

January 11, 2017 – GONNA BE FUN

Watching Kellyanne Conway duke it out with Chris Cuomo on CNN last Friday morning, it became clear the start of the Trump presidency will be fun. If they don't stumble too much, the fun could last a long time. Watching people who's ideas we detest going batty is worth the price of admission.

Here's an article in [Media-ite on the Conway/Cuomo rumble](#). [And you can watch it here](#).

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*At the conclusion of the interview, **Alisyn Camerota** quipped, "That was a calorie burner." Watch above via CNN.*

And the morning after Meryl Streep lectured the deplorables, Conway laid into the actress. Story from [The Daily Mail](#).

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*'So I'd like to hear from her today, if she wants to come and continue her platform on behalf of the disabled,' Conway continued. ...*

It's nice to see out folks pushing back and refusing to accept the premises of the left. And it is interesting to see how Trump has set the public face of his administration. Steve Bannon has disappeared as completely as the 15 million people who have given up and left the labor force. It has been left to Conway to be the fighting public face for the time being. In November 2015 we passed along a Bloomberg/Business Week profile of Bannon that is worth looking at again. [Here's the link.](#)

[A Salena Zito profile on Conway is here.](#) Zito, by the way, is the pundit who, in a September profile of Trump said; "The press takes him literally, but not seriously; his supporters take him seriously, but not literally".

*Kellyanne Fitzpatrick Conway's life has come full circle.*

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*Unsurprisingly, she is beaming.*

*"You want to hear about destiny? I was born Jan. 20, 1967. I will turn 50 years old on Inauguration Day, the day he is sworn in as president," she says, deadpanning, "Honestly, I think my family is very relieved that they don't have to think of a party idea."*

*It's a long way from her working-class upbringing in New Jersey's "Blueberry Capital of the World."*

*Yet she remains deeply connected to the blue-collar roots of an Italian family of four women who brought her up on limited financial means and a sense of boundless opportunity.*

### ***The Blueberry Princess***

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*That last trait sometimes made her a self-denying person early in her career: "Now it makes me have a much more grateful heart in a generous way."*

*Her father left when she was around 2 years old; there was no alimony or child support so, at age 26 and with only a high school education, her mother "had to figure it out."*

*"So we were middle class, maybe? Somedays I wonder. But it was a wonderful childhood, filled with family and cousins, great story-tellers and a lot of food because, in an Italian family, food is love." ...*

*... During our hours-long interview, Conway receives many, many texts. It seems likely that a lot of people are trying to contact her, given her position in the transition organization and her frequent appearances on TV news programs.*

*But actually, the texts are from one person, her daughter Claudia, who really, really wants to get in touch.*

*Finally, Conway pauses the interview and makes a call to answer her daughter's question about choir practice at St. Mary's, then proceeds to send several texts at lightning speed.*

*"That is the 12-year-old, the headstrong one," she explains. "You know, when you are a pollster and you get 75 percent agreement on anything, you are thrilled. But when you are a mother, you need 100 percent agreement."*

*Claudia, it appears, is the family holdout about moving to Washington. ...*

Not afraid himself to fight back, Trump called Schumer the Dems "head clown".

Matthew Continetti wrote on the theme.

*Democrats have been in power for so long that they've forgotten how to oppose. Their party has been on a roll since 2005 when the botched Social Security reform, the slow bleed of the Iraq war, and Hurricane Katrina sent the Bush administration into a tailspin. The Democrats won the Congress the following year and the White House two years after that. And while they lost the House in 2010 and the Senate in 2014, Democrats still had the advantage of retaining the White House, a president seemingly immune from criticism, the courts, the bureaucracy, and large portions of the media. The correlation of forces in Washington has weighed heavily in favor of the Democrats for a decade.*

*No longer. ...*

*... Yes, the first duty of the opposition is to oppose. And I don't expect the Democrats to roll over for Trump. But I am surprised by their hysterics, and by their race to see who can be the most obnoxious to the new president. They seem to have been caught off guard, to say the least, by their situation. Take for example their willingness to stand on a podium beside a sign that reads, "Make America Sick Again." By embracing this message, such as it is, the Democrats associated not Trump but themselves with illness. Who on earth thought that was a good idea?*

*It takes time to adjust. The Democrats may be counting on inertia and the media to slow the Republicans down and force them into a defensive crouch. Worked in the past. **But here's the thing about Trump: He doesn't play defense.***

Jeff Jacoby writes on the gurus who got it wrong last year.

*2016! Was there ever such a year for making donkeys out of seers? A whole column could be filled with nothing but the names of sages and savants, supposedly adept in the ways of politics, who confidently assured everyone that Donald J. Trump couldn't possibly win the Republican presidential nomination, let alone be elected president of the United States.*

*"If Trump is nominated, then everything we think we know about presidential nominations is wrong," wrote Larry Sabato, whose highly regarded website at the University of Virginia's Center for Politics is called Sabato's Crystal Ball. Peering into his crystal ball on Nov. 7, he saw Hillary Clinton poised to harvest 322 votes in the Electoral College, handily defeating Trump in the next day's election.*

*Countless experts made similar predictions. "GOP insiders: Trump can't win," read a Politico headline last summer.*

Turns out the GOP folks have been doing some homework on how to bring the bureaucrats to heel. Story from WaPo.

*House Republicans this week reinstated an arcane procedural rule that enables lawmakers to reach deep into the budget and slash the pay of an individual federal worker — down to \$1 — a move that threatens to upend the 130-year-old civil service.*

*The Holman Rule, named after an Indiana congressman who devised it in 1876, empowers any member of Congress to propose amending an appropriations bill to single out a government employee or cut a specific program.*

*The use of the rule would not be simple; a majority of the House and the Senate would still have to approve any such amendment. At the same time, opponents and supporters agree that the work of 2.1 million civil servants, designed to be insulated from politics, is now vulnerable to the whims of elected officials.*

*The revival of the Holman Rule was the brainchild of Rep. H. Morgan Griffith (R-Va.), who is intent on increasing the powers of individual members of Congress to reassign workers as policy demands. ...*

*... Democrats and federal employee unions say the provision, which one called the "Armageddon Rule," could prove alarming to the federal workforce because it comes in combination with President-elect Donald Trump's criticism of the Washington bureaucracy, his call for a freeze on government hiring and his nomination of Cabinet secretaries who in some cases seem to be at odds with the mission of the agencies they would lead.*

*"This is part of a very chilling theme that federal workers are seeing right now," said Maureen Gilman, legislative director for the National Treasury Employees Union, which represents 150,000 federal employees. ...*

**TaxProf** writes on what that rule could have meant to the loathsome Lois Lerner.

*... The rule would let lawmakers target civil servants who abuse their posts but still have union protections. The rule could, for instance, have been used on former Internal Revenue Service official Lois Lerner, locus of the IRS' intimidation scandal.*

*While Lerner faced minimal consequences for her wide-ranging role in the scandal — she refused to reveal much of anything to congressional investigators — The Weekly Standard pointed out that she received \$129,000 in bonuses and a yearly pension that could top \$100,000.*

Fun everywhere as **The Free Beacon** reports on the breakdown of Castro's death jeep.

*... While the media will most likely gloss over Castro's atrocities in Cuba and reflect on his life in a positive light, it is important that people around the world know the truth and learn about the real hero of 2016: Castro's death jeep.*

*"Hundreds of thousands of people lined the route, with some traveling long distances and many hours for a glimpse of the modest convoy and the small, flag-draped wooden box containing Mr. Castro's ashes, which sat in a glass case on a trailer hitched to a military jeep," The New York Times reported.*

*On the eighth day of Cuba bidding their goodbyes to Castro, the military jeep that was carrying Castro's ashes broke down. As a result, Cuban soldiers had no choice but to push the jeep down the road near Moncada Fort in Santiago, Cuba as mourners lined the streets on both sides to take pictures of the jeep as it passed. ...*

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## Media-ite

### ['Don't You Say That Again': Conway and Cuomo Get Into Transfixing War of Words Over Russia Hacks](#)

by J.D. Durkin

In a meaty interview that raged on for the better part of twenty minutes this morning, CNN *New Day* anchor **Chris Cuomo** sparred with **Kellyanne Conway** of the Trump campaign on a wide variety of controversies, foremost of which has been the President-elect's willingness to seemingly discredit our own intelligence community.

The senior Trump advisor took issue with the fact that talk of the "alleged" Russian hacking (as she puts it) is being conflated with why **Hillary Clinton** lost, a claim that Conway put at the feet of CNN itself. "Your network is doing it constantly," she told Cuomo. At times, two continued to spar even over the basic premise of questions asked due to Conway's effective filibustering.

"I'll ask you a third time!" Cuomo said at one point about the October joint report from the Homeland Security Department and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence: *did the intelligence community announce its findings of Russian involvement, yes or no?*

What transpired was an (at times) infuriating battle between a fast-talking New Yorker and an equally combative and witty woman from New Jersey, both also aided by legal backgrounds. "Chris, I see you're very passionate about this," Conway said.

"Sure I am. Russia trying to hack during our election, being ignored by our President-elect? That's troubling," Cuomo shot back.

Remarkably, Conway responded. "Right. No it's not." She furthered at one point, "You just want to argue with me."

"You're ducking the obvious," he said, "and I don't know why."

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## Daily Mail

['I didn't hear Meryl Streep give a shout out to the mentally challenged boy tortured on Facebook': Kellyanne Conway piles in on Trump's attack on Clinton-backing Golden Globe winner](#)

by Geoff Earle

Incoming White House advisor Kellyanne Conway has joined [President-elect Donald Trump's](#) counterattack on Meryl Streep by arguing that if the actress was such an advocate for the disabled, she should have stood up for the special needs man subjected to Torture in video posted on [Facebook](#).

Streep caused a sensation on the airwaves an online when she delivered a blistering speech against Trump while accepting an award at the [Golden Globes](#) Sunday night, where she slammed Trump for mocking New York Times reporter Serge Kovalski in 2015 at a campaign rally.

'That instinct to humiliate, when it's modeled by someone in a public platform, it filters down into everyone's life because it gives permission for others to do the same,' Streep said.

Conway was having none of it in appearance Monday morning on 'Fox and Friends,' and joined President-elect Trump in hitting back at Streep.

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'So I'd like to hear from her today, if she wants to come and continue her platform on behalf of the disabled,' Conway continued.

Conway was referencing the sensational video posted online last week of the horrifying treatment of an 18-year-old special needs man in Chicago.

In the 30-minute attack, the perpetrators kick and punch the man. At one point, one of them yells "f\*\*k Donald Trump" and "f\*\*k white people."

Jordan Hill, 18; Tesfaye Cooper, 18; and sisters Brittany, 18, and Tanisha Covington, 24, were arrested and charged the following day with aggravated kidnapping, aggravated unlawful restraint, aggravated battery and a hate crime Thursday.

Prosecutors say they forced the disabled man to drink toilet water, kiss the floor. They also say the suspects stuffed a sock into his mouth, taped his mouth shut and bound his hands with a belt.

Conway said the claim that Trump had been mocking the reporter's disability has been 'debunked.'

## **Washington Examiner** **[Kellyanne Conway unplugged](#)**

by Salena Zito

**NEW YORK** — Kellyanne Fitzpatrick Conway's life has come full circle.

The little girl from Atco, N.J., raised in a collaborative effort by her mother, a grandmother and two aunts, all living under the same roof, now has her mother living in her home, helping her and her husband with their four children.

"Funny how that happened," she says of her mother moving in after she became [Donald Trump](#)'s presidential campaign manager in August. "It is the way I was raised and, honestly, it really has been amazing."

Below her Fifth Avenue office in Trump Tower, tourists crowd the glistening peach marble lobby, hoping to catch a glimpse of the future president. Secret Service officers patiently allow them to linger long enough to see the gilded elevator doors open, then move them along to keep the lobby fluid.

Up the tower, retired Army Lt. Gen. Michael Flynn, Trump's pick for national security adviser, stands in the 14th floor lobby with a young man in a crisp white shirt and navy tie, discussing an article about the general published that day. Vice President-elect [Mike Pence](#) breezes by with a broad smile and a wave, then takes a seat in a glass conference room filled with advisers.

Down the hall, dozens of young people manning laptops and phones or watching television monitors fill the transition team's war room. Chocolates fill candy dishes on desks everywhere, and Omarosa Manigault, a first-season contestant on Trump's reality-TV show "The Apprentice," huddles with a young staffer on a phone in an office around a corner from the offices of Conway and campaign CEO Steve Bannon.

Conway's office is an uncluttered workspace filled with family photos, bookcases, a white board with "#winning" and "Make America Great Again" written in green marker, a faux fireplace, a glass door leading to a small outdoor terrace with several chairs, and, left behind by former campaign manager Paul Manafort, a map of the country.

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### **The Blueberry Princess**

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That last trait sometimes made her a self-denying person early in her career: "Now it makes me have a much more grateful heart in a generous way."

Her father left when she was around 2 years old; there was no alimony or child support so, at age 26 and with only a high school education, her mother "had to figure it out."

"So we were middle class, maybe? Somedays I wonder. But it was a wonderful childhood, filled with family and cousins, great story-tellers and a lot of food because, in an Italian family, food is love."

She cannot remember a time when something wasn't cooking on her grandmother's stove: "Anybody came in, it was like a full-course meal ready for them. There was no texting, saying can you call me to arrange to see each other. There was none of that. People just came over," greeted by her grandmother wearing a pretty dress, an apron and a warm smile.



One of Conway's favorite memories is of watching her family tell stories. Oddly, politics was never a subject around the dinner table, on her grandmother's knee, or anywhere else.

Instead, politics came to her when she was a high school senior and the local newspaper gave her an assignment to cover the Democratic and Republican national conventions by watching them on television. This was a time when the three networks covered conventions gavel to gavel.

It was a way for the local paper to give readers in the small farming community a young person's view of the political process.

"The party out of power goes first, so I covered the Democrats first and I thought that it was so cool that an Italian woman was Walter Mondale's running mate," she recalls. "That was truly ground-breaking to me in 1984."

She thought Geraldine Ferraro, the first female nominee on a major-party presidential ticket, spoke substantively and offered a compelling personal story.

"But I disagreed personally with so many of the positions she took and the promises she made."

Then came her political awakening.

"I listened to Ronald Reagan a week later and here he was, literally, a different gender, four times my age, and from a different coast. And yet I just connected with him immediately. His message was aspirational and visionary and positive. It was also uplifting and hopeful," she says.

One month later, Reagan came to Hammonton, N.J., when Conway had just been crowned the town's Blueberry Princess. (Four years later she won the World Champion Blueberry Packing competition).

Conway met Reagan onstage when he spoke in Hammonton. A Reagan presidential library video of the event shows an excited crowd of 25,000 people at the event, waving "Italians for Reagan" and "Farmers for Reagan" signs, as the candidate refers to the town's Italian heritage, Bruce Springsteen, the Hammonton Blue Devils and the St. Joseph Wildcats, for whom Conway played field hockey.

"I loved my hometown. It was truly a great moment, but after high school, I was also ready to see the world," she says.

### **The "No" man**

Conway went off to Trinity University, a Catholic college in Washington, D.C., then earned a law degree from George Washington University.

"I worked for Reagan's pollster Richard Wirthlin for eight dollars an hour, loved it. Finished law school, clerked for a judge, politely declined an offer I had already received from a law firm, and then went right back into polling," she says.

She went to work for pollster Frank Luntz and, in 1995 at age 28, started her own polling company.

"I went out on my own and never looked back," she says.

Conway loved being an entrepreneur and a job creator with an emphasis on small business; it enabled her to see the whole country and much of the world, "because when they say, 'How is it playing in Peoria?' ... I am the one who gets on the airplane and figures out how it is playing in Peoria."

She had a successful career, with clients such as American Express, Hasbro, Major League Baseball and Vaseline, as well as conservative politicians such as former House Speaker Newt Gingrich and Pence, then an Indiana congressman. She specialized in polling, trend analysis and communications.

Conway joined the Trump campaign in July as an adviser and pollster, when Manafort was still in charge. But her relationship with Trump began more than 15 years earlier, when she and husband George T. Conway III bought an apartment at Trump World Tower near the United Nations: "I sat on the condo board. That is where I really got to know him. He's very involved in his condos. He knew I was involved in politics, so he would always ask me my opinion about politics."

Conway's conversion from pollster to campaign manager came on a Friday that she describes as the low point of the campaign.

"The worst day of the campaign was the day before I became the campaign manager. It was Aug. 11, it was a Thursday, and I went out on the road with Gov. Pence, who I adore, who has been a client and a friend of mine for 10 years," she says.

Conway describes in detail a creeping malaise that filled the organization, and people wondering aloud, "Is it worth it? Can we win? What is going on? What are they meeting about? Why did he say that? Who is in charge?"

At the time, Manafort, Trump's second campaign manager after Corey Lewandowski, reportedly didn't get on with the candidate, and there was dark talk about political work he had done in Ukraine.

When the New York Times reported Manafort may have received cash payments from a political party affiliated with Russian President Vladimir Putin, the atmosphere reportedly within the campaign began to turn sour and despairing.

The next day Conway was back in Trump Tower, helping with a video shoot in which Trump "was doing different commercials and appeals and videotaped messages to groups that were holding meetings that he could not attend." They had been working on it for an hour or so and were about to leave for Pennsylvania when Trump asked everyone but her to leave the room.

After the others had gone, Conway asked Trump what was going on. "You are running against the most joyless person in presidential political history," she told the candidate, "and you don't look like you are having fun anymore."

Trump insisted he was having fun but admitted that he missed the days of the Republican primaries, when he traveled around the country and met people. "And I said, 'Well, those days are gone, because it is not the primary, it is the general [election]. But in fairness to you, sir, let's find a way to replicate that and put it into proper context for a general election strategy.'"

It was then that Trump offered her the job.

Conway accepted, as long as another person was in the C-Suite, a term derived from the use of the letter C in most high-level positions such as chief or chair. That other person was Steve Bannon, former Goldman Sachs executive, U.S. Navy officer, and publisher of Breitbart News, a right-wing news organization.

Conway then gave Trump her thoughts about how he could win, and about the issues and messaging it would require.

"He already knew that. His instincts are excellent," she says. "He had already built a movement, but he needed to have some people around him who create the right environment.

"So how did we leverage that into a campaign strategy? And, conversely, as I said to him on that first day, 'Let's see who [Hillary Clinton](#) is not, nor ever can be, and let's try to do it and be it.'"

Conway and Bannon saw Clinton as someone who lacked an uplifting message and couldn't break above 44 to 47 percent in polls. They also felt she would have a devil of a time knitting together the Obama coalition.

Meanwhile, Conway says she reduced the hassle and background noise for Trump, hoping to create an atmosphere in which he could flourish. "And I tried to take account of his gifts."

Trump's rallies soon became speeches, the kind of events where he began to use a teleprompter and to talk about policy. He started to offer a bullet-point outline of something that people could actually envision. He was still "able to add a great deal of personal flair and humor and off-the-cuff remarks at the rallies," Conway says, "And people loved that."

Conway serves in a role that few people consider possible, let alone would want to take, and that is Trump's "no man." She believes every leader needs someone who can tell them when they have a bad idea and can stop it.

Great leaders, she says, always have someone in the room who can tell them "no," and Conway says she does that, although others believe she sugarcoats things.

"It is actually the opposite. I think, because of our relationship and how much I respect him, that allows me to deliver a crisp message when I feel like it is in his best interest. You can do that respectfully, as long as it is accurate, smart and relevant."

### **An imperfect mom with imperfect children**

During our hours-long interview, Conway receives many, many texts. It seems likely that a lot of people are trying to contact her, given her position in the transition organization and her frequent appearances on TV news programs.

But actually, the texts are from one person, her daughter Claudia, who really, really wants to get in touch.

Finally, Conway pauses the interview and makes a call to answer her daughter's question about choir practice at St. Mary's, then proceeds to send several texts at lightning speed.

"That is the 12-year-old, the headstrong one," she explains. "You know, when you are a pollster and you get 75 percent agreement on anything, you are thrilled. But when you are a mother, you need 100 percent agreement."

Claudia, it appears, is the family holdout about moving to Washington.

"That's all right, honey, Claudia had choir practice, she is just waiting to be picked up at the church," she says on another call, a very affectionate conversation with her husband.

Once that's over, she explains, "My daughter started an online petition called 'Stop the Conway kids from moving to Washington,' and she has like 400 signatures. So I had to punish her because it was not nice to do without permission, but I will tell her, when she is older, that I appreciated her moxie."

Conway smiles at the thought. "I did notice that her sisters, who do want to move, were included in the signatures, and I said that it is against the law to forge or assume someone's identity and fraudulently express their opinion. She is a piece of work."

Claudia has a twin brother, George, and younger sisters Charlotte, 8, and Vanessa, 7.

Conway believes the children have adjusted to their mother's fame fairly well: "They have way gotten used to seeing me on TV and, for the most part, people on both sides of aisle have been very nice."

"Saturday Night Live" is another story. "The kids think the skits look a lot like our home," she says, referring to the "Kellyanne's Day-Off" sketch in which Conway is portrayed by cast member Kate McKinnon.

McKinnon portrays Conway trying to take a day off from the campaign trail, only to be constantly interrupted by a fictionalized Jake Tapper of CNN for breaking news on a series of ridiculous tweets by Trump.

"With mom trying to squeeze in every moment of spare time to go grocery shopping, or exercise, or do something fun with them — make them pancakes, as we do most mornings — they thought that was all very eerily true to life," Conway says. "If someone is going to make a spoof of you, it should be with that kind of affection."

Conway is impressed with McKinnon's portrayal: "She has really captured me, from my struggle with my bad-hair, an ongoing saga for decades, to my mannerisms, to the fact that she is wearing the exact dresses that I own. It is really very sweet."

She admits to having many flaws, "but being kind or generous is not part of those flaws. I am an imperfect mom raising four imperfect children. As long as you are kind and generous the rest falls into place."

## **The call**

Conway says she knew on election night by 8:30 the results looked good for them. "We kept calling him Mr. President-elect, but he is a brilliant businessman and he knows the deal isn't

consummated until everything is completed, and verified and signed, sealed and delivered," she says.

And so he brushed them off. Once the AP called Pennsylvania, Trump, his family and the campaign staff started to make their way to the Hilton, in New York, where supporters had been waiting for seven hours.

As Conway, Trump, his family and top campaign staff made their way from Trump Tower to the Hilton, Clinton's campaign chairman, John Podesta, told supporters "to go home, get a good night's sleep," and return the next day.

Everyone agreed that the case for Trump and his entourage to continue to the Hilton and join his supporters was simple. She puts it simply: "Why don't we do there what we are doing here? We can stay at the headquarters all night or for a week if we have to. Let's just watch the returns until he is the victor." That's why they didn't wait for Clinton's concession.

Minutes after they arrived at the Hilton, Jason Miller, their communications director, held his phone up and said "AP called it."

"I said which state? He said the race."

Conway said Donald Jr. picked her up into the air, "And I said 'Oh my God, we won.' "

Then her phone rang.

"I looked down, it said 'Huma Abedin,' and she said 'Hi Kellyanne, it's Huma.' I said 'Hey Huma, how are you?' She answered 'Secretary Clinton would like to talk to Mr. Trump.' I said now? She said if he is available. I said he was available. And I said there you go," she explains, recalling the conversation.

She sent Pence over to stand by Trump during the phone call for good measure to make sure Clinton conceded.

"And she did, and she was very gracious. She congratulated him and she conceded to him."

### **Faith and the future**

Conway is content that these events happened as late as they did in her career. She believes the wisdom and judgment of age and experience kept her grounded and humbled by the events.

"I mean this has been super cool and heady and I am thrilled with the results and it never gets old to hear that we won," she says. Her faith — she is a devout Catholic— has helped keep everything in perspective.

"Faith plays a minute by minute part of my life. It is constant," she says.

"This," she says, pointing to everything that is going on around Trump Tower, "is consequential, this is exciting and historic in its own way, but it is nothing compared to the universe in which we live, the God that I worship, and the totality of our lives.

"I do believe that God placed me in this position at this time to do my small part to create an environment to allow Mr. Trump to flourish and to help to create a campaign structure with our fabulous team."

As the interview winds down, Conway, dressed in a vibrant pineapple colored dress with matching strappy Mary Jane shoes, is sanguine about what the future holds for the country under a President Trump.

"He fulfills that self-avowed desire to elevate someone to the presidency who is so wildly successful outside of politics. As president, he will realize that promise to the people with a very successful presidency.

"I am looking forward to being part of helping his vision work, and lift up the American people."

**Free Beacon**

**Send in the Head Clowns**

***The delusional Democrats of 2017***

by Matthew Continetti



*Head Clowns*

Democrats have been in power for so long that they've forgotten how to oppose. Their party has been on a roll since 2005 when the botched Social Security reform, the slow bleed of the Iraq war, and Hurricane Katrina sent the Bush administration into a tailspin. The Democrats won the Congress the following year and the White House two years after that. And while they lost the House in 2010 and the Senate in 2014, Democrats still had the advantage of retaining the White House, a president seemingly immune from criticism, the courts, the bureaucracy, and large

portions of the media. The correlation of forces in Washington has weighed heavily in favor of the Democrats for a decade.

No longer. The election of Donald Trump has brought unified Republican government to Washington and overturned our understanding of how politics works. Or at least it should have done so. The Democrats seem not to understand how to deal with Trump and the massive change he is about to bring to the nation's capital. During the general election they fell for the idea that Trump can be defeated by conventional means, spending hundreds of millions of dollars in negative television advertising and relying on political consultants beholden to whatever line *Politico* was selling on a given day. This strategy failed Trump's Republican primary opponents, but Democrats figured that was simply because the GOP was filled with deplorables. It was a rationalization that would cost them.



Republicans control the House, the Senate, 34 governor's mansions, and 4,100 seats in state legislatures. But Democrats act like they run Washington. Nancy Pelosi's speech to the 115th House of Representatives was a long-winded recitation of the same liberal agenda that has brought her party to its current low. Give her points for consistency I guess. Chuck Schumer is just being delusional.

Smarting from the failed nomination of Merrick Garland to the Supreme Court, the Senate minority leader pledged to oppose Donald Trump's nominee weeks before inauguration day. "If they don't appoint somebody good," he said on MSNBC, "we're going to oppose them tooth and nail." That would "absolutely" include keeping the seat held by the late Antonin Scalia empty, [he said](#). "We are not going to make it easy for them to pick a Supreme Court justice."

I suppose it's too much to expect a graduate of Harvard Law School to grasp the difference between majority and minority. Mitch McConnell was able to block Garland's appointment because the Republicans controlled the Senate. The Democrats do not. And McConnell was able to hold his caucus together because he was on solid historical ground. Lyndon Johnson's



nomination of Abe Fortas as chief justice failed in the election year 1968, and the so-called "[Biden Rule](#)" of 1992 stipulated no Supreme Court replacements during the last year of a presidency. Schumer himself, [in a 2007 speech](#), expanded the waiting period to the final 18 months of a president's term. Now, despite a record of calling on the Senate to confirm the president's nominees—as long as the president is a Democrat—Schumer has adopted the strategy of no Supreme Court confirmations at all. How does he think President Trump will respond? By caving?

The Democrats, lead by head clown Chuck Schumer, know how bad ObamaCare is and what a mess they are in. Instead of working to fix it, they..

— Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) [January 5, 2017](#)

An attempt to filibuster the Scalia replacement may force McConnell to change the rules so that Supreme Court vacancies can be approved by a majority vote. And where would Democrats be then? Not only will they have lost the Scalia seat, they will be completely vulnerable should another vacancy arise in the next two years. And Schumer has a reputation for political savvy.

The blanket opposition to president-elect Trump extends to his appointments at large. Democrats can thank Harry Reid for allowing executive branch officials and lower-court judges to be approved by a majority vote. But [the Washington Post reports](#) that Schumer wants to prolong the confirmation process so that some Trump cabinet officials are not confirmed until March. The reason: "Democrats have been troubled by a lack of personal disclosure by Cabinet choices that they say mirrors Trump's refusal to disclose personal tax information during the presidential campaign." The presidential campaign that, in case the Democrats have forgotten, Trump won.

Reviving the issue of the tax returns makes little sense. It generates headlines but doesn't move votes. And though it's entirely possible that one or more of Trump's nominees won't be confirmed, I seriously doubt it. In every incoming administration there is a personal revelation or atrocious hearing that dooms a cabinet appointment. But hearings begin next week, whether Chuck Schumer likes it or not, and so far the quality of the opposition research against Trump's picks has been remarkably blah.

Yes, the first duty of the opposition is to oppose. And I don't expect the Democrats to roll over for Trump. But I am surprised by their hysterics, and by their race to see who can be the most obnoxious to the new president. They seem to have been caught off guard, to say the least, by their situation. Take for example their willingness to stand on a podium beside a sign that reads, "Make America Sick Again." By embracing this message, such as it is, the Democrats associated not Trump but themselves with illness. Who on earth thought *that* was a good idea?

It takes time to adjust. The Democrats may be counting on inertia and the media to slow the Republicans down and force them into a defensive crouch. Worked in the past. But here's the thing about Trump: He doesn't play defense.



**Boston Globe**

**The gurus got it wrong last year. They'll get it wrong this year, too**

by Jeff Jacoby



A NEW YEAR dawns, and you know what that means: Insiders, pundits, and gurus will spend the next 12 months making confident predictions that turn out to be spectacularly wrong.

“I think that you listen too much to the soldiers,” wrote the [British statesman Lord Salisbury](#) to the viceroy of India in 1877. “No lesson seems to be so deeply inculcated by the experience of life as that you should never trust experts.”

But the experts themselves — often mistaken, never in doubt — rarely seem to learn that lesson. Their forecasts will keep flowing in the year ahead, undeterred by their egregious blunders in the one just ended.

2016! Was there ever such a year for making donkeys out of seers? A whole column could be filled with nothing but the names of sages and savants, supposedly adept in the ways of politics, who confidently assured everyone that Donald J. Trump couldn't possibly win the Republican presidential nomination, let alone be elected president of the United States.

“If Trump is nominated, then everything we think we know about presidential nominations is wrong,” wrote Larry Sabato, whose highly regarded website at the University of Virginia's Center for Politics is called Sabato's Crystal Ball. Peering into his crystal ball on Nov. 7, he saw Hillary Clinton poised to harvest 322 votes in the Electoral College, [handily defeating Trump](#) in the next day's election.

Countless experts made similar predictions. “[GOP insiders: Trump can't win](#),” read a Politico headline last summer. Atop the story was the cocksure analysis of one of those insiders that nothing could keep Trump from losing short of “video evidence of a smiling Hillary drowning a litter of puppies while terrorists surrounded her with chants of ‘Death to America.’” Pollsters, politicians, and [even the incumbent POTUS](#) announced with perfect certitude that a Trump victory was off the table. Indeed, [prophesied Damon Linker](#), senior correspondent at The Week, not only would Trump lose, he would “lose in the biggest landslide in modern American history.”

By no means was it only in the realm of US presidential politics that experts blew it.

At Fox Sports, Sam Gardner insisted on Opening Day that the Chicago Cubs “[weren't ready to make the leap](#)” to the World Series. He was still insisting [six months later](#) that the Cubs' World Series drought would persist.

Climate experts predicted that in the summer of 2016, for the first time in 100,000 years, the [Arctic Ocean would be essentially ice-free](#). Peter Wadhams, head of the Polar Ocean Physics Group at Cambridge University, said the decline in sea ice was unstoppable. But when satellite images for September were released, they showed ice levels [greater](#) than they were in 2012.

Fortune magazine played up the [doomsaying](#) of Wall Street strategist Albert Edwards, who warned that 2016 would bring the biggest stock market crash in a generation. “The illusion of prosperity is shattered as boom now turns to bust,” Edwards wrote in January, amid a market swoon. Bust? By year's end, the Dow was flirting with an all-time record high.

British experts of every description made the case for keeping the United Kingdom inside the European Union, and pollsters were sure Brexit [would go down to defeat](#). But on the day of the election, [voters tore up the script](#), handing the “Leave” campaign a victory margin of more than a million votes. Michael Gove, the UK's justice minister and a leading Brexiteer, had been laughed at when he contended: “People in this country have had enough of experts.” Maybe the experts should have listened.

Maybe all of us should be more skeptical when experts are telling us what to think.

A book I cherish is “[The Experts Speak: The Definitive Compendium of Authoritative Misinformation](#).” Compiled by Christopher Cerf and Victor Navasky, it mercilessly documents the uncanny ability of experts to get things hopelessly, cataclysmically wrong. Flip through it at random, and marvel at the howlers: Business Week reporting in November 1929 that the Wall Street crash would not lead to a depression because the economy was “stronger than ever before.” The 50 political insiders unanimously predicting Thomas Dewey's defeat of Harry Truman in the 1948 presidential race. The 1977 declaration by Ken Olson, president of Boston's Digital Equipment Corp.: “There is no reason for any individual to have a computer in their home.”

For hundreds of pages, on hundreds of subjects, the experts get it wrong. I've often wished that “[The Experts Speak](#)” was supplied with an annual supplement, the better to be reminded that knowledge is no guarantee of truth, and that renown doesn't equal prophecy.

A new year dawns. Really smart people are gearing up to tell you what to think. Hear them out, if you like, but remember: There's an excellent chance they'll be wrong.

## **Washington Post**

### **[House Republicans revive obscure rule that allows them to slash the pay of individual federal workers to \\$1](#)**

by Jenna Portnoy and Lisa Rein

House Republicans this week reinstated an arcane procedural rule that enables lawmakers to reach deep into the budget and slash the pay of an individual federal worker — down to \$1 — a move that threatens to upend the 130-year-old civil service.

The Holman Rule, named after an Indiana congressman who devised it in 1876, empowers any member of Congress to propose amending an appropriations bill to single out a government employee or cut a specific program.

The use of the rule would not be simple; a majority of the House and the Senate would still have to approve any such amendment. At the same time, opponents and supporters agree that the work of 2.1 million civil servants, designed to be insulated from politics, is now vulnerable to the whims of elected officials.

The revival of the Holman Rule was the brainchild of Rep. H. Morgan Griffith (R-Va.), who is intent on increasing the powers of individual members of Congress to reassess workers as policy demands.

He favors a strategic application, likening it to a bullet from a sniper rifle rather than a shotgun. It's unlikely — but not impossible — that members will "go crazy" and cut huge swaths of the workforce, he said.

#### House minority whip rails against the Holman Rule

House Minority Whip Steny H. Hoyer (D-Md.) said Tuesday, Jan. 3, he is "deeply concerned by a number of controversial provisions" included by the majority in the rules for the 115th Congress. He said the revival the Holman Rule, "undermines civil service protection." (C-Span)

"I can't tell you it won't happen," he said in an interview Wednesday in his office. "The power is there. But isn't that appropriate? Who runs this country, the people of the United States or the people on the people's payroll?"

Democrats and federal employee unions say the provision, which one called the "Armageddon Rule," could prove alarming to the federal workforce because it comes in combination with President-elect Donald Trump's criticism of the Washington bureaucracy, his call for a freeze on government hiring and his nomination of Cabinet secretaries who in some cases seem to be at odds with the mission of the agencies they would lead.

"This is part of a very chilling theme that federal workers are seeing right now," said Maureen Gilman, legislative director for the National Treasury Employees Union, which represents 150,000 federal employees.

The rule is particularly troubling to Virginia and Maryland lawmakers and the District's nonvoting delegate, who represent large numbers of federal workers in the capital region.

The Holman provision passed Tuesday as part of a larger rules package but was overshadowed by the Republicans' effort to weaken the House ethics office on the first day of the new Congress.

## TaxProf

### [The IRS Scandal, Day 1339: House GOP Reactivates 'Holman Rule,' Would Have Permitted Reducing Lois Lerner's Pay To \\$1](#)

by Paul Caron

Washington Post, [House Republicans Revive Obscure Rule That Allows Them to Slash the Pay of Individual Federal Workers to \\$1:](#)

House Republicans this week reinstated an arcane procedural rule that enables lawmakers to reach deep into the budget and slash the pay of an individual federal worker — down to \$1 — a move that threatens to upend the 130-year-old civil service.

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Weekly Standard, [House GOP Revives Rule Allowing Them To Slash Salaries of Corrupt Federal Workers:](#)

[T]here can be no question that federal workers have far too many civil service protections. After the IRS held a press conference admitting that they had improperly targeted conservative groups, Lois Lerner, the IRS official deemed most responsible, didn't face any meaningful consequences. Instead it was revealed that [she recently received \\$129,000 in bonuses](#) and retired with an annual pension that [could possibly exceed \\$100,000](#).

Even after Lerner left, John Koskinen, the new interim head of the IRS, ignored congressional subpoenas as the IRS destroyed evidence relating to the investigation of Lerner and engaged in egregious stonewalling. It's pretty clear that the IRS was in no way fearful of suffering any consequences for persecuting thousands of ordinary Americans and flouting Congress.

Western Journalism, [GOP House Revives 140-Year-Old Rule That Has Swamp-Dwelling Bureaucrats Sweating Bullets:](#)

The rule would let lawmakers target civil servants who abuse their posts but still have union protections. The rule could, for instance, have been used on former Internal Revenue Service official Lois Lerner, locus of the IRS' intimidation scandal.

While Lerner faced minimal consequences for her wide-ranging role in the scandal — she refused to reveal much of anything to congressional investigators — [The Weekly Standard](#) pointed out that she received \$129,000 in bonuses and a yearly pension that could top \$100,000.

## Free Beacon

### [2016 Man of the Year: Castro's Death Jeep](#)



*Soldiers push the jeep and trailer carrying the ashes of the late Fidel Castro after the jeep briefly stopped working during Castro's funeral procession near Moncada Fort in Santiago, Cuba*

People around the world rejoiced and celebrated in November as news spread that Cuba's former dictator Fidel Castro had died at age 90.

However, many American journalists hailed Castro as a "fiery apostle," a "spiritual beacon," a model "of wit and clarity," and someone defined by "huge personal charm and charisma, and his political genius," the *Washington Free Beacon* previously [reported](#).

While the media will most likely gloss over Castro's atrocities in Cuba and reflect on his life in a positive light, it is important that people around the world know the truth and learn about the real hero of 2016: Castro's death jeep.



“Hundreds of thousands of people lined the route, with some traveling long distances and many hours for a glimpse of the modest convoy and the small, flag-draped wooden box containing Mr. Castro’s ashes, which sat in a glass case on a trailer hitched to a military jeep,” *The New York Times* [reported](#).

On the eighth day of Cuba bidding their goodbyes to Castro, the military jeep that was carrying Castro’s ashes broke down. As a result, Cuban soldiers had no choice but to push the jeep down the road near Moncada Fort in Santiago, Cuba as mourners lined the streets on both sides to take pictures of the jeep as it passed.

The jeep’s failure was particularly poignant, as a Fox News [report](#) helps illustrate.

“While his legacy inspires fierce adulation by many of the nation’s citizens, others continue to grumble about Cuba’s autocratic government, inefficient bureaucracy and stagnant economy.”

For helping demonstrate the fundamental absurdity of Castro’s Cuba in the most amusingly ironic way possible, the *Washington Free Beacon* is pleased to name Castro’s Death Jeep a man of the year.

**Apparently, pushing is a common mode of Cuban transport**







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And horse drawn carts too



Side Saddle?



**"Spider" transporting a bed**



## Sometimes Surrey Racing



## Cuban mechanics try to work miracles



