

Too Many Fronts, Not Enough Back

Written by Alex Baer

Tuesday, 24 March 2015 12:24

Military strategists will tell you almost anything in order to get a new war contract or get a green light to go stomp something. But they'll also mix in some truth from time to time. One of these truths is that nobody ever wins a war having too many fronts.

The concept has never been clearer to me. I am surrounded, and they're closing in on all sides. The war I'm waging, and very clearly losing, is one of basic interest.

No, not the sort of war involving compound interest, say, where one invades and takes over a country via financial manipulation, without a shot being fired, à la Greece. I'm not even fighting the type of interest that involves economic assault -- thinly disguised, survival-of-the-smarmiest stuff -- where one entity attempts to eat another entity in the corporate jungle, then pass off the debt from that "meal" as a loss, note it as a reason to loot the workers' pension fund, file bankruptcy, then flee offshore with the all-but-stolen loot, à la vulture capitalists in general, and Hostess as only one instance in particular.

- Although, I'd probably have to agree with you if you thought it possible that humanity's downfall began with calm acceptance of the idea -- put forth with the sort of straight face normally reserved for poker schools -- that one could auction off someone else's debt. This unseemly notion of perverted math is the falling pebble that triggered the larger global avalanches of leveraged takeovers, junk bonds, and credit default swaps.

- We all remember how well that show went, as many of us are still trying to get our family members, and our hopes and dreams, brought up into daylight again, rescued from the sub-basement rubble of collapsed buildings and caved-in plans.

No, although those financial maneuvers are the *real* weaponized-and-monetized WMD, held by legions of legally-blessed larcenists, contractual con artists, and bullion bully-boys the world over, my own battles have less to do with the rigged, well-oiled juggernaut of bean-counting than with plain old head counting.

In longhand: I am a sufferer of a new American complaint, one I just invented, called OTT-DRS -- *OTT-durrs*, if you're majoring in acronymese. Stands for *Over The Top, Delayed Reaction Syndrome*. Kicks in when you've had way too much of something already, and for too long a time, then receive a final, fatal overload that causes you to flip out and jump the shark.

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See, I was idling along, trying to just hang in there, as we hit the outer markers and distant fringers of yet another assault on our election cycle senses by the stampeding herds of Dumb-dom. Then Ted Cruz slumped, drooled, and heaved on by, stomping on my *OTT-durrs* **GO** pedal, hard.

I instantly flashed back to the previous endless plane of GOP Prez and Veep wannabees -- a plateau (a very low one, beneath sea level) chockablock with every possible sort of babbling, empty-headed moron who could rub five dollars, and two supporters, together.

In shorthand: I can no longer get any value whatsoever out of following the national political news. Not even entertainment value -- they all make me itch, twitch, and pitch bitching fits. They make me want to leap in a ditch, play on the freeway, learn underwater breathing, evolve wings but no hearing, hide in the breakfast nook curled in a fetal position...

- Perhaps "announced developments" is a better term than "news." After all, 99-point-9 percent of political machinations are foregone conclusions, with outcomes clearly readable by even entry-level readers of tea-leaves, crystal-balls, and chicken-bones -- especially the ones used as multi-million-dollar consultants for *no-real-news* news channels and networks desperate for verbiage to add ballast to the endless onslaught of lighter-than-air, featherweight, spinning-and-twirling hypno-babble-graphics.

I mean, the assault on my psyche has gotten so bad that there's not even any last vestige or damp, limping, parting wisp of entertainment able to be squeezed from these Cracked Jars and Crumpled Tubes of Political Mind-Poisoners. If I pay any attention to such things anymore, it's on the level of knee-jerk, reflexive, monkey-see-monkey-stare events -- like rubbernecking at highway wrecks.

And, just like rubbernecking, any momentary lapse of purposeful attention prompts an equally instinctive, shameful twinge in conscious reaction -- like suddenly realizing you're mindlessly evaluating roadkill while out on a walk, your body halted, some part of your mind aimlessly attempting, against your conscious will, to identify the original animal.

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And, just like staring brainlessly, in a mind-fog, at roadkill, it's the same with the country's political developments and its fabulous cast: *There's just no possible way to know what Nature really intended right there.*

I mean, really, come on now: There are no surprises anywhere in this Cart-wheeling Carousel of the National Unconscious -- although it is more often a Careening, Cuckoo Carom Contest of the Comatose.

Look: □ We all know the players. □ All too well. □ They're the same as last time. □ Again.

Republicans can always be counted on to do the wrong thing, and in the worst way possible, using the most honorable, valiant propaganda most echoic of any cliched, dog-eared snippet of Americana. In the national dog-and-pony show, Republicans get the blue ribbon every time, for Worst in Show. They can be relied on to plunge furiously into any activity guaranteed to reverse the course of human progress and evolution, usually by evoking wrongheaded notions of Liberty and Justice and Family Values.

Republicans can be depended upon to demonstrate the finer points of the Terrible Twos, and are all pros, every one of them, at pouting, throwing tantrums, and lying -- especially when caught holding a cookie, high atop a stool, on a kitchen floor strewn with the potshards of a busted cookie jar. And the equivalent in cash, favors, payoffs, hookers, insider deals, you name it.

In a pinch, when there is no course of action desired by the individual or group -- either from an utter lack of ideas, a burst of routine in-fighting, or an outbreak of their endless Just Say No Campaign --, Republicans can be trusted to furiously bear down with all their resources and sit on their hands. And do absolutely nothing. Again. Some more. And, aside from saying "No, and you can't make me, so there," they'll only add a *raspberried* tongue flourish, an upraised middle finger, or a colorful epithet as punctuation.

This ability to say no, to mean it, and to stand firm on it, and to enforce that jackbooted lockstep, is sacred to all Republicans, no matter what level of harm such inaction may cause to national or global audiences and institutions. However, in keeping with Republican standards of clear and uniform thinking, laborers and unions have been long despised for attempting any such

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similar inaction or equivalent copycat, wildcat strikes, for the benefit of workers and families.

Republicans can be flexible -- but, only when the group's most cherished, foundation principles are threatened.

For example, this flexibility can be seen in the heroic Republican effort to keep Americans ill, off-balance, and not thinking very clearly -- thereby insuring a swelling of their ranks by new, fevered, sleep-deprived members no longer certain of the outcome of complex mathematic operations such as *two plus two*. Republicans have done this by voting 3,619 times, at a cost to the American taxpayer of 74.3 quadrillion dollars, to scrap the Affordable Care Act.

Ted Cruz alone is responsible for more than half of these Here We Go Again, Cry-Baby vote calls, wasting more taxpayer money on this one issue than he could ever hope to make on the lecture circuit -- once he runs, becomes better known as an empty-minded and thorough asshat (even more than he is presently) and his fees skyrocket accordingly.

But, you can always bank on Republicans siding with banks, and with any money-bagged interests, from Wall Street to Easy Street. They're happy to trade their weight in titanium for a handful of Never Tax Me or My Business Interests Forever cards for contributors.

SCOTUS has previously approved the sale of office to highest candidate bidders and backers, and with no obligation to ever tell the country the names of those bidders and backers. Look for a new ruling later this year that allows all national offices to be placed on the Ebay auction block, with a *Buy It Now* option -- and a soon-to-be-revealed, *Whaddya Got To Trade?* option as well.

Predictably, however, Republicans object to person-on-person crime, but fully support corporate crime, corporate-on-corporate crime, and corporate-on-government crime. They already back McGagg the Corrupt National Security Safety Dog Program, and the slogan, *Help Take a Bite Out of Gummint!*

With Republicans, it's never a two-way street -- except for their own members, who are busy

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working both sides of it.

It's taken them decades since their last coup attempt in the 1930s, when fascists and financiers almost succeeded in overthrowing the government of the United States of America. Since then, they've worked hard to corner the key points of power, such as:

- Communications (media to disseminate and propel party propaganda)
- Fear-mongering (helps clannishness and pumps up apathetic voter turnout)
- Voter suppression (helps keep weak, apathetic, opposition voting even weaker)
- Gerrymandering (stacking the deck and buying the dealer helps in any card game)
- Lobbying (the fine art of strong-arming politicians to write the laws you want)
- Lawmaking (think ALEC here -- the group helping write Republican law in all 50 states)
- Think-tanks (study & implementation of effective marketing, propaganda, and policies)
- Red-herring farming (generate hot-button non-issues to sway members & cloud thinking)

- Finance (to power and fund tactics, goals, processes, and to buy the system itself)

... and more.

I mean, just in propaganda alone, you have to hand it to Republicans. Fox News is not news, it's a Republican clubhouse functioning as a talking point generator and echo machine, as well as a support group for the Hard-of-Thinking. It's a news organization in the same way as the Liars Club is a truth-telling society -- with the force of law behind them, boasting judicial rulings on their cases which say *there is no obligation for Fox broadcasters to tell the truth in news reports*.

Republican columnists and broadcasters deserve their own set of awards -- I'd suggest the name Grimmies, for helping make America a grimmer place to live every second -- and making their ideas as cheap, plentiful, and commonplace as fast food -- and just as nutritious, and in a similar, non-artisan, factory-stamped, production-line conveyor belt format, run by chimps on break from their tedious shifts flinging feces in the monkey house.

Republican media stars are the McDonald's hamburgers of thought: They bear as much resemblance to actual thought as a Mickey-D burger bears resemblance to an actual hamburger. One requires no chewing, is generic, appeals to well-researched tastes and to

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heavily marketed audiences, and is easily swallowed whole.

You don't have to be a Gourmet of Thinking and Thought to tell the two apart -- you just have to have had **a real hamburger** sometime in your life, and you must be willing to have the memory of that event interact with your Golden Republican Arch experience.

I mean, one is a real hamburger from your own grill and backyard, and other is a Big Lie (TM) with Freedom Fries. (R)(C)(P)(DON'TTREADONME).

When in doubt, kill your TV -- or at least, use it as a monitor or aquarium. Or a counterweight, on a pulley system, to help you read your voter's pamphlet, do some research, or help buy a needy voter a big ol' steaming can of *Doctor Mom's Majik Mojo Deep Thinking Powder -- Opens the Mind Without Closing the Case or Kicking Down the Door.*

Seriously, now: Rest assured, the next coup will not fail -- especially if Republicans lock down all three branches of government -- *known by Republicans as the Nina, the Pinta, and Moe* -- as is just about ready to happen, come 2016, a.k.a
*Election Apocalypse-geddon Cold Steel Rambo Sudden Death Finale:
The Dumbing Down of America, Achieved At Last!*

- (*Sorry about that graphic -- your local station had some winter storm graphics left over that slipped into the mix...*)

If you'd like to give the population more credit than that, just remember Mitt The Romney garnered a whopping 47% of the vote -- ironic to his elitist comments, of course -- and this was someone the GOP and its camp followers positively, absolutely, abjectly *hated*.

I mean, just about any bozo able to fog a mirror would do better with GOPpers (pronounced like *gawpers*, as in *to stare at with an open mouth*) with the "right" religion and a more approachable, non-vulture-capitalist, single-story garage-possessor (sans elevator) with fewer mansions that fingers and toes and hair follicles.

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- In well-researched data, 98.7% of Republicans believe they, too, can be multi-millionaires someday, as encouraged by official Republican dogma, but *Mitt* just shoved their GOP puppy noses in their own, *uh*, reality of the lack of their expected life outcomes.

So, the search continues for the penultimate Repunklican -- I mean, *Republican* -- candidate. Minimum Qualifications:

- Bible Thumper, with uninterrupted church attendance record since own conception
- Bona fide Heterosexual (provable even after intense investigation, daycare-to-current)
- Looks good in outdoor apparel while idly cradling a shotgun and squinting into distance
- Misogynist with heavy street cred (own gangsta rap tune can refer to candidate if cool)
- Vehement science denier / House Science Committee member (redundancy OK if both)
- War monger and/or profiteer, and/or strong war industries in home state
- Lifelong NRA supporter, including certified photos of gun use by second birthday
- No *traceable* history with the Klan or with hookers of either sex -- or any species
- Deep pockets (and/or ready access to same via family, friends, major donors, theft)
- Easy to say name (for broadcasters, ad writers, and as supporter memory aid)
- Awards / track record / demonstrated ability in ignorance, arrogance, saying NO
- Doctor-able background record (college/tavern/frat attendance, military service, etc.)
- Proven ability to lip synch lines from ventriloquist advisor, ala *EZ Cheney Playbooks*
- Demonstrated adoration of three or more sports involving a ball
- A pet of some kind; ability to remember pet's name; knowledge of pet interaction(s)
- No awkward convictions -- criminal or personal, private or published (unless paid in full)
- 750 originals of birth certificate, notarized, w/ birth video/photos & DNA tests
- Pulse (partial / occasional only is acceptable)
- Exceptionally high "acceptable to have a beer with" rating
- Exceptionally low "aware of what an actual debate looks like" rating

Given this harsh, rigid list of steep qualifications -- right up there with trying to sift sand with a 9-gauge sieve -- it's no wonder that hopeful, pasty-faced candidates are bobbing up left and right, like poorly anchored, too-talkative campaign donors previously invited to sleep with the fishes.

After all, who wouldn't want to live all the glitz and glamor of the high life, and the supreme ego lift of one's life, by having the public else foot the bill -- win, lose, draw, or withdraw? It's a great training ground for actual public office!

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And the Repunklicans -- sorry, I mean *Republicans* -- are hyper-pumped and super-crazy to get running, and get that *other person* out of the *White*

House. Besides, saying

NO

gets really old after eight years, even to those with shoe-size IQs, and it would be,

well,

different to say

YES

as a change of pace.

So, while Ted Cruz running may be the *straw-camel-back announcement* that *scissors-paper-rock* broke my interest in all things political this fabulous election -- set to run for the next 100 years this year -- he's only the messenger for the raft of titanic icebergs about to break, scrape, rake, and puncture the hull of our futures, and eardrums, and minds, in this country.

The GOP, of course, has got huge, vast vats of *Industrial-Strength, Grade-A, Weaponized Crazy* warming up in the wings for a shot at the West Wing. Shoals of them. Just like last time, but more better, with new and improved *Mind-Boggle 3000 (TM), the Doublespeak Method of House Flippers, Scientology Students, and Instruction Pamphlet Writers!*

A stroll through the hemming-and-hawing, faux-aw-shucks, still-considering-a-run lists reads like an actual Tea Party dosed and doused in Blotter Paper Acid Fresh from Bizzaro World, complete with Red Queens, Mad Hatters, and Scurrying Alices, not to mention a few unhinged Lex Luthor wannabees.

- And Bizzaro Supermen. [Looks down, hides face with hands, shakes head] Lots and lots of Bizzaro Supermen.

Only Mitt so far, and Paul Ryan -- you remember him, the Eddie Munster double for the Republican party, who wanted to balance the budget with Math from Mars And Way Beyond, and whose love for Ayn Rand's me-first-at-your-expense approach to life had knocked him into a lusty loop -- have so far excused themselves from this Fiesta of Fools.

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- Pity, that; there's an almost inexhaustible supply of strange and embarrassing factors and elements which could be linked to their names, for good clean fun; but, take note comedians: before you purge those files, consider, that, just as in science fiction, no-one ever really dies, in politics, a NO is just a YES waiting to happen. Besides, there's always these two little letters to keep in mind, even though they'll make us lose endless amounts of sleep: *Veep*.

I could go on and on with stultifying examples of GOP traits, policies, candidates, but why bother? Since the post WWII years -- certainly since JFK at the latest -- the GOP has been not only insane, but absurdly, grandly so.

People who line up for their wares show an amazing alacrity for mystifying action, on the level of eagerly queueing up behind signs reading FORM UP HERE FOR FREE PARBOILING and TEST DRIVE THE ALL-NEW PIRANHA POOL, as if following the GOP and its policies hasn't gotten them into more than enough hot water, or missing favorite body parts, just yet.

Democrats are no better -- or only slightly less worse, as you like it. Republicans' entire being, philosophy, and policy is based on Fear, and are propelled by this basic emotion.

- (There's a link or two below in which traits of the Republican brain are discussed; I know I've brought this up a few times in the last year or two, but it's still a fascinating topic and provides a beginning, teasing, possible answer to the musical question, "But why on Earth would anyone act in their own worst interests...?")

I'd like to believe Democrats are propelled less by fear than they are motivated by hope for the better. No, I'd really like to believe that. It's just that, having observed the process, I do not.

Of course: There are known exceptions to the rule, but these sane, purposeful players are becoming rarer all the time, and their islands of sanity are shrinking, due to rising sea levels which are not occurring, caused by climate change which is not happening.

- Two such stellar exceptions come to mind, of current politicians still striving hard to accomplish the best for everyone, from the famed Little Guy, on up to Everyone and the Nation Itself: Jeff Merkley of Oregon and Bernie Sanders of Vermont. (Unfortunately, strain as I might,

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very honestly I cannot name any Republican exceptions. And I've looked. And looked again.)

- Of course, these gentlemen -- and they deserve that honorable title -- have no chance at being President: one has no name recognition and the other would likely be called a (**Cau**
tion! Scary Word Alert!

) socialist by people who could not define that term at concealed-carry, stand-your-ground gunpoint.

Even if they could run and be elected, they would still be nice, sane, well-intentioned, helpful guys with an incredible record of great public works -- but, trying to get things done in an insane asylum where each person shrieks only his and her own language, to the exclusion of all others, and those with whom they need to partner, in order to get things done, all have pinwheel eyes, pluck their eyelids, and hum songs from the disco era.

Even Bill Clinton, a Democrat, the best president the Republicans ever had, was hounded and persecuted for a personal dalliance by Republicans, while ignoring heinous and illegal conduct on a vast and global scale, from and by their own man -- or men, if you include *Vice President* Bush along with *President* Cheney.

No, Dems too often dither and wither, shrinking from honorable, justifiable fights in Congress to appease the hot heads and psychos running the asylum. And, as Will Rogers so ably and aptly noted, "I am not a member of any organized political party -- I am a Democrat."

And so, energies go spiraling off into many wonderful directions, never to be heard of ever again. It would, however, be fantastic to switch things around, and give Dems control of the phenomenal war chest Republicans roll out each and every time. It would test out a lot of theories, not the least being whether money would corrupt them as easily as it has Republicans, or if sex would still be the generic point of downfall for all Democratic sliders into home plate, and instant unemployment.

Frankly, I'm simply tired of all of it -- from the amount of money and time wasted every four years, to the parades of Candidates of the Absurdists' Festival, to the vapid pomp, ceremony, and empty-handed, flag-waving, we're-number-one fist pumping.

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I've also got RF-SAST -- Rapid Flashback, Short Attention Span Theater. I hear political prattling, and I see dead people... all the Republican candidates of the last two decades, all 19,372 of them.

There's not much truth to celebrate, in this 2016 blow-out, beyond these few convention topics:

- Money is Power
- Jungle Law: Strike First
- Economics: Civilized Warfare
- The Powerful Always Get Their Way
- Bracketed Competition: The Lesser Evil Effect
- People Can Be Worked Up to Believe Anything We Say
- The Elaborate Trading/Tracking of Favors -- Accounting 101 - 999
- The Elaborately Disguised Art of Flinging Mud and Lies at Opponents
- Insiders Will Always Work to Increase the Wealth and Power of Insiders

And so on.

Really, everything else is just illusion -- smoke, mirrors, trap doors, and special effects. We choose people for the most powerful office on Earth, as it always said, like a Carny Show crossed with a Reality TV Show, mixed with Surrealist Theater, combined with a Game Show. It has all the dignity of a clown funeral. With the little zippy cars. And fezzes. Lots of fezzes.

- Funny thing, which is to say, *unfunny thing*, how money perverts EVERYTHING in a system run on, and based on, money.

Funny thing, which is to say, *unfunny thing*, how the founders didn't foresee the forces around this auction -- or how they failed to envision the modern, distracted, apathetic gutting in the guiding force behind this democracy: an informed and engaged citizenry, able to weed out wheat from chaff, in the marketplace of ideas.

Now, the self-correcting mechanism is money, and money always talks, while self-corrections

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walk. Money is never interrupted when it speaks, unless by a *bigger* pile of money.

- Law of the jungle. Same jungle, we've just, uh, *civilized* things. *Sure.* □ *That's it...*

Yeah: Battling for my sanity on just too many fronts at once and, you know -- I just haven't got the back to carry it any more. *The Beast with Two Backs* is one thing; I feel like *The Battered Beast Unable to Bounce Back*

Especially not haven taken another very hard look at the guest list for this little bash. And, look at any of them is beyond difficult -- then, there's *the hearing them* part of things...

See you on the other side of the 2016 election -- if we still have luxuries like free speech. Damn sure it's not going to be missing from intelligent overuse in the run-up to this election.

My babble included.

POSTSCRIPT

Breaking the logjam of a stubborn, entrenched, two-party system always at loggerheads requires walking outside it, encouraging independents and voting for those whose ideas are sound.

Silly me: I think every voter in America should be an Independent, selecting candidates based on ideas. But, then, I'm a woeful minority -- I also believe everyone should be a religious agnostic, saying, basically, "You know, beats me."

Open-mindedness can still get you killed in some parts of this world.

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I have no idea how the religious, or Republicans, get by in Missouri, whose *Show Me* motto sounds ominously close to *Prove It, Buddy, or Get Outta My Face*.

EPILOG

Politics: Still interested in the issues. Not the players or process. No way I know to separate them out.

To that end, I hereby give up, and proclaim myself an Earthbound Misfit, unable to get off this crazy -- but unmistakably beautiful -- planet and into a *Star Trek* reality.

- By the Way: I miss the thought of having Leonard Nimoy being with us. I wonder about many things. Today, right now, while writing this piece, I find myself wondering how many Republicans were touched by news of his death -- how many Republicans were *ever* touched by *Star Trek* or the notion of Spock or his celebrations or struggles.

- I am not sure which is more dismaying: The low estimate of Nimoy's and Spock's effect on Republicans, in life or in death -- or the fact of this era making my estimate of either so low.

In any event, I am thinking of coming up with a club -- *attention, pro bono copyright and trademark attorneys* -- to celebrate my status as a higher-plane-seeking, presently disenfranchised-sensing human, and to gain some comfort and camaraderie in knowing the number beyond myself is greater than one.

(Perhaps we could do regional potlucks and other fellowship event, without the weight and hysteria of religion, while still gaining the benefits and sharing of group membership.

- It'll be called the *EMU Club*, or, more simply, just *EMUs* -- Earthbound Misfits United (or

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Unlimited -- we could,
of all things...).

uhhh, vote,

The Club logo will be an emu hiding its head in the sand, against a field of stars and planets. More fun for pro bono artist renderings: Maybe a rainbow -- rainbows are still big -- or a patch of northern lights. Or just puffy clouds and blue skies, as blue-sky ideas go. (I'm chuckling now, but I'm also serious.)

- Very few people, especially Republicans, who get their world geopolitical view from cartoons, are expected to actually know an emu is **not** an ostrich, and that ostriches do **not** hide their heads in the sand.

However, this image seems completely fitting and germane to the whole notion of human escapism via false myth, and to our failings and foibles -- as well as providing a salute to our human sense of humor, and to our willingness to use laughter in building bridges across rivers of tears.

To be human is ultimately about being baffled, it seems to me, and our coming to terms with this state of utter befuddlement -- perhaps someday arriving at a measure of peace with it.

You know, give it a few hundred years, and the EMUs could become a religion.

... or, at least, a political party worth a damn.

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Send in the clones... uh, clowns -- both:

http://ballotpedia.org/Possible_presidential_candidates,_2016

The Republican brain:

http://www.alternet.org/story/154252/the_republican_brain%3A_why_even_educated_conservatives_deny_science_--_and_reality

Bio basis for GOP-think:

<http://www.alternet.org/news-amp-politics/are-republican-brains-different>

Brain differences:

<http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2013/02/brain-difference-democrats-republicans>

Conservative Id:

<http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/6651:the-rightwing-id-unzipped>

More?

Just Google "republican brains are different"

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Today's bonus:

The official EMU theme song, as performed by Pink Floyd:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bn4_zur5hgw