



## OBAMA AND TRUMP: TWO SIMILAR PEAS FROM VERY DIFFERENT



**PODS!**



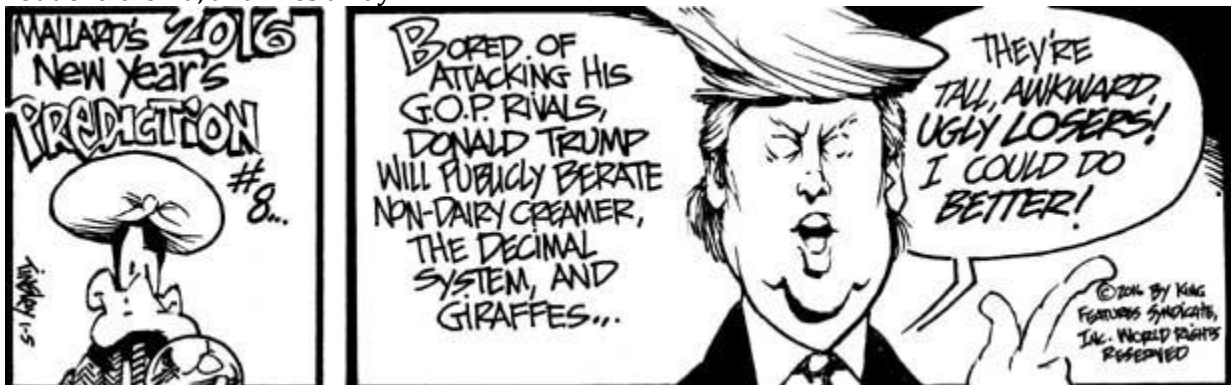
By Stephen L. Bakke January 2, 2016

This isn't a "separated at birth" exercise, but I am going to suggest that these guys seem to reflect each other in many ways – kind of like a photo negative – conflicting opposite extremes of the same thing. They are two very different manifestations of something eerily similar. I can't really put my finger on the explanation.

Why do such extremes appeal to the general public? It's all about the nature and issues of the world – local, national, and international. There's a lot of anger, even rage, about conditions, policies, and insecurities. Concerned people are attracted to these sometimes cult-like personalities who give assurance of eventual peace, tranquility and greatness.

Things that are the very much the same include:

- They make proclamations and promises that can only be described as transformational.
- Both galvanize supporters and severely divide others.
- Both are terribly annoying to all but their most devoted followers. Actually, both annoy many supporters who just close their eyes and express their undying, uh ... tolerance.
- Neither ever admits to error. Trump changes his mind but only if, in his words, the facts change. Obama simply never changes his mind – even when it's obvious he should. Obama blames public disapproval either on the press or on inadequate explanation of the Obama message and policies.
- Demagogues both, for sure! Obama finds a logical ideological enemy to demonize. Trump, on the other hand, is more opportunistic in his "demagoguery." Sometimes the selection of a demon is based on the target being a perceived threat. At other times he just picks someone or something out of a crowd, and fires away!



- Both seem to have personalities that attract a cult-like following.
- Both are bullies. One tries to hide it. The other doesn't.
- Both proclaim bold generalities, but are publically shallow (some would say cautious or discreet) on substantive details in analyses and policies.

I'll devote this paragraph to the topic of narcissism. I personally start from the premise that a moderate level of narcissism is probably somewhat helpful – as long as it enhances self-confidence without getting too deep into the worst reaches of antisocial behavior. Some common aspects of narcissism include:

- Grandiose sense of self-importance.
- Preoccupied with fantasies of success, power, brilliance, etc.
- Belief in one's uniqueness.
- Seems to require admiration.
- Strong sense of entitlement.
- Exploitive.
- Arrogant/haughty.
- Tendency to put others down.

Conclusion: Both are most certainly narcissists!

Here are things for which I see their approaches and motivation as being very different:

- Curiously, both seem to set out to aggravate – but Obama does it in a coy way ala (divide and conquer) Saul Alinsky, while Trump does it in an intentionally apparent way.
- Obama is consistently ideological while Trump's opinions seem to change with the prevailing emotion and political wind.

With this kind of character expressing such bold declarations, we need to be wary of the emotion each tends to pull out of us. With personalities like these one has to remember: Be careful what you wish for, you might get it. Obama followers have learned that already, and I fear Trump supporters might be finding out the same thing.



*Is there something like praise and worship going on here?*

Personally, I don't yet know what direction I'm going to take regarding supporting a presidential candidate.