



Guest Commentary: Trump and Skittles

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You know what the great thing about Skittles is?

You can never eat just one. They're just that tasty.

So on behalf of fruit-flavored candy addicts everywhere - not to mention the huddled masses, yearning to breathe free, I plan to enjoy a bag of that childhood favorite just as soon as I finish thanking Donald Trump Jr. for the spectacularly dense thing he said on Twitter on Monday.

In case you missed it (and it's hard to imagine how that happened), here it is:

"If I had a bowl of Skittles and I told you just three would kill you, would you take a handful," the scion of the Trump empire mused. "That's our Syrian refugee problem."

Then he added, just for good measure, "This image says it all. Let's end the politically correct agenda that doesn't put America first."

There are a number of things wrong with Trump the Younger's assertion - putting aside the fact that, so far as anyone knows, Syrian refugees are neither chewy nor fruit-flavored.

It is mainly that you possibly face a greater risk of choking to death on a Skittle (which is already astronomical) than you do of dying at the hands of a refugee.

According to a report by the Libertarian Cato Institute released last week, your risk of being killed by a refugee is a truly insane 1 in 3.64 billion.

That's billion. With a "buh."

By the way, you know who came into the country on tourist visas and killed a bunch of Americans?

That would be the 9/11 hijackers, who largely entered the country on tourist and business visas, laid in wait, and then perpetrated catastrophic attacks that claimed nearly 3,000 American lives 15 years ago this month.

It is, in fact, much harder for a refugee to gain entrance to the United States than it is someone seeking entrance on a tourist or business visa.

As *The Week*, and other sources have reported, it actually takes up to two years for a refugee to gain entrance to the United States. And no matter what a Trump (full-sized or bite-sized) tells you, the vetting process is a complicated one.

It's also important to note one really other important thing about refugees: They're fleeing, amid great hardship and at tremendous personal risk, to avoid being killed in a horrible war back home or to escape some other tremendously dangerous situation.

They've bought into the notion of America as a welcoming safe haven. If you want to radicalize them, the best way to make sure that happens is to be as unwelcoming and hostile as possible.

Like, say, comparing them to a bag of bite-sized candies.

So before you go off half-cocked, thinking you're going to be killed by a refugee, consider a couple more things.

One, the bombings in New York and New Jersey over the weekend, as awful as they were, were committed by a naturalized American citizen of Afghani descent who was radicalized.

Yes, the suspect in the Minnesota mall stabbing that left 10 people injured, was a refugee - when he was three months old.

Vigilance is important, and yes, if you see something, you should say something.

But, again, your odds of being killed in a terrorist attack remain astonishingly low.

The *Washington Post* crunched the numbers a while back, citing data from a variety of sources including The National Safety Council (2004), the U.S. Census Bureau and the Centers for Disease Control (2003).

They concluded Americans are, among other things, 17,600 times more likely to die from heart disease; nine times more likely to choke to death on their own vomit; 404 times more likely to die in a fall and 13 times more likely to die in a railway accident.

Put another way, your chances of dying like Jimi Hendrix (choking on your own vomit), while suffering from heart disease while falling off a ladder strategically positioned over a railroad track are better than your chances of dying in a terrorist attack — let alone one perpetrated by a refugee.

So have another Skittle.