

A Comical Look at the Energy Behind Donald Trump's Campaign

Everything Donald Trump learned about campaigning he learned from the WWE.

And he's following the playbook to a tee. WWE (World Wrestling Entertainment) is, of course, the pinnacle of the world of professional wrestling. It has its own television network and features stars such as Roman Reigns, The Miz and Samoa Joe.

Donald Trump himself made guest appearances back in the day and in one episode even body-slammed Vince McMahon to the mat before shaving McMahon's head in the ring after his victory.

For Trump, a presidential campaign is a WWE bout, one just as "rigged" as the other. He is the Tangerine Tornado, and he will pulverize anyone who climbs into the ring with him. His fans love him. Trump is their hero, their gladiator, and they're having fun. They want him to win the championship belt, and they will bring the rafters down when he does.

Many of his fans (many, but not all) like it when he insults his opponents because that's what wrestlers do. A championship wrestler ridicules his opposition, mocks them, taunts them and calls them names. And his fans want him to do it and eat it up when he does. The meaner and more insulting, the better.

While developing a devastating insult is bad form in a world of manners, it's part of the game in wrestling. It's expected, and fans will be disappointed if their hero doesn't resort to such tactics early and often. Trump has perfected the WWE campaign style—Lyin' Ted, Little Marco, Low-Energy Jeb, Crooked Hillary—and he's likely to pulverize the opposition on his way right into the Oval Office.

This is what America, including the GOP establishment, has failed to grasp. Donald Trump is not a politician; he's an entertainer, and not just any entertainer. He's participating in a "sport" in which his fans are calling for him to take out anybody and everybody who climbs into the ring with him. And Trump is happy to oblige. While polite society is appalled at his antics, Trump is just having fun. And so are his supporters.

This failure to appreciate the cultural backdrop to his campaign explains why people are flabbergasted when he continually does things that are over the top and discover to their shock it results not in plummeting ratings but skyrocketing popularity. His fans—we could call them voters, but let's be real here—can't get enough of it. The more he dishes it out, the more they love it. It's impossible for him to go too far. The further he goes, the more they love him, the more they cheer him and the higher his public stock soars.

There is no way for Trump to insult his way out of this race. Insults are what got him to where he is. Insults are the secret sauce to his recipe for electoral success. He's indestructible and invincible for one reason: Everybody else is serving tea while he is body-slamming people into the canvas.

Since he's the only one doing it, he literally has no rivals. Nobody can beat him. Nobody can touch him. Everyone else is playing by the Marquis of Queensbury rules, and he's playing by The Undertaker's.

This explains his unstoppable momentum. When others try to shame him or lecture him, his fans think they're just being wimps.

WWE fans don't care what their heroes believe, or what they do outside the ring, or what they did before they got in the ring. And so it is with Trump fans. It doesn't matter to them

that he does not have a coherent political philosophy. They just know their guy is beating the green beans out of his opponents, who happen to be people they don't like either.

They despise the establishment of both parties, and he's the guy who's putting the establishment out of its misery. He's pile-driving people into the mat, and his fans love it.

Here's how the baffled *New York Times* put it today:

Donald J. Trump's behavior in recent days—the political threats to the House speaker, Paul D. Ryan; the name-calling on Twitter; the attacks on Hillary Clinton's marriage—has deeply puzzled Republicans who expected him to move to unite the party, start acting presidential and begin courting the female voters he will need in the general election.

But Mr. Trump's choices reflect an unusual conviction: He said he had a "mandate" from his supporters to run as a fiery populist outsider and to rely on his raucous rallies to build support through "word of mouth," rather than to embrace a traditional, mellower and more inclusive approach that congressional Republicans will advocate in meetings with him on Thursday.

His fans don't want "traditional," "mellower" or "more inclusive." To them, that reeks of weakness. They're angry and don't want Trump to politely usher his opponents out of the ring; they want him to throw them over the ropes.

So while everybody else is playing chess, Donald Trump is engaging in a no-holds-barred, pin-them-to-the-mat, play-for-keeps, body-slamming campaign. We're seeing what happens when you put a chess master in the ring against "Stone Cold" Steve Austin. I wouldn't bet on the chess master in that matchup.
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