

The Dumpster and the Russians

Written by Jack King, BT Contributor
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h, yes. It's been quite the time having Don "the Con" Dumpster as our president. Little did we know how many crimes he could commit in two years -- and get away with.

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No doubt he had lots of help from the Russian bots led by Vladimir Putin, and Republicans in the House and Senate who, as it turns out, would do anything to gain control of the political landscape in the United States.

It's not so fun to watch the ways they've beat up America for their personal gain. We'll start with our voting machines. To say the least, most are old and in terrible shape. In ten states, the machines have no paper backups or, for that matter, any backup at all. It's ironic that the ballots our forebears used a couple of centuries years ago were paper and worked well. Who knew then that when we went to paperless voting machines, and no paper backups, we'd eventually want to go back to paper? Oh yeah, or that we'd invent optical scanners that have almost a zero percent of error?

You'd think that in such a high-tech country, we'd have equipment to make sure our elections -- one of the most basic tenets of governance -- go smoothly and are done right.

Remember, when the Founders set up the government 250-odd years ago, there was nothing yet quite like the system they created. Now we have countries around the world that don't like the way we govern. Hey, wasn't it Russia that collapsed a few years ago and still isn't back to its old self?

And speaking of the Russians again, the Dumpster was working on a deal with the Russians to build a hundred-story Trump Tower in Moscow. Forget the fact that the Dumpster and his cronies didn't have the money to build the tower and that the word on the street (in Moscow, that is) was that Putin and *his cronies* had contracted to buy most of the condo units, some upwards of \$100 million. Not a bad deal for the Dumpster.

But it wasn't just a condo development fueling the Dumpster, his "branding," and his campaign. A slew of Russians were playing the Internet with anti-Hillary Clinton stories on everything from her mental health to her alleged cover-ups while secretary of state and earlier. It is unclear just how much influence the Russians had in social media, but there's no question they had significant influence -- it's just that what they were doing was new and few of us even knew the word "bots."

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But they found Facebook and other social media companies -- which are referred to as “social media” because, for all intents and purposes, when some of them started out, they were more or less dating services. It didn't long for college kid and Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg (along with numerous college buddies) to realize that Facebook could be much more than a dating service, or a tool for ranking women's looks.

In short time, Facebook was grossing hundreds of million dollars but not making a nickel. Cash flow was going in both directions. So Zuckerberg brought in some realistic businessmen, and one of the things they did was start charging fees for advertising, and running ads on everybody's Facebook timelines. And the political advertising came, and so did the negative and anti-political advertising. For a small fee, you could disparage anyone you want. Hell, you could even post your sentiments for free.

It also didn't take too long before the mainstream media and the government started to notice Facebook and its very weird news dissemination program (what the company calls an algorithm). The government realized it had no guidelines for this type of news media operation and that Facebook was playing loose and fast without guidelines in place. Actually, they still don't. I don't think it will be much longer before that changes.

And, finally, the most serious issue, as far as I am concerned. It's about who or what controls the president, both legally and otherwise. The reality is that there are no rules, regulations, or laws that control the president. That's right. None.

First of all, back in the 1970s, during Watergate, the Justice Department issued an internal memo, not even a ruling, that a sitting president can't be indicted for a crime. A second memo in 2000 confirmed that opinion, but there's nothing in the Constitution that says anything even close to it.

The Constitution does say that a president can be impeached for high crimes and misdemeanors. However, there's no definition of high crimes and misdemeanors, so it's pretty much impossible to take any legal action against the president. Unless we change the Constitution. Fat chance. And even if we did, it could open another can of worms that we're not ready for.

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Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com