So far, the conversation about real extremism in America has been underwhelming, ranging on the low side of things, pinging in the ones and twos on the Overall Awareness Meter.

Such is the reward when focusing the energies and efforts of all hands, and all eyes, on the ugly, snarling surface issues espoused by extremists. If you trick people into noticing only the incoherent policies and speeches made by your candidate right now, however crazed or crass they may be, you can get these same people to blow past the lowest-gravity spots where previously inconceivable thoughts and verbalizations really start to bubble and bake.

Such is the alluring quicksand of true lunacy. Some practiced candidates are able to sound a bit whacky, and others even more than a smidge crazy -- but it takes clinically-approved sociopaths and psychotics to master the crowd-speak of madness, to pull off the snake-charmer act combining snake-charming, talking in tongues, and hypnotizing the masses.

During this season of political theater and its practice toward the pursuit of human imperfections, there has been no lack of the entire spectrum of practitioners.

In magic and painting, masters employ techniques of *trompe l'oeil* to trick the eye into seeing something not really happening -- be it the appearance of successfully sawing someone in half, or the materialization of a third dimension in a two-dimensional space.

In politics and in legitimate debates -- those involving facts, not the screaming-ego fests we have come to call political debates -- misdirection is not new. There are long lists of rhetorical tricks in any speaker's kit bag, lugged about like the honorable tools of any trade.

However, there comes a time when centuries-old tools and techniques simply are not up to the task of the usual wool-pulling, obfuscation, and outright lying. Special tools are required, in special times, to inflame the especially stupid, and to stir up the pointedly dunce-headed crowd.

This season, we have seen the birth of a brand new style of Neo-Conservativism, a brand new

neo-con swindle -- one I shall forever call *Trump Ploy*.

Here is how it works: One employs a surface appearance, as repulsive and revolting as possible, in order to disguise one's actual agendas and plans. Here, the public is made duly outraged, and *IS* completely distracted by same, endlessly picking apart the candidate's jaw-droppingly insensitive, ludicrous, unfeeling, dangerous, and boneheaded remarks and/or policies and plans and/or lack of any policies and plans and/or lack of any heart-mind-soul-conscience.

(It is the Age of Unshame, of course, where celebrities from all walks of life now embrace all scandal, and all scandalous comments made, even when they themselves feel no shame -- when their actions refuse to be curbed or changed by any shame. Maybe once, but no more. All press is great press. There is no need to run for cover now, to duck out of range at some heartless or disgusting thing one has said or done. In the Age of Unshame, one bows and reminds the public, *Yeah, that was me -- pretty cool, huh!*)

So: Having deftly diverted the public's attention by setting them loose upon disgusting table scraps of comments vomited up, the candidate-con-artist is thereby freed to get on with any and all *actual* plans, behind the scene.

(Political consumers: If you're not fond of the Bait-and-Switch similarities in the new *Trump Ploy*
school of politics, consider it more like
The Iceberg Theory
: The part you see above the surface is dangerous, all right, but it ain't even close to the part you can't see, underneath the water line.)

And, as any scientist -- or as any random swipe at Google -- will tell you, only about one-eighth of an ice mountain is above the water line, in plain view, up here, where us air-breathers live.

So, my fellow citizens of this one habitable planet we all share in this solar system of ours: Consider the level of your concern, or consternation, or outright fear, at the portion you *CAN* see -- and now, if you would be so kind, go ahead and multiply your concerns or fears by a factor of seven, to account for the part you

CAN'T
see.

All the reeling, damp-handed horror you may be feeling right now, from the steady application of *Trump Ploy* tactics and techniques, hasn't even gotten started yet. No doubt you've already begun to instinctively understand, maybe for the very first time, what *fear of the unknown* might actually mean for you, for yours, for the country, for other people on this planet.

Up until now, every politician has been using the Old Rules, so you could compare apples to apples, even if there were differences of varieties. But, now, with the miracle of *Trump Ploy*, you're left comparing vastly different things, with no common elements between them.

You might as well compare apples with razor blades -- while the candidate-con-man smirks and knowingly teases you, chiding you for your ignorance, rubbing it in, enjoying the moment, passing you the line, *How do you like those apples now, what you got there, from me?*

Scary, you think -- and on a scale not previously thought to exist? This is because you never really know what sort of swindle or game a con artist is truly playing -- not until the very end, when you have lost so much that you need to sit down, get a grip, take a deep breath, and start counting up everything that has been lost, stolen, and torched.

This is the new scorched-earth policy of Republicans, and conservatives, and every little me-first pipsqueak that rightwingnuts have grown and grown for decades, from the demon seeds of their misinformation and propaganda campaigns in think tanks, in publications, on radio and on TV.

The failed coup by financiers and fascists in the 1930s has taken a while to come back to a full boil, but they've finally applied the final bit of heat and fuel with *Trump Ploy*. The whole mass is roiling away, superheated, ready to boil over, ready to flood out of its own kettle.

The Game Riggers learned they couldn't win by force, and they've also come to learn that

tinkering with patriotic language and objective truths can only take a coup just so far. Time to deploy the secret ingredient: *Trump Ploy!*

In the lingo of the land: *Now with 100% more under-the-radar concerns, and over-the-top dangers, than ever before! Buy One Psycho, Get One Sociopath Free!*

And you know -- this year, they just can't keep it in stock. Even working 24-7, the GOP can't sell enough of it, nor fast enough, to suit the masses, who continue to thirst for the bracing recipe of Strong Man Formula 666, and continue to hunger for rich, meaty chunks of Shredded Constitutional Dream.

I can hardly wait to see how these boys carve up the world *this* time, during their ongoing bro-mance, here at Camp Donald, and later on, when they are reunited, at Club Vlad.

Castro? Franco? Stalin? Mussolini? Hitler? Bah -- bring on the *Trump Ploy*!

Those guys? Hey, they were amateurs. Putzes. Pretty sad, really. They coulda been somebody huge, with Trump Ploy *-- but they were losers. My way could have made them winners, I guarantee it! And don't you forget it!*

I've never before wished for amnesia or Alzheimer's. Now, with *Trump Ploy*, it's all I can think about.

Today's Bonus:

The always-amazing Roy Zimmerman keeps us all smiling on a singalong, as our titanic ship of state edges closer to Iceberg November:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iXfTl2pNLx8