[**American injustice**](https://www.dawn.com/news/1659940/american-injustice)

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FOR decades I have been amazed by the audacity of the US in preaching democracy and the rule of law to other nations. That’s absurd enough, even if one ignores its sporadic urge to inculcate “the American way of life” in faraway lands it barely understands through military invasions or surreptitious interventions.

There are not too many countries where it would be considered acceptable for a 17-year-old to acquire a lethal weapon, inject himself into a volatile situation, then shoot three people who justifiably considered him a threat, killing two of them. But that’s precisely what the verdict in the Wisconsin [trial of Kyle Rittenhouse](https://www.dawn.com/news/1659187) conveys.

**Read more:** [*Riots break out in US city over court verdict*](https://www.dawn.com/news/1659351)

A commentator by the name of Bruce Bawer wrote in the online journal *American Greatness*, “if teenaged marines can be sent to Mogadishu, then a 17-year-old citizen … has every right to try to keep the order in his own backyard”.

There’s a certain logic to that. Unless you query the moral validity of dispatching vigilantes in American uniforms to Mogadishu or Kabul or Baghdad, how can you reasonably question the validity of lethally armed vigilantes following their instincts on the streets of America?

The US is headed down the route it usually decrees for others.

In this particular case, not only has the culprit — acquitted of all charges by an almost all-white jury in a trial presided over by a clearly prejudiced judge — been hailed as a hero by the right wing, but a number of Republican congressmen are competing to hire him as an intern.

They include Paul Gosar, the extremist from Arizona who recently became only the 24th representative to be censured by the Hou­­se of Representatives, after posting an anime video in which he assassinates a colleague — Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, nat­ural­­ly — and then goes on to assault the president.

It wasn’t an easy motion, though. Ocasio-Cortez reasonably wondered what was so hard about condemning yet another death threat. But the Republican caucus, for the most part, has allied itself with extremism of the white supremacist variety. The ruling gerontocracy, exemplified by Joe Biden and Nancy Pelosi, seemingly barely has a clue about how to deal with it.

The bipartisanship Biden has championed throughout his political life is the realm of in­­c­­oherence in the present circumstances. Sure, you can push through an infrastructure bill that offers multiple opportunities to construction firms that will build roads and brid­ges for the taxpayers they simultaneously rip off.

Bernie Sanders, to his credit, keeps questioning the kind of American exceptionalism whereby Americans pay 10 times as much as Canadians for precisely the same medicines. But the scandal stretches far beyond the pharmaceutical industry.

That is why the passage Build Back Better bill was accompanied by so much more enthusiasm in the House of Representatives. Even though it’s been whittled down to approximately one-third its value in the original Sanders version, it still contains some laudable measures, notably on the health and education fronts. It can almost be guaranteed, though, that it won’t be passed in its present form by the Senate — thanks mainly to the two recalcitrants, Joe Manchin and Kyrsten Sinema, both of whom have lately been raking in donations from traditionally Republican donors.

Manchin and Sinema almost certainly are not the only Democrats to be instinctively drawn to the spoor of the greenback, but they stand out as particularly stark exemplars of what is wrong with their party.

If you take a close look, the idea of America as essentially a one-party state is not all that far-fetched. Yes, there are intermittent signs of hope on the fringes of one of the two ruling parties, and frequent symbols of despair across the other one. Neither of them seems to have a clue, though, about a way out of the neoliberal paradigm and the concomitant backlash.

In the immediate aftermath of the Ritten­house verdict, President Biden wasn’t inclined — as is his wont — to take a contrary stance. “I stand by what the jury has concluded,” he declared. “The jury system works and we have to abide by it.”

Well, it obviously doesn’t as far as the delivery of justice is concerned. It didn’t in this case, any more than it did it the case of the vigilante murder of Trayvon Martin in 2012. There are occasional exceptions, but trigger-happy policemen are routinely found innocent. That didn’t happen in the case of the [lynching of George Floyd](https://www.dawn.com/news/1559624), thanks to the widely publicised video of his murder.

But it remains the norm. No one was charged for the targeting in Kenosha of Jacob Blake, who was [shot by police](https://www.dawn.com/news/1576262/us-police-shoot-black-man-in-back-sparking-unrest) seven times in the back and side while leaning into a car containing three of his youngest children. He remains paralysed.

That’s what provoked the [riots](https://www.dawn.com/news/1576574/2-dead-1-injured-as-gunfire-erupts-at-us-protest-over-shooting-of-black-man) that Ritte­n­house reacted to. He gets off scot-free — arguably symbolising why America is doomed.

**Read more:** [*Kyle Rittenhouse tells Fox News ‘not a racist person,’ backs BLM*](https://www.dawn.com/news/1659782)

Who can seriously object if Donald Trump is re-elected in 2024 to lead the way? Perhaps America deserves him.

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