

From: Elias, Marc (WDC) </O=PERKINS COIE/OU=WDC/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=ELIAM>
To: Peter Fritsch; Glenn Simpson; Sussmann, Michael A. (WDC)
Sent: 9/18/2016 5:08:43 PM
Subject: Fwd: MEMO: Trump Freak-Out

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From: **Sidney Blumenthal** <sidney.blumenthal@gmail.com>
Date: Sun, Sep 18, 2016 at 2:07 PM
Subject: MEMO: Trump Freak-Out
To: Nick Merrill <nmerrill@hrcoffice.com>, Dan Schwerin <dschwerin@hillaryclinton.com>, Robert Mook <robbymook@gmail.com>

PRIVATE

September 18, 2016

For: David Brock/Correct The Record

From: Sidney Blumenthal

Re: Trump Freak-out

This memo is based on information from Republican sources close to the top of the Trump campaign and journalistic sources.

1. The Trump campaign is having “a major league freak-out,” according to a Republican source who has been reliable in the past. What is causing the Trump “freak-out” is anticipation of an investigative story to be published by the New York Times. The subject is described as “Russia” and “a disaster.” “That is completely the story of everything going on since Thursday,” insists the source. The Times story, says the source, accounts for Trump’s extraordinarily defensive aggressive reactions—his declaration that he will sue the New York Times, his personal tweeting attack on Maureen Dowd as “wacky” and a neurotic dope,” (though the source says “that’s just him anyway”), his call for the assassination of HRC, and the campaign’s push to the media of the flat-out lie that I was behind birtherism in 2008. On Saturday night, Trump tweeted: “My lawyers want to sue the failing @nytimes so badly for irresponsible intent. I said no (for now), but they are watching. Really disgusting.” Trump did not specify why the Times might be guilty of “irresponsible intent,” which in any case lacks any legal weight. Earlier on Saturday, he tweeted that the Times was “a laughingstock rag.” The atmosphere inside the campaign is described as chaotic, frenetic and “spontaneous.” Bannon and Bossie are said to be grasping at anything to throw back in order to distract from and fend off the coming story. Journalistic sources have independently said that reporters at the Times are working on a Trump-Russia story.

2. According to a Republican source close to the Trump campaign, the campaign is preparing a “helter-skelter” counter-attack. This source says that Trump intends to attack the Podestas, focusing on the Podesta Group and its Ukraine work. A source says, “It’s old material, but that’s what they have.” He also says that Trump will attack Robby Mook, but the source had no more information other than he would somehow be targeted.

3. Roger Ailes is not involved in decision-making, but engaged in the debate preparation. He is developing one-liners and sound bytes for the candidate. The debate strategy, such as it is, according to sources, is to attack HRC on the foundation, Goldman Sachs, whatever, etc., with sound bytes. Trump’s people expect she will be serious and substantive, which they think will put her at a disadvantage. Trump

& Co. believe that the media's fact-checking works in their favor because they think it most of the public doesn't care. In the meantime, the media puts out their sound bytes. The Trump lies are not random, but calculated. Lying is the heart of the strategy.

4. Trump's sudden reactive aggression, his psychological defense mechanism which permeates his campaign, is analyzed in an article by Josh Marshall in the Talking Points Memo website, though Marshall does not have the information about the coming New York Times bombshell.

<http://talkingpointsmemo.com/edblog/the-fever-inside>

The Fever Inside

By JOSH MARSHALL Published **SEPTEMBER 17, 2016, 10:53 AM EDT**

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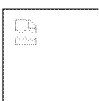
We've now seen one of those days which has become darkly familiar in the year of Trump. Trump is dominated, put on the receiving end of various perceived insults and assaults. In this case, it was being coerced by campaign aides into finally giving up the birther lie - which had to be addressed after the *Washington Post* interview and which I suspect they feared might blow up one of the debates. That was followed by a series of attacks from Hillary Clinton, a for once emboldened press corps roundly attacking Trump for the content and manner of his "major announcement", a furious attack from members of the Congressional Black Caucus and a mix of outrage and mockery from everyone from Barack to Michelle.

The response was predictable and rapid.

Trump lives in a psychic economy of aggression and domination. There are dominators and the dominated. No in between. Every attack he receives, every ego injury must be answered, rebalanced with some new aggression to reassert dominance. These efforts are often wildly self-destructive. We've seen the pattern again and again. The Khans, Judge Curiel, Ted Cruz, virtually every Republican presidential candidate at one point or another, half the reporters who've covered Trump. We can't know a man's inner thoughts. But we've seen action and reaction more than enough times to infer, or rather deduce, his instincts and needs with some precision.

Not infrequently with Trump, there are moments between candor and ingenuous transparency in which he reveals himself. One of the many came during the Khan debacle.

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Donald J. Trump

✓

@realDonaldTrump

I was viciously attacked by Mr. Khan at the Democratic Convention. Am I not allowed to respond? Hillary voted for the Iraq war, not me!

9:32 AM - 31 Jul 2016

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Almost every word in these three sentences are those of a profound narcissist. Last night's outburst - hinting again at the murder of Hillary Clinton - was basically inevitable. His teeth gritted admission that Obama was born in the United States had to be matched by a new lie about Hillary Clinton. He actually managed two. Trump packaged a narrow factual concession into two new lies. What might have been an admission or even an apology was presented as a personal victory for which the country and even President Obama should thank him.

Trump is injured by attacks and slights as we all are. But for Trump they create an inner turbulence which forces an almost peristaltic response. The inner equilibrium must be reestablished. The salient fact about Trump isn't his cruelty or penchant for aggression and violence. It's his inability to control urges and drives most people gain control over very early in life. There are plenty of sadists and sociopaths in the world. They're not remarkable. The scariest have a high degree of impulse control (iciness) which allows them to inflict pain on others when no one is looking or when they will pay no price for doing so. What is true with Trump is what every critic has been saying for a year: the most obvious and contrived provocation can goad this thin skinned charlatan into a wild outburst. He's a seventy year old man with children and grandchildren and he has no self-control.

But there's one part of the last few days that doesn't quite match up to this pattern or at least not on first glance. The fuse for yesterday's debacle was lit late Wednesday night when the *Post's* Robert Costa interviewed Trump on the tarmac in Canton, Ohio in his private jet. Already in this interview, the transgressive, belligerent Trump was back after a few weeks of uncharacteristic discipline. I could see it the moment I read the copy.

One minor mystery I've yet to see any explanation for is that the interview was conducted late Wednesday evening but remained unpublished for almost 24 hours. In an earlier era that might have counted as a rapid turnaround. Even today there are various possible unremarkable explanations. But in today's news environment, with what the *Post* surely realized was a story that would set off a storm, it seems like a surprisingly long delay. I'm not suggesting anything untoward on the *Post's* part. But I did wonder whether the Trump campaign, anticipating the response to Trump's comments, didn't kick up some sort of contrived ruckus about interview ground rules that temporarily delayed publication. This is pure speculation. But the delay seemed as odd to me when the story appeared mid-Thursday evening as the comments were predictably Trump. In any case, whether it was published Wednesday morning or that evening didn't seem to matter terribly one way or another.

As I'm sure many of you did, the moment I read the piece I could tell the fever was back: stabbing at the birther questions, lashing out at Anderson Cooper, boasting that he wouldn't trim any sails or make any concessions. But why? Here was Trump, at the apex of what he's managed to achieve in the campaign, drawing close to a tie with Hillary Clinton, lurching back into Khan/Curiel mode. When I read it it struck me as simply the truth of the man: feeling himself 'winning' he was entirely unable to resist the urge to lash out, strike out at enemies with what felt like his regained power, to regain dominance. He's Trump; he'll always give way to chaotic and self-destructive rages. To do it when he was riding high wasn't a mystery to be explained but the most obvious time. It's the

novelistic fatal flaw.

But reflecting on it, there may be more to the story. Only a few hours before that tarmac interview, Trump was rebuked to his face with cameras rolling by an African-American woman. It may have been the boldest rebuke Trump has received from a 'civilian' (not another candidate in a debate, or a journalist in an interview) in this entire campaign cycle. She even placed her hand on him in calling him to account.

"Mr. Trump, I invited you here to thank us for what we've done for Flint, not give a political speech," Timmons told Trump.

"Okay. That's good. And I'm going to go back onto Flint," Trump replied before ending the speech a few moments later.

As usual, Trump's reaction was characteristically meek in the moment. But internally he clearly seethed.

Our report on the Pastor Timmons' rebuke moved at 4:30 PM on Wednesday afternoon. Costa's article said the interview was "conducted late Wednesday aboard his private plane as it idled on the tarmac." In other words, Costa interviewed Trump at most little more than 5 or 6 hours after Trump left Pastor Timmons' church. Trump made a few comments after his Timmons encounter, claiming she was a Clinton supporter who had set him up. They were the same kinds of passive aggressive jabs that began his fisticuffs with the Khan family. But in all the rush of news of this unbridled week, they drew relatively little notice. I can't know, of course. But I suspect the fever really broke out in that interview with Costa back on his private plane and that the Timmons' encounter was the spark.