

PLACE YOUR BETS: WHAT'S TRUMP'S OCTOBER SURPRISE? [UPDATE-2]

[NB: Check the byline, thanks! Updates will appear at the bottom of the post. / ~Rayne]

It's become something of a American tradition – candidates pull something out of their asses in October which resets the calculus by which swing voters calibrate their darts before they aim at the board of presidential candidates.

Here are 180 years of surprises, though a few attempts aren't squarely in October but rather late in the election season:

1840: Van Buren (D) vs. Harrison (W) – Van Buren's fed prosecutors charged Whigs with voter fraud.

1880: Garfield (R) vs. Hancock (D) – The "Morey letter" purportedly written by Garfield implied Garfield favored Chinese immigration.

1884: Cleveland (D) vs. Blaine (R) – Blaine said nothing in response to a popular bigoted preacher's claim that Democrats promoted "rum, Romanism, and rebellion," costing him Catholic and southern sympathizers' votes.

1912: Taft (R) vs. Wilson (D) – Taft's VP died a week before election day.

1920: Harding (R) vs. Cox (D) – Rumor of Harding's "negro blood", Roosevelt's gays in Navy investigation.

1940: Roosevelt (D) vs. Willkie (R) – Roosevelt promoted African-American Colonel Benjamin O. Davis Sr. to brigadier general.

1964: Johnson (D) vs. Goldwater (R) –

Jenkins' gay sex scandal, Khrushchev's ouster, PRC's first nuke test, September "Daisy" TV ad.

1968: Nixon (R) vs. Johnson (withdrew)/Humphrey (D) – Nixon undermined Johnson's peace talks with Vietnam.

1972: Nixon (R) vs. McGovern (D) – Henry Kissinger's "peace is at hand" remarks referring to the Vietnam war.

1980: Carter (D) vs. Reagan (R) – American hostages remained in Iran.

1992: Bush (R) vs. Clinton (D) – Caspar Weinberger's indictment (really in June).

2000: Gore (D) vs. Bush (R) – George Bush's drunk driving charge.

2004: Kerry (D) vs. Bush (R) – missing explosives cache, OBL tape, Saudi oil price cut, terror alerts.

2006: midterm elections – Mark Foley scandal, Saddam Hussein trial verdict.

2008: McCain (R) vs. Obama (D) – Revelation of Obama's "illegal immigrant half-aunt" made the news.

2012: Romney (R) vs. Obama (D) – Romney's "47%" tape was released.

2016: Clinton (D) vs. Trump (R) – "pussy grabber" tape + Wikileaks' Podesta emails, Comey letter.

2018: midterm elections – A "migrant caravan" materialized in Central America.

My gosh, October surprises going back as far as the Whig Party. Trump will be in good company if he aims beyond his sabotage of the U.S. Postal Service to obstruct Americans' votes by throwing a late wrench in the works.

But what will that wrench be?

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There's already been some speculation as to what kinds of ratfucking Trump will pull at the last moment. Two topics which some suggest may be used to generate October Surprises are the Durham investigation and a vaccine for COVID-19.

I don't have a feel for the former. Marcy or bmaz might have a better sense of the likelihood. Can't rule out there being more than one surprise, either. I put my money on the latter, though.

When it comes to the COVID-19 vaccine, we're already seeing jockeying around this issue, including the news about Putin's daughter having been a test subject for a COVID-19 vaccine candidate.

Unfortunately, Dr. Anthony Fauci has naively set up expectations for a vaccine by the end of the year.

... "From everything we've seen now – in the animal data, as well as the human data – we feel cautiously optimistic that we will have a vaccine by the end of this year and as we go into 2021," said Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. "I don't think it's dreaming."
...

The problem is that he's offered inadequate qualifications when asked for comment, though to be fair, this excerpt is from that awful hearing with Rep. Jim "Killer Clown" Jordan being an asshole to him.

It's extremely doubtful there will be a safe and effective vaccine ready for nationwide or global deployment by the end of the year. There may be one or more candidates which are ready for varying stages of testing, trials, or regulatory approvals.

While there are numerous vaccines in development around the world, American pharma company Pfizer has a candidate nearing a benchmark:

... Pfizer has said repeatedly since June that it was targeting October for its application and the companies started a large late-stage study last month of the candidate vaccine, one of the few globally in later stages of development.

On Thursday they reported data from previous early-stage trials of the vaccine, BNT162b2, that showed it induced similar immune responses and had milder side effects than prior data on another candidate. ...

October. Huh. What a coincidence. How odd its timing also syncs up with anticipated roll-out of Russia's vaccine.

Do pay careful attention to that "milder side effects" bit. There's a lot in these three words without enough explanation.

Trump's veep-minion is singing a hopeful refrain, invoking some religious happy talk with the word "miracle":

VP Mike Pence: "I've got a newsflash for Joe Biden and that is we think there is a miracle around the corner."
pic.twitter.com/hejaMm79yK

— The Hill (@thehill) August 22, 2020

But this morning Trump had another temper tantrum via Twitter about the vaccine approval process:



Donald J. Trump
@realDonaldTrump



The deep state, or whoever, over at the FDA is making it very difficult for drug companies to get people in order to test the vaccines and therapeutics. Obviously, they are hoping to delay the answer until after November 3rd. Must focus on speed, and saving lives! @SteveFDA

7:49 AM · Aug 22, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone

No, you great tangerine dipshit. Speed should NOT be the focus unless you're worried about re-election and need a Hail Mary pass delivered in October.

For the American public, the vaccine must be safe and effective. There are no shortcuts to these two deliverables, especially since this vaccine will be rolled out to the entire population, from children to elderly. We don't want a vaccine which causes more problems than the disease it's supposed to prevent.

Which is why the Food and Drug Administration needs to do its job thoroughly and with as much openness as the process and partners permit. But not with such speed that safety and efficacy are threatened.

What I can't say is whether Trump's temper tantrum is meant to pressure the FDA, or if it's meant to condition the public to believe he is responsible for making the shortened vaccine development timeline happen, so when the FDA does get around to completing regulatory review, Trump can crow he alone can fix COVID-19.

Which is bullshit after 175,695 Americans have died of COVID-19 as of 11:00 p.m. ET today.

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So what's your take? What will be the October surprise Trump will attempt to save his ass this November?

This is an open thread.

. . .

UPDATE-1 – 11:50 P.M. ET –

Son of a gun, just when I was going to log off and go to bed this crap pops up in my feed.



Kayleigh McEnany 
@PressSec

 US government account

News conference with President [@realDonaldTrump](#) at 6 pm tomorrow concerning a major therapeutic breakthrough on the China Virus. Secretary Azar and Dr. Hahn will be in attendance.

11:21 PM · Aug 22, 2020 · [Twitter for iPhone](#)

Great. We're going to hear narcissistic dementia babble with some faux authoritative affirmation from a goddamned ONCOLOGIST and not an epidemiologist/virologist/public health MD about whatever dog-and-pony White House Coronavirus Taskforce stuff this is.

Where will the far-more-trusted Dr. Fauci be during this crap?

We all know the real point of this last minute lob into Saturday night's dark is a means to change the subject of tomorrow morning's Sunday talk shows.

The White House doesn't want the punditocracy to talk about

- 1) The Democrats' convention this past week and Joe Biden's acceptance in particular;
- 2) Postmaster General Louis DeJoy's appearance before the Senate and Steve Mnuchin's role in the USPS crisis;
- 3) The Delivering for America Act, H.R. 8015 which passed the House today and now heads to the Senate;
- 4) The lack of action in the Senate on reconciling the House's HEROES Act with the Senate's awful HEALS Act;
- 5) The beginning of a massive eviction/foreclosure/homelessness crisis;
- 6) The failures of schools both K-12 and universities to safely relaunch;
- 7) Mary Trump's audiotape of Trump's sister Maryanne Trump Barry in which much tea is spilled about Trump;

and lastly, the ongoing mass death event costing 1200 American lives each day because Donald Trump is such an abjectly corrupt fuckup.

Add that to your predictions – of which item is Trump most afraid of that Team Trump had to manufacture a breakthrough to derail Sunday morning talk shows?

. . .

UPDATE-2 – 7:15 P.M. ET –

Trump's 6:00 p.m. presser has come and gone – a quickly slapped together sandwich of a racist anti-China dig, nonsensical back-patting and a ridiculous announcement, with a side of exactly three questions allotted to Fox News (2) and OAN (1) before fleeing the scene like a criminal.

What's the likelihood the questions were pre-approved?

I am so fucking glad I didn't turn on my television to watch this laughable circle jerk.

Politico published a story earlier this afternoon about the subject of this announcement: the use of plasma from COVID-19 survivors as pharmaceutical therapy for patients in severe condition, hospitalized with COVID-19.

Convalescent plasma is NOT a preventative therapy.

Experts like former CDC director Dr. Tom Frieden aren't rah-rah about this therapy or announcement:

Big news? A 100-year old treatment may work, a bit, for some patients. May or may not be safe. Science moves slowly – there is still so much we don't know. What kind of antibodies? Which patients benefit? When in course of illness? What dose? How long? Need science, not politics.

– Dr. Tom Frieden (@DrTomFrieden) August 23, 2020

The one thing no one was able to ask Trump was whether he's received this therapy. It's possible he received a prophylactic dose; I can think of one occasion when it may have happened, three days after Herman Cain died.

I am not endorsing the rumor that Trump secretly went to Walter Reed yesterday. But that is clearly a big bruise on the back of his hand. Plus there's a tell: carrying a pile of newspapers? Seriously? <https://t.co/60fUefmY73> And we know they lie: <https://t.co/whlJbl8DGA> [pic.twitter.com/WH8Mbv4R07](https://t.co/pic.twitter.com/WH8Mbv4R07)

— Dan Froomkin/PressWatchers.org
(@froomkin) August 2, 2020

Maybe this is the surprise which hasn't yet been sprung on us yet?