

IF I WERE DICTATOR

*A tongue-in-cheek guide
to saving our democracy*



IF I WERE DICTATOR
A TONGUE-IN-CHEEK GUIDE TO SAVING OUR DEMOCRACY

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To Chuck
A social justice warrior until the end

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INTRODUCTION



Hello my friends,

I should probably begin with, I truly have no interest in overthrowing the government and installing myself as your dictator, I'm much too lazy for that. Instead, this book is about using humor, sarcasm, logic, and a little bit of math to discuss many of the issues facing our nation and ways we could fix them.

We've all been experiencing it. The sinking certainty our country is no longer working for us, and we no longer matter in the larger scheme of how our laws are made, or even, why they are made. Many of us no longer feel like we are a part of the American Dream of a good job, and a nice home with a white picket fence to share with our spouse and raising our kids in relative security. And, if this isn't quite your generic American Dream, feel free to take a few moments to create your own image before we continue.

The sad fact is, wages are low, employment insecurity high, living debt is out of control, and there are places within our country that more resemble a third-world nation than one which reflects a country with as much wealth as we possess. I read a grim factoid once (please don't ask me where, it's been a while, and I read a lot of articles every day, but this number stayed with me and I'm now going to share it with you): if we broke down our nation's wealth and divided it equally among every man, woman, and child, we would each receive roughly \$440,000. That's a lot of money.

Or, put another way, every family of four would have about \$1.7 million in total wealth. Yet most of the wealth belongs to a small handful of people at the top of the income scale. That, my friend, is income inequity in a nutshell. I'm not saying we shouldn't reward a person for working hard and doing well, but you cannot tell me that out of 342.6 million Americans, only a tiny handful are working hard enough to justify controlling the majority of our nation's

wealth. The top 1% now hold about 32% of all wealth, and the top 10% hold roughly 70%, leaving the remaining 90% of Americans to split what's left — barely 30% of the nation's total wealth.

For perspective, a small group of billionaires now hold more wealth than the bottom half of our country combined. That's a lot of money — so much money it's hard to even think about as an actual thing. It's easier to imagine unicorns than it is to really grasp the concept of that much wealth under your personal control. It's enough to make a jackpot lottery winner feel poor by comparison. And, sadly, to scale next to the top .01%, they are. It's easier to imagine \$440,000, which is why I think it affected me so much — it's a number I could fathom, it felt real.

We may not be able to imagine that much wealth, but we can, and we do, feel the weight of so much money concentrated among a very few. Our economy is like a building with a weak foundation supporting a statue weighing 540% more than the rest combined. Looking at it, we know it can't hold. Even as the architects who built it reassure us it will, we know it can't. This is our country right now, my friends — a house built on a shaky foundation to support something it cannot hold.

And no, before you ask, AI can't fix this either, it can barely write a grocery list without hallucinating a dragon fruit uprising.

So, the question you are probably asking is, what *can* we do. My honest answer is, I don't know. Instead, I present to you *If I Were Dictator*, a pretend world where I am in charge and can change anything on a whim, because, well... I'm the dictator and that's what dictators do — change things to suit themselves without having to answer for it. And maybe somewhere within these pages, we can find the beginnings of a solution for all of us before this house of cards falls down on top of us.

Your humble Dictator,
Lisa

AFTER THE REVOLUTION



Day 1

The revolution happened and, inspired by my words, you have all collectively supported installing me as your dictator for six years. Yay me, yay you, we won, and now I have only six years to fix everything wrong with this country before I (mostly) return things to our regularly scheduled democratic madness. The clock is ticking and it's time to begin making all the changes to turn our nation around, for all of us.

Why only six years, you ask? Simple answer: it should be long enough to fix everything, yet short enough that the United States shouldn't become comfortable with having a dictator. Besides (as I mentioned before), I'm way too lazy to want to do this for the rest of my life. After six years of dealing with all of the country's woes, I'm going to be tired (maybe a little cranky) and would like to retire and enjoy the rest of my life without all the daily stress. In my opinion, only the insane would want to do this for the rest of their lives, and I may be crazy for doing this, but I am not insane.

There's a lot to do, and I will be upfront and admit, I can't do it alone. I'm going to need help. A lot of help. And here is where the rest of you come in. We started this revolution together, and now we're all going to have to put in the hard work to make sure it wasn't for nothing. And I'm going to need a lot of smart people — I'm going to need experts in their fields to help me tackle the millions of problems our nation has, both big and small. That's too much for one person to deal with on their own. I may know a lot of facts over a multitude of subjects, but the simple fact is, I'm not an expert in most of them. I am aware of my limitations and weaknesses, and I will need your help.

I'm going to need economists, accountants, environmental scientists, doctors, a few lawyers, community organizers, and

activists. I'm going to need green tech experts and land-management people. I'm going to need city planners and poverty experts. I'm going to need educational experts, historians, and diplomats. I'm going to need... ummm, why don't we just stop here. Suffice to say, I need you guys. Are you ready to help me? I hope so.

It's Day 1, and I'm going to make a list of the problems we need to fix. I like lists — clearly defining something that needs to be done and the satisfaction of crossing it off when finished. And this may be the most important list I've ever made in my life. Here we go...

1. ***The environment.*** If we can't breathe, we're all dead.
2. ***Economy.*** If we can't enjoy our lives while on this earth, what's the point of any of it?
3. ***Taxes.*** Because if we don't learn to share, none of this is possible.
4. ***Healthcare.*** Because no one should lose everything because they were sick or injured.
5. ***Education.*** We need smart, capable people and the only way to get them is to educate them.
6. ***Housing.*** Because everyone needs a place to call home.
7. ***Food.*** Can't live if we can't eat.
8. ***Energy.*** Because oil isn't forever.
9. ***Infrastructure.*** Because if everything is falling apart, our country will collapse under the rot of neglect.
10. ***International relations.*** We need more friends who actually like us.
11. ***The military.*** We need to restore rational balance, and reject the shoot first and ask questions later mentality.
12. ***Elections.*** If we are going to be a nation for the people and by the people, our elections need to reflect that.
13. ***Legal Stuff.*** Everyone deserves to live in freedom and justice.

Okay, that's the list.
Are you ready to tackle it with me?
Then let's begin...

About the Author



Lisa Orban was born in Galesburg, Illinois, and has been preparing for benevolent dictatorship since approximately age five. After a childhood of frequent moves, family shenanigans, and a brief cameo in the foster care system, she fled to Arizona at eighteen, collected more stories than any one person should legally possess, and eventually returned to Quincy, Illinois.

She raised five kids, earned a psychology degree, survived several marriages, bought a house, and built a life that's part circus ringmaster, part author, and part collector of stray humans. In 2018 she founded Indies United Publishing House, a cooperative press dedicated to ethical, community-driven publishing — because if she can't rule the country, she can at least run a publishing house.

These days she writes, mentors authors, orchestrates joyful chaos, and occasionally wonders how much easier things would be if people would just let her run everything.

OTHER BOOKS BY THE AUTHOR

SERIES: OKAY, PICTURE THIS...

IT'LL FEEL BETTER WHEN IT QUILTS HURTING
WINE COMES IN SIX-PACKS

COOKBOOK

I'D RATHER STARVE THAN COOK!
A cookbook for people who hate to cook

SCIENCE FICTION

404: APOCALYPSE NOT FOUND

VISUAL VERTIGO: OPTICAL ILLUSION COLORING BOOKS

VOLUME ONE
VOLUME TWO
VOLUME THREE
VOLUME FOUR