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For Republicans, It's Still the Trump Show

OCTOBER 13, 2021 | [FLAGLERLIVE](#) | — 5 COMMENTS

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By Carl Golden

Alice Roosevelt Longworth, the free-spirited tart tongued daughter of Teddy, once described her president father as someone who “wanted to be the corpse at every funeral, the bride at every wedding and the infant at every christening.”

One hundred twelve years after Teddy left the White House, his daughter’s characterization falls on ex-president Donald Trump like one of his finely tailored navy blue suits.

From rallies to candidate endorsements to interviews to commenting on whatever topic strikes his momentary fancy, Trump has filled the roles Alice ascribed to her father. In the process, he’s blocking out the media sun and overshadowing any Republican mulling a run for the 2024 presidential nomination.

For good or ill, Trump in retirement is the same force of nature he was as president. Republican leaders tread lightly around him, conscious of polls that show him by far the first choice of self-identified Republicans for the nomination, even as they worry he’s alienated so many voting blocs that his top of the ticket presence would drag down-ballot candidates to defeat.

His critics in the party speak on condition of anonymity, fearful of offending him and subjecting themselves to one of his tirades while those who choose to comment on the record risk backlash and banishment.

His hold on the party base is extraordinary, driven in part by a conviction he was cheated of re-election in 2020, despite a lack of any evidence to validate the claim of an outcome rigged by sinister outside forces.

His “Stop the Steal” rallies attract thousands and his false claims of electoral theft draw thunderous applause and chants of agreement from the audience.

As the Biden administration continues to slide deeper into negative public standing and seems powerless to halt or reverse it, Trump draws increasing strength from a disappointed nation experiencing what many observers label “buyer’s remorse,” implying that replacing Trump with Biden was a mistake.

In less than 10 months, the Biden administration has lost the confidence of the American people – including independents – falling well below 50 percent in nearly every area of concern: the economy, inflation, immigration, taxes, and foreign policy, the last driven mostly by the debacle of the military withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Restive Democrats fret aloud the party will pay a price in the 2022 Congressional midterms, losing their thin House majority and breaking the 50-50 Senate stalemate in favor of Republicans.

Biden's been unable to reconcile the warring factions in his own party in Congress, endangering his multi-trillion-dollar infrastructure package and undermining his leadership and negotiating skills, qualities he campaigned on as an antidote to the chaos and uproar of his predecessor.

His public appearances are often painful to watch as he stumbles through prepared remarks, misidentifies individuals and forgets names, places and events, leading to awkward and whispered discussions of a cognitive decline.

He's offended the White House press corps by limiting his interactions with reporters as part of a staff strategy to guard against rambling responses or erroneous references to Administration actions.

The instances of his press staff forced to correct, clarify or walk back presidential musings have grown more frequent. Failure to deliver a coherent message on issues like the immigration crisis at the southern border, how the infrastructure package will be financed and decisions on the Afghanistan military presence have contributed to portrayals of an Administration in disarray.

Trump has gleefully seized on the administration's missteps and erosion of public confidence and parlayed it into a massive media presence, using it as he's done for his entire private and public sector career to dominate the debate.

The media, while certainly no supporter of the ex-president, at the same time can't seem to get enough of him. They can't boycott him or refuse to cover his appearances, following his narrative and giving him a marquee presence while shunting his potential party opponents off to stage right.

He no longer simply teases the possibility of seeking the nomination in 2024. There's no element of coyness in his confident predictions that he'd scare off any potential challengers while mopping the floor with those who dare enter the arena to face him.

He'll continue to play Alice Roosevelt's corpse, bride and infant and – nominee or not – will use them all to exert outsized and potentially decisive influence on the party.



Carl Golden is a senior contributing analyst with the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy at Stockton University in New Jersey. You can reach him at cgolden1937@gmail.com.



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Comments

Well Said says

OCTOBER 13, 2021 AT 6:40 PM

I enjoyed this very accurate read on the present status quo, scrolled back up to the top and was disappointed Mr. Trisdam was not the author.

[Reply](#)

puddintane says

OCTOBER 13, 2021 AT 9:19 PM

thank gawd!

[Reply](#)

Jackson1955 says

OCTOBER 13, 2021 AT 10:05 PM

Trump doing what he's done for decades. Just staying right in the grey space where he benefits from breaking the law, but suffers no consequences.

I'm continually disgusted that Trump and his people continue to subvert the Constitution, laws and basic decency in his completely self-serving attempt to refuse to accept that he lost the 2020 election. True patriotic Americans do not everything they can to destroy our democracy just for their own self interest and complete lack of ability to admit they lost. I would like to think that at some point enough republicans will say enough is enough. We need to move on from this menace regardless of the consequences with the cult that blindly supports Trump.

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David Schaefer says

OCTOBER 13, 2021 AT 10:36 PM

The Hell with them.

[Reply](#)

lamo says

OCTOBER 14, 2021 AT 7:30 PM

In my opinion, all politicians are crooks, but at least Trump has a backbone, and some sense about him. Just name one thing, the loser in the Whitehouse has not messed up... Biden is taking us down a road, even the Democrats, are gonna wish we never went down... Even the VP is an embarrassment, to the entire country, but you idiots don't write about that, just got to bash the former administration... Don't worry, America is waking up... Take the socialism, and stick it... Government over-reach, is a real problem, even on the local level...

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The advertisement features a laptop screen displaying a virtual consultation with a smiling male attorney. The screen also shows the firm's logo, which includes a scale of justice and the text 'RUE & ZIFFRA'. Below the laptop, there is a circular logo with a scale of justice and the text 'IN YOUR COMMUNITY', 'RUE & ZIFFRA', and 'ON YOUR SIDE'. At the bottom, the website 'RUEZIFFRA.COM' is listed, along with office locations: 'PORT ORANGE / PALM COAST / DELAND'.

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The advertisement shows a young man with curly hair, wearing a red and white striped shirt and a blue backpack, smiling. In the top left corner, there is a circular logo for 'DAYTONA STATE COLLEGE' with a torch and the text 'FOUNDED 1957'. At the bottom, a red banner contains the text 'Start Your Future HERE' in white.

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