

# True Story! 142 political things that really happened in 2016



[www.cnn.com/2016/12/30/politics/2016-political-stories/index.html](http://www.cnn.com/2016/12/30/politics/2016-political-stories/index.html)

(CNN)From pundits and prognosticators to political party people and the principals themselves, no one could have predicted it.

At every turn, another twist -- 2016 was outrageous, unforgettable and, with a new year and presidency dawning, only the precursor to something that promises to be far stranger: 2017.

Here are 142 things in politics that, both seriously and literally, actually happened during the last year.

1. Asked about the humanitarian disaster in the Syrian city of Aleppo, Libertarian presidential candidate Gary Johnson answered: ["What is Aleppo?"](#)
3. Marco Rubio suggested Trump had, during the previous night's debate, [literally wet himself onstage](#).
4. DNC chairwoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz [resigned ahead of the party's convention](#) after hacked emails revealed the committee had been favoring Hillary Clinton over Bernie Sanders.
5. Her successor, Donna Brazile, was later revealed to have [shared town hall questions](#) with the Clinton campaign.
5. A freshly-nominated Trump, at the final news conference he'd give during the campaign (or since), [encouraged the Russians to hack Clinton](#).
6. John Boehner drove an RV.
7. A GOP Senate group [tweeted](#) that Illinois Democratic Rep. Tammy Duckworth, a war veteran who lost both legs while serving in Iraq, had "a sad record of not standing up for our veterans."
8. Trump tweeted that he might "spill the beans" on Ted Cruz's wife, Heidi.
9. Trump suggested Cruz's father was in cahoots with [JFK assassin Lee Harvey Oswald](#).
10. Cruz, who refused to endorse Trump at the RNC and previously called him a ["pathological liar,"](#) eventually backed him, even [phone banking on Trump's behalf](#).
11. During a nationally televised debate, Trump [threatened to jail Hillary Clinton](#) if he won.
12. New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie became the first high profile GOP establishment figure to [back Trump](#).
13. One time, as he stood beside Trump, Christie looked like he was being held hostage.
14. Trump mocked Christie for [eating Oreos](#), but also made him his transition chair.
15. Then, after Trump won, [Christie and his allies were purged](#).
16. Why was Christie frozen out? Sources pointed to Trump son-in-law Jared Kushner, [whose father Christie prosecuted \(with glee\) in 2004](#) for tax evasion, witness tampering and illegal campaign contributions.
17. Clinton didn't hold a press conference [for more than nine months](#).
18. Trump tweeted that Americans should "check out" a (non-existent) "sex tape" featuring a former beauty queen whom he allegedly harassed.
19. The GOP-controlled North Carolina state legislature [passed new rules](#) stripping the incoming Democratic governor of a series of executive powers.
20. Then [they failed to repeal the state's controversial "bathroom bill"](#) despite making a deal with the Charlotte City Council, which had rescinded a nondiscrimination ordinance.
21. A UNC political science professor wrote that, [by his criteria](#), the state government was no longer democratic.
22. Trump became the first major party presidential nominee in a generation to make it through the whole campaign -- and beyond -- [without releasing his taxes](#).
23. Trump was seen (and heard) in a 2005 tape bragging that, because of his fame, [he is able to grope women](#).
24. The [Clinton campaign chairman's email was hacked](#) and leaked out over the course of months. The US government says Russia did it to undermine the election, and [possibly boost Trump](#).
25. This summer, FBI Director James Comey [cleared Clinton](#) following a probe into her use of a private email.
26. Then, 11 days before the election, he told Congress new information led him to [revisit that decision](#).
27. Two days before voters went to the polls, Comey [re-cleared Clinton](#).
28. Comey's decision to re-evaluate the case was spurred by the discovery of emails during an investigation into [alleged](#)

underage sexting by [Anthony Weiner](#), the former congressman and estranged husband of top Clinton aide Huma Abedin.

29. A 74-year-old self-described Democratic socialist from Vermont [won 23 Democratic nominating contests](#).

30. Bernie Sanders became [the first Jew](#) to win a presidential primary when he defeated Clinton in New Hampshire.

31. Days after the election, so-called "alt right" leader Richard Spencer capped off a gathering of the racist, anti-Semitic and misogynist neo-Nazi movement by raising his arm in a Nazi-like salute and yelling, "[Hail Trump! Hail our people!](#)"

32. Voters in California, Massachusetts, Maine and Nevada all passed measures to [legalize marijuana for recreational use](#).

33. Ben Carson [cut off a TV interview with CNN's Jeremy Diamond](#) about his ideas for urban renewal to search for his lost luggage.

34. A Carson adviser said the former GOP primary candidate turned down an offer to join the Trump administration for a good reason: [Because he had no government experience](#).

35. A few weeks later, Carson [accepted Trump's offer](#) to run the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

36. Vice President Joe Biden mused about fighting Trump -- who seemed to be [open to it -- behind a gym](#).

37. Heidi Cruz said that after their honeymoon, her husband went to the store and ["arrived back at our apartment with literally 100 cans of Campbell's Chunky soup."](#)

38. Trump demurred when asked if he would accept the results of the election, telling debate moderator, Fox News' Chris Wallace, "[I'll keep you in suspense.](#)"

39. Clinton [won the popular vote](#) by nearly 2.9 million votes, 2.1% better than Trump, who won the Electoral College and the presidency.

40. Jeb Bush-backing groups [raised more than \\$100 million](#) ahead of the primary in a bid to scare off opponents. By February, he was trailing badly in the polls and politely asking a small audience, "Please clap."

## MUST WATCH

Jeb Bush to audience: 'Please clap' 00:47

41. The USA Freedom Kids, a children's troupe that performed at Trump rallies, [sued after it was claimed the campaign stifled them](#).
42. Rick Perry [was picked to head one of the departments he wanted to eliminate in 2012](#) -- the same one whose name he [could not recall](#) on a debate stage five years ago.
43. Trump named Steve Bannon, a Breitbart exec and alt-right hero, [his chief White House strategist and senior counselor](#).
44. After years, [Trump conceded](#) President Barack Obama is a US citizen, then patted himself on the back for ending birtherism.
45. [The stage collapsed](#) a few minutes after Trump's remarks.
46. Cruz was the Phantom of the Opera for Halloween.
47. Mitt Romney went as ... Mitt Romney?

*[Dressed as our alter egos. #HappyHalloween](#)*

*A photo posted by Ann Romney (@annromney) on Oct 31, 2016 at 6:26pm PDT*

48. Trump on the People magazine writer who [accused him of sexual assault](#): "Look at her. Look at her words. You tell me what you think. I don't think so. I don't think so."
49. Trump [held a press conference](#) with three women who had accused Bill Clinton of sexual assault -- right before a debate with Hillary Clinton.
50. [His campaign tried](#) to put the women in family seating, creating a confrontation with Clinton, but was denied by the debate organizers.
51. Donald Trump Jr. compared Syrian refugees [to Skittles](#).
52. Donald Trump Jr. posted a meme that put him, his father and their political allies alongside the alt-right mascot, Pepe:

*[A friend sent me this. Apparently I made the cut as one of the Deplorables🤔🤔🤔 All kidding aside I am honored to be grouped with the hard working men and women of this great nation that have supported @realdonaldtrump and know that he can fix the mess created by politicians in Washington. He's fighting for you and won't ever quit.](#)*

53. Trump [considered dumping](#) Vice President-elect Mike Pence, after the choice was made public, for Christie but his campaign talked him out of it.
54. Howard Dean tweeted that Trump might be on cocaine.
55. Trump called Clinton a ["nasty woman"](#) during their final debate.
56. Ivanka Trump cut off a call with Cosmopolitan after sensing ["a lot of negativity"](#) in the interviewer's questions.
57. Trump [incorrectly tried to correct](#) a veteran about veterans' suicide rate.
58. Did Trump throw a crying baby out of his rally? [Maybe...](#)
59. Trump visited Mexico and said he didn't discuss with Mexico's president who would pay for his proposed border wall.
60. But Enrique Peña Nieto [said they did](#).
61. Clinton said half of Trump's supporters belong in a ["basket of deplorables."](#)
62. She gave a long speech dedicated to the truly deplorable -- [the racist "alt-right."](#)
63. Trump said ["Second Amendment people"](#) could be a bulwark against Clinton's judicial appointments. A Democratic senator called it an "assassination threat" and the former head of the CIA, retired Gen. Michael Hayden, told CNN's Jake Tapper: "If someone else had said what said outside the hall, he'd be in the back of a police wagon now with the Secret Service questioning him."
64. We streamed Pence getting a haircut -- and [a lot of people watched](#).
65. Carson, confused, refused to come onstage for a debate.
66. Cruz and Ohio Gov. John Kasich united against Trump in [a last-ditch effort](#) to derail the frontrunner. (It didn't work.)
67. Melania Trump's RNC speech [was plagiarized](#) in part from Michelle Obama's address to the DNC in 2008.
68. Kasich went on [a gut-busting tour](#) of the Arthur Ave. Market in the Bronx.
69. Clinton rode the subway, [controversially](#).
70. After months at the site, protesters against the Dakota Access Pipeline [won a reprieve](#) from the Obama administration.
71. Clinton ["healthers"](#) spread a conspiracy theory that she used a body double and required "auto-injector syringe" doses of diazepam to conceal her alleged seizures.
72. Clinton appeared to collapse at the 9/11 memorial. She had been suffering from pneumonia [but hadn't told the press](#).
73. After winning, Trump said he saved jobs that [had already been saved](#); brought new jobs that were [already planned](#).
74. Trump ([but mostly Pence and tax perks](#)) convinced Carrier to keep hundreds of jobs, once destined for Mexico, in the US.
75. Then Trump [attacked the union leader](#) representing Carrier workers
76. He repeatedly addressed Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren, a vocal critic who claims Native American heritage, as ["Pocahontas."](#)
77. The Rockettes are [booked to perform](#) at Trump's inauguration -- but some are [kicking out](#) at the plan.
78. Did someone try to have Megyn Kelly [poisoned before the first GOP primary debate?](#) Maybe, Kelly suggested in a book.
79. [More than 950 people](#) have been shot and killed by the police in 2016, according to a running count by the Washington Post.
80. The British [voted to leave](#) the European Union.
81. Former PM David Cameron, who staked his political career to the vote and lost, [hummed his way home](#) after his resignatic press conference.
82. Ex-UKIP leader Nigel Farage, a leading "Leave" campaigner, became pals with Trump and [campaigns for him in the US](#).
83. [Trump tweeted](#) that Farage should be made the UK's ambassador to Washington.
84. Fidel Castro, survivor of [more than 600 assassination attempts](#), died of natural causes.
85. Trump pledged to "drain the swamp" of DC lobbyists -- so [he hired their bosses](#).
86. The cast of "Hamilton" thanked Pence for attending the show, then [delivered a message](#) from the stage about diversity.
87. Trump attacked the cast on Twitter, demanding they apologize.
88. Pence said he [was not offended](#).
89. [A 12-year-old](#) ran Trump's campaign in Jefferson County, Colorado.
90. [Scott Baio](#) gave a speech at the GOP convention.

91. PolitiFact compared the truthfulness of public statements by Clinton on Trump -- [and wow](#).
92. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, a conservative hero, [died on a hunting trip in Texas](#).
93. Trump fed conspiracies theories suggesting Scalia, who died of natural causes, [had been killed](#).
94. Trump [blamed his delayed disavowal of former KKK leader David Duke](#) on a "bad earpiece."
95. The National Review published an entire edition called, ["Against Trump."](#)
96. Biden [had a cameo](#) on "Law and Order."
97. House Democrats [staged a sit-in](#) over a gun control measure.
98. Speaker Paul Ryan turned out the lights on them, so they [livestreamed it](#).
99. Ryan is now [proposing a ban](#) on such activities, enforceable by fines and ethics violations.
100. Time magazine named Trump its ["Person of the Year."](#) Trump was pleased but groused that the award was no longer called "Man of the Year."
101. Cruz [accidentally jabbed, then elbowed](#) Heidi onstage before he dropped out of the race.
102. Trump apparently defended the size of his penis during a GOP debate. "I guarantee you there's no problem," [he said](#). "I guarantee."
103. Right-wing conspiracy theorists concocted [something called "Pizzagate,"](#) a "fake news" story that alleged Democratic leaders were running a pedophile ring out of a restaurant in Washington, DC.
104. [A man with a gun](#) went to the pizza place to "self-investigate," fired his weapon, then surrendered to police.
105. Trump said [he might quit tweeting](#) if elected.
106. He settled a fraud lawsuit against Trump University [for \\$25 million](#).
107. [Romney](#) met multiple times about the secretary of state job with Trump, who then picked [someone else](#).
108. The creator of the private pro-Clinton Facebook group ["Pantsuit Nation"](#) got a book deal... in which she'll use other people's posts ([with their permission](#) after some serious backlash).
109. After the election, [Obama expelled 35 Russian diplomats](#) and imposed new sanctions in response to election-related hacks.
110. The White House [released a detailed flowchart](#) showing how Russian intelligence hacked "a political party."
111. A Flint pastor [interrupted Trump](#) and asked him to stop attacking Clinton during campaign church visit.
112. Carly Fiorina fell through the floor (or slipped off a stage?) after introducing Cruz at a campaign rally.
113. Cruz [named Fiorina his VP pick](#) about a week before he quit the primary race.
114. The Obama administration [allowed a UN resolution](#) condemning Israeli settlements to pass the Security Council.
115. Secretary of State John Kerry [gave a speech](#) declaring that, without a two-state solution, Israel could not remain both Jewish and democratic.
117. Alt-right troll Milo Yiannopoulos got [banned from Twitter](#).
118. Alt-right troll Milo Yiannopoulos got a [big book deal](#).
119. Trump still hasn't held a post-election press conference.
120. Trump, [who postponed a promised news conference this month](#), still hasn't explained how he will remove personal business conflicts of interest when he becomes president in a few weeks.
121. Trump, channeling his inner Nixon, had said: ["The president can't have a conflict of interest."](#)
122. ["Clintonspotting"](#) has become a kind of sport. It usually [happens in the woods](#) near her home.
123. Conspiracy theorists believed one of the original post-election snaps [was a fraud](#). (To what end? No one can really say.)
124. Obama has commuted more than 1,000 prisoners' sentences during his term -- [almost all of them](#) this year.
125. Green Party candidate Jill Stein [raised money](#) for recounts in Wisconsin, Michigan and Pennsylvania.
126. Obama and Trump are ["talking regularly."](#)
127. Bernie Sanders-loyal Democrats are [gearing up for a battle](#) ([with the White House and its allies](#)) over the next DNC chair.
128. Cruz explained to reporters that "queso is made to be scooped up with tortilla chips, dribbling down your chin and onto your shirt."
129. Who knew Trump would win? [Richard Nixon](#).
130. Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon was [ordered to serve as a public defender](#) by the state, which blamed his administration for cutting funding ... for public defenders.
131. A North Korean state news site [published an op-ed](#) calling Trump "wise" and Clinton "dull."
132. [The Treasury Department announced](#) that Alexander Hamilton will remain on the front of the \$10 bill. Harriet Tubman will replace Andrew Jackson on the face of the \$20.

133. Before he was nominated as Energy Secretary, Perry, the former Texas governor, was doing this:
134. According to a [Gallup poll](#), Obama is 2016 America's "Most Admired Man." Trump came in second.
135. Obama [said he would have beat Trump](#) in a head-to-head race.
136. NY Rep. Peter King, a Republican, said he would kill himself (["cyanide"](#)) if Cruz won the GOP nomination.
137. Former Mexican President Vicente Fox trolled Trump all year long.
138. A state representative in Georgia [delivered a speech to his colleagues in a Trump mask](#) .
139. Trump encouraged supporters in Pennsylvania to ["go down to certain areas and watch and study"](#) to prevent voter fraud (or, as many worried, intimidate legitimate voters).
140. Nevada Democrat Catherine Cortez Masto became [the first Latina](#) elected to the Senate.
141. Supreme Court nominee Merrick Garland never received a hearing. The high court bench will enter 2017 one justice short.
142. President-elect Donald J. Trump.