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55 YEARS

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Donald Trump Returns

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On a chilly January 8, 2004 evening I sat in a local restaurant (Bell's) with several employees. To our surprise, at around 8 p.m., the handsome smiling face of Donald Trump appeared on a large TV screen. It was the first episode of his new show, The Apprentice. Being the publishers of the weekly New York Real Estate Journal, we all were Trump fans - but what shocked us the most was what was on his desk.

In very plain sight was a copy of our newspaper. Nielson TV ratings later reported that the new show was watched by 20.7 million viewers. Could I have afforded to pay for having the newspaper sitting on his desk? Not really. So the next day I phoned his office and thanked them for the plug and that I would like to repay them by promoting his Mark Burnett Productions' The Apprentice show on my commercial real estate websites nereg.com and nyrej.com (the first ones in the country).

"Send me an ad for the show and I'll put it on the home page for a year, free of charge," I offered. They did. Who knew that 15 years later The Apprentice would still be on prime time. He was paid \$50,000 per episode the first year. He is now paid \$3 million per episode, making him one of the highest paid TV personalities.

Now that we are talking about Trump, let's go back a few years - 2011. If you recall he made all the headlines by suggesting that he might run for President. Made bigger headlines when he challenged President Barack Obama to prove he was an American citizen. As time progressed one major poll had him one point behind Hillary. Another had him 2 points behind Mitt Romney, and finally, a major poll shook up a few people when it showed he was 9 points ahead of President Obama.

Alas, one the greatest businessmen in history - owner and developer of skyscrapers, casinos, golf courses, apartment buildings, condos, and other businesses whose salary is suggested at \$60 million a year and net worth is suggested at maybe \$7 billion pulled out of the race. Why? Can we guess? He is now 68 years old and would have to give up all the things that he has so successfully developed over the almost 50 years since entering and eventually taking over his father's real estate company.

When has a businessman ever run for President? When has a businessman ever been elected President? The biggest business in the world is the U.S. government, and why isn't it run by someone with business background? Because one of the major successes of any business is getting things done now, not later or never. A private business owner comes up with an idea and puts in motion immediately. If he was forced to turn it over to a committee and wait for them to screw around for several months they would go out of business.

Trump has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. The only President to have that honor is Ronald Reagan. So if Trump decided to seriously run for President, I seriously believe he would be elected. However, he would then have to give up all the things that he loves, especially his TV show.

So the moral of this message is that we have some pretty special talented smart people in our

commercial real estate and allied industries, but I don't believe any of them are ever going to leave it, even if offered the highest post in the land and maybe the world - President of the U.S.

PS - Donald was captain of his high school baseball team. What hasn't he ever accomplished?

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