

February 1, 2016 - TED CRUZ

A couple of items today about Ted Cruz, one of the few candidates to have the courage to oppose ethanol while standing on Iowa soil. [John Fund](#) tells the story. *For more than 30 years, Iowa's obsession with its ethanol fuel industry has played an outsized role in its presidential caucuses. The winner of every caucus in both parties during that period has strongly backed federal subsidies or mandates for the corn-grown fuel. That winning streak could end this year if Senator Ted Cruz takes Iowa. Polls currently show him with a narrow lead.*

In 2008, Fred Thompson told me he didn't see merit in subsidizing one fuel over another, but in Iowa's GOP caucus that year "opposing ethanol was like pushing against a mountain." Hillary Clinton voted against ethanol a total of 17 times in the U.S. Senate, saying she found it "impossible to understand why any pro-consumer, pro-health, pro-environment, anti-government member" could vote for ethanol mandates. In 2007, as she announced for president, she took a sharp turn on the Road to Des Moines and embraced ethanol. This year, she calls ethanol "a success for Iowa and much of rural America."

But on the Republican side, two candidates have broken ranks. Senator Rand Paul, true to his libertarian principles, supports an immediate phase-out of subsidies. And [Cruz addressed the Iowa Agriculture Summit](#), run by ethanol and wind-subsidy interests, in March 2015. His message: The federal mandate on ethanol, which has cost consumers at least \$10 billion since 2007, had to end. In front of a crowd of pro-ethanol farmers and moneymen, Cruz said: ...

And from the [Texas Monthly](#), [Erica Grieder](#) writes on 10 things we need to know about Cruz.

One evening in 2009, I spent a few hours at a reception in Dallas, surrounded by assorted young professionals, chatting with a lawyer who had some kind of job in the private sector and the earnest interest in public policy that I tend to associate with political ambition. As a journalist, based in Texas, focused on politics and the economy, such small-talk situations are an occupational hazard. But this schmoozing session stood out. The lawyer and I quickly fell into a lively exchange about the ongoing contrast between the Texas Miracle and the Great Recession, with reference to Dallas Fed data and the political philosopher John Rawls. I was impressed enough to make note of his name: Ted Cruz.

I figured, back in 2009, that he was going to run for something at some point, and that someday I might end up writing about this bright and ambitious lawyer. I failed to foresee that within a few short years, Cruz would be a sitting senator with a realistic chance of being the leader of the free world or that our increasingly nervous nation would be worrying about who Cruz is, and whether he can be trusted with the power of the presidency. I did not anticipate the possibility that helping Americans make sense of the guy would become someone's job, much less mine.

As it happens, though, I've been covering Cruz's political career since it began, ...

National Review

Refusing to Kiss King Corn's Ring in Iowa

by John Fund

For more than 30 years, Iowa's obsession with its ethanol fuel industry has played an outside role in its presidential caucuses. The winner of every caucus in both parties during that period has strongly backed federal subsidies or mandates for the corn-grown fuel. That winning streak could end this year if Senator Ted Cruz takes Iowa. Polls currently show him with a narrow lead.

In 2008, Fred Thompson told me he didn't see merit in subsidizing one fuel over another, but in Iowa's GOP caucus that year "opposing ethanol was like pushing against a mountain." Hillary Clinton voted against ethanol a total of 17 times in the U.S. Senate, saying she found it "impossible to understand why any pro-consumer, pro-health, pro-environment, anti-government member" could vote for ethanol mandates. In 2007, as she announced for president, she took a sharp turn on the Road to Des Moines and embraced ethanol. This year, she calls ethanol "a success for Iowa and much of rural America."

But on the Republican side, two candidates have broken ranks. Senator Rand Paul, true to his libertarian principles, supports an immediate phase-out of subsidies. And Cruz addressed the Iowa Agriculture Summit, run by ethanol and wind-subsidy interests, in March 2015. His message: The federal mandate on ethanol, which has cost consumers at least \$10 billion since 2007, had to end. In front of a crowd of pro-ethanol farmers and moneymen, Cruz said:

I don't think Washington should be picking winners and losers. I have every bit of faith that businesses can continue to compete, can continue to do well without having to go on bended knee to Washington asking for subsidies, asking for special favors. I think that's how we got in this problem to begin with.

In reality, as my colleague Charles C. W. Cooke writes at National Review Online: "Cruz has changed his mind on ethanol in the past. But he did so in 2014." The Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) mandates that all gas sold in the U.S. include a certain percentage of biofuels such as ethanol. Cruz had supported a full repeal, but in 2014 he advocated cutting the RFS by 20 percent a year and ending it completely after five years. He has not changed his position since 2014.

Now that Cruz is leading in the Iowa polls, the industry-funded America's Renewable Future (ARF) is paying 17 staffers to trash Cruz in the state. The group, whose Iowa director is the son of GOP governor Terry Branstad, claims that Cruz has shifted his position in their favor, toward a gradual phase-out. In fact, they are only taking credit for a position that Cruz already held.

Last month, ARF spokesman Majda Sarki told the *Washington Post* that a Cruz victory would be devastating even though he doesn't support immediate RFS repeal. If he wins, she said, "it would kill investment in second-generation biofuels" by creating "uncertainty" about federal subsidies in the future.

A Cruz victory would also deflate Donald Trump, who has become the biggest booster of ethanol in Iowa. At a Des Moines rally last month, Trump surrounded himself on stage with green-T-shirt-wearing ethanol backers. He then claimed that Cruz was "in the pocket of big oil companies" and taking a "very anti-Iowa" position.

But that's not what the polls show. A new *Des Moines Register* survey found that 37 percent of Iowans agreed with Cruz on ethanol and 42 percent disagreed. The rest were undecided. All the GOP candidates kowtowing to ethanol might be miscalculating. Michael Needham, executive director of Heritage Action, told the *Washington Post*: "When Americans look at the challenges we face as a nation, it is reasonable for them to look at a politician who panders on ethanol and suspect that individual will not make the best commander-in-chief."

Iowa congressman Steve King — who supports the Renewable Fuel Mandate but is also a top Cruz backer — says that his candidate's stand on ethanol hasn't hurt him as much as he feared. He notes that Cruz has been accompanied on his Iowa bus tours by David VanderGriend, a pioneering designer of ethanol plants in Iowa who says Cruz's position is forward-looking and would reduce federal regulations on biofuels. "If these regulations get out of the way, we can stand on our own," VanderGriend told the *Des Moines Register*.

Other experts aren't so sure. "The boom in domestic U.S. oil production undermines the case for ethanol," James Lucier, an energy analyst with the Washington D.C.-based energy firm Capitol Alpha, told me. "The U.S. is becoming a net energy exporter."

Regardless of who is right, a Cruz victory in Iowa could have dramatic political consequences. "If Cruz wins Iowa, it could become untenable for a Republican to embrace the RFS in 2020 and win over fiscal conservatives," the *Washington Post* suggested last month.

That would be a good thing. As David McIntosh, a former Indiana congressman who now heads the free-market Club for Growth, points out: "Ethanol has corrupted politicians in both parties, despite the poor case for it, for too long. Our politics will be cleaner and less pandering once people can see the subsidies can be opposed and that opposing them isn't politically fatal." It's unlikely that Democrats would see the light in the wake of a Cruz victory but, hey, there's always hope.

Texas Monthly

[The Field Guide to Ted Cruz](#)

Ten tips for figuring out the "wacko bird."

by Erica Grieder

One evening in 2009, I spent a few hours at a reception in Dallas, surrounded by assorted young professionals, chatting with a lawyer who had some kind of job in the private sector and the earnest interest in public policy that I tend to associate with political ambition. As a journalist, based in Texas, focused on politics and the economy, such small-talk situations are an occupational hazard. But this schmoozing session stood out. The lawyer and I quickly fell into a lively exchange about the ongoing contrast between the Texas Miracle and the Great Recession, with reference to Dallas Fed data and the political philosopher John Rawls. I was impressed enough to make note of his name: Ted Cruz.

I figured, back in 2009, that he was going to run for something at some point, and that someday I might end up writing about this bright and ambitious lawyer. I failed to foresee that within a few short years, Cruz would be a sitting senator with a realistic chance of being the leader of the free world or that our increasingly nervous nation would be worrying about who Cruz is, and whether he can be trusted with the power of the presidency. I did not anticipate the possibility that helping Americans make sense of the guy would become someone's job, much less mine.

As it happens, though, I've been covering Cruz's political career since it began, especially during several months of intensive reporting in 2013 [for the profile that appeared on our February 2014 cover](#). By March of last year, when Cruz [announced his presidential campaign](#), the subject was familiar terrain—as were the various questions and concerns that people had asked me in person and on social media about his beliefs, goals, and character during his brief but eventful time in American politics.

Those questions and concerns have only intensified since then, and will soon become unavoidable. Cruz, who was at first widely dismissed as a minor contender in a crowded Republican field, too unpopular and extreme to be the party's nominee, has steadily worked his way to the front of the pack. A few days from now, he is likely to win the Iowa caucus. I can't read Cruz's mind, or tell you how to feel. But for readers trying to make sense of the senator, I can offer some reasonably sound rules of thumb.

1) Ted Cruz is not a fire-breathing extremist.

Cruz, obviously, is [a polarizing figure](#), for several reasons. One is that he is perceived as a hard-line conservative, if not a genuine extremist. This is a misconception that he has encouraged, by casting himself as someone outside the party establishment, to the right of his colleagues. He campaigned in 2012 as a Tea Party insurgent and has staged numerous fights in Congress, in opposition to the so-called conciliators of the surrender caucus. He is now stumping around Iowa, denouncing the “Washington cartel.”

There's no question that Cruz is a conservative. On constitutional issues, I'd say he's the gold standard. But he's not as extreme or ideological as people often assume. Maggie Wright, a Texan who has traveled to Iowa to volunteer, gave journalist (and *Texas Monthly* contributor) Robert Draper [an admirably concise summary](#): “He's for states' rights, for all the Constitution, he will not allow us to bash the gays but won't let anybody do jihad on the Christians.” Similarly, though Cruz is one of the few Republicans in Congress who passes muster with the right wing's self-appointed purity czars, and he is contemptuous of conservatives who assert principled convictions they do nothing to advance, he is ecumenical about disagreement. “In any two-party system you welcome people with a variety of views,” he told me in 2013, after I asked if the Republican coalition could include leaders who support gay marriage, or even abortion rights. And Cruz is not the kind of partisan [who casts his opponents as evil or stupid](#); his provocations are more subtle. In 2013, having described Barack Obama as an “honest-to-god socialist,” he added that [he was using the word in its literal sense](#): “It describes a means of structuring an economy. Socialism is government ownership or control of the means of production or distribution.”

Because Cruz is currently running for the Republican nomination, the perception that he is a ferocious hard-liner serves his interests, and he's not likely to dispute it. But even on the campaign trail, fielding questions from the grassroots, his answers are more nuanced than his reputation would suggest. As the campaign goes on he is likely to devote more attention to issues such as economic opportunity, which he emphasized in a January 2013 speech, [shortly after being sworn in to the Senate](#).

2) Cruz is also not a wild-eyed maniac.

Similarly, there is a persistent misconception that Cruz is unstable, erratic, or even unhinged. The candidate himself has been bemused about his reputation, and has invoked these characterizations as part of a more general critique of the mainstream media. “They do anything

they can to paint me as a wild-eyed lunatic with dynamite strapped around my chest,” [he said last year](#), shortly after announcing his campaign. Here in Iowa, he’s been joking that when he’s president, a lot of journalists will need a lot of therapy.

What’s ironic is that Cruz is one of the least erratic people in national politics. The oddities in his behavior are strategic rather than spontaneous. In interviews, for example, he often gives answers that have clearly been rehearsed; that’s not “normal,” per se, but it makes sense if you’re an ambitious politician, being interviewed or questioned in public.

While reporting on Cruz in 2013, I was struck by his composure and calm. He remained serene and even-tempered at all times, even under potentially annoying circumstances—waylaid by a lone supporter with a homemade Ted Cruz poster who had been waiting outside the Heritage Foundation in the hopes of meeting him, even as several tense staffers were trying to hustle him back to the Senate in time for an imminently approaching vote; stoically talking to the journalist from *Texas Monthly* for hours, once on a day when he was also juggling half a dozen events in Central Texas, and once on a day when he was so sick he could barely get through a sentence without a coughing fit. He was impeccably polite and well-mannered with me, and in all the interactions I observed.

Even now, ten months into a grueling campaign, under intense media scrutiny and while being attacked from all directions, Cruz has remained focused and unruffled. He’s hardly unhinged, quite the opposite. If anything, his preternatural self-possession is the most unsettling thing about him.

3) He has nerves of steel.

In retrospect, Cruz’s victory in the 2012 Senate race feels inevitable, even inexorable. Less than four years ago, it seemed unthinkable: it was a nearly universal assumption that David Dewhurst, then Texas lieutenant governor, would be the nominee. Very few ambitious young lawyers would have taken such a chance under the circumstances, and Cruz was considered foolish for trying. (This may, I suspect, help explain some of the sniping I occasionally hear from his former colleagues on George W. Bush’s presidential campaign.) Several of Cruz’s close friends have told me that they didn’t think he could pull it off. One added, in a hushed tone, that he had pleaded with Cruz to reconsider. Even more startlingly, I’ve heard the same from several sources who worked on Cruz’s campaign that year. They believed in him enough that they were willing to join him in the fight, but they didn’t think they were actually going to win.

And though Cruz was uncannily prescient in seeing a path to a Senate seat, it was a path, not a guarantee. He unquestionably got lucky. Texas’s primaries were pushed to late May that year, [due to another round of legal scuffling about redistricting](#). Had voting been held in March, as originally planned, Dewhurst might well have won.

That background casts Cruz’s subsequent adventures in a different light. Having reached the Senate, he continued taking huge political gambles, the biggest being his quixotic campaign to convince Congress to defund Obamacare, in 2013. Cruz elicited no shortage of criticism from his fellow Republicans for that one. It was an unusually audacious political play for a freshman senator. Even the most celebrated first-term senators of recent memory, such as Obama and Marco Rubio, had never attempted anything so visible or controversial. According to Cruz’s colleagues, it was a stunt with serious consequences: Many felt that the government shutdown that year was the direct result of what they saw as pointless and self-serving grandstanding. As a freshman member of the Democratic-controlled Senate, Cruz had a technical alibi, but his

efforts, which included a 21-hour-long pseudo-filibuster, had helped foment the insurrectionists in the other chamber. As [Grover Norquist put it](#), “He pushed House Republicans into traffic and wandered away.”

It’s possible that Cruz wouldn’t have taken his defunding campaign so far had it cost him anything, or put his own ambitions at risk. But I wouldn’t rule it out: he put his career on the line in 2012, and he’s doing the same right now. His presidential campaign itself has been an ongoing exercise in taking risks that would make many of his peers feel faint. In March, the day after he made things official with an announcement speech at Liberty University, I wrote [a piece for Politico magazine predicting that](#) his goal was to shore up support with social conservatives, to get a foothold in the field. That would enable him to compete in a crowded field for the long haul, rolling up support as other “conservative” or Tea Party contenders dropped out, and eventually squaring off against one more moderate or establishment opponent. That meant walking a tricky tightrope for 18 months, taking up issues and entering alliances that he will be associated with regardless of the results of the campaign. “The political strategy here makes sense,” I concluded. “But it’s risky, even by Cruz’s standards.” After the story was published, several sources close to Cruz quietly confided similar qualms, and that was before the Supreme Court struck down remaining state bans on gay marriage, before the Paris attacks and the San Bernardino shooting, before the Republican primary went fully off the rails.

A year from now, in other words, Cruz might be the president. Or he might be a national laughingstock—disliked by the public, disdained by his colleagues in Congress, tarred by the fact that he’s now on record calling Donald Trump “terrific.” The same is not true for rivals like Rand Paul or Marco Rubio; they too are relatively young, in the middle of their political careers, but unlike Cruz, they can expect their careers to continue either way. As was the case in 2012, the risk Cruz has taken is real. I have no doubt that he can see a path to the presidency, and we’ve all seen how well he can walk a tightrope, but the outcome, of course, is not foreordained. That takes a lot of nerve, and Cruz’s calm and scrupulously polite demeanor suggests a startling amount of *sang-froid*.

4) Cruz is smarter than us.

I’m not ideological about intelligence. In my view, it comes in many forms and none of them have a moral valence. So when I say that Cruz is smarter than us, I don’t mean it to imply a value judgment or even a contrast with other politicians. What I mean is that Cruz has the particular form of intelligence that is universally recognized as such, and he has it in abundance. This is just how it is. I feel no need to deny it, and I see no purpose to doing so.

Instead, I proceed on the assumption that Cruz is smarter than me—not that he’s a superior human who Americans should follow blindly, and not that he’s always right. Just that he’s smarter than me. In practice, that means when Cruz says or does something that doesn’t make sense to me, I ask myself what I’m missing. I take a step back and slowly puzzle through why a very smart person with certain well-documented strategic objectives would do that. Lord knows this is not my usual practice with politicians, but it has turned out to be a surprisingly effective technique for analyzing Cruz. I highly recommend it.

5) He may even be too smart for his own good.

Cruz has long struck people as a conservative whose brilliant legal mind might eventually lead him to the Supreme Court. It’s a little unusual to see a highly accomplished nerd inspire such passion in people, but perhaps it’s not surprising. Many conservatives resent the casual

condescension they routinely perceive from liberals and coastal elites. In Cruz, they have a candidate who gives the lie to such smug assumptions. And so, though Cruz's intelligence may strike his critics as a sign of arrogance, smarminess, or phoniness, it has proven to be a political asset thus far in his own party.

But it creates two complications that are, I think, worth remembering. First: between his intelligence and his verbal agility, Cruz is easily able to elide questions, or to answer them in a lawyerly, nuanced way. Such deftness [can be a lifesaver](#) for a politician who's been put on the spot, and Cruz's nuanced arguments are often quite interesting, but such answers can also seem like sophistry, and over time, have fueled suspicions that Cruz is a phony.

Relatedly, like many highly intelligent people, Cruz is vulnerable to being too clever by half. That's the only explanation for his [tortuously convoluted response to Marco Rubio's allegation](#) that they had both supported "amnesty" during the 2013 debate over immigration reform. Cruz's retroactive insistence that he was lying about his stated support for a path to legal status doesn't seem to have hurt his standing in the primary, but it was a rare own goal—and a regrettable one, I think. His original position on immigration reform, which is Rubio's current position, was conservative, but nonetheless eminently reasonable. It also would have given him the upper hand if he ends up in a general election, where the Democratic nominee will have to defend not just "amnesty," but Obama's executive orders. Those of us covering him should proceed with the knowledge that Cruz has the capacity to think himself into a pretzel.

6) Cruz is very serious about strategy.

One of the biggest surprises to me while reporting on Cruz in 2013 [was how serious he is about strategy](#). At the time, he was in the midst of his effort to defund Obamacare, and there was a reason he made a point of emphasizing his strategic thinking. Most of his Republican colleagues in Congress agreed with at least some of his critiques of the Affordable Care Act itself; all of them who were there in 2009, after all, had voted against it in the first place. Their criticisms of Cruz hinged on the premise that his defunding campaign had no realistic chance of succeeding. Democrats controlled the Senate. And as Tom Coburn pointed out, Obama would presumably not have been pleased if Congress sent him a bill that defunded his signature effort; Cruz would ultimately have had to convince dozens of Democrats, in both chambers, to join Republicans in voting to override a presidential veto. From that point of view, [the wacko bird from Texas](#) had arguably engineered a government shutdown for no possible productive purpose. Cruz, not surprisingly, was keen to argue that the effort was worth a chance, and that the chance did in fact exist.

Cruz showed a similar preoccupation with strategy, however, when talking about his work as solicitor general. He had always found it crucial to focus "very pragmatically" on how to win, he told me. At first glance, for example, 2007's [Medellin v Texas](#) might look like a case related to the 10th Amendment; on consideration, however, he and Greg Abbott, then the attorney general, had concluded that Texas would lose the case if they approached it that way. Instead, Cruz argued Medellin as a separation of powers case, and won, on a 6-3 ruling. The book Cruz wrote recently, *A Time for Truth*, offers many more such examples of his strategic approach to appellate law. In addition to carefully framing his briefs, it turns out, he went into every Supreme Court appearance with an individuated understanding of the nine justices on the bench, and some arguments tailored to the ones likely to cast the swing vote.

The insight that Cruz takes strategy seriously has proven useful in interpreting his subsequent moves. His decision to announce his campaign at Liberty University, in March last year, struck

many observers as consistent with Cruz's socially conservative beliefs. I took it as a tipoff about his strategy. After careful consideration and gaming out several hundred scenarios, Cruz had concluded that announcing the campaign at Liberty University would maximize his odds of achieving the overarching objective. After thinking it through, I could see why; my aforementioned preview of his campaign strategy looks [eerily astute, ten months later](#). I say that not to brag, but to illustrate the power of following the Cruz Rules.

7) Cruz is meticulous with his words.

Cruz was a champion debater during his undergraduate days. It follows that he's an unusually good speaker, with a particularly well honed talent for formal debates that helped him take the stuffing out of Donald Trump [at the most recent Republican debate](#), and which will serve him well if he reaches the general election.

This training, though, can also be a mixed blessing. Cruz's unusual fluency and precise language, I suspect, is helping to fuel the heebie-jeebies so many Americans experience when listening to him. And it's very annoying for those of us who are journalists. I enjoyed interviewing Cruz; he's intelligent and thoughtful. But under normal circumstances, he's so disciplined and on message that there's almost no point in asking him a question. You're more likely to find the answer by using the Cruz rules in conjunction with inferential reasoning.

At the same time, Cruz's lawyerly precision is such that you can put a lot of weight on his occasional answers, and on things he's said in the past: With very few exceptions, what he said is exactly what he meant to say. Thanks to this technique, I was able to discover Cruz's position on immigration reform all the way back in 2013.

As a bonus tip: Cruz [wrote his own book](#). If you're a careful reader, the aforementioned *A Time For Truth* may serve as a sort of Rosetta Stone.

8) Cruz is a mainstream conservative from the Texas Republican establishment.

The various misconceptions about what Cruz stands for are, of course, partly his own fault. He often puts himself in situations—the announcement at Liberty University, on stage after an introduction by his ferocious father—that are clearly going to create a certain impression, and that in many cases have been carefully designed to do just that. His background adds to the mystery: He's only been in office for a couple of years, and prior to that, as an appellate lawyer, he worked on behalf of clients, and for the state. Even now, he has not yet had to fully commit himself to any particular faction of the Republican coalition. All told Cruz remains a cipher, wrapped in a veneer of plausible deniability.

Some critics see this as sinister: it allows for the possibility that Cruz's evasion is motivated by the need to conceal his genuinely alarming beliefs from the general public. Others see it as ethically troubling. Even if he has rarely been compelled to pick a side, the fact is that he has often declined to do so—and his record may not include proof of deliberate dishonesty, but it certainly shows a tendency for strategic misdirection.

I share some of these qualms; I would be more critical of how Cruz has engaged with the right wing during the course of his current campaign, frankly, if not for the fact his ability to do so strikes me as [the only thing keeping Donald Trump from winning the party's presidential](#)

[nomination](#). And the line of questioning is wholly legitimate. The guy might be president. It's not nosy to wonder what his beliefs and positions are.

At the same time, Cruz is running for the Republican presidential nomination, at a moment when the party itself seems to have gone wildly off the rails. So, realistically, we might have to make do with educated inferences. Mine is that Cruz is a mainstream conservative from the modern Texas Republican establishment. Given his background, he has an unusual expertise and commitment to constitutional issues. He has a lot of intellectual and temperamental overlap with longtime attorney general Greg Abbott, who is now the governor of Texas. (National readers who aren't familiar with Abbott might want to take a look at [Texas Monthly's profile of Abbott](#), by my boss Brian Sweany.) But more generally, like most of the Republicans who have held high office in Texas lately, Cruz is fiscally conservative, and focused on fiscal issues; socially conservative, but only once or twice a season; pragmatic rather than ideological; and, as noted earlier, not nearly as radical as his reputation would suggest.

If I hadn't encountered Cruz prior to his presidential campaign, I doubt I'd describe him in those terms. But I have, and so I would. And I am aware that for many readers the suggestion that Cruz is a mainstream Texas conservative is not reassuring either way. So let's proceed to a happier rule.

9) Cruz is really into the Constitution.

Love him or hate him, Cruz knows the Constitution. By high school he had memorized the thing, thanks to an after-school program run by the Free Enterprise Institute, [which had the teenage Cruz studying the Federalist Papers and traveling the state with a troupe of like-minded adolescents](#) billed as the "Constitutional Corroborators." His undergraduate thesis, at Princeton, [was about the historical and theoretical underpinnings of the Ninth and Tenth Amendments](#). After attending law school, at Harvard, he landed clerkships in a federal district court, then at the Supreme Court. And so on.

In light of his lifelong obsession with the subject, I am reasonably confident that Cruz's diabolical plans, and thirst for world domination, are ultimately constrained by his own fealty to the supreme law of the land. What's more, Cruz has specific expertise in the constitutional limits of the office he's currently aiming for. His arguments against the president's executive overreach have been backed by unique professional credentials, which actually exceed Obama's. Both men are graduates of Harvard Law, and have been professors of constitutional law. Cruz is also the person who has successfully argued, at the Supreme Court, that an executive order issued by George W. Bush amounted to an unconstitutional violation of the separation of powers. If Cruz becomes president, he may start to feel differently about executive power, but at least he's given the subject plenty of thought, and has reflected on the story of Joseph, who was doing well in Egypt, until there came a pharaoh who knew not Joseph.

10) Cruz is in it to win.

All politicians have daydreamed about being president—even if they're not American, probably. Cruz clearly has, and by 2013, at the latest, he was well past the daydreaming stage. An exchange in October of that year [told me as much](#):

We were interrupted as I went through the security checkpoint at the entrance to the Capitol. Cruz paused until I had been cleared, then jumped in exactly where he had left off.

“I don’t think we’re there yet, but there is an urgency to these fiscal and economic issues unlike anything I’ve ever seen before.”

“That reminds me of what President Obama used to say during the primary in 2008, when people asked him why he was running for president after only a few years in the Senate,” I said. “He would say, ‘There’s a thing called “too late,” and that hour is almost here.’”

We stared at each other for a moment.

“I didn’t know he said that,” Cruz said innocently.

“I thought it was remarkable,” I said. “Especially in a primary.”

For the first and last time since I began interviewing him, in July, Cruz said nothing at all in response.

Cruz may not, at that point, have made up his mind. His decision would have been contingent on whether he saw a viable path to winning the White House. But that’s a first-term senator laying the groundwork for a potential presidential campaign in 2016.

That brings us to the final rule. Cruz is not running for vice-president. He’s not angling for a cabinet position. He’s not positioning himself for a gubernatorial campaign, trying to promote his book, or auditioning for a gig on Fox News. Cruz is running for president because he wants to be president, and because, having surveyed the 2016 political landscape with his dauntingly intelligent and highly strategic mind, he concluded that he can win. The day he announced his campaign, I learned two things. Cruz sees a path to the presidency. And the path exists.

Readers who can’t see it yet shouldn’t feel bad. It took a lot of people in Texas a while to see Cruz’s path to the Senate, too. Whether his risky bet pays off this time is yet to be determined and subject to circumstances, some of which can’t yet be anticipated, and some of which are unavoidably out of his control. But he’s already come much further than his critics thought he could. He clearly has a chance. Cruz, I have no doubt, knew that long ago.



'PATIENCE, Bessie, PATIENCE — ONCE I DECIDE ON THE NEXT LEADER OF THE FREE WORLD AT MONDAY'S CAUCUS, WE WON'T SEE THESE FELLERS FOR ANOTHER FOUR YEARS....

