

Scaramucci Might Need His Own Communications Director



Anthony Scaramucci has made quite an impression in his first week as White House Communications Director. The charismatic, plain-spoken figure (nicknamed “The Mooch”) has been generating a number of memorable sound-bites, while vowing to get to the bottom of the Trump administration’s ongoing problem with internal leaks.

Last night, he took the Twitter to report on his progress, and in doing so, seemed to implicate a high-ranking administration official:

“In light of the leak of my financial disclosure info which is a felony. I will be contacting @FBI and the @TheJusticeDept #swamp @Reince45”

Scaramucci was referring to a story in *The Politico*, in which financial disclosure forms, that he had filed for a previous job with the administration, had been published. And yes, that’s White House Chief of Staff, Reince Priebus, that he

tagged at the end of that tweet. It wasn't by accident.

The *New Yorker's* Ryan Lizza soon confirmed what many were speculating, tweeting:

"In case there's any ambiguity in his tweet I can confirm that Scaramucci wants the FBI to investigate Reince for leaking."

Minutes later, the *Washington Post's* Philip Rucker also weighed in on Twitter:

"Some in White House are trying to build a case that Priebus is a leaker – "a diagram" charting leaks, per senior official – to show Trump."

Taking a page out of President Trump's playbook, Scaramucci had publicly censured a member of the administration, going as far as to accuse him of committing a felony.

Only, as Stephen Hayes of *The Weekly Standard* described in a piece this morning, Scaramucci neither had proof that Priebus had leaked the information, nor evidence that there had been any leak at all.

You see, the disclosure form had become public record as of last Sunday.

At some point during the night, Scaramucci seemed to have realized that he had created a media firestorm. In response to an *Axios* tweet that stated, "Scaramucci appears to want Priebus investigated by FBI over leaks," he wrote:

"Wrong! Tweet was public notice to leakers that all Sr Adm officials are helping to end illegal leaks. @Reince45"

Soon after, Scaramucci deleted the original tweet that caused the ruckus.

The revised notion that Scaramucci had singled Priebus out, only as *honorable mention* in an effort to expose White House

leakers, earned widespread mockery across the Twitterverse. In fact, the reversal was so absurd that Scaramucci abandoned it himself this morning.

Appearing on CNN, Scaramucci told Chris Cuomo, “If you want to talk about the chief of staff, we have had odds, we have had differences. When I said we were brothers, from the podium, that’s because we’re rough on each other. Some brothers are like Cain and Abel, other brothers can fight with each other and then get along. I don’t know if this is repairable or not – that will be up to the president.”

Later in the interview, Scaramucci said, “So if Reince wants to explain that he’s not a leaker, let him do that.” He added, “I can speak for my own actions. He’s going to need to speak for his own actions.”

And if you think that President Trump couldn’t possibly approve of *The Mooch’s* public, highly-unprofessional conduct, think again. Scaramucci told the *Washington Post* that the president actually authorized this morning’s CNN interview, and told him to talk about Priebus and the leaks.

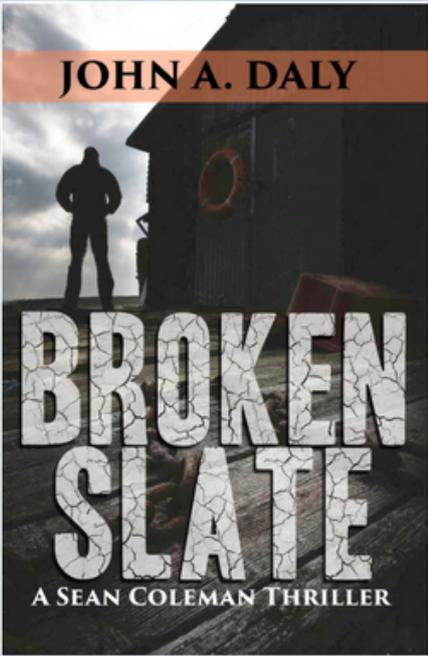
But don’t worry. The situation is even crazier than that. Scaramucci is now reportedly seeking messaging advice from *Fox News’s* Sean Hannity.

As you may recall, Hannity generated big headlines earlier this year with his incessant spreading of reckless conspiracy theories about Seth Rich, a murdered DNC staffer. The weeks-long, televised crusade was designed to deflect heat off of the Trump/Russia collusion story, but resulted only in causing deeper pain to Rich’s family, who begged (and eventually convinced) Hannity to stop.

So, yeah. Why *wouldn’t* you want this guy advising the White House’s communications director? Right?

God only knows what more we can expect from Scaramucci in the

future, but one thing's for certain: Sean Spicer must be loving retirement right about now.



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Priebus to Primary Candidates: Kneel Before Trump

On Sunday's *Face the Nation*, RNC Chairman Reince Priebus suggested that if Donald Trump's primary challengers don't support the GOP presidential nominee, their political futures in the Republican party could be in jeopardy.



As is widely known, a number of Trump's primary opponents

haven't offered endorsements (or even tepid support) to his candidacy. Notably among them are Ted Cruz, John Kasich, and Jeb Bush. All could potentially throw their hats back into the presidential ring in 2020 or 2024.

"Those people need to get on board," Priebus told host John Dickerson. "And if they're thinking they're going to run again someday, I think that we're going to evaluate the process – of the nomination process and I don't think it's going to be that easy for them."

When asked specifically if the party itself planned to "penalize" these individuals, if they don't make good on their pledge from last summer, to support the eventual nominee, Priebus framed it as a real possibility.

"I think these are the things that our party's going to look at, in the process," he answered. "And I think that people who gave us their word, used information for the RNC, should be on the board."

Priebus referenced a ballot-access issue in South Carolina, where party candidates are actually *required* to pledge their support to the eventual nominee, in order to get on the ballot...regardless if who that person is.

This wasn't the case, of course, with the "loyalty pledge" that was taken by the Cruz, Kasich, Bush, and 14 others; it wasn't legally binding. Still, Priebus seemed to be suggesting that the South Carolina model had enough merit to be applied to national candidates.

"If a private entity puts forward a process and has agreement with the participants in that process," he added, "and those participants don't follow through with the promises that they made in that process, what should a private party do about that if those same people come around in four or eight years?"

My guess is that Priebus's view actually mirrors popular

sentiment among Republican voters. I've been surprised by the number of Trump supporters (even reluctant ones) who have responded to me on this website, and on social media, with the belief that the loyalty pledge is akin to a *blood pact* – one that must be honored as a show of true character.

I've found that viewpoint quite curious, being that:

1. Trump disavowed the same pledge back in March.
2. Trump has broken promises throughout his campaign, whether it be on policies (like immigration), or vows to provide information to the public (like tax returns).

Still, a lot of Republicans in this decisively *anti-establishment* election are insistent that the losing candidates now swallow their pride, and their concerns for the nation, and hold firm on the promise they made to – yes – *The Establishment*. And Priebus has become those people's loudest voice.

Talk about irony.

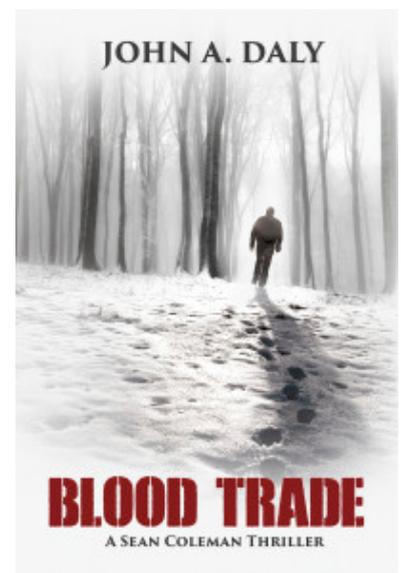
I certainly can't speak for the GOP holdouts, but if I were them, I know what my response would be: "Screw you, Reince."

There was no RNC talk of *penalties* or demands for *party loyalty* when Donald Trump was insisting that our nation's last Republican president "lied" about WMDs in Iraq. There was no retribution for when he placed the blame for 9/11 on that president, or for when he likened the administration to war criminals.

Where was the RNC when Trump was waging personal attacks on elected Republican leaders (including some up for re-election) for committing the dastardly act of endorsing other primary candidates? Reminder: We're talking about a guy who later said that he "doesn't mind" if the GOP loses the U.S. Senate.

When Trump compared one of his Republican opponents to a “child molester,” why wasn’t the RNC issuing him threats? Where was the committee when Trump suggested that another primary opponent’s father conspired to assassinate JFK?

Let me repeat that last one: A Republican presidential candidate accused another Republican presidential candidate’s father of being involved in the murder of an American president. And the RNC did nothing.



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Sure, there have been times when Priebus has publicly *stood up* to Trump and denounced some of his rhetoric, like when Trump called the Colorado GOP “corrupt.” And for that, Priebus deserves some credit. But there were *never* any public threats issued to Trump about his political future. There was *never* any talk about the RNC making it hard for him to ever run again.

The RNC took *ownership* of Trump, and now Priebus is warning others that they’d better debase themselves if they know

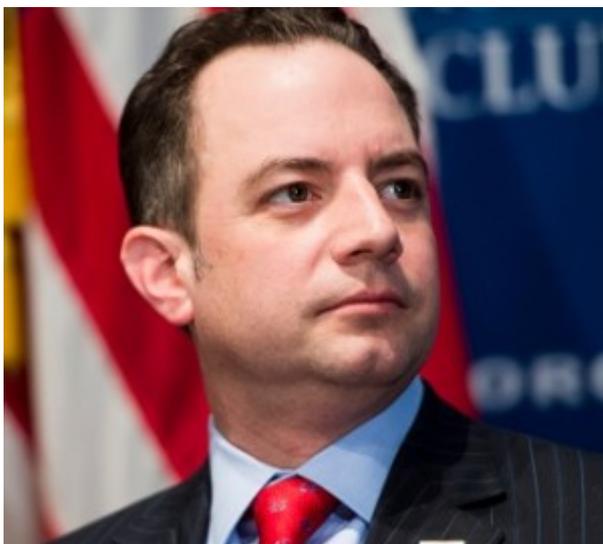
what's good for them.

He's saying that they have to vouch for a guy who, in some cases, attacked their families. He's telling them that they need to prop up a man who they believe is totally unqualified to serve as president, or else they will suffer political consequences.

In short, Priebus is demanding a show of party loyalty that would have never been (and never will be) demanded of Trump.

Because of that, those who don't want to endorse the Republican nominee shouldn't feel the slightest bit obligated to do so. In fact, they should be insulted by the public pressure now being placed on them.

The Approaching Exodus From the Republican Party



This morning, CNN announced the results of a new national poll that should mortify the faction of Republicans who firmly object to what presidential candidate Donald Trump has been doing to their party and the conservative movement. According to the poll, Trump now has the backing of 49% of GOP voters – a near majority.

The poll may well prove to be an outlier. Most others still

place Trump at around 35% (roughly one-third support), where he's been hovering for quite some time. Then again, this CNN one reflects the latest sampling of the race, covering a date range between February 24th and the 27th, which no other polling agency has reported thus far.

Could the number be right, or at least suggest a significant uptick of Trump support? Yes, it absolutely could.

One can't underestimate the momentum that a string of state-primary and caucus victories (and a media narrative of inevitability) can bring to a presidential candidate. Because of that, Trump may soon have the support of a majority of Republicans. If that happens, he will not only become the party's nominee (even in a two-man race), but also its unequivocal leader.

If that's the fate of the GOP, expect a mass exodus from the party.

Last week, Jon Gabriel of Ricochet.com wrote a thought-provoking piece where he called on the RNC to cut Trump loose from the party. His reasoning came down to the supportive role the party establishment would eventually have to play, should Trump become the nominee:

"Once a candidate is the presidential nominee, it is the party's job to defend every statement he makes. When Romney criticized the 47 percent, or McCain suspended his campaign after the economic crisis, or George W. Bush was blindsided by reports of a 1976 drunk driving arrest, the RNC had to support their candidates and aggressively attempt to spin the bad news in their favor.

Every candidate makes missteps here and there, but Trump has based his campaign on indefensible statements."

It's a really good point – one that I doubt most people have thought about. If Trump's the nominee, the GOP brass will not

only be tasked with rationalizing his reprehensible personal conduct (a job currently filled by anonymous Internet trolls and certain cable news hosts), but also his stated policy positions.

These positions not only include lots of liberal, authoritative, government-heavy ideas for the economy and healthcare, but also new limitations on freedom of speech, forms of religious expulsion, the torturing of terrorists as a punitive measure (and the killing of their families), etc.

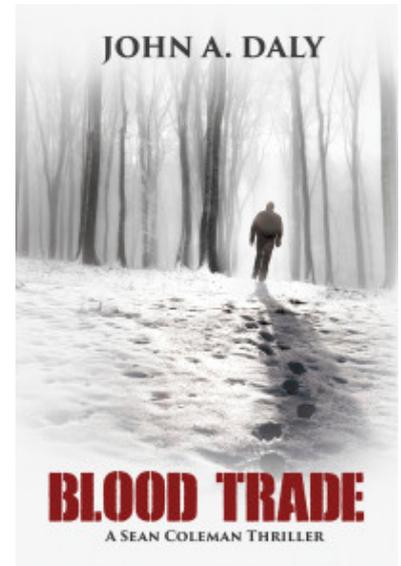
In propping up Trump, the RNC would even have to back a man who has portrayed our last Republican president as a war criminal who's to blame for 9/11, and who lied to take us to war with Iraq.

Sure, I expect Trump to soften his stances (dramatically in some cases) if he wins the nomination, but that would by no means erase what he has already said over and over again in front of television cameras. In many ways, Trump has presented himself as the embodiment of all the unfair stereotypes that Democrats have long applied to Republicans (greedy, sexist, bigoted), despite the fact that he rejects most of the principles Republicans have long stood for. The RNC would have to not only contend with that, but also Trump's legendary thin skin, which has resulted in the billionaire reflexively mocking American POWs, mocking disabled people, and publicly musing over a journalist's menstrual cycle.

Should this be the role of the RNC (even if the GOP is partially to blame for the rise of Trump)? Gabriel says no. He thinks they should disavow Trump from the party. He makes a good case, but if the GOP establishment hasn't done it by now, I can't imagine they ever will. So if Trump becomes the nominee, what does that mean for Republicans who are absolutely disgusted by Trump?

I'll tell you what it means: an abandonment of the party in

large numbers. If Trump's the face of the GOP, the GOP will be no more. It will crumble into unprincipled disarray, as will the conservative movement – at least for several years.



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Analysts are underestimating just how many long-reliable Republican voters (and donors, small and large) can't, in good faith, vote for Trump in a general election. When I wrote a column a couple of weeks ago explaining why I'm one of them, I was stunned by how many people my words resonated with. The piece went viral, caught the attention of national figures, and even landed me (a relatively unknown commentator) a television interview on *TheBlaze* network with Dana Loesch.

This *#NeverTrump* movement (as it's being called) is very real, and it's hardening with each new Trump debacle (like the David Duke/KKK incident over the weekend). At this point, the movement is an anti-Trump protest, but if the GOP establishment adopts the same kind of hypocritical, incoherent shilling that we saw from Chris Christie on Sunday (his

interview with George Stephanopoulos was breathtakingly painful), it will morph into a significant departure of voters from the Republican Party.

Conversely, because the "Trump Train" has made it this far, largely un-vetted, unhindered, and steadily picking up media-driven passengers along the way, the GOP would most certainly lose a lot of Trump's supporters if they were to suddenly derail his nomination.

It's a total mess, no matter how you look at it. One thing's for sure: I wouldn't want to be Reince Priebus right now.