

The Trump Zone

Have you ever heard of something called “The Tyson Zone”?

It was a term coined by sportswriter Bill Simmons and used to describe what has been called “train-wreck” celebrities like the Kardashians or Lindsay Lohan or the inspiration for the term, Mike Tyson, the boxer who once, in the midst of a heavyweight championship fight, bit off a piece of his opponent’s ear.

Here’s a description I picked up from a blog called the Mormon Iconoclast: “It essentially described someone who has made such a public mess of his life that there’s almost literally nothing you wouldn’t believe if you heard it about them. Let’s suppose someone said to you, ‘hey, did you hear about Mike Tyson? He’s converted to Scientology?’ or ‘He’s having himself surgically turned into an iguana?’ Or “he’s become a cannibal.”

You’d just say, “Yeah, what else is new – that’s Mike.” He could do anything and you not only wouldn’t be shocked, you might just yawn.

Which brings us to the political version of The Tyson Zone: The Trump Zone.

Nothing Donald Trump says or does shocks us. Imagine if someone said, “Did you hear about Trump ... he just got into it with the pope.”

Is that any more shocking than if a year ago someone said, “Hey did you hear that Donald Trump is going to run for president?” Or if someone told you, “Donald Trump is moving to Saudi Arabia to open a bagel shop outside the Grand Mosque in Mecca.”

My response would be, “Yeah, so? What’s your point?”

But if a week or so ago you told me that Pope Francis was going to inject himself into the 2016 presidential campaign, I'd say, "You must be joking. Why would the pope do that?"

But on his flight home from Mexico to Rome, a reporter asked the pope about Trump and his promise to build a wall to keep illegal immigrants out of the United States. The pope replied: "A person who thinks only about building walls, wherever they may be, and not building bridges, is not Christian."

Trump who doesn't take criticism from anybody – including the leader of the Catholic Church – called the pope's comments "disgraceful."

But I wonder what the pope thinks about Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton. Are they Christians in his view? They support abortion, which is murder, a crime against the most innocent and helpless, as far as the Catholic Church is concerned.

Is building a wall to keep illegal immigrants out of your country worse than abortion?

I wish Donald Trump had made a point like that. Or one like this that one of my readers made in a comment that appears in full below: "So the Pope visits Cuba and hugs Castro a ... God hating atheist and Communist Dictator but says Donald Trump an American candidate for President of the United States of America isn't a Christian. Why does Pope Francis hug Castro and mug Trump?"

I understand that the pope is a man who cares deeply about the poor and the dispossessed. I understand that he was also sending a message, not just to Donald Trump but also to the leaders of Europe who are faced with a tidal wave of immigrants escaping the horrors of the Middle East. "Be humane," he is saying. "Take care of people who need your care." But he should have stopped short of declaring that people like Donald Trump are not Christians.

This won't hurt Trump in South Carolina, and not just because Catholics make up a small percentage of the population. But also because a pope who lives behind giant walls designed to keep unwelcome people out, shouldn't insinuate himself into American presidential politics. Most people, I think, understand that.