

Donald Trump and His Engineered Crazy Train



"I believe it is easier for people to survive on this train if they have some level of insanity... You need to maintain a proper balance of anxiety and fear and chaos and horror in order to keep life going. And if we don't have that, we need to invent it." ~Minister Wilford

The above is a line from one of my favorite movies of the last few years: *Snowpiercer*, a post-apocalyptic story of the planet's last remaining survivors, living aboard a perpetually-moving train in a new ice-age. It might also be the deliberate, defining philosophy behind Donald Trump's presidential campaign. At least, that's the essence of a theory that some have put forth.

For months, a number of Trump admirers have been telling me that the celebrity billionaire's seemingly unhinged, often offensive conduct is not – I repeat, *not* – the stamp of an egotistical, overly insecure individual with a screw loose. They insist, instead, that Trump knows *exactly* what he's doing. They say he has masterfully used the psychological edge he has over his opponents to dismantle their candidacies, tap into the souls of voters, and draw in electoral support. Several news pundits have made a similar claim.

In other words, Trump's not crazy... He's crazy like a fox.

Is it possible they're right? I've rejected the notion from the very beginning of Trump's candidacy, but seeing as how the loonier the man acts, the stronger he performs in the polls,

I'm starting to have second thoughts.

Could it be that mocking American POWs for their capture, musing over female journalists' menstrual cycles, and comparing opponents to child molesters truly is the mark of an advanced, self-aware mind? After watching Trump's Iowa speech from Thursday night, I believe it's time to consider that.

The 95-minute-long speech, which Trump delivered in front of a crowd of roughly 150 people, covered a lot of ground. It touched on some policies and his thoughts on his primary opponents. In case you missed it, here were some of the highlights:

- In regard to critics that have accused him of not understanding foreign policy, Trump said that he actually knows more about Islamic State terrorists than U.S. generals do. "Believe me," he added to assure the crowd. He also took credit for predicting 9/11.
- Regarding immigration, he repeated his policy-point that the Mexican government would pay for a border wall, and he praised himself for raising the issue of "anchor babies," explaining that the "geniuses" at Harvard Law School have now backed his play. Additionally, he said that when it comes to immigration, Marco Rubio is "weak like a baby", and that sweat would be pouring off Rubio's face if he were ever in a poker game.
- Regarding terrorism, Trump explained that as president, he will "bomb the s—" out of oil fields in Iraq and Syria, and claim that oil for America.
- Multiple times, Trump marveled at how the attendees positioned on stage behind him were remaining on their feet throughout his speech. Note: they didn't have chairs.
- For the second time in two days, Trump cited the phrase "pathological temper" (which Ben Carson had used to describe his younger self in his autobiography) as evidence that Carson was similar to a child molester.

His rationale: Child molesters are pathological too.

- Trump cast doubt on the claims in Carson's book that he once tried to stab someone with a knife, with the intended victim being spared from injury by the belt buckle he was wearing. In case the audience didn't fully appreciate the story's implausibility, Trump stepped out from behind his podium and physically reenacted the scenario, asking if anyone in a crowd had a knife that they would like to try and stab him with.
- Commenting on Carson's description of how he turned to religion, Trump said, "He goes into the bathroom for a couple of hours, and he comes out, and now he's religious. And the people of Iowa believe him. Give me a break. Give me a break. It doesn't happen that way. It doesn't happen that way. Don't be fools, okay?"
- Trump offered his opinion of people who believe Ben Carson's account of his life story, asking, "How stupid are the people of Iowa? How stupid are the people of the country to believe this crap?"
- Trump also explained about himself, "I'm not polarizing."

It was quite a speech, described by the *Washington Post's* Jenna Johnson (who was at the event) as an angry, defensive rant. Yet, the rhetoric was really only distinguishable from past Trump statements by its sheer length (95 minutes straight without any time available for questions, which Trump has promised) and its cumulative nature. Thus, there must have been some psychological brilliance to it, because Trump, as it has been explained to me time after time, absolutely does *not* have a screw loose. His mind is stable and he knows what he's doing.



Breaking: Presidential candidate Donald Trump endorses John A. Daly's new novel.

So, I tried to decipher it. I tried to determine how sounding like a bitter, betrayed ex-boyfriend blathering out a drunken toast at his former girlfriend's wedding, was in fact a cunning display of voter persuasion. After several uncompleted graphs and outlines, I'm embarrassed to say that I was unable to do so.

I was so frustrated with my failed analysis that I nearly returned to my original assessment that people were simply drawn to Donald Trump's charisma and celebrity, and felt his angry attitude mirrored their angst over the direction of the country. I almost fell back on my long-held belief that the content of what Trump actually says (including the overly-personal trashing of those he perceives as political threats) comes from no psychological prowess at all, and that maybe – just maybe – Trump is just one miserable human being. I even considered, again, that his campaign is squarely about himself and his ego, and has little if nothing to do with the best interests of the country.

But of course, that *can't* be the case. After all, he's still leading in the polls. And because I can't sufficiently explain

it, I'm forced to concede that Trump's strategy of *invented insanity* is so advanced and psychologically sophisticated, that someone of my clearly primitive intellect couldn't possibly grasp it.

You win, Dr. Trump. You are a profound genius. The crazy train you've masterfully engineered is running right on schedule.