

SURROGATING THE 2016 AMERICAN PRESIDENCY

Tonight was the opening of the Democratic National Convention. It was a rather stunning difference from the scenes on the street yesterday and today, where there were minimal and well behaved cops in Philly as contrasted with the warrior cop oppressive stormtrooper presence in Cleveland. From my reporter friends from the Arizona Republic, the food is totally better in Philly too. Hey, armies move on food, and cheesesteaks rule.

Is everything coming up roses? Nope. There was the whole Debbie Wasserman Schultz thing. She was well advised by our friend David Dayen to stay away and excommunicate herself from the convention podium. But, crikey, the rest simply looks beautiful. Sanders supporters marching in the streets for change, mostly unfettered and unoppressed, other voices being heard, and all relative delegates meeting and co-existing in the halls. This ain't the dysfunctional RNC bigoted shit show. That, in and of itself, would be worth this post. There is more.

Don't let cable coverage and the relentless yammer of their panels of self interested toadies fool you, the few true camera pans at the RNC showed more than a few empty seats and a far smaller crowd (especially in the upper decks) than displayed tonight at the DNC.

The real tell, in difference, was in the quality of the speakers and presentation. The only lasting memory from the RNC's opening night was the embarrassing plagiarism in Melania Trump's speech. Honestly, my bet is that is not on her, but the understaffed and idiot handlers her narcissistic, yet bumbling, husband provided. That said, it was a *res ipsa loquitur* deal and, in the end, spoke for itself. What else do you remember from that night other than Tim Tebow did not appear? I got nuthin.

The first night of the DNC in Philly, however, came with a litany of decent and well presented folks presented to a full and energetic hall. Emphasis on full. The dynamics in staging and presentation were stark. As were the quality and mental coherence of the speakers. The first electric moment came when Sarah Silverman, who along with Al Franken, was doing a bit and intro to Paul Simon singing (a geriatric, albeit mesmerizing) Bridge Over Troubled Water. Silverman and Franken had to kill an extra 120 seconds or so and she blurted out some hard, and real, truth that her fellow Bernie Sanders supporters who refuse to help Clinton defeat Trump are flat out "being ridiculous". Truer words have never been spoken.

But soon came Michelle Obama to the podium. I am not sure I have the words to describe how good Michelle was. As a convention speaker, a surrogate, a leader, a mother and as a First Lady embodying all of the above. Michelle Obama killed it. She blew the joint up. I don't know how else to describe it, but if you did not witness it live, watch the video up at top. Just do it.

Frankly, at the conclusion of Michelle Obama's speech, it was hard to see how the last two key speakers, Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders, could possibly top the moment. Sadly, they could not. Liz Warren gave a great, and often in depth, speech. One that absolutely slayed Donald Trump in nearly every way. On its own, it would have been noteworthy. But sandwiched between the brilliance of Michelle Obama and Sanders, with his acolytes cheering and hers still reeling, it seemed good, but not great.

Bernie Sanders caught a little more fire, but mostly because of his young contingent of supporters. And that is not just a good thing, it is a great thing. Sanders did everything, and more, he should have done in this speech by ginning up the classic points and issues his campaign, and its followers, were built on...and then transferring them to Clinton.

It did not work perfectly, but this will be a process up until the election date on November 8. Bernie went a long way, gracefully and patiently, tonight. And, while the cheering crowd appeared to be much more than just the "Sandernistas", all of the hall seemed to get on board. That, along with Sarah Silverman telling holdout Bernie Busters to wake up and not be ridiculous, were giant steps in unifying support for Clinton over Trump.

Listen, I have been around the block a few times, and know I am supposed to lead with the headline. Sorry, this one worked up to it, and here it is. The RNC and Trump got their lousy bounce because the media, once again, cravenly portrayed what happened in Cleveland as normal, and tit for tat, with what is happening, and will happen, in Philadelphia. That is simply a ratings and craven click germinated lie. The difference is stark.

Nowhere is it more stark than in the picture painted as to the surrogates who will come out of the respective conventions to campaign for their respective candidate between now and November 8.

Um, let's see, for the GOP we have Newt, Carson, Melania, Thiel, Flynn, Joe Arpaio and Chachi Baio. I excluded Ivanka because she might actually be competent. Seriously, that is basically it for Trump surrogates. From the whole convention. Even Clint Eastwood's chair took a pass in this, the year of the Orange Faced Short Fingered Vulgarian Bigot.

Let's compare that with what came out of the Democratic Convention's first night. Sarah Silverman, Al Franken, Paul Simon, Eva Longoria, Corey Booker and, then, the big three...Michelle Obama, Liz Warren and Bernie Sanders. That is just the first night folks.

See a bit of a dichotomy in personality and credibility there?

Then picture that Clinton's road warrior surrogates will include not just the above, but

also Joe Biden, President Barack Obama and the Big Dog himself, Bill Clinton.

Elections are won in the trenches. Say what you will about Hillary Clinton, and I will probably join you on many negatives, but the Clintons do have a ground operation. And their surrogates are like the 1927 Yankees compared to the Bad News Bears for Trump and the RNC. How will Trump bolster his bench, by bringing in Roger Ailes to molest the women of America? Is there another ground plan for the Trump Juggalos?

Sure, Clinton can still muck it up and lose. She, and the DNC, have been beyond pathetic in how they have treated nearly half their party, and much of their activist base, during the primaries and aftermath. Not just ugly, but stupid. They deserve any hell they get for that, whether it comes from appropriately enraged Sanders supporters or from press reporting on hacks (THE RUSSIANS ARE COMING, THE RUSSIANS ARE COMING!!!)

Bottom line is this: Which set of surrogates would you think would do a better job spreading out over the country: Crazy Newt, Racist Flynn, Bigot Arpaio and Chachi, ... or Michelle Obama, Liz Warren, Bernie Sanders, Barack Obama and Joe Biden?

Think I will go with the latter, and I think they will reach a heck of a lot more voters who will actually engage than will the trite and petty bigots Trump will have on the public offer.

And the Dems have a laundry list of other quality surrogates who will stand up. Trump has apparent Klan worthy members like Jeff Sessions, felons like Don King and Mike Tyson, and people who seek to be them.

Who you gonna call when it comes time to vote?

Seems like an easy decision, especially when you consider that the next 30 to 35 years of ideological control of the Supreme Court hang in the balance.