

Aren't Trump & His Supporters the Real RINOs (Republicans in Name Only)?

It's common for Donald Trump and his supporters to label any Republican (like Rep. Liz Cheney) who doesn't blindly support him a "RINO," which amuses me, because Donald Trump himself is the ultimate RINO — previously a Democrat who supported abortion and donated to prior campaigns of both Joe Biden and Kamala Harris. He became a Republican and adopted anti-abortion, anti-immigrant and pro-gun positions as the easiest path to electoral success. Those positions have something important in common — they don't require much intellectual work to garner supporters. They are gut issues, much easier for a self-obsessed psychopath like Trump to spout.

Remember when Donald Trump first announced his candidacy in front

Talking Turkey



By Jim Smith

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of an audience of paid extras? (It's now known that each person that day got \$50 to be in Trump Tower applauding him.) Almost immediately the majority of Republican leaders identified themselves as "Never Trumpers."

One of the best known Republicans, **Sen. Lindsey Graham**, said at the time, ***"I don't think he's a Republican, I don't think he's a conservative, I think his campaign is built on xenophobia, race-baiting and religious bigotry. I think he'd be a disaster for our party, and [although] Senator Cruz would not be my first choice, I think he is a Republican conservative whom I could support."***

Even after Trump became the presumptive Republican nominee in May 2016, Sen. Graham said, ***"I cannot, in good conscience, support Donald Trump because I do not believe he is a reliable Republican conservative, nor has he displayed the judgment and temperament to serve as Commander in Chief."***

If you Google the term "Never Trump," you'll find an impressively long list of Republican governors, senators, representatives, and other elected officials, past and present, who publicly opposed Donald Trump in 2016, usually including in their criticism that he was not a true Republican. Many of them resisted the temptation to endorse Trump after they saw his pull on the Republican base and on the formerly Democratic middle class who felt ignored by the Democratic Party. But many of those Never Trumpers realized that by supporting Trump they would benefit electorally, and they fell in line.

The term RINO was born in the early 1900s and was revived through the years as an insult wielded within the party, but it was typically wielded against Republicans who supported Democratic *policies*. It was Donald Trump who turned it into an insult wielded solely based on not supporting an *individual*. For example, hard core Republicans like Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger and Georgia Governor Brian Kemp were

labeled RINOs by Trump solely for their refusal to go along with the Big Lie about massive voter fraud.

We have learned the hard way that among Trump's supporters are people who would resort to violence against anyone who Trump identified as his enemy, which can quickly turn someone who defies Trump into a supporter, if only to protect his/her own life and that of family members. A useful statistic we'll never see is how many Trump supporters privately despise the man but can't afford to say so for reasons of (1) personal safety and (2) electoral survival. One or two Republicans have been quoted along that line and probably regretted having that sentiment revealed.

Where does all this lead? I was horrified by a Ted Koppel segment on CBS Sunday Morning this week in which a busload of ordinary citizens he interviewed in Mt. Airy, NC, were almost universally Trump fans and repeated as truth multiple lies spouted by Trump such as the press being the enemy of the people, the 2020 election being stolen, and more.

The posting of this column at www.JimSmithBlog.com contains YouTube links for both Graham quotes and the Ted Koppel segment.