with some rationale why it can’t be held.” Lots of people scoffed at this. Maybe those scoffs should be taken back?

I say to Republicans, and also to my fellow conservatives: “What would we say about a Democratic president, who, in the same circumstances as Trump’s, suggested a delay in the election? Whatever that is, we should say just the same now.”

- [Here](#) is an interesting story, which will be lost in the whirlwind.

Russian intelligence services are using a trio of English-language websites to spread disinformation about the coronavirus pandemic, seeking to exploit a crisis that America is struggling to contain ahead of the presidential election in November, U.S. officials said Tuesday.

- Hey, did you know about [this](#)? I did not (or if I did, I had forgotten). Let me quote you a paragraph:

“It’s one of the great medical stories of all time,” says Howard Markel, the University of Michigan physician and medical historian who coined the term “flatten the curve” in relation to COVID-19. “We should take heart and inspiration from the courage, bravery, and unity of doctors, nurses, and patients alike to combat an infectious foe. We need to do that today, and they did it under much more dire circumstances.”

The subject: a typhus outbreak in the Warsaw Ghetto.

- I’d like to mention something about [Jonathan Swan’s interview with President Trump](#) this week. First, go back to the 2016 presidential cycle for a minute.

Joe Scarborough asked Trump about Vladimir Putin’s killing of political opponents. Trump said, “Well, I think our country does plenty of killing also.”

After the inauguration, Bill O’Reilly said, “Putin’s a killer.” President Trump replied, “There are a lot of killers. We’ve got a lot of killers. What, you think our country’s so innocent?”

Okay, back to the campaign — during which Trump was asked about Erdogan’s crackdown on civil liberties. “When the world looks at how bad the United States is,” said Trump, “and then we go and talk about civil liberties, I don’t think we’re a very good messenger.”

Now, here is a passage from John Bolton’s new memoir — a passage concerning Hong Kong:

I first heard Trump react on June 12, upon hearing that some 1.5 million people had been at Sunday’s demonstrations. “That’s a big deal,” he said. But he immediately added, “I don’t want to get involved,” and, “We have human-rights problems too.”

So, earlier this week, Swan asked the president about Russia’s supply of weapons to the Taliban. Trump answered, “Well, we supplied weapons when they were fighting Russia, too.” (This refers to the Soviet war in Afghanistan in the 1980s.)

I have a question: Why does our president do this? Why does he draw moral equivalence between ourselves and Putin’s Russia, over and over? I would think our nationalists in particular would be up in arms.

What would we conservatives say if a Democrat spoke as Trump does? Why is Trump consistently defensive of Putin, and scolding of Angela Merkel and other democratic leaders?

It's all so odd. So very odd.

- Here is John Bolton, on Wednesday: “Trump’s decision to withdraw U.S. forces from Germany shows a broad lack of strategic understanding. It sends the wrong signal to our adversaries and leaves our allies vulnerable in the face of increasing global threats.”

Here is Mitt Romney: “a slap in the face at a friend and ally”; “a gift to Russia.”

Here is the Kremlin spokesman, Dmitry Peskov: “The fewer American troops there are on the European continent, the more peaceful it is in Europe — our position is well known.”

It certainly is.

- Recently, I was in a 7-Eleven. A man came in, without a mask. Management asked him to put one on or leave. They did this politely. The man was belligerent, hollering that the coronavirus was a hoax, and claiming a racist conspiracy. Then he coughed, hard, opened-mouthed, ostentatiously, at store personnel.

Eventually — it took several minutes — he left.

Sometimes, I believe that our shopkeepers are well-nigh heroic. Putting up with this stuff, day after day. Exposed to the public, on whom they depend, but to whom they are vulnerable, too.

These particular shopkeepers were South Asian immigrants. God bless them and all others.

- In the Upper Midwest, where I come from, there are a lot of people with Scandinavian roots. Did you catch this story? “Michigan inn removes Norwegian flag as residents falsely believe it’s the Confederate flag.”

Oh, for heaven’s sake.

- On Twitter, I saw that “Doug Collins” was trending. It turned out to be the Georgia congressman, who is running for Senate. But I had immediately thought of the NBA great, the Philadelphia 76er, who went on to coach.

I like to think that’s a sign of health. Political zombie-ism is for the birds. All politics and no NBA — or play in general — makes Jack a dull boy.

- About a week ago, someone tweeted, “This is your reminder that ‘not being political’ is just ‘being political in support of the status quo.’” I loved the response of Walter Olson, the libertarian scholar: “This is your reminder that people who want to push you into a state of permanent political mobilization do not have your own happiness at heart.”

- You know what was a damn good story idea? Check it out. The headline: “Tailors Know New Yorkers’ Pandemic Secret: ‘Everybody Got Fat!’” The subheading: “Tailors across New York City are expanding waistlines and moving buttons to accommodate the ‘Quarantine 15.’”

- As you may have seen, Regis Philbin, the television host, has died at 88. For the *New York Times*’s obituary, go here. He worked in my neighborhood, and had a home in it too. I would see

him on the street from time to time. He always seemed happy and friendly: the kind of happy person who wants everyone else to be happy too.

When I said this on Twitter, someone replied, “Yeah, anyone would be happy and friendly with all that money and success.” No. A look around at life will dispel that notion.

Anyway, I wish I’d known Regis. Of course, we all did, in a way, because we saw him on television for decades. Thanks for joining me, you-all. Hope you have a good weekend. See you soon. Hang in there.