

THE UNION

Power of showmanship: the pitch and the con

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The character of a national leader matters. It is the words and actions of a country's leader that most widely represent that country's highest principles and core values to the world.

But we do nothing while the world watches our president compulsively counter-punching a dead military hero, while serving as the commander in chief to two of McCain's sons.

No restraint. No decency. No character.

It took one mass shooting and less than one week for New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern to respond to a real national emergency. She is banning all military style semi-automatic weapons, high-capacity magazines, and all gun parts that allow modification into the type of weapon used in the mosque shooting.

Trump's 2020 budget calls for a federal cut of \$1.5 trillion to Medicaid, \$845 billion to Medicare, and \$25 billion to Social Security.

When our president phoned the Prime Minister asking what he could do following the shooting of Muslims by a white terrorist, she replied, "Show sympathy and love for all Muslim communities."

The New Zealand Herald followed up with a stinging editorial stating, "Trump personifies everything the rest of the world despises about America: casual racism, relentless self-aggrandizement, and vulgarity on an epic scale."

Trump has lived his whole life in flagrant disregard for the law and has a 40-year history of federal and state investigations resulting in financial penalties to prove it. He is showman who is good at selling deals and making money ... for himself.

The Pitch: Trump promised federal regulation to curb gun violence following the Parkland shooting. But he only targeted schools and local communities with funds for reporting and crisis intervention training.

The Con: The House just passed two bills that strengthen the background check system. Trump plans to veto them when they cross his desk.

The Pitch: Despite Trump's repeated threats that "Killers are coming through the Southern border" and "Muslims hate us." Statistics prove otherwise.

The Con: Immigrants commit crimes and are incarcerated at a much lower rate than U.S. citizens (CATO Institute, a Think Tank founded by the Charles Koch Foundation). Trump knows that.

The Pitch: "I am not going to cut Social Security like every other Republican and I am not making cuts to Medicare and Medicaid."

The Con: Trump's 2020 budget calls for a federal cut of \$1.5 trillion to Medicaid, \$845 billion to Medicare, and \$25 billion to Social Security.

Under threats from billionaire and corporate campaign donors to pass a tax cut for the wealthiest 1 percent or risk the loss of further campaign money, a Republican Congress passed a tax cut benefiting corporations, limited partnerships, real estate holdings and huge investments.

The Pitch: "It's not good for me, believe me."

The Con: According to the nonpartisan think tank, Tax Policy Center, most of the wealthiest 1 percent who actually pay taxes will now see a tax cut averaging \$747,580.

Trump has committed tax fraud against the very government that assisted him in accumulating his private fortune with tax abatements, incentives, and public subsidies.

The Pitch: Trump promised to surround himself with the best men.

The Con: So far, six of Trump's best men have been sentenced to prison and five are turning states evidence.

Trump is attracted to American mobsters, unscrupulous investment bankers, and business and personal associates tied to the Russian mafia.

Many known Russian criminals have nested like carrier pigeons in the feathered nests of Trump Tower. One of the flock was convicted felon Felix Sater, who worked with the Trump family on multiple real estate deals and presented Flynn with a plan to end sanctions against Russia while negotiating a Trump Tower deal.

"Our boy can become president of the USA and we can engineer it," Felix Sater said.

Attorney General Bill Barr now reports that while the Mueller Report does not "conclude that the President committed a crime, it also does not exonerate him."

Another confusing message.

Americans have a history of buying snake oil from hucksters who captured the attention of a crowd with promises of a cure-all for what ails them.

Our president is not "The greatest job producer God ever created." He does not "Know more than the generals." "Mexico will never pay for it." "Democrats don't hate Jews!" "The press is not the enemy of the people." "Muslims don't hate us." And you can still watch a blowhard like Hannity without the wind picking up to power your television.

President Trump pretends to protect the welfare of white entitlement through the haze of dawns early light and ends up pocketing taxpayer money by twilights last gleaming.

The Sting: Trump will end his presidency by having made great deals for himself and his family and leave our country holding the bag ... one with a \$22 trillion national debt and another with a \$890 billion national deficit.

If you are still in the market for a cure-all for dementia, delirium and bone spurs, you can buy into the stimulant the showman is selling. Sip it cautiously, down it if you can't stomach the taste, or use it to slick back your hair.

But don't ever expect a straight dose of truth.