

Substantial Disruption



Abby Normal

By Mike Tully

Dr. Frederick Frankenstein: Ah! Very good. Would you mind telling me whose brain I DID put in?

Igor: Then you won't be angry?

Dr. Frederick Frankenstein: I will NOT be angry.

Igor: Abby someone.

Dr. Frederick Frankenstein: [pause, then] Abby someone. Abby who?

Igor: Abby... Normal.

- "[Young Frankenstein](#)," (1974)

On August 30, 2016, the day after [Gene Wilder](#) died, the Washington Post published a tribute by [cartoonist Tom Toles](#) that shows Wilder, suitcase in hand, running up to St. Peter at Heaven's Gate and exclaiming, "Tell him somebody put an abby normal brain into a presidential candidate!" It was a heartfelt tribute to Wilder, as well as cunning political satire. It was funny and easy to laugh at, since Hillary Clinton [took a commanding lead in the polls](#) just a week earlier and it seemed obvious she would trounce Trump in November and send him back to "The Apprentice." Then, lightning struck and the monster with the "abby normal" brain came to life and took up residence in the White House.

An "abby normal" brain is a lot funnier in a Mel Brooks farce than in real life. The West Wing became the "abby normal" brain of the federal government, populated with odd characters like Steve Bannon, Stephen Miller, Sebastian Gorka, and Mike Flynn. Then there is Rich Higgins, whom Flynn brought into the National Security Council. Higgins was recently shown the door along with Ezra Cohen-Watnick who, at the age of 31, was inexplicably chosen as Senior Director for Intelligence Programs by Flynn. Both [were fired](#) by the new Chief of Staff, Retired General H. R. McMaster, who harbors the peculiar notion that the federal government should be run by competent adults.

Higgins was fired because he authored a [memo](#) that could only be spawned by an "abby normal" brain. He advances a Manichean world view in which his hero, Donald Trump, faces "political warfare at an unprecedented level" from a vast conspiracy of evil forces, including mainstream Islamic advocacy organizations, which he labels as fronts for the Muslim Brotherhood. He includes the UN, the ACLU, and Black Lives Matter, as well as "'deep state' actors, globalists, bankers, Islamists, and establishment Republicans." He claims the conspiracy is trying to

enforce “cultural Marxism” through “political correctness” which he denounces as “a weapon against reason and critical thinking.” He accuses the alleged conspirators of using the media – also part of the conspiracy – to “suffocate the vision of America that made (Trump) president.” He does not limit his criticism of media to news outlets, but includes “the entertainment industry from late night monologues, to situation comedies, to television series memes, to movie themes.” He concludes by stating, “the defense of President Trump is the defense of America.” In Higgins’ view, if you watch Stephen Colbert, you’re a traitor.

While McMaster was cleaning house, the Higgins memo wound up in the Oval Office. According to [Foreign Policy Magazine](#), which released the memo to the public, Trump’s eldest son, Donald the Lesser, “gave the memo to his father, who gushed over it, according to sources.” The President didn’t know Higgins had been fired until his personal banshee, Sean Hannity, gave him the news. A senior administration official told the magazine that Trump was “furious” to learn Higgins was gone and “is still furious.”

The Higgins memo, in its depiction of Trump and his supporters under siege from a global array of dark (and dark-skinned) forces, reflects a cultural pathology that informs the “alt-right” movement and its cousins in the white nationalist and white supremacist movements. Trump’s Chief Strategist in the White House, former *Breitbart* Editor Steve Bannon, is an apostle for the alt-right. The term “alt-right” was popularized by Richard Spencer, a white supremacist who organized last week’s [demonstration in Charlottesville](#), Virginia that attracted the KKK, neo-Nazis, and similar racist organizations and got three people killed.

The Charlottesville fatalities, including a young woman run down by a white supremacist who drove his car into a crowd of peaceful counter-demonstrators, led lawmakers, both Democrats and Republicans, to denounce the white supremacist movement and its supporters. The President failed to do so. Instead, he denounced “violence on all sides,” repeating “on all sides” for emphasis. Following a barrage of criticism, he finally denounced the white supremacists on August 14th -- but it was too late. His earlier refusal to assign blame reinforced their belief they had a friend in the Oval Office. "When asked to condemn, he just walked out of the room," wrote a contributor to the *Daily Stormer*. “God bless him.”

And God help the rest of us. We have a President who caters to white supremacists and believes he is under siege by a “politically correct” Marxist conspiracy that includes international bankers, establishment Republicans, Muslims, and late-night talk show hosts. It’s abby normal.