



**AMERICAS** | M E X I C O C I T Y J O U R

# Donald Trump Gains Infamy in Mexico for Comments on Immigrants

By **AZAM AHMED** JULY 2, 2015

MEXICO CITY — It is the kind of publicity money cannot buy — front-page coverage, segments on the nightly news, the attention of political heavyweights and a stream of commentary burning a hole in the web.

But Donald J. Trump, champion of the so-called birther movement that wrongly questioned President Obama's birthplace, owner of the Miss Universe contest and developer of hotels bearing his name the world over, has not only found fame in the United States, where he is running for president.

He has also found it in Mexico — or infamy, anyway.

“He’s just ignorant,” said Ricardo Arevala, 18, who works at a piñata shop here, adding that someone recently came into

the store looking for a smackable rendition of Mr. Trump. “He speaks in stereotypes.”

While announcing his candidacy to be America’s next president last month, Mr. Trump delivered remarks that ended up echoing across Mexico.

“They are bringing drugs. They are bringing crime. They’re rapists,” Mr. Trump said about Mexican immigrants, adding, “some, I assume, are good people.”

While most presidential candidates are positioning themselves to court the Latino vote, Mr. Trump ignited a firestorm with his statement, managing to galvanize the disparate populations of Mexico, both social and political.

A host of Mexican political notables have lashed out at the remarks, including former President Felipe Calderón.

A company controlled by Carlos Slim, the Mexican telecom magnate — who is much, much richer than Mr. Trump, many Mexicans are quick to point out — cut ties on a joint project with him.

Univision said it would not broadcast the Miss USA and Miss Universe pageants, which Mr. Trump partially owns the rights to, and Mexico as a nation has pulled out of the competition.

Mexican gov doesn't want me talking about terrible border situation & horrible trade deals. Forcing Univision to get me to stop- no way!

— Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) June 25, 2015

That is to say nothing of the expletives cast around when describing Mr. Trump in much of Mexico, by every strata of society.

The blowback has struck on both sides of the border, of course. NBC severed ties with Mr. Trump. It is backing out of Miss USA and Miss Universe, which was a joint venture with Mr. Trump, although the show that helped resuscitate Mr. Trump's profile, "Celebrity Apprentice" (of the "you're fired" fame), will continue.

Macy's stopped carrying a line of clothes branded by Mr. Trump, and Emmitt Smith, a football Hall of Famer, and Flo Rida, a rapper, now refuse to participate in the Miss USA pageant.

Many Mexicans understand that as an archetypal capitalist, perhaps best known for real estate whose binding characteristic is a mammoth "Trump" sign, Mr. Trump does not do subtle.

From his vast, rust-orange comb-over to his power suits, Mr. Trump plays for keeps, whether suing business partners for soured deals or issuing statements about his enemies.

But while Mr. Trump has defiantly refused to backtrack, there has been a bit of backpedaling.

I love the Mexican people, but Mexico is not our friend.  
They're killing us at the border and they're killing us on jobs  
and trade. FIGHT!

— Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) June 30,  
2015

He has repeatedly assured the non-rapist and noncriminal Mexicans that he loves them and their country. He says he has done business with people from Mexico. He says he has great respect for Mexicans and “their tremendous spirit.”

The feeling, it seems, is not entirely mutual.

Many have posted YouTube clips deriding the tycoon. Others have posted a litany of words online that, were they not directed at Mr. Trump, he might even appreciate. In the northern city of Reynosa, one piñata maker has fashioned a model after him, coif and all.

The price: about \$35.

In his own defense, Mr. Trump has said that all anyone has to do is read the papers to know what is happening along the border.

What he said was true, he has fired back, adding that if

people do not like that, they had better brace themselves for President Trump.

His general rancor has increased from there.

He has called for a boycott of Macy's, slapped Univision with a \$500 million lawsuit and called NBC "weak and foolish."  
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My just filed lawsuit against Univision. Always fight back  
when right. #MakeAmericaGreatAgain  
<https://t.co/ies96YzSeG>

— Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) June 30,  
2015

Mr. Trump posted on his Instagram feed a personal letter from a Univision anchor, imploring him to come on the air and talk. The note included the anchor's cellphone number. He also told executives at Univision that if any of them or their representatives so much as set foot on his resorts, he would have them apprehended.

But while the fracas over his comments might have hurt his business relationships, they have not appeared to hurt him politically. They may even have helped.

Mr. Trump has seen a bump in the polls in both Iowa and New Hampshire, where he is trailing behind the current Republican leader, Jeb Bush. But whatever his chances of

coming to power, Mr. Trump, like others before him, seems to have tapped into a vein of resentment in American society.

It is a popular narrative, after all, that those who cross the border into the United States are fleeing into the embrace of safety, prosperity and opportunity. And that flight, according to Mr. Trump, is precisely what he hopes to block.

“We must have strong borders & stop illegal immigration now!” he said on Twitter, where he has more than three million followers.

But for many Mexicans, the reality is more complex.

Ostensia Bonilla, the 56-year-old sales manager at a party supply shop in downtown Mexico City, has lived in the United States. She moved to Illinois in 2007 with her daughter but, after two years, decided to leave.

“I was worried about the crowd she was hanging out with,” she said. “There were too many people selling and using drugs in her circle.”

And like that, the family moved back, to avoid the very thing Mr. Trump has proclaimed that all of Mexico suffers.

“Of course, we do have drug problems,” she conceded, resting her hands on a wooden box filled with candy. “And Mr. Trump has a right to free speech.”

“But we aren’t the ones using the drugs,” she said. “The addicts are in America.”

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