It all comes back to Rupert Murdoch. As multiple recent news stories have proven, the 2016 presidential race is fast becoming a referendum on the News Corp CEO and reigning media gorgon.

[Gor·gon GREEK MYTHOLOG each of three sisters, Stheno, Euryale, and Medusa, with snakes for hair, who had the power to turn anyone who looked at them to stone. a fierce, frightening, or repulsive woman.]

The two top candidates in the Republican field are a Fox News contributor (Ben Carson opened his Fox career two years ago [comparing Obama to Lenin](http://mediamatters.org/blog/2013/10/10/ben-carson-uses-his-first-official-fox-appearan/196383)) and a onetime Fox favorite who is fast becoming the network's archenemy: Donald Trump is the fallen angel in the Fox story, a traitor who's trying to tempt away Murdoch's lovingly nurtured stable of idiot viewers by denouncing their favorite "news" network as a false conservative God.

The fact that Trump is succeeding with this message on some level has to be a source of terrible stress to Murdoch. He must be petrified at the prospect of losing his hard-won viewership at the end of his life.

This, in turn, might explain last week. Otherwise: what was Rupert Murdoch doing tweeting?

Murdoch owns or controls print, cable and film outlets in so many places that his cultural and political views are fast becoming a feature of global geography. The sun never sets on his broadcast empire, a giant hovering Death Star that's been firing laser cannons of "Rupert Murdoch's Many Repellent Thoughts About Stuff" at planet Earth for decades now.

Yet Murdoch apparently still doesn't feel like he's getting his point across. At 8:59 p.m. last Wednesday night, the 84 year-old scandal-sheet merchant [had to turn to Twitter](http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/opinion/page/ct-rupert-murdoch-ben-carson-obama-black-president-perspec-1011-jm-20151009-column.html) to offer his personal opinion on Ben Carson and the American presidential race. [To recap](https://twitter.com/rupertmurdoch/status/651924724960874497):

"***Ben and Candy Carson terrific. What about a real black President who can properly address the racial divide?***"

Forget for a minute what Murdoch said. Think about the why.

Murdoch's networks have already spent the last eight years hammering home this message to the whole world. Fox News has constantly presented Barack Obama as a mongrel, a kind of Manchurian President, [raised in madrassas](http://mediamatters.org/blog/2009/12/31/coulter-brings-madrassa-lie-back-to-fox-news/158521) and [weaned on socialism](http://www.foxnews.com/story/2010/04/07/glenn-beck-barack-obama-socialist.html), who [hates white people](http://www.politico.com/blogs/michaelcalderone/0709/Foxs_Beck_Obama_is_a_racist.html) and [yearns to euthanize them](http://mediamatters.org/blog/2015/03/23/right-wing-medias-debunked-obamacare-death-pane/202997).

The network spent years exhaustively building and tweaking Obama's supervillain persona, almost always employing this Two-Face theme. The president in Fox lore is superficially a polite, intelligent, "[articulate](http://www.foxnews.com/story/2007/07/05/barack-obama-smart-campaign-pitch.html)" American politician who sounds on the level. But in the end, Fox tells us, Obama will always be unable to control the envious, Christian-fearing, success-hating African Marxist Terrorist in control of his subconscious.

Murdoch's relentless message has been that Obama isn't just impure, but overcompensatingly impure. He's forever accusing the president of designing policies to [redistribute white wealth](http://mediamatters.org/video/2011/09/20/foxs-crowley-obama-is-a-committed-wealth-redist/182603) as a means of proving his solidarity. And when Fox talks about Obama's race, the caricature is always that he's a secret street hood straining uncomfortably in politician clothes.

There was the time Eric Bolling talked about him "[chugging 40s](http://mediamatters.org/blog/2011/05/23/foxs-bolling-obama-is-chugging-40s-in-ireland/179925) in IRE while tornadoes ravaged MO." Or there was the time Brent Bozell compared him to a "[skinny, ghetto crackhead](http://www.alternet.org/newsandviews/article/753244/fox_news%27_latest_racist_attack%3A_%22obama_looks_like_a_skinny%2C_ghetto_crackhead%22)," or the time they called his 50th birthday party a "[hip hop barbecue](http://mediamatters.org/blog/2011/08/05/fox-nation-obamas-hip-hop-bbq-didnt-create-jobs/181953)."

Rupert Murdoch has spent seven to eight years finding every conceivable way to say that Barack Obama isn't one of us. The president is forever described as a kind of malevolent animal, unable to control his irrepressible urge to take and redistribute the white man's property. His [hatred of Christians](http://conservativesunited.com/fox-news-reporter-presses-white-house-different-treatment-muslims-christians/), too, is uncontrollable, a result of his early Muslim indoctrination.

Fox usually describes Obama as "cool" and "smart" on the outside, but a mystery on the inside, an unknown even to himself. They [compared him](http://www.birtherreport.com/2015/06/video-fox-news-host-speaking-of.html) to Rachel Dolezal, for God's sake. Even Obama's "filthy" private smoking habit has been [presented](http://www.foxnews.com/story/2007/01/18/who-is-barack-obama.html) at times as evidence of his secret split personality.

So after blasting out this ocean of repulsive, underhanded and frankly racist bilge over the course of years, Murdoch still thought we hadn't got the message that Obama isn't a "real black president."

Forget about Barack Obama's psyche; the fact that Murdoch thought he had to hit this same vicious rhetorical note one more time in a personal tweet at 9 at night at the age of 84 says a lot about Murdoch's own pathology. This is a level of narcissism that makes Donald Trump seem introspective.

Speaking of Trump: The orangutoid real estate mogul's presence in this presidential race is a real and hilarious threat to Murdoch's political influence, at least in the United States. The [on-again, off-again romance](http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2015/08/how-donald-trump-and-fox-news-went-back-to-war.html) between Fox and Trump seems destined to end in permanent divorce, which could force Murdoch into a serious conundrum, because Trump has essentially been calling out Murdoch's own "realness."

Until Trump arrived, Murdoch owned the lowest common denominator in the media space. He didn't just play to our worst instincts, he wrapped both arms around them and squeezed as hard as he could.

Some people think the media business is tough, but think of it like teaching preschool. There's a whole range of strategies, but one of them, guaranteed to work, is walking into class every morning and handing out giant tubs of ice cream. The Fox lineup is the media equivalent of this: a giant pile of tits, explosions and football.

All media companies do this to varying degrees, but Murdoch's brilliant insight, the one that made Fox the voice of *'Murica,*is that the lowest common denominator can be extended beyond entertainment, to ideology and politics.

Murdoch sold political coverage that could be digested directly by the stomach, bypassing the mind. He fed viewers a steady diet of Southern Strategy bromides about minorities and foreigners and queers and feminists and Sean Penn, all working together to steal the minivan out of Middle America's driveway.

From a production standpoint, this coverage strategy is a beautifully utilitarian thing. The stuff writes itself, and you don't really need to agonize over things like facts, just putt somewhere near the cup. You win by picking five to six news stories each week that fit the narrative, and just hammering the hell out of them.

In no time, every retirement home in America will be tuned in ([half of Murdoch's news viewers](http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2014/01/half-of-fox-news-viewers-are-68-and-older/283385/) are 68 or older), and your advertisers will be able to suck money out of the elderly and the desperate even more efficiently than do casinos.

Murdoch's genius is that he always found ways to hit new lows without hitting absolute bottom. He created a political propaganda network whose next step down was the Third Reich. But he's been careful to never go there, likely not because it's wrong, but because that next step scares advertisers – just [ask Glenn Beck](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/04/29/fox-news-glenn-beck_n_3177932.html).

Along comes Trump, who wants not just to cross that invisible line, but race past it. He's pitching voters on the idea that Rupert's news network is a sellout establishment plant because it won't go there, and a good number of them are buying.

Now Murdoch has to worry how low he'll have to go to keep his street cred. His network wasted no time [backing Trump's "Mexicans are rapists" comments](http://mediamatters.org/research/2015/06/30/fox-news-rallies-to-defend-donald-trump-after-n/204207). But [they've been paralyzed](http://www.newscorpse.com/ncWP/?p=29394), for instance, over the difficult question of whether or not women are fat menstruating pigs.

At present, Murdoch's people seem desperately to want to plead *nolo contendre*on Trump's crazier comments. Fox personnel have reportedly been instructed to stay away from Trump's "blood coming out of her wherever" line about anchor Megyn Kelly. Disturbingly, but also darkly ironically, viewer emails have reportedly all been on Trump's side.

"[Fox News Chairman] Roger [Ailes] was not happy," a Fox source [told *New York Magazine*](http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2015/08/donald-trump-and-roger-ailes-make-up-for-now.html)*.*"Most of the Fox viewers were taking Trump's side."

Neither Ailes nor Murdoch are too dense to know what this means. They know **they've spent a generation building an audience of morons. Their business model depends on morons**; morons are the raw materials of their industry, the way Budweiser is in the hops business.

The problem with morons is that you can do a pretty good business asking each one for a dollar to keep them safe from the giant asteroid that is going to land in their living rooms tomorrow. But even an American starts to get suspicious after 30 or 40 years of tomorrows.

You have to keep upping the ante to make it work. Trump is doing his best, but he's going to places now that make even Rupert Murdoch nervous. Meanwhile the "respectable" candidate is Fox's own Ben Carson, a man who continues to be living proof that you don't need to have a brain in order to operate on one.

Carson's latest gem is that the Holocaust could have been prevented [if only the Jews had been armed](http://time.com/4069415/ben-carson-defends-holocaust-guns/), a line so dumb that it would have been cut from a Zucker brothers movie. Six months ago Rupert Murdoch dismissed the loony neurosurgeon in an amusingly [condescending tweet](http://www.breitbart.com/2016-presidential-race/2015/03/25/rupert-murdoch-ben-carson-is-political-naif/). "Wonderful character, up from Detroit ghetto, sadly seems political naïf," he wrote. But now he's clinging to Carson as his best hope to stay in the game.

I think Rupert Murdoch fired off those desperate tweets last week because he senses his beloved audience of idiots drifting away. They are beginning to suspect the truth about him, i.e. that he isn't really one of them: They may finally sense that he's a foreigner, that he wouldn't be caught dead eating pork rinds, that he knows what the word "naïf" means.

Murdoch could go lower to prove his devotion, but that next step down is Trump. If he balks at that, he might lose his audience. Beautiful. Here's to hoping that any choice he makes will end in disaster. Nobody has ever deserved it more.

Read more: <http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/rupert-murdoch-is-deviant-scum-20151013#ixzz3pIkaSNv8>
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