

The Excellence of Less

Written by Alex Baer

Sunday, 04 September 2016 18:10

It was a complete surprise when I got word from the Trump campaign that I had been chosen to interview its candidate.

"We hate all the press," I was told upon confirming the invitation details, "because they always insist on quoting what Mr. Trump actually says, which simply isn't fair." Apparently, random drawings for unknown interviewers were seen by the campaign as being no worse than selecting known individuals by name, media outlet, or audience.

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My body clock told me I met the candidate around midnight. (This is only a guess, as I saw no clocks in the room, when I came around, after my eyes adjusted to the light, as the black bag was removed from my head, following the flight in Trump Force Nine.)

"It's really something to meet you," I said thickly, refocusing my eyes to the well-known figure seated across the large, dimly-lit room. He was flanked by staff and bodyguards. My hands were lashed to the arms of the chair with zip-ties, I slowly realized. My mouth tasted like horse blankets soaked in rusty garlic oil.

"I imagine it is," he clucked.

I remembered as much of the meeting as I could, having no way to record details, which follow. (If the account is fuzzy in spots, I apologize. Blame the knock-out drugs.)

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INTERVIEWER: How did you arrive at using Ronald Reagan's old campaign slogan, *Make America Great*, for your campaign? Did you hope to encompass the fatherly figure Reagan so happily milked?

TRUMP: I wasn't aware. Reagan was smart, using my slogan. He was OK, but not my kind of genius. I am much better at it.

I: Do you think America has slid from greatness, and, if so, what are you proposing to do to help the nation re-attain its former status?

T: Things. It's terrible now. I want it better. All Americans do. It's only right. We deserve it.

I: Do you have policies or plans?

T: No. Accountants.

I: How do they enter into things?

T: You want things, you pay. A new war will cost everyone ten thousand a year, minimum, cash on the barrel.

I: Everyone?

T: Not me. Just the little people.

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I: And schools, roads, hospitals?

T: Another eight or ten a year. Each thing. By each person.

I: So, a new war, a new area school, a new regional highway...

T: Yeah, 30 big ones, cash, by every person. Kids, too.

I: Would that be before or after taxes?

T: After, of course. Everything else has to keep going.

I: Do you have economists checking out the plan for viability?

T: No. Why should I waste the time?

I: Are you concerned that the country has somehow lost its way?

T: Oh, the country is crazy right now, what politicians do. And immigrants. Bad, very bad.

I: Are you speaking here of mediocrity of effort or results now, or about some failure of planning or policy you would like to change?

T: I was thinking of hats. My slogan is really excellent. It costs, though. A dime a word or

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space. Really. Unbelievable, right? It's what it costs to put it on hats. My slogan. China, Bangladesh, whatever. That's \$2.40 a hat. It's too much. Going to make it smaller.

I: Your slogan is too long, you mean -- that it costs too much to have it sewn on the hats, the way it is now?

T: Not as bad on tee shirts. It's all one thing. But hats, yeah. Each letter is, you know. Single.

I: Well, they say less can be more, sometimes. So. how would you change your slogan?

T: That's pretty good. I can use that. Maybe.

I: Pardon me?

T: I have the best words. For the *bigliest* ideas. But that's good, your less-thing.

I: That less is more, you mean -- from the Browning poem, from the minimalist school of design, from...?

T: [Thinking] *But excellence is good.*

I: Yes, yes it is. But, I'm not following...

T: Not as long. Could be "excellence again." Something.

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I: For your slogan?

T: Yeah. Talk to me more. About more and less.

I: Well, they say less is more. You could also say more is less, too, in philosophical...

T: I like that. *More*, and *excellence*, and *less*. That can work.

I: Work how? I don't see...

T: It's like this: More is good. Less is better. Plus, excellent is better than good. Which can only mean less is excellent!

I: Well, if you say so...

T: I do say so. I'm saying so. I'm going with that. *Make America Less* -- that's only...

[Here, the candidate looked up at a man flanking him; the man leaned down and whispered something in his ear, then straightened up again.]

T: Only \$1.70 a hat, saving more than 69 cents off each hat...

[The candidate looked back up at the same man, who provided a subtle nod of agreement.]

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T: ... which helps. When you buy as *bigly* as me. Hats. Thousands at a time. Making jobs.

I: Well, yes -- but those jobs are overseas, aren't they?

T: Thanks. OK idea. Interview's over.

I: Already?

T: Appointment I forgot. Maybe you can come back. Ideas are good. So, come back, maybe.

I: Thank you, but I am adopting your new motto -- *less is excellent*.

T: Good choice. Agreeing with me? That's always *excellent*.

[The candidate beamed at me, and made an almost imperceptible nod to someone behind me.]

There was a slight sting, like a bee, in my neck, down to the right, behind my ear, and over more. I awoke again at my desk, head lagging back in my chair, where I last remembered being, before the interview began.

Trump is nothing if not efficient. On the keyboard was a red hat. The logo read, *Make America Less*.

Despite all his lies, Trump is a man of his word: Make America Less?

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He already has.

Today's anthem:

The exodus is here... Let's get together before we get much older.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=316HQ3769-s>

To make sense of life, know history; to make the knowledge hurt less, do art:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ucPuhZKty4g>

Meanwhile: □ older art cannily captures newer life:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QMAUIId-2i48>