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The Photograph in Trump's Skittle Meme Was Taken by a Refugee

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On Monday night, Donald Trump Jr. discovered a meme that perfectly expressed his view of the Syrian refugee crisis.

Like so many other opinions espoused by men named Donald Trump, this summary of our “refugee problem” was cruel, bigoted, plagiarized, factually wrong, and grammatically incorrect.

The core issue, of course, is that whether one should eat from a bowl of Skittles, in which three have been poisoned, is *radically* different from whether the United States should offer refuge to those displaced by the Syrian Civil War.

If you choose not to eat the Skittles, no one gets hurt (not even you, really, since even the non-poisoned candies are a net-negative for your nutritional health). But if no country offers the 4.8 million Syrian refugees — half of whom are children — a place to restart their lives, they suffer in camps and then die.

Then there's the discrepancy in risk: As Mashable explains, if we assume the bowl contains six ounces of Skittles, “That's 162 Skittles, including three Skittles that would kill us, or, around a 1.9 percent chance you will be killed by a Syrian refugee.” The chance that you will die in a terrorist attack on U.S. soil, committed by *anyone*, let alone by a refugee, is 0.00000027 percent, according to a recent study by the CATO Institute.

So, unless one views refugees' lives as essentially valueless, the risk-reward proposition of welcoming refugees into your nation is not at all analogous to that of eating from a bowl of poison candy.

To establish that refugees' lives do, in fact, have value, some reminded the Trump campaign that suggesting otherwise is monstrous. Others noted that the iPhone was invented by a refugee, as was the theory of special relativity.

And now, David Kittos of the United Kingdom has informed the Trump campaign that *the very photograph it used to dehumanize refugees* was composed and shot by a refugee. Specifically, himself.

“I am now a British citizen but I am Greek-Cypriot by birth and in 1974 I was a refugee because of the Turkish occupation,” the 48-year-old Kittos told the BBC. “I was 6 years old. We lived in the area of Cyprus that is now under Turkish military control. We had to leave everything behind overnight. Our property and our possessions.”

Kittos took the photo in his home studio, while experimenting with “off-camera flash.” He then posted it to Flickr in January 2010, where someone saw his work and thought, *This can be used to express my contempt for people displaced by war.*

“This isn’t about the money for me. They could have just bought a cheap image from a micro stock library,” Kittos observed in his interview with the BBC. “This is pure greed from them. I don’t think they care about my feelings.”

The fact that the tweet remains on Donald Trump Jr.’s Twitter feed suggests Kittos is correct.