

Gotham: A Rhetorical Analysis of President Donald J. Trump's Republican National
Committee Acceptance Speech.

by

Michaela Edwards

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Abstract

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Donald Trump shook the political landscape in America during the 2016 election cycle. His use of over simplified adjectives and lack of political correctness has deepened the divide in American constituents, particularly on the generational divides. This thesis aims to create some understanding of Trump and his rhetorical motives by comparing him to pop culture legend Batman and Trump's view of America to Gotham. This is supported through his use of "god and devil" terms in his Republican National Committee acceptance speech. The analogy is then strengthened by analyzing Trump's persuasive methods through the use of Burke's Terministic Screens and appropriating psychological framing to his use of ultimate terms. Finally, five other RNC speeches are analyzed through word occurrence of specific ultimate terms revealing similarities and differences in Trump's persuasive method and those before him.

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Michaela Edwards

APPROVED:

Dr. Kaylene Gebert
Department of Communication Studies
and Organizational Communication

Dr. Heather Hundley
Department of Communication Studies
and Organizational Communication

Dr. Theresa Davis
Department of Psychology

Dr. John R. Vile
Dean, University Honors College

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Introduction

The political scene in the United States has been drastically changing over the past two years, there has been a transfer of rhetorical power that has erupted out of the seemingly unexperienced and non-political. At the head of this political change is our 45th President Donald Trump. Political change is a part of history and naturally cycles. For newer generations, however, this cycle is dulled through text and often romanticized. When political change happens, “Generation Y” is taken aback with very little to relate to and draw connections. This results in a large majority of young people calling Trump, “Cheeto Hitler,” or referring to him as a fascist tyrant.

This lack of understanding in the younger generation is an issue grounded in relatability. To most progressive young Americans, Trump is the embodiment of everything the nation has tried to change (Page & Crescente, 2016; Hope, 2016; Clement & Guskin, 2016). There is a need for a large group of individuals to understand the historical precedent that is Trump’s presidency. Sometimes, the best way to create understanding is to draw parallels between developed schemas. Relating the issue to a well-known trope can offer some clarity.

Thesis Statement

Looking at Trump’s RNC acceptance speech, a parallel can be drawn between Trump’s worldview and the trope of Batman and Gotham City. With this parallel, it is possible to facilitate understanding for the younger generations that are struggling to relate not only with their expectations of politics and government, but also with their expectations of progress and the future.

Further, by applying the theories of terministic screens and framing to Trump's rhetoric in his RNC acceptance speech, it is possible to begin to understand Trump and his constituents' point of view. Terministic screens are unconscious linguistic filters that are applied to reality through word choice. However, the assertion made is that Trump is aware of his constituents' point of view and has created a speaking style that will frame his arguments and connect with his audience in a way that other candidates have not. A word count analysis of five other RNC acceptance speeches shows the similarities in Trump's persuasive motives, but also highlights the differences in his speaking style. The analysis focuses on specific terms found in Trump's speech that can be seen as God or Devil terms in the American society. These specific terms were chosen based on recurrence in Trump's speech allowing an analysis of other RNC speeches with the same terms. Trump has created a new way of doing things rhetorically in the political sphere and it has worked for him.

Gotham: An American Application

Many words have a history that transcends nations, politics, and pop culture. The word Gotham finds its origins in medieval England where it was used to describe a "goat town" which was a "village of simple minded fools" (Nigro, 2010). Nigro (2010) goes on to say that the people in *Gotham* were sometimes described as "playing the fool" to avert the wrath of whichever monarch was in power at the time. It was not until the magazine *Salmagundi*, published in the early 1800's, that we see the word make a resurgence in North America. *Salmagundi* was a satirical literary periodical developed and published by Washington Irving (Lastch, 1976). The magazine featured short essays on contemporary issues in "Gotham" aka. New York City. Irving's use of the word Gotham

was intended to show the “stupidity of its inhabitants” reaching back to the medieval roots. However, the name gained popularity and soon became a pseudonym for New York City.

In the early 1800s New York City was plagued by rampant gang violence that lasted the century. The gangs engaged in violent turf wars and every petty crime imaginable. As the gangs grew they honed crimes such as prostitution, racketeering, and counterfeiting (Burrows & Wallace, 1999). New York’s alleys were figuratively and literally home to thugs and murderers, giving the name Gotham a new light as the brackish-noir city location portrayed in the *Detective Comics* better known as DC Inc., where Bat-Man made his debut (Finger & Cane, 1939).

In the late 1930s DC comics created Bat-Man, a caped detective with no unnatural super powers who crusades to rid his city of crime. Bat-Man is “the common man’s only hope against the same type of senseless violence that plagues many real-world cities” (Taylor, 2008). The Batman ark begins with him as young Bruce Wayne. A Criminal senselessly guns down Bruce’s parents leaving him as an orphan and heir to a gigantic fortune and a multibillion dollar corporation. The origin story of Batman is important here because it sets the scene of Gotham. This dark noir is crime ridden and desperate, providing the locus for Batman’s obsessive battle with crime (Uricchio, 2010). Gotham city is “ideologically skewed” by the origin story not only emphasizing the corruption of the city, but also allowing the birth of Batman. Batman has a fixation on trivial crimes while “refusing to address” the possibility that the environment is to blame for the plight of social inequities (Uricchio, 2010).

Batman spends his life obsessively combating petty crimes, though the real trouble in Gotham is derived from the robust social inequity that Bruce Wayne perpetuates through Wayne Enterprises and his seemingly aloof playboy lifestyle (Taylor, 2008). Instead of making a difference through the influence he has as a Wayne, Batman chooses to fight trivial crimes. It is important to note here that the Batman archetype has gone through many evolutions through the decades. Originally, he was a quiet detective, moving in to the late 60's early 70's his characterizations emphasized his playboy fun life style. In the early 2000s and into the last decade Batman has taken on a very dark role as the suffering vigilante. For the purposes of the comparison the Batman in question is much closer to the characterizations of the late 70s or early 80s, he is still beginning to take on a more serious role, however, he has not left his socialite playboy life behind for the aloof bat he becomes in the 2000s (Taylor, 2008).

A parallel can be drawn with Trump. In his RNC speech he attempts to create a Trump who will save the American people from the errors of his predecessors. He can be the vigilante president who will go above and beyond to correct all wrongs and restore law and order. Trump, however, has been influential and in the limelight for many years, funded first by his father's fortune. He has political power through his companies and his means.

The assertion is not to say that Trump believes he is a new age Batman (Cavna, 2015). It is meant to offer some perspective into Donald Trump's worldview. Trump grew up in Gotham. He was born and raised in the heart of New York City by a wealthy family. Though he did not witness his parents murdered, he grew up with the widespread idea that the streets of his home were dangerous. In fact, in 1991 his mother was robbed and

beaten at the age of 79 outside her home in Jamaica, New York City (Update; Youth, 1992). Unfortunately, this is one more piece of evidence for Trump's worldview. Along with the city's gang history, it is easy to imagine the mean worldview that Trump expresses in his RNC acceptance speech.

Trump and many of his constituents have a bleak view of America and this can be blamed in part on mass media. Looking at the "mean world syndrome" out of Gerbner's research on cultivation theory (Lanehart, 2016), media has a direct influence on worldview when watched with enough regularity and consistency. Mean world syndrome is described as the assumption that the world is more violent than it actually is due to viewing of "violence-related" content (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1980). It has been found that the most watched shows of those in Trump's base are crime shows and conservative news outlets (Duncan, 2016). This is important when thinking about his constituents' worldview and voting/political obligations. The most recent report from the Bureau of Labor Statistics on leisure activities (BLS, 2015) cites socioeconomic level and education levels as the highest factors contributing to TV viewership. Specifically, those with lower socioeconomic level and lower completed education tend to watch more television per day. Looking at Trump's base (McGill, 2016), these are many of the same individuals.

At the very beginning of Trump's RNC acceptance speech, he claims that he will lead the country back to a time of safety, peace, and prosperity. He wants a country based on law and order for the betterment of all Americans. Trump then narrates the downfall of America's criminal justice system due to the current administration's rollbacks on criminal enforcement, which he claims is a direct correlation to the acceptance of illegal

immigrants in the nation. In the first minute of his acceptance speech he paints a very dark picture of America. He uses words such as killings, sacrifice, and terror to describe a grim, bleak, and violent America. This is placed parallel to the often dark and bleak description of New York City (Greenberg, 2008; Hannigan, 1999).

In a word count analysis of Trump's RNC speech (See Appendix A for full speech transcript), words like terror, fail, and threat are repeated continuously (See Table 1 for word count analysis). Trump's America has progressed to a place of disaster and he wants to go back to a time when the citizens were protected, safe, and at peace. His use of the words "we" and "ours" creates unity. In the same sweep, however, he continuously calls to himself, "I will" (Trump, 2017) work to create this America that we dream for. Trump shows his need to release America from the clutches of illegal immigrants, crime, and threat through his word choice and use of negative over simplified adjectives when talking about the past administration. This bleak Gotham that he applies to the whole of America "Needs a Hero." America needs someone who will stand up to the lies and corruption on the Hill even if that means throwing away the rule book.

"I have a message to every last person threatening the peace on our streets and the safety of our police: when I take the oath of office next year, I will restore law and order to our country. Believe me, believe me. (Trump, 2016; see Appendix A for full transcript)."

The Rhetoric of Trump

Donald Trump has a unique way of speaking. Through his use of over simplified adjectives and trigger words, he has created a new kind of persuasive tool that appeals to the masses. Part of Trump's success is due to his ability to connect with his audience's

sense of reality. Kenneth Burke coined the term terministic screen to describe the use of word choice as a filter for reality. Using specific words and their respective connotations, it is possible to analyze an individual's worldview and therefore the reality in which a person operates. A terministic screen is best exemplified the way that Burke explained the term in his book, *Language as Symbolic Action* (1966). Imagine a camera with different lenses. Each picture can be of the same object, yet with each lens the object can look completely different. When a blue filter is applied and picture of a yellow flower is taken, the flower is photographed to look green. The flower remains yellow; however, it is seen by the photographer and anyone who views the picture as green. Burke suggests that this is how language and word choice works. Depending on word choice, one's perspective of the world changes, and with it, the worldview of others changes.

Word choice is heavily dependent on connotative definitions. One of the easiest examples of a connotative definition with the ability to change perspective is the word "green." For the past century, the word green has indicated the hue created when blue and yellow are mixed. Within the past few decades however, the word "green" has taken on a new meaning. It now refers to environmentally friendly products and ideas: companies go green, green fuels, green trash disposal, green initiatives. If someone says "My car is green," it is no longer assumed that they are talking about the color of their car.

Connotative definitions lie within the terministic screen; they are the manifestation of an active screen. In Wayne Booth's book, *The Many Voices of Kenneth Burke* (2001), Burke indicates that value is assigned to words. Richard Weaver (2009) expands on the use of value, stating that society decides what is supremely good and what is supremely bad; these are god and devil terms, respectively. For the American people, god terms can

be hope, peace, patriotism, freedom, democracy. For an American citizen to disagree with these terms is fundamentally wrong and seen as an evil. Devil terms within the screen of Americans would be rape, incest, terrorism, and murder. These are terms that disturb the peace and encroach upon fundamental human rights. With just the use of these terms, it is possible to see the terministic screen of an average American. Due to the strength of the connotative meanings, the words can paint reality not only for the individual but also for others that the individual communicates with. These specific words are not listed in any text but chosen connotatively from the author's American worldview.

With these ideas in mind, looking back at Trump's RNC acceptance speech (2017), his use of god and devil terms are very clear (See Table 1 for listed god and devil terms and recurrence). His use of words like "terror," "crime," and "threat," create a morose, scary existence for the American people. Trump strives for an existence where "peace" and "safety" are the American reality. The question then becomes, does Trump genuinely believe that America has become Gotham, or is it just advantageous for him to support this idea in his constituents? Does Trump intend to be the Vigilante President who washes out the corruption and "Drains the Swamp," or is his speech purely what he thinks the American people want to hear?

Hypothetically, Trump could be speaking from his worldview. He may expound upon some of the issues with his iconic superlatives, but overall Trump has a bleak view of our government and the state of our nation. He is generally under-qualified to lead a country, but intends to bring his own style and views of right and wrong to fix some of the issues he mentions in his RNC acceptance speech. It is possible that he is hoping to stir up

constituents with the overuse of words such as “terror” and “crime;” however, it is also possible to say that he uses these words because they are an ingrained part of his reality growing up in New York City. In this way Trump’s speech can both be his view of reality, as well as a persuasive device with the use of specific words to frame his argument; painting him as a hero that will go above and beyond for justice. However, this idea that he is afraid of the crime and threat that he grew up in New York is unlikely. Trump uses his wealth and power in the state and now the nation in order to be in control of the crime not to cower from it.

The original language of a terministic screen indicates that screens are purely subconscious material (Burke, 1966). The “word choice” is not considered choice at all, but merely a manifestation of reality in connotative view. It is possible, however, to use an individual’s perceived screen to connect with them, similar to audience analysis but on a deeper psychological level. Trump’s main constituency group is made up of lower middle-class blue collar workers (McGill, 2016) most of whom are white. The group is often seen as a majority by the policy makers, but due to their low economic class, they do not have the same political voice as their wealthier counterparts. This “silent majority” feels cheated and lied to by the administration (Chydeia, 2016; Gest, 2017). They hold traditional values that are being undermined with the passing of every new “progressive” law. Trump is able to connect with this group by appealing to these traditional values on the campaign trail. He wants America to come first and to those constituents this means their jobs and families are Trump’s top priorities.

The idea of framing comes from Teversky and Kanheman (1981) studying the effect that different positive and negative word choices had on situation perception. This

concept has been primarily studied through the use of numbers in previous studies (Chein & Chang, 2015; Best & Charness, 2015; van de Ridder, Peters, Stokking, de Ru, & ten Cate, 2015); however, the application to terministic screens is applicable here. Through the use of identified god and devil terms, it is possible to frame an argument to create either a positive or negative bias in an audience. This, of course, requires active audience analysis and intentional persuasion by the speaker; however, the focus of this proposed study comes into conflict with Burke's terministic screens. Terministic screens are unconscious language filters that affect our perceived reality. To study someone's use of a terministic screen as a persuasive method, it is necessary to bring the concept into the conscious world.

In Trump's RNC speech, keeping in mind that the word choice could either be a worldview or persuasive device, there are specific words that are used continuously. These words carry heavy connotative values through the speech creating a frame of sorts for the arguments that Trump makes. The frame would create a focal point for the audience to interpret his speech. His speech can instill a sense of mistrust and fear in constituents creating an America that needs to be saved. Trump's word choice enhances the fears that many Americans already hold, shown in Gallup polls (Poll, 2016) in early April 2016 where 53% of Americans worry "a great deal" about crime and violence.

An Analysis of RNC Acceptance Speeches

One method of determining intent in Trump's RNC speech involves looking back at other similar speeches made by those in similar circumstances. If his speech mirrors other RNC speeches, it is reasonable to consider his word choice to be a conscious attempt at persuasion and less a representation of his worldview. If he is using his constituents'

worldviews to persuade, he has left the subconscious realm of terministic screens and is instead consciously using the terministic screen of his constituents to relate and manipulate. Examining five separate RNC acceptance speeches spanning across several decades, some similarities exist, but overall Trump's Gotham still stands as his own device.

Each election cycle the Republican National Committee chooses a nominee to run for president through a majority delegate vote. RNC acceptance speeches are widely recorded and available to the public. The *New Yorker* reported that Trump was inspired by Richard Nixon's 1968 RNC acceptance speech (Frank, 2016). In the 1960's America was undergoing great social change and violence had erupted across the nation. Nixon's speech emphasizes the domestic strife by talking about crime and violence, but focuses more heavily on the wars at hand. Unlike Trump, he is less isolationist, but speaks very strongly about respect for America worldwide. Nixon goes on to say that "I don't promise that we can eradicate poverty, and end discrimination, eliminate all danger of war in the space of four, or even eight years" (Nixon, 1968). This one sentence sets Nixon on a different stage than Trump who promises to make America "Proud," "strong," and "great again." Though vague, Trump has promised more than the action that Nixon promised; Trump has promised results.

In an attempt to find the noir Gotham frame in other RNC speeches, separate word count analysis were run on the five selected speeches. The only speech that nears the frequency of devil terms used by Trump is Nixon's 1968 speech and this is only on average. Nixon used the given devil terms 18 times in his speech; this is compared to Trump's use of the same words totaling out to 60 uses (See Table 1 for word count analysis). None of the five speeches analyzed have the same emphasis on abundant crime

and violence. Trump uses some similar words to describe the state of American but he is more repetitive in his descriptions. He also spends a large amount of his time stressing the negatives that he intends to fix (See Appendix A for a visualization of stressed negatives versus positives).

The analysis showed that George W. Bush Jr's speech is the only other speech that continuously makes the claim "I will." This rhetorical device creates a divide between the speaker and the audience creating a power gap between the politicians and their constituents. George W. Bush used this phrase 24 times in his acceptance speech compared to Trump's 13. Regardless of the currency, however, the theme becomes, Trump is going to drain the swamp for us, or Trump is going to bring our jobs back. These themes sharply contrast with the other speeches that specifically pledge to work with others to produce results such as Nixon, Reagan, or Ford (See Figure 1 for specific word counts comparison). This shows that Bush and Trump's solution to the issues in America come specifically from their contributions to the American people.

Trump's repetitiveness is seen in George W. Bush's speech as well, though the focus is on God terms and inclusionary words. In Trump's speech, he averages out to repeating each word eight times. This repetitiveness can serve two purposes, to create imagery through the use of repetitive words, and to adjust his speech to the medium. When George W. Bush was running for office the second time, the internet existed; however, it was not as readily available as it is today. Trump is very internet and social media savvy. He is aware of the abilities to edit videos. It stands to reason that the repetitiveness of a message could be a defensive measure against the "untrustworthy" media. It is possible to

argue about the effectiveness of Trump's message; however, he repeats the message so many times that it is hard to misrepresent.

Through analysis of other RNC speeches, it becomes clear that though Trump does emphasize crime and terror more than other past candidates, he is not using a new persuasive device. He is not unique, but rare, in his use of the phrase "I will" to solve his problems and his repetitiveness; however, this could just be a lack of variety in his vocabulary. Trump's constituent base is, on average, poor and undereducated white men (McGill, 2016); it is possible that his word choice is geared specifically to their assumed reading level and comprehensibility. It is also possible that Trump is making an effort to define clearly his messages through repetitiveness in light of new media capabilities.

Conclusion

Trump's rhetoric is not a new occurrence in the political landscape, he is just a first for a lot of young voters. In times of change, it can be hard to understand others' viewpoints. This misunderstanding can be due to a lack of want or simply a lack of knowledge. The assertion here is not to sympathize with Trump or his constituents, it is to grow understanding for the young college demographic by applying theory and pop culture to an issue that has created much anxiety and strife.

By understanding the effect that media has had on the lives of constituents, it is possible to understand further their political views and their voting priorities. In Trump's RNC speech he connected directly with the "silent majority" that has been so heavily affected by the media through their life time, as they grow more skeptical of authority and more fearful of the outside. This "mean world" view is clearly portrayed in his RNC

speech through the repetitive use of devil terms which are not seen in the other five speeches analyzed.

Trump is able to connect with his constituents by creating a language that is easy to understand and remember. He uses words like “terror” and “illegal” over and over, creating a clear message. He then declares that he will solve America’s problems when he is in office. Trump is the vigilante president that will right all of the wrongs that his base has faced over the past eight years through a progressive administration. He is going to put American jobs, American safety, and American people first. For many people, he is the signal in the sky that lets them know help is on the way.

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Table 1

DEVIL TERMS	Trump	Nixon	Bush Sr.	Bush Jr.	Reagan	Ford
danger	3	2	0	0	1	2
radical	4	0	0	0	0	0
bad	4	0	0	0	0	0
suffer	4	0	0	0	2	0
illegal	7	0	0	0	0	1
crime	7	4	1	2	0	2
threat	8	0	0	4	3	2
fail	10	11	0	0	4	0
terror	12	0	0	0	0	0
death	1	1	2	2	0	0
Totals	60	18	3	8	10	7

GOD TERMS	Trump	Nixon	Bush Sr.	Bush Jr.	Reagan	Ford
peace	5	22	9	10	9	11
child	8	12	13	34	2	4
safe	11	0	0	0	5	2
protect	11	0	3	5	0	0
work	12	7	13	32	20	7
Totals	47	41	38	81	36	24

I/Us Words	Trump	Nixon	Bush Sr.	Bush Jr.	Reagan	Ford
I will	13	1	5	24	4	3
we	61	94	63	108	72	33
our	120	36	39	119	82	45
Totals	181	130	102	227	154	78

Table 1. RNC Speech Analysis by Nominee. Word count analysis of Ultimate terms selected due to recurrence from Donald Trump’s RNC Acceptance speech. Each speech analyzed for the reoccurrence of specific ultimate terms and inclusionary terms.

Figure 1

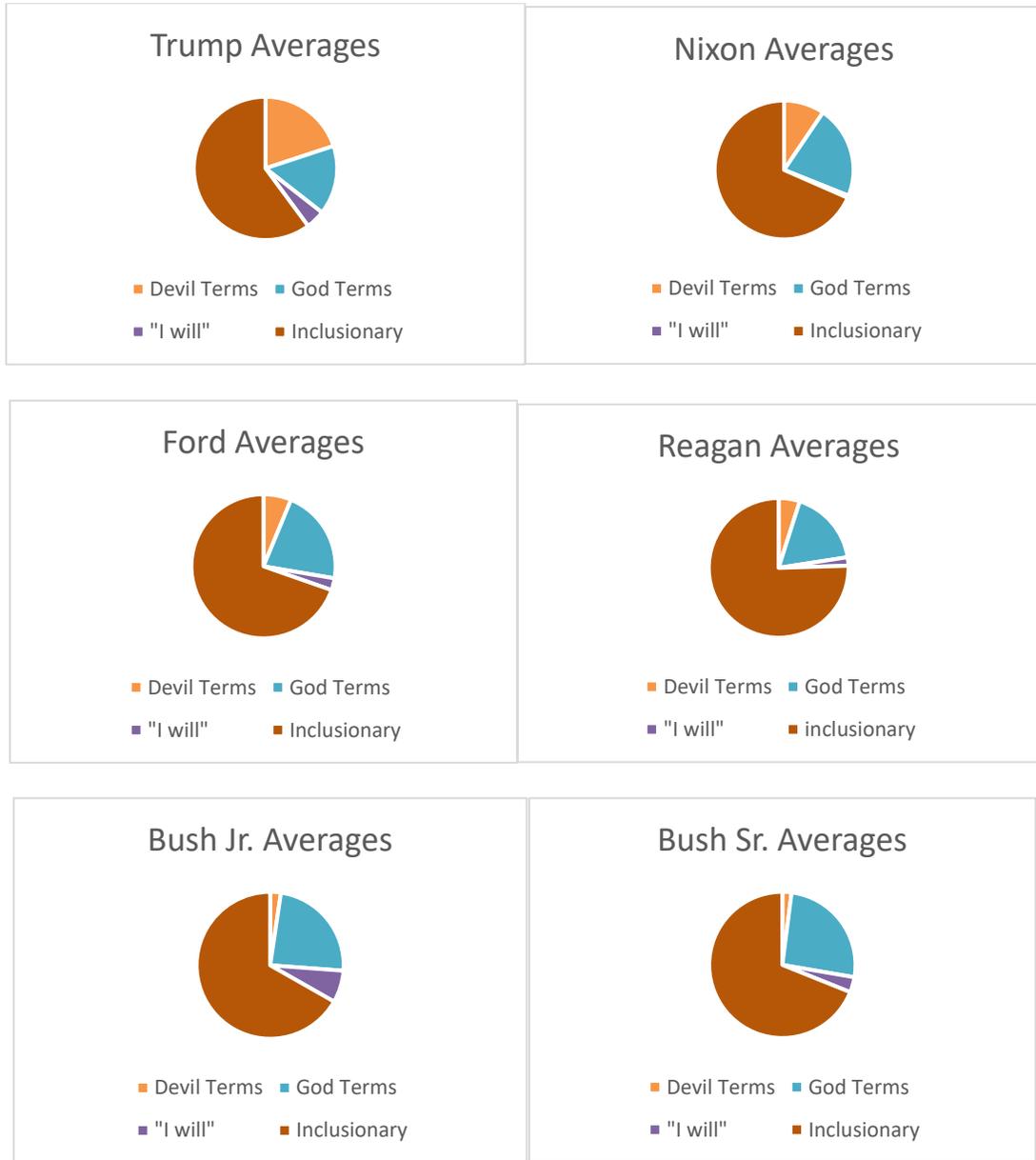


Figure 1. Pie Chart Images of Word Occurrence. Word count analysis in six different RNC speeches based on Table 1.

Appendix A: Full transcript of Donald J Trumps Republican National Committee Acceptance Speech

- Highlighted words are selected god and devil terms, blue and red respectively.

Donald J. Trump: "Address Accepting the Presidential Nomination at the Republican National Convention in Cleveland, Ohio," July 21, 2016.

Friends, delegates and fellow Americans: I humbly and gratefully accept your nomination for the presidency of the United States.

Together, we will lead our party back to the White House, and we will lead our country back to **safety**, prosperity, and **peace**. We will be a country of generosity and warmth. But we will also be a country of law and order.

Our Convention occurs at a moment of crisis for our nation. The attacks on our police, and the **terrorism** in our cities, **threaten** our very way of life. Any politician who does not grasp this **danger** is not fit to lead our country.

Americans watching this address tonight have seen the recent images of violence in our streets and the chaos in our communities. Many have witnessed this violence personally, some have even been its victims.

I have a message for all of you: the **crime** and violence that today afflicts our nation will soon – and I mean very soon – come to an end.

Beginning on January 20th of 2017, **safety** will be restored.

The most basic duty of government is to defend the lives of its own citizens. Any government that **fails** to do so is a government unworthy to lead.

It is finally time for a straightforward assessment of the state of our nation.

I will present the facts plainly and honestly. We cannot afford to be so politically correct anymore.

So if you want to hear the corporate spin, the carefully-crafted lies, and the media myths the Democrats are holding their convention next week. Go there.

But here, at our convention, there will be no lies. We will honor the American people with the truth, and nothing else.

These are the facts:

Decades of progress made in bringing down **crime** are now being reversed by this Administration's rollback of criminal enforcement.

Homicides last year increased by 17 percent in America's fifty largest cities. That's the largest increase in 25 years. In our nation's capital, killings have risen by 50 percent. They are up nearly 60 percent in nearby Baltimore.

In the President's hometown of Chicago, more than 2,000 people have been the victim of shootings this year alone. And almost 4,000 have been killed in the Chicago area since he took office.

The number of police officers killed in the line of duty has risen by almost 50 percent compared to this point last year. Nearly 180,000 **illegal** immigrants with criminal records, ordered deported from our country, are tonight roaming free to **threaten** **peaceful** citizens.

The number of new **illegal** immigrant families who have crossed the border so far this year already exceeds the entire total from 2015. They are being released by the tens of thousands into our communities with no regard for the impact on public **safety** or resources.

One such border-crosser was released and made his way to Nebraska. There, he ended the life of an innocent young girl named Sarah Root. She was 21 years-old, and was killed the day after graduating from college with a 4.0 Grade Point Average. Number one in her class. Her killer was then released a second time, and he is now a fugitive from the law.

I've met Sarah's beautiful family. But to this Administration, their amazing daughter was just one more American life that wasn't worth **protecting**. No more. One more **child** to sacrifice on the order and on the altar of open borders. What about our economy?

Again, I will tell you the plain facts that have been edited out of your nightly news and your morning newspaper: Nearly Four in 10 African-American **children** are living in poverty, while 58% of African American youth are now not employed. 2 million more Latinos are in poverty today than when President Obama took his oath of office less than eight years ago. Another 14 million people have left the **workforce** entirely.

Household incomes are down more than \$4,000 since the year 2000. Our trade deficit in goods -- think of this -- our trade deficit reached nearly \$800 billion last year alone. We're going to fix that.

The budget is no better.

President Obama has doubled our national debt to more than \$19 trillion, and growing. And yet, what do we have to show for it? Our roads and bridges are falling apart, our airports are Third World condition, and forty-three million Americans are on food stamps.

Now let us consider the state of affairs abroad.

Not only have our citizens endured domestic disaster, but they have lived through one international humiliation after another. One after another. We all remember the images of our sailors being forced to their knees by their Iranian captors at gunpoint.

This was just prior to the signing of the Iran deal, which gave back to Iran \$150 billion and gave us absolutely nothing – it will go down in history as one of the worst deals ever negotiated. Another humiliation came when president Obama drew a red line in Syria – and the whole world knew it meant absolutely nothing.

In Libya, our consulate – the symbol of American prestige around the globe – was brought down in flames. America is far less **safe** – and the world is far less stable – than when Obama made the decision to put Hillary Clinton in charge of America's foreign policy.

Let's defeat her in November, OK.

I am certain it is a decision President Obama truly regrets. Her **bad** instincts and her **bad** judgment – something pointed out by Bernie Sanders – are what caused so many of the disasters unfolding today. Let's review the record.

In 2009, pre-Hillary, ISIS was not even on the map. Libya was stable. Egypt was **peaceful**. Iraq was seeing a big, big reduction in violence. Iran was being choked by sanctions. Syria was somewhat under control.

After four years of Hillary Clinton, what do we have? ISIS has spread across the region, and the world. Libya is in ruins, and our Ambassador and his staff were left helpless to die at the hands of savage killers. Egypt was turned over to the **radical** Muslim brotherhood, forcing the military to retake control. Iraq is in chaos. Iran is on the path to nuclear weapons. Syria is engulfed in a civil war and a refugee crisis now **threatens** the West. After fifteen years of wars in the Middle East, after trillions of dollars spent and thousands of lives lost, the situation is worse than it has ever been before.

This is the legacy of Hillary Clinton: **death**, destruction, **terrorism**, and weakness.

But Hillary Clinton's legacy does not have to be America's legacy. The problems we face now – poverty and violence at home, war and destruction abroad – will last only as long as we continue relying on the same politicians who created them in the first place. A change in leadership is required to produce a change in outcomes. Tonight, I will share with you my plan of action for America.

The most important difference between our plan and that of our opponents, is that our plan will put America First. Americanism, not globalism, will be our credo. As long as we are led by politicians who will not put America First, then we can be assured that other nations will not treat America with respect, the respect we deserve.

The American People will come first once again. My plan will begin with **safety** at home – which means **safe** neighborhoods, secure borders, and **protection** from terrorism. There can be no prosperity without law and order. On the economy, I will outline reforms to add millions of new jobs and trillions in new wealth that can be used to rebuild America.

A number of these reforms that I will outline tonight will be opposed by some of our nation's most powerful special interests. That is because these interests have rigged our political and economic system for their exclusive benefit. Believe me, it's for their benefit.

Big business, elite media and major donors are lining up behind the campaign of my opponent because they know she will keep our rigged system in place. They are throwing money at her because they have total control over every single thing she does. She is their puppet, and they pull the strings.

That is why Hillary Clinton's message is that things will never change...never ever. My message is that things have to change – and they have to change right now. Every day I wake up determined to deliver for the people I have met all across this nation that have been neglected, ignored, and abandoned.

I have visited the laid-off factory **workers**, and the communities crushed by our horrible and unfair trade deals. These are the forgotten men and women of our country. And they are forgotten, but they're not going to be forgotten long. People who **work** hard but no longer have a voice.

I am your voice!

I have embraced crying mothers who have lost their **children** because our politicians put their personal agendas before the national good.

[disruption in the audience]

How great are our police? And how great is Cleveland?

I have no patience for injustice, no tolerance for government incompetence, no sympathy for leaders who **fail** their citizens.

When innocent people **suffer**, because our political system lacks the will, or the courage, or the basic decency to enforce our laws – or still worse still, has sold out to some corporate lobbyist for cash – I am not able to look the other way, and I won't look the other way.

And when a Secretary of State **illegally** stores her emails on a private server, deletes 33,000 of them so the authorities can't see her crime, puts our country at risk, lies about it in every different form and faces no consequence – I know that corruption has reached a level like never ever before in our country.

When the FBI Director says that the Secretary of State was "extremely careless" and "negligent," in handling our classified secrets, I also know that these terms are minor compared to what she actually did. They were just used to save her from facing justice for her terrible terrible **crimes**.

In fact, her single greatest accomplishment may be committing such an egregious crime and getting away with it – especially when others who have done far less, have paid so dearly. When that same Secretary of State rakes in millions and millions of dollars trading access and favors to special interests and foreign powers, I know the time for action has come.

I have joined the political arena so that the powerful can no longer beat up on people that cannot defend themselves. Nobody knows the system better than me, which is why I alone can fix it. I have seen firsthand how the system is rigged against our citizens, just like it was rigged against Bernie Sanders – he never had a chance.

But his supporters will join our movement, because we will fix his biggest single issue: trade deals that strip us of our jobs, and strip us of our wealth as a country. Millions of Democrats will join our movement because we are going to fix the system so it **works** justly for each and every American. In this cause, I am proud to have at my side the next Vice President of the United States: Governor Mike Pence of Indiana. And a great guy.

We will bring the same economic success to America that Mike brought to Indiana, which is amazing. He is a man of character and accomplishment. He is the man for the job. The first task for our new Administration will be to liberate our citizens from the **crime** and **terrorism** and lawlessness that **threatens** their communities.

America was shocked to its core when our police officers in Dallas were so brutally executed. In the days after Dallas, we have seen continued **threats** and violence against our law enforcement officials. Law officers have been shot or killed in recent days in Georgia, Missouri, Wisconsin, Kansas, Michigan and Tennessee.

On Sunday, more police were gunned down in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Three were killed, and three were very very badly injured. An attack on law enforcement is an attack on all Americans. I have a message to every last person **threatening** the **peace** on our streets and the **safety** of our police: when I take the oath of office next year, I will restore law and order to our country. Believe me, believe me.

I will **work** with, and appoint, the best and prosecutors and law enforcement officials to get the job properly done. In this race for the White House, I am the law and order candidate.

The irresponsible rhetoric of our President, who has used the pulpit of the presidency to divide us by race and color, has made America a more **dangerous** environment for everyone than frankly I have ever seen and anybody in this room has ever watched or seen.

This Administration has **failed** America's inner cities. Remember: it has **failed** America's inner cities. It's **failed** them on education. It's **failed** them on jobs. It's **failed** them on **crime**. It's **failed** them at every level.

When I am President, I will **work** to ensure that all of our kids are treated equally, and **protected** equally.

Every action I take, I will ask myself: does this make better for young Americans in Baltimore, in Chicago, in Detroit, in Ferguson who have as much of a right to live out their dreams as any other **child** America? Any other **child**.

To make life **safe** in America, we must also address the growing **threats** we face from outside the country: We are going to defeat the barbarians of ISIS, and we are going to defeat them fast.

Once again, France is the victim of brutal Islamic **terrorism**. Men, women and **children** viciously mowed down. Lives ruined. Families ripped apart. A nation in mourning.

The damage and devastation that can be inflicted by Islamic **radicals** has been proven over and over – at the World Trade Center, at an office party in San Bernardino, at the Boston Marathon, and a military recruiting center in Chattanooga, Tennessee. And many, many other locations.

Only weeks ago, in Orlando, Florida, 49 wonderful Americans were savagely murdered by an Islamic **terrorist**. This time, the **terrorist** targeted LGBTQ community – no good and we're going to stop it.

As your President, I will do everything in my power to **protect** our LGBTQ citizens from the violence and oppression of a hateful foreign ideology – believe me.

And as a Republican, it is so nice to hear you cheering for what I just said. Thank you.

To **protect** us from **terrorism**, we need to focus on three things.

We must have the best intelligence gathering operation in the world. We must abandon the **failed** policy of nation building and regime change that Hillary Clinton pushed in Iraq, Libya, Egypt and Syria. Instead, we must **work** with all of our allies who share our goal of destroying ISIS and stamping out Islamic **terrorism** and doing it now, doing it quickly. We're going to win. We're going to win fast.

This includes **working** with our greatest ally in the region, the State of Israel.

Recently I have said that NATO was obsolete, because it did not properly cover **terror**, and also, that many of the member countries were not paying their fair share. As usual, the United States has been picking up the cost. Shortly thereafter, it was announced that

NATO will be setting up a new program in order to combat terrorism -- a true step in the right direction.

Lastly, and very importantly, we must immediately suspend immigration from any nation that has been compromised by terrorism until such time as proven vetting mechanisms have been put in place. We don't want them in our country.

My opponent has called for a radical 550% increase in Syrian -- Think of this. Think of this. This is not believable, but this is what's happening -- refugees on top of existing massive refugee flows coming into our country under President Obama. She proposes this despite the fact that there's no way to screen these refugees in order to find out who they are or where they come from.

I only want to admit individuals into our country who will support our values and love our people. Anyone who endorses violence, hatred or oppression is not welcome in our country and never ever will be.

Decades of record immigration have produced lower wages and higher unemployment for our citizens, especially for African-American and Latino workers. We are going to have an immigration system that works, but one that works for the American people.

On Monday, we heard from three parents whose children were killed by illegal immigrants Mary Ann Mendoza, Sabine Durden, and my friend Jamiel Shaw. They are just three brave representatives of many thousands who have suffered so gravely. Of all my travels in this country, nothing has affected me more deeply than the time I have spent with the mothers and fathers who have lost their children to violence spilling across our border, which we can solve. We have to solve it.

These families have no special interests to represent them. There are no demonstrators to protest on their behalf. My opponent will never meet with them, or share in their pain, believe me. Instead, my opponent wants Sanctuary Cities. But where was sanctuary for Kate Steinle? Where was Sanctuary for the children of Mary Ann, and Sabine, and Jamiel? Where was sanctuary for all the other -- oh, it is so sad to even be talking about it because we can fix this problem so quickly -- Americans who have been so brutally murdered, and who have suffered so so horribly?

These wounded American families have been alone. But they are alone no longer. Tonight, this candidate and the whole nation stand in their corner to support them, to send them our love, and to pledge in their honor that we will save countless more families from suffering and the same awful fate.

We are going to build a great border wall to stop illegal immigration, to stop the gangs and the violence, and to stop the drugs from pouring into our communities. I have been honored to receive the endorsement of America's Border Patrol Agents, and will work directly with them to protect the integrity of our lawful, lawful, lawful immigration system. Lawful.

By ending catch-and-release on the border, we will stop the cycle of human smuggling and violence. **Illegal** border crossings will go down. We will stop it. It won't be happening very much anymore. Believe me. **Peace** will be restored. By enforcing the rules for the millions who overstay their visas, our laws will finally receive the respect they deserve.

Tonight, I want every American whose demands for immigration security have been denied – and every politician who has denied them – to listen very very closely to the words I am about to say.

On January 20th of 2017, the day I take the oath of office, Americans will finally wake up in a country where the laws of the United States are enforced. We are going to be considerate and compassionate to everyone.

But my greatest compassion will be for our own struggling citizens.

My plan is the exact opposite of the **radical** and **dangerous** immigration policy of Hillary Clinton. Americans want relief from uncontrolled immigration. Communities want relief.

Yet Hillary Clinton is proposing mass amnesty, mass immigration, and mass lawlessness. Her plan will overwhelm your schools and hospitals, further reduce your jobs and wages, and make it harder for recent immigrants to escape the tremendous cycle of poverty that they're going through right now and make it almost impossible to join the middle class.

I have a different vision for our **workers**. It begins with a new, fair trade policy that **protects** our jobs and stands up to countries that cheat, of which there are many. It's been a signature message of my campaign from day one, and it will be a signature feature of my presidency from the moment I take the oath of office.

I have made billions of dollars in business making deals – now I'm going to make our country rich again. Using the richest people in the world, which our country has, I am going to turn our **bad** trade agreements into great trade agreements. America has lost nearly-one third of its manufacturing jobs since 1997, following the enactment of disastrous trade deals supported by Bill and Hillary Clinton.

Remember, it was Bill Clinton who signed NAFTA, one of the worst economic deals ever made by our country -- or, frankly, any other country.

Never, ever again.

I am going to bring our jobs back to Ohio and Pennsylvania and New York and Michigan and all of America – and I am not going to let companies move to other countries, firing their employees along the way, without consequences. Not going to happen anymore.

My opponent, on the other hand, has supported virtually every trade agreement that has been destroying our middle class. She supported NAFTA, and she supported China's

entrance into the World Trade Organization – another one of her husband's colossal mistakes and disasters.

She supported the job killing trade deal with South Korea. She has supported the Trans-Pacific Partnership. The TPP will not only destroy our manufacturing, but it will make America subject to the rulings of foreign governments. And it's not going to happen. I pledge to never sign any trade agreement that hurts our **workers**, or that diminishes our freedom and independence. I will never, ever sign **bad** trade deals. America first, again! America first! Instead, I will make individual deals with individual countries.

No longer will we enter into these massive transactions, with many countries, that are thousands of pages long – and which no one from our country even reads or understands. We are going to enforce all trade violations against any country including through the use of taxes and tariffs, against any country that cheats.

This includes stopping China's outrageous theft of intellectual property, along with their **illegal** product dumping, and their devastating currency manipulation. They are the greatest that ever came about; they are the greatest currency manipulators ever! Our horrible trade agreements with China and many others, will be totally renegotiated. That includes renegotiating NAFTA to get a much better deal for America – and we'll walk away if we don't get the deal that we want.

We are going to start building and making things again.

Next comes the reform of our tax laws, regulations and energy rules. While Hillary Clinton plans a massive -- and I mean massive -- tax increase, I have proposed the largest tax reduction of any candidate who has declared for the presidential race this year – Democrat or Republican. Middle-income Americans and businesses will experience profound relief, and taxes will be greatly simplified for everyone, and I mean everyone.

America is one of the highest-taxed nations in the world. Reducing taxes will cause new companies and new jobs to come roaring back into our country. Believe me, it will happen, and it will happen fast. Then we are going to deal with the issue of regulation, one of the greatest job-killers of them all. Excessive regulation is costing our country as much as \$2 trillion a year, and we will end it very very quickly. We are going to lift the restrictions on the production of American energy. This will produce more than \$20 trillion in job creating economic activity over the next four decades.

My opponent, on the other hand, wants to put the great miners and steel **workers** of our country out of **work** and out of business – that will never happen with Donald Trump as President. Our steel **workers** and our miners are going back to **work** again. With these new economic policies, trillions of dollars will start flowing into our country.

This new wealth will improve the quality of life for all Americans – We will build the roads, highways, bridges, tunnels, airports, and the railways of tomorrow. This, in turn,

will create millions more jobs. We will rescue kids from **failing** schools by helping their parents send them to a **safe** school of their choice.

My opponent would rather **protect** bureaucrats than serve American **children**. And that's what she's doing, and that's what she's done. We will repeal and replace disastrous Obamacare. You will be able to choose your own doctor again. And we will fix TSA at the airports which is a total disaster!

We are going to **work** with all of our students who are drowning in debt to take the pressure off these young people just starting out their adult lives.

We will completely rebuild our depleted military, and the countries that we **protect**, at a massive loss, will be asked to pay their fair share.

We will take care of our great veterans like they have never been taken care of before. My just-released Ten Point Plan has received tremendous veteran support. We will guarantee those who serve this country will be able to visit the doctor or hospital of their choice without waiting five days in line and dying.

My opponent dismissed the VA scandal as being not widespread – one more sign of how out of touch she really is. We are going to ask every Department Head in government to provide a list of wasteful spending projects that we can eliminate in my first 100 days. The politicians have talked about it, I'm going to do it.

We are also going to appoint justices to the United States Supreme Court who will uphold our laws and our Constitution.

The replacement for our beloved Justice Scalia will be a person of similar views and judicial philosophies. Very important. This will be one of the most important issues decided by this election. My opponent wants to essentially abolish the 2nd amendment. I, on the other hand, received the early and strong endorsement of the National Rifle Association and will **protect** the right of all Americans to keep their families **safe**.

At this moment, I would like to thank the evangelical and religious community because I'll tell you what, the support they have given me, and I'm not sure I totally deserve it has been so amazing and has had such a big reason for me being here tonight. So true. They have so much to contribute to our politics, yet our laws prevent you from speaking your minds from your own pulpits. An amendment, pushed by Lyndon Johnson, many years ago, **threatens** religious institutions with a loss of their tax-exempt status if they openly advocate their political views. Their voice has been taken away.

I am going to **work** very hard to repeal that language and **protect** free speech for all Americans. We can accomplish these great things, and so much else – all we need to do is start believing in ourselves and in our country again. Start believing. It is time to show the whole world that America Is Back – bigger, and better and stronger than ever before.

In this journey, I'm so lucky to have at my side my wife Melania and my wonderful children, Don, Ivanka, Eric, Tiffany, and Barron: you will always be my greatest source of pride and joy. And by the way, Melania and Ivanka -- did they do a job? My Dad, Fred Trump, was the smartest and hardest working man I ever knew. I wonder sometimes what he'd say if he were here to see this and to see me tonight.

It's because of him that I learned, from my youngest age, to respect the dignity of work and the dignity of working people. He was a guy most comfortable in the company of bricklayers, carpenters, and electricians and I have a lot of that in me also. I love those people.

Then there's my mother, Mary. She was strong, but also warm and fair-minded. She was a truly great mother. She was also one of the most honest and charitable people I have ever known, and a great judge of character. She could pick 'em out from anywhere. To my sisters Mary Anne and Elizabeth, my brother Robert and my late brother Fred, I will always give you my love you are most special to me. I have loved my life in business.

But now, my sole and exclusive mission is to go to work for our country – to go to work for all of you. It's time to deliver a victory for the American people. We don't win anymore, but we are going to start winning again. But to do that, we must break free from the petty politics of the past.

America is a nation of believers, dreamers, and strivers that is being led by a group of censors, critics, and cynics.

Remember: All of the people telling you that you can't have the country you want, are the same people that wouldn't stand -- I mean, they said Trump doesn't have a chance of being here tonight. Not a chance! The same people. Oh, we love defeating those people, don't we? Love it, love it, love it. No longer can we rely on those same people in politics and in the media, who will say anything to keep a rigged system in place. Instead, we must choose to Believe In America.

History is watching us now. It's waiting to see if we will rise to the occasion, and if we will show the whole world that America is still free and independent and strong. I'm asking for your support tonight so that I can be your champion in the White House.

My opponent asks her supporters to recite a three-word loyalty pledge. It reads: "I'm With Her." I choose to recite a different pledge.

My pledge reads: "I'M WITH YOU – THE AMERICAN PEOPLE."

I am your voice.

So to every parent who dreams for their child, and every child who dreams for their future, I say these words to you tonight: I'm With You, and I will fight for you, and I will win for you.

To all Americans tonight, in all our cities and towns, I make this promise:

We Will Make America Strong Again.

We Will Make America Proud Again.

We Will Make America Safe Again.

And We Will Make America Great Again.

God bless you, and good night! I love you!