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“Donald Trump wins the presidency, the business tycoon and TV personality capping his improbable political journey with an astounding upset victory. Donald J. Trump will become the forty-fifth President of the United States, defeating Hillary Clinton and a campaign unlike anything we’ve seen in our lifetime” (“Donald”), news anchor Wolf Blitzer declared to the world early Wednesday morning. Grand music was playing in the background at the new President-elect’s victory rally in New York City, bringing a close to one of the most shocking, frightening, and drawn-out presidential election seasons in United States history. Beginning with Trump announcing his campaign at the Trump Tower in New York City and continuing through a long primary season, the 2016 presidential election stumped political analysts, political experts, news anchors, media personalities, and average citizens alike worldwide and split the nation as well as the two major political parties into several pieces. Lifelong friends turned into unrelenting foes over Trump’s brash statements and Americans struggled with one another and themselves on how to respond to these statements. Trump’s campaign promises—the few that remained constant despite his flip-flopping views throughout his campaign—were illegal, immoral, potentially fatal, and went against the fundamental concepts of America, like freedom of speech and religion. The shocking, unprecedented, and entirely unexpected reality of having a President-elect that has stated plans to impose mass deportation, create a log of Muslims entering and residing in the country, and “bomb the hell out of” ISIS (Kaplan) as well as many other policies dangerous to the country all under a united government makes Trump terrifyingly similar to former populist leaders including Adolf Hitler because many of them exhibit the same qualities.

Trump’s candidacy, when he announced it on June 16, 2015, was largely seen by the national media as well as independent reporters as a stunt to promote his name brand and

organization. Data analysts, political pundits, and betting websites immediately dismissed his campaign, giving him a one percent chance of winning or less (Diaz, Pagliery). Even as Trump led in the polls and became the frontrunner for the nomination, this trend continued, as no candidate with a lack of prior political and military experience had ever won the presidency of the United States—the only two candidates in the primary debates with this notable characteristic being Ben Carson and Carly Fiorina. Many Republican voters, simultaneously angry about the complacency of the Republican-majority Congress that they voted in less than a year before regarding campaign promises that Speaker of the House Paul Ryan and others made to them and the progress of the Obama administration towards liberal-leaning policies, foamed at the mouth for some anti-establishment candidate to lead the way for the Republican Party. Trump's outrageous statements about Hispanics, Muslims, women, African-Americans, and others forced the media to give coverage to him, earning him loyal support from these anti-establishment conservatives who truly believed that he would convert his statements into action. For example, "this ridiculous and insensitive statement shows what Trump and others" (Clayton) believe regarding illegal immigration: "Republican candidate Donald Trump sparked attention and controversy when he said: 'When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best ... They're sending people that have lots of problems, and they're bringing those problems with us. They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people.'" These Republican voters' emotions overpowered their sense of judgment and they chose to ignore or interpret his statements positively, vaulting Trump into first place for what would be the rest of the race for the nomination.

As improbable as Trump's victory was, Trump's frequent appeal to people's emotions rather than facts, evidence, or logic worked not only in the primaries, but also the general election. Trump's supporters overlooked him being a Democrat for most of his life—Trump switched his party affiliation at least six times and only switched back to the Republican Party in 2012—often citing the false comparison of Ronald Reagan being a Democrat for most of his life before becoming a Republican in 1962. Trump won the divisive presidential primaries by

running far more extreme than any other candidate, with his unique style making him stand out from the other candidates and continuing to fuel the anger towards establishment politicians that many Republican voters felt. Many were looking for an “outsider” with no political experience that would govern differently from other politicians, whom they believed was Trump. Many in the media reported on his ever-increasing number of controversial statements, giving him close to five billion dollars in free media, over fifty percent more than Clinton’s free media net worth (Harris). This advantage immensely helped Trump erase his double-digit deficit in national polls and ascend to the presidency.

Trump often complained that “the polls were rigged” against him, even though he never overperformed the polls to change the outcome in any contest. However, in several polls conducted by CNN, the 18-35 age group was excluded due to being too small of a proportion to be accurately polled. The methodology states: “Some subgroups represent too small a share of the national population to produce crosstabs with an acceptable sampling error. Interviews were conducted among these subgroups, but results for groups with a sampling error larger than ± 8.5 percentage points are not displayed and instead are denoted with ‘N/A’” (“CNN,” “CNN”). Many thought that this made polls overstate Clinton’s lead and especially understate the proportion of third party voters, of which the 18-35 age group represented more than other age groups. Additionally, Fox News drastically undersampled independent voters that would end up breaking days before the election for Trump (“Fox”). While Fox News has been sampling independents for an average of 17% of each poll, Gallup notes that around 42% of Americans identify as independent (Jones). There was also the “shy Trump voter” effect in general election polling, in which many people that intended to vote for Trump were afraid of saying so due to the nature of his candidacy. These three issues contributed to many polls overstating Clinton’s lead among voters not only nationwide but also in each state. This strongly suggests a systematic polling error that occurred in all polls throughout the course of the final few months of the election in which Clinton’s actual lead was smaller than it appeared in polls. Although the polls were likely not “rigged,” they were evidently inaccurate with an unrepresentative methodology,

allowing Trump to capitalize. Another key for Trump was to appeal directly to certain groups with which he would have great success to “run up the score” and limit Clinton’s outreach.

Trump especially appealed to one group of voters in a way that no other candidate could: blue-collar workers. Trump specifically parroted the announcement by Carrier Corporation that they were relocating thousands of factory jobs from Indianapolis to Mexico and promised to bring them back as President. His staunch opposition to NAFTA and the TPP drew the support of many American workers who felt their jobs would be safe under a Trump administration. Trump also began repeating Clinton’s comment in a CNN town hall: “We’re going to put a lot of coal miners and coal companies out of business” (Strauss). His remarks regarding repairing the country’s infrastructure and building a wall across America’s southern border also played into his support of workers, while his plans to roll back environmental regulations for the coal industry appealed to free-market conservatives that he struggled to garner support from throughout the primaries. Many union Democrats and blue-collar workers in states across the Midwest and the Rust Belt like West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Indiana saw Trump as the candidate to revitalize the factory industry and, making up such a big group in those states, gave their votes to him over Clinton, whom they perceived as a neoliberal war hawk that was out of touch with the average American’s daily reality. Although it provided the means to Trump’s remarkable victory, his praise for blue-collar workers was still largely overshadowed by his offensive and belligerent comments on the campaign trail.

As Trump continued to make remarks that often were interpreted as hate speech throughout the campaign season, his rise in followers, in the polls, and in media coverage began to pose a serious threat to Americans that are not white or male. Many journalists, observers, and even a presidential candidate saw similarities between Trump and Nazi Party leader Adolf Hitler. At an Ohio event for Republican candidate John Kasich, retired Air Force Col. Tom Moe paraphrased an anti-Nazi quote by Protestant pastor Martin Niemöller that listed the groups of people the Nazis rounded up: “You might not care if Donald Trump says Muslims should register with their government, because you’re not one. And you might not care if Donald Trump

says he's going to round up all the Hispanic immigrants, because you're not one. ... If he keeps going, and he actually becomes president, he might just get around to you" (Parnass). A video of Moe was later used in an online advertisement for Kasich. Trump's apparent support for sexual harassment, nationalism, violence, nativism, racism, and xenophobia increased his chances of getting elected and made it dangerous to live in the country. Even worse, Trump has largely stood by his statements when any other politician would rescind them, casting over him the veil of being "politically incorrect" or "speaking the truth."

Most concerning, "Donald Trump appears to take aspects of his German background seriously. John Walter works for the Trump Organization, and when he visits Donald in his office, Ivana [Trump's first wife] told a friend, he clicks his heels and says, '*Heil Hitler*,' possibly as a family joke" (Brenner), the same line uttered by millions of Nazis. According to Ivana, he also "reads a book of Hitler's collected speeches, *My New Order*, which he keeps in a cabinet by his bed. [Trump's lawyer, Michael] Kennedy now guards a copy of *My New Order* in a closet at his office, as if it were a grenade." His support of Nazism, whether satirical or real, is reflected in the numerous endorsements that he received throughout his campaign.

Shortly before the presidential primaries on March 1, 2016, or Super Tuesday, Trump was endorsed by former Ku Klux Klan Grand Wizard David Duke and reacted by pretending not to know about it, saying: "I don't know anything about what you're even talking about with white supremacy or white supremacists. So I don't know. I don't know—did he endorse me, or what's going on? Because I know nothing about David Duke; I know nothing about white supremacists" (Bradner). However, Trump actually knew Duke prior to receiving his endorsement, as a Reform Party presidential candidate in 2000: "The Reform Party now includes a Klansman, Mr. Duke ... This is not company I wish to keep" (Nagourney). Facing stiff media pressure, Trump reluctantly disavowed Duke's endorsement: "David Duke endorsed me? OK, all right. I disavow, OK?" (Bradner). The "official" newspaper of the KKK officially endorsed Trump just over a week before the general election (Holley), reaffirming the white supremacist

group's support for him. Trump also garnered support from many other toxic and racist groups, even one that he himself may have invented.

The rise of Trump also coincided with the rise of a fringe coalition of supporters known as the “alt-right” or “alternative right” who claimed to reject “establishment” conservatism in favor of more radical and authoritarian policies. For example, while many conservatives praise American leaders like Ronald Reagan, some members of the alt-right look elsewhere: former Chilean president and dictator Augusto Pinochet; who, disgusted with the rise of socialism in Chile, rose through the ranks of the Chilean military, deposed of former Marxist president Salvador Allende through a coup d'état in 1973 (“Allande”), and interned and infamously killed dozens of thousands of leftists by throwing them out of helicopters (Franklin); which the alt-right sees as a “hero” fighting against the “scourge” of leftism. During his reign, he implemented many free market policies for which the alt-right and Trump could relate to: the privatization of social security, the outlawing of trade unions, and the reversing of the nationalization of businesses under Allande. Many find it difficult to pinpoint the ideology of the alt-right because of its nature; the group largely exists as an overbearing presence on Internet threads like 4chan, 8chan, and Reddit, where they commonly express their unique views using Internet memes. The movement is composed of many different groups, including white supremacists, neo-Nazis, and misogynists, as well as outraged populists, nativists, and nationalists, all united against leftism by branding anything they disagree with as “communism.”

At his rallies, Trump has showcased his unconstitutional plans regarding Muslims immigrating to America: “Donald J. Trump is calling for a total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States until our representatives can figure out what the hell is going on” (Johnson). Subsequently, he supported a national registry for Muslims—Hitler forced Jews to register in a similar registry—which would ban Muslim immigration, a direct violation of the Freedom of Religion clause in the First Amendment (US Const. amend. I).

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U.S. Constitution. Amendment I.