

June 22, 2015

Some of our favorites comment on Trump. Andrew Malcolm is first.

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Peter Wehner calls Trump a stain on the GOP.

... What, then, could possibly be the attraction of Trump to conservatives? For some, it seems, the attraction is found in the Trump style, which is precisely the concern. Mr. Trump's announcement speech was rambling, vague, shallow, simplistic, insulting, ad hominem, and self-obsessed. He has no governing agenda and no governing philosophy; all he has is an attitude. And that attitude is crude and off-putting. Trump would be temperamentally and intellectually unqualified to run for the state legislature; running for president is ludicrous. But that's where we are.

I'm not quite sure what the Republican Party and the conservative movement can do about Trump. If he polls well enough to be invited to participate in the debates, it's hard to keep him out. Doing so might become a rallying point for him and his supporters. But here's what I know they shouldn't do, which is to be sympathetic towards him and his candidacy. Nor should they speak as if Trump has something to useful and constructive to offer. To say, as Fox's Eric Bolling did, that Trump is "refreshing." He isn't.

Donald Trump is a stain on the Republican Party and conservatism, and leaders of the party shouldn't be afraid to say so.

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... Trump's policy agenda is too skeletal or absurd to analyze. He will pick better generals to defeat the Islamic State. He will slap a 25 percent tariff on Chinese goods. He will build a wall across the continent and make Mexico pay for it.

There is little chance that Trump will have much influence when votes are tallied — even the most celebrity-blinded Republican is unlikely to forget Trump’s political contributions to Harry Reid — but there is plenty of time for mischief between now and then. And the largest risk, in the end, is not to Republicanism but to populism.

Trump’s form of populism promises not reform but deliverance. The answer to every problem is a leader who can make deals, knock heads and get results. The defects of democracy, in this view, are remedied by the strongman. It is not a coincidence that Trump expresses admiration for Vladimir Putin. “He’s doing a great job,” says Trump, “in rebuilding the image of Russia and also rebuilding Russia, period.”

This is populism as Caesarism. The fact that Trump is laughable in the role of Caesar does not make the argument less pernicious. And it tells you a lot about the blind anger of the anti-establishment right that Rush Limbaugh is more favorable to Donald Trump than to Jeb Bush.

Jonathan Tobin says Trump means the GOP has joined the circus.

If you thought the 2016 Republican presidential race was going to be a sober affair, Donald Trump had other ideas. Trump jumped into the GOP race today with a long rant in which he boasted of his prowess as a negotiator and dismissed his competitors as a bunch of unintelligent losers who deserve to be thrown off a game show. It was a characteristically bizarre as well as an oddly compelling piece of political theater. But rather than attempting to analyze the laundry list of positions on the issues that he put forward in his speech, pundits would do better to ask whether Trump really intends to spend the next several months attempting to win the Republican nomination. If Trump is prepared to invest the time and the considerable personal wealth he has at his disposal in this enterprise, then the attitude toward his candidacy should not be limited to the mixture of dismay and mockery with which it was greeted by most of the press. A clownish, albeit opinionated celebrity, Trump doesn’t deserve serious consideration from the voters. But his presence will disrupt the race in ways that we can’t predict. Like it or not, if he meant what he said today, the Republican Party has just joined the Donald Trump circus.

Given Trump’s history as publicity hound rather than an actual office seeker, it’s entirely possible that this announcement was, like his past flirtations with presidential runs, merely a stunt that will soon be retracted. If so, the rest of the GOP field will breathe a sigh of relief. Though not even the least interesting or intelligent of the Republican presidential wannabes need fear a comparison with Trump as a potential commander-in-chief, they should all be worried about the way the developer/television personality has of sucking the oxygen out of a room. ...

Last, but not least, we have **Kevin Williamson** continuing his evisceration of the Donald.

... Trump brings out two of the Right’s worst tendencies: the inability to distinguish between entertainers and political leaders, and the habit of treating politics as an exercise in emotional vindication.

Whatever Trump’s appeal is to the Right’s populist elements, it isn’t policy. He is a tax-happy crony capitalist who is hostile to free trade but very enthusiastic about using state violence to

homejack private citizens — he backed the Kelo decision “100 percent” and has tried to use eminent domain in the service of his own empire of vulgarity — and generally has about as much command of the issues as the average sophomore at a not especially good college, which is what he was (sorry, Fordham) until his family connections got him into Penn.

If it's not the issues, it's certainly not the record of the man himself. Never mind that he's a crony capitalist, he's not even an especially good crony capitalist: The casino racket is protected from competition by a strict cartel-oriented licensing regime, but Trump, being the type of businessman who could bankrupt a mint, managed to be the biggest loser in Atlantic City, which is no small feat. He is a lifelong supporter of Democratic politicians, including Chuck Schumer and, awkwardly, the woman against whom he is pretending to run: Hillary Rodham Clinton. He is dishonest (“Oh, he lies a great deal,” said architect and collaborator Philip Johnson) and has shown himself to be a bad bet for bankers, business partners, and wives, among others.

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IBD

Donald Trump is laughable -- and dangerous

by Andrew Malcolm

Just as Rachel Dolezal believes she is a black woman, Donald Trump believes he is a legitimate presidential candidate.

Neither belief is accurate.

Trump's well-financed game of political pretend will get much undeserved media attention in coming weeks, just as showman P.T. Barnum's hoaxes did. But Trump's ruse is damaging, as intended.

Trump is in reality a stalking horse for Democrats, including the Clinton couple, who ruled the last time our nation endured a reality-show presidency. Trump has contributed countless thousands of dollars to re-elect and curry favor with the Clintons, their foundation and other Dems.

Hillary is his pal. So, suddenly he's Republican, which helps her, feeds his ego and hurts the GOP. Win-win-win for everyone on that side, especially Trump, who didn't acquire more than \$8 billion without playing the angles in every deal.

Business outsiders being urged to seek public office is an occasional outbreak in American politics. Henry Ford, Lee Iacocca. Electrical power executive Wendell Willkie actually won the Republican nomination in 1940. He earned more popular votes that year than any Republican ever before. But he got crushed under the wheelchair of FDR, 449 electoral votes to 82.

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But Trump says he wants to be commander-in-chief of the the most powerful nation on Earth to talk loudly and carry a big stick. That's a different tent entirely.

Trump's clear-cut, un-nuanced declarative sentences can sound enticing to a public starved for a real leader with vision: "I will be the greatest jobs president that God ever created."



Dress-up pals.

Especially after these past six-plus years of unfulfilled blather.

Like Carly Fiorina and Ben Carson, Trump must turn a minus to a plus; he's never been elected to public office. Obama promised to fix a dysfunctional Washington, as do most presidential candidates. None ever do. But inattentive American audiences fall for it every time.

The Trump Tower audience applauded Tuesday as the showman attempted a grand entrance, descending on a painfully slow escalator. We can only wish Trump soon falls for one of

Barnum's best scams. In his hyperbolic museum, eager patrons were urged to follow the sign: "This Way to the Egress."

Thinking it was another exotic exhibit, they soon found themselves instead dumped outside on the street.

Contentions

Donald Trump Is a Stain on the Republican Party

by Peter Wehner

The *Washington Post's* Michael Gerson has [an excellent column](#) eviscerating Donald Trump, who earlier this week announced he was running for the Republican presidential nomination. Mr. Gerson's column follows another insightful commentary, [this one](#) by our own Jonathan Tobin, who offers observations about what a Trump candidacy might mean for the Republican Party.

I, too, worry Trump's presence will damage the image of the Republican Party. I say that because Trump is a buffoon, a narcissist, and deeply unserious. Unfortunately his presence in the race – and especially on the debate stage, should he be invited to participate – will guarantee enormous attention. His idiocies have the potential to dominate the show, particularly since elements within the press will be eager to make him representative of the Republican Party. As Jonathan puts it, "The Todd Akin precedent here will apply in a way that it would not if Trump were merely a spectator to the presidential derby. If he's in it, each one of his statements will be brandished by the left as a club to beat all conservatives, even if most want nothing to do with him."

Which brings me to conservatives and Mr. Trump. In [a piece published on Thursday](#), I argued

For some on the right – not all by any means, but some —substance, philosophy and governing achievements don't matter all that much. What *does* matter to them is style – and the style they prefer is strident, angry, and apocalyptic.

This point helps explain the appeal Trump has to some on the right. After all, Trump is hardly a conservative on the issues. In the past he's advocated a single-payer health care system (which even ObamaCare didn't give us), called for massive tax increases, favored abortion rights, and revealed himself to be hyper-protectionist. Today he attacks those who want to reform Social Security and Medicare, the main threats to our fiscal future. He was a registered Democrat from 2001 to 2008. As of 2011, he had [given a majority of his \\$1.3 million political contributions to Democrats](#), including Harry Reid. If that wasn't enough, Trump has a fondness for conspiracy theories, from linking autism to vaccinations to being [America's most prominent birther](#).

What, then, could possibly be the attraction of Trump to conservatives? For some, it seems, the attraction is found in the Trump style, which is precisely the concern. Mr. Trump's announcement speech was rambling, vague, shallow, simplistic, insulting, *ad hominem*, and self-obsessed. He has no governing agenda and no governing philosophy; all he has is an attitude. And that attitude is crude and off-putting. Trump would be temperamentally and

intellectually unqualified to run for the state legislature; running for president is ludicrous. But that's where we are.

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Washington Post

[Donald Trump's politics by hammer](#)

by Michael Gerson

Donald Trump has already succeeded by provoking this column. Any form of public communication that puts "Donald Trump" within five words of "president" — which, darn, I just did — is a victory for the [reality TV star](#) turned [presidential aspirant](#).

But Trump, it is now clear, will not go away by being ignored. If polling support — really, at this point, vague impressions and name recognition — is the selection criterion for participation in Republican debates, Trump is likely to be part of them. This would not only foster a circus-like atmosphere but also would, by definition, exclude a more serious candidate. Imagine losing Ohio Gov. John Kasich, for example, to make a seat for Trump. It would seriously undermine the deliberations of the Republican Party in choosing its most visible leader.

But doesn't Trump deserve a chance to make his rambling, egomaniacal case? Some fraction of Republicans might be attracted to a populist, anti-establishment businessman, who, in private settings, is more serious than his cartoonish public image (it would be hard not to be). I have talked to Republican officials in early primary states who have enjoyed perfectly polite and rational calls and notes from Trump.

Yet the whole process of applying political scrutiny to Trump is difficult, given his aversion to systematic political thought. He communicates in a series of eruptions, gestures and tweets that generally assert the need for his own leadership while [dismissing rivals as fools and worse](#). He calls Jeb Bush's intelligence into question and ridicules Rick Perry for excessive sweating. He is [a Ted Cruz birther](#) and speculates that Hillary Clinton "[can't satisfy her husband](#)." His opponents are "losers" and "morally corrupt" and "[selling this country down the drain](#)." They are "clowns" and "[stupid](#) people" and often, by his account, physically ugly.

On the issues, we don't get arguments, we get impulses. "I've built a multibillion-dollar empire," he says, "[by using my intuition](#)." Like many public figures who refuse to use written speeches, he believes that everything crossing his mind is worthy of expression, without being edited or organized for the benefit of others. So we get a spew of Trump's gut feelings. They tend to be resentful of outsiders; immigrants are depicted as "[rapists](#)" and drug runners. They assume that

[Barack Obama](#) was the beneficiary of affirmative action. “How does a bad student go to Columbia and then to Harvard?... Let him show his records.”

But mostly Trump’s gut tells him (and thus, automatically, us) that political and scientific elites are evil and scheming, both composed of idiots and capable of sophisticated conspiracies. He has falsely and dangerously asserted a [connection between vaccines and autism](#), rooted in practices set by “pharmaceutical companies, because they probably make more money.” He has described a “[GLOBAL WARMING](#)” hoax of an extent so vast that it could only be revealed by capital letters. He famously asserted that public officials were engaged in a conspiracy to conceal the circumstances of Obama’s birth. And when one official tragically died, he pressed the claim to her grave. “How amazing,” [Trump tweeted](#), “the State Health Director who verified copies of Obama’s ‘birth certificate’ died in plane crash today. All others lived.”

Trump’s [policy agenda](#) is too skeletal or absurd to analyze. He will pick better generals to defeat the Islamic State. He will slap a 25 percent tariff on Chinese goods. He will build a wall across the continent and make Mexico pay for it.

There is little chance that Trump will have much influence when votes are tallied — even the most celebrity-blinded Republican is unlikely to forget Trump’s political contributions to [Harry Reid](#) — but there is plenty of time for mischief between now and then. And the largest risk, in the end, is not to Republicanism but to populism.

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Contentions

[The GOP Joins the Circus With Donald Trump](#)

by Jonathan S. Tobin

If you thought the 2016 Republican presidential race was going to be a sober affair, Donald Trump had other ideas. Trump jumped into the GOP race today with a long rant in which he boasted of his prowess as a negotiator and dismissed his competitors as a bunch of unintelligent losers who deserve to be thrown off a game show. It was a characteristically bizarre as well as an oddly compelling piece of political theater. But rather than attempting to analyze the laundry list of positions on the issues that he put forward in his speech, pundits would do better to ask whether Trump really intends to spend the next several months attempting to win the Republican nomination. If Trump is prepared to invest the time and the considerable personal wealth he has at his disposal in this enterprise, then the attitude toward his candidacy should not be limited to the mixture of dismay and mockery with which it was greeted by most of the press. A clownish, albeit opinionated celebrity, Trump doesn’t deserve serious consideration from the voters. But his presence will disrupt the race in ways that we

can't predict. Like it or not, if he meant what he said today, the Republican Party has just joined the Donald Trump circus.

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While every election can be counted on for a sideshow or two, Trump's entry is significant because of the likelihood that it would put him on the platform for the initial series of presidential debates. Even before he announced, [polls consistently showed](#) Trump getting enough support to land him in the top ten, the cutoff point for entry into the first debate hosted on Fox News.

One might hope that when placed alongside more qualified candidates, Trump will be exposed as a buffoon and quickly forgotten. Even when he's on the right side of an issue, his positions may be inconsistent, poorly thought out and come across like promotions for a reality show. But he's an experienced performer who has a knack for tossing out one-liners and quips that are easily remembered. That doesn't mean he can use the debates to actually give himself a chance to win. Voters aren't that dumb. But his very presence on the stage and his willingness to say outrageous things will, almost by definition, give him a disproportionate amount of the attention and news coverage that will result from the debates. That means that even though his effort will come across as an out-of-control ego trip, Trump will deprive some other candidates of the chance to shine and prove their worth.

In a race this crowded, that will be a crucial factor since virtually all of the more serious contenders know they must do well in the debates if they are to have a chance to win. That's a tall enough order even without the distraction that Trump will provide. This will not merely be a circus that could make it harder for one of the leading candidates to break out of the pack. It could also present difficulties for any of the less well known candidates to break into the top tier.

Part of the problem is that the mainstream media tends to judge all Republicans by the ravings of any one of them. It's a given that Trump's presence at the debates and on the stumps will be a standing distraction, as the media will inevitably be drawn to his gaffes and outrageous pronouncements and demand that his competitors respond. But he could wind up hurting all Republicans by saying dumb things that will tarnish them all if only by association. The Todd Akin precedent here will apply in a way that it would not if Trump were merely a spectator to the presidential derby. If he's in it, each one of his statements will be brandished by the left as a club to beat all conservatives, even if most want nothing to do with him.

This was already a race without a real frontrunner and more than a few possible winners and others with the ability to make a splash. But Trump's addition has the potential to change it in ways that we can't predict. No matter what he says or does, if he sticks with it, he will have an impact on the outcome and not one that most Republicans should be pleased with.

National Review

[The Art of the Con, by Donald Trump](#)

Showmanship isn't statesmanship.

by Kevin D. Williamson

Conservatives love a faction. Among my friends here at National Review, we have conservatarians (Charles C. W. Cooke), reform conservatives (Ramesh Ponnuru), the secular Right (Andrew Stuttaford), etc. The distinctive features of those camps are, respectively, being comfortable with gay marriage, favoring tax credits for children, and favoring tax credits for the children of gay marriages so long as the money doesn't end up in the offering plate.

The reaction to Donald Trump's announcement of his presidential campaign suggests that there is room for one more: Grow the Hell Up Conservatism.

Trump brings out two of the Right's worst tendencies: the inability to distinguish between entertainers and political leaders, and the habit of treating politics as an exercise in emotional vindication.

Whatever Trump's appeal is to the Right's populist elements, it isn't policy. He is a tax-happy crony capitalist who is hostile to free trade but very enthusiastic about using state violence to homejack private citizens — he backed the *Kelo* decision “100 percent” and has tried to use eminent domain in the service of his own empire of vulgarity — and generally has about as much command of the issues as the average sophomore at a not especially good college, which is what he was (sorry, Fordham) until his family connections got him into Penn.

If it's not the issues, it's certainly not the record of the man himself. Never mind that he's a crony capitalist, he's not even an especially *good* crony capitalist: The casino racket is protected from competition by a strict cartel-oriented licensing regime, but Trump, being the type of businessman who could bankrupt a mint, managed to be the biggest loser in Atlantic City, which is no small feat. He is a lifelong supporter of Democratic politicians, including Chuck Schumer and, awkwardly, the woman against whom he is pretending to run: Hillary Rodham Clinton. He is dishonest (“Oh, he lies a great deal,” said architect and collaborator Philip Johnson) and has shown himself to be a bad bet for bankers, business partners, and wives, among others.

“But he speaks his mind!” shout the Trumpkins. Indeed, he does, in a practically stream-of-consciousness fashion: His announcement speech was like *Finnegans Wake* as reimagined by an unlettered person with a short attention span. The value of speaking one's mind depends heavily on the mind in question, and Trump's is second-rate. “He's the candidate who will take the fight to Hillary!” protest the Trumpkins. Maybe, maybe not: He is on record as a supporter of Herself, and he's not on record as a presidential candidate, having not bothered to file the FEC paperwork making his candidacy official. “He'll build a wall on the border and make the Mexicans pay for it!” Unlikely, but even if he did, half of illegal immigrants arrive not on the banks of the Rio Grande but in the airports. Trumpkins: “He'll show the political elites who's boss!” They already know, because they already own him: You don't get into Trump's game without being a creature of the ruling class. Neither casino licenses nor Manhattan building permits find their way into the hands of the unconnected, in this case the heir to — not the creator of — a New York City real-estate empire.

Trump is a sort of action star for the sedentary, a boardroom gladiator, and that is what makes him so successful as a reality-television freak. One of the functions of popular entertainment is wish-fulfillment, a chance to imagine oneself in various satisfying situations, in this case

scenarios involving the exercise of executive power. That aspect of drama extends well beyond reality television: George Will once described football as “violence punctuated by committee meetings,” and that also is a pretty good description of *Sons of Anarchy*, with its endless boardroom drama and exhortations to “take this to a vote,” as well as practically every police procedural in the history of television. And with the understanding that the violence is merely rhetorical, it is a pretty good description of talk radio — the conference call as entertainment — and of the electoral process itself.

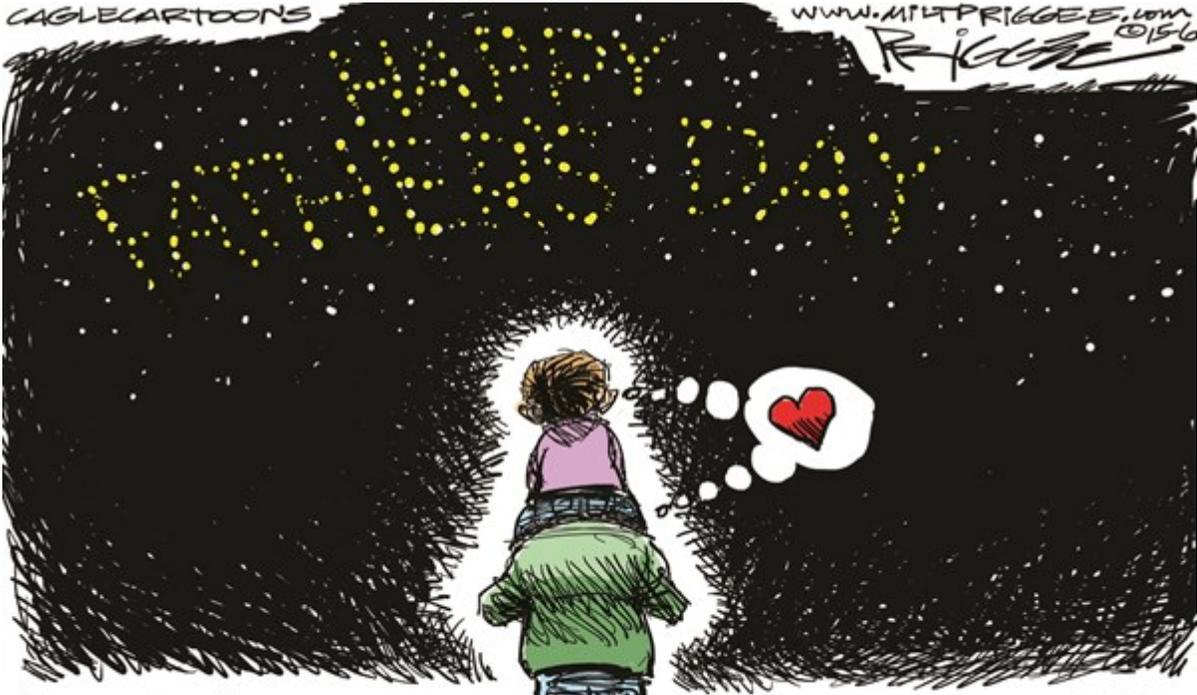
Trump may be made out of cookie dough — he has a lot more in common with Paris Hilton than with Henry Ford — but he plays an iron man on television, and a certain sort of man — forgive me for pointing this out — finds the theatrical preening of Trump’s alpha-male act erotically compelling. (Properly understood, *The Apprentice* and its ilk constitute a subgenre of pornography.) That is not entirely surprising: We live in an age of economic insecurity, and it is attractive to imagine having Trump’s wealth and confidence, even if neither of those rests on as sure a foundation as Trump would have us believe. It’s better to be the boss — to be the man who says, “You’re fired!” — than the man who has to go home emasculated and face his wife’s disappointment.

Trump’s performance-art character is butch in the sense that certain gay icons are butch — bikers, cowboys, and the rest of the Village People — and appealing to certain men for similar reasons, one of which is overcompensation for threats against their virility. That often descends into outright camp — who could have guessed that *Queer as Folk* would have provided Charlie Hunnam with only his second-most-homoerotic role? — and Trump’s race, if it actually happens, will be as campy a campaign as can be imagined.

Every age produces its reactionary fantasy: The overpowering domesticity of the 1950s, followed by the heaviness and drabness of the 1960s and 1970s, provoked American mass culture to a series of ever more frivolous and exotic retreats: Disneyland, Las Vegas, *Playboy*, *Star Trek*, *Deep Throat*. Trump’s act is a way of ritualizing certain insecurities — certain specifically male insecurities — in order to tame our terror of them.

But American culture is Janus-faced: In 1954, Marlon Brando’s leather motorcycle jacket became an icon of masculinity as Americans went gaga for *The Wild One*, and Liberace became the nation’s highest-paid entertainer, earning \$138,000 for a single performance at Madison Square Garden and negotiating a \$50,000-a-week residency at the Riviera. Liberace’s plumage was literal, and Trump’s is mainly rhetorical, but it is not coincidental that both men ended up with their names on buildings in Las Vegas.

There are important differences, too: Liberace was a conservative, and unlike some conservatives of our time, he understood the difference between showmanship and statesmanship.



'SON, BROTHER, FATHER AND FRIEND. THERE IS ROOM IN THE HEART FOR ALL THE AFFECTIONS, AS THERE IS ROOM IN HEAVEN FOR ALL THE STARS.' —VICTOR HUGO



Holbert
Boston
Heads
15

IT'S A GROUP OF PEOPLE
CELEBRATING DONALD TRUMP'S
ENTRANCE INTO THE
2016 RACE!

ULTRA-
CONSERVATIVES?

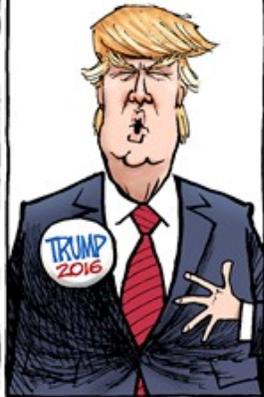
POLITICAL
CARTOONISTS



I IDENTIFY AS BLACK!



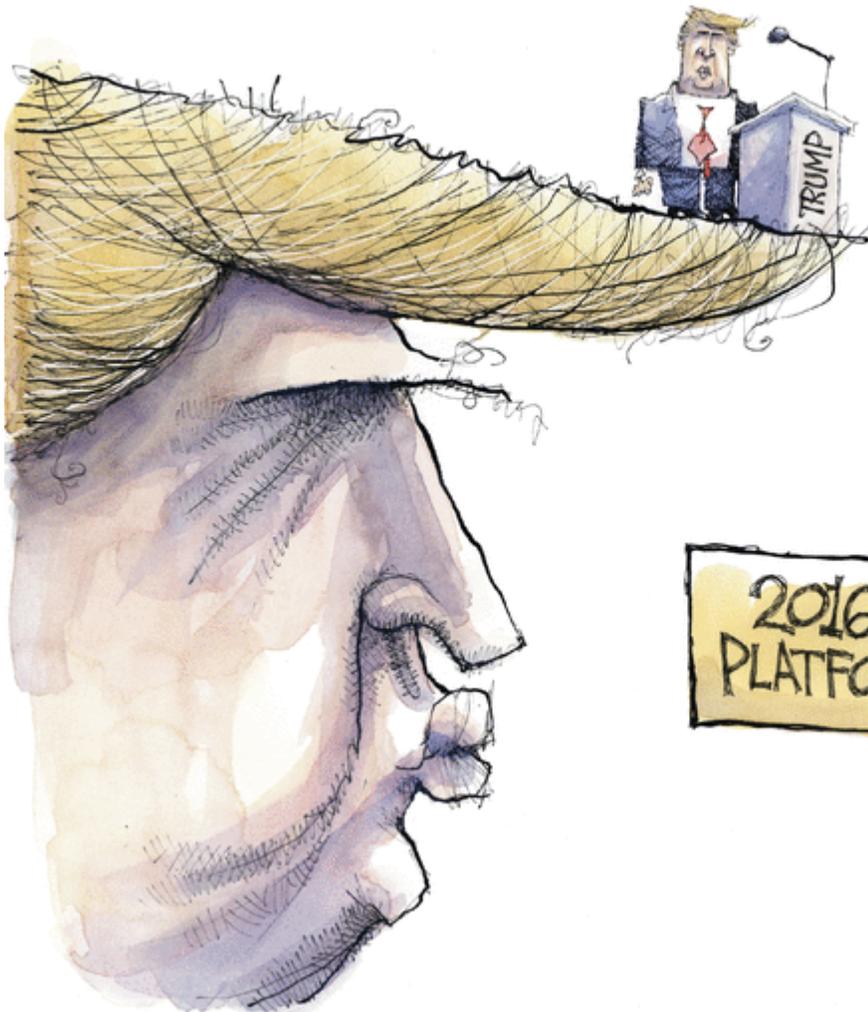
I IDENTIFY AS CREDIBLE!



I IDENTIFY AS TRUSTWORTHY!



I IDENTIFY AS CLETUS McDUGAL, 71, OF PATASKALA, OHIO!



2016 PLATFORM



