

Mar-A-Lagowood Comes to Montoursville

In an early description of Donald Trump, he was likened to a Borscht Belt comedian taking his irrepressible show on the road. I figured it was time to hear the man in person. I, among many thousands of others, arrived at the Montoursville Airport to watch the President land and regale the crowd with his shtick.

The performance was a tad disappointing. There were no White Nationalists chanting Nazi slogans or rough, crude people dumping on minorities. There was nothing more than an orderly, large, enthusiastic crowd. When I say large, I mean **LARGE!** This is Montoursville, Pennsylvania, and the people streamed in by the thousands as though they were going to see the most important Rock Star of the century. These were families with children, the elderly, disabled, and all extraordinarily polite. The rally was more like a picnic on a beautiful summer afternoon than any cause célèbre on behalf of the Great Satan.

Rock and roll music blared from the oversized speakers as the FAA control tower announced the approach of the President's plane from 8,000 feet right down to the tarmac along the beautiful ridge of the Bald Eagle Mountains. The crowd cheered at the approach of the blue and white jetliner and from the speakers was heard Mick Jagger singing, and "yes" I kid you not, *Sympathy for the Devil*.

As for the President's speech, he has gone from an ad lib, ad hominem, shoot-from-the-hip wild and crazy guy to a well-rehearsed, carefully delivered stump speech sticking close to the text of the words that appeared on the Teleprompters. The President threw in "what the Hell" like salt and pepper on a thick steak. The crowd bit into the juicy, red meat.

The President sounded moderate. He talked about immigration, growth in the economy, bad trade deals, and the awful Obama Iran give-away which empowered the World's worst promoter of terrorism. The President gleefully bragged about the United States moving its embassy to Jerusalem, Israel. However, the President carefully stayed on script that it is "The economy, stupid." While Joe Biden and the President's increasingly leftist opponents project scary images of trade wars, President Trump quite properly understands that, "What the Hell; how could I lose with this economy?" He is right. The only way the President can lose is by alienating so many people within his own party and firing up the Democrats sufficiently so that the image of the President as Kook in Chief overrides any sense of reality.

An interesting side note, unnoticed by the media, but nevertheless a reflection of The Man: Three people at the rally fainted or needed medical assistance due to the heat and dehydration. Each time, the President stopped and did not begin speaking again until that person received help, was taken care of, and was either helped out of the rally or was seated on a chair. During the five or seven minutes that passed each

time, the President talked to the first responders from the podium and to the attendee, saying at one point, "Let's just wait here a minute until we go on. . . we have all night." It is that sort of personal engagement which the media does not pick up and yet which defines President Trump in a way rarely understood. He connects with people.

There was nothing particularly remarkable about the President's words at the rally. His excoriation of opponents was certainly tamer than Joe Biden's recent performance in Pennsylvania. In that recent dual, Trump winds up sounding like the moderate! President Trump, if he wants to win this election, has to transition from the crude attack dog to the confident, successful, sharp-tongued executive. Can he do it? Only the next year and a half will show. In this country, we have much too long a process costing billions of dollars and tearing the nation to shreds. One great reform would be to vastly shorten the time between state primaries and the general election in November. We have a crazy electoral system calculated to cause the most harm with the least possible good.

I wondered how the press would cover the rally and I took the time the next morning to click through the stations. Trump was right when he said that the national news would show four people behind him instead of a large, enthusiastic and mannerly crowd. He was also correct that the press would play sound bites apparently intended to characterize the President as defensive and abrasive rather than talking about the mundane national, economic and social issues that most people really care about when they go the grocery store or fill up their car with gasoline. The coming election will not be about anti-Clinton-Obama control of the Washington establishment but rather will concern whether the American people can see through the fog of the political wars to vote for an America that is serious about fair trade deals, an economy with the potential to grow, and assimilation of those who live substandard lives in this country into the great pool of social and economic success.

Donald Trump is not a demon. He is not a bigot, a racist, and certainly not an anti-Semite. What Donald Trump is can only be described as much more complex. He is a showman, a comedian, a man with a very specific vision, a pugilist and an irascible genius. The American people will have ample time to decide who they like, who they hate, and why. Unfortunately we can only look to a campaign of negatives, where the pollsters, advertising people and political wonks try to find out how to tie into America's fears and insecurities. The PR advisors will attempt to appeal to the reptile mind, which based upon prehistoric evolution, responding only to fear from a neuropsychological point of view.

Economist John Kenneth Galbraith once wrote that consumer demand is created by advertising. That principle today is used in politics. Demand for negative feelings and positive purchasing characteristics are developed by advertising intended to appeal to our raw emotions. If only Americans could learn to step back and smell the roses and the garbage, we might be able to make an informed and rational decision on the next President of the United States.

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