

Source link: <http://archive.mises.org/20249/the-worst-rise-to-the-top/>

The worst rise to the top

January 4, 2012 by [Douglas French](#)

SHARE IT:

Share 9

5

Tweet 1

reddit this!

-  [/r/Libertarian](#)
-  [/r/Economics](#)
-  [/r/Politics](#)
-  [/r/Mises](#)
-  [/r/Anarcho-Capitalism](#)

 Stumble

[Email This](#)

This year's Republican primary race has turned politics into a continuous 24-hour carnival for political junkies to gawk at and speculate about. The weekly debates, packed field, plus the poll surges and collapses by virtually every candidate, has been a boon to MSNBC, CNN, and FOX.

However in the end, as the saying goes, "no matter who wins, the government gets elected." This political primarypalooza is just a 7 days a week infomercial for democracy and the state. The coverage from Iowa last evening was continually laced with high minded "the people get to choose" pronouncements from both the TV talking heads and the candidates.

Choosing is the problem. F.A. Hayek famously argued in *The Road to Serfdom*, that in politics, the worst get on top, and outlined three reasons this is so. First, Hayek makes the point that people of higher intelligence have different tastes and views. So, as Hayek writes, "we have to descend to the regions of lower moral and intellectual standards where the more primitive instincts prevail," to have uniformity of opinion.

Second, those on top must "gain the support of the docile and gullible," who are ready to accept whatever values and ideology is drummed into them. Totalitarians depend upon those who are guided by their passions and emotions rather than by critical thinking.

Finally, leaders don't promote a positive agenda, but a negative one of hating an enemy and envy of the wealthy. To appeal to the masses, leaders preach an "us" against "them" program.

"Advancement within a totalitarian group or party depends largely on a willingness to do immoral things," Hayek explains. "The principle that the end justifies the means, which in individualist ethics is regarded as the denial of all morals, in collectivist ethics becomes necessarily the supreme rule."

According to law enforcement examiner Jim Kouri, politicians share a number of traits with serial killers. People with a talent for mixing charm, manipulation, intimidation, and occasionally violence to control others, to satisfy their own selfish needs are psychopathic.

Not all psychopaths are serial killers, but according to Kouri, serial killers display numerous psychopathic traits. Kouri [writes](#),

What doesn't go unnoticed is the fact that some of the character traits exhibited by serial killers or criminals may be observed in many within the political arena. While not exhibiting physical violence, many political leaders display varying degrees of anger, feigned outrage and other behaviors. They also lack what most consider a "shame" mechanism. Quite simply, most serial killers and many professional politicians must mimic what they believe, are appropriate responses to situations they face such as sadness, empathy, sympathy, and other human responses to outside stimuli.

On the same theme, H.L. Mencken wrote of politicians in *Notes on Democracy*,

His business is never what it pretends to be. Ostensibly he is an altruist devoted whole-heartedly to the service of his fellow-men, and so abjectly public-spirited that his private interest is nothing to him. Actually he is a sturdy rogue whose principal, and often sole aim in life is to butter his parsnips. His technical equipment consists simply of an armamentarium of deceptions. It is his business to get and hold his job at all costs. If he can hold it by lying he will hold it by lying; if lying peters out he will try to hold it by embracing new truths.

So now it's on to New Hampshire where the motto is "Live Free or Die." But Mencken wrote that the Democratic man "is quite unable to think of himself as a free individual; he must belong to a group, or shake with fear and loneliness—and the group, of course, must have its leaders."

[Subscribe to comments on this post via RSS](#)

Ludwig von Mises Institute • 518 West Magnolia Avenue • Auburn, Alabama 36832-4528

Phone: 334.321.2100 • Fax: 334.321.2119

contact@mises.org • [webmaster](#) • [mises.org sitemap](#)

