

# Can the Republican Party Survive?



Every four years we get the same alert: “This is the most important presidential election in our lifetime.” The message is clear, if not spoken in so many words: Get out and vote because if you don’t and the wrong candidate wins ... *America is doomed!* Of course, it never quite works out that way. Somehow we manage to survive. And then, four years later, we get the same dire warning.

But this time the boy may not be crying wolf. This time, at least for Republicans, it may very well be the most important election of a lifetime – and not because of the fear that if Hillary wins the country will go down the drain. This time the very existence of the party may be at stake.

The two leading candidates on the Republican side – Donald Trump and Ted Cruz – are also the most polarizing candidates in the field. Their supporters love them and their detractors detest them. They may be the most popular on the GOP side at the moment – but they may also be the least popular in a general election.

In a New York Times story, under the headline, “For Republicans, Mounting Fears of Lasting Split”, Senator Lindsey Graham says, in essence, that judgment day for his party is coming.

“If Trump or Cruz wins the White House, then my side of the party has to re-evaluate who we are, what we stand for, and I’d be willing to do that,” he told the Times. “But if Trump or Cruz loses the presidency, would their supporters re-

evaluate their views on immigration and other issues that would grow the party? If they do that, we can come back together. If they don't, the party probably splits in a permanent way."

That's not an exaggeration. Cruz supporters have very little in common with those who like John Kasich or Chris Christie, for example. Trump supporters don't have much use for Jeb Bush or Carly Fiorina. Will the moderates really "re-evaluate" what their party stands for if their wing loses. Maybe. But it's hard to imagine the hard right doing much re-evaluating – a process many in that wing see as selling out their principles.

As the Times points out, "While party leaders like Senator Lindsey Graham of South Carolina say Republicans are in a 'demographic death spiral' and will not survive unless they start appealing to Hispanics and young people, many voters see such statements as a capitulation. They hunger for an unapologetic brand of conservatism that would confront rather than acquiesce to the political establishment – sentiments that have been amplified by conservative talk radio hosts like Rush Limbaugh and commentators like Ann Coulter, whose verbal broadsides influence the party's agenda."

The split is real. It's not just that the hard right disagrees with moderates; the hard right detests the moderates, whom they see as wimpy RINOs. And the feelings are mutual going the other way. The moderates see the hard right as crazies who think compromise is a felony. So, do the two wings of the Republican Party have enough in common to actually come together and back the party's candidate, whoever it turns out to be?

It's plausible that if Trump doesn't get the nomination, many of his followers, disillusioned as they might be, would jump onto the Cruz bandwagon. And the same is true if Cruz doesn't get the nomination; many of his supporters would support Trump.

But what if the frontrunners don't make it to the finish line? It's hard to imagine Trump and Cruz supporters backing an "establishment" candidate. Marco Rubio might be a someone both sides can support. But that's not a sure thing – or anything close to a sure thing.

America may not flourish if Hillary Clinton wins. The last thing we need next time around is Barack Obama in a dress. But America will survive. It always does. As for the Republican Party ... I'm not at all sure about that.

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## Lindsey Graham Ponders a Brad Pitt Candidacy



Back in 2004, I ordered a DVD of that year's Republican National Convention highlights off of a GOP website. Little did I know (though I really should have) that from that day forward, my email address would end up in the hands of practically every Republican candidate running for national office—well, in the hands of their campaign people anyway.

Most of the emails these campaigns send to me these days go straight to my junk mail folder, which I clean out periodically. That's what I was doing this morning when I noticed an email from presidential candidate Lindsey Graham. It's subject was "Brad Pitt".

I nearly deleted it, but the notion of Graham's campaign finding a way to connect the senator to the Hollywood heartthrob was too appetizing to discard. Thus, I gave it a read.

As it turned out, Brad Pitt was used simply a metaphor for describing how this year's GOP presidential debate rules were tailor-made for celebrities, rather than serious candidates vying for the Oval Office.

*"Under the current debate rules supported by the RNC, Brad Pitt would have a better shot of being on the debate stage than real candidates for president,"* states Graham in the email.

Graham may well be right, though it seems kind of silly to reference Brad Pitt when the campaign's really talking about Donald Trump, who is topping some of the latest GOP polls.

As everyone who follows politics knows by now, organizations (like *Fox News*) that are hosting GOP debates have had to make some tough choices over who they'll allow to appear on their stages. The problem comes from the sheer number of candidates that are running (there will likely be around 15 by the time all is said and done) and how much time will be available for each of them to speak and answer questions constructively.

Fox News has limited their prime-time, televised debate (coming up in August) to ten candidates. This is already a pretty hard-to-manage number for this type of forum. They'll be using public opinion polls to select the ten most popular of the bunch. Graham isn't happy about this, primarily because polls show his national popularity ranked near the

bottom of the field.

I do understand Graham's frustration. Watching an unserious blowhard like Donald Trump rise to the top of the field on little more than his celebrity and hyperbole has to be tough for a longtime U.S. senator with presidential aspirations.

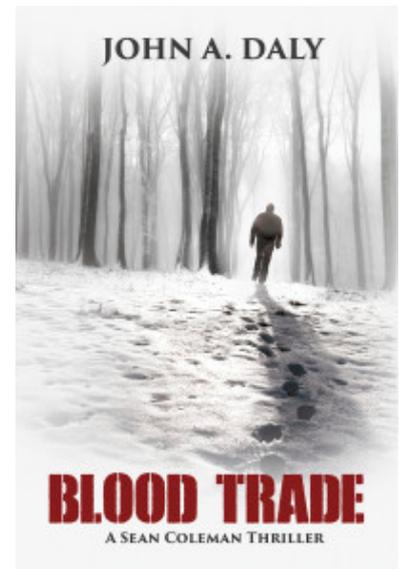
But while Trump may be a problem for the GOP in this election cycle, he's *not* what will keep Graham and a handful of others from participating in the big debates. The *GOP Bucket List Brigade* will.

The GOP Bucket List Brigade is a term I came up with for the Republican candidates who are in this race not because they believe they can win, or because they think they're uniquely qualified to lead the country, but rather for the prestige and historical recognition that comes with *being* a presidential candidate.

I don't exclude second-time candidates from this categorization. Beating expectations the first time around has a way of motivating one to try and recapture some of their former glory.

Sure, such candidates exist in every presidential race, but when you get to the point where you can't fit everyone on one stage, that's a real problem. Serious candidates *will* get left out, while those who are in the race to massage their own egos, gin up publicity for future memoirs or television shows, and cross "run for president" off their bucket lists will make the overall field weaker—weaker at a time when our country is in desperate need of strong leadership.

Trump absolutely is a member of the GOP Bucket List Brigade (albeit a high-profile one), but I've got news for Senator Graham that he probably doesn't want to hear: He is too.



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There's just no appetite in the Republican Party—nor is there one with the rest of the country—for a Lindsey Graham presidency. And it's not because Americans don't know him. Few senators have been in front of national television cameras as often as Graham has over the past ten years or so. People know what he stands for, and although many admire him (count me among those people), they don't want him in the White House. The polls and lack of excitement behind his candidacy have made that quite clear.

Why run then? I'm guessing Graham was encouraged to by his friends (and former presidential candidates) John McCain and Joe Lieberman (who may truly believe he has what it takes), but if they're not leveling with him on his prospects of winning, they're doing him a real disservice. The same could assuredly be said about a number of other candidates and their advisers.

In our great country, anyone should be able to run for president. That goes without saying. But those who run should have enough humility and respect for the office not to use it as some expensive exercise in self-affirmation. The stakes are

too high, especially in the year 2016.

Please... leave the acting to Brad Pitt, and leave the campaigning to viable candidates.

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## **Obama's De-Nile**

I would like to spend a little time wandering through those weird cavernous echo chambers that pass for brains in the skulls of Obama, Kerry, John McCain and Lindsey Graham. But only if I knew I could get out and not be trapped inside with all those stalagmites.

While the Republican pinheads speak of reconciliation of all parties in Egypt, the Democrats wring their hands over the "rolling back of human rights" and the refusal of the military to allow for "peaceful demonstrations." On what bizarre planet do these ignoramuses live? And is there sufficient oxygen to support human life?

For McCain and his mini-me, Lindsey Graham, to spout off insisting that all sides agree to form a united Egypt borders on the psychotic. Just exactly how are the opposing parties in Egypt – those who yearn for a secular democracy and those who crave a nation governed by Sharia law – supposed to come together? What sort of compromise would McCain suggest? A government run sanely three-and-a-half days a week, with Islamic lunacy controlling things the other 84 hours?

But never let it be said that the Democrats will ever allow the Republicans to hog all the foolishness. It is, in fact, the one area in which bi-partisanship carries the day in our nation's capital. Let the Republicans insist on mortal enemies coming together and setting aside their mortal differences, and you can count on the Democrats referring to "peaceful protest," while turning a blind eye to the rampant vandalism by the Muslim Brotherhood and their burning nearly two dozen Coptic Christian churches in Egypt.

As for those precious human rights that Obama is convinced the military is denying to 85 million Egyptians, it didn't seem to faze him when those rights were being denied by Mohamed Morsi during the year after he was narrowly elected. Did Obama think that millions of Egyptians had taken to the streets because they didn't like Morsi's beard? Did it never even enter his puny little mind that it might have had something to do with the fact that Morsi was shredding the Egyptian constitution, imprisoning journalists and imposing a theocratic dictatorship?

To be fair, those might seem to be trivial matters to a president who used the IRS to punish his political foes and the Justice Department to snoop on reporters and lie about it to Congress; while he, himself, has shown only contempt for the laws of our nation, whether they involve shipping arms to Mexico, ignoring drug-related felonies or abandoning even the pretense of guarding our border.

Still, why is it that so many of our politicians, on both sides of the aisle, insist on pretending that the Muslim Brotherhood is just another political party? It is clearly a terrorist organization, no more benign than Al Qaeda or Hezbollah. And any politician who feels himself compelled to pay it lip service should be viewed with the same contempt that would have accrued to an American politician who spoke out on behalf of the Nazis during the 30s and 40s.

When I hear our politicians boohooing over the deaths of 50 or 60 rioting members of the Muslim Brotherhood, I would remind them that 72 Egyptians were killed in Port Said recently when a riot broke out over nothing more than a soccer match!

Just because the bad guys in the Middle East don't wear uniforms or swastikas doesn't entitle anyone to defend them as innocent civilians. The Egyptian military is the only thing keeping Egypt from morphing into another Iran, whereas the Muslim Brotherhood is strictly in the business of spreading Islamic fanaticism, and has about as much to do with promoting brotherhood as the Aryan Nation or the NAACP.

Inasmuch as most Americans seem to believe our Civil War, which resulted in 700,000 dead, was worthwhile, I'm at a loss to understand why so many folks get upset when far fewer are dying in Syria or, if it comes to pass, would die in an Egyptian civil war. At least in Egypt, we'd finally have a side worth rooting for.

So, naturally, that's the side Obama and McCain are bad-mouthing.

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## **Alchemy, Al Gore & Jazeera**

People who have blind faith in science would do well to recall that during the Middle Ages, a time not all that different from our own, especially in the Middle East, not to mention Chicago, Detroit and Hollywood, there were those who regarded alchemy to be a science. They were convinced that base metals such as lead could be magically turned into precious metals such as gold. In modern times, we find remnants of those

earlier pinheads in left-wing circles, where it is widely accepted that a community organizer, by virtue of winning an election, can be transformed into a savior.

When I first heard that Obama and his stooges were demanding that gun magazines be made smaller, I naturally assumed they wanted the NRA monthly to be condensed. When I discovered they actually believed that the answer to violence in America was fewer bullets, I found myself wondering if they had put Michael Bloomberg, the idiot who thinks smaller soft drink containers is the answer to obesity, in charge of the crusade.

The irony of the situation is that, thanks to the perceived threat that this administration is apparently more concerned with confiscating our weapons than it is with denying Iran the ability to wage nuclear war, Obama has done more to increase gun sales than the NRA and Eric Holder's Operation Fast and Furious put together.

Because I have zero tolerance for blather, if I were a senator I would vote against Chuck Hagel because when Obama nominated him to be Secretary of Defense, he said he wanted to advance global freedom, decency and humanity, as "we help to make a better world for all mankind," and I would nix John Brennan, Obama's nominee to head up the CIA, because, on the same occasion, he said he wanted to make sure that "the CIA always reflected the liberties, the freedoms and the values we hold so dear." I don't want the guys heading up those two offices sounding like mushy-mouthed social workers. I realize they can't help how they look, but I want them to at least try to sound like John Wayne, vowing to destroy anyone who gets between his thirsty cattle and the nearest water hole.

Frankly, I haven't heard such unmitigated hoey since the 11th grade when Seymour Schwartz promised to bring about an era of world peace if only we'd elect him class president.

Recently, I sent an email to Sen. Lindsey Graham. It was one

of those rare occasions when I was praising a politician. I was commending him for refusing to allow Obama and his stooges in the media to sweep the Benghazi massacre under the carpet. But instead of a polite acknowledgment, I received an email informing me that due to the volume of email he receives, he is only able to respond to inquiries from South Carolinians.

In response, I wrote: "I really do think that you and other senators should be open to comments from out-of-staters inasmuch as your decisions affect us all. In this instance, I was complimenting you. But even if I had been taking you to task, I deserved the right to make my feelings known. God knows I can't expect a reasonable response from my own senators, Boxer and Feinstein. But I should be able to contact any one of you hundred "public servants." It's not as if it's only the taxes paid by South Carolinians that go to pay your salary and the salaries of your staff."

It's bad enough being stiffed by left-wingers without being shunted aside by conservatives. Is it any wonder that in a recent poll, members of Congress were deemed to be less popular than root canal, head lice, colonoscopies, cockroaches and France!

But even Congress is more popular these days than Al Gore. For the past decade, the human dirigible has been piling up money and honors, everything from Oscars to Nobel Prizes, by running around like a demented Chicken Little, screaming that not only is the sky falling, but that the oceans are rising, and all because of those evil fossil fuels. And then, after refusing to even entertain an offer from Glenn Beck, he turns around and peddles his TV network to Al Jazeera, the pro-terrorist media outfit owned by the oil sheiks of Qatar. It would be like Michelle Obama, after making all of us endure her silly crusade against baked goods, agreeing to do TV commercials for Twinkies and Ho-Hos.

Compared to all the money that the Democrats waste in other

areas, the half billion dollars or so that they funnel to Planned Parenthood is a drop in the bucket. But for lying about their mission and pretending that the group is anything other than a massive abortion mill, they should be put out of business. In 2011, for instance, in spite of insisting that they offer prenatal services to the poor, they referred only 2,300 women to adoption agencies, while performing 334,000 abortions. But I guess in the wacky world of liberals, an abortion is regarded as a prenatal service.

In what might be regarded as related news, some outfit calling itself the National Father's Day Council decided that Bill Clinton was Father of the Year. It will probably come as no surprise that the 2007 honoree was none other than John Edwards. But at least Mr. Edwards earned the title the old fashioned way, by impregnating his mistress while his wife was dying of cancer.

Rumor has it that Arnold Schwarzenegger, who certainly appeared to be the early odds-on favorite, is crying "Foul!" and demanding a recount.

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## Could This Be Bye-bye Obama?

Political scandals come, and political scandals go, but they all smell the same.

I am going to go way out on a limb here, and predict that President Obama will be forced to resign from office before the end of his second term, because of Benghazi-gate, just as one of his esteemed predecessors, Richard Nixon, did because of Watergate.

It will be the last, nasty practical joke inflicted upon our country by this ill-natured, incompetent boob of a President – because look at who we will get as his successor!

I decided that Obama was bound to resign because I don't think any presidency can survive more than four years of the fully justified drubbing that Obama already is receiving from the alternative media. His mishandling of our foreign affairs is exemplified, though not limited to, his mishandling of the Benghazi tragedy.

Being incompetent isn't quite enough cause for impeachment, and Obama would never acknowledge that he is incompetent in any event. But when you add in the lies, the deceptions, the cover-up, and when all the gory details of this disgraceful shell game finally get disclosed, as they will, to the American public, you have a presidency that simply cannot remain viable.

I don't know whether the worthless mainstream media, which in its more honorable days led the charge in ousting Nixon, will continue to "circle the wagons," as Rush Limbaugh puts it, around their precious President. I still have enough belief in our nation's journalistic tradition to assume that there must be some mainstreamers out there who will break ranks and join the better cause.

Where are all those young idealists who enrolled at journalism schools in record numbers after Watergate? Some of them are still batting away at their keyboards, and if enough of them decide to do the right thing, it will be Hello Again, Chicago for Obama and his lovely family.

It wasn't until today that I mustered enough certainty to publicly predict Obama's premature departure from the Oval Office. It happened when a reporter at his news conference asked Obama to respond to the attack by Republican Senators McCain and Graham on Obama's United Nations ambassador, Susan Rice. The senators said they would do whatever they could to

ensure that Rice, who has been mentioned as a possible successor to Secretary of State Clinton, does not receive that promotion, because of her involvement in Benghazi-gate.

Rice, you no doubt recall, went on five different Sunday political talk shows a week after the Benghazi attack, to spread the administration's propaganda – which already had been thoroughly discredited – that the attack which killed our ambassador to Libya and three other Americans had been prompted by an anti-Muslim video. (The producer of the video has just begun a one-year term in a California prison, supposedly for parole violation. Yeah, right! This is just Obama's kiss-up #546 to America's enemies.)

Obama gallantly rode to Rice's defense. He seems to have a bit of a thing for her. Michelle ought to take note.

Obama said: "...let me say specifically about Susan Rice, she has done exemplary work. She has represented the United States and our interests in the United Nations with skill, and professionalism, and toughness, and grace."

Echoes of Watergate! Maybe you aren't old enough to remember everything that went on during the Watergate drama, but I am, and I was following the events so closely at the time that every word of every participant has been forever etched in my mind. So, this is what I remember:

When Bob Haldeman and John Ehrlichman, two top White House staffers who had been implicated in the Watergate scandal, were forced to resign, Nixon went on TV and called them "two of the finest public servants it has been my privilege to know."

Neither of those fine gentlemen, who wound up serving time in prison, was by any stretch of the imagination a "public servant." They were Nixon's personal servants, Nixon's myrmidons.

Susan Rice and the rest of the lying cabal, including Obama himself, Hillary Clinton, Jay Carney and, sad to say, perhaps General Petraeus, are not public servants. They serve their own interests, exclusively.

Good riddance to the lot of them. Better sooner than later, guys.