

LISA M. ORBAN

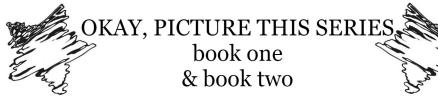
A tongue-in-cheek guide to saving our democracy



If I were Dictator

A tongue-in-cheek guide to saving our democracy

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To Chuck

A social justice warrior to the end.

LET THE REVOLUTION BEGIN ONE CHAPTER AT A TIME

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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 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 not too long ago, (please don't ask me where, it's been a few months, 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 equally among every man, woman, and child, we would each receive \$700,000 per year. That's a lot of money.

Or, put another way, every family of four would be millionaires, with an annual combined income of 2.8 million dollars a year. 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 out of 323.1 million Americans, only a small handful are working hard enough to justify their possessing over half of our nation's wealth. Broken down, the top 1% is in control of 43% of our nation's wealth, and next 4% in possession of an additional 29%, leaving almost nothing for the rest of us. A mere 28% to split up among 96% of Americans.

For perspective, three individuals in our country have as much wealth as the bottom half of our country, just three. 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 a third of our nation's 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 image \$700,000, 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 image 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.

So, the question you are probably asking is, what do 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 fall 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 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, I'm going to need you guys, 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...

- 01. The environment. If we can't breathe, we're all dead.
- 02. Economy. If we can't enjoy our lives while on this earth, what's the point of any of it?
- o3. Taxes. Because if we don't learn to share, none of this is possible.
- 04. Healthcare. Because no one should lose everything because they were sick or injured.
- o5. Education. We need smart, capable people and the only way to get them is to educate them.
 - 06. Housing. Because everyone needs a place to call home.
 - 07. Food. Can't live if we can't eat.
 - 08. Energy. Because oil isn't forever.
- 09. 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...

SAFEGUARDS



Before we begin, we should probably discuss a few things before we get started on this revolution. First of all, this is a work of fiction, but even so, let's go ahead and pretend we're actually doing this, and to that end, we should cover all our bases. The following few sections will be dealing not so much with problem solving as much as ground rules for our revolution and what to expect. And, if at any time there is an overthrow of our government, you can use this book as a manual. Just something to have laying around the house, break glass in case of emergency, type thing. So let us proceed...

The problem with having a dictator is, generally, absolute power corrupts absolutely, and that is not what this revolution is about. Our movement about getting our country back on track the quickest way possible. You know, basically wrestling it away from the powers-that-be and handing our country back to the people, after I've made a few tweaks.

I have no love for power, in and of, itself, but I do like the idea of not wading through layers of bureaucratize that has stifled our government and hindered progress. But, if our revolution is to succeed, there does need to be a few safeguards put in place to make sure I, as your humble Dictator, do not fall in love with power for the sake of power.

So, to keep me in check (because all power needs a check of

some kind) the Secret Service will be there not only to protect me from you, but to protect you from me. If I ever decide, I love power more than I love my country, it will be their duty to step in and stop me. By whatever means necessary.

Our revolution is not about one person being in power, it's about getting power back to where it belongs, to all of us, not just a small handful of lucky and/or very rich individuals who have all the say in what our government does. A brief dictatorship, such as mine, can do this much quicker than the meandering process we have now, as long as the love of power is never allowed to flourish during my reign.

So, I will put safeguards in place to ensure this never happens. You can rest easy during my six years as Dictator I will never stray from our mutual goal of fixing our country and making it a better place for all of us. I hope this eases your mind a bit if you were feeling a bit uncomfortable about having a dictator in charge of your democracy for a few years.

Now, let's get back to the basics of governing with the next section, the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

THE CONSTITUTION & BILL OF RIGHTS



We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, ensure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

While this country will briefly be under my dictatorship, we will not be abandoning the principles of our Founding Fathers, instead, we will be embracing the spirit of what they were attempting to create all those long years ago. Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for all who are within our borders.

Our nation was founded on the idea we all were created equal, and while we were off to a rocky start with slavery still allowed to flourish, the treatment of our Native populations, and for women and children of all status, colors, and creeds. That's not to say progress hasn't been made, but we have a ways to go before we can say we are all truly equal. More steps have to be taken to make the ideals of our founding fathers a reality for every man, woman, and child, regardless of age, sex, marital status, race, sexual orientation, religion or any other artificially created standard we currently have in our society.

Starting on Day One of my dictatorship, those existing prejudges will no longer be tolerated. Every law we've ever enacted in our country under any guise that takes away rights from one group to appease another will be stripped from our legal code. Any group who incites violence or hatred towards another will not be tolerated and will be judged harshly for their actions. We have free speech in our country, and we are all free to believe whatever little fantasy tickles our soul, but when those fantasies infringe on the rights of others, a line has to be drawn. Our country's first document started with the line, *We the People*, and as your Dictator, I will be upholding the dream of our Founders, *e pluribus unum*, out of many, one.

The Constitution has been the foundation for our country, since the moment we declared independence, and while we have on occasion lost our way, we have always kept this document at the heart of all we hold dear as a country. During my six year reign, it will be the vision of a more perfect union our Founding Father's gave to us I will use as the guiding principle while I am in charge of the country.

The Bill of Rights will also remain largely unchanged. But it has become the bad habit of some to embrace one amendment to the exclusion of all others in an attempt to further their own personal agenda. We cannot allow the common good to be discarded by continuing this practice. So, let's quickly go through the first ten amendments our Founding Father's thought important enough to include.

The First Amendment

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

We will embrace the First Amendment, and uphold the principles of its intent. The government will honor the ideals of keeping our politics out of religion, and neither embrace one to the exclusion of all others nor condemn any individual or group's religious practices, provided they do not attempt to harm or subjugate others in their practices. People are allowed to peacefully assemble and air their grievances, as long as they are not used to incite violence. We need a healthy voice in the public forum and we will encourage the public to continue to engage in public discourse.

The Second Amendment

A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.

I believe to the depths of my soul our Founding Father's would be horrified if they witnessed what has been done in the name of the Second Amendment. It was never their intent to give blanket protection to the slaughter of innocents, but to protect us from tyranny. Unfortunately, it has become the whipping post to stir up the population and allow atrocities to happen all over our nation and excuse it. I do not plan on taking all your guns away, but we have to be reasonable and put in place common sense laws to bring sanity back to our society.

To this end, I will be enacting gun sanity laws, more or less based on the same principles as owning a car. Before you can buy a gun, you will have to pass a background check and a psychiatric exam. If you are emotionally stable and do not pose a threat to society, you may go on to the next step. You will have to take a class and learn how to operate and care for a gun, and you will have to pass the class to get a license to own a gun. Once you have completed the course, you will be required to carry gun insurance. If someone is harmed or killed with one of your guns, their care, recovery, or death benefits will be covered by your insurance policy. Once a year, you will be required to renew your license, and show proof of insurance for the full prior year. And once every five years, you will be required to undergo a psychiatric evaluation and refresher course.

Our amendments are there to protect us from our worst intentions, not sanction them. It is hard to pursue life, liberty, and happiness if we're ducking bullets in our streets, schools, and homes. And no other amendment has been perverted as much as the Second since the founding of our country. It is time to restore balance and reign in the unfettered application of it. We have free speech in our country, it's in the First Amendment, but you cannot yell fire in a crowded theater, because of the public safety factor, and the same should be applied to the Second.

The Third Amendment

No Soldier shall, in time of peace be quartered in any house, without the consent of the Owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law.

This hasn't been much of an issue, so it requires little commentary. It's there because during our time as a colony, England would house their soldiers in the homes of local populations and it was frowned upon by the people they imposed on. Since we have military housing and ample funds to house our soldiers, I don't believe this will ever be an issue. But we'll keep it, just in case, to prevent any future stupidity.

The Fourth Amendment

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

In recent years, our country has gotten away from this founding principle and have gone about enacting laws to circumvent it in the forms of the Patriot Act and civil forfeiture laws. If you are unfamiliar with civil forfeiture, let me take a moment to tell you about it. Civil forfeiture has given law enforcement the abilities to seize assets from individuals, even if they haven't been accused of a crime if an officer believes those assets were gained through illicit activity. But here's the rub, they don't need to *prove* the money or property they took was actually ill-gotten gain to keep it, they only have to submit they *believe* it to be so.

This has led to a rise in cash strapped police departments seizing assets from people and using them to support their departments and it's lead to a variety of behaviors that would be crimes by any other name if not committed with a badge on their chest and civil forfeiture to hide behind. And it will end. If law enforcement cannot come up with reasonable, actionable evidence of a crime, a person should not be subjected to the loss of property and/or money merely on the say-so of an individual, even if they do wear a badge.

We will return to a more reasonable and humane treatment of our citizens, and protect all of us from too much power being given to individuals or offices without proper oversight and a clear path to address a grievance if misconduct has occurred.

The Fifth Amendment

No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a grand jury except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the Militia, when in actual service in time of War or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offense to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation.

We will be talking more about this in Legal Stuff, but suffice to say, we need to ensure our legal system is working for us, not being used as a means to intimidate, harass, or deprive of us of our liberties wantonly or without reasonable cause.

The Sixth Amendment

In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the State and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the Assistance of Counsel for his defense.

We'll cover more of this in *Legal Stuff* but, I would like to touch upon assistance of counsel. We have public defenders in our country who (generally) work hard for their defendants, but they are often underfunded, underpaid, and so overworked, many who might have gone free under different circumstances, instead, end up in jail because of overworked lawyers. This is a problem we can

easily solve with money, and we will work hard to correct the injustices that have been done because of the current system.

The Seventh Amendment

In suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact tried by a jury, shall be otherwise re-examined in any court of the United States, then according to the rules of the common law.

I will leave this one alone, for now at least. Perhaps as things progress, it might need some looking into but that's for later, if ever.

The Eighth Amendment

Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

Oh, we've gone far astray from this amendment, and have built a system which resembles more debtors prison than a justice system. It is not uncommon for someone to end up in jail only because they could not afford the excessive fines or come up with bail money and ended up sitting in prison for minor violations. This is a practice we will be ending, it is cruel in its application and causes excessive hardships upon the most vulnerable among us. No one should ever go to jail because they couldn't afford to pay a fine for something as minor as a seatbelt violation, and yet, all over our country this can, and does, happen. We will talk more about this in Legal Stuff.

The Ninth Amendment

The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.

We, as a nation, need to embrace this amendment. Most do not

even realize it exists and do not understand the power it could have on our society. When a law is brought up we will often talk about the First and the Second Amendment and how it applies, but rarely is this ever discussed when laws are being made to curtail the rights of individuals or groups, typically stemming from a religious belief, not a legal one. When we try to deny some of our citizens the rights enjoyed by the majority, this amendment should protect us, but it has been ignored in favor of granting more rights to some and less to others. But this amendment will play heavily into some of the changes we are going to be making when discussing *Nosy Neighbor Laws*.

The Tenth Amendment

The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.

Essentially, this is the *get off my lawn* amendment. It gives the states the right to order its business, without interference from the federal government, provided it does not violate federal law. It's a dual-edged sword which has given rise to greatness, and plunged our nation into darkness, and we're just going to have to continue wrestling with it back and forth in all its glory and dismay as necessary.

So, that covers the first ten. We have more, some didn't work out so well, like prohibition, and others, like the abolishment of slavery, did. The Equal Rights Amendment, to this day, still hangs around in limbo just shy of the necessary states needed for it to become law. There will be more changes to come, and I hope by the end of this revolution of ours, you'll be proud of what we have accomplished

while acknowledging there will always be more work to be done so we never slide back into the complacency that got us into this mess to begin with.

THE MEDIA



As your humble Dictator, I felt it prudent to address the media. In most dictatorships, media outlets are usually controlled and directed by the dictates of power, mere shadow puppets compared to what the media is capable of in free societies. During my reign, I wish to reassure the members of the media about my intentions. I expect the best you have to offer, if only so poor Walter Cronkite can stop spinning in his grave.

That being said, I expect the media to report the news with honesty and integrity and leave the spin to the PR people who are paid for such things. Our system has been overtaken by bias and gratuitous fear-mongering that has divided our country and even called into question the nature of reality, as our news stations broadcast spin instead of facts.

If a news station is broadcasting opinion, then it should be clearly understood it is an opinion being offered for public consumption, **not** facts. The blurring of the facts vs opinion needs to end, and our news should not be determined on ratings but in reality. Political leaning news stations must cease to call themselves news stations and be truthful with their audience about who, and what, they are. Stories are to be fact checked, and not abridged to give false impressions of reality to suit viewers personal biases.

During my reign, fake news outlets will come to an end, or overtly stamped "parody" or "opinion only" across all their broadcasts. The warping of our news has to end. And end it shall. I will, in the beginning, allow stations to clean up their act on their own, but after six months, reviews will begin and if the spewing of misleading information continues, action will be taken. Beginning with fines and ending with the dismantling of entire news systems if I have to. I want honest news and genuine criticisms, but I will not tolerate the warping of reality anymore.

Other entertainment media outlets, please, continue to entertain. If I, your delightful Dictator, am the butt of those jokes, go for it. There will be no repercussions for creative expression.

I want people to have faith in our news, to know it is real and not question if it is honest. I want our news industry to flourish and inform our people of the important things happening in our neighborhoods, states, country, and the world. I want a free exchange of information from reporter to their listeners, without the seeds of doubt our current news media circus has brought us to. I want Walter Cronkite to be your patron saint and keep him as your guiding principle of integrity in the news, and strive to rebuild our news into something he would be proud to be a part of, rather than the shame it would bring him now.

A strong, independent, and free press is the backbone of any solid democracy. And we will need your strength in the coming years. It is upon your shoulders our country rests, so... don't fuck it up.

CIVIL FORFEITURES



As we briefly discussed earlier, civil forfeitures are something I plan on putting an end to in our country. But... well, I am Dictator, and I'm making one exception to this rule. Over the past decade, a small group of people have manipulated our system and brought our country to edge of collapse, all in the name of greed and personal power. I wish it to be known from this day forward, destructive greed will not be rewarded.

I have a list (don't we all have a list of people we'd like to bring to justice?) but suffice to say, if you have used your money and influence to undermine our country for your personal gain, I am coming for you. Your assets will be seized, your companies taken and turned into employee owned co-ops, and your freedoms ending in prison for crimes against our nation. Wealth will no longer insulate a person from the consequences of their actions. All will be held to the same code of conduct, and illicit activities no longer ignored simply because an individual was good at hoarding money.

There are problems to be solved in our country, many of them brought about by unmitigated greed, and we will use their money to start to put to right much of what has been wrong with our nation. This will not erase the atrocities done in the name of profit, but it will go a long way towards fixing them. Our country will need capital to correct the many problems we will be addressing in this book, and this is where we begin.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR





Lisa Orban was born in Galesburg, IL a long time ago on a hot summer day. Due to various shenanigans by the adults in her life, her time in Galesburg was short and the family moved to Quincy, IL where they settled down for a good long stay.

Things were rolling along for a while inside the confines of Quincy, and Lisa rolled with them. There were several divorces, marriages, different schools, friends lost & gained, and many, *many* moves throughout all this activity. Until, quite unexpectedly, Lisa found herself in foster care at 16, much to her surprise.

Upon turning 18, Lisa ran away as fast as she could to Phoenix, AZ where she lived for 3 years. Got married, had a two sons, made many mistakes, and then eventually, ran for her life back to Quincy, where she still lives to this day.

Lisa went to college, earned an Associates in Psychology, raised her kids, got married, and divorced, several times, bought a house and eventually settled down to live the life she wanted, as the ringleader in a madhouse of anarchy. She now writes books, takes in strays in need of help, travels, and pretty much does whatever she wants, and is pretty happy about it.

She became an author in 2015 with her first book, *It'll Feel Better when it Quits Hurting*, and hasn't stopped since. If you'd like to learn more about Lisa's life, go to her website <u>The Talking Book</u>.

To follow more of Lisa's misadventures in living

Go to her website at:

http://pandra411.wixsite.com/lisaorban

Where you can find all the lastest news, photos, video blogs, interviews, and download free previews of all of her books.