THE IOWA CAUCUS TRAIN WRECK – ACCIDENTAL OR PLANNED?

This year's Iowa caucus ought to have gone more smoothly than any caucus ever before in Iowa history. Then a gremlin threw the whole caucus into utter chaos. Or was it just a gremlin?

At this point, inquiring minds are getting paranoid about whether the DNC is desperately trying to run away from Bernie's apparent momentum.

The problems started with that elusive Des Moines Register poll. Keep in mind that the Des Moines Register already brought shame on itself late last year when one of its reporters doxxed a 24-year-old sports fan who did a cute tweet, got lots of beer money, and then generously donated it to a local children's hospital. Anheuser-Busch joined into the donation.

That was when one of the Register's reporters decided to troll through the man's tweets, going back seven years to his teens, and finding two racist tweets. If that wasn't sleazy enough, it turned out the reporter had his own history of nasty tweets. The Register fired the reporter, but by then, the whole episode had become irrecoverably ugly.

That was bad. This weekend, though, the Register went one worse. Working with CNN, the Des Moines Register commissioned a poll in the lead-up to the Iowa caucuses. However, owing to some confusion about whether Pete Buttigieg was among the candidate choices offered to those taking the poll, CNN and the Register decided to pull the poll. That's the *official* story.

The *unofficial* story is that the poll shows that both Bernie Sanders and Andrew Yang polled so high (and Biden so low) that the Democrat establishment made the decision to yank the poll, lest it help those two candidates on the day of the caucus.

On the one hand, it's a great conspiracy theory, composed of imaginary dots connected by invisible lines. On the other hand, knowing that the DNC essentially took the 2016 nomination from Bernie and bestowed it on Hillary, and knowing that the DNC is in a blind panic about Bernie's momentum... suddenly, anything is possible.

And then there's the caucus itself. What is supposed to have happened is that the precinct chairs would have a handy-dandy app that would easily enable them to report caucus results in real time. What actually happened was reminiscent of the glory days of Obamacare's utterly failed website. A letter from Dana Remus, general counsel for Joe Biden's campaign, to the Iowa Democratic Party pooh-bahs sums up the disaster:

> "I write on behalf of the Biden for President Campaign regarding the considerable flaws in tonight's Iowa Caucus reporting system. The app that was intended to relay Caucus results to the Party failed; the Party's back-up telephonic reporting system likewise has failed. Now, we understand that Caucus Chairs are attempting to — and, in many cases, failing to — report results telephonically to the Party. These acute failures are occurring statewide."

As matters stand now (Tuesday afternoon 2/04), it appears that all of the candidates won 0% of the caucus votes. In lieu of actual data, there are rumors. Chief among the rumors is that Biden's candidacy collapsed completely and that Bernie had a major blowout.

Patrick Ruffini summed this up by looking at what the candidates had to say for themselves, something that rather obviously reflects reports they were picking up from people on the ground:

> *"Behind the scenes, the campaigns and the media know who won. Read the body language and network decisions.*
> *Klobuchar gave an 'exceeded expectations' speech*
> *Biden a losing speech*
> *Warren's speech got cut away from*
> *Sanders giving a winning speech*
>
> *— Patrick Ruffini (@PatrickRuffini) February 4, 2020"*

Certainly, that tweet is consistent with what was reasonably predictable in the lead-up to the Iowa Caucus: Bernie is running away with the polls, and Biden is collapsing.

This is a nightmare scenario for the Democrat Party, which believes (quite reasonably) that Bernie is unlikely (to put it mildly) to prevail against Trump in a general election.

On the one side, there's Trump, under whose watch wages and the stock market are rising; crime

and drug deaths are falling; black families are being reunited; foreign enemies are being corralled; oil and gas are being exported, not imported; and all sorts of other good stuff.

And on the other side, there's Bernie, who says, "Give it all to me, every bit of it, and I'll make sure that some of it trickles back to you."

One of those is not a winning message.

Given the DNC's blind panic about a Sanders candidacy, there's rising suspicion that what happened in Iowa on Monday wasn't just bad luck and bad tech but was, instead, a desperate move on the DNC's part to game the outcome of the Iowa Caucus.

Whether that's true or not, if enough people believe it, it's easy to imagine the entire DNC edifice collapsing on itself, killing the world's oldest continuously existing political party.

And all the time, just in the wings, Bloomberg is waiting...

Meanwhile, on the Republican side, Trump sailed to an easy, uncomplicated victory. Life is good.

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