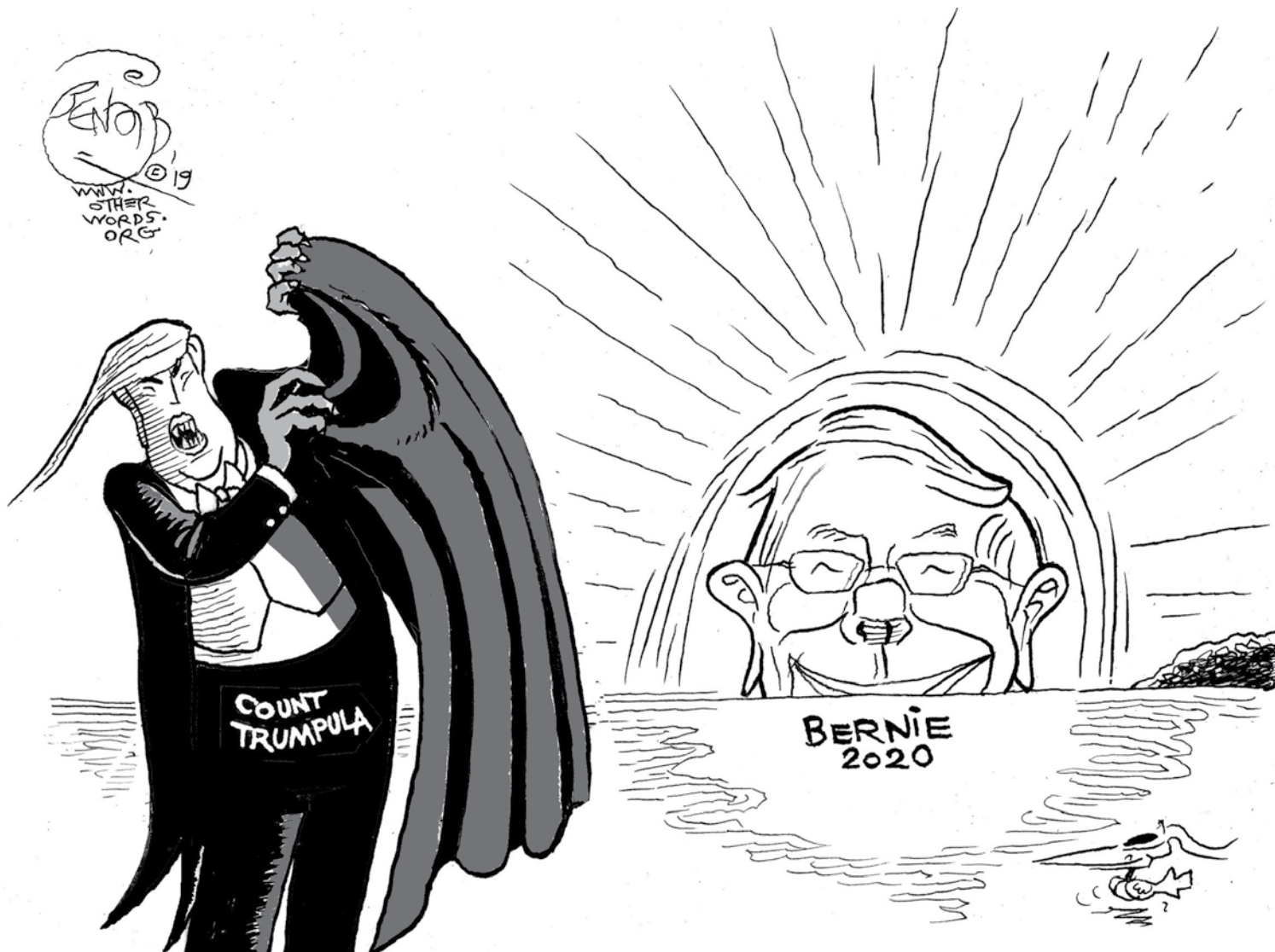


# OPINION



## America's Worst Nightmare since Watergate

A president spouting false claims

BY TOM H. HASTINGS

Our national embarrassment. Our national emergency. There he is, residing for a minute in the White House, a minute that is the longest lucid American nightmare since Watergate.



The day is not complete until Trump has lied to the American people and the world, until he's insulted any and all critics even when those critiques are deliberative and strictly evidence-based, and even when they are people nearly universally respected, even revered.

Ruth Bader Ginsberg? Justin Trudeau? Really? Toss in some misogynist identity slurs, several braggart malignant narcissistic self-congratulating ridiculous claims—even managing to combine them with insulting Samuel L. Jackson—and a few gaslighting redundancies and there isn't much left on the Trump list of abusive things to do today.

Brilliant. A waddling, braying, tweeting embarrassment to any

and all critical thinking, fact-reliant Americans.

My colleague and I do workshops, sometimes for visiting foreign professionals. Almost no matter their country or countries of origin, I lead with a sincere apology for the Dear Leader who lost the popular vote but still managed to get installed in the most powerful office on Earth.

American white man. It gets us off on the right foot.

Now comes journalists from some dozen countries, mostly European but a few from the Middle East and one from Asia. None of us have ever met each other.

I open with an apology for slights, for insults, for mortifying misstatements and unwarranted UN laughingstock braggadocio emanating from the old white guy

Couric, for goshsakes.

Last week we saw a grifter lawyer, Michael Cohen, turn state's evidence against his former boss—and even though Cohen, as Trump's lawyer, was a serial liar, he presented Congress with actual forensic evidence that Trump committed felonies, not just in the past, but while in office. Shades of Spiro Agnew.

My father was a psychologist, not I, but clearly, Trump's claims of fake news are what psychologists call projection. I attest to my own profound confusion at his clumsy hate speech and utter cultural incompetence and frankly, negotiating fails despite his blowhard boasts and his fake autobiography—his next memoir: How to Be a Rotten Role Model for American Youth and the Great Big Butt of International Jokes. My wincing and shaking head let them know that I'm fully as confounded as I am certain they are.

This is what it means to be an American dealing with a fake president spouting cringeworthy claims even as we try to create decent relationships with bewildered people from other lands.

Tom H. Hastings is from Portland. He is director of PeaceVoice and on occasion an expert witness for the defense in court.

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Here comes a roomful of Kenyan National Police. I apologize for obvious reasons. Most Americans have likely forgotten Trump's repugnant comment about African "sh—hole" countries. I assure you that Kenyans and other Africans absolutely have not. They appreciate a genuine apology from an

who just seems verbally incontinent and whose thumbs seem to have zero impulse control, managing to praise dictators and vilify popular democratic leaders as a matter of course—not to mention his incessant juvenilia about all manner of journalists, from the Wall Street Journal to Katie



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