

# Daily Herald

## The basket of deplorable Skittles

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September 25, 2016

Donald Trump Jr. made headlines this week by tweeting a picture of Skittles.

The picture, a bowl of Skittles, was captioned: “If I had a bowl full of Skittles and I told you that just three would kill you. Would you take a handful? That’s our Syrian refugee problem.”

Along with the picture, Don Jr. included the following commentary:

“This image says it all. Let’s end the politically correct agenda that doesn’t put America first.”

The implication that we can’t afford to care for refugees because of possible terror attacks caused the outrage machine to restart.

That’s interesting for several reasons.

First, it’s ironic people find the comparison offensive to begin with. I remember when feminists first took to Twitter with the hashtag #YesAllWomen where they shouted in 140 characters about how hard it was being a woman.

Many talked about sexual assault, cat calling and being told to smile.

Many in #YesAllWomen even said their negative experiences were so awful they had a hard time trusting men. Many felt threatened by the mere presence of men and painted the whole gender with one brush until individual men proved themselves to be different.

Many replied to #YesAllWomen with the hashtag #NotAllMen.

The responses to #YesAllWomen mostly said that not all men are rapists or sexual predators, and it’s sexist and wrong to generalize one gender like that.

The most striking response I saw come from #YesAllWomen in response to #NotAllMen was the same explanation Donald Trump Jr. gave. The only difference was #YesAllWomen’s version used M&Ms instead of Skittles.

I saw this explanation everywhere.

I saw so many feminists say they recognized that not all men are predators, but if a certain percentage of the M&Ms were rapists then you couldn’t blame women for being cautious in taking a handful.

This isn't the only time the left has generalized others like Trump Jr.

Hillary Clinton not that long ago decided to label 40 percent of all Trump supporters as the racist, sexist and homophobic "Basket of Deplorables."

It's interesting that now that Donald Trump has made the generalizations that everyone suddenly switched sides on whether it's OK to stereotype.

If you can make the comparison between men and M&Ms, or that simply supporting a candidate puts you into a basket, then certainly comparing refugees to Skittles shouldn't be outrageous.

I'm of the opinion that all three comparisons are wrong.

Should women just blindly trust men? No.

Should the United States blindly trust anyone seeking refuge? No.

There are a lot of crazies in this world who want to hurt women or Americans.

But should we treat either of these groups with hostility simply because they're the same gender, race or nationality?

No. That's wrong. People are individuals and thus should be treated as such.

How many Mormons have ever been convicted of child abuse? But are all Mormons child abusers? No.

Even in Provo, some neighborhoods are kind of rough. I live in west Provo, and the west side has some issues. But that doesn't mean we should wall off half the city because of a couple of tweakers and transients.

Muslims are no different.

Sure, people from various groups will share cultural norms, likes and dislikes. But that's not the same as "all men should be treated like rapists" or "all Syrians should be treated as terrorists" or "Trump supporters are all deplorable."

Second, let's address whether or not the idea is correct in the first place.

Many critics felt that comparing people to inanimate objects is dehumanizing.

I disagree.

If you say a football player is built like a brick wall, you're not taking away his humanity. You're saying he's huge.

We all know these comments compare characteristics of people and not actual individuals. Whether we're comparing employees to cogs in a machine, calling an intelligent person smart as a whip or comparing someone to a sack of potatoes, we're not being literal.

We make comparisons between people and objects all the time, and most everyone understands it's meant to highlight characteristics and not to dehumanize the person.

If you're going to be mad at Don Jr., let it be because the comparison is wrong and not because of some meta philosophical reason.

Having said this, do I agree with the tweet?

No.

I can accept the fact that ISIS could try to infiltrate the ranks of Syrian refugees, but numbers show the chances of that effectively happening are incredibly low.

The CATO Institute, a libertarian think tank, recently published a study calculating the risk of getting killed by a refugee in a terrorist attack. The report says an American's chance of getting killed by a terrorist masquerading as a refugee in a year is 1 in 3.64 billion.

That means if you have a bowl of Skittles, your bowl would have to contain 3.64 billion skittles and one poisoned piece of candy.

In 2014, the most recent year available in FBI data, the U.S. murder rate was 4.5 per 100,000 people. That means you're significantly more likely to get killed by a random American than by a splinter cell refugee.

You're probably more likely to get killed by a police officer than an ISIS refugee in America.

I'm even willing to bet that if combine the probabilities that an ISIS refugee might kill you, sexually assault you, attack you, steal your Amazon package from your front door, insult your mother or accidentally step on your dog's tail, you would still be more likely to choke to death on an actual Skittle.

So was Donald Trump Jr. correct? No.

Even if it's likely that ISIS wants to infiltrate the refugee population, the chance it will be able to do so successfully and hurt anyone is incredibly low.

Third, would I take a handful of Skittles?

Yes, I would.

I've talked about being Mormon before. The church has made no small deal about how it is our moral responsibility to serve others and even went so far as to create a large program to get members of the church helping the refugee population.

Much like how many Muslims are refugees now, Mormons were once refugees. President Dieter F. Uchtdorf himself was a refugee.

Even if there was an incredibly small risk that taking care of refugees would result in some harm, I feel that, as Americans, Christians, Mormons or whatever, it's our responsibility to lend a hand.

That doesn't mean we don't vet our refugees, but we shouldn't lock them out, either.

All I want is for us to take a reasonable approach to policy. Whether it's foreign policy, economic policy or local issues, I just want us to be reasonable about it.

Painting everyone with the same brush, whether it's with a basket or with Skittles, is wrong.