



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on April 8, 2016

RNC Delegates Face Intimidation if They Switch From Trump

When he was in the first grade, Roger Stone, now a political strategist associated with the presidential campaign of Donald Trump, perpetrated what he describes as his “first political trick.” A supporter of Democrat presidential candidate Senator John Kennedy, young Stone went through the cafeteria line at school and told every kid that Kennedy’s Republican Vice President Richard Nixon was going to require that they all go to school on Saturday.



Later, in a touch of irony, Stone went to work for Nixon, hitting up Nixon campaign aide Jeb Magruder for a job at a Young Republican Club meeting while Stone was a student at George Washington University in 1972. Going to work for the infamous Committee to Re-elect the President, Stone has bragged about such “dirty tricks” as contributing money to a possible Nixon rival in the name of the Young Socialist Alliance. He then sent the receipt to the *Manchester Union-Leader*. He was also able to get Democrat candidate Hubert Humphrey to hire a driver who was really a spy for the Nixon campaign (Humphrey lost the Democratic Party nomination to George McGovern, as it turned out).

Stone so admired Nixon that he had Nixon’s face tattooed on his back in 2007.

Now, Stone is something of an informal consultant with the presidential campaign of New York businessman Donald Trump. Stone officially left the campaign in August of last year, but he has said, “I’m the ultimate Trump loyalist.” The professional and personal relationship between Trump and Stone goes back about 30 years, with comparisons made to the relationship George W. Bush had with Karl Rove or David Axelrod’s relationship with Barack Obama. Stone has said that he was introduced to Trump by prominent New York lawyer (and associate of the late Senator Joe McCarthy) Roy Cohn. Cohn was an attorney for Trump’s father, and also for Trump himself. Now, Stone is only embellishing his image as a hardball campaign operative.

This week, Stone told Stefan Molyneux of Freedom Radio that he is urging Trump supporters to descend on Cleveland, Ohio, this summer during the week of the Republican National Convention. Once they arrive, Stone is promising to give them the hotel room numbers of delegates who are involved in what he calls the effort to “steal” the nomination from Trump.

Stone has since charged that CNN used a “truncated video clip” of his interview with Molyneux, which Stone says left the incorrect impression he was advocating violence. “Donald Trump is right to say that the press is so dishonest.” Stone insists he is only advocating the right of Trump supporters to express their feelings to the delegates.

In an obvious reference to the 1968 riots at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago, which were called “days of rage,” Stone has promised similar “days of rage” if Trump is denied the nomination.



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So, how is this alleged effort to “steal” the nomination away from Trump happening, according to Stone? He asserted, “They’re trying to steal it in two different ways. It is interesting to me that in every primary or caucus where Ted Cruz won, we have certified, proven, sworn evidence of massive voter fraud.” He promised that this “evidence” will be presented to the credentials committee in Cleveland “in an attempt to unseat the delegates who were illegally elected.”

Next, Stone cited “the phenomena of the Trojan Horse delegates, where Trump has won a primary — let’s take Texas, for example — or he’s won a share of the votes in a primary. Trump got 40 percent of the vote in Texas; he’s entitled to 40 percent of the delegates. There’s 100 delegates from Texas. That’s 40 delegates. And they are pledged by party rules to vote for Trump on the first ballot.” (Senator Ted Cruz beat Trump 44 percent to 27 percent in the Texas GOP primary; there are 155 delegates from Texas.)

But, should Trump fall short of the 1,237 number (a majority of the delegates) necessary under the rules to be nominated, Stone argued, “The actual people in these delegate seats will be anti-Trump party hacks who will vote against Trump on procedural matters such as the seating of delegates or the rules under which this convention will be conducted.”

“The fix is in,” Stone said, believing that those he called “the kingmakers” will proceed to “cheat, to steal and to snatch this nomination from the candidate who was overwhelmingly selected by the voters.” Instead of Trump being awarded the nomination, Stone predicted that either Trump “will have 1237 votes” or “he will be just short of 1237.” In the first case, Stone expects “the party will throw out some of those delegates in a naked attempt to try to steal this from Donald Trump.” In the second scenario, Stone laments that “many of his own delegates, or, I should say people in his delegate seats, will abandon him on the second ballot.”

Trump himself said last month, “I think you’d have riots” if he lost a contested convention. Stone said Trump really meant, “I promise you’d have riots.” But Stone added that by “riots,” Trump really intended to say, “my supporters will accost delegates in their hotel rooms.”

Stone explained how the strategy would work. “We’ll tell you who the culprits are. We urge you to visit their hotel and find them.”

While charges of stealing delegates at a Republican National Convention are unusual, they are not unheard of. In 1952, the case could be made that the nomination was stolen from Senator Robert A. Taft of Ohio, the clear conservative choice. As Gary Allen explained in his book *The Man Behind the Mask*, “As the time for the Republican convention approached, Taft apparently had enough delegates to win the nomination on the first ballot, while [opponent General Dwight] Eisenhower was at least 150 delegates short.” At this point, in then-heavily Democrat Texas, legally elected Taft delegates were ignored in favor of delegates elected by Democrats at competing meetings.

“When Taft and his supporters protested this illegal action,” Allen said, the supporters of Eisenhower accused the Taft supporters of stealing delegates! “When the illegally elected Eisenhower delegates arrived at the Republican National Convention in Chicago, the job was to get them officially seated in place of the Taft delegates, in order to take away Taft’s narrow margin of victory.” A rule change was passed which led to the expulsion of the regular Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas delegations (all of whom supported Taft) in favor of Eisenhower delegates in those states. California played a key role in this rule change, and its junior senator, 39-year-old Richard Nixon, was placed on the ticket as Eisenhower’s running mate. Additionally, the governor of California, Earl Warren, was promised the next seat on the



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Supreme Court. And the rest, as they say, is history.

Shenanigans also occurred at the 1940 Republican National Convention, when Wendell Willkie was essentially the beneficiary of an orchestrated effort to deny the nomination to “noninterventionist” candidates such as Taft, Senator Arthur Vandenberg of Michigan, and Manhattan District Attorney Thomas Dewey. The chairman of the committee on arrangements, Sam Pryor, was an executive with Pan American Airways. Pryor was a close friend of the Rockefeller family. He was also an operative with the Office of Strategic Services (the forerunner of the CIA), and an ardent interventionist.

In this position, Pryor was able to manipulate the convention arrangements in such a way as to favor Willkie. For example, he reduced the ticket allotments to delegations committed to candidates other than Willkie, while making sure those in favor of Willkie got their full allotment. William F. Jasper provided a detailed account of the multitude of machinations perpetrated by party insiders who wanted Willkie, a pro-war candidate, in an [article](#) originally appearing in the February 5, 2007 print issue of *The New American*.

More recently, at the 2012 GOP national convention, although Congressman Ron Paul of Texas was not a threat to stop the nomination of Mitt Romney, actions taken against Paul illustrate how it is certainly possible for delegates to be essentially stolen. On August 24, the RNC voted to take away half of the Maine delegates fairly won by Paul in that state’s Republican convention held in May.

Then, later the same day the Rules Committee voted to create a new party rule that gave what has been called “the ruling cabal” unchecked power to change the party’s rules. This was the occasion for the infamous rule that denied Paul the opportunity to be nominated at the convention by arbitrarily raising the threshold to get nominated to having had to win a minimum number of states — a number, of course, greater than what Paul won. One former national committeeman, who was not a Paul supporter, told this reporter that it was disgusting what was done to Paul and his supporters.

But, do Stone’s charges of nomination-stealing rank up there with the theft of the ‘52 nomination from Bob Taft, or the manipulations that led to Willkie’s nomination in 1940?

Hardly. First of all, primaries themselves, an innovation of the “progressive era” of American politics, began the process of taking the nomination process away from the party activists, sometimes called the “grassroots.” Today, many of these presidential preference primaries are even “open” to voters from the other party! In other words, thousands of voters in the Republican primaries are, like those “delegates” who helped engineer the victory of Dwight Eisenhower over Taft in 1952, not even Republicans, but Independents and even Democrats. In 1952 in Texas, what happened was actually illegal. Now, it is standard practice, except in states where the primary is “closed” to only those actually registered in the party.

Another subject to respond to concerning Stone’s charges is the proposition that if a candidate runs first in the number of delegates, but finishes short of the majority required under the rules, that person — in this case Trump — should get the nomination anyway. But in this case, the majority of Republican voters actually voted for someone else, such as Senator Marco Rubio, Senator Rand Paul, or one of the other candidates. In Rubio’s case, exit polls have indicated that around 80 percent of Rubio supporters would have voted for someone else other than Donald Trump had Rubio not been an option. So, one must ask an obvious question: Why should Trump receive delegates won by Rubio, when those voters did not favor Trump? Why is he any more entitled to those delegates than any other candidate?

Perhaps the most interesting claim is that delegates bound to a candidate, such as Trump, should



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remain bound through multiple ballots. Logically, if delegates were unable to ever change their vote after the first ballot, then the convention would continue for eternity, with no one ever receiving a majority of the delegate votes. In 1924, delegates at the Democratic National Convention stubbornly refused to budge, through 16 days and 104 ballots!

The Cruz campaign has clearly been more skilled at getting their supporters to party conventions around the country than Trump's campaign effort. The actual delegates elected at these state party conventions may be bound, in many cases, by the primary results to vote for Trump, but they are not always actually for Trump. Then, as soon as they become unbound, these delegates (called Trojan Horse delegates by Stone) will often vote for someone else. In some other states, bound Cruz delegates could actually be for Trump, but that is less likely, of course. In a word, the average Republican activist who gives up evenings and Saturdays to go to conventions, and then campaigns for their nominated candidates, tends to be more politically sophisticated than the average voter whose political involvement is largely limited to voting two or three times a year.

Even Stone admitted, in an interview with Ed Berliner of "America Votes: 2016," that the Trump campaign has made some strategic mistakes. "Trump has no polling — so, of course, you didn't really know what was going to happen" in Wisconsin. "In all truth, Ted Cruz out-organized him."

Looking ahead, Stone thinks Trump needs to spend \$20 million between now and the July convention. He was not sure if Trump was willing to do that. "I would be surprised if he's prepared to spend that kind of money," Stone said.

Some have theorized that party "insiders" will pass over both Trump and Cruz and nominate a more middle-of-the-road choice, such as House Speaker Paul Ryan. It is very clear that party insiders do not like Trump, but why? The two most likely reasons are (1) Trump is too unpredictable — he might turn out fine for the establishment, but then again, he might not; and (2) The trade issue. It is very clear that multilateral trade agreements are very important to those in the establishment, for various reasons. Generally, presidents of both parties, whether it is Clinton, Bush, or Obama, trumpet the "benefits" of so-called free trade agreements, such as NAFTA, GATT, and now, TPP. The principal danger to the republic are that these treaties necessarily require supranational governmental structures, all of which diminish the national sovereignty of the United States. One only need to look at how the European Union has gutted the independence of European member states — even in clearly domestic affairs — to provide an example of what our future could be in any North American Union modeled after the EU. Because of this, any candidate who does not bend the knee to the concept of more and more trade agreements can expect to face unrelenting opposition from those powerful forces who favor these agreements.

At this time, there is no indication that the average party activist — whom Stone dismisses as a "hack" — is planning to switch to Ryan or any other such Washington politician over both Trump and Cruz. However, past manipulations of national conventions through the credentialing process, rules changes, and even through the arrangements of delegation seating — states with high numbers of Paul delegates were placed in what Politico reported as "the outer fringe of the convention floor" — indicate such devious tactics are not all ancient history.

Party activists tend to be more conservative than members of the party who are in Congress, as any person who attends party conventions will quickly detect. While congressional leaders such as Ryan and Senator Mitch McConnell practice pragmatism and compromise, such actions generally cause consternation among party regulars. Party activists were told in 2010, "Give us the House, and we'll



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make some changes.” Then they were told in 2014, “Give us the Senate, and we really will make some changes.”

This disenchantment with the failure of promises of the party leadership in Congress clearly led to something of a revolt among the party regulars and truly conservative Republican primary voters this year, leaving “moderate” Establishment figures such as former Florida Governor Jeb Bush, Governor Chris Christie, and even Senator Marco Rubio to fail miserably in the early primaries. While powerful figures inside the Republican Party would have preferred to put a Ryan or a Bush on the ticket this year, disgust at the congressional leadership has instead created the successful candidacies of both Donald Trump and Ted Cruz, who are perceived as anti-establishment. It is also clear that the party insiders are not fond of Cruz, either. His insistence that the Republican defund Obamacare did not set well with party leaders who have said they feared a government shutdown that would be blamed on the Republicans. Or so they say.

Voters can hope that whichever candidate ultimately wins the nomination will produce a strong constitution-respecting conservative presidency. Now that would be something radically different from what this country has had in a president in a very long time, whether Democrat or Republican.

Certainly that is not what we had in the White House during the tenure of the man whose face is tattooed on the back of Roger Stone: Richard Nixon.

Photo of Trump supporters: AP Images

Steve Byas is a history professor at Hillsdale Free Will Baptist College. His book History's Greatest Libels is a challenge to some of the greatest lies of history against such persons as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Joseph McCarthy.



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