[Authored by Jeffrey Tucker via The Brownstone Institute,](https://brownstone.org/articles/comedy-tragedy-or-both/)

The Saturday Night Live skit on Covid policy is a welcome relief,**a cultural sign that rationality has started to return.**

Yes, the segment is truly hilarious.

<https://www.zerohedge.com/covid-19/covid-policy-comedy-tragedy-or-both>

And it reveals so much about the present moment in which even highly **politicized elites are realizing that the dissidents in the Covid wars had it right all along.**

At the same time, the skit speaks to a deeper truth about the last two years.**For many in the professional Zoom class, the entire occasion tragically became an opportunity for signaling virtue, pontificating about politics, and tightening alliances with their class compatriots, even as billions around the world suffered** at the hands of overlords who massively neglected the lessons of traditional public health in favor of a wild experiment in pointless compulsion.

**They shut down the “economy” (two weeks turned into two years)** but for people in a certain class and age group, it was a welcome relief from the burdens of going to the office. The value of seeming to be part of a grand political mission outweighed the cost of not going out to eat. The lack of empathy for the workers who had no such luxury, church goers locked out of their houses of worship, and kids torn from their peers, to say nothing of millions who fell into poverty – and we could go on – was truly startling.

No, there was nothing amusing about any of this. Not to be humorless here but this was an unprecedented catastrophe the world over. It should not be reduced to fodder for late-night amusement. It’s tragedy not comedy. Every family has a tragic story to tell. And it is far from over, for the collateral damage will be with us for a generation or two.

Perhaps in the future we can treat the arrival of pathogens as a time for patients and doctors to work together to promote wellness. Perhaps researchers can focus on therapeutics. Perhaps public-health agencies can work on being truthful with the public. Perhaps we can be more careful about mandating injections for vast swaths of humanity that did not want them or had already earned their natural immunity.

None of this will happen unless we can talk openly about it, without censorship, and do so seriously. The prevailing emotion right now as I type is the opposite: you can now laugh about how preposterously everyone behaved but don’t get serious about investigations or rethinking anything.

For that matter, an interview I did with a world-class pathologist in Canada was just deleted by YouTube for “medical misinformation.” The censorship is as ruthless as ever!

**We will be fully over the political side of this mess when the following has become a political, social, and cultural consensus:**

1) Emergency powers were never justified. They were imposed in a panic, one deliberately generated in Congressional testimony by Anthony Fauci who manipulated the US president into believing that he could on his own “shut down” the economy to make a virus go away. The whole episode was pathetic and contradictory to the whole experience of public health.

2) All “mitigation measures” deployed have not proven effective and certainly caused vast harm. The schools should never have been forced closed. The hospitals should have done business as usual. Doctors should have been free to treat patients. Travel should never have been stopped. Stay-at-home orders served no purpose. Hundreds of thousands of businesses were wrecked for no reason at all. Mandatory masks are not just pointless but inhumane, especially for kids. Testing the healthy, as track-and-trace theater, proved a waste. The vaccines should never have been mandated anywhere.

3) Even if C19 mutates in a worse way, or some new pathogen comes along, there is no public-health justification for shutting down society, dividing the social classes, canceling gatherings, limiting building capacity, restricting travel, or otherwise violating the rights of conscience and bodily autonomy. Contra the CDC, people should not have to wait breathlessly for the bureaucrats to look at the “science” to discover whether and to what extent we can exercise our human rights.

4) All public-health interventions need to be limited to informing the public of all available information, seeking therapeutics, quarantine for the sick by choice, and otherwise allowing doctors to practice medicine. Yes, society might need to respond to new pathogens but society is fully capable of doing so without central direction from unelected bureaucrats on power trips. Everything [on this page](https://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/specificlawsregulations.html) from the CDC has to go.

5) The science behind pandemic management needs to be decentralized and include genuine discussion and debate rather than allowing a small cabal to take full power while censoring everyone else.

And for each of these points, there need to be iron-clad guarantees. No more discretionary power for unelected bureaucrats to impose horrible rules on anyone. The power of the CDC, and all their sister bureaucrats in the states, needs to be reined in, starting with the many documents posted on government websites that presume that in the event of a virus, this agency or that gets to become the central manager of society while ignoring all constitutional restraints on power.

**In short, we need freedom back, and a guarantee that nothing like this can ever happen again.** Some degree of levity about the comedic qualities of the last two years is merited but it needs to be complemented by a serious commitment toward radical reform. We need a new way to think about how a good society can develop freely even in the presence of infectious disease. Freedom needs to be nonnegotiable.

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