

The Delray Democrat

Is DeSantis Worse than Trump?¹

Michael K. Cantwell

I'm not sure whether Ron DeSantis is actually a racist, but I am certain that he is something worse.

If he's not a racist, that is, if he is just throwing red meat to the wingnuts, then he's actually worse than a racist. Someone who promotes and exploits racism for electoral advantage is a lower form of life than a racist, at least IMHO. Andrew Gillum nailed it during one of the gubernatorial debates when he said, *"I'm not calling Mr. DeSantis a racist, I'm simply saying the racists believe he's a racist."*

Of course, that would only place DeSantis in a long and grotesque gallery of Republican miscreants who exploited racism to advance their careers. For example, early-stage Alzheimer's or not, Ronald Reagan had to understand full well the import of launching his 1980 campaign in the Mississippi county where Goodman, Schwerner, and Chaney were brutally murdered, and doing so with a speech appealing to States' Rights. It was a signal to the racists that he was with them. So too were his memes of "Cadillac-driving welfare queens" and "strapping bucks using Food Stamps to buy T-bone steaks.

Similarly, whether or not George H.W. Bush was a racist, he was happy to use the racist Willie Horton commercials as a stepping-stone to the White House in 1992.

Donald Trump is a different story. He is pretty much sui generis, or, as an unnamed general referred to him, "the most loathsome individual I have ever met." Trump exploited racism in his presidential campaigns but he also has a long history of actual racism, extending back to his twenties when he and his father Fred were sued by the Department of Justice (under Nixon!) for their refusal to rent apartments to Black applicants.

When he still owned casinos (that is, his before casinos filed for bankruptcy for the sixth and final time and he was bailed out by dark Russian money), casino bosses ordered the floor cleared of Blacks employees when they knew Trump was visiting. Most monstrous were his calls for executing the Central Park Five and his continued insistence on their guilt even after their convictions were vacated on DNA evidence.

My personal favorite was his mixing of antisemitism with racism when he complained about a Black accountant: "Black guys counting my money! I hate it. The only kind of people I want counting my money are short guys that wear yarmulkes every day. ... I think that the guy is lazy. And it's probably not his fault, because laziness is a trait in blacks. It really is, I believe that. It's not anything they can control."

Stereotyping a people is the alpha and omega of gutter racism, but the irony is that *Trump* is the one unable to control himself. And let's be charitable and say Trump is not entirely at fault for

¹ *The Delray Democrat*, April 2022, page 5.

becoming the miserable excuse for a human being he's been his entire life. Having Fred Trump for a father while being lazy, dyslexic, and intellectually challenged and unaccomplished cannot have been easy.

This raises the question whether DeSantis is more dangerous than Donald Trump. DeSantis is able to complete a sentence without sounding like a buffoon and is intelligent and academically accomplished. He would be far more capable of disarming our craven, credulous, national media.

Think about that in November before you decide not to vote because the Democrat on the ballot was not your first choice. Think about President DeSantis.