



Trump and the Chumps: What's a Serious Candidate, Anyway?

Ever since Donald Trump rose to front-runner status in the 2016 GOP presidential field, we've heard dismissive talk about how he's not a "serious" candidate. [Pundits](#) and [political-party leaders](#) have made this claim, in efforts ranging from seriously intended but unserious commentary to the tactic of hoping that if you act as if something is true it will be considered so. But whether or not Trump is a serious candidate, one thing is plain: these politics wonks have no idea what that is.



"Serious" in the sense it's being used by the establishment types is not only a weasel word, but also akin to the tactic of calling an Internet commenter who utters uncomfortable truths a "troll"; the water-muddying message is, "Oh, you don't have to pay attention to that; he's not serious."

But what is a "serious candidate," anyway? Does it reflect seriousness when a politician says, as Jeb Bush has, that violating our borders and invading our nation is an "act of love"? How about Carly Fiorina [saying](#), two weeks after 9/11, that Muslim civilization was once "the greatest in the world" and "was driven more than anything, by invention"? What about when a brain-frozen Hillary Clinton blurted out, "Don't let anybody...tell you that, ah, you know, it's corporations and businesses that create jobs"? Or what about when, subject to normal oversight as any public official should be, she petulantly exclaimed about Benghazi, "What difference at this point does it make?!"

Then there's the supposed savior of Democrat electoral fortunes, Joe Biden. When he [said](#) that Franklin Roosevelt got on TV to address the 1929 stock market crash, not realizing it predated the television age and Roosevelt's presidency, was it suggestive of a serious candidate? And how about his boss, Barack? He thought "Austrian" was spoken in Austria, [pronounced "corpsman" "corpse-man" three times](#) in one speech and called the "transcontinental" railroad the "intercontinental" one (you know, the intercontinental ballistic railroad developed during the Cold War). Would a serious politician have such a poor knowledge base?

We could also mention Senator Marco Rubio, a.k.a. Aquaman, who promised conservatives he'd never support an immigration bill whose first priority wasn't enforcement, but then [told](#) Spanish language station Univision (in Spanish) "First comes the legalization. Then come the measures to secure the border." If such a shameless liar and panderer can be considered a serious candidate because he has a pretty face, we need to reevaluate our priorities.

Again, though, what is a "serious" candidate? Well, imagine a doctor refuses to render a correct diagnosis, but instead tells the patient what he wants to hear, because he thinks the truth will be unwelcome. Or imagine he's a witch doctor who doesn't know the truth in the first place. Would you consider him a serious physician? If "serious" has any meaningful significance in the context of politics at all — as opposed to just "serious about conning you" or "serious about attaining power by any means



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necessary” — integral to it is *knowing* the truth and *being willing* to speak it. Otherwise the person is as serious as [Joe Isuzu](#).

Now, one quality characterizing almost all our candidates, to at least an extent, is political correctness (PC). But what is PC? It can accurately be defined as “the *suppression of truth* for the purposes of advancing a left-wing agenda.” Conclusion?

It can roughly be said that a candidate can be serious only insofar as his pronouncements are not politically correct.

And, question: who is the most politically incorrect candidate running this election cycle?

Answer: Donald Trump.

Thus, Trump in this sense is not just a serious candidate — he’s perhaps *the most serious candidate in the race*.

Punctuating this point is that he has talked the most, and the most seriously, about one of the most serious issues of our time: the invasion of our nation euphemistically called “illegal immigration” (hint: illegal entry isn’t *any kind* of immigration).

This isn’t to say that any candidate, including Trump, is as “serious” as I might like (hey, I’m not running). Everyone has his deficits and his “filters.” For starters, not one of the presidential aspirants seems to grasp — or is willing to say — that our [legal immigration regime](#) is a [far, far bigger problem](#) than illegal migration. Nonetheless, there are lessons in the Trump phenomenon that must be understood.

First, any one of the other GOP candidates *could* have tapped into what Trump has capitalized upon. But they either

- lacked the wisdom and/or guts to do so.
- are of the Karl Rove school and believe that such brash political incorrectness can’t win the general election (lamentably, given how morally degraded the country has become, this may be true).
- have neocon instincts and actually subscribe to the PC nonsense.

But what exactly is Trump capitalizing upon? To begin with, there’s a certain truth that his rise illustrates:

Tens of millions of Americans fear being politically incorrect.

But relatively few Americans actually embrace political correctness.

In this our nation is a bit like the old Soviet Union: the man on the street didn’t believe in the state ideology, but everyone feared the ideological machinery of the state. Trump is saying (to an extent) what countless Americans want to but fear to; he is the champion striking a blow against an unpopular social code enforced by a minority via fear and intimidation.

This isn’t to say there aren’t millions of useful idiots who subscribe to PC. But what percentage of Americans supported the forced resignation of marriage advocate and former Mozilla CEO Brendan Eich or the firing of the [Miami school principal](#) who merely voiced support for the McKinney, Texas, police officer? PC is largely a phenomenon of the pseudo-elite, not the street. And it has its sting — Trump himself has lost major business deals (and is the rare person who can afford to) because of his immigration stance — but the privacy of the voting booth is one place where Americans don’t yet have



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to fear being politically incorrect.

The second thing Trump has tapped into is related to the first, and it was brilliantly articulated by one Julius Krein in a September *Weekly Standard* article. He [wrote](#) of Trump:

[W]hat defines him as a candidate and forms the essence of his appeal, is that he seeks to speak for America. He speaks, that is, not for America as an abstraction but for real, living Americans and for their interests as distinct from those of people in other places. He does not apologize for having interests as an American, and he does not apologize for demanding that the American government vigorously prosecute those interests. ... His slogan is “Make America Great Again,” and he is not ashamed of the fact that this means making it better than other places, perhaps even at their expense.

In other words, Trump is tapping into what is the historical norm and has only been dispensed with, quite recently, by the suicidal West: a “tangible...nationalism,” as Krein put it. This makes him stand out in a time when an European Union insider can self-righteously [say](#) “sovereignty is an absolute illusion that has to be put behind us,” home-owner association officials can [fine residents](#) for flying the American flag, and an establishment-choice presidential candidate can call an invasion an act of love — and not be tarred and feathered and “[warned out of town](#).” Trump talks like a patriot in a bizarro world where treason has become the norm.

Of course, a lack of seriousness does bedevil us. But understanding that PC is the antithesis of seriousness puts this in perspective. The arenas claiming to be able to identify “serious candidates” — the media and academia — are themselves the most PC of all and thus wholly unserious. And since they, along with PC entertainment, drive the culture and help shape opinion, they are partially responsible for what is the root cause of our problems: unserious voters.

Whatever our candidates may or may not be, they just reflect us, an unserious civilization in serious and unstable condition.

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