

September 15, 2015

Borrowing a phrase from Obama acolytes, Matt Continetti says it's time for Hillary to "wet the bed."

In early July, during another rough patch for Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign, Dan Pfeiffer took to CNN to reassure his party. Pfeiffer used to be President Obama's top communications aide. The title of his op-ed was "Stop the bed-wetting: Hillary Clinton's doing fine." Bed-wetting, Pfeiffer explained, "is a term of art in Obamaland." Ah, the president and his acolytes. Such sophisticates.

Clinton shouldn't panic, Pfeiffer argued, because she remains ahead in polling and in fundraising, because Bernie Sanders "is not Barack Obama," and because "Hillary Clinton circa 2015 is not Hillary Clinton circa 2008." Elections, after all, "are about fundamentals," and "the fundamentals point to a decisive if hard fought victory for Clinton." Of course, "A lot can change in the coming months."

No kidding. As we enter the fall campaign season, Pfeiffer's case seems laughably self-assured and unpersuasive. Now is precisely the time for Clinton and her team to wet the bed—indeed, they may already be doing so. ...

Dems are now the "no diversity party" according to Victor Davis Hanson.

In the jubilation of the Obama election victories of 2008 and 2012, the Left warned Republicans that the party of McCain and Romney was now "too old, too white, too male — and too few." Columnists between 2008 and 2012 ad nauseam berated Republicans on the grounds that their national candidates "no longer looked like America." The New York Times stable crowed that the Republicans of 2008 were "all white and nearly all male" — not too long before McCain chose Sarah Palin as his running-mate. In reaction to the defeats of McCain and Romney, Salon and Harper's ran stories on the "Grand Old White Party" and "Angry White Men." ...

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So we come to 2016, and the Democrats, of all people, are suddenly in danger of being the washer calling the dryer white. Who exactly are the serious and not so serious presidential candidates of each party?

On the Republican side, there is plenty of diversity as defined by liberals — Ben Carson, Carly Fiorina, Bobby Jindal, Ted Cruz, Marco Rubio.

And on the Democratic side? The only representative of "diversity" is Hillary Clinton, who counts by virtue of being female, but who is white and soon to be 68, a fixture on the national political scene for more than a quarter of a century. ...

John Fund thinks Trump's mouth will catch up to him before the Iowa caucus in February.

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Donald Trump has tested the media's limits of propriety for three decades, and he's usually succeeded in expanding them.

We will learn in the next four months just how far Trump can expand the equivalent political limits. As much as he may have mastered many of the lessons of the Robert Ringer classic Winning Through Intimidation, he might have forgotten a key one. "The secret to bluffing is knowing when not to bluff," Ringer told me. "Some people don't know when to stop, and they always regret it."

Sean Davis says Jerry Seinfeld knows how to handle someone like Donald Trump.

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This kind of behavior, and these kind of statements, are not the fruits of a healthy outlook on life. While many people regularly mock Trump for his outlandishness, I actually feel bad for him. I pity the desperate need for external affirmation through fame and wealth. As I wrote when Trump first announced his 2016 candidacy, I don't think Donald Trump needs a campaign; what he needs is a hug. I legitimately feel bad for the guy.

Which brings us to Jerry Seinfeld's advice for how to handle someone like Trump.

During a reddit AMA in 2014, comedian Jerry Seinfeld was asked how he handled hecklers who disrupted his sets. His answer provides a perfect blueprint on how Republican strategists, pundits, and presidential candidates should handle Donald Trump, who is basically a C-list comedy club heckler masquerading as a White House contender.

Here's what Jerry Seinfeld said: ...

Jim Geraghty spots the missing words in Trump speeches.

Did you ever think you would see the day when the GOP front-runner rarely uttered the words "freedom" and "liberty"?

Perhaps some Republicans can be accused of loving liberty and freedom too much — or at least using those words as rhetorical crutches. Donald Trump is not one of them. The current GOP presidential front-runner rarely uses the words “freedom” or “liberty” in his remarks at all.

Trump didn’t use the words “freedom” or “liberty” in his announcement speech. He didn’t use those words in his Nashville speech on August 29, or his Nashville rally on August 21, or his appearance at the Iowa State Fair on August 15, or his rally and news conference in New Hampshire on August 14, or his news conference in Birch Run, Mich., or his press conference in Laredo, Texas, on July 23.

He didn’t use those words while discussing his signing of the Republican National Committee’s pledge last Thursday, or in his contentious interview with Hugh Hewitt the same day.

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Free Beacon

[Time to Wet the Bed](#)

The Hillary campaign should start panicking

by Matthew Continetti

In early July, during another rough patch for Hillary Clinton’s presidential campaign, Dan Pfeiffer took to CNN to reassure his party. Pfeiffer used to be President Obama’s top communications aide. The title of his [op-ed](#) was “Stop the bed-wetting: Hillary Clinton’s doing fine.” Bed-wetting, Pfeiffer explained, “is a term of art in Obamaland.” Ah, the president and his acolytes. Such sophisticates.

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No kidding. As we enter the fall campaign season, Pfeiffer’s case seems laughably self-assured and unpersuasive. Now is precisely the time for Clinton and her team to wet the bed—indeed, they may [already](#) be doing so.

Polling? Recent surveys have Sanders beating Clinton not only [in New Hampshire](#), which borders his home state of Vermont, but [also in Iowa](#), where the *Daily Mail* notes that Clinton has [dropped](#) 12 points in just two months. Support for Clinton nationally has been on a [downward trajectory](#) ever since she launched her campaign in April. She spent \$2 million on television ads in [August](#)—and her numbers fell.

This week's [Monmouth poll](#) has Joe Biden, who hasn't decided to run, with the best positive rating of the Democratic candidates. He comes in second to Clinton in the horse race, with large numbers of Democrats saying they'd switch to him if he announces his campaign. "A Biden candidacy would be substantially worse for Clinton than Sanders," observes the [Washington Post](#).

As of August 1, Clinton had raised some \$68 million. Only Jeb Bush has more money. Sanders, with around \$15 million, lags far behind. But, NBC News [reports](#), many of the campaign bundlers who donated to Barack Obama in 2008 and 2012 haven't written checks this time around. And, [says](#) the *Wall Street Journal*, "a handful of Mrs. Clinton's backers said they are prepared to switch allegiances or to fund more than one Democratic candidate." Donors tend to go with the candidate they think will win.

But money isn't everything (or so I've been told). Even if Clinton stays ahead in the money race, she still will have to win over voters. And voters are not attracted to a candidate's total haul or burn rate, to the size of a Super PAC or to one's connections to billionaires. What pulls in voters are a candidate's attributes, his argument. These are things Clinton cannot find in [the Hamptons](#).

Bernie Sanders isn't Barack Obama, says Dan Pfeiffer. Of course he isn't. Neither is Hillary Clinton. "President Obama is a once-in-a-generation political talent," Pfeiffer adds, and with this I would, forlornly, have to agree.

Already one notices the differences between a presidential race that includes Barack Obama and one that does not. The almost religious fervor that greeted the president is gone, as is the uniform media enthusiasm and readiness to defend him against criticism, whether from Republicans or Democrats.

There is no one in 2016 with Obama's bearing and eloquence, his ability to embed himself in pop culture, his incredible good luck. No one feels as if he is part of a movement to bring "hope" and "change" to America. Nor do I expect throngs to fill a football stadium next summer in anticipation of a nomination speech—unless, perhaps, the man giving the speech is Donald Trump.

Pfeiffer is half-right when he says, "Hillary Clinton circa 2015 is not Hillary Clinton circa 2008." Of her differences as a candidate there can be no doubt. She's worse. Much worse. She is more removed from everyday life, more aloof, more entitled, more prone to verbal gaffes, more vulnerable on questions of ethics and integrity. She is out of practice, out of shape, out of alignment. She vacillates between aggression and apology, she panders, she is clumsy, she is besieged.

Hillary Clinton in 2008 was closer in time both to her last election in 2006 and to her last competitive election in 2000. She did not have the FBI "[A-Team](#)" in possession of her private email server, investigating whether it compromised national security. She did not have "senior intelligence officials" leaking to the *New York Times* that she had received "[highly classified information](#)" on the email account hosted by her private server. She did not have a judge ordering the State Department to release tranches of her emails every few months. Her political and personal future did not [depend](#) on the outcome of decisions made at FBI headquarters in Washington, DC.

I can't argue with the idea that elections are "about fundamentals." The fundamentals of the 2008 election were these: In the midst of financial collapse and unpopular war a savvy group of

political operatives guided a talented candidate to victory as the first African-American president. And the fundamentals of 2016 are these: In the midst of [bipartisan outrage](#) at the political establishment and an [overwhelming desire](#) for a change in the direction of the country, an increasingly unpopular candidate surrounded by yes-men and back-stabbers is hounded not only by an ongoing government investigation but by growing perceptions that she [cannot be trusted](#) and [does not care](#) about people. Don't worry, though—after 30 years in public life, she's [finally](#) going to show us her heart.

“The Clinton campaign has a new message for its supporters: No bed wetting,” Kristen Welker [reported](#) last month. “This is a familiar mantra we heard in the Obama campaign of 2008. Clinton officials say it applies now.”

It does not. The Clinton officials are wrong. If they aren't already panicking—Tuesday's “apology” for the email business is a sign that they might be—they really ought to start. New York is not Chicago, Robby Mook is not David Plouffe, John Podesta is not David Axelrod, and, sweet Jesus, Hillary Clinton is not Barack Obama. Put down the Hillary-branded [beet chips](#), Clinton supporters. And break out the rubber sheets.

National Review

[The Democrats: Too Old and Too White?](#)

Leftwingers' taunts in 2008 and 2012 have come back to haunt them.

by Victor Davis Hanson



In the jubilation of the Obama election victories of 2008 and 2012, the Left warned Republicans that the party of McCain and Romney was now “too old, too white, too male — and too few.”

Columnists between 2008 and 2012 ad nauseam berated Republicans on the grounds that their national candidates “no longer looked like America.” The *New York Times* stable crowed that the Republicans of 2008 were “all white and nearly all male” — not too long before McCain chose Sarah Palin as his running-mate. In reaction to the defeats of McCain and Romney, Salon and *Harper’s* ran stories on the “Grand Old White Party” and “Angry White Men.”

For Democratic progressives, Hawaiian Barack Obama could not be of mixed ancestry and decidedly middle class, but simply “black” or “African American” — as if he had shared the Jim Crow experience of Clarence Thomas. Nor was there any allowance that race itself had become hard to sort into neat categories in a nation of immigration, intermarriage, and assimilation, in which millions of Americans were one-half this and one-quarter that. Rachel Dolezal and Shaun King proved that well enough by successfully constructing themselves as white for quite a long time.

Liberals had reversed the vision of Martin Luther King Jr.: The color of our skin, *not* the content of our character, is what matters. Superficial appearance, the ossified politics of the tribe — the curse of the world outside the United States, where corpses have piled up in the Balkans, Rwanda, and Iraq — alone mattered. Identity politics dictated that a shrinking white insular conservative party lacked the Democrats’ “inclusiveness” and “commitment to diversity.” Icons like Barack Obama were what mattered.

So we come to 2016, and the Democrats, of all people, are suddenly in danger of being the washer calling the dryer white. Who exactly are the serious and not so serious presidential candidates of each party?

On the Republican side, there is plenty of diversity as defined by liberals — Ben Carson, Carly Fiorina, Bobby Jindal, Ted Cruz, Marco Rubio.

And on the Democratic side? The only representative of “diversity” is Hillary Clinton, who counts by virtue of being female, but who is white and soon to be 68, a fixture on the national political scene for more than a quarter of a century. Her claim on the nomination seems to be that it’s “her turn,” as if Democrats in the post-Obama era nominate their candidates on the basis of seniority and waiting patiently in line. Her status and connections are apparently seen as exempting her from the consequences of violating federal laws that apply to other public servants.

Her opponent is, in traditional liberal parlance, an old white guy and equally a political fixture, the 73-year-old socialist Bernie Sanders, independent senator from Vermont, who has been running for or holding some office for the last 40 years.

What happens if the Democrats cannot choose between an avowed socialist who is not registered in the party whose nomination he seeks, and Hillary Clinton, who has a felony-indictment sword of Damocles over her head?

It is said that perhaps Secretary of State John Kerry might run, a 71-year-old white guy who has done nothing but politics for the last 30-plus years. He followed Clinton as secretary of state, so why not also as presidential candidate? But if Kerry’s loss in the 2004 presidential race, or his ponderous and pontificating style, still grate on Democrats, there are plenty of other old white guys who could step up.

Al Gore is sometimes mentioned, a 67-year-old white male and former Washington insider. But if Gore's propensity for occasional hysterics and his multimillion-dollar green hypocrisies are a problem, the Democrats can turn to 72-year-old white guy Vice President Joe Biden. Biden has been a Washington fixer who has done nothing outside of politics for the last 40 years.

If Clinton, Sanders, Gore, and Biden are seen in liberal lingo as "too white and too old" — and if 77-year-old white guy Jerry Brown does not jump into the race, as is sometimes rumored — then the party can turn to one of two other white-guy candidates: 52-year old Martin O'Malley or 69-year-old Jim Webb. Or perhaps Al Sharpton could revive his presidential ambitions?

In fact, so far, the monotonous sameness of the serious and semi-serious Democratic contenders is multifaceted and eerie. Almost all come from the same narrow geographical corridor — Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, Vermont, Virginia, and Washington, D.C. Their motto in the 21st century seems to be "Stay east, old man." Maybe they are channeling the much-caricatured Founding Fathers, the old-white-guy elites from the Eastern Seaboard who governed a mostly white country.

So far, on the list of declared or likely Democratic candidates, there is not a Texan, Louisianan, or Californian among them.

The serious Democratic candidates are also all creatures of politics — no outlier brain surgeons, ophthalmologists, CEOs, or entrepreneurs among them.

Many also are presidential-candidate retreads. Gore failed to win the 2000 presidential election. Kerry failed to win the 2004 presidential election. Clinton and Biden both failed to capture the 2008 Democratic nomination. The liberal caricature of Romney in 2012 was that he was an old-white-guy has-been — yet again running for office.

But perhaps Democrats define true diversity by *both* race and class, as in the 2012 tarring of Romney as an out-of-touch 1-percenter, who hated the "47 percent" and did not deign to have coffee with his minority garbage man. Do we remember poor John McCain, who, liberal late-night-talk-show hosts joked, could not remember just how many houses he and his multimillionaire wife actually owned?

The Clinton team may be worth over \$200 million — a staggering figure for lifelong public servants. But they discovered a brilliant strategy for quid-pro-quo speaking and shakedown consulting — channeling pay-to-play donations through a foundation. The latter's major expense was jetting the pair around and paying their unemployed functionaries between election cycles.

Al Gore may be even wealthier. How does a lifelong politician become astronomically rich? In good Marcus Licinius Crassus style, he hyped the fires of climate change and then offered his own brand of fire-extinguishers to put them out: various green videos, speeches, learning packets, schoolbooks, etc. Gore, the advocate of eliminating the internal-combustion engine, made a killing by selling a bankrupt cable station to the carbon-rich and oil-exporting Qatar-owned Al Jazeera, which spews anti-Semitic hate over the air waves. Gore the tax-raiser, who sees more taxes on the wealthy as the fuel that runs necessary redistributionist big government, rushed to cement the Al Jazeera deal in time to beat anticipated Obama-administration hikes in capital-gains taxes.

There is no need to mention the lack of financial diversity of John Kerry. He was married once to a multimillionaire heiress, divorced her, and is now married to the billionaire widow of the late Republican senator John Heinz.

Bernie Sanders is a man of his word: His own relative financial modesty matches his equality-of-results rhetoric.

Is there any diversity to be found?

Isn't Hillary the feminist candidate — who, unlike vice-presidential candidate Sarah Palin, for liberals really counts as a female, because of her progressive credentials? Perhaps. But by the usual feminist definition of a properly liberated woman, Clinton is found wanting. Without her marriage to Bill Clinton, there would be no political career for Hillary Clinton. Early on, she hitched her star to the politically talented though often dissolute Bill Clinton. In good stand-by-your-man style, she dug in during his serial womanizing, impeachment, and lawsuits by aggrieved former female liaisons, many of whom, in speaking-truth-to-power fashion, claimed that Clinton's advances were forced and manipulative. For the 2016 race, such devotion apparently has finally paid off.

We live in strange times, with r-trilling local newswomen and the fake ethnic fides of the Ward Churchills, Elizabeth Warrens, Shaun Kings, and Rachel Dolezals, who claim fabricated minority identities for the sake of career advantage and leftwing politics — and in accord with the postmodern idea that we can construct ourselves into any gender or race we wish. Being “minority,” supposedly subject to long-held bias by white, privileged Americans, can mean being an impoverished illiterate newly arrived from Mexico, or it can mean being a third-generation Portuguese American, without fluency in any Latinate language and with no firsthand knowledge of the grandparents' homeland — or being a middle-class Hawaiian prep-schooler whose exotic nomenclature was reclaimed when it proved advantageous in adulthood.

Nevertheless, this is the bizarre world of identity politics that the progressive movement wanted. These are the rules that they imposed on the nation when a legion of Barack Obamas was announced as America's future and that of the pace-setting Democratic party. Thus, by their own illiberal standards, they stand convicted of illiberality.

For the present gang of 2016 Democratic presidential hopefuls, leftwing politics demands no penance for being “too old and too white.”

Jewish World Review

[Trump: The Art of the Bluff](#)

by John Fund

“I don't like to analyze myself because I might not like what I see.”

— Donald Trump, in an interview for [Never Enough: Donald Trump and the Pursuit of Success](#), by business journalist Michael D'Antonio.

“Trump was willing to say and do almost anything to satisfy his craving for attention. But he also possessed a sixth sense that kept him from going too far.”

— D'Antonio's conclusion to the book.

One often-underappreciated virtue of U.S. presidential campaigns is that their extreme length makes it very difficult to conceal what makes a candidate tick. (Barack Obama in 2008 was an exception, and he had help from an actively complicit media.)

This reality is finally catching up to Donald Trump.

As good as his “sixth sense” may be, Trump seems unlikely to avoid “going too far” in the long four-month stretch between now and the Iowa caucuses in February.

On Wednesday night, it came to light that Trump had made fun of rival candidate Carly Fiorina’s looks to a *Rolling Stone* reporter. “Look at that face,” he was overheard to say. “Would anyone vote for that? Can you imagine that, the face of our next president?” Trump now claims he wasn’t talking about Fiorina’s appearance, but her “persona.”

Before the news of his Fiorina remark broke, Trump spoke at an afternoon rally protesting President Obama’s nuclear deal with Iran, and blasted Obama for failing to secure the release of four Americans jailed in the Islamic Republic. Then he misapplied a lesson from history: “If I win the presidency, I guarantee you that those four prisoners are back in our country before I ever take office. I guarantee that. They will be back before I ever take office, because [the Iranians] know what has to happen, okay?”

Trump no doubt remembers that Iran released the hostages it had held for 444 days at the U.S. Embassy in Tehran on the day Ronald Reagan was sworn in for his first term as president. But foreign policy experts I’ve spoken to say that for Trump to “guarantee” a similar outcome for the four Americans imprisoned there today will likely lead to one of two disappointing outcomes: a) the Iranians stubbornly refuse to lose face by appearing to knuckle under to Trump; or b) Trump will feel pressure to use military force against Iran after he is sworn in so *he* won’t lose face.

“Reagan was careful not to comment on the hostages before he became president,” Martin Anderson, his late policy advisor, once told me. “That allowed him to exploit a vacuum and helped bring them home.”

In addition to the nationalistic fervor he can’t help whipping up, much of Trump’s support is predicated on his self-proclaimed genius in business deals. But *National Journal* reported this week that his business instincts are greatly exaggerated:

"If he'd invested the \$200 million that Forbes magazine determined he was worth in 1982 into (a mutual fund of S&P 500 stocks), it would have grown to more than \$8 billion today. . . . That a purely unmanaged index fund's return could outperform Trump's hands-on wheeling and dealing call into question one of Trump's chief selling points on the campaign trail: his business acumen."

Then there is the matter of Trump’s net worth itself. In June, Trump announced his presidential bid brandishing a document that claimed he was worth more than \$8.7 billion. By August, when he filed reports with the Federal Election Commission, the number had ballooned to \$10 billion.

#share#The game of hide-and-seek Trump plays with his “billions” was described by Tim O’Brien, a former *New York Times* reporter, in his 2005 book *TrumpNation*. The book quoted sources close to Trump as claiming he “was not remotely close to being a billionaire.” Trump promptly sued O’Brien for \$5 billion in damages.

During the resultant litigation, O'Brien's lawyers deposed Trump for two days in 2007. "Among the documents discussed was a Deutsche Bank assessment that pegged Donald's net worth at \$788 million in 2005," O'Brien recalled in a *Bloomberg View* article this past July. "At the time, Donald was telling his bankers and casino regulators that he was worth \$3.6 billion; he was telling me he was worth \$5 billion to \$6 billion."

When Trump was asked about the wide discrepancy between his claimed net worth and the various independent estimates of his wealth, he revealed how his mind works. As D'Antonio reports in the excellent new *Never Enough*, "[Trump] explained the wide swings as a function of market conditions, and his own sense of the value of his name. This brand valuation — [Trump] estimated it was worth \$6 billion." Trump said in the deposition that the value of his brand "goes up and down with markets and with attitudes and with feelings, even my own feelings." He then added some thoughts about his net worth:

"[Wealth] can change when somebody writes a vicious article like O'Brien. I mean, I didn't feel so great about myself when I read that article. I would have said that — after reading that article I would have said that this psychologically hurt me."

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The Federalist

[Jerry Seinfeld Explains The Perfect Way To Handle Donald Trump](#)

Donald Trump doesn't deserve to be attacked. He deserves to be pitied.

by Sean Davis

Donald Trump, in case you haven't noticed, loves to say ridiculous things. Saying ridiculous things is the secret to his media success. He got famous, after all, by humiliating and firing people on national television.

Trump's 2016 presidential campaign has been no different. Earlier this week, he decided to [attack Carly Fiorina's personal appearance](#) during an interview with *Rolling Stone*:

When the anchor throws to Carly Fiorina for her reaction to Trump's momentum, Trump's expression sours in schoolboy disgust as the camera bores in on Fiorina. "Look at that face!" he

cries. “Would anyone vote for that? Can you imagine that, the face of our next president?!” The laughter grows halting and faint behind him. “I mean, she’s a woman, and I’m not s’posedta say bad things, but really, folks, come on. Are we serious?”

It’s not unusual for Trump to attack the looks of women he wishes to demean. When he wants to put a man in his place, he focuses on the man’s bank account. In 2011, he insulted Mitt Romney, of all people, by noting that Mitt Romney was basically a poor person compared to Trump.

“I mean my net worth is many, many, many times Mitt Romney,” Trump [said](#).

By many indications, Donald Trump appears to believe a man’s worth as a human being is based solely on his monetary wealth, while a woman’s worth is based on her looks. After all, this is a man who complimented his own daughter by saying [he would probably date her](#) if she weren’t his daughter, on account of her “very nice figure.”

This kind of behavior, and these kind of statements, are not the fruits of a healthy outlook on life. While many people regularly mock Trump for his outlandishness, I actually feel bad for him. I pity the desperate need for external affirmation through fame and wealth. As I wrote when Trump [first announced his 2016 candidacy](#), I don’t think Donald Trump needs a campaign; what he needs is [a hug](#). I legitimately feel bad for the guy.

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Here’s what [Jerry Seinfeld said](#):

Very early on in my career, I hit upon this idea of being the Heckle Therapist. So that when people would say something nasty, I would immediately become very sympathetic to them and try to help them with their problem and try to work out what was upsetting them, and try to be very understanding with their anger. It opened up this whole fun avenue for me as a comedian, and no one had ever seen that before. Some of my comedian friends used to call me – what did they say? – that I would counsel the heckler instead of fighting them. Instead of fighting them, I would say “You seem so upset, and I know that’s not what you wanted to have happen tonight. Let’s talk about your problem” and the audience would find it funny and it would really discombobulate the heckler too, because I wouldn’t go against them, I would take their side.

Republican skeptics of Trump shouldn’t become outraged every time Trump says something absurd or ridiculous. They should be sympathetic. Republican candidates on the debate stage with Trump shouldn’t attack him, they should feel empathy for him.

Don’t ridicule Trump for the kind of behavior that would never be tolerated from toddlers, let alone fully grown adults. Instead, engage him and ask him why he thinks a rich, powerful, famous man like himself feels the need to belittle the looks of a cancer survivor.

As Seinfeld noted, the key to disarming an angry, insecure heckler who’s desperate for attention isn’t a quick, witty response. It’s pity.

National Review

The Words Trump Doesn't Use

by Jim Geraghty

Did you ever think you would see the day when the GOP front-runner rarely uttered the words “freedom” and “liberty”?

Perhaps some Republicans can be accused of loving liberty and freedom too much — or at least using those words as rhetorical crutches. Donald Trump is not one of them. The current GOP presidential front-runner rarely uses the words “freedom” or “liberty” in his remarks at all.

Trump didn't use the words “freedom” or “liberty” in his announcement speech. He didn't use those words in his Nashville speech on August 29, or his Nashville rally on August 21, or his appearance at the Iowa State Fair on August 15, or his rally and news conference in New Hampshire on August 14, or his news conference in Birch Run, Mich., or his press conference in Laredo, Texas, on July 23.

He didn't use those words while discussing his signing of the Republican National Committee's pledge last Thursday, or in his contentious interview with Hugh Hewitt the same day.

Trump did use the term “free-market” once during his Meet the Press interview with Chuck Todd, in a defense of his qualified support for affirmative action: “Well, you know, you have to also go free market. You have to go capability. You have to do a lot of things. But I'm fine with affirmative action.” The word “liberty” didn't even come up.

This is an unusual vocabulary for a Republican front-runner. It wasn't that long ago that grass-roots conservatives showed up at Tea Party rallies with signs reading, “Liberty: All the Stimulus We Need.” The Tea Party named itself after an event organized by the Sons of Liberty. The GOP platform declares the party was “born in opposition to the denial of liberty.”

Some of Trump's Republican presidential rivals use words like “freedom” and “liberty” more frequently than commas. When CNBC's John Harwood asked Scott Walker about his health-care plan, the Wisconsin governor used the word “freedom” six times in a 179-word answer. In his campaign-announcement speech, Ted Cruz used the word “freedom” twice, and not counting references to Liberty University, which hosted the event, he used the word “liberty” eleven times.

#share# Trump's lexicon is another indicator of the dramatic shift he would represent in moving the Republican party from a libertarian-leaning one to a populist one. During the Obama era, self-identified libertarians have asked whether the Tea Party and the GOP are truly dedicated to liberty and individual rights, or if their real objection to big government is that it's controlled by Democrats. The embrace of Trump suggests their skepticism was well-founded.

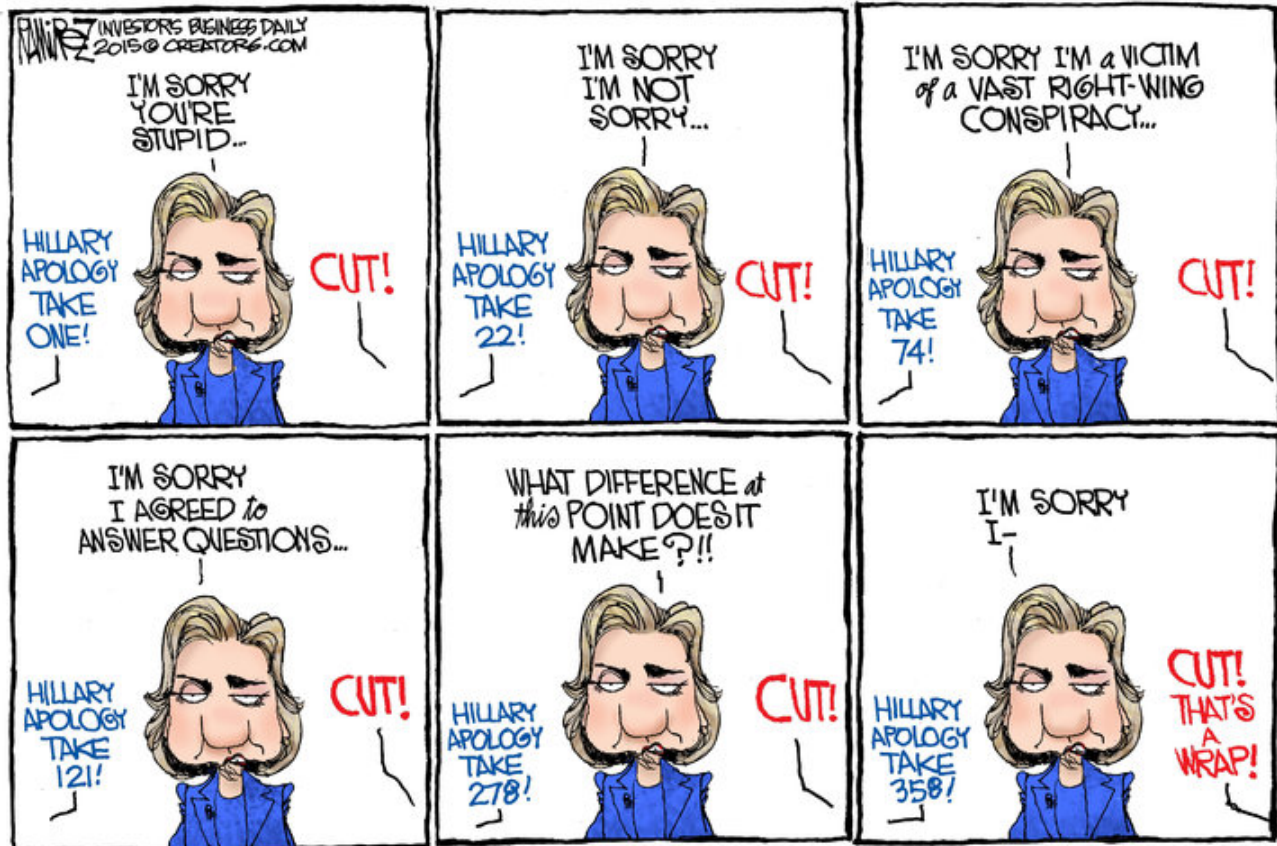
It's no accident that Trump has been labeled a populist by outlets across the political spectrum, from The American Interest to NPR. His speeches and off-the-cuff remarks make clear that he doesn't see the world through the lens of free and unfree; he sees it through the lens of strength and weakness:

For me, conservatism as it pertains to our country is fiscal. We have to be strong and secure and get rid of our debt. The military has to be powerful and not necessarily used but very powerful. I am on the sort of a little bit social side of conservative when it comes — I want people to be taken care of from a health-care standpoint. But to do that, we have to be strong. I want to save Social Security without cuts. I want a strong country. And to me, conservative means a strong country with very little debt.

The man whose slogan is “Make America Great Again” doesn’t seem particularly worried about a Leviathan state infringing upon its citizens’ liberties. He sees a disordered society whose people are threatened by violent criminals coming across the border, undermined by poor negotiation in foreign-trade and security agreements, and asked by free-riding allies to shoulder way too much of the burden in a dangerous world.

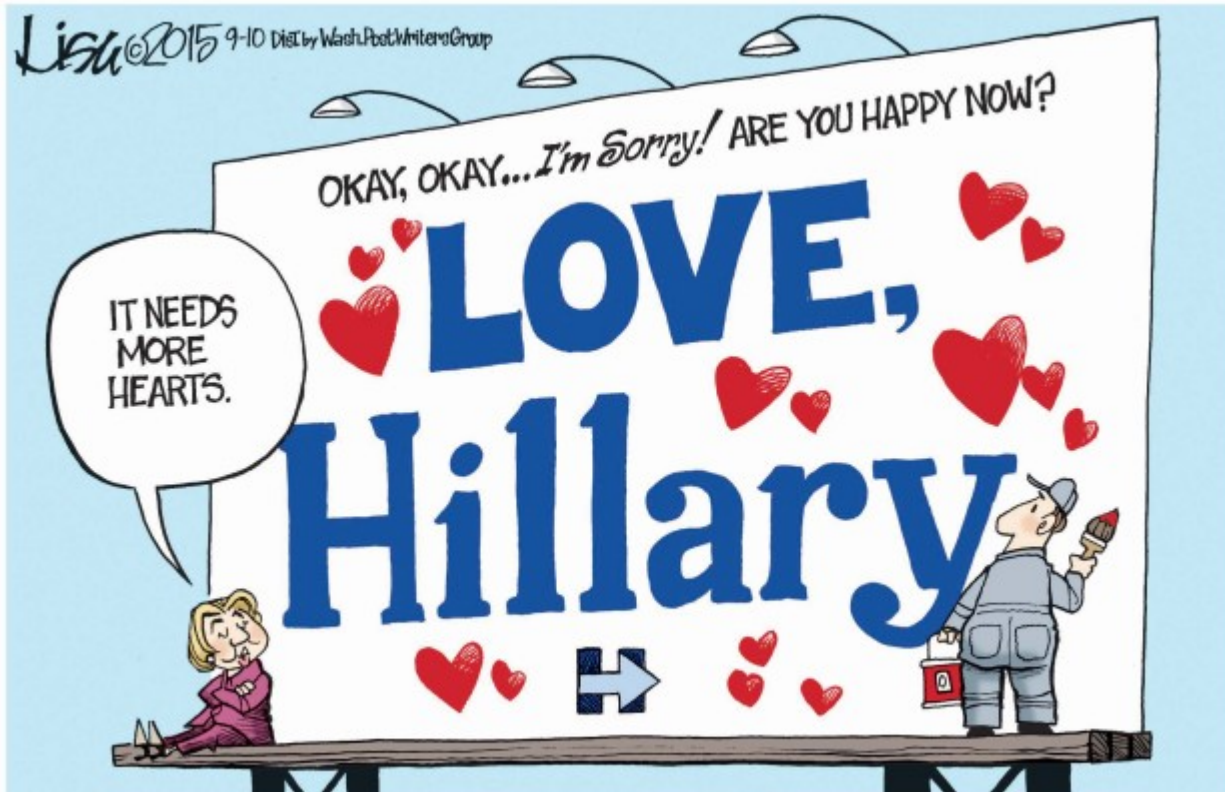
That philosophy is dramatically different from the liberty-focused message Republicans have become accustomed to since the rise of the Tea Party in 2009. And, at least for now, it has made Trump the front-runner by a wide margin.



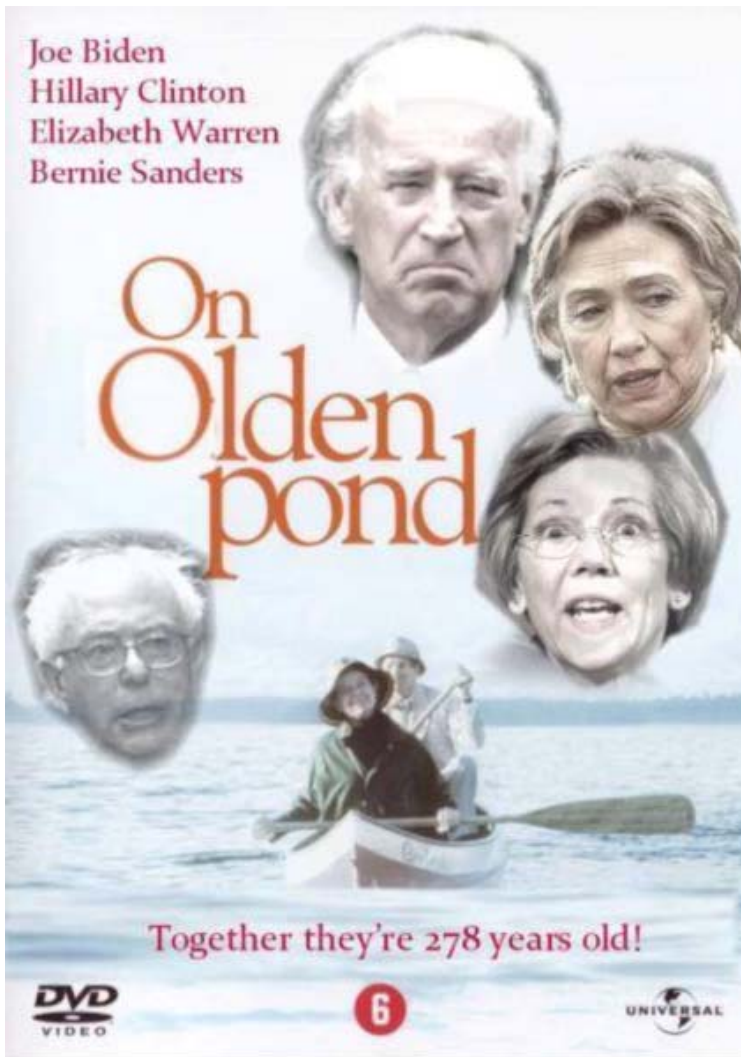
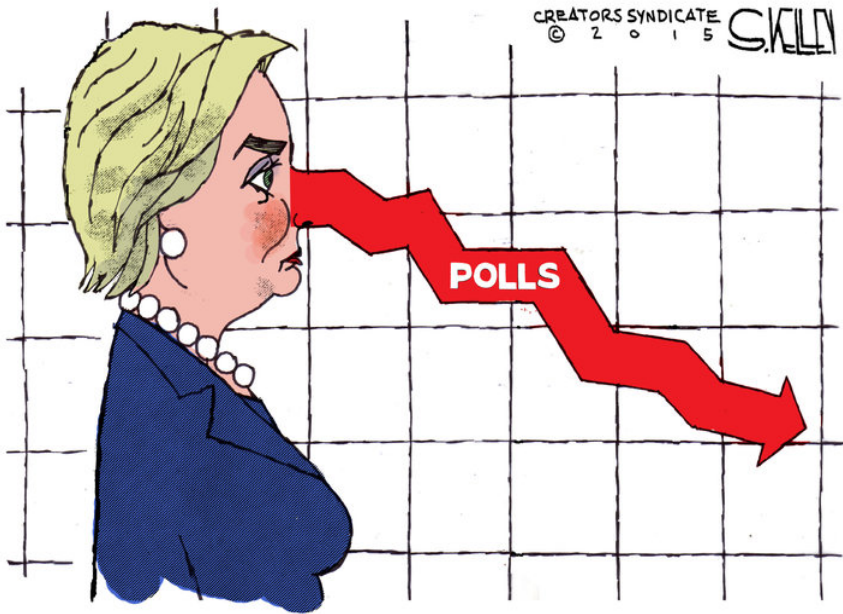


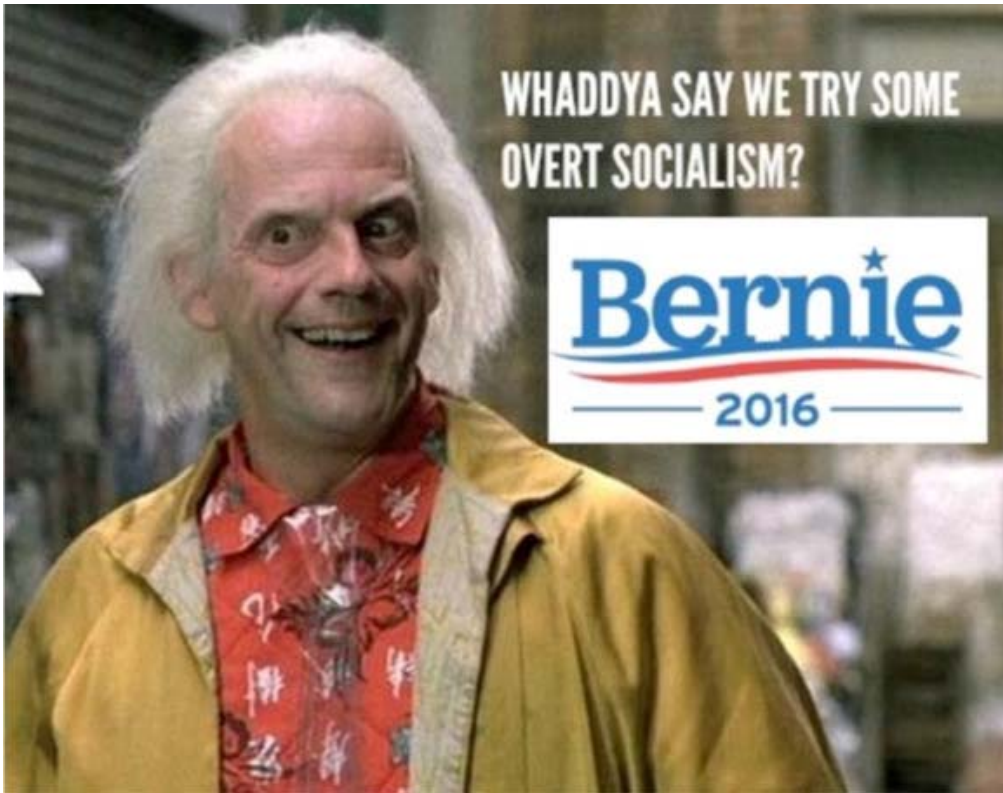
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