



Donald Trump Jr.'s terrorist-Skittle analogy is completely wrong

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On Monday afternoon, Donald Trump Jr., the son of the Republican presidential nominee, sent out an ... interesting tweet:

"If I had a bowl of Skittles and I told you three would kill you, would you take a handful?" implores the image. "That's our Syrian refugee problem."

Let's just first clarify that analogizing refugees to nuggets of artificially flavored fruit candy is dehumanizing in every sense. The candy's parent company, Wrigley, was quick to point this out: "Skittles are candy," wrote its spokesperson. "Refugees are people." Hundreds of others **took to Twitter** and posted images of refugees, alongside the caption "Not a Skittle."

But there is at least one other major problem with Trump's visual: It insinuates that the risk posed by admitting refugees into the United States is much larger than it actually is.

Let's do some Skittle math!

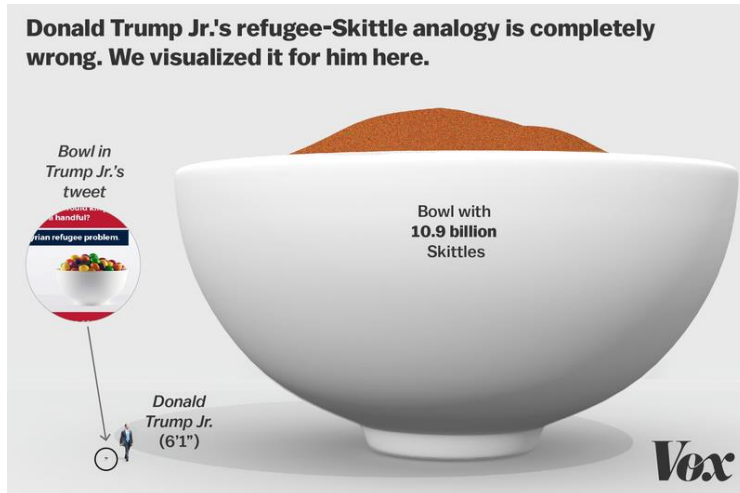
The image posted by Trump pictures a small bowl containing perhaps 100 Skittles. Assuming that three of said Skittles could kill you, eating a handful from this tiny bowl would, indeed, be risky.

Here's the thing, though: The image drastically oversells the "risk" posed by these Skittles (read: refugees).

A report released last week by the **Cato Institute** measured the risk to Americans posed by refugees. The report found that an American's chances of being killed by a refugee in a terrorist attack in any given year are **1 in 3.64 billion**. America's murder rate — at **4.5 per 100,000** capita — is about 163,800 times higher.

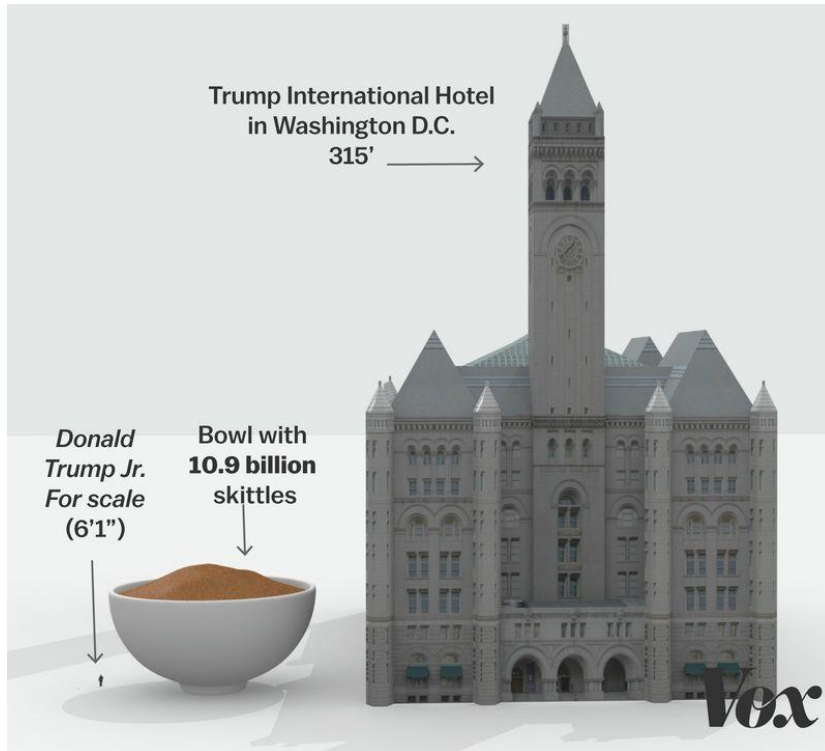
As the Washington Post's **Philip Bump** points out, adhering to Trump's analogy, a bowl with three deadly Skittles (refugees) in it would need to contain **10.93 billion Skittles**. Bump calculated this to be the equivalent of **1.5 Olympic-size swimming pools** full of the candy. This would equate to a bowl of Skittles roughly 246 feet long, 123 feet high, and 9 feet deep.

Below, Vox graphics editor Javier Zarracina has depicted what that bowl would look like. Donald Trump Jr. (6-foot-1) is included for scale, along with the original bowl in his tweet.



Javier Zarracina/Vox

And just for fun, here is what this gargantuan bowl of Skittles would look next to Washington, DC's (yuuuuge) Trump International Hotel:



Javier Zarracina/Vox

According to Bump's analysis, Wrigley produces **200 million Skittles a day**. It would take the company 54 days to produce the number of Skittles necessary to fill this bowl — and only three would pose a risk.

Or you could think of it this way: You'd have to go through 202,407,407 bags of Skittles (each of which contains about **54 candies**) in order to find the three individual pieces that are contaminated.

Trump's tweet, much like the rhetoric of his father, insinuates that inviting refugees to the United States is a deadly risk not worth taking. But that risk, in reality, is infinitesimally small.