

August 27, 2015

Streetwise Professor says Trump is the "Leader of the Mercantilist Zombie Apocalypse."

Running the risk of serious brain damage, I watched Trump on O'Reilly last night. It was a cage match to determine the world champion of economic ignorance. I declare it a tie.

The "discussion" started out with China. O'Reilly asked Trump about China's alleged devaluation policy. Except O'Reilly couldn't pronounce "devalue": he kept saying "devaluate." But Trump took the bait and ranted (but I repeat myself) about how China has relentlessly devalued its currency over the years.

Except, of course, it hasn't. It devalued years ago, but since the financial crisis it has pegged the yuan to the dollar, and only recently made two small devaluations. ...

... Perhaps to give him more intellectual credit than he deserves, Trump is a died-in-the-wool mercantilist who believes trade is a zero sum game, and who favors protectionism and beggar-thy-neighbor currency policies. He talks like it is the late-80s, and Japan is still an economic juggernaut that will overwhelm the US, completely overlooking the fact that Japan's crypto-mercantilist policies gifted it a 25 year long lost decade, and that neo-mercantilist China is on the brink of the same fate. If it is lucky.

Adam Smith is spinning in his grave.

But alas, mercantilism is a like a zombie. It has no brain, and has proven impossible to kill. Which means, I guess, that in Donald Trump, it has found its perfect advocate.

Taking a more benign view of Trump, **Roger Simon** says the presidency is his to lose.

... He's unafraid. He's upbeat. He's funny. He despises political correctness (as anybody with half a brain does). He's so rich no one can buy him, has an absolutely drop-dead gorgeous wife the likes of which we have never seen as first lady (not even Jackie O, well maybe Dolly Madison) and most of all he really, truly loves America. Of course, compared to the incumbent, a dead centipede loves America, but you know what I mean. He's an all-American success story and that's what we need right now — a winner, even a braggart. He's also, as my wife Sheryl says, "bad medicine," just the kind of medicine we need in extreme times.

Now I could change my mind on a dime, as we all could, or indeed as I have, if other information comes to light or if Donald starts to act looney or, more precisely, excessively looney. But as of now, it would be dishonest not to say that not only he is the frontrunner, he is THE MAN. I can think of no greater antidote to Obama than a Trump presidency.

Well, yes, I can. It would be a Trump/Carson presidency. Watching Dennis Miller Wednesday night, I see he is on my wave length. He's talking about a Trump/Carson ticket too. And while we're at it, throw Carly Fiorina in as secretary of State or Treasury.

What Carly, Ben and Donald all have in common is obvious. It's why we like them. None of them are career politicians. Double bravo for that.

Kevin Williamson writes on what Trump gets wrong about trade.

... Trump fancies himself an ace negotiator, a skill that he has had some chance to hone in an embarrassing series of corporate bankruptcies, and he proposes to employ those skills to ensure trade that is “fair” by whatever ethical standards occur to this particular serial adulterer/crony capitalist/pathological liar/reality-television grotesque. While Trump himself is fundamentally unserious, the Right has witnessed a destructive reemergence of the old anti-trade populism articulated by Pat Buchanan and Ross Perot.

Perot was the Trump of the 1990s, a billionaire businessman with an absurdly high estimate of his own importance, though Perot at least had the distinction of having made his own fortune. It was Perot who famously warned of the “giant sucking sound” that would accompany U.S. capital shifting south if NAFTA were to pass. And as many election scholars figure it, it was also Perot who ensured the election of Bill Clinton, a previously obscure political figure if a gifted campaigner. Another billionaire megalomaniac ensuring the election of another Clinton would be almost pleasing in its symmetry if it weren’t for the fact that it would do tremendous damage to the country and the world. ...

Nate Silver says so far Trump's a perpetual attention machine.

... Is it sustainable? In the long run, probably not. There are lots of interesting candidates in the GOP field, whether you’re concerned with the horse race, their policy positions or simply just entertainment value. Sooner or later, the media will find another candidate’s story interesting. Cruz has a lot of upside potential in the troll department, for instance, along with better favorability ratings than Trump and a slightly more plausible chance of being the Republican nominee.

But there’s not a lot of hard campaign news to dissect in August. Fend off the occasional threat by throwing a stink bomb whenever another story risks upstaging you, and you can remain at the center of the conversation, and atop the polls, for weeks at a time.

Matthew Continetti writes on how the media use Trump.

... Why do the media love Trump so? Bombastic, direct, and occasionally hilarious, Trump has been grabbing headlines and performing on television for decades. He’s a master of the medium and generates ratings for viewer-starved cable networks: He’s not wrong when he says he’s responsible for the massive audience that watched the first GOP primary debate on Fox.

Trump also shares the same obsessions as the media, spouting off on the latest twist in the horse race, the newest polling, the cable-show back-and-forth, the dueling campaign strategies, all the minutiae of the electoral process that voters don’t care about and that have no bearing on governance, but dominate the airwaves nevertheless.

But there’s another—and more important—reason the press can’t stop talking about Donald Trump. He conforms to, he exuberantly personifies, he seems to go out of his way to prove

correct the worst media stereotypes of old pale cisgender plutocratic sexist nativist blowhard conservatives. (I should point out that these stereotypes are unfair. I, for instance, am only 34.)

The 69-year-old white male makes constant reference to his fortune. He brags about how he takes advantage of bankruptcy law and uses political donations to buy access to politicians. His most controversial statements on Mexicans and women seem tailor-made to alienate from the GOP the very demographic groups the Republican Party has been told it must win to capture the White House. His unfavorable ratings are sky-high—and he leads the polls for the Republican nomination. ...

John Podhoretz says Trump's appeal is that he is an obama for the right. That's great! Two ignorant president's in a row.

... So how is this happening? Many say it's because of his hard line on immigration. Trump believes this. Others, Bill Kristol in particular, have observed cleverly that Trump is the only unrestrained nationalist in the race.

I think there's something else at play here. Trump has basically declared himself the anti-Obama, an all-American (he still believes Obama was born in Kenya) who has built things and run things and hasn't just been an egghead and government guy.

In fact, what Trump is promising is simply a different form of Obamaism, and that is what perversely makes him attractive to so many people.

Obama's astonishing second-term efforts to do an end-run around the constitutional limits of the presidency have given Trump's approach peculiar resonance with certain conservatives.

They've watched in horrified amazement as Obama has single-handedly postponed parts of the Affordable Care Act; unilaterally installed people in federal jobs (at the National Labor Relations Board) that require congressional consent and announced in November 2014 that he'd cease enforcing certain immigration laws and effectively grant protection to 5 million so-called "dreamers" — when it is his constitutional obligation to enforce existing laws passed by Congress.

Trump is, in effect, promising to be a right-wing Obama, to run roughshod over the rules to fix things Obama and other politicians have broken. ...

Topping off our week, late night from **Andrew Malcolm**.

Conan: Scientists have grown a tiny human brain in a lab. And guess what— It's already announced support for Trump.

Conan: Hillary Clinton's new ad stresses her personal, humble economic background. In it, she says, "Just 15 years ago, my family and I were evicted from our house."

Meyers: Donald Trump says Jeb Bush is "totally out of touch on women's health issues." That's like Jared Fogle saying you're creepy.

Streetwise Professor

Donald Trump: Leader of the Mercantilist Zombie Apocalypse

by Craig Pirrong

Running the risk of serious brain damage, [I watched Trump on O'Reilly last night](#). It was a cage match to determine the world champion of economic ignorance. I declare it a tie.

The “discussion” started out with China. O'Reilly asked Trump about China's alleged devaluation policy. Except O'Reilly couldn't pronounce “devalue”: he kept saying “devalue.” But Trump took the bait and ranted (but I repeat myself) about how China has relentlessly devalued its currency over the years.

Except, of course, it hasn't. It devalued years ago, but since the financial crisis it has pegged the yuan to the dollar, and only recently made two small devaluations.

Indeed, the yuan has been appreciating in recent years. Since 2011 the yuan has risen from about 6.8 to the dollar to 6.2 to the dollar, before dropping to 6.4 to the dollar as a result of the devaluations. It is arguable whether the yuan is undervalued or overvalued as a result of the peg, but that's something completely different than devaluation. And it is just wrong to say, as Trump does, that China has been relentlessly devaluing its currency for years.

Further even if the Chinese have engaged in policies that keep their currency artificially low, the effect on the US is not unambiguously bad. Yes, some US industries and workers are harmed, but consumers overall would get a great boon, as we exchange overvalued paper for artificially cheap goods. It is not uniformly bad for US manufacturing either, as many of the “consumers” are manufacturers who can purchase cheaper inputs. This raises the derived demand for other inputs, including some labor.

The best part was where Trump repeated one of his common themes that American leadership is dumb (I don't disagree) but that Chinese leadership is really smart. But then he went on to screech that the Chinese have created a huge bubble that is imploding, and threatens to bring down the US economy with it. But, if the Chinese leadership is so damn smart, why would they create a huge bubble, and then be incapable of preventing its bursting? And if we live in a zero sum world where China's gain is America's loss, wouldn't a Chinese economic collapse be good for the US?

Another lowlight was the discussion of trade with Mexico, which is apparently also governed by those overqualified for Mensa. (Who knew?) He is furious at Nabisco for moving a plant from Chicago to Mexico. Presumably if elected president he will force the company to forego use of the “Ritz” brand (because that's the name on a fancy-schmancy American hotel!) and preclude them from selling Oreos with a cream center in the US. Nope, just two dry chocolate biscuits, unsweetened, held together with a nail. Ford also came in for a bashing for moving assembly to Mexico.

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Roger L. Simon

No More Politicians: The Presidency Is Trump's to Lose

We're still over five months from the Iowa caucuses and — astoundingly — it's increasingly looking like the 2016 presidential election, not just the nomination, is Donald Trump's to lose.

It's not only the polls, which are swinging his way. He has changed the nature of our electoral politics into a reality show with himself as star. Read his interview in Wednesday's [Hollywood Reporter](#) if you're looking for confirmation. Everybody else in both parties looks boring by comparison. We pretend to be interested in the others but Donald is all we really care about, even bourgeois liberal critics when they try to dismiss him. (The WaPo's [David Ignatius](#) is now likening Trump to Putin, as if Donald were about to invade the Crimea. Well, he might put a hotel there.)

Oh, sure, Bernie Sanders is drawing twenty or thirty thousand here and there, but this is a huge country and, as I can personally attest having been around in 1972, over two hundred thousand attended anti-war demonstrations with McGovern when he was running and he ended up winning exactly one state against Nixon.

As for Hillary, her big problems are legal, not electoral. And now, with the Benghazi emails beginning to [dribble out](#) and [Huma's cell phone gone missing](#), no one can even imagine where this will end, but we can assume nowhere good for her Chappaquaness. The Democrats would be complete idiots to run this woman for president. Still, as Abba Eban famously said about the Arabs, "[they] never miss an opportunity to miss an opportunity." So you never know.

Whatever the case, Trump's dominance has little to do with the old Tea Party vs. RINO thing. That's so 2014. Both Tea Partiers like Cruz and RINOs like Bush are being easily eclipsed by Trump. Indeed, if you examine Trump's record, he seems like something of a RINO himself, but again nobody cares. Inconsistencies that normally cause the far right to go ballistic just wash over Donald like yesterday's bodywash at Walgreen's.

This, by the way, is good. Bravo for people who change their minds. ("[A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little, etc.](#)") That no one finally knows exactly what Trump stands for is fine by me, even that he sometimes contradicts himself. I'm supposed to get upset about that — and I did originally — but I don't now. Like others, I want things to change — as many things as possible, almost everything, really — and Donald seems like the man with the courage and will to do it.

He's unafraid. He's upbeat. He's funny. He despises political correctness (as anybody with half a brain does). He's so rich no one can buy him, has an absolutely [drop-dead gorgeous wife](#) the likes of which we have never seen as first lady (not even Jackie O, well maybe Dolly Madison) and most of all he really, truly loves America. Of course, compared to the incumbent, a dead centipede loves America, but you know what I mean. He's an all-American success story and that's what we need right now — a winner, even a braggart. He's also, as my wife Sheryl says, "bad medicine," just the kind of medicine we need in extreme times.

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National Review

What Donald Trump Doesn't Know about U.S. Trade

by Kevin D. Williamson

A great deal of Donald Trump's silly and illiterate trade talk presupposes the gutting or repeal of NAFTA, the trade accord between the United States, Canada, and Mexico that went into effect in 1994, with his dreams of punitive sanctions and blockades. Indeed, NAFTA is a favorite whipping boy for populists Left and Right, a reminder that populist conservatives have much more in common with populist progressives such as Senator Bernie Sanders than they do with the political tendency that connects Adam Smith to F. A. Hayek and Ronald Reagan.

Trump fancies himself an ace negotiator, a skill that he has had some chance to hone in an embarrassing series of corporate bankruptcies, and he proposes to employ those skills to ensure trade that is "fair" by whatever ethical standards occur to this particular serial adulterer/crony capitalist/pathological liar/reality-television grotesque. While Trump himself is fundamentally unserious, the Right has witnessed a destructive reemergence of the old anti-trade populism articulated by Pat Buchanan and Ross Perot.



Perot was the Trump of the 1990s, a billionaire businessman with an absurdly high estimate of his own importance, though Perot at least had the distinction of having made his own fortune. It was Perot who famously warned of the “giant sucking sound” that would accompany U.S. capital shifting south if NAFTA were to pass. And as many election scholars figure it, it was also Perot who ensured the election of Bill Clinton, a previously obscure political figure if a gifted campaigner. Another billionaire megalomaniac ensuring the election of another Clinton would be almost pleasing in its symmetry if it weren’t for the fact that it would do tremendous damage to the country and the world.

Trade is one of those issues about which the strength of people’s opinions tends to be the converse of their level of knowledge. With that in mind, it is worth revisiting a few facts.

U.S. manufacturing has not been undermined by NAFTA. In real (inflation-adjusted) terms, U.S. manufacturing output today is about 68 percent higher than it was before NAFTA came into effect. Real manufacturing output today is nearly twice what it was in 1987, when NAFTA’s predecessor, the Canada–U.S. Free Trade Agreement, was negotiated. Manufacturing output per man-hour has skyrocketed as investments in information technology and automation pay off, which is the main reason a smaller share of the work force is employed in manufacturing even as output continues its steady climb. Fewer people work in our factories today because we’ve gotten better at running them.

The United States does run large trade deficits, though the cause and consequence of these is generally misunderstood. (Daniel Griswold’s 1998 analysis, though inevitably dated, remains an excellent primer.) For many years, nearly half of our trade deficit came from imports of a single product: oil, not Hondas or cheap flip-flops from China. Oil accounted for 40.5 percent of the trade deficit from 2000 to 2012. Thanks to fracking, the United States is today a very substantial

petroleum producer, but federal law prohibits most crude-oil exports. A recently negotiated swap of U.S. light crude for Mexican heavy crude required presidential dispensation, which gives an indication of how unfree that market is. What that means is that one-way trade in the commodity that has been an important driver of our trade deficit is not the result of protectionist policies abroad but of protectionist policies at home, a federal ban on oil exports enacted in 1975 to keep our precious fluids out of the hands of wily foreigners.

In fact, there isn't a great deal of evidence that trade restrictions enacted by foreign countries have a great deal of long-term effect on American producers. Annual U.S. exports have been setting new records for years, and did so again in 2014. The largest share of U.S. exports go to Canada and Mexico, respectively, with the third-largest market for U.S. exports being China. China consumes about twice as much in U.S. exports as does our next-largest overseas market, Japan, and far more than any other country down the list. The United States runs trade surpluses with relatively protectionist countries such as Brazil.

What drives bilateral trade deficits between the United States and other countries is not, for the most part, trade policy, but simple supply and demand. The United States exports a lot of farm commodities and industrial products, along with a great deal of very high-end goods. The effects of that are mainly psychological: We see a lot of goods on the shelves marked "Made in China" but few overseas goods marked "Made in the USA," because what the United States exports isn't consumer goods, for the most part. But you'll find American robotics in German automobile factories and American cotton in Vietnamese textile plants.

Because of our size (we sometimes forget that we're the third-most-populous country on Earth and account for 22 percent of the planet's economy), we tend to run relatively large trade deficits or surpluses as a share of trade with smaller countries, big deficits with Saudi Arabia, and big surpluses with the Netherlands. And we tend to do lots of business with our immediate neighbors and with other large and diverse economies. Among that group, we generally send more exports to richer countries and fewer exports to poorer countries, for the obvious reason that poor people are "undercapitalized" when it comes to buying \$50,000 Ford pickup trucks or Boeing jets. The poorer countries do buy a lot of U.S.-produced food: At \$152 billion a year, our annual farm exports slightly exceed our automobile imports. And about \$30 billion of those farm exports go to China; Beijing may try to game trading terms, but hungry people are hungry people.

For the same reason that the United States tends to excel in high-value exports, foreign companies have often found it amenable to make some high-end goods for the American market, and other markets, in the United States. That is not because we have protectionist policies encouraging that, but because it saves on shipping costs and because we have a highly skilled work force. There aren't any Chinese companies making \$1 plastic water-guns to sell at Wal-Mart in the United States, but Mercedes-Benz makes automobiles here and Leica makes high-end optics here (not the famous cameras, but rifle scopes — know your market!), and not because American labor is cheap. Indeed, the race-to-the-bottom analysis is deeply flawed; with the notable exception of China, where wages have steadily climbed but are relatively low, global investment tends to be concentrated on high-wage countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and the countries of Western Europe. The next time somebody tries to sell you a race-to-the-bottom story, ask why they don't make the BMW 7-Series in Haiti.

Conversely, because Ford sells the Focus all over the world (it sells twice as many in China as it does in the United States), it has made them in places as different as Michigan, Portugal, Germany, and the Philippines.

Mexico has made great strides in automobile manufacturing — but not because it has pursued a protectionist agenda. The opposite is the case: While the United States pursues the occasional free-trade deal in its sluggish and desultory fashion, Mexico has closed some 45 free-trade accords over the past few decades, which means that builders in [Mexico can export duty-free](#) to virtually any significant market in the world except China. Meanwhile, the United States languishes: By most estimates, the United States has a trade environment inferior to Sweden's, and it has a higher corporate tax rate than Sweden does, too.

[NAFTA has had a modest positive impact](#) on the United States economy: positive in that it has increased both output and employment in the United States, modest because there already was a great deal of North American trade absent NAFTA. The treaty is not without its defects. My colleague Jonah Goldberg has written that an ideal free-trade treaty would be one sentence long: "There shall be free trade between . . ." But NAFTA, like our other trade accords, is more Rube Goldberg than Jonah Goldberg, an overly complex piece of political machinery. But it has, despite its defects, lowered trade barriers, to the benefit of all three parties.

It is very likely that the Trans-Pacific Partnership, which gives so many of our talk-radio friends the willies, will do the same. Some conservatives despise TPP because of the fast-track trade-negotiation authority that has accompanied it — any delegation to the president is tantamount to treason in their view — while others, mainly on the left but some on the right, abominate its intellectual-property standards and other provisions. The analysis that sees TPP as giving the president leverage against Congress is so narrow as to be blind. The real advantage of negotiating a trade deal that requires consensus among such countries as Singapore and Australia is that these countries generally have economic policies that are superior to our own and better suited to the realities of 21st-century markets and economic conditions. Which is to say, it's an opportunity to leverage Tony Abbott and the ghost of Lee Kuan Yew against Barack Obama on the matter of free markets — a desirable situation for conservatives.

Don't expect to hear any of that from Donald Trump, who imagines that the global economy is a poker game and is transfixed by the phantasm of the inscrutable Oriental dealing from the bottom of the deck while the sneaky Latin sharpens his machete.

Five Thirty Eight

[Donald Trump Is Running A Perpetual Attention Machine](#)

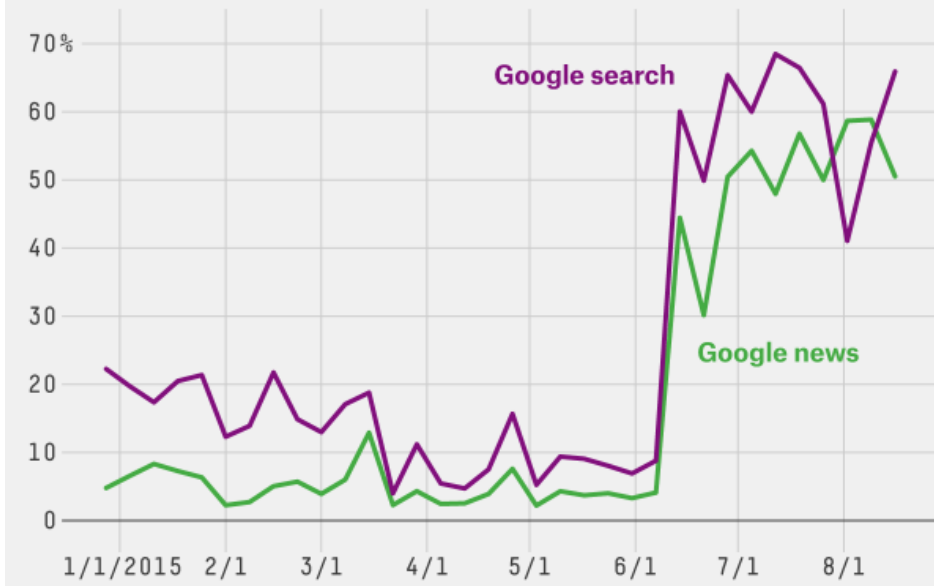
by Nate Silver

Earlier this month, I outlined Donald Trump's "[Six Stages of Doom](#)" — the hurdles he'll have to clear to win the Republican nomination. The first obstacle: Could Trump keep his polling numbers up when another storyline emerged that prevented him from monopolizing the news cycle? "For a variety of reasons, Trump isn't affected much by negative media coverage — it may even help him," I wrote. "But a lack of media coverage might be a different story."

It's too soon to say whether Trump has passed this first test. Partly because it's August — almost half a year before Iowa and New Hampshire and [way too early](#) to read much into the polls — but also because the Trump show hasn't stopped. He's dominating coverage as much as ever.

A Trumping To Remember

Share of hits for Donald Trump among all Republican candidates



FIVETHIRTYEIGHT

SOURCE: GOOGLE

The chart above shows the share of news coverage and Google search traffic that Trump has received among all Republican candidates. (See [here](#) for the methodology.) The share of news coverage devoted to Trump has been fairly steady over the past month. Steady and very high, at 50 percent to 60 percent of all coverage received by the GOP field. In other words, Trump is getting as much coverage as the rest of the Republican field combined. But Trump's Google search traffic is often just as high, or higher.

There's one anomaly, though, which is the week of Aug. 2. That was the week of the [first Republican debate](#), in Cleveland. That week, Trump received a comparatively low share of Google search traffic — “only” 41 percent. People weren't any less interested in Trump after the debate, but they were more interested than usual in some of the other Republican candidates, especially Ben Carson, Carly Fiorina, Ted Cruz, Marco Rubio and John Kasich, each of whom had among their best weeks of the year from a search traffic standpoint. So Trump's share of search traffic fell in proportion to the rest of the field. Media interest in Trump was as high as ever, however: He represented 59 percent of the press coverage that week. Since then, search traffic for Carson, Fiorina and Cruz is a bit higher than before the debate but has [reverted mostly back to the mean](#).

What's interesting is how Trump seemed to go out of his way after the debate to ensure that he'd remain the center of attention, with his [tirade](#) against Fox News anchor Megyn Kelly (a feud that he's since [resurrected](#)). That tended to drown out most of the coverage of whether, say, Fiorina or Kasich had gained momentum after the debate, perhaps preventing them from having the sort of feedback loop of favorable attention that can sometimes trigger surges in the polls.

I don't know whether this was a deliberate strategy on Trump's behalf. But if so, it's pretty brilliant. Trump is [perhaps the world's greatest troll](#), someone who is amazingly skilled at disrupting the conversation by any means necessary, including by drawing negative, tsk-tsking attention to himself. In the current, “free-for-all” phase of the campaign — when there are 17 candidates and you need only 20 percent or so of the vote to have the plurality in GOP polls — this may be a smart approach. If your [goal is to stay at the center of attention](#) rather than

necessarily to win the nomination, it's worth making one friend for every three enemies, provided that those friends tell some pollster that they'd hypothetically vote for you.

Is it sustainable? In the long run, probably not. There are lots of interesting candidates in the GOP field, whether you're concerned with the horse race, their policy positions or simply just entertainment value. Sooner or later, the media will find another candidate's story interesting. Cruz has a lot of [upside potential](#) in the troll department, for instance, along with better favorability ratings than Trump and a [slightly more plausible chance](#) of being the Republican nominee.

But there's not a lot of hard campaign news to dissect in August. Fend off the occasional threat by throwing a stink bomb whenever another story risks upstaging you, and you can remain at the center of the conversation, and atop the polls, for weeks at a time.

Commentary

[Making Use of Donald Trump](#)

by Matthew Continetti

Since launching his presidential campaign in June, Donald Trump has become the biggest—what seems like the only—political story in the country. Why? The media. They hold the billionaire television star to a different standard from that of other candidates, Democrat and Republican. It's a double standard that Trump exploits for personal gain and that the media exploit for ratings and political ammunition against Republicans.

Forget Barack Obama; Donald Trump is the one the media have been waiting for.

Trump is *sui generis*. Marco Rubio, Scott Walker, Bernie Sanders, even Hillary Clinton have to appear in person for television interviews. Not Trump, who recently answered questions over the phone on four different Sunday shows—treatment not even a sitting president could expect. The other candidates are judged, often harshly, by how they respond to questions of policy and demonstrate knowledge of domestic and world affairs. Trump has the ability to turn every encounter with the media into a colloquy on his favorite subject: himself.

Trump's media appearances are devoted to analyses of his latest verbal barrages against Mexicans, John McCain, Rosie O'Donnell, Megyn Kelly, and whomever he's attacking as you read this. The media are far more interested in Trump's response to another candidate's response to something Trump said than in, for example, his support for single-payer health care. He drowns out every other candidate, every other subject. As I write, the economy isn't the biggest issue of 2016. Trump is.

"Hillary Clinton is truly the luckiest person in America right now because of all this Trump noise," said Joe Scarborough in early August. There's no doubting the extent of Trump coverage: An analysis of 10 print and electronic publications conducted in July by *Time* magazine found that "Trump has been mentioned in more articles than all leading Republican presidential candidates except Bush."

That finding exaggerates Bush's prominence. Also in July, the AP reported, "Since the beginning of June, Donald Trump has received more coverage on the broadcast network evening newscasts than all of the candidates for president combined." Around the same time,

stat guru Nate Silver wrote, “Based on Google News, 46 percent of the media coverage of the GOP over the past month was directed toward Trump.” Bush came next, with 13 percent.

Why do the media love Trump so? Bombastic, direct, and occasionally hilarious, Trump has been grabbing headlines and performing on television for decades. He’s a master of the medium and generates ratings for viewer-starved cable networks: He’s not wrong when he says he’s responsible for the massive audience that watched the first GOP primary debate on Fox.

Trump also shares the same obsessions as the media, spouting off on the latest twist in the horse race, the newest polling, the cable-show back-and-forth, the dueling campaign strategies, all the minutiae of the electoral process that voters don’t care about and that have no bearing on governance, but dominate the airwaves nevertheless.

But there’s another—and more important—reason the press can’t stop talking about Donald Trump. He conforms to, he exuberantly personifies, he seems to go out of his way to prove correct the worst media stereotypes of old pale cisgender plutocratic sexist nativist blowhard conservatives. (I should point out that these stereotypes are unfair. I, for instance, am only 34.)

The 69-year-old white male makes constant reference to his fortune. He brags about how he takes advantage of bankruptcy law and uses political donations to buy access to politicians. His most controversial statements on Mexicans and women seem tailor-made to alienate from the GOP the very demographic groups the Republican Party has been told it must win to capture the White House. His unfavorable ratings are sky-high—and he leads the polls for the Republican nomination.

Indeed, if you were to conduct a search for the most off-putting Republican presidential candidate in the Milky Way Galaxy, you would probably choose a four-time-married narcissistic billionaire who spends his days insulting fellow Republicans and getting into high-profile fights with famous women.

Giddy is the only word that describes the media’s reaction after Trump accused Fox News anchor Megyn Kelly of being unfair to him at the GOP debate and began insulting her on television and online, saying, “You could see there was blood coming out of her eyes, blood coming out of her wherever.” The *New York Times*’s lead headline on Saturday, August 8: “Fear That Debate Could Hurt GOP in Women’s Eyes.” On Sunday, August 9: “A Word Too Far? ‘Blood’ Remark Tests the GOP.” On Monday, August 10, inside the A Section: “Remaining Defiant, Donald Trump Faces Backlash.”

NPR asked, “Should the Republican Party Worry About the Trump Phenomenon?” The *Washington Post* carried articles with headlines reading “5 Times Donald Trump Has Insulted Women” and “Trump’s History of Flippant Misogyny.” CNN.com asked, “Donald Trump Loves Women But Do They Love Him?” They don’t.

The overwhelming coverage blurs the line between Trump and the Republican Party. And this may be the point. Of course the media would rather be talking about Donald Trump and his daily insults than about Hillary Clinton’s email scandal or falling poll numbers, the consequences of the Iran deal, the class and racial divisions in the Democratic Party, or the agendas of Bush, Rubio, Walker, Chris Christie, and Ted Cruz.

Television anchors seem to design their lines of questioning to provide Trump as many opportunities as possible to stoke controversy and say something offensive to an individual or a minority group. Most of the questions are either about where Trump stands in the polls, what he

thinks of the other candidates, and whether he'll apologize for his latest rhetorical bomb. This allows him to mock and insult his competitors and prolong the latest controversy. Not only have Anderson Cooper and Chuck Todd asked Trump for his thoughts on Mexicans and women, they've also asked him about police killings of unarmed civilians and the Black Lives Matter movement. No doubt they expect—and hope—that Trump will say something racially insensitive.

It's as though Trump were a heat-seeking missile fueled by the media and aimed at Republican hopes of "rebranding" the party to appeal beyond its aging white constituency. And conservatives haven't been able to come up with a missile defense. So Trump gets attention, the media get ratings, and the Democrats get a victory. No wonder Bill Clinton encouraged Trump to play a more active role in the GOP.

NY Post

Donald Trump's appeal -- an Obama for the right

by John Podhoretz

Donald Trump keeps rolling along, with new polls (caveat: polls stink) showing him far ahead of the GOP pack in the early primary states of New Hampshire and South Carolina.

Not content with the evidence that he's connecting with voters, Trump has continued with his signature campaign approach — insulting people. In the past two days, he's taken to Twitter to trash-talk *bête noire* Megyn Kelly of Fox and Sen. Lindsey Graham, a fellow presidential candidate who poses absolutely no threat to him.

Trump's startling affect — half-borrowed from the World Wrestling Federation's scripted banter and half-stolen from shock-jock disc-jockeys — is a sea change from past elections.

Sure, they featured all kinds of ad hominem attacks jaw-dropping in their ugliness, but previous sophomoric assaults on media figures and other campaigns were the exclusive province of Red-Bull-chugging campaign spokeschildren who all sounded like they were on the verge of failing the eighth grade.

Trump has cut out the middleman. He is his own spokesman, his own opposition-research director and his own campaign hitman.

That's why he's so entertaining, and it's also why most political professionals have found themselves aghast and agog at his rise. Trump is breaking decades of hard-learned lessons about how to minimize risk and maximize effectiveness. He is playing the game in an entirely new way.

Candidates struggle to be consistent, or to explain their changes of opinion if they find themselves making those changes. Not Trump, who was able in less than one minute earlier this week to say he supports a flat tax — in which everyone in the country pays the same rate — and wants rich people to pay at a higher rate.

At any other time in American history, such an answer would make him a laughing-stock. Not Trump. He's laughing all the way to the polling bank.

So how is this happening? Many say it's because of his hard line on immigration. Trump believes this. Others, Bill Kristol in particular, have observed cleverly that Trump is the only unrestrained nationalist in the race.

I think there's something else at play here. Trump has basically declared himself the anti-Obama, an all-American (he still believes Obama was born in Kenya) who has built things and run things and hasn't just been an egghead and government guy.

In fact, what Trump is promising is simply a different form of Obamaism, and that is what perversely makes him attractive to so many people.

Obama's astonishing second-term efforts to do an end-run around the constitutional limits of the presidency have given Trump's approach peculiar resonance with certain conservatives.

They've watched in horrified amazement as Obama has single-handedly postponed parts of the Affordable Care Act; unilaterally installed people in federal jobs (at the National Labor Relations Board) that require congressional consent and announced in November 2014 that he'd cease enforcing certain immigration laws and effectively grant protection to 5 million so-called "dreamers" — when it is his constitutional obligation to enforce existing laws passed by Congress.

Trump is, in effect, promising to be a right-wing Obama, to run roughshod over the rules to fix things Obama and other politicians have broken.

It's easy to see why this is seductive.

Conservatives and others who dislike Obama see him acting with impunity. They believe the media cover for him. They think Republicans in Congress are too weak to challenge him. And so he gets whatever he wants.

They're largely right about the media, but they're wrong that he gets away with whatever he pleases.

His immigration scheme was basically thrown in a garbage can by a district judge in Texas only three months after his speech, and his appointments to the National Labor Relations Board were declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court.

Right-wing Obamaism is just as dangerous. The American system is designed to restrain our politicians, not to give them a free hand.

Trump is uninterested in such niceties, and he is canny enough to declare that anyone who disagrees with him is simply too weak or cowardly or too controlled by "political correctness" to see that his strongman tactics are the only way to fix what's broken.

But the answer to Obamaism isn't more Obamaism. The answer to a president who acts like a strongman isn't another strongman. The answer is to restore the proper balance to the American government.

IBD

Late Night Humor

by Andrew Malcolm

Conan: Scientists have grown a tiny human brain in a lab. And guess what— It's already announced support for Trump.

Conan: Hillary Clinton's new ad stresses her personal, humble economic background. In it, she says, "Just 15 years ago, my family and I were evicted from our house."

Meyers: Donald Trump says Jeb Bush is "totally out of touch on women's health issues." That's like Jared Fogle saying you're creepy.

Conan: Today was Bill Clinton's birthday. Hillary sent Bill an e-birthday card. Then, out of habit, she immediately deleted it.

Meyers: New CNN poll says Trump leads Clinton in Florida. That's really worrisome because if it can happen in Florida, it could happen in the U.S..

Meyers: According to a new list, Nashville is the friendliest city in America. While Philadelphia beat up the person putting together the list.

Meyers: Donald Trump gave a speech yesterday accusing Jeb Bush and Hillary Clinton of being under the control of lobbyists, special interests and deep-pocketed donors. Trump says we should vote for him because he's not under control at all.

Meyers: Despite no longer working for Trump, ex-campaign strategist Roger Stone said he still fully supports his former boss. At which point, Trump said, "OK, cut him down."

Conan: Donald Trump insists he's always had great, great relationships with women. Trump said, "I believe a woman can be anything she wants to be, whether that's Miss USA or Miss Universe."

Meyers: Bernie Sanders has passed Clinton in New Hampshire polls. It's the first time anyone's ever been passed by a guy in a Prius.

Conan: North Korea is creating its own time zone. Bad enough they're starving, ruled by an insane dictator, now they have to wait until 8 o'clock to watch "Wheel of Fortune."

Conan: Donald Trump arrived at the Iowa State Fair in a helicopter. Of course, nobody could hear the helicopter over Donald Trump.

Meyers: A winery in France is currently facing a rosé shortage. For those not familiar with these terms, a "winery" is a group of women who have run out of rosé.

Conan: Women in Saudi Arabia are able to vote now and decide whether to live in the 9th or 10th century.

Fallon: Reports that if Joe Biden runs for president, he would promise to serve for only one term. Because nothing says confidence like [promising your presidency would be over quickly.](#)

Conan: Google announced its restructuring under a new name "Alphabet." The company actually announced this a month ago on Google Plus. But no one noticed.

Meyers: Hillary Clinton disputes Trump's claim she attended his wedding because of his campaign donations. She attended because she thought, "It would be fun." Adding, "Am I saying that right? Fun?"

Conan: In some polls Hillary Clinton is only six points ahead of

.... Bernie Sanders. A very confident Hillary said, "Oh, please. Like I'm gonna lose the Democratic nomination to a left-wing senator nobody's ever heard of."

Fallon: Trump recently dropped nine points in a poll. Hearing that, he said, "No! Was it everything I said?"

Meyers: Donald Trump's new policy paper would deny automatic citizenship to children born here to foreign parents. Said Trump, "It's nothing personal, Sasha and Malia."

Conan: Despite all his sexist comments, a new poll finds 20% of GOP women support Trump. Asked why, they said, "He's paying us alimony."

Fallon: North Korea has declared its own time zone, "Pyongyang Time." Clocks are set back a half-hour. So if it's, say, 11:40 here in New York, in North Korea it's 1925.

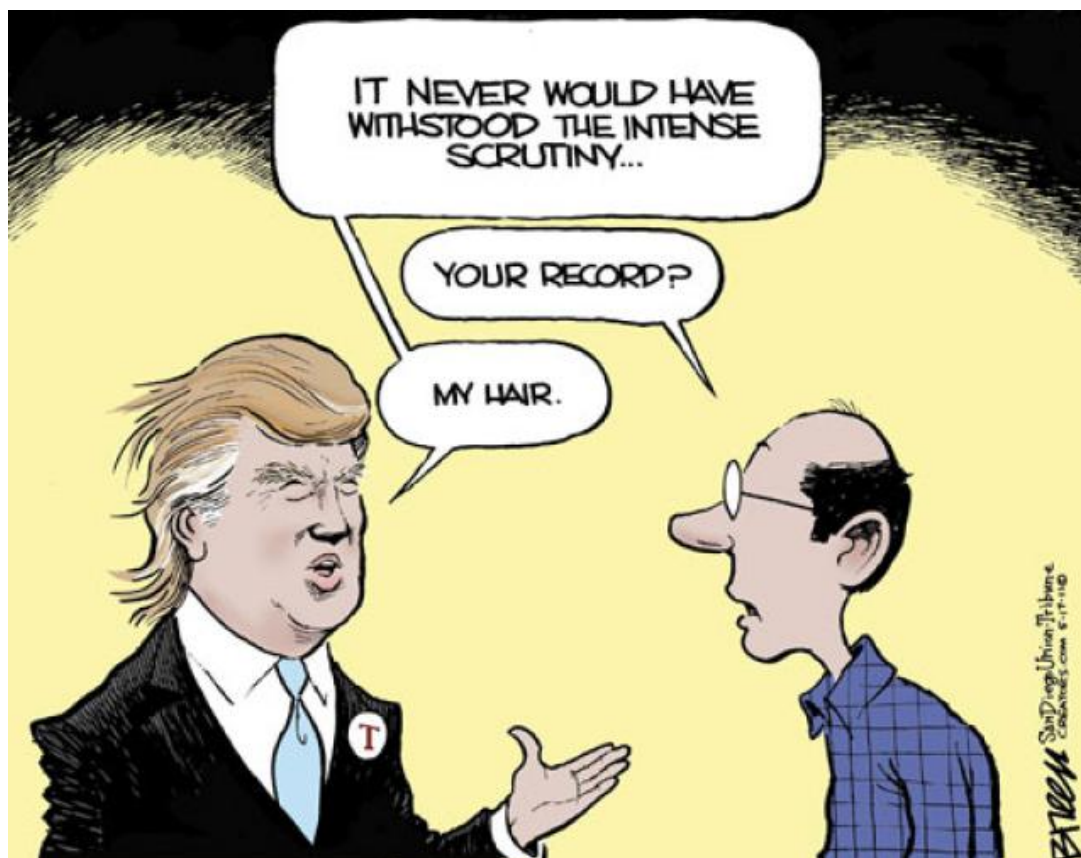
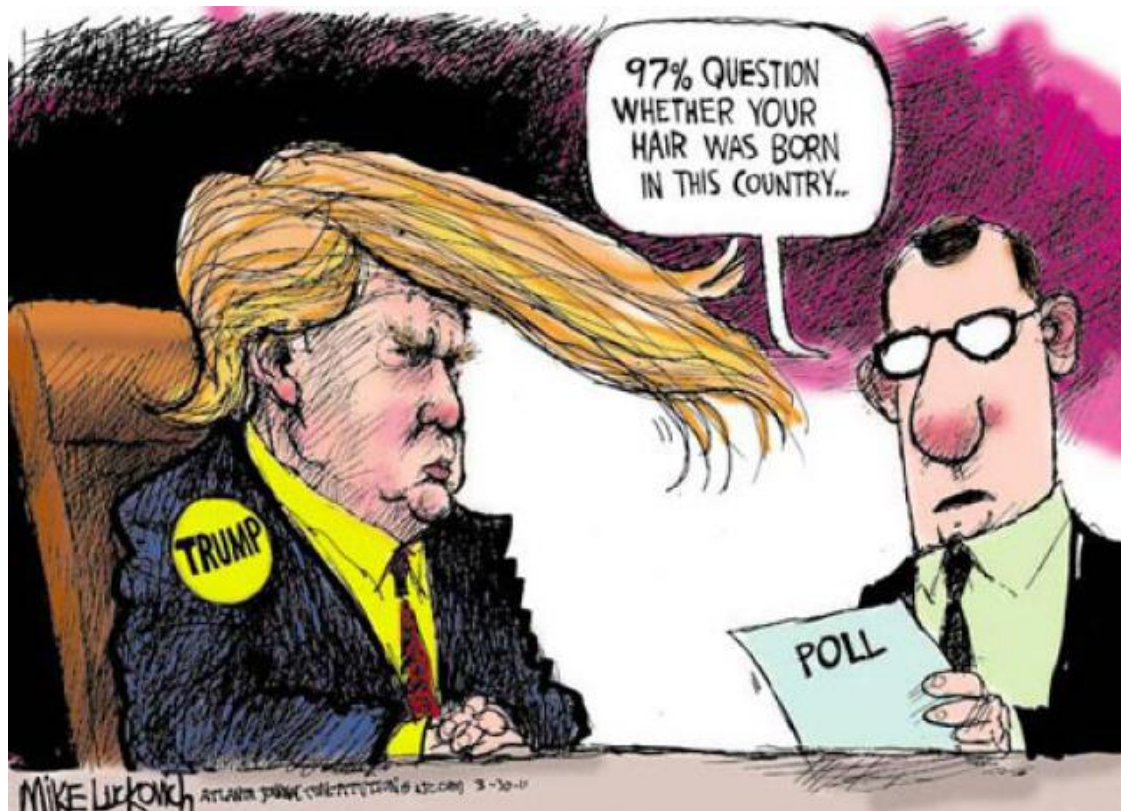
Conan: China's stock market crash cost its richest citizens millions. In a related story, Jackie Chan just signed on for "Rush Hours 5 through 10."

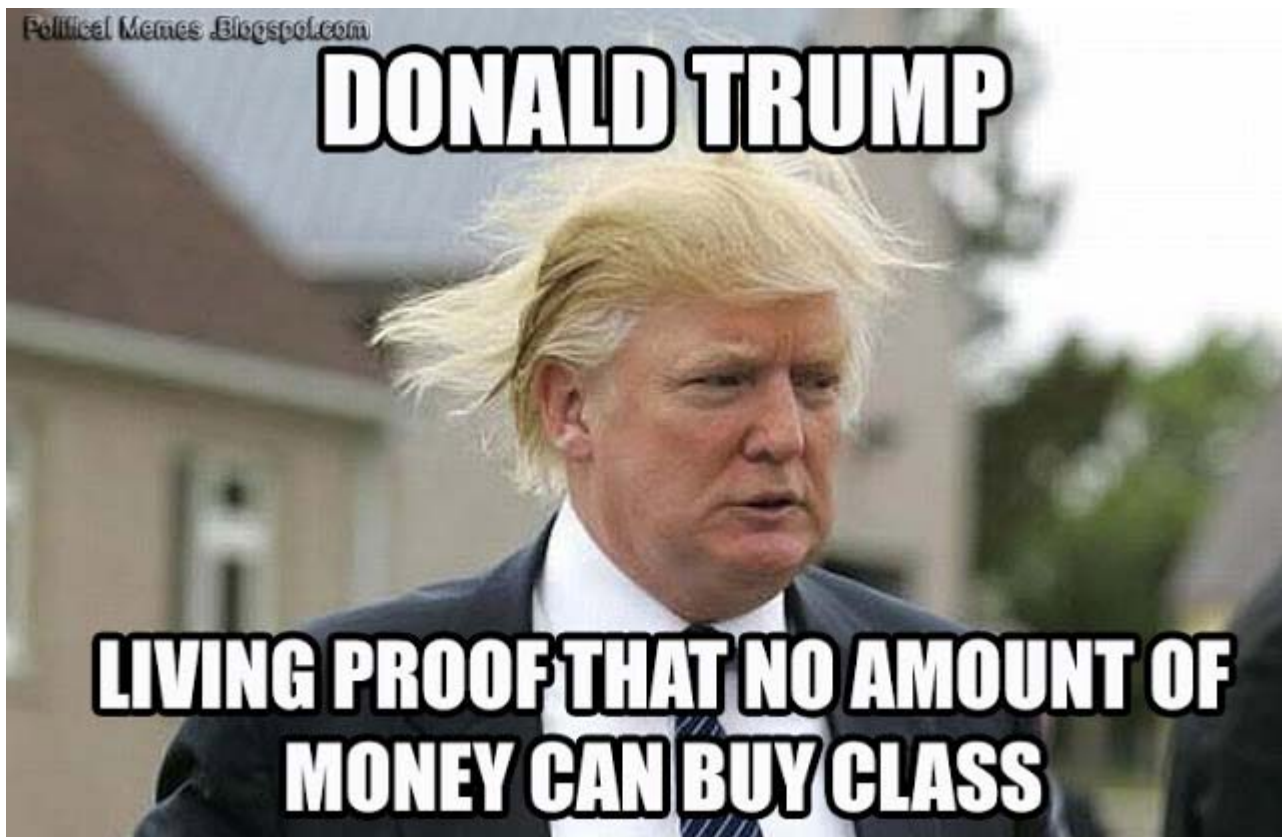




Lies & distortions.
Bluster & thunder.
All puff up the size
of a GOP wonder.

Until the gas bag
learns too late,
a sharp tongue that's
too crude
makes a blowhard
deflate.





THE WHITE HOUSE APPRENTICE

I'M
HIRED!



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