

No More Mr. Nice Guy: Trump is Back

“Good politics, make bad policies.”

– Anonymous

“It has been said that politics is the second oldest profession. I have learned that it bears a striking resemblance to the first..”

– Ronald Reagan

Introduction

In this week's Evergreen Virtual Advisor (EVA), we turn to Dr. Pippa Malmgren, who served as special assistant to President George W. Bush for Economic Policy on the National Economic Council and is a former member of the President's Working Group on Financial Markets. She and her father, Harold, are regarded as two of the most connected and credible observers of the often strange behavior patterns that characterize Washington, DC, these days.

We believe this is a fascinating read that highlights how Donald Trump is finding creative fundraising mechanisms to mount a return to the Oval Office. (As Pippa notes, we realize that many Americans find this is a disturbing prospect while others are exhilarated.) This article also delves into how Trump is considering creating his own news network in order to control his narrative after feeling that Fox News and CNN needed more competition.

Summary

- Former President Donald Trump still has a substantial following, as at least 71 million Americans are committed supporters. With such a dedicated voter base still remaining, it appears he has decided to run for his previous office again.
- One strong indication of a renewed campaign is that he has created a new media platform with the launch of the Trump Media and Technology Group via a Special Purpose Acquisition Company (SPAC), which recently raised nearly \$300 million. This windfall political fundraiser represents the largest and fastest of its kind in American history.
- As he has done in the past, Trump is leaning on technology to propel him back to the White House. It looks possible that he is gearing up to create his own news network “TNN – Trump News Network”, allowing him to compete with Fox News and CNN.
- Meanwhile, Mastadon (Twitter's code platform) has filed a lawsuit against the former President, alleging Trump's team lifted their code in order to create his new media platform, Truth Social.
- If another Trump presidential run is on the horizon, it appears he might take a new political approach: No More Mr. Nice Guy. More specifically, a former Commander-in-Chief who feels betrayed and may be seeking revenge.
- Tish James, the New York Attorney General, appears hell-bent on digging into Trump's complex finances and bringing him up on the same charge that took down Al Capone: mail fraud. If this were to lead to Trump's incarceration, however, it could spark a serious civil backlash amongst his supporters.
- Trump views himself as a disruptive force in politics, attempting to disintermediate Washington itself from power and shifting that authority back to the individual states.

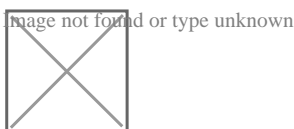
- While the outcome of the investigation into Trump's involvement in the Jan 6th Capitol riots remains unsettled, there seems to be some pretty clear evidence on Twitter that he (not so secretly) incited participation.
- While many thought Trump's political career was in the rear-view - and though it may thrill many and appall others - it appears he's standing by to attempt to reprise his former role as President.

No More Mr. Nice Guy: Trump is Back by Dr. Pippa Malmgren

President Trump may have left office but he never left being in power. At least 71 million Americans are committed Trump supporters. Many more are silent "Trumpers" who quietly voted for him before and will vote for him again. After spending a month touring the East Coast from NYC to Miami, I was surprised to find many Democrats quietly confiding that they may vote for Trump too given the current state of The White House. So, he's back. He has decided to run again. He hasn't announced this in so many words but there are plenty of signals that he is in play.

One sign is that he has created a very innovative media platform. With the launch of the Trump Media and Technology Group through the [DWAC SPAC](#) (Digital World Acquisition Corporation), he invented a new fundraising mechanism that avoids the complications of a traditional IPO. He may have ducked the usual political fundraising rules as well. In short, he just raised nearly \$300 million to launch a platform exclusively devoted to promoting himself. The subsequent excitement skyrocketed the market cap of DWAC to just shy of \$5 billion for one brief moment, giving him ample opportunity to return to the market for additional fundraising. Yes, the share price then collapsed in half. But the amount of money he is going to have to promote himself, to command a narrative in politics, and to run again is stunning.

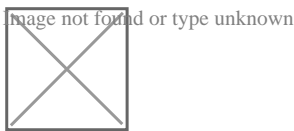
Let's be clear. This is the largest and fastest political fundraise in American history. It changes the business model of political fundraising forever. Trump is harnessing a new technology and a new platform to propel himself back into the Oval Office. He's been planning this "TNN - Trump News Network" for a very long time, since at least [October 2018](#). I first noticed the possibility when he kept saying that both Fox News and CNN "needed some competition". That's the "Truth", Truth Social, that is. Truth will give him a media platform from which to deliver all kinds of fee-paying content and unlimited airtime. It will be a home for everything from political talk shows to reality TV. It's not hard to imagine that "Truth" will have more nudity than Game of Thrones and more shocking political drama than House of Cards.



It seemed to cause a real ruckus when I predicted back in [November 2018](#) that Trump would create a media platform. It seems so obvious that a media platform is Bully Pulpit of our time and every ex-President wants one. That's why the [Obamas did their deal with Netflix](#). It's why the Clintons did their book deals with Knopf and [Simon & Shuster](#). Only President G.W. Bush opted for the quiet life. Though, I imagine that a second Trump run at the Presidency will cause that former President to drop his [paintbrush](#) and head straight to the nearest podium for a mike drop statement about a Trump Presidency redux.

The Trump team has digested the reality that the Silicon Valley media giants and the mainstream media could together de-platform him. They concluded that it was not enough to create a media platform. They have to create one that can't be de-platformed. That means using technology to avoid dependence on Apple or Google or Facebook. At this point, quite a few Americans are dead set against the [FAANG monopoly](#) and pretty fed up with what they see as corruption in Washington (thank you [Members of Congress](#) and [Federal Reserve Board members](#) and all your personal trading accounts). The former President is digitizing politics itself, moving the battleground to the internet and the airwaves. He'll say whatever he wants from that privileged position from, "What kind of world de-platforms the President but lets The Taliban run riot over social media?" to, "the Chinese virus." Trump will be selling his enterprise as an opportunity to disrupt big tech, drain the swamp in Washington and restore and protect the right to free speech. Truth will be expressly "anti-woke."

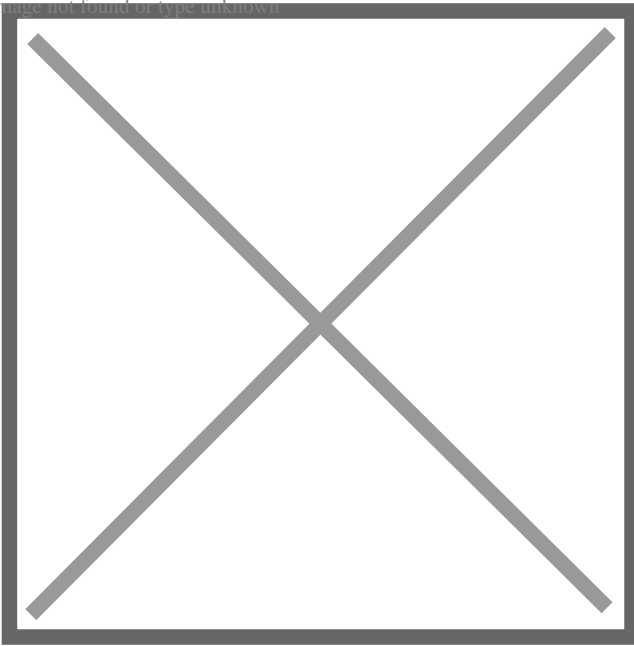
Meanwhile, [The Verge](#) has reported that the Trump team basically lifted the code for his platform straight from Twitter's code platform, [Mastodon](#). A lawsuit is now filed alleging that Truth is not in compliance with Mastodon's Affero General Public License (AGPLv3). The Verge says that Trump's team has 30 days to comply or get shut down. Does he care? With this kind of money, he can handle a welter of lawsuits alongside the prosecution actions that are already in motion.



Who will watch all this? The answer may be *everybody*. The titillation and sheer horror will draw in opponents and borderline voters alike. The loyalists will be glued to their seats, loaded with popcorn and beer and borrowing ever more money to make formal campaign contributions.

This brings us to something that will make many even more uncomfortable; one thing that will mark the difference between this time around and our last experience with The Don on a Presidential run. Trump feels he tried to play by the rules last time. He genuinely tried to play nicely in the political sandbox. This time, he will be unrestrained. The strapline of his 2024 Presidential run could well be "No More Mr. Nice Guy." This is Trump with the gloves off. In 2016, Richard Branson recounted a [lunch](#) he once had with the former President during which Trump reportedly spent the whole time talking about his intended revenge on the handful of people who refused to finance him. Imagine how much revenge he has in mind for Trump Round Two?

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While supporters already view him as an untouchable martyr, he has persecutors that are proper prosecutors; namely, Tish James, the NY Attorney General. She is fearless in her efforts to bite into Trump and the family finances. She is also taking on the [NRA](#), [Facebook](#) and a range of other seemingly impossible targets. Bankers tremble at the thought that she'll use heavy weapons like a [Wells Notice](#) to get them to hand over Trump business records. She is smart enough to know that a jury could never understand the complexities of Trump's sophisticated finances. She's likely to go for the simple and elegant solution that brought [Al Capone down: mail fraud](#).

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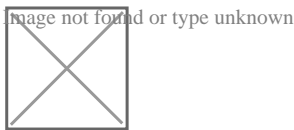
Tish James may turn out to be the Elliott Ness of our time. It makes sense now that we know that she intends to [run for the Governorship of NYC](#), which is a launchpad to the Presidency. Keep an eye on her. Watch how ruthlessly she turned on her fellow Democrat, Andrew Cuomo, when he was called out as a sexual predator. She is ambitious. If she attempts to incarcerate Trump, it will propel her towards the White House. However, it might also propel the nation into a maelstrom. One has to consider the possibility that Trump supporters will object to any and all efforts to restrain him. Could America start to look like [South Africa when it attempted to jail its former President, Jacob Zuma](#)? It is possible. Zuma did not have a fee-paying media messaging machine, yet serious riots and social unrest broke out across that nation.

Does Trump want a civil war? He may want an uncivil war. We now need to reconsider the events of January 6th. At the time, I remember being able to read about the incidents that occurred in various state capitals as well as at the nation's Capitol. It's hard to find these accounts now on the net. It matters because it may be that January 6th was just a test run. It may be that Trump and his team are now negotiating with the leadership of the red states, seeking their support not just for the Presidency but for a national effort to unseat Washington itself. Trump has always presented himself an Uber-like disruptor in politics. He has tried to

disintermediate Washington itself from power, shifting power back to the individual states. He constantly removed authority from the bureaucracy and many Americans loved it. He will argue that the reason the FDA approved the vaccines in a year is because of [his efforts](#) to halt their usual bureaucratic inertia.

Could he be gearing up for a scenario in which the red states seek to elect their own President? A political map of America shows the battle lines clearly. Could the red state capitols be taken over by Trumpers? If Trump and his band tried to "[kill the baby \(the Biden Presidency\) in its crib](#)," what might they do to the rather geriatric infrastructure of politics at the state level?

Elsewhere, Seth Abramson, the writer who authored a trilogy on Trump starting with Proof of Collusion, [took to Substack](#):



Candidate Stern has said he was approached by Michael Flynn's Patriot Caucus in their efforts to acquire dirt on state and federal politicians with a view to "extort those politicians into pushing to audit and decertify **Joe Biden**'s November 2020 election victory and reinstall **Donald Trump** as president." Abramson has an ax to grind here. But, it is still worth considering whether the Republican party is undergoing a rather Stalinesque [purge](#). Are we in the midst of a [Night of the Long Knives](#) where moderates are being systematically purged at the state level? As Peggy Noonan recently pointed out, the loss of local newspapers has led to a loss of local journalism which has led to an explosion in local corruption. There are no more gumshoes trying to sneak into back rooms to suss deals. The journalists have been replaced by algorithms.

The Washington Post held its own inquiry. Perhaps most telling is the conclusion that "Trump frequently tweeted about the Jan. 6 rally..." sending messages like "Big protest in D.C. on Jan. 6th. Be there, will be wild!" So, his attempts were not conducted in secret. The details were clear. "The hour, date and location of concern was the same: 1 p.m., the U.S. Capitol, Jan. 6." Clashes occurred earlier in the day less than a mile away "between hundreds of Trump supporters — some with shields and gas masks — and police." The Washington Post concludes, "intelligence officials certainly never envisioned a mass attack against the government incited by the sitting president." They did, however, quake in fear of calling in the military to deal with the problem. That's Trump's trump card.

The end result is that both Democrats and Republicans are now accusing each other of engaging in a Coup d'Etat. International observers will be in shock at all this. The rest of the world believed that Trump was gone and would never return. For the domestic audience, a Trump revival is either so awful or so wonderful that no one can speak to anyone about it unless they are on the same side. For some, Trump is the gruesome evil character in a horror film who just refuses to die. For supporters, Trump is a savior that will resurrect himself over and over. Either way, get ready for Trump, the Sequel: No More Mr. Nice Guy. Cue the music, [Let's Go Brandon](#).

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