

Substantial Disruption



The Scaramucci Putsch

By Mike Tully

Scaramouche, Scaramouche, will you do the Fandango?
- Queen, "Bohemian Rhapsody," 1975

Anthony Scaramucci ("[The Mooch](#)") was either the most obsequious sycophant since [Waylon Smithers, Jr.](#), or a stealth assassin. While the former is harmless, albeit a bit sad, the latter may be the reason new White House Chief of Staff, Retired General John Kelly, ushered him out the door before the stains of his tenure had dried.

If Donald Trump's head split open and his id jumped out, it would look and sound like The Mooch. William Cohan, a personal friend, labeled him Trump's "[Mini-Me](#)." When The Mooch's lips move, Trump's words come out. If The Mooch was a ventriloquist's dummy he'd be [Charlie McCarthy](#) channeling [Chucky](#). "We're going to win so much," Trump told a crowd in Montana in 2016, "you're going to come to me and go 'Please, please, we can't win anymore.'" "We're going to win so much you are actually going to get tired of winning," The Mooch told CNN last week. The Mooch even moves like the Puppeteer-in-Chief. Where Trump points, The Mooch points. When Trump raises his hands to frame a statement, like a lobster fondling a bra, The Mooch does the same. When The Daily Show [produced a video mash-up](#) of Trump and The Mooch side-by-side, the identical choreography was unnerving.

Then there is the profanity. Oh, Lord, the profanity. Mark Twain [once said](#), "Under certain circumstances, urgent circumstances, desperate circumstances, profanity provides a relief denied even to prayer." That quote fits the Trump era, although it does not explain why Trump and The Mooch cuss (just the rest of us). And cuss they do; Trump [used the eff bomb](#) several times during the campaign. But The Mooch took it to a greater level when he [carpet-bombed an interview](#) with Ryan Lizza of *The New Yorker* in late July, especially when he shared his regard for then White House Chief of Staff Reince Priebus. "Reince is a f-ing paranoid schizophrenic," he told Lizza, "a paranoiac." The Mooch saved his most compelling imagery for Chief Strategist Steve Bannon, whom he accused of engaging in a personally gratifying ouroboros-ish gymnastics maneuver. While I can't quote The Mooch, suffice it to say that, if Bannon was able to perform the feat, the Trump Administration could claim credit for breathing life into the auto-fellatio industry.

The Mooch revisited his Priebus comments the next day, noting that he had once referred to himself and the former Chief of Staff as "brothers," invoking the most famous brothers from the Old Testament. "When I said we were brothers from the podium, that's because we're rough on each other," The Mooch [told CNN](#). "Some brothers are like Cain and Abel." Presumably, The Mooch does not identify with Abel. With his vulgar Mini-Me exuberantly cheering him on, the Puppeteer spit out Priebus like a worn-out chew toy. The humiliated Chief of Staff, who

previously lost a close aide as soon as The Mooch arrived on the scene, resigned that evening. Trump told the world the next day -- in a tweet, of course. So far there has not been any response from Bannon to The Mooch's comments in *The New Yorker*, but he might be otherwise engaged.

How did Trump regard his Mini-Me's vulgarity and insults? "We're told the President loved the Mooch quotes," [wrote Mike Allen](#) of *Axios*. Jabba the Hutt [once praised](#) a supposed bounty hunter as "my kind of scum." That, in essence, was The Mooch's job description. And, while Allen cautioned The Mooch against upstaging the Puppeteer, there was no reason to worry: The Mooch [confessed his love](#) for Trump. But, thanks to General Kelly, the Priebus replacement with a disdain for loose lips, he will have to burn that candle elsewhere.

Kelly undoubtedly feared The Mooch's influence on Trump. Samantha Bee [recently suggested](#), with supportive video evidence, that The Mooch inspired Trump to abandon restraint and speak his mind. That brought criticism from Congress, the military, the nation's police chiefs and the Boy Scouts of America -- [all within 72 hours](#) and shortly after The Mooch's arrival. Scaramucci threatened to become the Avatar's Avatar, leading Trump into crazier and crazier cul-de-sacs. Trump is a man who breathes his own vapors, and The Mooch had him huffing. That's why The Mooch could be a stealth assassin: he feeds Trump's ego, encourages him to breathe in, breathe in, breathe in, over and over and over until saturation and voila! Pop Goes the Weasel!

Kelly has saved Trump from himself -- so far. But Trump loves adulation more than life itself, as illustrated by a disconcerting [Cabinet meeting](#) in which Cabinet members took turns confessing admiration for the Puppeteer. The Mooch may be gone, but the adulation addiction is here to stay. There are many, many, Mini-Me's yet to come.