

## It's never enough

"McKay says Mr Trump is "dispiriting and upsetting because he doesn't care about anything", but Cheney "levied a lot of damage; we invaded a country, we started torturing - there's some pretty major stuff, the world economy collapsed on his watch".

The film stars Christian Bale as Cheney and Amy Adams as his wife Lynne, and has already won a clutch of awards – including best actor for Bale at the Golden Globes.

However, it has certainly not been embraced by all, with reports Ivanka Trump and her husband Jared Kushner walked out of a screening.

This is something McKay seems to relish.

"I think a lot of the Republicans wanted to pretend that the Bush-Cheney years never happened, so some were very unhappy that this movie came out.

"As far as Ivanka and Jared walking out, that is the least surprising thing I've ever heard and I'm amazed they bought a ticket.

"I think they meant to buy a ticket for *Mule* and got *Vice*," he says, referencing the latest movie from Clint Eastwood, based on the true story of a Second World War veteran in his 80s who became a drug courier.

"They knew it was about some cranky old white guy and couldn't figure out which."

- Adam McKay, director of *Vice*, interviewed on Sky News, 18 January 2019.

"Are you even more ruthless than you used to be ?"

- Donald Rumsfeld (Steve Carell) to Dick Cheney (Christian Bale), in *Vice*.

"Tony Blair: "I was the worst Prime Minister of all time."

Gordon Brown: "Hold my beer."

David Cameron: “No, hold mine.”

Theresa May: “Just grab my Pinot Grigio will you.”

Jeremy Corbyn: “Where’s the bar?”

- Tweet from Bruce Lawson (@Sapere\_vivere), 24 May 2019.

**Vice is a blast.** The critics largely hated it, which is all the more reason to watch it. And its director, Adam McKay, has somehow managed to carve out a film genre all for himself: the gonzo econo-political biopic. (See also 2010’s *The Other Guys* and 2015’s *The Big Short*). At the time of writing, its subject, the 46<sup>th</sup> vice president of the United States, was still alive. This leads us to suspect that, given the inherent litigiousness of the country in question, quite a bit of this amazing story might actually have some grounding in reality. No spoilers, but you can draw a line of the consequences from corporate deregulation through an illegal war in the Middle East and abuse of due process which ends up managing to encircle things like Tony Blair, ISIS, uncontrolled migration into Europe, a global financial crisis, perhaps even Brexit. Not bad for a pudgy non-entity whose wife describes him early on in the film as a “big, fat piss-soaked zero”.

Over on this side of the pond, a “kinder, gentler politics” looks like a more forlorn hope than ever. Who could have foreseen, for example, that if you betray 17 million people after a legitimate plebiscite, they get angry ? The pro-Brexit tsunami has already half-drowned the Conservative Party. Now it looks set to do something similar to Labour – if the party doesn’t destroy itself by way of either inherent anti-semitism, or firing most of its own members for publicly voting for another party altother, first. And amid the widening gyre of the Tory leadership election “process”, we have the likes of Matt Hancock shrieking:

To the people who say ‘f\*\*\* business’, I say f\*\*\* ‘f\*\*\* business’.

The world has gone quite mad. This low if spirited coinage sounds sufficiently garbled to make it seem like it could almost have come from the lips of someone like Jeremy Hunt, who is sometimes unable to remember whether his wife is actually Japanese or Chinese. Well, we’ve all been there. Is there any political party out there *not* vigorously nursing some kind of post-millennial death wish ?

If trust in politicians is close to an all-time low, and trust in money is becoming increasingly hard to come by.. Which means we can segue effortlessly to the latest [In Gold We Trust blockbuster](#) from the good folk over at Incrementum AG. Among the highlights:

- Trust is the basic value of interpersonal cooperation and the cement of our social order. The erosion of our “trust capital” can be observed in many areas of society.

- The breakdown of trust in the international monetary order is manifesting itself in the highest gold purchases by central banks since 1971 and the ongoing trend to repatriate gold reserves.
- Gold reaffirmed its portfolio position as a good diversifier as trust in the “Everything Bubble” was tested in Q4/2018. While equity markets suffered double-digit percentage losses, gold gained 8.1% and gold mining stocks by 13.7%.
- The normalization of monetary policy was abruptly halted by the stock market slump in Q4/2018. The “monetary U-turn” that we already forecast last year has begun.
- Recession risks are significantly higher than discounted by the market. In the event of a downturn, negative interest rates, a new round of QE, and the implementation of even more extreme monetary policy ideas (e.g. MMT) are to be expected.
- When it comes to trust in investments, our vote is clear. Trust looks to the future, forms itself in the present, and feeds itself from the past. Gold can look back on a successful five-thousand-year history as sound money.

For all their merits, we find gold (and silver, and related mining companies bought at attractive multiples) insufficient for our purposes of capital preservation and diversification, so we also use vehicles wholly uncorrelated to the world’s stock and bond markets. For us, that means systematic trend-following funds. And we won’t be blown off course by even a sustained period of sub-par performance – because any subsequent diversification benefits would then be thrown out with the bathwater. Any readers looking for a discussion on trend-following, and much else besides, are encouraged to listen to [this recent interview](#) with trend-following manager Chris Clarke. (Parental advisory: contains parliamentary-level language on occasion.) Our conclusion: in an imperfect and challenging world, you probably can’t be diversified enough.

Meanwhile, there is *Vice* to relish and enjoy. As Lily Tomlin once said,

No matter how cynical you become, it’s never enough to keep up.

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