Government: Federal Theocratic Republic

Religion: Protestant Christianity (organized by the National Church of America)

Capital: Washington, D.C.

Currency: DSD (Devout States Dollar)

Political Faction: Revenant Party

History:

 In response to the upcoming 1980 U.S. election, one Republican presidential candidate named David Farthing had become fully aware of growing resentment towards current politics and the status quo. A supposedly humble timber wolf raised on a Midwestern farm and originally a part-time church preacher-turned-politician, Farthing knew the opportunity for great change was imminent. In response to the growing crime rate and a large recession caused by the 1970s oil crisis, evangelical movements and televangelism were gradually rising in popularity across the country. Thanks to his likable charisma and popularity among both old and young conservative voters, Farthing easily won enough electoral delegates to win the party’s nomination, securing further votes for the election after picking his most influential competitor Ronald Reagan for the role of Vice President.

 Months later, the two candidates would win by a landslide. However, the next four years would become the greatest political gamble in the history of American government.

 The day after being inaugurated, President Farthing and Vice President Reagan shocked their constituents and the world by terminating their membership to the Republican Party to create a new faction: The Revenant Party, an evangelical, right-wing platform dedicated to ‘religious freedom, God and country, making America devout again and a nation reborn’.

 Despite vehement backlash from significant Republican leaders and losing voters, the Revenant Party experienced steady membership over the course of Farthing’s presidency.

 In response to the effects of the oil crisis and unemployment, President Farthing implemented various policies dedicated to making America less dependent on foreign fuel. This involved—but wasn’t limited to—the construction of renewable energy plants such as windmill and solar farms (creating thousands of new jobs), tax breaks on solar-powered homes, the deregulation of alternative energy research and the regulation of oil companies importing oil from Middle Eastern countries. Regardless of the vocal opposition from oil and gas companies, whose influence extended to many congressional lobbyists, Farthing’s PR team of economic advisors helped spearhead the ‘New Eden Deal’. He and V.P. Reagan promoted these policies as an opportunity to turn America into an ‘Eden our Lord would be proud to see on Earth’, connecting to both conservative and liberal voters who disliked high gas prices and the effect it had on the environment. Of course, this didn’t end the use of fossil fuel-powered cars, but it did lessen the dependence on them for transportation.

 Meanwhile, the new presidency forged strong relationships with various evangelical groups across the country. Farthing closely worked alongside prominent Christian fundamentalists, dominionists and right-wing celebrities concerned about the secularization of American life, one of whom included Jerry Falwell, founder of an organization dedicated to promoting family values called the ‘Moral Majority’. Uniting with Falwell and other national groups in a joint front against the ‘secular menace’, according to a speech he gave during a press conference, the President further consolidated his power and influence among the Christian right.

 Four years later, these alliances, environmental policies, new technology on electric transportation, a decrease in violent crime and a rising job market helped David Farthing gain enough votes to win a second term in office. The new political party and its founder were here to stay in America. Unbeknownst to the public though, they wanted more.

 Over the eight years of his presidency, Farthing and his Revenant Party discreetly strategized in interfering in certain court cases. Some of this was accomplished by hiring criminals to gaslight opponents and ironically using Soviet-inspired propaganda tactics claiming secularism equated communism. During the Supreme Court case of *Bowers v. Hardwick*, a case attempting to preserve sodomy laws in the U.S., two former judicial interns accused a Chief Justice of accepting bribery money. Their claims would be dismissed days later after one of the accusers was pulled over for carrying marijuana across state borders, while the other had been placed in a psychiatric hospital following a mental breakdown.

 Several other pre-Devout cases allegedly swayed in their favor due to these tactics are *Edwards v. Aguillard*, *Texas v. Johnson*, *Romer v. Evans* and *Reno v. American Civil Liberties Union*. In the 1987 Fourth Circuit case of *Hustler Magazine v. Falwell*, in which Farthing’s long-time colleague sued Hustler’s owner, Larry Flynt, over libel and intent of inflicting emotional distress. Flynt tried appealing to the Supreme Court to reverse the decision, who would have held that First Amendment rights prevented public figures from suing for damages when it came to parody or satire. Unlike our timeline where the court case went in the defendant’s favor, Flynt and his lawyer were assassinated by an unknown shooter before they could file the proper paperwork for an appeal. The fur behind it was never convicted.

 Of course, nobody would learn about these connections. Everyone else was more focused on Farthing’s other radical religious policies and the results of the New Eden Deal.

 By the end of the 1980s, the United States would no longer heavily rely on foreign oil interests as they once had a decade prior. True to President Farthing and V.P. Reagan’s word, the United States had transformed itself into a new Eden that utilized twice as much renewable energy as it did carbon and oil. Crime and unemployment were at an all-time low thanks to what historians would call ‘revenomics’, while the Revenant Party steadily won local and state elections. Laws supporting school prayers, Bible studies, and the teaching of intelligent design in learning curriculum passed unanimously in most states. In the meantime, anti-discrimination laws that oppressed practicing Christians were slowly being repealed.

 By the end of his second term, Farthing and his political platform had largely ignored a new disease prominently affecting the country’s LGBT population. Harming the immune system by destroying important white blood cells in the body, AIDS was seen by many evangelical Christians as the ‘gay plague’, even though this sexually transmitted disease also infected heterosexuals that were sexually active. Before leaving the White House, Farthing did discuss the possibilities of quarantining HIV-infected Americans with his advisors.

 However, it would be the Revenant Party’s next president-elect who would bring his mentor’s suggestion to life. Thanks to sensational reporting by press and scapegoating over the years, the new Revenant President did not need much to further demonize the gay community with this disease. A poll in the 1990 elections would indicate 79% of Americans approved of quarantining citizens carrying the HIV virus. And so, on January 25th, 1990, many U.S. voters were relieved as the President signed an executive order for the National Guard to detain HIV+ individuals into ‘quarantine camps’, alongside another order requiring non-virgins to test themselves for the disease.

 The quarantine camps, though only operating until 2002, further ostracized America from the rest of the world. Many states opposed to the administration’s policies led to further political turmoil against the Revenant Party, who spun the camps as a mission accomplished in spite of criticism comparing them to the concentration camps of Nazis Germany. Unfortunately, a large portion of the population wouldn’t care about the controversy once news spread of the Soviet Union’s collapse in 1991. As their fellow citizens rotted away in camps held against their will, freedom-loving Americans celebrated in the streets, their homes and across the country how one of democracy’s greatest enemies had been defeated.

 To further unite conservative news and influence media coverage in their favor, David Farthing acted as an advisor to all future presidents while a government-funded news corporation dedicated to, “preserving the sanctity and integrity of the press, as well as spreading God’s Word to the American people”, formed thanks to constituent donations and various consolidations of existing news broadcasters: FaithTV.

 Further divide between secularism and religion extended beyond the next two elections, as the Democrats held less and less seats in Congress or state legislatures, while the Republican Party dissolved in 1995 due to lack of membership and funding. A small majority of citizens were beginning to resent the Revenant Party’s sixteen-year-long domination in presidential elections. They despised the lack of true representation in Washington, D.C.

 The American populace largely ignored this divide until the inauguration of the Revenant Party’s newest U.S. President. On January 20th, 1997, in front of a crowd of approximately 1.2 million people, the elected leader gave an inaugural address that would change the course of the country’s history, forever.

 In his famous ‘We are Reborn’ speech, President H.W. Hedge declared that America was now a nation reborn. And effective immediately, the government would be reorganized to reflect their faith in God and the will of the furs who elected them. In this speech he explained a series of executive orders backed by Congress that would be put into effect the next day. Some of these included every acceptable church organization becoming registered subsidiaries to the ‘National Church of America’, the recriminalization of sodomy, abortion and marital infidelity across every state in the Union, abolishing the Equal Rights Amendment, the reformation of the National Guard into the Covenant Guard (repurposing them into a more militarized reserve accepting far-right militiamen into their ranks), replacing the Bill of Rights with the Ten Commandments, and the official establishment of a government organization geared towards public security and counter-terrorism: The Homeland Security Agency.

 Symbols of the old government would be removed, such as the flag and the designation of the dollar. Lastly, the President proclaimed their country as a Christian nation renamed the ‘Devout States of America’.

 Americans loyal to the country and the Revenant Party rejoiced at this proclamation, yet the newly restructured Covenant Guard would be forced to quell many uprisings in numerous states. Within the first several weeks of Devout America’s inception, hundreds of protesters would be injured or killed when clashing against militarized militias. Temporary rebellions in New York City, Boston and Buffalo resulted in heavy casualties and executions of insurrectionists, yet these would be insignificant compared to what was to come.

 Despite Revenant Party’s best efforts, the Democratic and Libertarian Party still held substantial legislative control in the states of Alaska, Hawaii, California, Washington, Oregon, Nevada and Colorado, making them one of the last holdouts for moderate and secular thought.

 These seven states united under one banner by announcing their secession from the Devout States of America. U.S.-loyal military leaders organized their men and women in the Armed Forces, discharging and imprisoning soldiers who refused to desert, while senators and representatives secretly drafted a new constitution declaring independence. Utah reluctantly joined the seceding states once its Mormon governor learned the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints had been declared ‘heretical’ by the National Church. Arizona followed suit due to a mixture of Navajo, Mormon and Catholic-loyal influence in their legislature.

 On July 4th, 1997, based on the principles of the original Founding Fathers and their own Bill of Rights, the Western Republic officially seceded from the former United States. Thus, the Second American Civil War officially began…and never ended.

 The presidential administration retaliated with aggression. They enacted a nationwide media blackout, the government declaring the ‘Immoral States’ as communist-supported rebels and traitors to Devout America. Captured soldiers were tried in military courts for sedition while homosexuals, unbelievers and leftists were sent to either reeducation/forced labor camps or conversion clinics.

 Eastern Colorado was reclaimed by the D.S.A. Army in the Battle of Denver on June 2nd, 1997, but Western Republic Armed Forces did not concede. Through various sieges, ambushes, counterstrikes, aerial dogfights and guerilla tactics, the Western Republic eventually held back the Devout States with the threat of obtained nuclear weapons. However, a ceasefire has not been declared by either nation after twenty-two years of intense hostilities.

 During this time, the Devout States of America faces international sanctions and repercussions from its former allies. To combat the crumbling economy over the years, the D.S.A. successfully annexes most of Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, Cuba, Haiti and the Dominican Republic into its political stranglehold while bolstering up puppet governments in their place. This expansion of borders gives the Devout government and state-controlled businesses access to cheap labor, strategic locations, and natural resources such as oil and gas.

 By the year 2019, the Western Republic maintains military vigilance against the fanatical government of Devout America. The Republic’s capital city originally resided in Los Angeles from 1997-2004, until multiple terrorist attacks prompted their leaders to relocate in Anchorage, Alaska. Despite this, Los Angeles continues to be a cultural and commercial hub for the rest of the sovereign nation, while the rest of the country manages to self-sustain itself, occasionally accepting supplies and foreign aid from former allies of what was once the U.S.A.

 To this day, the Disputed Zone continues to see tense surveillance and occasional skirmishes. The Rocky Mountains serve as a natural border between the Western Republic and Devout States, dividing the once-powerful country in two as military skirmishes and buzzing warplanes dominate the region. Rumors of resistance cells echo within the isolated rogue state.