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DONALD TRUMP: DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE

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Ben Carson, the latest major endorser of Donald Trump's candidacy for the Republican presidential nomination, last week asserted that there are two sides to Trump's personality. The one that the public sees and the "cerebral" dimension that only a few see. Shortly afterwards, Trump himself underscored his cerebral side by calling himself a thinker. Even more recently when asked on MSNBC's *Morning Joe* about the persons he consults on important public policy issues Trump responded that he is his own primary consultant and added "I have a very good brain."

Having attacked Jeb Bush as "low energy" we could call the side seen in public as "high energy" Trump. Instead because they seem to be more revealing of Trump's true personality, we identify those two dimensions as Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. The cerebral Trump is Dr. Jekyll, the one who insists he is a thinker, the one who attended an Ivy League school, the one who authored the greatest business book ever written, the one who claims he will unify the Republican Party.

The public Trump is Mr. Hyde, the one who tells it like it is even if his rhetoric at times is over the top, the one who slips into vulgar language to drive home his talking points, the one who fires up his supporters by ridiculing the other candidates including the Democrats whom he sees not as opponents but as enemies, the one who knows that if you repeat a message often enough it becomes accepted as the truth.

How to account for the Jekyll and Hyde dimensions to Trump's personality? Trump in this regard is no different than any other human being who struggles to know the good and to live by the good. At times, the good in us is overwhelmed by the evil that masquerades as the good. Recall Gordon Gekko's forceful assertion that "greed is good." And Harry Reid's defense of the lie he told in 2012 about Mitt Romney's taxes: "Romney didn't win [the election] did he?"

The original Dr. Jekyll at first viewed his experiments as good in the scientific sense that he was trying to come to grips with the human personality. As those experiments continued he began to realize that the cocktail he had concocted released the evil Mr. Hyde whom he could no longer control.

Just as Hyde emerged when Jekyll downed the toxic cocktail, Trump becomes Hyde through the adulation of his supporters at the public rallies he has organized to energize his candidacy. Trump feeds off the hero worship they express as he repeats his campaign slogans to “make America great again,” to “win, win, win,” to “bring back jobs from China and Mexico.” At the very same time he stokes their anger channeling it in the direction of voting for him in the caucuses and primaries. He knows full well that with enough angry supporters he could win the Republican nomination.

When Trump looks in the mirror he sees only Jekyll. He brags about the size of his rallies because he needs those huge crowds to affirm his Jekyll self-image. Their adulation helps him construe what he says as the essence of goodness when in fact too often it is not. Because he is delusional, Trump never sees the Hyde who is so clearly evident in his tweets that are intended to destroy his enemies.

A far greater danger to the Republic emerges should Trump win the nomination and then the presidency. Trump supporters do not identify his two dimensions in terms of Jekyll and Hyde because they see in him the strong man who will address the problems that ignited their anger – illegal immigration, loss of manufacturing jobs, middle-class wage stagnation, terrible trade deals, crumbling infrastructure.

A strong man who by definition rejects two of the fundamental pillars of the Republican Party: limited government and individual freedom. A strong man who is the antithesis of self-governance that is at the very heart of the American experiment. President Trump would deal with Washington gridlock by suppressing self-governance and would keep his grandiose promises not by invoking the will of the people but by drawing upon the strength of his own will. History shows how and why strongmen emerged in Italy and Germany in the 1920s-1940s and more recently in Cuba, other Latin American countries, and Africa.

Trump’s presidential aspirations bring to mind Ben Franklin’s warning to a questioner who at the conclusion of the Constitutional Convention of 1787 wanted to know what the delegates had created. “A republic if you can keep it.”

It is not Jekyll who wins when Trump wins. It is Hyde.

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