



Written by [C. Mitchell Shaw](#) on January 21, 2022

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The QAnon Phenomenon

In the just over three years between October 28, 2017 and December 8, 2020, one or more bloggers claiming to have access to secret intelligence from inside the Trump White House published nearly 5,000 cryptic posts known as “drops” under the moniker “QAnon,” or simply “Q.”

At the time, many viewed the posts as credible, yet the passage of time showed beyond a reasonable doubt that they were not. After all, according to Q, patriots in high places, not the Deep State, were in control and those patriots would protect Trump from the Deep State. Events that have transpired since then have shown otherwise.



AP Images

Putting it bluntly, Q followers were beguiled. Yet lessons can be learned and — to avoid being beguiled again — it is worthwhile taking a look at the Q phenomenon.

Fanciful and Fantastic

The Q drops ran the full range from the incredible to the ridiculous. Averaging nearly four cryptic drops per day for over three years, Q bombarded followers with one fanciful theory after another. Some of the drops claimed to be predictions, while others were claims of things alleged to be already in action. Q was consistent in only two regards: The drops were all audaciously outrageous, and they were all false. But the sheer volume of the Q drops was dizzying. Followers had so much to follow that it would have been nearly (if not completely) impossible to keep up with what was being said and how a more recent drop contradicted the claims of a previous drop.

And the contradictions were legion.

They were also part of a larger picture of failed predictions — referred to as “prophecies” by some followers. And many of the failed “prophecies” were conveniently “fixed” by merely resetting dates after the previously promised dates had come and gone without anything resembling the fulfillment of the “prophecies.” But then the new dates also came and went with the “prophecies” failing to come to pass.

And it’s not as though Q began by making predictions that came to pass before going full bore with nonsensical falsehoods. Q’s mendacity began with the very first drop.

Drop #1 — published on October 28, 2017 at 4:44 p.m. — was not *entirely* a prediction of something that was to take place in the future. It also contained elements that it claimed were present and past. That drop read, “HRC [Hillary Rodham Clinton] extradition already in motion and effective yesterday with several countries in case of cross border run.” This, of course, implied that Hillary Clinton was soon to be arrested. The drop continued, claiming that Clinton’s passport was “approved to be flagged



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effective 10/30 @12:01am.” The drop then stated, “Expect massive riots organized in defiance and others fleeing the US to occur. US M’s [Marines] will conduct the operation while NG [National Guard] activated.”

Since the claims of the post were so outrageous, Q offered this assurance at the conclusion of the post: “Proof check: Locate a NG [National Guard] member and ask if activated for duty 10/30 across most major cities.”

If those who read that drop in October 2017 had taken that challenge, Q would have been seen for the fraud he was. The whole phenomenon would likely have fizzled out, and there would not have been subsequent failed predictions — or even if there were, it wouldn’t have mattered, since no one would have cared to pay attention. That simple bit of due diligence would have shown that there was no military operation, no activation of the National Guard, no mass riots, no arrest of Hillary Clinton, and no accomplices fleeing the country. In fact, *nothing* predicted or claimed in the drop turned out to be true. Most notably, instead of Hillary Clinton being arrested on October 28, 2017 — beginning the end of the Deep State/Democratic National Committee conspiracy — it turned out that two of President Trump’s former aides, Paul Manafort and Rick Gates, were charged on that date and turned themselves in. A third former Trump aide (George Papadopoulos) was reported that day to have already pleaded guilty to lying to the FBI.

Hopelessly Addicted to “Hopium”

For the next 1,137 days, Q continued to push the bounds of credulity, making one brazenly false claim after another. But — and this is important — all of the claims were laced with a healthy dose of hope. Granted, it was *false* hope, but people desperate for hope will often seize false hope and cling to it for dear life, and this was the case with Q’s nearly 5,000 drops. For the faithful followers, it was the hope that mattered, even if not one single prediction ever came to pass. And each new drop — promising the coming “storm” — was one more dose of false hope to keep the followers addicted a little while longer.

Q fed into people’s confirmation bias, posting of terrible goings-on within the DNC, including high-ranking Democrats (such as Hillary Clinton) living off of adrenochrome, an adrenaline-based substance allegedly harvested from the adrenal glands of kidnapped and tortured children. It did not matter that whatever “proof” was offered of these stories fell apart under the slightest scrutiny; the very unbelievability of the claim was seen as all the proof that was needed. After all, don’t we already *know* that Democrats are inhumanly evil? *Of course* they sacrifice children. Can you prove they *don’t*?

But beyond offering false hope to Americans who found themselves concerned over seeing their country dragged, kicking and screaming, into an Orwellian New World Order, Q offered them the promise of salvation without effort. Time and again, Q drops told followers to do *nothing* — stay out of the way — as “patriots” on the “inside” handle everything. This was never stated more clearly than in Drop #4, dated October 29, 2017 at 12:11 p.m. That post promised, “POTUS [the president of the United States] is 100% insulated — any discussion suggesting he’s even a target is false,” and “POTUS will not be addressing nation on any of these issues as people begin to be indicted and must remain neutral for pure optical reasons.” Drop # 4 ended by saying, “Patriots are in control. Sit back and enjoy the show.”

As even a cursory glance at the facts will tell any honest observer, President Trump was not “100% insulated” and he most certainly was “a target” of the Deep State. After all, he was twice impeached, he



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was hounded by false allegations of collusion with Russia his entire presidency, and he eventually was taken out of office in an election that was highly suspect.

Looking for Hope in All the Wrong Places

If that is winning, this writer would hate to see what losing looks like. But that is exactly what happens when concerned Americans are persuaded to outsource their patriotic duty. The admonition to “sit back and enjoy the show” since “patriots are in control” serves only to lull concerned Americans into a do-nothing state of apathy where they wait for a hero to save them and their country.

The only correct path to restoring and preserving the Republic is for each and every concerned American to stop looking for a hero to save us and *be* the heroes who save us. If the reader wants to find a hero, he should look not to Q or any other online persona, but in his own mirror. This magazine’s parent organization, The John Birch Society (JBS), has been educating, organizing, and putting to work concerned patriots since 1958. The motto of the JBS sums up our mission: Less government, more responsibility, and — with God’s help — a better world.

When the JBS exposes a problem, it also proposes a realistic, moral, and legal solution that members and others can work to employ. In other words, the JBS recognizes that if *we* are going to save our freedoms, *we* must bring that about through our own hard work (while, of course, also recognizing the need for God’s help) — we cannot “sit back and enjoy the show,” expecting somebody else to save our freedoms for us. Hard work — by each and every patriotic American — is the only thing that will save us. There are no shortcuts.

But with Q, the expected happened: The self-appointed hero and self-anointed savior not only failed to deliver, but then summarily slithered back into the ether of the Internet from whence he came. It is still not known who Q was. What is known is that the last post from Q was on December 8, 2020 — just over a month before President Trump left the White House and turned the keys over to Joe Biden. Once his falsehood was undeniable to all but the most ardent (and stubborn) of his followers, Q simply logged off and went away.

Prior to December 8, 2020, the longest time Q went without posting was about three months in 2019, when 8chan (the platform Q used for posting) went offline. Now, more than a year after going silent, it is safe to say that Q is gone for good. And while there are still some die-hard believers left out there who continue to cling to the hope that Q will return, others have realized the truth about Q. As *Forbes* reported hours after Biden was inaugurated, one QAnon follower posted, “It’s over and nothing makes sense ... absolutely nothing.” Another wrote, “He [apparently referring to Q] sold us out.”

The dream is over and the “storm” — when President Trump would bring down the Deep State, and well-known figures from the Democratic Party and Hollywood would be arrested for their crimes — never came to pass. In fact, far from a “storm,” the sun rose brightly over the DNC, as Democrats now control not only the White House, but also both houses of Congress.

The Great Disappointment

The chagrin and frustration experienced by faithful followers of Q causes this writer to reflect on a period of religious history in this country known as The Great Disappointment. In the 1800s, Baptist preacher William Miller predicted the Second Coming of Christ would happen on October 22, 1844.



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Those who followed Miller — called “Millerites” — had all but quit this world. Many had neglected their businesses and farms, running up debts in the process. But none of that would matter because the Lord would return and take them to Heaven. When October 22 came and the Lord did not, they waited with great anticipation — it would happen any minute now. But it never did. One of the Millerites, Henry Emmons, later wrote of the disappointment. What he wrote could — with very few alterations — have been written by any of them. He wrote:

I waited all Tuesday [October 22] and dear Jesus did not come; — I waited all the forenoon of Wednesday, and was well in body as I ever was, but after 12 o'clock I began to feel faint, and before dark I needed someone to help me up to my chamber, as my natural strength was leaving me very fast, and I lay prostrate for 2 days without any pain — sick with disappointment.

While most Millerites did their best to pick up what was left of their lives and get on with the business of living by leaving Miller and his predictions alone for the rest of their lives, others started their own spin-off religious movements, claiming that Miller was essentially right, but that the event was spiritual, rather than material.

Likewise, many Q followers are still hanging on for dear life to the false hope that Q administered to them in small, regular doses.

Questioning QAnon

The New American and the JBS had been calling out Q's deceptions well before December 2020. In videos and articles, as well as in the field work of the JBS, we exposed Q as a psy-op, deliberate disinformation, and a tangent. A full six months before Q closed up shop, The New American published an article entitled “Questioning QAnon.” In that article, this writer asked, “If the Deep State wanted to discredit and neutralize American patriots, could it have invented anything that would have been better designed for that purpose than Q?” That article ended with this observation:

One thing is obvious: Q is not — as claimed — someone with access to classified information involving the battle between the Trump administration and its opponents in the liberal establishment and who is working to save America by sharing the truth.

It was an unpopular position to take at the time, but the facts being what they were — and with liberty at stake — Q needed to be exposed as a fraud. It has taken others more than a year to catch up to The New American and the JBS, but now media are reporting that even former White House National Security Advisor Michael Flynn, who was once reported to be an ardent supporter of QAnon — and who was recorded at a pro-Q conference in Dallas in May 2021 saying a Myanmar-like coup “should happen here” — has recently said that he thinks Q's drops were “total nonsense” and likely “a disinformation campaign that the CIA created.”

Those remarks were made in a phone call with attorney Lin Wood, who made the recorded call available to media in November 2021. In the recording, Flynn can be heard on the call with Wood saying, “I think it's a disinformation campaign. I think it's a disinformation campaign that the CIA created. That's what I believe. Now, I don't know that for a fact, but that's what I think it is.”



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Whether Flynn really believes that or not is not the point. Whether Flynn ever believed in Q or not is not the point. It is possible that corporate media — doing the bidding of their corporate and Deep State masters — exaggerated Flynn’s statements to make it appear that Flynn was an ardent Q supporter. It is also possible that Flynn is just another public figure turning his sails into the prevailing political winds. In that case, he would merely serve as a very public example of someone who hitched his wagon to the shooting star of the Q phenomenon and is now scrambling to unhitch it after it came crashing down to Earth.

Either way, this new report of Flynn calling Q a “disinformation campaign that the CIA created” still illustrates that the JBS and The New American were way ahead of the curve on calling Q nonsense and a *possible* Deep State disinformation campaign.

Q was never going to save us. We have to do it ourselves — but that requires trustworthy leadership.

The John Birch Society helps concerned patriots work together in concert to preserve and restore the Republic. If you are already a member of the JBS, now is the time to redouble your efforts. The fields are white for the harvest. What is needed are laborers in the field. If you are not already a member of the JBS, you should consider joining us in our proud companionship and our epic undertaking.

Q is gone, thank God, but something else — some other outrageously fanciful tangent — will likely come along. If patriotic Americans are already hard at work, practicing effective activism when whatever-next comes along, it won’t have any place to gain purchase. We’ll all be too busy *actually* saving the Republic to care.

C. Mitchell Shaw, a freelance writer, is a strong advocate of both the free market and privacy. He addresses a wide range of issues related to the U.S. Constitution and liberty.



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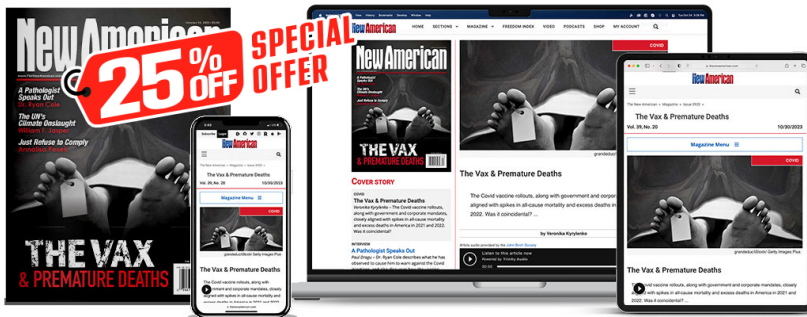
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