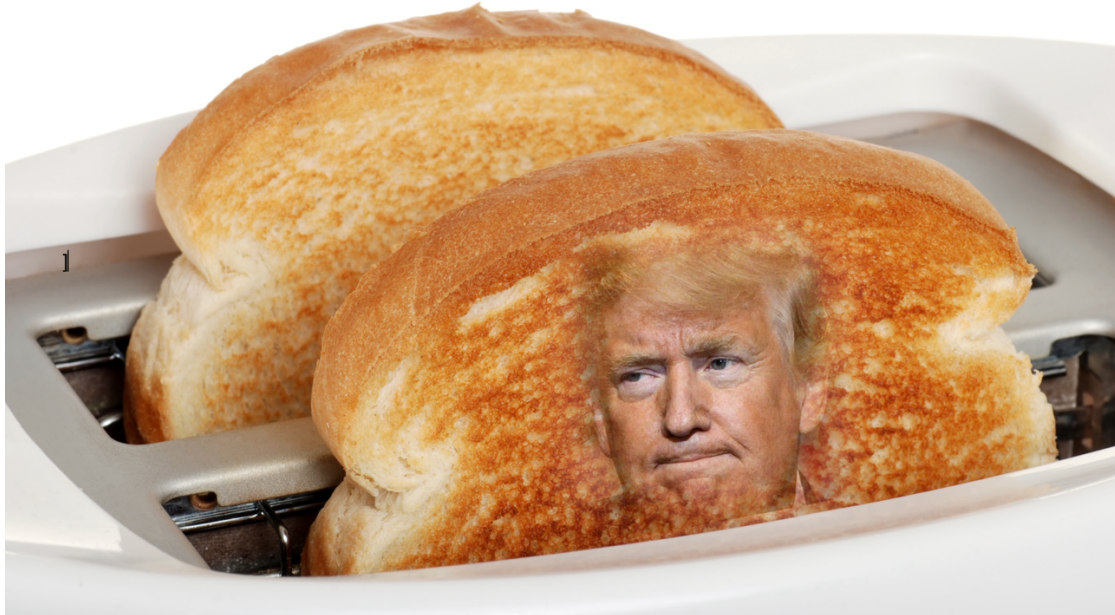


Missing the Point – Trump is toast.

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Images from Shutterstock, combined by the author.

We can all relax.

“Ahhhhh. Finally,” says the voice in my head, exhaling a sigh of relief.

Donald Trump is not going to be the next President of the United States. In fact, it's highly doubtful that he'll even be the next Republican nominee, despite what he thinks and what [the polls](#) show. Stick a fork in him. He's done. He's just too dumb to know it and too nuts to accept his reality, however bold the writing on the wall.

He's not going to run for re-election. He'll be lucky if he doesn't spend the rest of his life in jail or on house arrest as a courtesy to the Secret Service team assigned to protect him. In all likelihood, he'll live out his remaining years in disgrace for reasons that he'll never acknowledge, not even to himself.

Ever do something embarrassing you wish you could go back and expunge from the record? Donald Trump as President is that moment for the American story. It's history. Too well-documented to deny. We'll just have to get over it. We screwed up. America is, after all, human.

Mind you, I'm not saying that the next President won't be a Republican or that Joe Biden is unbeatable. Just [taking off his shirt](#) the other day while enjoying the sand at Rehoboth Beach may have blown his chances for re-election right then and there. The end of the video – that you can watch via the link I just gave you – showing him walking away with Mrs. Biden is worse. He moves over sand like someone who forgot to bring his walker. Just knowing he's too old to be President is one thing. Actually seeing the bare chest and aging stride of an 80 year old man, on the other hand, on whose shoulders rests the fate of a great nation, are indelible images that voters will find troublesome.

I like Joe and hope he lives forever. That said, he's only one mini-stroke or other physical problem away from becoming the single term, transitional President he told us he would be. It's an honorable legacy still not too late for him to consider voluntarily.

“What about all those polls showing Trump way out front? Are you saying they're not accurate?”

No, they're accurate. They're just not meaningful, no matter how much play they get in the news by media that are overly focused on the results of survey research that is nothing more than simple “recognition polling” – polls that measure impressions that can change overnight and will evolve over the course of a campaign season.

When a prospective, likely voter is presented with a list of candidates, that voter identifies his or her favorite based on three criteria, in descending order of importance...

The first and most important criterion is **recognition**. Does the voter recognize the candidate? Not everybody watches or cares about political news as much as you and I do. I have to watch cable news and read online newspapers for living. That's my excuse. What's yours?

As I write this, there's a flat screen on the wall of my office tuned to CNN, albeit muted when I'm writing, and even I don't recognize most of the [Republican candidates](#) running or thinking about it. Like so many sharks circling Trump whose blood, figuratively speaking of course, they smell in the water, these Presidential hopefuls all look the same to me, politically-speaking. It's too early in the campaign to tell them apart.

There's no shame for a likely Maryland voter, for example, who doesn't know anything about South Carolinian Tim Scott – even though he's a three-term Senator and the only African American Republican in the Senate. Or former Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson? And who, in the world, is Vivek Ramaswamy? No disrespect meant to Mr. Ramaswamy, none at all, but I don't know anything about him and I don't have time to find out. It's up to him to make the effort and spend the money to make the

introduction – or somehow get the media to do it for him. He and most of the also rans haven't done that yet.

So, if I'm a likely voter, I don't pick anyone I don't recognize or know anything about. No wonder *those* candidates score so low in the polls.

Why do you think Democrat Congressman David Trone, who represents western Maryland's sixth congressional district, spent so much money advertising when he declared, early, to run for Ben Cardin's Senate seat? It's because the vast majority of voters whose support he needs to be nominated live elsewhere in Maryland where nobody knows his name. He's wealthy and spent his own money to buy name recognition, scaring other less well-funded potential candidates away and amping up his standing in the polls from zero to something much higher.

The second most important criterion for likely voters who have been selected for a political poll is **personality**. Of those candidates who I recognize and know something about, who do I like?

Third – and a distant third at that – of those remaining candidates, what do I think of their **politics**? What do they stand for? What are they promising that appeals to me?

And there's a fourth factor, the **mood** of the voter, that affects the second criteria in particular. As a voter, are you, for example, happy or at least reconciled to politics being what it is or are you frustrated, maybe even angry and looking for something different?

This is how Trump won his party's nomination... High levels of recognition, a personality that was interesting to voters tired of the same old, same old shtick from other candidates and a blatant, narcissistic dislike for government that, for his core supporters, was positively orgasmic. Then he won the general election because he was running against Hillary Clinton and because most voters, including Democrats and independents, didn't realize that he was and still is a soulless con man who cares far more about himself than his country.

It's too early for Presidential political polls to be meaningful. Soon enough, Trump will be indicted for a third time, in Georgia. Trials he couldn't put off will be underway and will headline the news in 2024 ahead of the primaries and general election. He's almost as old as President Biden and carrying too much baggage to win the general election this time out. As a friend of mine would say, "The only thing he'll be running for is cover."

Republican candidates and the party's political leaders may be reluctant to talk about it, but the Trump base is losing its luster as essential to anyone's election. The nomination is up for grabs. Candidates who can attract significant funding will begin spending it on name recognition. The better ones will have adjusted their messaging

and candidate personas to boost their standing in the polls while Donald's numbers fall.

Trump himself and the media who thrive by following him may be missing point, but some of the Republican candidates, the smart ones with money who have figured it out, are positioning themselves to replace Donald as the new Republican party standard bearer.

So, ignore the media who talk about the polls. Get Trump out of your head. The most important question is which Republican candidate is going to replace him. Can that Republican beat Joe Biden? And, heaven forbid, what will our country be like if the Republicans control the House, Senate, White House and the Supreme Court?

I don't know about you, but just putting that last sentence on paper gives me the willies.

-Les Cohen

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