

WONKS AND TRUMP

Back in July, I [wrote](#) that if and when Republicans, having worked their way through the 5 stages of Trump grief, came to accept him as their party's standard bearer, I hoped that "they may well recognize that their ideological celebration of the rich and of demagoguery have delivered them [precisely the candidate](#) they've asked for."

Republicans have worked their way through their grief – especially in the face of even more destabilizing Cruz grief, seem to be coming to grips with that their party seems poised to do.

The pundits who said it would never happen, however, are having a bit more difficult time.

Nate Cohn, still imagining a Marco Rubio (and not John Kasich, who's the best polling non-nut right now) resurgence, is [shocked](#) that Republican leaders have helped Trump shore up his IA advantage, and with it chances he'll get the nomination.

There's still a lot of time before the caucuses on Feb. 1. The debate on Thursday could change things, as could the belated [airing of attacks](#) on Mr. Trump from Mr. Cruz's allies. Mr. Cruz is also thought to have a considerable organizational advantage over Mr. Trump, who may be dependent on low-turnout voters.

But the increasing possibility that Mr. Trump will win the state – in no small part because of an improbable alliance with the party's establishment – makes Mr. Trump's path to the nomination far more plausible than ever before.

[snip]

Astonishingly, Mr. Trump's attacks were successful in part because they were amplified by some of the [G.O.P.](#)'s most

prominent leaders, like John McCain and Mitch McConnell. The chorus of opposition to Mr. Cruz didn't end there; Terry Branstad, the six-term Iowa governor, [said he wanted](#) Mr. Cruz "defeated," and the former presidential nominee Bob Dole [said he preferred Mr. Trump](#).

[snip]

A Trump win in Iowa could make it more difficult for a mainstream candidate, like [Marco Rubio](#), to mount a comeback later in the season – even if the establishment does intend to fight Mr. Trump after dispatching Mr. Cruz.

Cohn points to Nate Silver for his judgment (including on whether the book *The Party Decides* has been disproven by Trump) that the GOP party is not so much backing Trump yet as it is working first to defeat

[I]t may be that Republicans think of Cruz as the more immediate threat, and then plan to turn around and attack Trump later. But that's a high-degree-of-difficulty caper to pull off. For one thing, Trump, who's in a much better position in the polls than Cruz in [states after Iowa](#), could rack up several wins in a row if he takes the Hawkeye State.

[snip]

Things are lining up better for Trump than I would have imagined, however. It's not his continued presence in the race that surprises me so much as the lack of a concerted effort to stop him.

And Jonathan Chait [piles on](#), arguing with the others that his past predictions that Trump would go nowhere was based on the assumption that, "I didn't think the GOP was suicidal."

All three of these pundits are still missing the key part however (which carries over into Chait's other badly wrong punditry). The reason Trump is winning this year (and the reason Bernie is competitive) is because the promises of the elite have gone undelivered for so long. It may be that the GOP is trying to accommodate to themselves to this, or still have plans to get save Rubio's campaign. But ultimately, the GOP has no choice, because Trump proved immune (partly because of all the free press he has gotten, not to mention his own wealth) from their controlling mechanisms, but to let a man who exploited their own demagoguery exploit it one last time, because the master the GOP has been serving in its name – unrestrained capitalism – is not helping the high school educated white voters who make up the key part of Trump's success. And yet, Trump's voters like his authoritarianism, something else the GOP has encouraged more and more since 9/11.

The pundits are still looking at sacred fundamentals for their analysis, without considering that underneath them all are actual human beings who were bound, one day, to [revolt over the undelivered promises](#).

The elite pundits are still operating – on the election itself, but also on health care and economic policy – on the assumption that no one will or is holding them responsible for their undelivered promises.

Update: I hope (well, actually, may reluctantly after much procrastination) return to this issue, but [this great post](#) hits at a lot of what I would also hit at on the pundits' lack of awareness about the revolt over unfulfilled promises.