 **REPUBLICAN
SURVIVORS
– UPDATE:
I’M STILL OUT
ON A LIMB!**

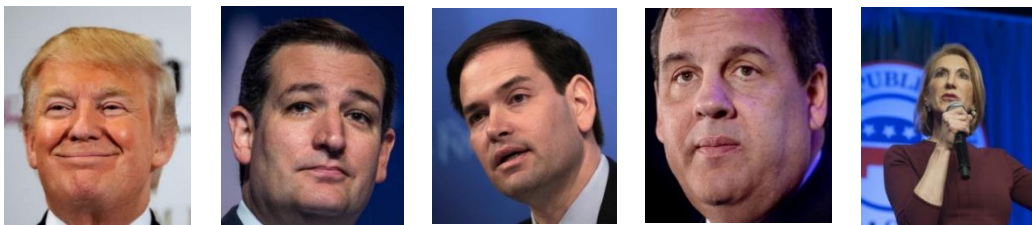


By Stephen L. Bakke  December 16, 2015



In September, I went out on a limb to predict who would be the “last 5 standing,” probably sometime in the spring. Needless to say, just like my personality, the earlier analysis was somewhat flawed. Here were my “Final Five”: Bush, Carson, Christie, Fiorina, and Rubio. It’s now time to revise that list, and in so doing, I’m probably starting to apply a saw to that limb. Actually, the two newcomers to the list, Trump and Cruz, were previously at positions “six and seven,” – that’s not so bad. But it’s embarrassing for me that they are now “one and two.” Following are my new “picks” for the “Final Five!

The Final Five



Donald Trump – People probably think Trump’s “40% numbers” are of recent origin. Actually he came in at over 40% even in September – so while he has solidified his popularity, he hasn’t increased it. He’s surprised everyone. He’s struck a chord. This week’s debate showed him at his best AND worst, in my opinion. There were disgusting comments AND embarrassing facial expressions. But he demonstrated a real friendliness to Cruz and a “first time” commitment to support the Republican Party. I still think that as candidates drop out, their supporters will NOT rush to support Trump. I predict that once Trump sees potential defeat on the horizon, he will DECLARE VICTORY and drop out.

Ted Cruz – Earlier, I had Cruz peaking and then going away as people got tired of his ideological and non-compromising nature. It’s a surprise to me but he has established broad-based support in spite of his cutting edge contrarian agenda and style. I think he could dominate a debate with any of the democrats. He’s getting better at this “game” and is in it for the long term. I even heard one person state that Cruz is shedding his negative image as the second coming of Grigori Rasputin – the infamous 19th century Russian mystic. Here’s a picture of ol’ Grigori:

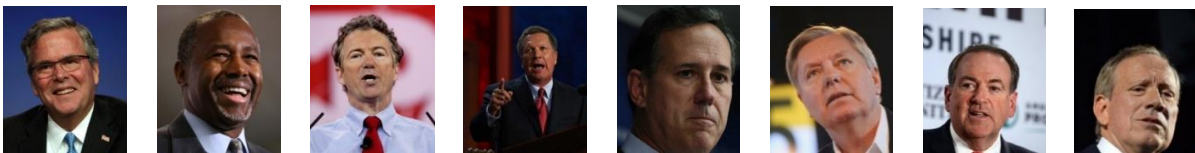


Marco Rubio – Extremely fluent on international issues. Has clawed his way upward but follows two, ever more formidable opponents. Challenges Cruz as an orator, and very informed on international policies and national security. Has a few skeletons that will come back to haunt him. He’s still a major factor!

Chris Christie – People love it when he spouts off. Likable, and as cuddly as a naughty little boy. He’s the personality many of us geeky nerds really want to be (for a few minutes). He’s had good debates, and his “toughness” is appealing to the voters. But I still think he’s competing for a cabinet spot.

Carly Fiorina – I like her! Solid! She’s tough and experienced in many things including international security (led the Central Intelligence Agency’s External Advisory Board from 2007 to 2009). Strengths have not translated into poll success, and I’m surprised. She will rise once the field shrinks a bit. I think she will be in the race for a lot longer – a survivor! An obvious VP choice for all the leaders except Trump.

Can’t Last Forever



Jeb Bush – I used to think he was in ‘till the end! I no longer believe that. He claims to “love this,” but I doubt that. He’s a fine fellow but when someone like Trump is in the race, due to Bush’s personality, he’s a target for Trump’s most disgusting attempts to humiliate his opposition. Jeb doesn’t know how to deal with it. I wouldn’t either. It’s just a matter of time until he withdraws. Let’s make it sooner rather than later!

Ben Carson – Let’s be honest! Carson is PAINFULLY non-confrontational, and I don’t think this is playing well with the voters. His sincere humility at times is drowned out by conflicting characteristics of frankness and non-combativeness. He’s likable but probably should go on vacation and wait for his cabinet appointment as Secretary of Health and Human Services. A cabinet post is better for Carson than would be the Presidency, as far as I’m concerned. Pull the plug Ben!

Rand Paul – He’s made a valuable contribution to the election debate, but his international isolationism (for lack of a better term) doesn’t seem to reflect the electorate’s collective idea of the role the U.S. should play in the world. His libertarian positions are often valid and he is a good influence in the Senate. He is a great Senator and should stay there because he’s outside of the “conventional” definition of candidates who can currently become President. Time for a political vacation!

John Kasich – Not a strong ideological conservative, and yet I would like to have him last a little longer. He’s just not making much of an impression with the voters. Excellent record as governor but it seems he will be not much more. Maybe being Governor is his ultimate calling.

Rick Santorum – Probably one of the finest persons in the running. Most of what he says is supportable, but he obviously can’t win, and from now on he’s only fighting to raise the visibility of his favorite issues. He’s made his point. He’s delivered his message. And now he should go home and encourage his supporters to select the “next best choice.”

Lindsey Graham - OK as a senator but not a CEO type of personality. Will continue to fade. He should give up Presidential aspirations and go back to Congress and thrive.

Mike Huckabee – Seems to speak up aggressively on only a couple of issues. Committed and sincere but probably has no real expectations of doing anything other than getting his message out. Time to fold the tent!

George Pataki – I know, I know a republican governor in a liberal state. But his visibility has been mostly limited to the state of New York. “Flyover country” doesn’t pay much attention to that little corner of the world. He’s had his say, and should go home.