

Selling Out Their Principles – For Donald Trump

Let's begin with something we all know: that Hillary Clinton is immensely unpopular; that she's inauthentic; that she comes off as programmed; that she's boring and not a very good campaigner; that she's widely seen as dishonest and untrustworthy; and that whenever she lets loose with her signature laugh the word "cackle" creeps into my head.

Now let's add to the laundry list that Americans almost never vote for the same party three times in a row in presidential elections.

Add it all up and Bugs Bunny could beat her this November if he were running as a Republican. The bad news for the GOP is that Bugs isn't running but Donald Trump is.

An editorial in the Wall Street Journal points out that Trump is "running against one of the worst Democratic candidates in the last 50 years." That would be great news for Republicans but for one thing: Donald J. Trump is *the* worst GOP candidate, possibly ever.

You can't offend members of so many different voting blocs and expect them to vote for you – which helps explain why Trump's poll numbers are underwater when it comes to support from women, minorities and young voters.

Ask a Republican in Washington what he thinks of Donald Trump and you better not blink – because he won't be there when you open your eyes. "No comment" is the best you'll get. His unfavorable numbers have hit all-time highs. Just about the only people who like Trump are blood relatives. A recent Washington Post-ABC News polls found that 70 percent of Americans have a negative view of Trump. Ninety-four percent of blacks don't like him; neither do 89 percent of Hispanics.

The poll found that, " ... there's only one group for which a majority views Trump favorably: White *men* without college degrees. Every other racial/gender/education split views him negatively."

But hey, anything can happen. November is still a long way off. And Hillary isn't exactly Ms. Popularity. The poll found that 55 percent of Americans view her unfavorably. Pretty bad. But not as bad as Trump's numbers. The fact is, she's pretty much got one thing going for her: *Donald Trump*. She ain't him!

But can a new more refined Donald emerge – one more-acceptable-to-the-masses? Well, he did recently speak not off the cuff but off the teleprompter and he even sounded like a grownup. But that lasted 10 minutes. So lets be realistic: The man is 70 years old. He is who he is. He may change his act from time to time but he isn't changing his essence. And essentially he is a narcissist who is way too thin-skinned and not very informed about the issues.

None of this matters, of course, to those who worship the Donald. He is their messiah. But it's true that not *everyone* who supports Trump worships him. Some simply see him as the lesser of two evils. Better Donald, they figure, than Hillary. Fair enough. What's harder to figure out is why so many on the hard right, the true blue conservatives – especially media types who think anyone who isn't Ronald Reagan is a RINO – support Donald Trump.

These are the "real" conservatives. If you don't believe *me* just ask *them*. These are the ones with the big megaphones on radio and TV who expect nothing less than ideological purity from their candidate – unless his name is Donald Trump

Let's set aside the long list of issues where Trump has taken a sledge hammer to conservative principles. Let's focus instead on something else conservatives tell us they deeply

care about: civility ... simple, common decency.

Donald's fans in conservative TV and radio – not all but way too many – looked the other way when he insulted a POW; when he mocked a journalist with a physical disability; when he took a nasty shot at a female opponent because he figured the American people couldn't stand to look at her face for at least four years.

Imagine if Bernie Sanders had made fun of a serviceman who was shot down over North Vietnam and was captured by the enemy and spent years in a prisoner of war camp. Imagine if he had said of John McCain, "He's not a war hero. He's a war hero because he was captured. I like people that weren't captured."

Imagine if Hillary did a loathsome impersonation of a *conservative* reporter with a disability.

Imagine if Barack Obama had suggested that Carly Fiorina wasn't attractive enough to be president. Imagine if he had said, "'Look at that face. Would anyone vote for that? Can you imagine that, the face of our next president?"

Conservatives would have rightly been incensed. They would have said this is why so many people detest liberals. They would have said liberals think they can get away with mocking people with "unacceptable" opinions because liberals think they're better, smarter and most of all, more moral than everyone else. But with Trump, the "real" conservatives on radio and TV simply accepted his incivility, his indecency – proving a point I've long believed about Donald Trump: He has a knack for making his supporters – especially the high profile ones – look foolish.

Now, in the wake of Orlando, he's stirred things up again. Was he being politically opportunistic, taking credit for predicting another attack? Was he being nutty Donald, suggesting that if the president isn't downright incompetent when it comes to taking on terrorism, *something else* is going

on?

As I say, I understand why “ordinary” Americans have rallied around their messiah. They’ve wanted to give the elites the middle finger for quite a while now. Trump – an elitist of the first order – is doing it for them. I get it. But for media conservatives to sell out their conservative principles – *for Donald Trump no less* – is beyond pathetic.

They would do him one big favor if they used those megaphones to demand that he start behaving like a guy running for president. They should tell him that he’s no longer playing only to angry blue collar GOP primary voters; that what worked for them won’t necessarily work for the bigger audience he’s now auditioning in front of. They – along with the Chris Christies of the GOP – could say, “If you don’t stop channeling Bluto Blutarsky (John Belushi/Animal House) we’ll *un-endorse* you!” One thing’s for sure: They’re not doing him any favors when, because they can’t stand Hillary, they cover for him. What they’re doing is helping Hillary.

The Wall Street Journal recently said that, “Mr. Trump needs to convince millions of skeptical voters that he’s more than an impulsive bully who poses too big a risk in the Oval Office.”

He’ll have no trouble convincing his fawning pals on conservative TV and radio that he’s more than an impulsive bully. No trouble at all. Convincing the rest of America won’t be nearly as easy.