

Not with a Bang but a Whimper

Letter to the Editor, [Brunswick Beacon](#), 12.22.22

Is that how Trump's hold on the GOP ends? Mocking John McCain, siding with Putin against American Intelligence, even inciting an insurrection only strengthened his grip, confirming his boast that "I could stand in the middle of 5th Avenue and shoot somebody and I wouldn't lose voters." Still, this time feels different.

When Trump promised a "major announcement" on Dec. 15, MAGA-world thrilled with anticipation, speculating he would become Speaker of the House, or give them Ron DeSantis as his running mate. Instead, they got Ron Popeil, the late Veg-O-Matic huckster of late-night TV.

"This is Donald Trump, hopefully your favorite President of all time, better than Lincoln, better than Washington," he immodestly began, then revealed his line of Trump digital trading cards, or NFT's, which he's hawking for \$99/each. "But wait," as Popeil would say, "there's more!" Each card comes with the chance to win "amazing prizes like dinner with me. I don't know if that's an amazing prize, but it's what we have," Trump ad-libbed in an uncharacteristic moment of self-awareness.

It's said history repeats itself, first as tragedy, then as farce, a "comedy with crude characterizations and ludicrously improbable situations." Could anything be more farcical than crude characterizations depicting a ludicrously muscled Trump improbably costumed as a superhero, a cowboy, and an astronaut?

MAGA-world understandably felt betrayed. Anthime Gionet, a/k/a "Baked Alaska" participated in the 2017 white-supremacist rally in Charlottesville, VA and the Jan. 6 insurrection, for which he will be serving time. "I can't believe I'm going to jail for an NFT salesman," he tweeted, "I wanted to Make America Great Again but all I got was this shitty NFT."

Steve Bannon ran Trump's 2016 campaign then became President Trump's Chief Strategist. Streaming Trump's announcement on-air, Bannon moaned: "I can't watch it again...make it stop!" When Bannon whimpered "I can't do this anymore," he spoke for all America.

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