



These '20s Are Roaring

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If someone were to tell me on January 1 that the President of the United States would be impeached this year and it wouldn't even be in the top five big news stories by the time 2020 was half over, I would have called them insane. Yet here we are.

The 2020s have begun with a rage unlike anything I have ever witnessed in my 45 years on this earth. The roaring '20s? Yeah,

we are kicking off a new roaring '20s and we all need to buckle up because it's looking like it's going to be a bumpy ride. A scene from the movie "The Perfect Storm" comes to mind—Mark Wahlberg and George Clooney standing on the bridge of the Andrea Gale seeing a small eye of sunshine in the chaos of three massive storms that have rendered their boat almost useless. As the eye closes and the 80-foot waves return,

Clooney's character utters in a tone of resignation, "She's not going to let us out." I hope 2020 lets us out.

We approach a new decade in a state of turmoil—a global pandemic, widespread protests over policing practices, rioting and looting by Leftists, and an election the results of which could send us further into division (regardless of which candidate wins).

At the same time, I have become acutely aware of a fact as we inch closer to November 3. We will have, for the first time ever, individuals voting who were born after September 11, 2001. This, to me, represents an inflection point—we will begin to see, over time, more and more voters whose experience does not have a life memory of the 9/11 attacks, the response, and the path our country has taken as a result. As someone attuned to the psychological impact that 9/11 had on the country, this is no small crossroads.

There are historical events that bring out the "where were you" conversation. The Kennedy assassination, the Challenger tragedy, 9/11. For some new voters, this perspective does not exist. They have no specific recall of the events of 9/11 as they occurred—and their entire life to this point has existed in a perpetual state of conflict—Afghanistan, Iraq, the financial meltdown, the 2016 election, Russia and China, COVID-19, policing—the generation born at the dawn of the millennia has drifted from one historical crisis to another without much of a break.

I recognize that the history of our Republic has been paved by tumultuous events. We were forged in revolution,

shaped in civil war, and catapulted to global power in world war. And yet, maybe because of the speed of media, it appears that there is now a seeming lack of any break in the drama. It brings pause to the question, "Will our children inherit a better America than we inherited?" It is a question on my mind quite a bit lately, as I navigate the burgeoning adolescence of my own two daughters—ages 12 and 11. The America I inherited was one of unlimited opportunity for anyone willing to study, work hard, and apply themselves. College was, for the most part, an affordable venture with both private and public choices. Entering adulthood at the dawn of the information age also meant that wealth and prosperity were achievable with technical skills and training that didn't require a college education. Back in the 1990s and early 2000s, it was not uncommon for systems engineers to have never stepped on a college campus while commanding six-figure salaries.

This is why, among the traditional articles from scholars around the country, we are including several articles written by younger writers. Students, new graduates, young professionals—their perspectives and outlooks are of paramount importance because they are on the cusp of inheriting the reins of our society. They are the upcoming economists, attorneys, social workers, educators, and entrepreneurs that we hope will create greater opportunity for all. You'll have a chance to read their words, unabridged, as they examine ideas, contemplate our current state of affairs, and attempt to proffer concrete ideas for moving to a better place societally. They come from all walks of life, represent the

entire spectrum of philosophies, and all seek to rise above rhetoric to demonstrate a passion for solutions and a commitment to addressing real challenges with real ideas.

Typically, each issue of The Journal has a common theme—either explicit or implied. Technology and innovation, criminal justice, an upcoming election. It is our hope that you'll see this issue as a little bit like society right now—a few common themes, interwoven narratives, random thoughts, and some dispersed musings that reflect a society being tossed about from wave to wave, looking for a break in the battering storms. I am proud of this issue—the authors' transparency, the difficult

topics that they have undertaken, and the willingness to continue to set aside political narratives for the sake of ideas grounded in solving complicated policy challenges.

During the course of 2020, as political or cultural events have hit with greater regularity than what seems normal, and pundits, news media, and activists from both sides have proclaimed that our very democracy is falling apart, I have had to remind myself often that we live in a republic that saw the Vice President kill a political rival in a duel.

I'm just glad we didn't have Twitter back then.