

O P I N I O N



Jonah Goldberg

I used to worry that Donald Trump was Lonesome Rhodes in a better suit. I'm starting to wonder if he's Chance the Gardener in a worse one.

Just in case you don't get the references, Rhodes was the lead character, played by Andy Griffith, in Elia Kazan's 1957 film "A Face in the Crowd," the best movie ever made about the dangers of populism and mass media. Chance the Gardener was the lead character, played by Peter Sellers, in Hal Ashby's "Being There," a brilliant 1979 film based on the Jerzy Kosinski novel about a simple-minded gardener who had never been outside his employer's home until the man died. Because Chance speaks in fortune cookie aphorisms about gardening (and has one impeccable custom-tailored suit), he's mistaken for a man of deep wisdom and is lifted to heights of power in Washington.

President Trump isn't nearly as kind-hearted as Chance, nor as dimwitted, but there are two relevant similarities. First, both have an unhealthy addiction to television, preferring it to reading. Second, neither really understands what's going on around them but benefits from being surrounded by people who see what they want to see.

Last week, the president took the opening offer on a debt-limit deal from Sen. Chuck Schumer and Rep. Nancy Pelosi, the Democratic leaders in the Senate and House, respectively. A person close to the GOP leadership told Axios, "He accepted a shakedown when he was holding all the cards. ... This is quite literally a guy who watches 'ER' trying to perform a surgery."

According to reports, the president was ecstatic over the favorable coverage he received for his "bipartisanship."

"I got a call early this morning," Schumer told the *New York Times*. "He said, 'This was so great!' Here's what he said: 'Do you watch Fox News?' I said, 'Not really.' 'They're praising you!' Meaning me. But he

said, 'And your stations' — I guess meaning MSNBC and CNN — 'are praising me! This is great!'"

Despite his "fake news" refrain, Trump doesn't hate the mainstream media the way his most ardent supporters do. They sincerely believe it's a hostile opponent in the culture war, while Trump's anger is more that of a jilted lover. His whole life has been marked by an obsession with publicity.

His supporters, though, are oddly blind to that fact. Normally, when conservatives or Republicans deviate from the party line, the knee-jerk assumption among activists is that they are doing so out of a desire to win praise from the liberal media and invitations to Georgetown cocktail parties. If that's often unfair, it may actually be the case for Trump, and yet his base insists that if he "wins," it must also be a win for conservatives. So deep is the desire to see the Trump they thought they were getting, they bend the facts to fit their heroic narrative.

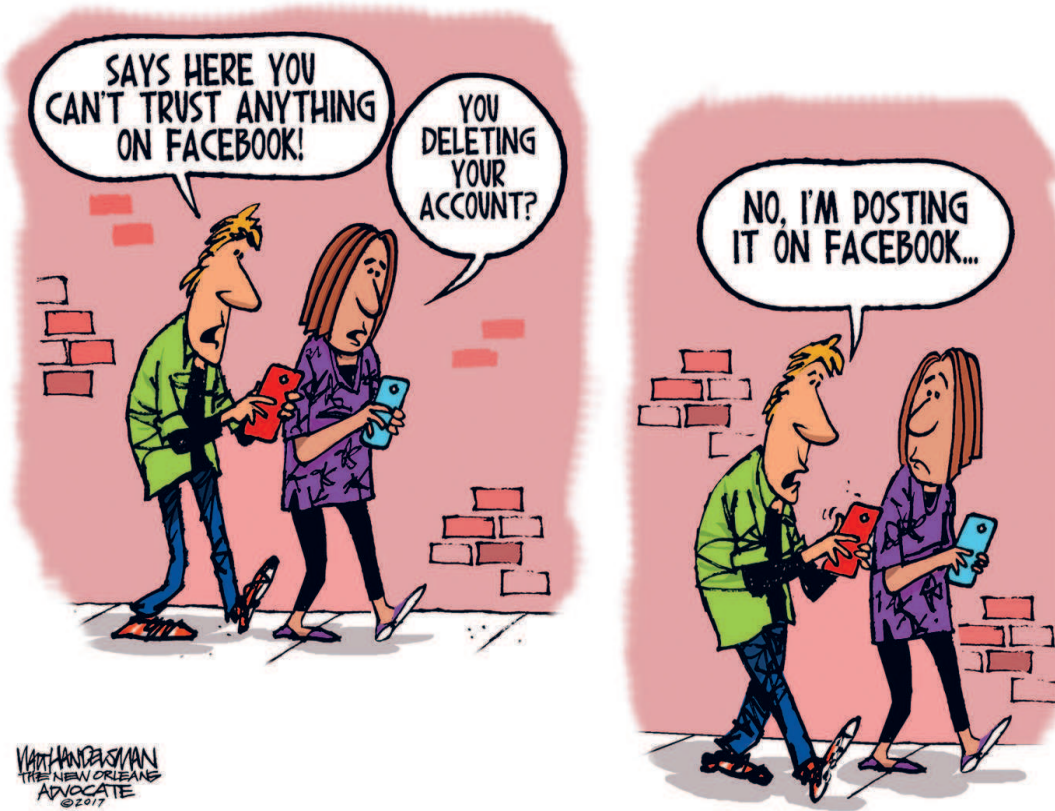
In his "60 Minutes" interview, former White House strategist Steve Bannon insisted that the establishment is "trying to nullify the 2016 election." Never mind that the House has passed most of Trump's agenda (Obamacare repeal and replace, funding the wall, etc). Bannon is working on the assumption that Trump has a mandate for Bannon's potted theories of "economic nationalism."

The truth is that Trump's real mandate was to be "not Hillary Clinton" — and he fulfilled it on Day 1. With the exception of appointing conservative judges, all of Trump's other scattershot policies earned only partial support from GOP voters.

The other truth is that Trump craves praise more than he cares about implementing his defenestrated strategist's political fantasies. And his supporters want Trump "wins" more than conservative ones, which is why we can expect more of what we saw last week.

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Letters to the Editor...

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To the Editor:

The recent events associated with the Milli wildfire have caused me to wonder about the Forest Service, both state and federal, and their management policies and practices and the resulting impact on budgets, jobs and air quality.

I do not understand how environmental groups could endorse a no-cut timber program that results in huge wildfires. This does not seem to be an environmentally sensible thing.

I cannot help but wonder about the environmental damage caused by an out-of-control wildfire in our forests as compared to a well-managed logging program.

Wildfires do provide some short-term employment in a very hot and dangerous profession and a great deal of air pollution, while destroying hundreds of thousands or millions of board feet of valuable timber. Wildfires are

also a huge drain on the forestry departments' already strained and meager budgets. I also wonder if the heat generated by a wildfire contributes to global warming.

Wildfires do an incredibly huge amount of damage to wildlife and their habitat, while a well-managed logging program may do some minor damage for a very short time with minimal wild life loss.

I believe a well-managed logging program that logged 1 percent of our forestlands every year would provide a renewable and sustainable never-ending supply of 100-year-old trees and result in a vibrant and diverse timber industry.

Furthermore, a well-managed logging program would also reduce the ladder fuels that contribute to wildfire growth. Logging roads

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Sisters Weather Forecast

Courtesy of the National Weather Service, Pendleton, Oregon

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
Showers Likely 49/28	Chance Showers 53/34	Slt. Chance Showers 59/31	Mostly Sunny 65/34	Sunny 68/35	Sunny 71/46

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