

Why don't I like Donald Trump? Let me count the ways.

First, I dislike Donald Trump because he is a reprehensible person.

Trump lacks nearly every virtue for which the English language has a word:

Wisdom  
Curiosity  
Compassion  
Generosity  
Discipline  
Courage  
Love  
Faith  
Charity  
Kindness  
Intelligence  
Probity  
Dignity  
Empathy  
Constancy  
Loyalty  
Reliability  
Trustworthiness  
Honesty  
Bravery  
Patriotism

Whatever your list, he has none of these things.

He is a paragon of greed and narcissism and pettiness and envy and malice and corruption. He wears his hatreds on his sleeve. And he never pretends to be anything else. He doesn't even aspire to be anything more. He can't possibly judge you. He feels no shame; he has no empathy; he is unable to view himself from the outsider's perspective. He is profoundly, completely shameless. He mocks disabled people, for Heaven's sake. I'm not going to engage in amateur psychologizing; but there's something profoundly wrong with Donald Trump.

He has lived his life by pushed up to and beyond every legal and societal norm. He never restrains himself; he must be restrained by others. He will attempt anything for his own gain. He will not stop until forced by other to stop. The rest of the GOP has signally failed the American people in this.

Do you see any hint of Donald Trump in these words (except possibly 'clean')?:

Trustworthy  
Loyal  
Helpful  
Friendly  
Courteous  
Kind  
Obedient  
Cheerful  
Thrifty  
Brave  
Clean

Reverent

Do you see any hint of Donald Trump in these words?:

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

By the way, which two residents of Corinth (Greece) was he talking about? (January 2016 at Liberty University) Trump is about as much a Christian as Mohammed bin Salman.

Trump has crapped all over traditional conservatism — or at least the values traditional conservative Republicanism paid lip-service to, among them:

Limited government,  
Balanced budgets  
Free trade  
Open markets  
Personal rectitude and probity  
A due regard for American institutions and traditions and norms  
Strict constitutional construction  
Maintenance of strong international alliances  
Opposition to Russian aggression and expansionism

Trump is a horrible, horrible liar. He lies automatically, constantly, and in ways that childishly easy to detect. (See his total shamelessness, above.) We never accept a wanton liar as leader. How can anyone trust his word? He has certainly lied more than any other President, certainly in my lifetime. And he feels no need to even gesture towards believability. Bill Clinton lied (and he otherwise behaved pretty badly). But he knew he had to try to make people believe him. Trump doesn't care. It took the Trump administration to invent the nonsense term, "alternative facts". There is no such thing: There are facts and lies.

He behaves like a poorly disciplined child. His behavior at the first Presidential debate of 2020 (29-Sep-2020) would have earned him a seat facing the corner in Kindergarten. His thin-skinned petulance is absurd and repellant.

Trump is a blatant misogynist. Trump oozes his disdain for women from his every pore. Women are objects to be used. Would you want your mother, your sister, your wife, or your daughter to be treated the way Trump treats women? He trails a broad wake of accusations of sexual misconduct. He's paid off many women to silence them (sometimes in violation of campaign finance laws, as in 2016).

Trump is a terrible businessman. He refuses to show his taxes. What does he have to hide? It must be really bad. From what we have learned about his taxes, he hasn't paid any for perhaps decades. He's done this by losing money. Good businessmen make money, they don't lose it. He's either a terrible businessman or he submits fraudulent tax returns (a felony). As a businessman, he constantly left in his wake: unpaid contractors and invoices, litigation, broken promises, whatever he could get away with. He managed to bankrupt a casino in Atlantic City NJ. He has declared his businesses bankrupt six times since 1991. His business "empire" is a house of cards, built on debt held by foreign entities (including Deutsche Bank, notorious as a money laundering house). US banks stopped lending Trump money because of his repeat bankruptcies.

Trump admires authoritarian dictators, like Putin, Duterte, Bolsonaro, Kim. Exactly the kind of bad actors the US has traditionally opposed.

Trump is ignorant of most important topics, including science, history, international relations. And he's proud of his ignorance and makes no effort to reduce it. And he feels the compulsion to pat himself on the back calling himself, "a very stable genius," in public, for the world to gape at. Smart people don't need to proclaim themselves smart.

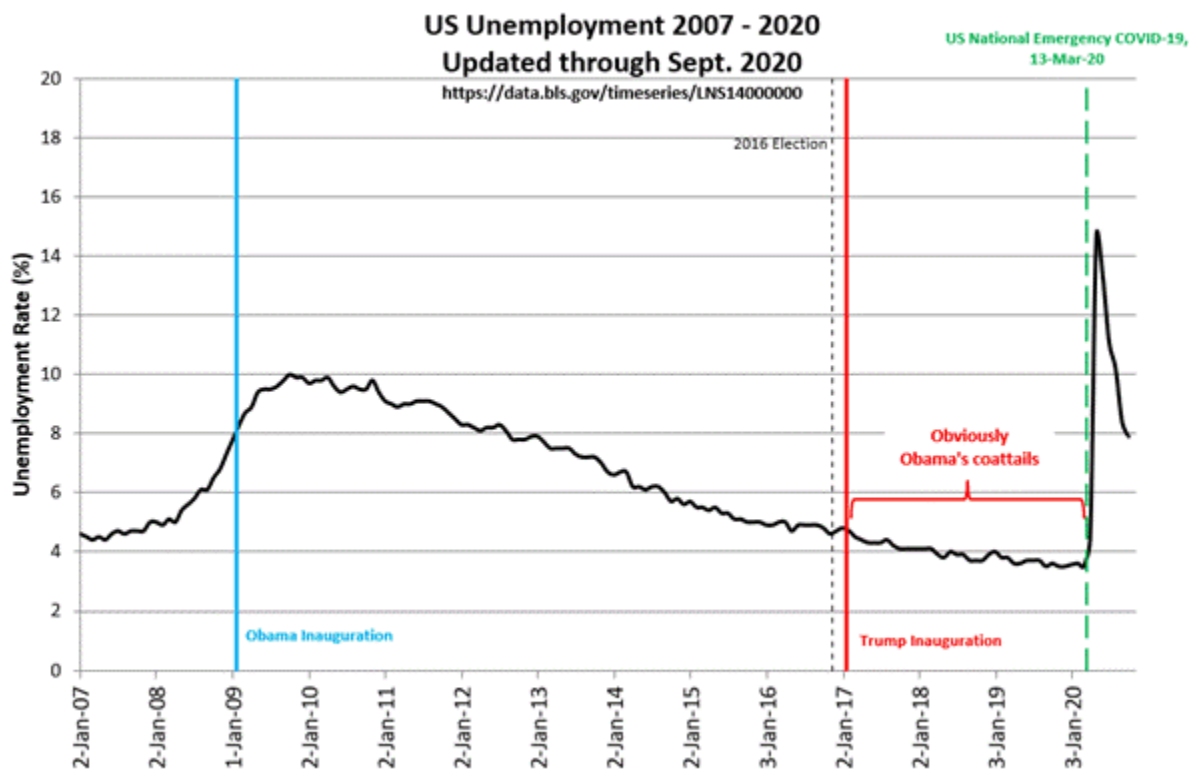
Trump is anti-science. One only need review his reaction to the COVID-19 crisis to understand this. He denies any scientific findings that are inconvenient to his making money or to his political and personal self-aggrandizement.

As David Frum has nicely summarized the Trump Administration: Populated by incompetents, crooks, and fanatics.

He has called our military servicepeople suckers and losers. His disdain for a true American hero such as John McCain was disgusting. Especially coming from a draft dodger.

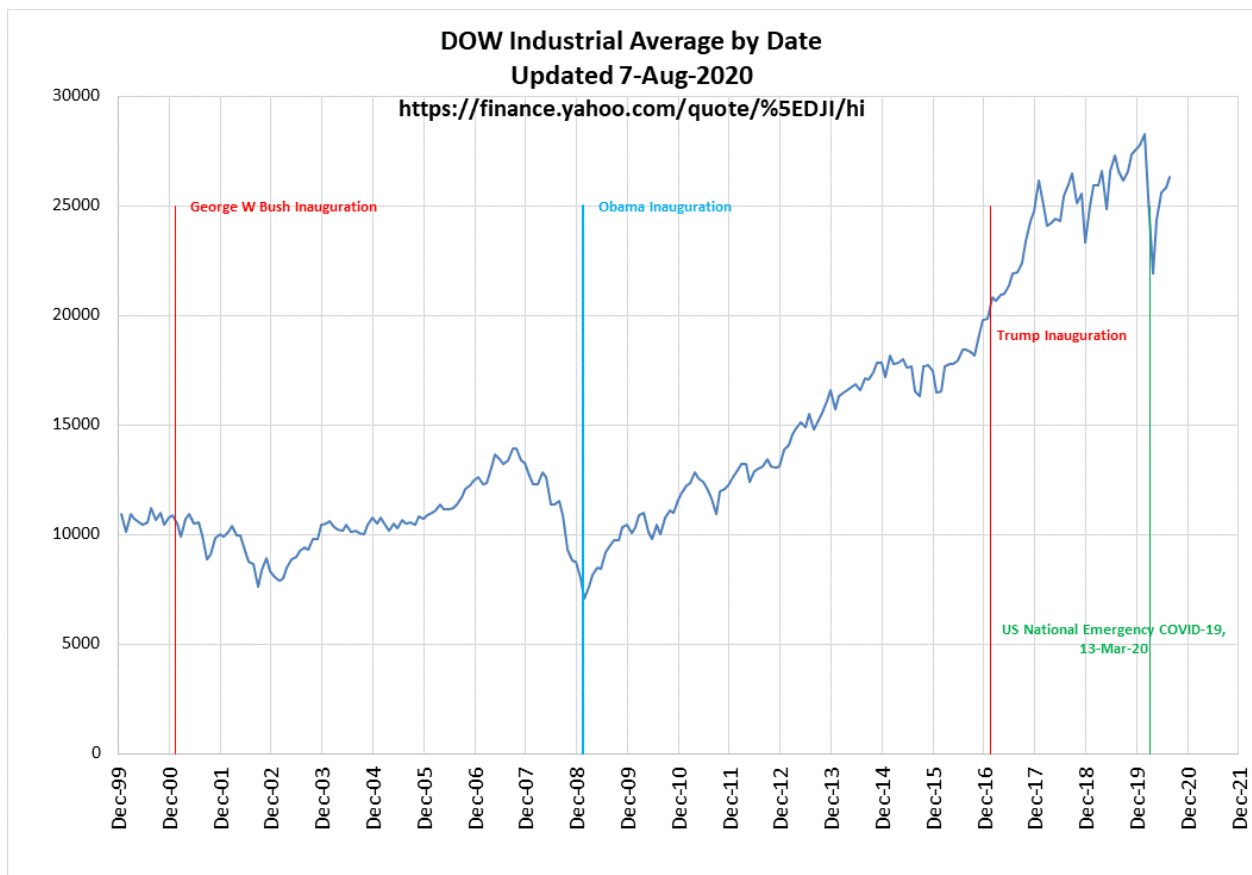
So, yes, I find him a terrible person. But how has he performed?

You think Trump made the economy great? I have a word for you: Coattails. He inherited the longest post-WWII recovery from President Obama. There was a big change in the economy in the last 15 years; but it happened under Obama.



It has been hilarious to hear Trump praise himself over the partial recovery from the COVID dip in the economy. It would be hard not to have positive numbers when you're starting from the worst hole the US economy has been in since the Great Depression.

The stock market is doing well; but it's just back on the same trajectory it was on prior to the 2008 Great Recession. And, again, Trump inherited this trend. Again, there was a big (positive) change in the trajectory; but it happened under Obama. And, ask yourself: How much money do you make off the stock market? Does it have any impact at all on your own economic status? Only about 30% of Americans have any liquid retirement savings at all.



Trump did nothing to move this line until COVID hit. And COVID wasn't his fault (just as the booming economy he inherited wasn't to his credit). But his bungling and lies about it have certainly worsened the pandemic and cost 10s of thousands of additional lives that need not have been lost.

He politicized the COVID-19 pandemic because, in his infantile, thin-skinned, narcissism, anything that could reflect badly on him he thinks is a personal attack.

Imagine this on 13-Mar-2020:

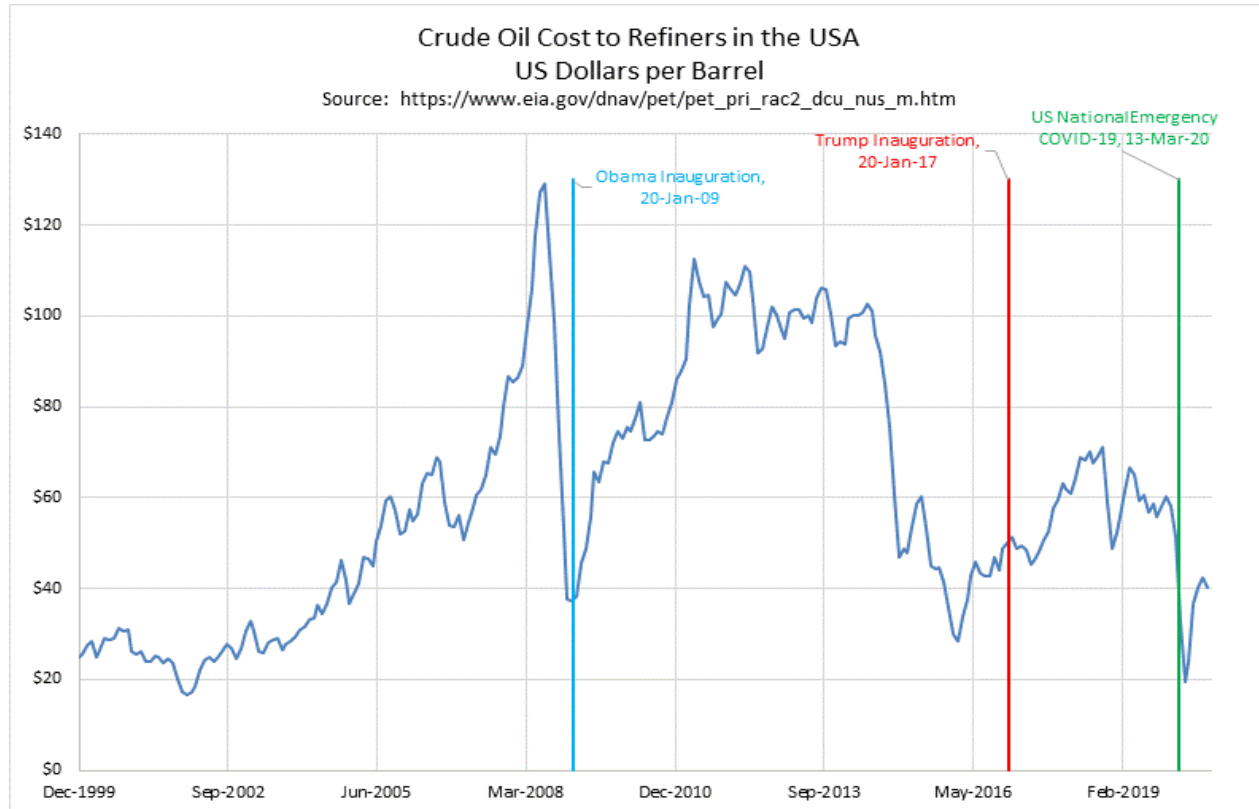
Donald Trump steps to the microphone at the White House and says to the American people: "I have met with my scientific and security teams. They have confirmed that we are in the middle of a great fight: The worst disease to hit out nation and the world in a century. Our lives, our health care system, and our economy are threatened, they sit in the balance. We know little of this emerging threat, we have no vaccine against it, and we have few effective treatments. But our scientific and medical teams are working on it. The CDC and the rest of my scientific and medical teams inform me that the most important things we can all do right now is: Social distance, wear appropriate face masks at all times when you leave your home. I am therefore issuing an executive order for all Americans to wear masks when in public. We must all do this to protect ourselves, our families, and others. This is our moment to show strength, determination, and resilience. I know we can do this together."

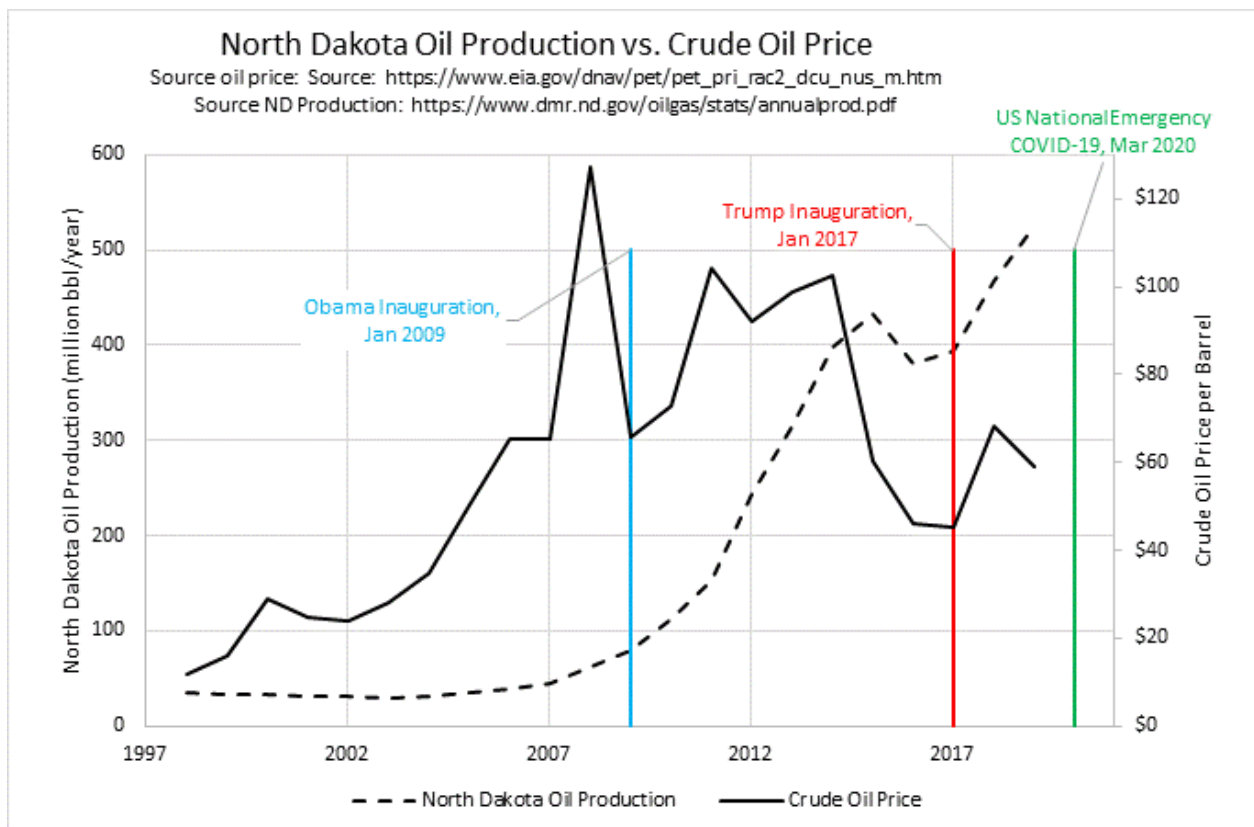
But what did we get? Lies. Nonsense about injecting disinfectants. Politicization of basic public health measures. Denigration of the hard-working scientists trying to help protect their fellow citizens. Denigration of our health care workers, risking their lives and health to continue to care for us.

You think low gasoline prices are a good thing? A true indicator of economic prosperity? You may want to check with people in the North Dakota Oil patch. Oil prices have dropped because the world economy has slowed, dramatically and potentially catastrophically. It's supply and demand and Trump has done nothing to affect this (aside from bungling the COVID crisis).

As you can see from the plot below, oil prices have trended upward in Trump's administration (as would be expected as the recovery he inherited continued to expand the economy; gasoline prices track oil prices very closely). The only real bumps in the road have been due to the COVID crisis.

Oil prices dropped in 2014-2015 because of a world oil glut (which has, perhaps permanently, defanged OPEC), which was partially driven by the explosion of production in the Bakken field in North Dakota 2009 - 2015 (see the second plot). (And also due to slackening world demand, much of this due to conservation and moving to renewable sources of energy.) Oil prices collapsed in 2008 (from a dizzying height) due to the massive economic contraction of the Great Recession. The rise in oil prices during the Obama administration was also expected, based on the large expansion of the economy. This is supply and demand and Presidents have precious little influence over it.





Trump has led and presided over the dismantling of the environmental protections that have ensured we have clean air to breathe and clean water to drink. This is also the denial of science.

Trump has been undermining the traditional institutions that have kept our country strong. A free press. Science. Education. The separation of powers (he has refused to acknowledge the powers of the congress, for instance to subpoena witnesses). A fair and unbiased judiciary (by denigrating and threatening judges).

In addition to his admiration for authoritarian dictators, he has done his best to do Putin's bidding by undermining our traditional alliances and international organizations for cooperation, the organizations that have brought us the Great Peace, 1945 – 2020 (so far): NATO, the EU, the UN, many of our treaties. He has damaged the international reputation of the US, perhaps for generations. I hope trust can be reestablished under new management.

All of this on top of the fact that I am sure that the Trump Administration will be determined to be one of the most corrupt in US history. History is not going to be kind to Donald Trump.

(Some of the beginning of this piece is paraphrasing of Sam Harris from 2-Nov-2020.)