

# TRUMP DIDN'T CREATE INCIVILITY

After watching President Trump for the past few years, *New York Times* columnist David Brooks recently opined that he fully expected “the country would rise up in moral revulsion” at his gruff style. He is dumbfounded at the outcome. “Trump’s behavior got worse and worse...and nothing happened.”

There are plenty of reasons why. The mainstreaming of incivility in our culture tops the list.

For several decades now, the public has become so inundated with crassness that it has become increasingly inured to expressions of it. That is why it smacks of naiveté to express horror when our elites adopt the cues of the dominant culture. This isn’t the 1950s.

Howard Stern is more than a shock-jock: He epitomizes the coarseness of our culture, and his fans are legion. Moreover, he has inspired many others to follow suit. Kathy Griffin, Sarah Silverman, Bill Maher, Louis C.K., Samantha Bee—just to name a few—have contributed mightily to the dumbing-down of our culture. Just think how vile they are when compared to Lucille Ball, Milton Berle, Bob Hope, Jerry Lewis, Groucho Marx and Dean Martin.

It is not just the lyrics that have changed in the music world; it’s the behavior exhibited on MTV and BET. The filth of the songs is routine, as are the crotch-grabbing antics. Cardi B’s best-selling “WAP” is another index of our gutter culture, and it does not speak well of Joe Biden that he gave this vicious misogynist a high-profile interview during the Democratic National Convention. The success of Miley Cyrus is another index of our moral destitution.

“South Park” and “Family Guy” are demonstrative of our

nation's moral health, as is the popularity of non-stop "genital jokes" on network sit-coms. Movies that were once given an "R" rating are now "PG-13," if not "PG." And it is next to impossible for responsible parents to screen all that is available online to their children.

There was a time, not long ago, when students would be suspended from school for foul language. Now they can curse out their teachers with impunity. Worse, affluent suburban parents who are notified of the offensive behavior of their children are as likely to express umbrage at the principal as they are their child.

Social media has played a big role in corrupting our culture. The idea of liberty as license is on full display, and attempts to mitigate it are resisted. An array of court decisions, starting in the 1960s, did much to lower the moral bar. Incivility and indecency were redefined as freedom of expression, and the results are everywhere today. When Rep. Rashida Tlaib called President Trump a "motherf\*\*\*\*\*," what price did she pay? None. Why the silence? Tip O'Neill would never have allowed her to escape without a sanction.

Trump's abandonment of established presidential etiquette has gotten out of hand on many occasions. It is easy to understand why people complain. Whether it is reason enough to negate the success of his policies, as compared to Biden's record of 47 years, is another matter altogether.

We have a right to expect our presidents to rise above the fray. But in the end, Trump is a reflection of what our cultural elites have wrought. It is a little late in the game to cry foul at this point. We reap what we sow.