

H A R L A N   R I C H A R D S

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The Lesser of Two Evils

Most American politics boils down to a simple calculation: which candidate is the least distasteful? Sure, there are some True Believers who advocate for a specific candidate because they believe in that person. Obama had many True Believers in 2008 who were sure he was going to herald a new era in Washington. We were all sadly disappointed. Now, in his final year, he is trying to do all the things he should have done 8 years ago - what a wasted presidency. But at least he spared us from Shoot-From-The-Hip John McCain and corporate raider Mitt Romney.

Our current lesser of two evils election looks like it is going to be between Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton. They both have die-hard supporters who believe in their candidate. But for the rest of us, neither one is worth a shit. Clinton is a duplicitous, untrustworthy lap dog for the corporate elites. She will do or say whatever is expedient to get elected and will sell us all out while claiming to act on our behalf - just like her husband did. Trump is an unethical, self-centered ego-maniac. He is a showman who is selling the American public a pig in a poke. His tax plan alone will do more damage to his core supporters than all the policies of George Bush II and Barrack Obama combined.

Which is the lesser of two evils? Who wins will depend on whether Clinton can expose Trump's past malfeasance in his business dealings in such a way as to persuade moderates and independents that she is the lesser of two evils. I have to laugh at the Republican loyalists. They are mortified that Trump hijacked their party. After swearing vehemently "anybody but Trump," now that it comes down to Trump vs. Clinton, they are rallying around Trump. They may disagree with all his policies and detest him as an unprincipled opportunist but they will still vote for him. After all, it doesn't matter what Trump does as president - as long as he does it as a Republican.

A third party candidate is out of the question. Party loyalists will never desert their own party. They know that to do so is to give the election to their arch enemy - the other party. I think Trump is going to win the general election - not because he is the best candidate, but because he has the most passionate supporters.

Trump and Bernie Sanders have the most dedicated supporters who believe in their candidate. They will go the extra mile to get their guy elected. Clinton will lose many Sanders supporters because they'll switch over to the other outsider or not show up at the polls. Meanwhile, Trump will keep all his supporters and also get the mainstream Republicans who can't stand the thought of another Clinton presidency. Independents may go for Clinton but that won't be enough to beat Trump when the Sanders supporters switch sides.

The best thing Clinton can do as a service to her country is drop out of the race and let Sanders take on Trump - that's the only way we can be sure to get a Democratic president elected in November.