Emails Again! Trouble In The Trump Family Bubble, Junior Don & His Very Naughty Emailing

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Michael J. Matheron, July 13, 2017

Prince Donald is in trouble. When Jr. Donald Trump self-released his email thread* heads shook ruefully and legalistically. We learned that in June 2016 he accepted a meeting with a person he thoroughly believed was a Russian government lawyer who offered access to damning information about then-candidate Hillary Clinton in order to help Trump win the presidency. Jr. Don effusively accepted the offer. Why on earth would he agree to that meeting? Did he not know that the American government and a large majority of American voters consider Russia as a dangerously chronic irritant? Was he unaware of basic elementary school FEC law? Where did he go to school? Did he attend school, mentally, I mean?

Legally, Jr. Don may have tripped the wire on a variety of laws including an FEC law pro

hibiting a campaign contact with a foreign government for anything of value (monetary or otherwise). This is especially true when an adversarial government makes the offer. Would Jr. Don have met with Kim Jong-Un at a Mets game had Kim sneaked into NY? Open question. North Korea and Russia are in the same infectious disease league – avoid like giant bed bugs except through channels energized by an actual sitting president's administration, like, say, Barack Obama's was during the 2016 campaign and transition.

So, outside of Jr. Don's, Kushner's, and Manafort's subsequent misguided meeting, merely *agreeing* to the settee may put otherwise unlikable Jr. Don in the conspiracy and espionage zone monitored by nasty government investigators. Moreover, many legal eagles consider his email of June 3, 2016 adequate to meet the criterion for a campaign finance criminal conspiracy charge. So, if Jr. Don cares for low-hanging fruit like a governorship or Senate seat in 2018 or 2020, running his campaign from Devon federal prison would be seriously cramped, although prison campaign operations are not unprecedented.

Back to the Russian Federation. I'd bet your ten dollars that two years ago a large majority of Donald Trump supporters would have pegged Russia as a serious adversary (for general population through 02-05-2017 see here). For authoritarian cheerleaders of the Trump campaign, however, the decision might have been split; authoritarian personalities are not simply persons who want to dominate, they are also, and in larger numbers, those who want to be *led* [.pdf] by a dominant figure. It's reasonable to believe that Trump's supercharged embrace of Vlad the Putin, another “strong” leader, might have appealed enough to those weak authoritarians to unload their votes. Trump's embrace of Putin's style went so far as his legendary request that Russia go and find those 33,000 missing Hilary Clinton emails. As President Trump he continues to treat Russia with kid gloves three sizes too big for his hands.

Turning to our intel establishment, hopefully released by now from Dick Cheney's black eminence, it has restored its muddled overall reputation to at least its former state of moderately believable. And they believe. To a high certainty. Russia pushed the election interference envelope beyond the pale, pardon the horrible mixed metaphor that ought to be beneath my station. But is not.

President Obama's Reaction Inaction Lack Of Traction. Muddying the swamp water even more - sensible metaphors are not my bailiwick - why did President Obama not react vigorously to halt Russia's envelope-pushing election interference? Perhaps the issue will land on Mr. Mueller's desk. As the leader of a Democratic executive branch the President likely wanted to avoid appearing to influence an election. Perhaps now-fetal historians will judge his laudable high-mindedness as a mistake they'll trace back to Plato.

There *are* rumors that President Obama wanted to present a united bipartisan patriotic chorus of fiery denunciations and sanctions but was rebuffed by the House

and Senate leadership, especially Mitch McConnell. If true, why? Investigate, I say! I thought patriotism was the GOP's wheel house when convenient. Perhaps this wasn't convenient? Why's that? To Obama's credit he did unilaterally shake his finger at Mr. Putin and say, “Cut it out.” He also shut down two Russian sites that purportedly were bed and breakfasts, but apparently only served Russia-friendly spies. As a result 35 Russians formerly ensconced therein were sent packing to more menial jobs as Russian snipers' practice targets.

All sides of this complicated nonlinear equation we call the United States government seem stuck in the mud, but Mueller's task force is a likely exception, please God. That's where all the potential civil and criminal actions sit impatiently in the waiting room. It's a Trump nightmare responsible for more than one orange hair in his scalp. And scalp is an appropriate term for Jr.

Donald's full head of hair. Two other potential scalps are already running the FBI gauntlet: Paul Manafort, a "subject of the investigation," and Jared Kushner a “person of interest.” By the way, in unofficial FBI-speak, "subject of the investigation," and “person of interest” more than just occasionally means, “You did it, and we gotcha.”

In a Friday follow-up post I'll look at how these events have much to say about the need for nuanced and expert campaign and presidential transition structures, even – perhaps especially – among those who, like a hopefully rising Progressive Party, want to boldly restructure. For many, especially on the right-wing, expertise and political experience is akin to experience at sewage disposal, *i.e.* something related to a task few would desire (and not meant as a slur on sewage disposal personnel, whom I admire above astronauts even).

The Trump campaign campaign was based primarily upon a disdain for ethics, policy expertise, and political experience. They thought, quite cynically, I believe, that all the world operates as does the business world, largely unregulated, or ineffectively regulated due to industry-capture of regulatory agencies, and often unethically. So, for the Trump team everything goes, still. Though, once Jr. Don got his private parts caught in a wringer this week, everything goes may have gone.

More profound reflections tomorrow, including why is there no hubbub regarding the DNC's active (illegal?) undermining of Bernie Sanders candidacy?

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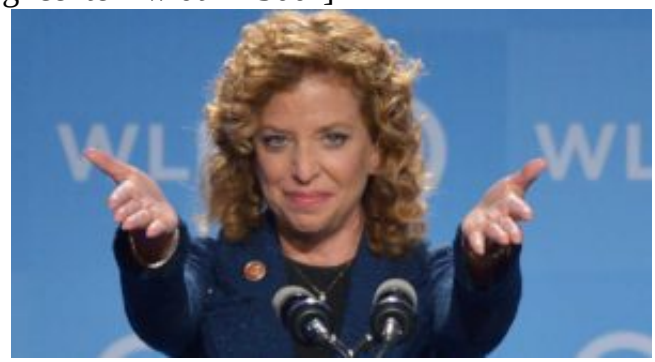

"Donald Trump. Brought to you by . . ."[/caption]

* Jr. Don released his emails only after being informed by the New York Times investigative editor that the *Times* was going to release them imminently. Jr. Don craftily beat the Times by about 10 minutes.