



# ENQUIRY

A publication of the AHI  
Undergraduate Fellows  
Free thought and discourse

VOL. IV .... No. 7 | CLINTON, NY. MONDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2016

- ① *GOP: Forget Trump, Save the House & Senate*
- ② *Flannery O'Connor Takes Us For A Ride*
- ③ *Actions Speak Louder than Words*

## GOP: Forget Trump, Save the House & Senate

By ALEX KLOSNER  
STAFF WRITER

The greatest reality television show in human history is over. The overwhelming majority of data reveals that Hillary Clinton has virtually secured the presidency. The latest polling data from the Real Clear Politics average shows Clinton leading nationally 48.1 percent to Donald Trump's 41.4 percent: a gap of 6.7 percent. Just one month ago, Trump has gotten within striking distance and was trailing by only one point.

Additionally, the current Real Clear Politics electoral college map has Clinton solidly with 256 Electoral College votes and only 170 for Trump, while 112 votes remain a toss-up. Pennsylvania and Virginia, two crucial states for Trump, both lean in Clinton's favor. She leads Trump by 6.7 percent in Virginia and 8.4 percent in Pennsylvania. In order to be competitive, Trump would need to secure victories in Florida, North Carolina, and Ohio; Clinton currently leads by about 2-3 percent in all three states. According to *New York Times* data from The Upshot, Clinton now has an 89 percent chance of winning compared with just 11 percent for Donald Trump. Unless Wikileaks' Julian Assange releases further incriminating information or she has another major medical episode, we'll have a President Clinton in January.

Interestingly, Trump has ceased campaign activity in Democratic vice presidential nominee Tim Kaine's home state of Virginia. Trump's former Virginia campaign chairman, Corey Stewart, expressed outrage regarding the decision to concede the state: "I think it's totally premature for the campaign to be pulling out of Virginia after so much work and all the hundreds ... of hours of volunteer time and thousands and thousands of volunteers." Historically, Virginia has been a solidly Republican state for every presidential election from the 1970s until the re-election of George W. Bush in 2004. However, changing demographics and urbanization in Northern Virginia have transformed it into

a swing state. President Obama won it in 2008, the first time a Democrat won Virginia since Lyndon B. Johnson defeated Barry Goldwater in 1964. Obama went on to win there again in 2012.

Following the release of Trump's 2005 lewd comments about women, a number of prominent Republicans have withdrawn their support for him. His former primary opponents Carly Fiorina and Governor John

*Let's be practical: its time for the Republican National Committee to stop devoting it's precious time, money, and resources to Trump's hopeless campaign*

Kasich no longer endorse him. Senators John McCain, Kelly Ayotte, Lisa Murkowski, and Rob Portman, and Congressman Jason Chaffetz, have all retracted support shortly after the release of the tape. Former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice put out a statement expressing utter disgust with Trump: "Enough! Donald Trump should not be President. He should withdraw. As a Republican, I hope to support someone who

*continued on back page*

## Flannery O'Connor Takes Us For A Ride

By CLAIRE ANASTASIA KITZ  
STAFF WRITER

The percentage of people who say they believe in God, pray, go to religious services, embrace religious practices or find their faith meaningful has declined over the last 50 years. A growing group of Americans do not believe in God or any organized faith whatsoever. In many communities, unbelief is even considered smart: religious conviction is perceived as strange, burdensome and outdated.

This is the context in which American Southern Gothic writer Flannery O'Connor penned her fictional books and short stories, many of which are set in the 1950s and 1960s rural South. O'Connor wrote about the human condition and the state of the

*FLANNERY O'CONNOR cont.*

weak and the faithless. She wrote about unbelievers, lukewarm souls, narcissists and the spiritually illiterate. She wrote about racists, white trash, busybodies, snobs, fake intellectuals, poor folks, and beaten down and marginalized African Americans. Above all, O'Connor wrote about the unraveling of faith in America.

O'Connor's works reveal that she believed America, particularly the South, was haunted by religion, but that its people were experiencing spiritual mediocrity, cynicism and emptiness – a rough-and-tumble nihilism. She argues that people might attend services or preach that their faith matters, but that many are just lying to their neighbors and to themselves. To her, they are just checking the box with a faith bordering on the tepid or the pathetic. God is deemed

*many people would not recognize a theophany, or sign from God, if it slapped them in the face*

irrelevant. She suspects that many people would not recognize a theophany, or sign from God, if it slapped them in the face, and that countless souls are existentially

## This Week's News in 140 Characters

### EDITORIAL REPORT



**Paul Krugman** @paulkrugman · 15m  
Some advance thoughts on post-election punditry: it's already obvious that pundits will dismiss HRC's achievement.

66 retweets 176 likes



**Bernie Sanders** @SenSanders · 6m  
Apparently for many in the top 1%, owning and controlling our economy is not enough. They also want to own and control the government.

210 retweets 455 likes



**jimgeraghty** @jimgeraghty · 5h  
Liberals who spent their lives believing conservatives are the worst will spend the rest of their lives denying conservatives opposed Trump.

53 retweets 101 likes



**Donald J. Trump** @realDonaldTrump · 2h  
Nothing ever happened with any of these women. Totally made up nonsense to steal the election. Nobody has more respect for women than me!

7K retweets 19K likes



**Breaking News** @BreakingNews · 17s  
US says North Korea carried out failed missile launch at 10:33 pm CT Friday near city of Kusong - @idreesali114 bit.ly/2dSoRD9

3 retweets 2 likes

## Actions Speak Louder than Words

By ALLISON ZUCKERMAN  
STAFF WRITER

Americans are in the throes of a national conversation about sexual assault, and yet somehow they are collectively missing the point. Earlier this month, President Obama signed into law a sexual assault survivors' "Bill of Rights," meant to formally acknowledge survivors' rights concerning sexual assault evidence collection kits. This piece of legislation establishes the federal standard that survivors do not have to pay for their sexual assault kits, that they must be notified of any test results from these kits, and that the kits must be preserved for the length of the applicable statute of limitations, whether or not survivors pressed assault charges.

For the first time, sexual assault survivors now have clearly enumerated rights under federal law. Admittedly, this bill does not go very far in the short term. But it establishes a precedent for handling evidence kits that will, hopefully, influence sexual assault laws at state and county levels, thereby effecting concrete change

has the dignity and stature to run for the highest office in the greatest democracy on earth.”

Let’s be practical: it’s time for the Republican National Committee to stop devoting its precious time, money, and resources to Trump’s hopeless campaign. Instead, top GOP officials should direct all resources to maintaining the Senate majority. The Real Clear Politics polling averages indicate that the Democrats and Republicans each have 46 Senate seats that are safe or not up for election, leaving eight toss-ups, seven of them currently held by the Republicans. It appears Republicans will maintain control over the House of Representatives. 218 seats are needed to for a majority, and the GOP now has 231 safe ones. There are 15 toss-up seats, 11 held by Republicans. It’s unlikely the GOP will lose control of the House, but current polling shows that their majority will weaken.

A spokeswoman for House Speaker Paul Ryan recently stated: “The speaker is going to spend the next month focused entirely on protecting our congressional majorities.” It’s also time for more GOP elected officials to publicly denounce Trump in order to salvage the legitimacy of the party going forward.

FLANNERY O’CONNOR cont.

lost and fumbling in the dark.

Through her works, O’Connor tries to show people what the world would look like without faith and religion. Nothing would be of real consequence – beauty, truth, sacrifice, love, history, death, honor and sex wouldn’t matter in the least. O’Connor was also determined to show the results of that prevailing attitude in the faces of the despairing, the fallen, the pretenders, the depraved and the lost.

Flannery O’Connor’s method of accomplishing this is not subtle; she knocks her readers over the head and tries to open them up to the frozen depths of their lethargy through comedy, tragedy and sometimes even violence. She writes: “To the hard of hearing you shout, and for the almost-blind you have to draw large and startling figures.” Throughout her life, O’Connor was bent on making her readers understand the importance of faith by shocking them with outlandish characters, striking scenes and painful revelations, as in her book *Wise Blood*.

She populates this work with an over-the-top cast of characters: peculiar loners, false preachers, rudderless souls, unabashed skeptics, spiritual zombies, men in gorilla suits, killers, zookeepers, sex addicts, mummified dwarfs,

prostitutes and con men – the grotesque, the ignorant, the humorous, the marginalized and the saved, sometimes one and the same. Reading *Wise Blood* is akin to watching a Mad Hatter with Southern, fundamentalist tendencies hold a revival, or an Alice stand-in slither down the rabbit hole while running an illegal moonshine operation. Her characters are bigger than life, sometimes amusing, sometimes violent, and downright biblical in their ability to fail over and over again in a multitude of ways. Her characters are more than memorable; they are unforgettable.

In *Wise Blood*, as in all her writing, O’Connor asks her readers to pay attention to their intentions. At the time, religious understanding and conviction were already on the decline and indifference abounded. But O’Connor was staunch in her belief that apathy and nihilism wouldn’t give a person any hope, just a bucket of despair! *Wise Blood* and the rest of her works were her literary offering to those who found themselves like Dante: “In the middle of the journey of our life I found myself astray in a dark wood where the straight road had been lost sight of” (Dante’s *Inferno*).

Not much has changed since O’Connor passed away in 1964. Religious practices and church attendance are still on the decline. Perhaps there is also now a more virulent strain of atheism or disdain for the demands of belief flowing through American culture. Reading Flannery O’Connor, however, is still wildly popular. She tapped into something, then and now, of the American dissatisfaction with what the culture and the cultural elites have failed to offer – the mysteries and revelation of faith. She remains the “voice crying out in the wilderness.”

ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER cont.

for sexual assault survivors and in the treatment of their evidence kits.

Instead of becoming a national discussion on the future of sexual assault legislation or prevention, the conversation about this historic bill was overtaken by the scandal of a leaked audio clip from 2005 of an *Access Hollywood* reporter and the future Republican presidential candidate, in which Donald Trump bragged about his ability to sexually assault women due to his celebrity status.

Since the breaking of this audio clip, at least fifteen women have stepped forward to accuse Trump of sexual assault or harassment. Several celebrities and politicians, notably Michelle Obama, Robert De Niro, and Senator Mitch McConnell, have also publicly condemned Trump for his statements and

past actions concerning women. Unfortunately, the majority of discourse about this scandal centers on what it means for the state of American politics or the fate of the Republican Party. Those are serious concerns, of course, but what of the women whom Donald Trump sexually assaulted, who felt silenced by his power, money, and celebrity status? What of other sexual assault survivors across the country, men and women, who

*It is time, however, to shift the spotlight from Donald Trump and instead focus on bringing justice to sexual assault survivors*

are fighting to be believed by their families, by society, and by the law?

Exposing Trump’s repulsive acts and rejecting his “locker room talk” about pursuing women is incredibly important to ensuring that rape culture is not normalized in our society. It is time, however, to shift the spotlight from Donald Trump and instead focus on bringing justice to sexual assault survivors. This scandal could be the opportunity America needs to publicly address its sexual assault problem and offer meaningful solutions and help to survivors of sexual assault.

According to the Department of Justice, 284,000 Americans are sexually assaulted per year. This number does not even account for those crimes that go unreported.

State governments could be diverting more resources into the handling of rape kits, the subject of the Sexual Assault Survivors’ Rights Act, which wait in huge backlogs across the country. The

slowness in testing this evidence potentially allow rapists to roam the country free. American schools could also introduce sexual assault prevention education, among other courses of action.

Donald Trump’s disgusting comments and actions should not be just another excuse to talk about him or to bemoan the state of American politics. Instead, Americans should use this opportunity to address their prevailing attitudes about sexual assault and to have open conversations about consent, respect, and prevention. It would be irresponsible to let this moment become just another of the many instances of public outrage over Trump’s actions, which resulted in neither change nor solutions.

## CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION

1

*GOP: Forget Trump, Save the House & Senate*

#ForgetTrump

2

*Flannery O’Connor Takes Us For A Ride*

#OConnorNovels

3

*Actions Speak Louder than Words*

#ASLW

vol. IV

# ENQUIRY

Elizabeth Barry  
*Editor in Chief*

Will Utzschneider  
Andrew Juchno  
*Associate Editors*

Helen Sternberg  
*Layout Editor*

## STAFF WRITERS

Alex Klosner  
Sam Benevelli  
Claire Anastasia Kitz

Amy Elinski  
Allison Zuckerman

*The opinions expressed in these articles are the views of their authors and do not represent the views of Enquiry or the Alexander Hamilton Institute.*

Enquiry accepts articles of 500 to 800 words at ebarry@hamilton.edu and madamo@hamilton.edu. Please be aware that we do not accept anonymous submissions.