

Political satirist speaks at Rancho Mirage event

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Political satirist, journalist and author P.J. O'Rourke spoke Tuesday night as part of the 2016 Rancho Mirage Speaker Series.

O'Rourke, who describes himself as libertarian, discussed the current state of American politics, including taxes, income inequality and the current presidential election cycle.

"I'm a political commentator and I can't get a word in edgewise with Trump around," O'Rourke said. He described the presidential candidates as, among other things, "animated spittoons."

"Cruz, Kasich, Rubio, Carson, Clinton, Sanders and Trump. That is not a list of presidential candidates, that is the worst law firm in the world," he said, to audience laughter.

O'Rourke, who has covered presidential races since 1972, said in a separate interview that he theorizes this presidential race is more about authenticity than likability, pointing out that none of the highest-polling candidates rate particularly well in terms of likability.

"Originally, we would elect people we admired. And as time went on, we have tended more to elect people we like. It's not for nothing 'I Like Ike was one of the great political slogans ever," he said. "But now it seems we keep moving from the impersonal to the personal. We have moved from admiration to affection to authenticity."

Both in the interview and during the talk, O'Rourke described attending a Trump rally with his 15-year-old daughter while covering the New Hampshire primary.

"We got out of the Trump rally and she said, 'Dad he doesn't say anything, he just says we're going to make America great again and if somebody says 'How are you going to do it?' he says, 'Really well!'"

O'Rourke also said this presidential race might be so crazy because the reach of government has expanded. "I think it's getting to people. I think people are starting to crack."

"People want to feel that they really know the candidate. They feel that they've been surprised and disappointed by candidates that turn out they didn't know. Jack Kennedy was a womanizer, LBJ was power mad, Richard Nixon we don't even go there."

During the question and answer portion, O'Rourke said that if Trump makes him vote for Hillary Clinton, "I'm coming after him with the two things he fears most: a building inspector and Kobe

Bryant's barber," he said, which elicited laughter from the audience. "You can say a lot of things about Hillary, but she's not insane."

O'Rourke is currently the H.L. Menken Research Fellow at the Cato Institute and has previously written for *National Lampoon*, *Esquire*, *Vanity Fair*, and other publications. He is also a regular panelist on NPR's *Wait Wait...Don't Tell Me!*

The third and final speaker in the 2016 Rancho Mirage Speaker Series will be Glenn Greenwald at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, March 22. Tickets and information are available [here](#).

O'Rourke's speech was coincidentally held on the same night as the Nevada caucuses, which Trump won.