



# Learn by heart

**Decades from now, the lessons our grandchildren will absorb from studying the Trump era will be numerous and layered. For starters, they'll learn a new vocabulary as we have—words like malignant narcissism, megalomaniac and mendacity. They'll look back on the depths of the corruption and hypocrisy and ask us why we tolerated it for so long. They'll marvel at Trump's capacity to use his go-to mechanism of deflection by projecting his deficiencies onto other people. The dictionary definition of projection is Trump personified:**

**"The tendency to ascribe to another person feelings, thoughts or attitudes present in oneself, or to regard external reality as embodying such feelings, thoughts, etc., in some way."**

Trump projects his worst qualities on everyone else, friend or foe. He's also dangerously impulsive, as we saw last week when he abandoned our allied Kurdish fighters and removed U.S. troops from northeastern Syria, thus helping a murderous regime in Turkey prepare for an

invasion that could easily lead to a massacre. There were immediate bi-partisan objections; even the obsequious Senator Lindsey Graham called Trump's actions a "stain on America's honor."

The President's tweeted response to the criticism was classic Trump in its "not to worry" tone and narcissistic content, complete with errors:

**"As I have stated strongly before, and just to reiterate, if Turkey does anything that I, in my great and unmatched wisdom, consider to be off limits, I will totally destroy and obliterate the Economy of Turkey (I've done before!)."**

It's probable that the new direction on Syria is a "wag the dog" tactic by Trump to divert attention from his impeachable quid pro quo machinations that betray his oath of office. His obsession with the Bidens is another way he projects the corruption he and his family are engaged in onto his political enemy.

Ivanka and Jared earned an astonishing \$82 million in outside income in 2017 while

serving as advisors to the President, trading on their family name and access to the Oval Office. Hunter Biden's \$50,000 a month from the Ukrainian gas company hardly compares, but Democrats should recognize the inherent corruption in his conduct as well. Does anyone really think that opportunity would have materialized if Hunter's last name were not Biden?

A September story in *The Atlantic* articulates the ethical problems of our politicians' family members cashing in on their familial relationships in an article by Sarah Chayes entitled "Hunter Biden's Perfectly Legal, Socially Acceptable Corruption."

Chayes points out, "Donald Trump committed an impeachable offense, but prominent Americans also shouldn't be leveraging their names for payoffs from shady clients abroad." She wonders how our culture allows "top-tier lawyers, former U.S. public officials, and policy experts (and their progeny) to cash in by trading on their connections and their access to insider policy information. ... The renewed

focus on Ukraine raises jangling questions: How did dealing in influence to burnish the fortunes of repugnant world leaders for large payoffs become a business model? How could America's leading lights convince themselves—and us—that this is acceptable?"

We should demand much more transparency and ethical behavior from our politicians, their family members and the people who serve them and end the corrupt revolving door that rightly makes our country's values suspect around the world. New York Times columnist Peter Schweizer says we need a "Washington Corrupt Practices Act to stop political families from self-dealing," and he's not wrong.

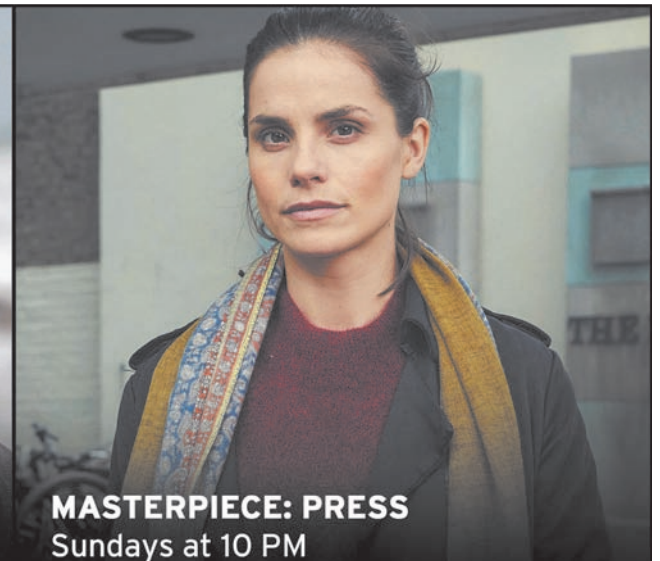
And, please, America, let's redeem our love of democracy and our collective "great and unmatched wisdom," by ridding ourselves of the biggest phony of all at the first opportunity through impeachment, a forced resignation or at the ballot box. Let's prove to our grandchildren that we were capable of righting a great wrong. □



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