

# The Angry Little Teapot Strikes Again

Not long after he lost the chance to be his party's nominee for president back in 2004, Howard Dean told a gathering of fellow Democrats, "I hate Republicans and everything they stand for."

Dean, the former governor of Vermont and former chairman of the Democratic National Committee, is a nasty little man, the kind who gives politics an even worse name that it already has.

Just before the Iowa primary in 2004, when he was considered by many to be the odds-on favorite to win his party's nomination, Peggy Noonan, a portrait of civility and decency in the rough and tumble world of journalism, wrote that, "In the past I have thought of him as an angry little teapot, but that is perhaps too merry an image. His eyes are cold marbles ... and he holds himself with a kind of no-neck pugnacity that is fine in a wrestling coach or a tax lawyer but not in a president."

Howard Dean is the kind of partisan who doesn't see the other guy as an opponent; he sees the other guy as the *enemy*.

So I guess we shouldn't be surprised about what Howard Dean did during the recent presidential debate. He noticed that Donald Trump seemed to be sniffing from time to time at the podium, so he tweeted this: "Notice Trump sniffing all the time. Coke user?"

Let's be clear: Howard Dean didn't have a shred of evidence that Trump was using cocaine. Not a shred. Let's also note that Howard Dean is a medical doctor, someone who should know better than to make comments about supposed drug abuse from long distance.

When given the opportunity to say something like, "*It was a lame attempt at humor. I'm sorry I put out that tweet,*" Dean instead doubled down.

He told MSNBC that while he doesn't know if Trump was actually using cocaine – and didn't really think he was – Trump, he said, did show signs of a coke user. He had "pressured speech," and he displays a kind of "grandiosity," and the "question is why he is unstable," Dean wanted to know.

A better question is why is Howard Dean unstable? And how, as a surrogate for Hillary Clinton, can he be so irresponsible and get away with it?

Whenever a Trump supporter says something nasty, the Clinton campaign sets its hair on fire, demanding that Trump explain and apologize for the assault on decency. Never mind that Trump never met the jerk who made the comment – somehow he's still responsible for anything any of his supporters say anywhere at anytime.

But Hillary Clinton knows Howard Dean. What does she think about what he tweeted? Would she put him in a "basket of deplorables" – or is the basket reserved only for Trump supporters who say stupid things?

When I read the Dean tweet, my mind wandered back to 2012 – and to something Democratic Senate leader Harry Reid said about Mitt Romney, then the GOP presidential candidate.

On the floor of the Senate, Reid said he *knew* that Romney hadn't paid any federal income tax in a decade. It was a lie, but Reid didn't care. Asked if he regretted the cheap shot, he told a reporter, no he didn't, "Romney didn't win, did he?"

Maybe that's where Howard Dean got his inspiration. To politicians like Harry Reid and Howard Dean, nothing is out of bounds. Victory is all that counts. Lying for the right

cause isn't wrong, it's noble. Trying to destroy your opponent's character is simply part of the game.

I'm guessing Howard Dean won't lose any sleep over his slanderous remark about Donald Trump and cocaine. Angry little teapots rarely do.

**Editor's Note:** Since this column was published, Howard Dean offered something vaguely resembling an apology. Here's what that apology looked like:

"I would be very willing to apologize, not to Donald Trump, but I don't think using innuendo is a good thing."