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Opinion

What If Donald Trump's Campaign Manager Were Black?

It is probably not especially politically correct to bring more race matters into the debacle that is also known as the Donald Trump quest for the Presidency. The latest goes from the amusing to the amazing. Although there is a video showing his campaign manager, Corey Lewandowski putting his hands on former Breitbart reporter Michelle Fields, he and Trump have said that eyes can lie. Even in the face of video evidence, he denied touching Fields. He and Trump tried to dismiss her as "delusional," essentially "blaming the victim."

Imagine that Corey Lewandowski was an African American man. Imagine that he nearly knocked down a White woman reporter. Can you hear the outrage? Can you hear the demands? Were Lewandowski African American, would he have been caricatured as a hoodlum or thug, pandering to the stereotypes? Or would Mr. Trump have had Black Lewandowski's back as firmly?

I am not surprised that Mr. Trump has condoned Lewandowski's violence, nor am I surprised that he's taken the "wuss" role by suggesting the reporter, who was attempting to get his attention, had "touched" him (and that may-



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be he should press charges). It is entirely consistent with his other campaign behavior. He has suggested that his supporters might "riot" if he does not get the Republican nomination. How different would it be if Corey Lewandowski were Black?

“Were Lewandowski African American, would he have been caricatured as a hoodlum or thug, pandering to the stereotypes?”

A Black man could not have put his hand on a White woman with impunity. If he did, he probably would not have had to wait more than a week to be charged for his transgression. He might have apologized, whether he were asked to do so or not, both from civility and from cultural conditioning. Trump and Lewandowski assumed that Michelle Fields, a White woman, could be thrown under the bus by two powerful,

White men who called her a liar, delusional, and any other slur they could get away with. A Black man would not have had the luxury.

Those women who are supporting Trump need to be well aware of his propensity to disregard and disrespect women. Loyalty notwithstanding, Lewandowski's untoward behavior deserves some reaction – maybe not a firing, but some form of suspension, or something that suggests that a "hands on" campaign need not be literally hands on, or that the "ground game" that

Lewandowski is often praised for does not mean that he should knock reporters down to the ground.

Those African Americans (and there are a few), who are supporting Donald Trump need to ask themselves what the reaction would be if Corey Lewandowski were Black. Would Trump be as supportive? Would others?

I am of the generation that used to play "what if" all the time. Knowing, but determined to imagine and spec-

ulate, what would happen if you flip the script. What if the White McKinney, Texas police corporal Eric Casebolt had pulled a blonde White girl by the hair instead of pulling the braids of the Black Dajerra Becton? Or, what if a Black officer, not Casebolt, had pulled a White girl by her blonde locks? The very muted outrage that we heard when Becton was assaulted would have turned into a crescendo had a Black police officer had the temerity to assault a White teen.

Similarly, if a car full of Black plainclothes NYPD police officers had chosen to hassle a White mailman because he hollered at them, would there have been the same arrest and cover-up that has taken place in the White police officers in Crown Heights arrested Glen Grays and forced him to abandon his mail truck?

I am not sure why I play "what if" or "just imagine." We know that race still matters, and that matters still aren't fair. Still, as I watch Mr. Trump circle the wagon around Corey Lewandowski, I just have to wonder how different his reaction (and the public reaction) might be if Lewandowski were Black. Just wondering.

Flint Water Crisis Can Still Bring Out the Best in Americans

Our nation continues to marshal support for the people of Flint, Michigan, as the city rebuilds after its water supply was found to be contaminated with extremely dangerous amounts of lead. The long-term exposure of Flint residents to lead, which even in small amounts can cause grave health problems, has raised the public's awareness of this health crisis and prompted the call for immediate and enduring action – now and for years to come.

Perhaps the most devastating consequence of the Flint water crisis is the uncertain impact that prolonged lead exposure will have on the city's children. We know that infants and children under the age of six are exceptionally vulnerable to lead poisoning, which can severely hinder mental and physical development and produce a host of health complications, including learning and behavioral disabilities, slowed growth, poor muscle coordination, hyperactivity, and lower IQ.

More than 200 of the city's children have already shown signs of elevated blood-lead levels, and the symptoms of poisoning can set in long after the child is no longer exposed – meaning that a child who appears well now can still



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face daunting health complications later in life.

We do not yet know the gravity of what has transpired in Flint. But we do know this: Flint's children deserve every opportunity to be healthy,

“It will take all clinical resources available to address Flint's long-term health concerns for impacted children

and we must come together to develop a comprehensive strategy that guarantees the compassionate care they need to overcome short- and long-term challenges to health.

Flint has already seen an outpouring of support. Organizations including the Greater Flint Health Coalition, the United Way of Genesee County and Genesys Health System – an Ascension hospital serving Flint and its mid-Michigan neighbors – are working together to maximize the benefits of their support services and develop a long-term healthcare strategy for the generation of Flint kids who might be adversely affected.

But there is still much more work to be done, and it will take all clinical resources available to address Flint's long-term health concerns for impacted children.

Underlying the crisis in Flint are the many socioeconomic barriers that Flint's low-income children and families faced long before the tragedy, including a lack of access to quality healthcare and affordable housing. In a city of more than 100,000 Americans – where 57 per-

cent of residents are Black and more than 40 percent live at or below the federal poverty level – there are virtually no grocery stores to be found. Together, we're working to change that and ensure that Flint's children are not left wanting – for nutritious food, early education and access to integrated social services – ever again.

The road ahead is long, and we cannot do it alone. It will take a national effort from healthcare providers, policymakers, civic leaders and individuals to equip Flint's children with the compassionate care they deserve.

Even the smallest act of

service can help address the short- and long-term costs of this crisis. The Flint Child Health and Development Fund – created by a united committee of residents, healthcare providers and community organizations – will be used to provide social services, early childhood education, behavioral health services and more to children in Flint. The Flint Child Health and Development Fund is so important to the local community that Ascension Michigan (Borgess Health – Kalamazoo, Crittenton Hospital Medical Center – Rochester, Genesys Health System – Grand Blanc, St.

John Providence – Detroit, St. Mary's of Michigan – Saginaw, and St. Joseph Hospital – Tawas City) has supported the initiative by donating to this effort.

You can contribute today by visiting www.flintkids.org.

Even after the water runs clean in Flint once again, its children – and our community – may bear these scars for years to come.

And so we must confront the health ramifications of the crisis and support positive health outcomes for Flint's children.

It will require our foresight and collaboration to guarantee their long-term care.