

DAILY NEWS EDITORIAL

Stop Donald's ducking

The "Commander-in-Chief Forum" in which NBC News televised back-to-back interviews with Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump degenerated into a Trumpian circus of nonsense and falsehoods under ringmaster Matt Lauer.

Below we have paired Trump's actual remarks with questions that Lauer could have asked when facing the ignorance and say-anything tactic that Trump would bring to the White House.

Trump: "I was against the war in Iraq."

Followup: Actually, Mr. Trump, as the Bush administration was drumming up public support for invading Iraq, radio personality Howard Stern asked whether you would support the invasion. You answered, "Yeah, I guess so."

The day after the invasion, Mr. Trump, you told Fox News that "it looks like a tremendous success from a military standpoint . . . and, you know, we have a strong and powerful country and let's hope it all works out."

Mr. Trump, were you lying when you said you opposed the Iraq War from the start? Or were you lying in statements before and during the war?

Trump: "I've always said, shouldn't be there (in Iraq), but if we're going to get out, take the oil. . . . We would leave a certain group behind and you would take various sections where they have the oil."

Followup: Taking the oil would require indefinitely deploying tens of thousands of American troops to occupy large areas of Iraq for years, because Iraq has dozens of oil fields and thousands of miles of pipelines. Would you have done that as President? If so, why not complete the job if you are elected?

Trump: "You know, it used to be to the victor belong the spoils. Now, there was no victor there, believe me. There was no victor. But I always said: Take the oil."

Followup: Would it not be illegal, if not immoral, not to mention a disaster for America's image, to invade a nation in the false belief that the coun-

ty possessed weapons of mass destruction and then plunder its national resources?

Trump: "She made a terrible mistake on Libya. . . . I would be very, very cautious. I think I'd be a lot slower. She has a happy trigger."

Followup: Recognizing that strongman Moammar Khadafy was about to massacre thousands of Libyans, Clinton as secretary of state supported toppling Khadafy with a multinational force. You were on the same page, Mr. Trump. Remember, in 2011 you said:

"It's horrible what's going on; it has to be stopped. . . . We should do (it) on a humanitarian basis, immediately go into Libya, knock this guy out very quickly, very surgically, very effectively, and save the lives."

Trump: "What I did learn is that our leadership, Barack Obama, did not follow what our experts . . . said to do. . . . In almost every instance. And I could tell you. I have pretty good with the body language. I could tell they were not happy. Our leaders did not follow what they were recommending."

Followup: Mr. Trump, you are revealing what you discovered in classified intelligence briefings given to presidential candidates. Are you not violating secrecy rules for political advantage? As for how you divined your conclusions from body language, isn't it more likely that, actually, the intelligence briefers were unhappy talking with you?

Trump: "I think under the leadership of Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton, the generals have been reduced to rubble."

Followup: As a man who dodged service in Vietnam with temporary bone spurs, would you have the courage to utter such a slander to America's top military commanders face to face?

Trump: "I think I would have a very, very good relationship with Putin. And I think I would have a very, very good relationship with Russia. . . . Well, he does have an 82% approval rating."

Followup: If that's what counts, Mr. Trump, your approval rating is 37%. What's up with that?

Newell for Assembly

The conviction of former Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver has sparked a six-way race to fill the lower Manhattan seat that was his power base for 40 years. The Daily News endorses Paul Newell in Tuesday's Democratic primary.

A lifelong resident of the Lower East Side and graduate of Stuyvesant High School, Newell had the courage to challenge Silver's reelection eight years ago in a campaign that focused on the stifling, anti-democratic boss rule that, unknown then, gave free rein to Silver's criminal corruption.

Newell is highly informed, fully in touch with a district that is 43% Asian, 33% white, 16% Hispanic and 5% black, and promises unusual independence in Albany.

The field has a second candidate who is unusually qualified.

A native of Taiwan, Yuh-Line Niou grew up in Washington State, where she served as a legislative aide, focusing on health care, and worked as an advocate against predatory lending.

Niou has lived in the district for three years, is chief of staff to Flushing Assemblyman Ron Kim and is backed by the Queens Democratic machine. She says that she was motivated to run in part as Chinatown residents were seeking constituent services in Kim's Queens office.

Newell has the edge over Niou in knowledge

both of the district and of the issues. He is in touch with grass-roots concerns about traffic, schools, affordable housing and sustainable neighborhoods.

Seeking to represent an area flooded by traffic from the Brooklyn, Manhattan and Williamsburg bridges, Newell backs congestion pricing to toll the spans and pour money into mass transit.

Niou declined to take a firm stand on congestion pricing, no doubt because it is opposed by the Queens Democrats.

Newell is also clear-eyed about the economics of building affordable housing, including the impact of requiring developers to pay so-called prevailing wages. Meanwhile, Niou insisted it was inconceivable that any Manhattan developer could fail to turn a profit, no matter what wages they were forced to pay workers.

On reform, Newell wants to curb the absolute power of leaders, strengthen committees, abolish partisan special elections, ban leaders from paying cash stipends to loyalists and cap outside income while disclosing it instantly.

Niou's most pressing reform is to equalize the office budgets of members. While necessary, this fix would attack only a symptom of the disease of boss control.

In an overwhelmingly Democratic district, the winner of the Sept. 13 primary will take the Assembly seat. Paul Newell is the choice of the field.

The bird-strike threat looms large

BE OUR GUEST

BY ERIC UHLFELDER

In his new film "Sully," Clint Eastwood puts us in the cockpit of the ill-fated US Airways A320 jet that collided with Canada geese shortly after taking off from LaGuardia in 2009.

Most watching the film won't realize the risk of bird strike is as great today as it was when Flight 1549 went down on the Hudson.

A 20% increase in reported strikes between 2013 and 2014 didn't assuage matters. Preliminary data for 2015 suggests a more modest increase to more than 14,000 per year.

Over the past 25 years, in the U.S. alone, one flight per day has been diverted due to bird strikes. Annual industry costs: \$1 billion.

Wildlife officials report a long-term downward trend in "damaging" strikes since 2000 — which corresponds to when the Federal Aviation Administration first issued its "Wildlife Hazard Management" manual for airports.

The trend, however, has been flat since 2007, with some upward spikes. Since 2010, the same can be said for the number of aborted commercial takeoffs due to bird strikes.

As for the large birds that Sully's plane struck, the latest available nationwide report on Canada geese strikes (through 2012) shows total collisions in 2009 numbered 56. In 2012, it was 50. Six strikes caused engine damage for both years, despite very aggressive culling policies — including right here in New York.

If avian populations have been significantly expanding, then government action may have prevented collision rates from getting worse. But it appears flying hasn't become demonstrably safer since Capt. Chesley Sullenberger became a national hero.

Pilots are virtually helpless in preventing strikes once they are in the air. Can more be done to help them?

Few folks know that just 17 months after Sully's jet went down, the same kind of accident occurred in Amsterdam. The pilot of a Royal Air Maroc 737, which was severely damaged, was barely able to return to Schiphol Airport.

Today, Schiphol, Europe's fifth busiest airport, is installing avian radar to scan the skies around its

runways. Siete Hamminga, head of the Dutch radar manufacturer Robin Radar, which is in use at Schiphol, says his product can distinguish risk — more than 6 miles away — by identifying whether an approaching flock is comprised of small, medium or large birds.

Turkey is building the world's largest airport on the Black Sea. Plans include avian radar.

Five years ago, the U.S. Defense Department released a comprehensive report on avian radar. Using Accipiter Radar systems, 50 times more birds were detected than workers could observe using conventional visual methods at a range of at least 6 miles and up to an altitude of 3,000 feet. (Virtually all strikes occur under 3,000 feet, involving only the first and last four minutes of flight.)

This radar system could trigger automatic alerts when, for instance, a large flock is moving between sensitive air-

spaces. Because airport workers still use binoculars to identify avian risks, they are blind at night and when there's fog.

The cost of one such radar unit is about \$500,000. A large international airport, such as Kennedy, would need two to four units.

Tim Nohara, head of Accipiter, says at the very least, avian radar can be used to better understand and assess risks.

The FAA recently reported results of a simulated test with air traffic controllers and pilots, which integrated real-time avian radar data into controllers' displays. The results: Controllers and pilots found the increased information useful in heightening risk awareness.

For reasons more bureaucratic than technical, we're still far away from air traffic controllers relying on avian radar to advise pilots when to stop their takeoff roll or circle before landing. But there is growing industry belief that if LaGuardia today were utilizing avian radar and a flock of migrating Canada geese was approaching at 3,000 feet, there would be no collision.

Uhlfelder has reported on airplane-bird strikes for National Geographic.

As dangerous as when Sully flew

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