

Hillary, Donald and the “Compared to What” Test

Just between us, despite my many misgivings about him, I would rather see Donald Trump in the Oval Office than Hillary Clinton. But I'd rather see Daffy Duck as the next president of the United States than either of them.

And apparently, I'm not alone. About 4 in 10 voters say they're having a tough time choosing between the two candidates – because, they believe, neither would make a good president, that according to a new study by the Pew Research Center.

Donald makes me cringe every time he opens his mouth. I could be alone in the house watching him on TV and I get embarrassed when he starts to ramble. Hillary, on the other hand, bothers me in a completely different way. I would list them but I'm trying to keep this column to less than a million words. Let's just say I get nervous when a progressive Democrat is in charge – of anything.

Like a lot of you, I was watching FBI Director James Comey's impossible task on TV the other day. The one where he explains why he pretty much believes Hillary Clinton broke the law but doesn't think she should be prosecuted for breaking the law because she was so unsophisticated about technology that she didn't know what she was doing. That impossible task.

And when it was over and I was wondering if Comey really is as wonderful and non-political as almost everyone in the media has been telling me he is, I got a phone call. It was from a friend who thought that despite Comey's decision not to recommend criminal charges, he still eviscerated Hillary.

“If Hillary were running against anybody else,” he said, “the Republican candidate would be up by double digits.” Such was

the indictment of Mrs. Clinton's dishonesty and incompetence that Comey delivered, whether he thinks that's what he did or not.

My friend is right. But Hillary isn't running against "anybody else." She's running against Donald Trump.

And that's the problem for Republicans that just won't go away. As vulnerable as Hillary Clinton is, she doesn't look as bad as she should – not when you employ the "compared to what" test.

The FBI investigation of Mrs. Clinton shows that New York Times columnist William Safire was right, when 20 years ago he wrote that she is a "congenital liar." Some things change over time. And some don't. If she was telling the truth to the FBI about her emails, then she must have been lying to the American people.

Here's where the "compared to what" test kicks in. Let's stipulate that Donald Trump isn't exactly Honest Abe, either. In fact, the best way to tell if Donald is lying is if his lips are moving. In public speeches and interviews, he tells lies more often than he tells the truth – literally!

According to PolitiFact, Trump tells the whole truth a measly 2 percent of the time; his statements are mostly true another 8 percent of the time; and they're half true 14 percent of the time. As for the lies: PolitiFact says his statements are mostly false 14 percent of the time; totally false another 40 percent of the time; and pants on fire false 19 percent of the time.

What about fitness for the office of President of the United States? Given what we know about how "careless" Hillary was with sensitive government information, it's fair to wonder if she's competent enough to be trusted as commander-in-chief.

But even if you say no, do most voters really think Donald is?

Did you hear his speech the other night in Cincinnati? This is a man who gives stream of consciousness a bad name. One minute he's talking about how he hates mosquitos the next he's yakking about Saddam Hussein and then it's on to his golf swing.

He may be a big hit inside the arena but outside, I suspect, they wonder if the guy has lost a few marbles. As a journalist I have spent time with Donald Trump. I have interviewed him more than a few times. He's always been cordial, civil and polite. He even stays on point. But when he's making speeches to adoring fans at his rallies, the same Mr. Trump comes off as unhinged.

In a column you can read on this website, Pat Buchanan writes about Hillary in a piece that runs under the headline, "Is Hillary Morally Unfit to be President?"

"If, knowing what we know of the congenital mendacity of Hillary Clinton," he writes, "the nation chooses her as head of state and commander in chief, then that will tell us something about the America of 2016." And that something, he says, is not good. "And it will tell us something about the supposed superiority of democracy over other forms of government."

I agree. And if America chooses Donald Trump that also will tell us something about America of 2016 and about the supposed superiority of democracy over other forms of government.

In both cases, it won't tell us anything we should be proud of.

In a country of more than 300 million people, these two are the best we could come up with? Were Charlie Sheen and Kim Kardashian too busy to run?

Where's Daffy Duck when we really need him?