

The Donald Trump We Could Have Seen in Cleveland

There's nothing Donald Trump could do or say that would alienate his biggest fans. Nothing! He could be even more egotistical than he already is and it wouldn't hurt him, not even a little. He could stretch the truth more than he does and it would have no effect. He could, as he himself once said, shoot someone on Fifth Avenue in New York and he wouldn't lose any votes.

As for the GOP big shots, the Paul Ryans of the party, they're not going anywhere either. Once they made the decision to jump on the Trump Express they knew they couldn't get off until the last stop on November 9.

So here's what I'm wondering: Why would Donald Trump deliver the speech he did at the GOP convention? The one that even the Wall Street Journal said was "dark." "The outsider stuck to his dark, populist themes of an America under siege by crime, terrorism, corruption and illegal immigration," as the Journal put it.

That kind of talk got him where he is today, which is farther than the pundits thought he'd ever get. But now that the "Dark Knight" as the Journal dubbed him, is auditioning to a bigger, more diverse audience, why didn't he show America another Donald Trump – one who might have a better chance to pick up votes from people currently on the fence? Toning it down wouldn't have hurt him with his fans – but at the same time it might have widened his appeal beyond his so-called angry mostly white base.

Here are a few snippets of the speech he might have delivered:

"In the heat of battle I said a few things that upon reflection I wish I hadn't. Should I have said John McCain was

a hero only because he was captured? No. It was dumb.

Should I have mocked that disabled journalist or made that really dumb comment on Carly Fiorina's looks? No.

In the heat of battle, people say stupid things. I did. And I'm sorry I did.

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As for the other side: I think Democrats have good intentions. I think they want a lot of the things we Republicans want – less poverty, more success, less crime, less racial tension, more jobs, more new businesses. You get the idea. But here's where we differ: Good intentions aren't enough. Democrats have good intentions just as we have. But we have better ideas.

I'm a businessman. I've had my ups and I've had my downs. But I know how business works and that matters. With all due respect to my opponent, she's never had to meet a payroll. She and other liberals see government as the answer to a lot of things that government isn't good at. She means well. Yes you heard me: She ... means ... well. But meaning well isn't good enough.

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And if some of you out there watching on television think this is a cynical act, you're wrong. I'm not that good. The way I see it, we are the faces of tomorrow. They are the faces of yesterday. That doesn't make them bad people. They're not evil. They're just wrong about too many important things.

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The other night, my wife delivered a speech that unintentionally contained the words of another speaker. Tonight, I am going to do the same. As our first Republican president, Abraham Lincoln said: "With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives

us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds."

We are not emerging from a civil war. Thank God for that. But let's end what sometimes seems like non-stop political warfare. We've had enough of that.

That's what I want for America – A New Beginning. That's what WE want for America. Thank you all – my friends here in Cleveland ... and all of you at home: Democrats, Independents and Republicans.

Good bless you all ... and God bless America."

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I know, I know: I'm dreaming. Modesty and regret are not traits to be found in Mr. Trump's DNA. But even in a year when no one knows how anything is going to turn out, I'll bet a speech like that would have given Donald J. Trump a better chance of winning in November than he has now.