The best book I've read in quite a while is a nonexistent one called *Scorched-Earth Realpolitik Cookbook: Cajun-Style Political Elexting and Black-Eyed Peace for the Rest of Us,* by Pfisher Pranx, a renowned, well-respected, award-winning author whom I made up only a few seconds ago, while typing this sentence.

The alternate title of the book, I just now realized, is: *Or: 183,429 Better Ways to Elect a President.*

This fictitious book is from Keisterville Publishing, a company which fails to pass the real-company sniff test.

- (Full disclosure: However, this is true except in an accidentally oblique, and quite eerily coincidental sense, way out in *pretty-much-still-real* Pennsylvania, where Keisterville actually exists. This is a coincidence for which I deeply apologize discovering, and then mentioning, after first selecting my own fake company's name, liking it, and then Googling it at the last second to make sure there wasn't a real publishing company named that, thereby accidentally setting up myself and others for a lethal, 60-kiloton mega-legal blast. Sorry, Keisterville -- about, uh, everything -- and hello there, Keisterville Publishing.)

In this book which exists in some alternate reality not our own, there is also featured The Best Music Video Which Doesn't Really Exist. Two of them, in fact. (This is an incredible accomplishment, I have to say, having an old-fashioned paper-and-pressed-board book, with the ability to project a full, room-sized high-def hologram with rich colors and 10-point sound, simply from within the book's pages and binding and vocally activated with individual password... *amazing!*)

Wait -- I should probably start again.

Here's the thing: Since the Laws of Legitimate Political Reality have been totally gutted, abandoned, and forever revoked by the Lame, Hamstrung, and Hungover Lower Deities of Self Governance with whom we Humans have saddled ourselves in a cruel trick of Fate and our own brain-dead decision-making attempts, the common civic reality we once all shared has been

shattered and suspended. The common good, and common sense, have all been devastated and obliterated by far-right-wing psychoses, propaganda, and personal Ponzi pyramids.

We're just about back to monosyllabic grunting, if you haven't noticed.

Funny thing, then, that the legal notices on the Repeal of Reality went out so long ago, but -- *ge t this*
-- only to Republicans. That's supremely ironic, that The Universe Itself experienced an unprecedented bureaucratic breakdown and seismic snafu along such cosmic lines upon which members of
only
the GOP benefitted -- people who
live
for
exclusivity
.

- (I am a long-time fan, *and no first-time caller*, of Deep Universal Irony's Greatest Mega-Hits, and practiced at the usual nightmares, so I am just really at a loss right now, wondering how to juggle this deeper-than-normal life schism and in my reflex to simultaneous weep openly while laughing hysterically, while calmly sipping a decent gewurtztraminer or moscato on a lakeside porch swing I just created in my mind, on a fine summer day, all while trying very hard to *not* imagine forcing long chunks of Kasseri or Muenster cheese deep into my aching sinuses, in a futile attempt to try to rub dairy-based salve on my inflamed political membranes, and have my figurative feathers re-ruffle themselves in a more acceptable, non-bending direction.)

So: Like the allegedly human Republicans which so stunningly co-inhabited the previous world with us, it is with great relief that it's been announced now, in this book I made up out of smoke, mirrors, thin air and whole cloth -- cloth from mills frequented by Republicans -- that we, too, are now free to make up our own rules, our own facts, and our own belief systems, just as members of the GOP have done for decades.

Yes: We are now able to create our own fairy tales, our own sky deities, our own hapless responses, and our own meaningless excuses and blank stares, and our own blinking, drooling, mouth-gaping myths and stares, should we decide we need to do so.

Or not.

- Granted, the GOP has a huge head start in the Surreality Gap the rest of us are only now getting around to noticing and acknowledging, but Ivy League medical school studies have steadily shown that consistently sane, non-Republican people are from 367.2 to 949.8 percent more creative than even the most creatively off-the-wall, but permanently-deranged, member of the GOP -- *and I have the freshly made-up scientific results right here to prove it, freshly cobbled from the word processor and promptly spat out from the printer, right here in the real world!*

It's a new era, all right. Break out all those bags of *Mission Accomplished*-brand confetti that you've been storing all these years, hoping to get some truthful use out of, someday or other. *Today's the day!*

The past -- *bah!* So much for trying to do the impossible, which was coming up with well-reasoned, and even reasonable, political options and approaches in an era of wild-eyed, purple-flashing, bug-zapper reasoning among itchy, twitchy, well-charcoaled, and thoroughly electrocuted logic.

And, guess what -- imagining someone who actually *wants* the job as President of the United States is a pretty suspicious resume, all by itself, given the Ryans and McConnells of the world. (Except for the job perks, I mean.)

- Even fuller disclosure: *Dear Diary, Today, I publicly admitted I could be bought off with trips to Tahiti on Air Force One, and having an executive chef and wait staff close at hand.* [End of public portion; remainder redacted with extreme prejudice and childish glee, along with a touch of fright at the honest depths to which self knowledge can sometimes go if not kept on a short leash.]

Anyway: I think this new Sane Person's Reality, or SPR, mentioned in my best-selling, made-up book, will help us usher in a new American era of understanding, prosperity, and greatness -- one which was only hinted at in the depth of the total fabrications of reality by the *(cough, cough)*

towering figures in the GOP's Hall of Hallowed Hallucinators, such as Nixon, Reagan, Bush, and Shrub/Bush-Lite/Dubya/The Pretzel Avenger/Captain Accomplished.

Yes, the SPR era should be amazing, limited as it is only by the imagination of non-psychotics -- providing we keep off the third rail in this new world, which is dwelling on the fact that SPR and SPQR are really, *really* similar acronyms in lots of literal and figurative ways, unless we're careful to not be so stupid as to run wild with these things, held out at arm's length, like sharply decisive scissors of judgement, around or near the swimming pools of our thought-swollen and imagination-inflamed minds -- at least, not within an hour or so of eating, anyway.

So, to get back to the book, here are some excerpts on how we might more efficiently name our new Presidents, and without resorting to the endless foot-in-mouth, toenail-shredding chatter normally accompanying our quadrennial *Angst Fest and Back-Biting Contest,* here in our usual, dismal, bottom-feeding world's nations category of
Best in Show During a
No-Holds-Barred Demonstration of a Delusionally-Superior,
Gawd
-Given Paranoid Lunatic Shooting Gallery of a Country in Choosing Titular Heads of State, Fading Super-Power Division
.

*

Now, then: This is a brief time-out and sidebar for an aside as to story structure, for a moment: If this article here were a play, or even a film, for example, you might see *this* direction noted now:

- *(In strident, stage-whispered parental voice by The United States to its spouse, America:)* **Stop it! Just stop it! You're scaring the children, with your campaign rhetoric, honey -- and the rest of the world, too!**

But, as this is not a play or a film -- at least, not yet, if I can keep my mind from wandering, *he said in a somewhat vague, queasily unsettling, and oddly threatening manner*
-- here is what

actually
appears next in this paragraph: Here are some handy suggestions as to the various ways all the bizarre, troublesome, and arcane mechanics and directives of electing Presidents might be bypassed, and other methods adopted, even if the old Psychotic Reality were to again raise its single-minded, clammy reptilian head:

*

Number 162,308: *Twister* for President, except that Republicans are totally inflexible creatures -- so, SCOTUS would toss out this possible election mechanism faster than a hooker working the hallways of a GOP Congress during a Bring Your Spawn to Work Day, or one of its many bogus Family Values Day during key re-election, campaigning, and donation periods (known as "always" by civilians).

Number 43,912: Bracketed playoffs for candidates, via appearances on *Jeopardy!* -- complete with the usual game show's categories, and some new ones, such as
The Daily Double, The Daily Three Fingers, The Daily Hassle with My Lobbyists-Agents-Investors Jeopardy!, The Daily Five Fingers of Scotch-Bliss Jeopardy!, The Daily Double-Dipped & Double-Crossed Donor Jeopardy!, Triple Jeopardy!, Unconstitutionally Repetitive Jeopardy!, Instant Jeopardy!, Is This Buzzer Working Jeopardy!, What's Wrong With My Brain Now Jeopardy!,
and
Sudden Death Jeopardy!

Number 78: *Elexting* -- Election by Twitter-Texting-Facebooking-Hashtagging Popularity Contest Polling (details TBA, after they figure out a way to keep people from sending in photos of their genitalia, their dinner orders, cute-cat pics, and/or some combination of all three).

- It should be noted here that *elexting* would be very popular with some unbalanced, power-seeking members of the new reality, just as voter suppression tactics were screamingly popular with all Republicans, under the guise of halting a voter-fraud problem which didn't exist, however, the expected percentages in this new world should be even lower than the fake problem the GOP tried to suggest it was correcting.
- In this scenario, anyone without a registered, controlled texting device would become instantly disenfranchised, and be forced to travel to a Texting Center in order to vote; with each state having only one site, located the maximum distance away from any population center in that state, in keeping with the spirit of the former GOP's *voter streamlining* programs.

Number 78,135: Super-sharpened Lawn-Dart-Offs. (Candidates on prescription blood thinners can file an appeal for participation in Rubber-Suction-Cup-Tipped Lawn-Dart-Offs, supplemented by Random Dunk-Tanking in the Piranha Pool of Unforeseen Happenstances, brought to you by Monsanto.)

Number 13,920: Selection by Bingo, with candidates swallowing random pharmaceuticals placed on winning squares by various corporate sponsors, think tanks, and lobbyists. Shout *Bingo!*, and then gulp down the goods, in a *switcheroo* of the usual order.

Number 64,291: Running the Skin Gauntlet: State by state, all candidates must carry 100-pound weights, and run past a two-sided line of delegates who will snap wet gym towels at passing candidates. (Bonus points will be awarded to candidates who do not opt for the leather bite tabs.)

Number 179: Explain-O-Rama: Candidates must completely answer questions put to them by designated delegates, and to the delegates' complete satisfaction, before being allowed to go to the next question. (Delegates will be selected based on their questions' levels of originality, complexity, and on likely candidate embarrassment issues.)

Number 9: Tell-a-Kid: Candidates must explain questions put to them by everyday children in arenas around the country, until the child questioner fully understands the answer and releases that candidate to the next child questioner. (Many candidates may not pass the basic Patience, Knowledge, and Basic Lifetime-Understanding qualification entrance tests to even participate in this Presidential selection process.)

Number 3,913: The Oscar Screen-test: Candidates must respond to constituents' accusations, in detail, why it is that candidates have defended doing so much harm to the country and its people, or doing so little to prevent such harm, and/or participating in so much vigorous *obstructionism-nothingism* in their on-the-job political careers, and beg constituents for forgiveness. (Candidates need not be forgiven by constituent-delegates, unless they are convinced an act of transformative

personal regeneration and awareness has truly occurred in the candidate.)

Number 24,083: Strip Parcheesi. (The less said about this one, the better, except that it was demanded to be in the mix by Fox News advertisers.)

Number 42: Candidates must actually filibuster -- not merely threaten to do so-- against a cherished vote that candidates themselves desperately hope will pass, and then attempt to defeat the dearly-sought measure by reading aloud from the complete works of Douglas Adams, Mark Twain, Kurt Vonnegut, and Thomas Pynchon. (This is similar to Number 151,218, Shock-Conversion Therapy While You Wait Among Peers and Other Unfriendlies in the Waiting Room of a Small Town Muffler Shop.)

Anyway, it's a heck of an imaginary book, and by a fabulous new author who positively does not exist. I am certain this promising new writer I made up will find a vast audience, and become a *hotnew,*
cherished commodity in the newly-freed marketplace of American ideas and idealism. (There might even be some tip money involved, which would be handy and refreshing.)

- Welcome to the brand new days of the sparkly-bright, squeaky-clean, springtime-fresh, lemon-scented, just-right-sweet, *America is Great Again Some More* -- Surreality for People Who Just Couldn't Hack the Constant Co-opting of the Country by Right Wing Psychos and Full Moon Loonies.

- Congratulations! You've won back your country, and your peace of mind, from the manipulative propagandists and the well-intentioned but ultimately ignorant, arrogant, angry masses.
- Let's see what some clear thinking and fact-based living can do to lift this great nation off its knees one more time. (She's been down there a long time, so we'll all need to help her back up slowly, or she'll get all woozy from the bends and fall right over.)

*

Oh, and from the Afterword of the book: If you feel yourself relapsing at first, and sliding back to Toxic TrumpWorld Shock, like before, you should check out The Best Music Video Which Doesn't Really Exist, which is a phenomenally lifelike CG animation of the Statue of

Liberty doing a slow boogaloo-rhumba-moonwalk thing, trying to get people to take every scrap of right wing psychosis and leave it far, far behind --
forever
-- to the tune of Paul Simon's
50 Ways to Leave Your Lover
...

... or, to the back-up soundtrack, featuring B.B. King's *The Thrill is Gone*, a deep, blues farewell to the now-ancient Republican adrenalin-pump of acting as Crazy and Selfish As You Possibly Can In Public, Without Regard for Anyone Else or for Yourself.

*

Of course, we could always draw straws for the gig, but that's pretty much how we got here in the first place. Not counting the hormones, chest-beating, and threatening displays of genitalia -- yet, that is.

*

You know, after re-reading this completely made-up book, from the beginning, I can hardly wait for Pfisher Pranx's next fictitious work, perhaps of fiction. (I have no idea how librarians will catalog it, but it might invoke a few RPMs from Mr. Dewey.)

Meanwhile, there is a film version of this book being made, already in progress, as I understand it. It bears the working title, *Free at Last: Plenty of Happy, Mellow Squirrels Hereabouts Despite Having Damn Few Nuts Around Now.*

Watch for it, along with the new Making-of Documentary Soundtrack CD (and branded and autographed tee shirts, picnic throws, sporting goods, sleeping bags, helium tanks, Italian ice makers, space blankets, and boat tarpaulins), subtitled, *Cornucopia, Pharmacopia, Fornicopia, No-Can-Copia, and Me* -- all from Keisterville Publishing.

At Keisterville, we all know you'll be glad and amazed that you pulled out another fine, last-minute product from our conga line of formerly impossible, unthinkable consumer goods. *K eisterville --*
Keeping in Touch with the Butt-Dialing Mood of Our Times (TM)
.

Informational Note: The poker-faced author eagerly anticipates the release next month of an updated version of the short film, *Bambi Meets Godzilla*,* in which Donald Trump is featured as Bambi's -- not Godzilla's -- understudy.
(It was not immediately clear if the author was kidding, nor was it known if the devastating rip in space-time we've been experiencing this election cycle has already been mended, and not yet announced, by
Paradox Control at
Conundrum Central, or if that one's already gone rogue, like Fukushima...)

* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8s3UogfAGg0

Resources:

SPQR: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SPQR

Soundtrack to the best music video which doesn't exist:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ABXtWqmArUU

Back-up soundtrack to the best music video which doesn't exist: ** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HzTlB-TjAzM

** *Drawback alert: □ voice-over heads-up at 11:06; □ restart, or go here*: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yOSnUmLt5VQ

[Well, heck --YOU know. □ The Blues -- that music's everywhere, thank goodness. □ Go find some, lay it back, and play in the healing groove a while.]