

## Joe's mask-charade

Poor Joe Biden. Just when he thought it was safe to remove his mask for a photo-op at the Lincoln Memorial he's broadsided by those evil Fox News reporters for engaging in some mask hypocrisy. I've been doing some serious thinking about Joe's relationship with his mask and how traumatic it must be for him to be criticized for letting it drop during a moment of weakness. I think I have an answer, but we have to take a trip back to Joe's childhood.

Joe's dad suffered some dramatic financial setbacks just before Joe was born and the family was forced to drastically scale back on their finances, so little Joe lived with his maternal grandparents for several years. Times were tight and there was little in the way of luxury. This obviously had an effect on him. I surmise that on one occasion, on or about October 30<sup>th</sup> and probably around the age of five or so, Joe asked to be masked up for Halloween. Not having a lot of money, his granny probably had to say there wasn't enough in the cookie jar to dress Joe up like the Lone Ranger. So Joe was forced to make due. His grandmother probably took a pair of his underwear, ripped them up, reformed them in the shape of a mask, stitched the pieces together and dyed the makeshift mask in black tea. Voila! Joe had a mask, and though he was embarrassed about wearing his underwear over his face, he was probably jubilant at being able to go out and grab himself a bag full of Halloween candy.

That story is as good as anything I would guess to describe Joe's longing for a *real* mask, and it could explain his attachment to 'Old Blackie' the huge mask that covers his face at nearly every public event these days. Rarely do we see him without it. It's actually become the equivalent of an official mascot though Biden does have two dogs, Major and Champ, both of which he has brought with him to the White House. (I do not know if they are required to wear masks or not.)

Now that Joe has the wherewithal to own the very best of masks AND he has the perfect opportunity to keep it plastered to his face, he does. It must be a comfort to him though we cannot see whether he is flashing his famous lop-sided grin beneath its layers of protective cloth or not. Joe's affection (some would say 'addiction') to Old Blackie is akin to Linus van Pelt's security blanket or in my case my old teddy bear, 'George.' Most of us have had a strong connection to a stuffed or imaginary childhood *friend*, and Old Blackie probably reminds Joe of his old underwear mask. I wonder if he dons it when he's doing laps in the pool or when he and Dr. Jill are snuggling up under the Presidential duvet. It could be something for reporters to ask about in the daily press briefing instead of the inane questions about the color scheme in Air Force One.

Given that mask love affair, isn't it logical that Joe would want all of America to share in his joy and comfort? I think it explains why one of his next Executive Orders is purported to be mandated mask-wearing on Federal property, in planes and on his beloved Amtrak trains. That brings me to the subject of 'mask love' versus 'mask-a-phobia.' I've been searching intently for THE definitive study on the efficacy (or lack thereof) of mask-wearing as a prophylactic for contracting the Coronavirus. I'm afraid, that after several exhaustive attempts, I cannot find one that all the doctors or scientists agree on. Even the sainted Dr. Anthony Fauci flip-flopped on his mask advice last year.

So what's a layman to do? The answer given to me by some Liberals I know is, "follow the science and do what you're told." Well, I've followed the science and it leads me round in a circle. Nobody can prove to me that a mask is going to keep me from getting the dreaded virus. There are wiser persons (obviously) than myself out there who must have studied the matter and they have given me a way out. It seems that the absolute, bona fide, truer than true facts about masks and their magical power to defend us against those nasty Covid-19 particles rest with (wait for it) our politicians! I should have known it. Our governors (and Joe of course) are the source of the wisdom that science can't provide. How stupid I've been. Instead of grumbling about how hard it is for me to breathe with a mask on I should have been prostrating myself at their feet and thanking my lucky stars that people with no scientific or medical backgrounds or no conclusive proof whatsoever that masks prevent disease can tell me what to do.

This whole parade of mask-wearing in stores has taken a tack upwards (or outwards). Masking up has now become *de rigueur* with walkers and runners in the great out-of-doors, no matter they are physically removed from other humans many feet away. Masks have become a symbol of compliance and are like a secret handshake that binds people of like minds together. I suspect that many of the early adopters were legitimately concerned citizens with health problems who would do anything to protect themselves, and I fully understand that attitude.

As time has worn on, however, and mask-wearing has become the law, I have noticed that people are now split into two distinct groups: freedom-loving individualists and the obedient collectively chaste. Ah, I almost forgot. There is a third group. They are the *fashionistas* who regard face coverings as a wardrobe accessory and go to great lengths to match their masks to their clothes. A prime example is the *Lady of the House*, California's own clothes maven, Nancy Pelosi. Just check out her color-coordinated masks. Each one probably costs more than a San Francisco homeless person's daily fix.

So now we've come full circle, back to old Joe. If he wants to wear a mask, I say let him. If he wants to wear a mask all day, every day, I say let him. But, if he wants to force me to wear one I must respectfully decline...unless of course it's a 'Make America Great Again' mask.

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