

It is true that Americans are facing a natural selection moment in November. We face a choice that will not only define us as a people, but chart the course for our republic in the decades to come. Given the evolutionary forces involved with populations in (often mortal) competition with one another, the election outcome will contribute greatly to our fate as a people. The question probably boils down to whether or not a critical mass in our republic insists upon being entertained above all else.

But simply because this election is a Darwinian test of sorts does not mean we can accuse our opponents of being racist, sexist, and xenophobic. Truth be told, we *all* hold these ugly attributes to some varying degree. A beautiful thing about our country is the street diplomacy we acquired, across generations of hardship and suffering, where people from all walks of lives are woven into the same civic fabric. This was not a “gimme.” In fact, it works against our base instincts, which have real power. In a sense, sneering at the “alt-right” disregards the role we Americans have played in bringing the human race into an era where differences can be respected rather than feared.

As the contest Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump moves into the home stretch, here are several things Democrats should keep in mind. **First: stop whining and start winning.** This business of complaining about the media has gotten silly. True, Republicans have been very good at “working the refs” over the past few decades, but media narrative will *always* tend towards the corporate and oligarchic. The key for any candidate these days is to be friendly with reporters in the particular while contemptuous of the profession in general. In any event, elections today are much less about “spin” than thirty or forty years ago. The public is not immune to media narrative, particularly from the standpoint of increasing or decreasing voter enthusiasm, but media is not really changing the minds of people, so enough whining already. It is the home stretch; time to make your prospective voters excited about Hillary.

**Second: Trump needs to be ridiculed, not for being a bully, not for being a liar, but for being weak.** When he is criticized for doing the things bullies do, it only reinforces the narrative that he is strong. Similarly, strong men lie. No one has any illusions about *that*. What makes Trump ridiculous is that he can only talk tough when with Fox News weaklings or at one of his Mussolini-esque rallies. When he gets some pushback, such as with that Pastor in Flint, or is in an unfamiliar environment, such as when he was with the President of Mexico, Trump becomes meek as a lamb. The fact that Trump folds when the chips are down is what should be mocked, not that he bullies or is a liar.

**Third: Not all change is good change.** There is the change that goes from bad to worse and anyone who thinks that life in America could not get any worse does not get out much. It is true that Trump is a different kind of politician, but the “change” he brings would only accelerate the change we have already seen, i.e. the transition of our broadly prosperous, middle-class republic into oligarchic stagnation. Trump is not an obstacle to this trajectory: he accelerates it.

**Fourth: The fact Trump has not released his tax returns enables us to assume the worst.** Rather than wasting time with outrage towards Trump’s breach with tradition, the

fact that Trump has not released his tax returns should be taken as proof that he is a failure as a businessman. This is not a question mark that can only be resolved when Trump releases his tax returns: it is an exclamation point derived from the reality that Trump is a failed businessman, that he does not give anything to charity, and that he pays less in taxes than most Americans. His “business empire” is a house of cards and despite all the hot air surrounding his “brand,” the key to Trump’s success was his dad. Any person who has a father spotting \$3 million here or \$9 million there is bound to live a comfortable life. That does not make Trump a “winner” by any stretch.

**Fifth: Economic growth is a good thing, but the Republicans do not know how to deliver it.** As the “Never Trump” crowd inevitably migrates back to Trump, the public needs to understand that their tired prescriptions for renewed growth stand in the way of jobs and prosperity. Republicans created the crash, Democrats fixed the problem, and then the Republican Congress began strangling the economy with ill-timed fiscal austerities. I have written extensively on how Democratic economics should be argued in the public space, including a piece just three months ago. I encourage you to read that for a conceptual framework on how to make the economic argument.

**Sixth: Double-down on the argument that Russia, China, and ISIS are pulling for Trump to win.** Trump is obviously trying to frighten Americans into voting for him, but the fact is that our country’s enemies and potential enemies want him to win this election. They understand, in a way that many Americans do not, that a blustering President undermines American interests and reduces our strategic influence. Look at George W. Bush. For all his big talk, America was weaker after his Presidency, not stronger. It is true that Clinton voted to give Bush the authority to invade Iraq, but that is the difference between being in the arena and just sort of giving opinions on the Howard Stern Show. For those people who do not wish our country well, Donald Trump getting elected President would be a gift from heaven. Trump is already a laughing stock. The deadly serious issue facing the electorate is whether we are willing to allow our nation to become a laughing stock as well.

**Seventh: Convince public that HRC is worthy of their vote.** Hillary is the master here. She is the likable one. She is the one who is better with the truth of things. She is better for our country. The debate will be a great opportunity to shred that asshole and have some fun doing it. Just do it in a manner that reveals Trump as weak and ineffectual, and calling him a bully or a liar is not going to achieve that. And the way Hillary conveys strength is by being what she is: good humored and smart.

Every election carries a sense of urgency about it. For the wider world, the Trump/Clinton match is a curiosity, but for Americans, it really comes down to whether we are a population which puts its own amusement above everything else. That makes it a natural selection election. But again, this is not an elitist thing. This is about the central tendency of the American people.

*Civis Jones*