

# Catching Up With the American People

By now everybody knows that when it came to Donald Trump, the pundits – those wise men and women of TV and the press – got it all wrong.

We got it wrong when we figured he wouldn't run. We got it wrong when we said his candidacy was a joke that would go nowhere. We got it wrong when we thought he jumped the shark after he ridiculed a POW and insulted the looks of a female opponent and said he would ban an entire religion from entering this country until "our country's representatives can figure out what the hell is going on." We thought he'd lose the South Carolina primary after he said President Bush lied about weapons of mass destruction in order to get us into a war in which thousands of Americans were killed and many more grievously wounded. We got that wrong, too. And we got it wrong when we thought last summer's romance with a reality TV star would fizzle and be nothing but a faint memory when fall and winter arrived.

Did I mention that we got it *ALL WRONG*?

But now that we're acknowledging the obvious, that Donald J. Trump is the odds-on favorite to win the GOP nomination for president, maybe it's also time that we acknowledge what else we got wrong.

We got the American people wrong. At least a certain segment of them.

The media elites are so out of touch, so insulated inside their comfortable bubble, that they didn't understand the people who live between Manhattan and Malibu. Sure, the pundits knew they didn't like Congress; the polls made that quite clear. But the supposedly "smart money" never really

grasped just how disgusted they were – and not only with politics and the media. The elites didn't grasp the *depth* of their alienation from what they saw going on all around them.

The media elites don't feel dispossessed the way millions of "ordinary" Americans do – Americans who looked around and felt they were losing their country; Americans who believed that while they were working and going nowhere, others were mooching off the system and getting away with it. They weren't against helping the truly needy, but were wondering why so many millions of people were getting free food (stamps) while they were busting their rear ends and paying for everything they got. Why were they expected to obey the rules while, in their view, their country was being overrun by aliens who just barged in? What really fueled the alienation is that they didn't like the idea that **THEY** were taking over **OUR** country? I'm not saying all their grievances were legitimate. Some of them weren't. Some were stoked by opportunistic Republicans who wanted to rile the base in order to win them over. And while not everyone who was angry was also bigoted, more than a few were. But to the aggrieved, their grievances were real.

The elites who were blindsided by Trump's success, who couldn't understand why any sensible person would be attracted to such a thin-skinned, often nasty, narcissist, didn't grasp what was going on because too many journalists look down their elitist noses at "ordinary" Americans. Frankly, a lot of journalists wouldn't wash their hands in the same sink with "ordinary" Americans. Too many elite journalists think that Fourth of July parades are for hayseeds. That eating at Red Lobster is a crime against humanity. Well, now the "hayseeds" have had enough and are fighting back.

It's a safe bet that most Trump supporters don't know or care what his position is on taxes or tariffs or a lot of other things. They don't care that he's not conservative or that he promises things that will never happen. They don't even care

that he says one thing on Monday and the opposite on Tuesday.

What they do care about, I think, is that he's telling the elites to take a hike – which is rich, given that Trump is one of the elites. Through Trump they're telling the elites that despite what you think, you're not *better* than we are. That's also rich, since Trump thinks he's better than everybody.

When I wrote *Bias* I had no idea it would go to # 1 on the New York Times bestseller list. It was my first book. I was stunned. And then it hit me: I was catching up with the American people, the ones who thought the media didn't respect them or their values. They also felt alienated and dispossessed. Without realizing it at the time, I tapped into that. I wasn't leading anything. I was catching up!

Catching up with the American people can be a powerful force. And Donald Trump is doing just that. Not with all of them, of course.. Maybe not even with most of them. But for the moment, with enough of them.

So look out: He may win more than the GOP nomination.