

Impeaching the President Comes Down to “Rooting for Laundry”

Editor’s Note: This column is free to all and first appeared on the website ... thehill.com

A few days ago, as I was writing this column, my TV was on in the background and some Democratic congressman was yammering about what an awful human being Donald Trump is and why he should be impeached. A few minutes later some Republican congressman took his place and began yammering about how the president was being railroaded, about how impeaching him would be a vindictive deed that his tormentors will come to regret.

Despite the passion on both sides, it wasn’t good TV. If this had been a reality show, it would have been canceled a long time ago. We all knew how the “drama” would end – and we’ve known it before the show even began.

First, Donald Trump gets accused of [high crimes and misdemeanors](#). Then he gets impeached. And then, in the final scene – which will play out soon enough – he gets off, no conviction. If you didn’t know all of that, you’re the only one who didn’t.

And despite the fact that they’ve been at it now for roughly a million hours, nobody is changing anybody’s mind. That may not literally be true, but it’s pretty close. Democrats are dug in. Republicans are dug in. Swing voters are still making up their minds. But at this point, it looks like the Democrats haven’t convinced them that Donald Trump is a threat to national security.

All of this, strange as it may sound, reminds me of something [Jerry Seinfeld once said](#). He was talking about the fickleness

of sports fans and noticed that they cheer for their favorite star player who wears their team's uniform – until he decides to leave the team for more money and puts on the rival team's uniform. Then when he comes back to town to play against his old team, the fans boo the very same guy they used to cheer.

As Jerry put it: The fans are just cheering for clothes. They're rooting for laundry.

That's what we're all doing these days – rooting for laundry.

If you're on the blue team, you were glad that Donald Trump was impeached. If you're on the red team, you think he's getting a raw deal.

This is just one reason that I have come to believe that most Americans – whether they're members of the chattering class in the media or your next-door neighbor – have lost the ability, and sometimes even the desire, to persuade anyone to change his or her mind on just about any important issue. Too many of us have put a "Do Not Disturb" sign around our necks and don't want to be exposed to any ideas that we don't already hold.

To be clear, having strong beliefs and hanging on to your principles is a good thing. But as a friend puts it, it's not beliefs and principles we're hanging on to, it's identity that we cling to; what matters most now is what team we play for.

And the impeachment hearings are a lot like the cable TV news channels that were carrying the show. We don't watch opinion shows to consider what the other side is saying. We watch to get our own views and biases validated. If we're on the red team, we want conservative opinion. And if we're on the blue team, we look for liberal echo chambers that will confirm our progressive ideas. No one is watching the other side to learn something they hadn't already thought about.

It's the same with the impeachment TV show. No one is watching to learn something they hadn't already thought about.

A lot of Americans would feel a lot better if the politicians were honest about what they were doing. [President Trump](#)'s real impeachable offense to Rep. [Adam Schiff](#) (D-Calif.), Rep. [Jerry Nadler](#) (D-N.Y.) and the rest of the progressive gang is that he beat [Hillary Clinton](#) in 2016. They [wanted him out](#) from the moment he got elected.

But they can't say that. Why? Because telling the truth in Washington will get you in a lot more trouble than telling a pack of lies. The progressive base that makes the most noise for the blue team would never tolerate such honesty. Not that the other side is any better.

So, I wonder: How is rooting for laundry good for any of us.