

Opinion: Donald Trump is living in my closet

By Joe Mathews

I have a confession to make: Donald Trump is imprisoned in my closet.

He's been in there for months, and I haven't dared to let him out, for fear that his presence might be discovered. What's worse, my treatment of Trump does not conform with the Geneva Convention. He's spent all this time in a tiny, dark space, without proper ventilation. I haven't even provided food or water.



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I'm not a kidnapper or torturer, I swear. My only defense is puzzlement: Like most people in California, I badly want to get rid of Donald Trump, but I can't figure out how.

To be clear: My Donald Trump looks a lot like the one who is assuming the presidency of the United States. My Trump also hasn't released any tax returns. But my Trump is not that Trump.

How do I know? Well, the Trump in my closet has never insulted Mexicans, threatened to ban Muslims from the country, boasted about assaulting women, or cozied up to Vladimir Putin.

My Trump is a piñata. He is about half the size of the human

Trump. Unfortunately, he has become, like President Trump, inescapable.

I never thought my Trump would hang around this long. I bought him online in 2015—as a gift. A journalist friend in Sweden was celebrating his 50th birthday. I thought a Trump piñata might offer an opportunity for amusing intercultural exchange. So I paid to have Trump shipped direct.

But borders are always fraught in matters Trump. Swedish officials, for reasons I don't understand, wouldn't let him into their country, deporting him back to me in Southern California. Trump sat in a box among kids' toys until the kids opened the box and started asking questions about his lack of private parts.

So, early in 2016, I relocated Trump to the closet, laying him on his back on the top shelf. I figured, like other Americans, that the non-piñata Trump wouldn't last. But as he kept winning primaries, I felt unsettled about having an unhinged white nationalist in the closet.

I tried to get rid of him. I offered him to friends, and friends of friends. No one would take him. My Trump experienced bipartisan rejection—more liberally minded people didn't want to be near the piñata. And more conservative minded people didn't want any association that would force them to explain why they might support or oppose him.

Desperate, I tried to repurpose Trump. Noisy birds had taken up residency in our yard, so I attached him to our grapefruit tree—my very own Trumpian scarecrow. Unfortunately, he scared the neighbors more than the birds. One asked me how I could be a Trump supporter. Another asked me if my suspending Trump from the tree was a form of lynching.

Trump went back in the closet. But I didn't give up. After his frightening convention speech, I put him out with the trash. But Trump was too large to fit entirely in one trash can, and

the company that handles our city's trash won't pick up oversize items. I considered setting him on fire in the driveway, but would I be in violation of Southern California's strict air quality regulations?

After his upset victory in November, I redoubled my resolve to dispatch him once and for all. I asked my family if we could seize the opportunity of a December birthday party to let the piñata fulfill its intended destiny. But my wife, who stays out of politics, didn't think it was a good idea. My 8-year-old informed me he was already sick of seeing and hearing Trump all the time.

So today Trump remains in my closet. And I remain stuck, in the same way California is with President Trump.

We can't support him—more than two thirds of Californians voted against him. But we can't really fight him at every single turn—he's the federal government and we still need our Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid and military.

There is, of course, the lingering temptation to stuff him full of candy and beat him with a stick until he breaks into pieces. But maybe we can't even do that anymore. Now that he's president, would someone call the cops or the Secret Service?

In recent days, I've decided I was devoting too much energy to the future of my Trump. So I'm keeping him in my closet for the foreseeable future. I won't ever be comfortable with him, but the two of us can coexist. At least the piñata version of our president hasn't told me any lies.

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