

I like Donald Trump. When **The Benefactor** was announced, he was one of the first people to call. Told me he thought it was a great idea, and I was the right guy to pull it off. Thanks, Donald. Very nice thing to do. What wasn't nice, was to call **The Benefactor** a copycat of The Apprentice.

A Trump quote from the Chicago Sun-Times in reference to The Benefactor:

"Because of the success of 'The Apprentice,' you'll have 100 people trying to do shows a little bit like us, but we have a very unique show and I have a very unique guy in [Burnett]," he said. "I'll tell you something, it's not going to be easy to duplicate what we've done as a team."

Let's get some things cleared up in case anyone is confused. The Benefactor is going to be nothing like The Apprentice. Why? Because, Donald, we are not alike in any way. The funny thing is, in some respects, I have you to thank for that.

Back in Jan of 1999, I went to a SuperBowl party at Mar-a-Lago. I was there with some friends who had brought me along. I happened to bump into one of the founders of Yahoo by your pool and was talking to him when you walked up. It was just your typical, short meet-and-greet, but what you said left a lasting impression. You told us that "someday, maybe we could sit up there with the rich people" as you looked up to a 2nd floor patio that had a smattering of people eating their dinner. Someday, Donald.

I don't quite remember all the details, but not long after I got a note from you asking to come meet in New York. Sure, I thought. Why not?

We had a good meeting, talked about your internet plans for Trump.com and how it would sell and promote all things Trump. We talked about Broadcast.com. You had a sharp guy there with you. We didn't do any business, but we gave it a shot. That wasn't the educational part of the meeting. It was your office. It was covered, literally, every inch of every wall with pictures and magazine covers of you.

I have been in a lot of offices. I have seen pictures with the president, with family, with various famous people, but the over/under was usually 5 pictures, not 100. At that point in my life I was very well off financially, but I had a lot more paper money from stock in my net worth than cash. Our encounter proved to be a reality check for me.

After leaving your office, I promised myself that if I ever got liquid and had an obscene amount of money in the bank, I would make a point not to remind myself and everyone else around me of it every minute of every day unlike you.

I guess our definition of success is just completely different.

I used to wear a suit to work every day. I worked hard so I wouldn't have to. I bought a big house so I could throw a football and play whiffleball in it, rather than show it off. I don't play golf, I work out. I don't have an entourage, I have friends. You talk about how much you are getting paid per episode, I talk about the fact I'm not. You need to make more, I have enough. But those are little things.

Where we are 180 degrees different is how we deal with business partners. You talk about how your problem casinos are just 1 pct of your net worth. I would feel like shit if I had a failing business with partners that were going to lose money and would talk about what it meant to my partners net worth, not my own. Heck, I won't even let friends invest in any of my companies until I'm certain they will make it. How in the world can you pay yourself while shareholders take a beating?

I like your show. It was entertaining and brought out your personality and approach to the world.

So will mine, and I can assure you they are nothing alike. If I wanted to do a show like yours, I would have met with Mark Burnett when he wanted to talk about taking your place after next season.

For a lot of reasons, I didn't want to write this blog entry. In some ways it's not fair to you to just lay into you like this. But the point of my blog is to try to tell the story behind the story that is in the paper. You could have said that you didn't know much about our show and left it at that. You suggested our show was a duplicate of yours. It's not. It won't be. I wanted to make that perfectly clear.