

The Content of Donald Trump's Character

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Though some anti-war Americans see hope that Donald Trump would pull back from foreign wars, they also must face his undeniable record of racial and sexist bigotry, writes Marjorie Cohn.

In his acceptance speech for the Republican presidential nomination, Donald Trump declared, "My Dad, Fred Trump, was the smartest and hardest working man I ever knew. . . . It's because of him that I learned, from my youngest age, to respect the dignity of work and the dignity of working people."

Donald apparently forgot what his father taught him. The GOP nominee refuses to pay the people who work for him. "Among them: a dishwasher in Florida. A glass company in New Jersey. A carpet company. A plumber. Painters. Forty-eight waiters. Dozens of bartenders and other hourly workers at his resorts and clubs, coast to coast. Real estate brokers who sold his properties. And, ironically, several law firms that once represented him in these suits and others," wrote Steve Reilly in *USA Today*.



Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump.

Moreover, Fred Trump, "the smartest" man his son ever knew, did not respect the dignity of black people. The legendary folk singer Woody Guthrie rented an apartment in the elder Trump's Brooklyn complex in 1950. It turned out blacks were not welcome there.

University of Central Lancashire professor [Will Kaufman](#), a student of Guthrie's life and songs, noted that Guthrie thought "Fred Trump was one who stirs up racial hate, and implicitly profits from it," lamenting "the bigotry that pervaded his new, lily-white neighborhood."

Guthrie responded to Fred Trump's bigotry with this song:

I suppose
Old Man Trump knows
Just how much
Racial Hate
He stirred up
In the bloodpot of human hearts
When he drewed
That color line
Here at his Eighteen hundred family project

The acorn did not fall far from the tree of racial prejudice. In 1973, the Nixon Justice Department sued Fred and Donald Trump for systematic discrimination against African-Americans in housing rentals.

The *New York Times*' Nicholas Kristof cited the Trumps' former building superintendent who said he was told to code rental applications with a "C" for colored, which would flag the office to reject the application. The Trumps only rented to "Jews and executives," not blacks, according to a rental agent.

Kip Brown, a former Trump casino owner, told the *New Yorker*, "When Donald and [former wife] Ivana came to the casino, the bosses would order all the black people off the floor. . . . They put us all in the back."

In his 1991 book, John O'Donnell, former president of the Trump Plaza Hotel and Casino in Atlantic City, quoted Donald Trump as saying "laziness is a trait in blacks. It really is, I believe that. It's not anything they can control."

The 'Mexican' Judge

Trump's racial animus is not confined to African-Americans. He has vowed to deport 11 million undocumented immigrants, calling Mexican immigrants "in many cases, criminals, drug dealers, rapists"; build a wall on the southern U.S. border to keep people out; and temporarily forbid Muslims from entering the United States.



President Barack Obama bending over so a boy visiting the Oval Office could feel that the President's hair was like his. (White House photo by Pete Souza)

At one of his rallies, Trump condescendingly pointed to a black man in the crowd, saying, "Oh, look at my African-American over here – look at him."

And Trump denounced Gonzalo Curiel, a well-respected federal judge of Mexican heritage who is presiding over a lawsuit in San Diego filed by people claiming they were scammed by Trump University. After Curiel unsealed documents, Trump declared that Curiel had "an absolute conflict" that should disqualify him from the case. Trump's reason: "He is a Mexican," adding, "I'm building a wall. It's an inherent conflict of interest."

Trump's overriding theme, "Make America Great Again," is a euphemism for "Make America White Again." Indeed, Trump was a founder of the birther movement, whose aim was to discredit Barack Obama by claiming he was born in Kenya, thus stoking racist attacks throughout his presidency. That movement evolved into the Trump for president campaign, which is steeped in racial hatred.

As Sen. Elizabeth Warren said in her speech at the Democratic National Convention, Trump pits blacks against whites, reminiscent of what occurred during the era of Jim Crow. She quoted Dr. Martin Luther King's remarks about how poor white workers in the South were told, "No matter how bad off he was, at least he was a white man, better than the black man," noting, "Racial hatred was part of keeping the powerful on top."

Trump is sexist as well as racist. His comments about women reveal his misogyny. He has referred to women as "dog," "fat pig," "slob," "degenerate" and "disgusting animal." And Trump disgustingly said of Megan Kelly, "You could see there was blood coming out of her eyes, blood coming out of her wherever."

The GOP nominee has no more respect for the disabled than he does for women, workers and people of color, publicly mocking a reporter with a disability.

And although he declared in his acceptance speech that he would "protect our LGBTQ citizens from the violence and oppression of a hateful foreign ideology," Trump said nothing about protecting them from the hateful ideology within the United States.

The next president may fill three or four seats on the Supreme Court. Trump has vowed to nominate justices like Antonin Scalia, who said during oral argument in the affirmative action case, *Fisher v. University of Texas*, that he was not "impressed by the fact that the University of Texas may have fewer" black students.

Scalia added, "Maybe it ought to have fewer. I don't think it stands to reason that it's a good thing for the University of Texas to admit as many blacks as possible."

Scalia opposed reproductive rights, universal health care, same-sex marriage, affirmative action, voting rights, immigrants' rights, labor rights, LGBT rights and environmental protection. Trump, who has said he will pick his judicial nominations from lists drawn up by the Heritage Foundation and the Federalist Society, could move the high court radically to the right for decades to come.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. famously said he hoped his children would not be judged by the color of their skin, but rather “by the content of their character.” Donald Trump’s character is racist, sexist, and just downright mean. A Trump presidency would pose an unimaginable danger to the people of this country.

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