

## If Taylor Swift says it?.

by BRIAN LOCKHART

I've never been much of a fan of celebrities who make political endorsements.

I don't mind celebrities or sports figures who make commercial endorsements. That's just earning a living.

If a famous actor is paid a million dollars to say they like a certain brand of pickles, or a famous athlete gets paid big bucks to say they use a certain kind of flippy-floppy shoe on the beach ? keep smiling and take the money to the bank. With fame, does come fortune.

Famous pianist, Liberace, the rather flamboyant, all-time greatest showman, used to show his furs and very expensive jewellery to his audience and say, ?Do you like them? You should ? you paid for them!?

He was a character.

Being famous does not make you smarter, more intelligent, more politically aware, or more in tune with any political strategies, platforms, or occurrences, than any other person.

Most of these famous Hollywood types who endorse a candidate, likely couldn't name a single policy or party platform of the party or candidate they just endorsed. I'll bet if there were voting records, most of them don't even bother to make a trip to the polls to cast a vote.

Some Hollywood celebrities get this ? they don't make endorsements and they don't make political statements. They are the smart ones. They realize they just may be called on to explain their endorsement at a later interview and end up looking stupid. This has happened on more than one occasion.

Some celebrities are smart enough to keep their political leanings private.

Actor and comedian, Ricky Gervais, said a mouthful at the Golden Globe Awards in 2020.

I like Ricky. He's made some great movies, and he's a pretty funny guy.

This particular year, he hosted the awards, and during his opening monologue, he pretty much said what he thought about celebrities making political statements at awards shows.

?Apple roared into the TV game with a morning show ? a superb drama,? he said to his audience. ?A superb drama about the importance of dignity and doing the right thing ? made by a company that runs sweat shops in China. If ISIS started a streaming service, you would call your agent.?

The comment received a lukewarm response, for obvious reasons.

He went on to say, ?If you do win an award tonight, don't use it as a platform to make a political speech. You're in no position to lecture the public about anything. You know nothing about the real world. Most of you spent less time in school than Greta Thunberg. If you win, accept your little award, thank your agent, and your god, and F\*\*\*\*\* off.?

To be fair, part of Ricky's comedy shtick is an abrasive delivery, but I think in this case, he was being sincere.

It is now reported, after the recent U.S. presidential debate, that pop star, Taylor Swift's Instagram call for voter registration, prompted around 400,000 people to visit an American government website, in under 24 hours, to learn how to register to vote. The week prior, the website reported it had around 30,000 visitors per day.

Taylor Swift is now the biggest pop star on the planet. I'm not really a fan ? her music seems to be geared more toward teenagers and young girls. But I will admit she is a talented songwriter and gifted performer, and her audiences love her.

She's also quite attractive, so I'll count myself as a fan in that respect.

The scary thing here is not that Taylor Swift encouraged people to register to vote, it's the fact that it took a celebrity to make this happen.

Why haven't these people already registered? Why does a person who is so complacent, who hasn't bothered to register to vote, suddenly make the effort because a celebrity suggested it?

Are some people that dim, that they haven't bothered to cast a vote in previous federal elections, but are suddenly spurred into action because a pop singer told them to register to vote?

Even if they register, and go to vote in the upcoming American presidential election, they will likely have to check their iPhone prior to entering the voting station so they will know which candidate's name to place the 'X' beside.

I'm glad I won't be voting in this foreign election ? what a nightmare ? but if I did, I would like to think that the people joining me at the polls at least had an idea of what the candidates are about, their policies and platforms, and not cast a vote based on a celebrity endorsement.