

Just because he's going to be president, it doesn't mean he deserves respect

Prior to Donald Trump's big win over Hilary Clinton last month, Robert de Niro [made a video](#). Speaking directly to the camera, he had this to say about the orange-skinned presidential hopeful:

"He's so blatantly stupid... a punk, a dog, a pig, a cock, bullshit artist, a mutt, who doesn't know what he's talking about, doesn't care, thinks he's gaming society, doesn't pay his taxes, he's an idiot; Colin Powell said it best: he's a national disaster, he's an embarrassment to this country, it makes me so angry that this country has gotten to this point that this fool, this bozo, has wound up where he has. He says he wants to punch people in the face, well, I'd like to punch him in the face."

Fair enough.

However, speaking after Trump's win, on American television, de Niro backtracked, saying, "... I can't [punch him] now he's president. I have to respect that position."

Really? Just because he's president, you're not going to go all Raging Bull, and smash him in his vile, pig-like face? You're going to "respect" him, just because he's president? Come on now Bob. Lace up the gloves one last time. It would make great television.

Of course I can see the logic behind de Niro's *volte-face*; Trump was elected fairly based on the constitutional framework of American democracy (despite the fact he lost the popular vote to Clinton by an astonishing margin of three million votes). A punch in the face for Trump, post-inauguration, is a punch in the face for the system, and the people, that put him there. It is an affront to the highest political office in the world.

However, it should hardly need spelling out: Trump himself is an affront to the political office he will soon be entertaining. He is an affront to decency, to sanity, and to hair stylists everywhere. He is an odious and misogynistic narcissist, a bully, a compulsive liar, an apparent racist, a tax avoider, and a corporate criminal. He clearly has a serious personality disorder, and he is quite possibly psychopathic.

(Psychopaths can often be found within the top floors of corporate offices – especially ones emblazoned with their surnames on the outside in giant gold letters.)

Perhaps the least edifying spectacle surrounding this political car crash has been witnessing a cavalcade of specimens from across American society slithering into Trump Tower, to prostrate themselves before this disgusting man. They are worshipping the power that will soon tremble through his slimy jowls. They wish to bask in his reflected glory. They will scabble for whatever scraps might be thrown their way. They will gladly abandon whatever principles they may once have cherished. They will feed the ego of the monster, whose appetite is limitless, which will suck in planets and star systems, and black holes, and galaxies, belching obnoxious filth at intervals. Because after all, what could possibly go wrong? Hasn't every deal struck with the devil ended happily?

We have witnessed former political enemies, like Mitt Romney, choke down dinner with Trump. All of his Republican opponents during the primaries have fallen into line, swallowing their words without a hiccup, in the typical style of the politician. Defence contractors,

Silicon Valley bosses, retired sports stars, “celebrities” of various kinds – all have ascended the tower that bears his name, watched by the press pack permanently based on the ground floor, and the hoards outside on the street.

I’m sure it must seem very glamorous and exciting now. But what will the legacy of this political experiment be?

Trump has pledged to expand the fossil fuel industry, and to back out of the Paris climate accords, signed by 194 nations across the world, with the intention of limiting the effects of global warming. His election win caused share prices in coal, oil and gas companies to jump, while investment in renewables has fallen. This is precisely the kind of setback that we, as a species, can ill afford.

His determination to “Make America Great Again” would appear to come at the cost of life on Earth, as we know it today. For this reason alone – leaving aside his bigotry, his misogyny, and his ignorance – the sycophants calling at Trump Tower might have cause to think twice before summoning the elevator.

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