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# Three Reasons to Kill Yourself

By Marty Kaplan

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The morning after Christmas, Mike Huckabee goes pheasant-hunting in Iowa, presumably to remind Iowa's Republican hunters that he, not Romney, deserves to be the NRA's poster child.

When the Romney people see the Huckabee footage, they contact every political reporter they know: Look how fat Huckabee looks in that get-up! Look at those jowls! Look at that goofy unpresidential hat! What a blunder!

Minutes later, the footage, plus the usually admirable David Shuster, interrupt MSNBC's all-tiger-mauling-all-the-time coverage for a segment on the impact on the caucuses of Huckabee's hunting couture. The Romney people think this could be exactly the opening they've been hoping for, Shuster reports. Perhaps rural Iowan hunters may not laugh at Huck's Elmer Fudduddy look, but it just might make urban Iowa Republicans come home to Mitt's matinee manhood. For more on the political damage done by Huckabee's Turkey Day parade-float look, Tucker Carlson and Chris Matthews will have complete coverage later today.

Here are three reasons to consider killing yourself.

1. Shuster may be right. There may actually be enough voters who think that Huckabee looks as stupid in that getup as Dukakis did in his tank-riding Howdy Doody hat to affect the Iowa outcome.
2. MSNBC executives may be right. Visuals are catnip to viewers; stupid but easily grasped stories are way more compelling television than important but complicated stories.
3. There is no countervailing force to this civic lunacy. Compared to the power of paid ads, the impact of "free" television, and the herd mentality of mainstream media, the complaints of cranks like me are pathetic.

On the upside, we've known for about 2,500 years that democracies are shockingly fragile. In that light, it's a miracle that we still have the Constitution in place to protect us. Oh, wait.

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