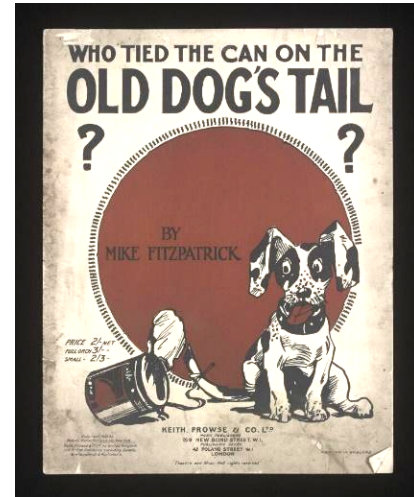


Trump Can't Get Away from Project 2025

By Andrew Christie

Two months ago, as we prepared to celebrate Independence Day, the *Santa Lucian* became the first publication in SLO County to [sound the alarm on Project 2025](#), the Heritage Foundation's blueprint for a second Trump administration, a plan to "reshape America."

We pointed out several of Project 25's [most troubling aspects](#). It didn't seem necessary to go into all the ways the plan is connected to Trump because it seemed obvious, and also because it didn't occur to us that Trump would subsequently attempt his I've-never-seen-that-woman-before-in-my-life gambit in an effort to distance himself from it.



In support of that effort, the media has largely fetched and rolled over, a la *Newsweek*:

Karoline Leavitt, national press secretary for the Trump campaign, told *Newsweek*: "Project 2025 has nothing to do with our campaign. It's a proposal from Heritage, an outside organization." Leavitt pointed *Newsweek* to a previous statement issued by Trump campaign managers Chris LaCivita and Susie Wiles, which said that "no aspect of future presidential staffing or policy announcements should be deemed official" unless Trump or a campaign member says it. "Democrats are fixating on Project 2025 because they want to paint Trump as an extremist. At the same time, it's worth emphasizing that Trump has distanced himself from the document and that the official Republican Party platform this year has actually disappointed many social conservatives because it's so moderate," said Thomas Gift, professor of political science at University College London in the U.K.

But the Heritage Foundation's Project 2025 website blows all that smoke away:

"The 2025 Presidential Transition Project is being organized by The Heritage Foundation and builds off Heritage's long standing "Mandate for Leadership," which has been highly influential for presidential administrations since the Reagan era. Most recently, [the Trump administration relied heavily on Heritage's "Mandate"](#) for policy guidance, embracing nearly two-thirds of Heritage's proposals within just one year in office.

"[Paul Dans](#), former chief of staff at the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) during the Trump administration, served as the director of the 2025 Presidential Transition Project.

[Spencer Chretien](#), former special assistant to the president and associate director of Presidential Personnel, serves as associate director of the project.”

Trump’s first attempt at denial, in a post on July 5, 2024, was comical: "I know nothing about it and some of the things they're saying are absolutely ridiculous and abysmal. Anything they do, I wish them luck, but I have nothing to do with them."



He sounded much different on April 21, 2022, when he delivered the keynote address at the Heritage Foundation’s Annual Leadership Conference in Florida, one week after Heritage announced Project 2025. There is [video](#) and a [transcript](#).

On that day, Trump had a very good idea “who is behind it” – i.e. the Heritage Foundation, 140+ members of his former administration, and his

friend, Heritage president Kevin Roberts. Trump was delighted at the advent of Project 2025 and grateful for his long and close relationship with the Heritage Foundation, i.e. the aforementioned heavy reliance of his administration on Heritage’s “Mandate for Leadership”:

“Already we have shown the power of our winning formula, working closely with many of the great people at Heritage over the four incredible years that we’ve worked with you a lot, and we were just discussing it with Kevin (inaudible), they’re going to work on some other things that are going to be very exciting, I think, Kevin, I think maybe the most exciting of all...they’re going to lay the groundwork and detail plans for exactly what our movement will do and what your movement will do when the American people give us a colossal mandate to save America, and that’s coming.”

Two years later, “our movement” had strangely morphed into “I have no idea who’s behind it and I have nothing to do with them.”

On July 30, after a full month of the worst kind of attention and great distress in the Trump campaign, the resignation of Paul Dans from the Project 2025 office at Heritage was announced. Or as the Trump campaign put it: “Reports of Project 2025’s demise would be greatly welcomed and should serve as notice to anyone or any group trying to misrepresent their influence with President Trump and his campaign — it will not end well for you.”

But there has been no demise. The plan is still [right there on the Project 2025 website](#), still a blueprint for a new Trump administration, still the instruction manual for Trump’s stated wish to scrub the federal government of civil servants and replace them with political hacks, weaponize

the Department of Justice against his enemies, erase the separation of powers and subvert all of government to the will of a “unitary” president with unlimited power.

Trump’s downfall is in the details, and Project 2025 remains what it’s always been: 900 pages of inconvenient details, letting us know what will happen when “the American people give us a colossal mandate” for “exactly what our movement will do,” and the rough beast, its hour come round at last, slouches towards the White House to be born.

To stop that from happening, sign up to help turn out voters [here](#) and [here](#).