

Too Much and Never Enough:
How My Family Created the World's Most Dangerous Man
By Mary L. Trump, Ph.D.
Simon & Schuster. 240 pp. \$28

Anatomy of a Malignant Narcissist

By Ginette Novello

Amidst the flood of books and articles about the most outrageous, bombastic, and alarming president in history, one publication stands out: Mary Trump's book about her uncle, Donald John Trump.

Too Much and Never Enough sold nearly a million copies on the first day it went on sale in July. The author's purpose was not to titillate or exploit by revealing embarrassing secrets that every family harbors. Rather, Mary Trump sought to explain. She believed the public desperately needed to understand the origins of Donald's psychological flaws, and she was uniquely placed to present them. Not only did she have the information and perspective from inside, but Mary Trump had the clinical training to be far more than an amateur psychologist breaking down the dysfunctions of the Trump clan. In her prologue the author writes, "Donald, following the lead of my grandfather and with the complicity, silence, and inaction of his siblings, destroyed my father. I can't let him destroy my country." The result is a book like no other in the vast literature about American presidents, which includes a fair share of psychological portraits.

Donald Trump and Fred Sr., 1973

Mary Trump's campaign to expose the truth antedated her book. Following its publication, it was revealed that she was the source of financial records obtained by *The New York Times* in 2017, which led to a series of Pulitzer Prize-winning investigative reports about the legerdemain behind the Trump real estate empire. Her campaign also continued after publication when Mary Trump took the unusual step of releasing some of her most important source material. She provided excerpts from recordings secretly made in 2018 and 2019 during conversations with her aunt Maryanne Trump Barry, Donald's

eldest sibling. In the recordings, Maryanne (born 1937) can be heard candidly describing her younger brother (born 1946) as stupid, cruel, selfish, and mendacious. Maryanne, a retired federal judge, was the source for the allegation that Donald paid a bright student to take his SAT exams for entrance into the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Business. The brutal picture the president's sister paints is that of a spoiled brat who was a menace to all of the family.

Evidently, Mary went to the extreme extent of betraying and embarrassing her aunt because the cause of damaging Donald's re-election superseded every other consideration. Just possibly, there was also an element of retribution. Despite Maryanne's generally good reputation as a lawyer and a judge, she had participated, or at least acquiesced, in the so-far successful effort to deny Mary Trump and her brother Fritz a fair portion of the vast estate left by the family's patriarch, Fred Sr.

The question that quickly arose—and it is a fair one—was why just now? Why had Mary Trump waited until 2020 to convey the truth as she knew it? Why didn't she write a book warning about her uncle's pathologies in 2016? Her answer was instantly credible. As she told Rachel Maddow on MSNBC, she never imagined her uncle would ever win a national election, believing that voters would be turned off by his crass and boorish behavior, his racism and sexism, among many other deficiencies. Aunt Maryanne voiced the same opinion in 2016, according to Mary: "He's a clown. This will never happen." Yet Maryanne ended up voting for her brother out of "family loyalty." This election cycle Mary vowed not to repeat her mistake, and swore to herself to do everything she could to thwart her uncle's re-election.

The Patriarch

The book's title and especially the subtitle—*How My Family Created the World's Most Dangerous Man*—aptly convey Mary Trump's overriding purpose of analyzing her uncle and revealing the sources of his mental and emotional instability. She earned a Ph.D. in clinical psychology from Adelphi University in New York and has taught graduate courses in psychopathology; she has also published in peer-reviewed journals on the subject of schizophrenia. The terms "too much" and "never enough," she explains, refer to common forms of child abuse. In Donald Trump's case, he experienced both syndromes: too much wealth and privilege growing up, but never enough attention from his father and mother. "Everyone in my family," she writes, "experienced a strange combination of privilege and neglect."

The patriarch, Fred Trump Senior (Frederick Christ Trump, 1905-1999), was the son of a German immigrant, Friedrich Trump (1869-1918), who came to America at the age of 16 in order to avoid mandatory military service, as did many immigrants. Friedrich made a fortune during the Alaska gold rush, providing prospectors with food, lodging, and prostitutes. In 1904 he returned to live in Bavaria with his wife Elizabeth and newborn daughter, also named Elizabeth. But his draft dodging was not forgotten, and he

was forced to return to America, where his wife gave birth to Fred and his brother John (1907-1985). In 1908, the family settled in Queens, New York.

Friedrich started the family's real estate business, Trump Management, but died in 1918 from the Spanish flu, when Fred was 13 years old, whereupon his widow Elizabeth took over the firm. Young Fred worked a variety of jobs while going to school and took night classes in carpentry and other subjects related to building. In 1925 Fred's mother renamed the business E. Trump & Son and put her 20-year-old son in charge. Fred began to build houses and expand the business with a passion, employing ruthless, cutthroat, and sometimes illegal tactics. Any display of concern or kindness for others was seen as being "weak." Being "tough" was prioritized above everything else, even outside of his business and inside the family. This meant not caring about what happened to other people so long as his own interests were served. Fred became a father in 1937 with the birth of Maryanne. The following year his first son and namesake was born; inside the family Fred Junior became known as "Freddy."

In the 1950s Fred Sr. became a follower of Norman Vincent Peale, who set forth a "prosperity gospel" in a best-selling guide, *The Power of Positive Thinking* (1952). According to Peale, the rich deserved their success and the poor their poverty. If people were poor, it was their own fault, whereas the rich were equally deserving of their good fortune and blessed by God. "Financial worth was the same as self-worth, monetary value was human value," writes Mary. "The more Fred Trump had, the better he was. If he gave something to someone else, that person would be worth more and he less. He would pass that attitude on to Donald in spades."

As the real estate business grew during the postwar economic boom, Fred naturally looked to "Freddy" to carry it on. But Mary's father had neither the killer instinct that Fred Sr. prized nor the interest. Instead, he found joy in flying airplanes, and became a pilot for Trans World Airlines. Occasionally Fred Jr. tried to appease Fred Sr. by returning to the family enterprise between airline jobs. But these forays never turned out well, as nothing was ever good enough for a father who could never accept that his first-born son vastly preferred a different profession. Donald sided with his father and weighed in against his older brother: "You know, Dad is really sick of you wasting your life You're nothing but a glorified bus driver."

Freddy's unhappiness eventually manifested itself in alcoholism. He died at the youthful age of 42 in 1981, all but disowned by Fred Sr., a teetotaler who regarded Freddy's drinking problem as a shameful weakness—another part of the Peale prosperity gospel. Mary points out that her grandfather didn't drink, and was never sick a day in his life.

To Fred Sr., meanwhile, the female members of his family—a second daughter, Elizabeth Joan, was born in 1942—were of no account. To him, women were "innately inferior." Their only purpose was to function as supportive wives and mothers. Those who didn't fit into this mold were to be demeaned. One of Fred Sr.'s pleasures was talking openly about "ugly women," a trait Donald quickly adopted. That his oldest

daughter Maryanne managed to become a lawyer and eventually a federal judge, despite her father's attitude, was a testament to her fortitude. Yet even her success had no effect on Fred Sr.'s misogyny. When Mary informed her grandfather that she planned to return to university after a leave of absence, he ridiculed her, saying that she should go to a junior college instead and become a secretary or receptionist. When she insisted on going back, he sneered and replied, "That's nasty."

An Ailing & Distant Mother

Donald's mother, Mary MacLeod (1912-2000), immigrated from the Isle of Lewis, 40 miles off the coast of Scotland. She was the youngest in a family of 10 children, and sought better opportunities in America after WWI and the Spanish flu pandemic decimated the male population of the island. She met Fred Sr. at a dance hall and impressed him enough for him to court her. Coming from a dirt-poor background, Mary MacLeod greatly enjoyed the elevated social position she gained by marrying a rich man, and would never do anything to jeopardize it. She seldom contradicted or opposed her husband, except in rare instances, and then always in private.

After the birth of her fifth and last child in 1948, a third son named Robert, Mary MacLeod Trump began to suffer from poor health. She was discovered one night on the floor of her bathroom in a pool of blood and rushed to the hospital, where doctors removed her uterus and ovaries. At the time hormone replacement therapy was not well-known or often prescribed, and she developed severe osteoporosis due to a lack of estrogen in her system. Because of her near-constant pain, she developed insomnia and roamed the house at night "like a wordless wraith." Some mornings her children would find her unconscious in one or another part of the house.

As a mother, Mary MacLeod Trump sought comfort from her children rather than offer comfort to them. She was emotionally unstable and needy, "prone to self-pity and flights of martyrdom." Since she was effectively unable to care for her children, eldest daughter Maryanne essentially took over the role at the age of 12 and saw that the three younger children—Elizabeth, Donald, and Robert—were cared for and put to bed every night. Freddy wasn't expected to help because he was a boy. Meanwhile, Fred Sr. was aloof and uninvolved, as he considered caring for children to be women's work.

Fred Sr. never wanted to be bothered when he came home from his 12-hour workday. Any expressed desire for affection was met with rejection, anger, or indifference. He preferred that his children learn early, and on their own, not to need anything or anyone. Love held no meaning for him, and he couldn't empathize with any of their plights. All he wanted from his children was obedience, and for them to stay out of his way. Mary Trump characterizes Fred Sr. as a "high-functioning sociopath." She lists the symptoms of such a person as "a lack of empathy, a facility for lying, an indifference to right and wrong, abusive behavior, and a lack of interest in the rights of others." She adds: "Having a sociopath as a parent, especially if there is no one else

around to mitigate the effects, all but guarantees severe disruption in how children understand themselves, regulate their emotions, and engage with the world.” Donald was only two and a half years old when his mother went into decline. He had virtually no parental love, attention, or influence at a vital time in his early childhood. And it inexorably showed.

Donald as Boy

With no adult guidance or boundaries at home, Donald became self-centered, rebellious, and disrespectful. He became so unruly that his parents shipped him off to a military academy as punishment, a not uncommon practice in the 1950s. His mother later admitted to Mary Trump that she was relieved at the time to have Donald out of “The House,” as their two-story Queens mansion was called, since he never listened to her and Fred Sr. didn’t care enough to discipline him. Mary Trump believes that Donald probably had a learning disability, which compounded the problem posed by his dysfunctional upbringing. He never liked to read, even in his younger years. People with learning disabilities can become very adept at hiding this embarrassing shortcoming—by faking, memorizing material, or having other people do their work and taking credit for it. This comports with what Maryanne told Mary Trump during their tape-recorded interviews: that she often did Donald’s homework for him, and that he paid someone to take his Wharton entrance exam.

In all likelihood, this learning disability is a family trait, as it is known to be inherited. Donald’s oldest son, Don Jr., was tested in grade school and found to have a learning disability, and Fred Sr. may have suffered from one as well. The library in “The House” contained no books whatsoever. Shelves were used only to display pictures and knick-knacks.

Donald as Entrepreneur

When Fred Sr. disowned his namesake for not wanting to be heir of the family business, Donald leaped at the chance to becoming his father’s protégé. Donald embraced as his own the callous and ruthless manner that Fred Sr. delighted in displaying. Fred Sr. had “dismantled his oldest son (Freddy) by devaluing and degrading every aspect of his personality and his natural abilities until all that was left was self-recrimination and a desperate need to please a man who had no use for him,” writes Mary Trump. “The only reason Donald escaped the same fate is that his personality served his father’s purposes.”

Fred Sr. was generally as stingy with his money as he was with his emotions. He refused to help Maryanne, Elizabeth, and Freddy when they were financially stressed on occasion, forcing them to live in run-down apartments on meager incomes. No doubt he thought that their situations were of their own making, as ordained by Peale’s gospel. The

one exception to his miserliness was Donald, once the second son entered the family business.

Fred Sr. considered his son to be a great success because of all the publicity he generated, even though Donald would declare bankruptcy five times. Scores of contractors and workers went unpaid. Donald was given unlimited access to the family fortune because Fred Sr. was desperate to believe that the son who supposedly followed in his footsteps was also a successful and shrewd businessman. Even banks were enamored of Donald's flagrant self-promotion and claims, and continued to lend him money long after prudence dictated otherwise. "By continuing to enable Donald," writes Mary, "my grandfather kept making him worse: more needy for media attention and free money, more self-aggrandizing and delusional about his 'greatness.'" All he cared about was establishing the Trump name ostentatiously in the public eye, and Fred Sr., no great law-abider himself, loved it. "Donald was to my grandfather what the border wall has been for Donald: a vanity project funded at the expense of more worthy pursuits."

Donald's failed business dealings, rather than teach him caution, taught him that "no matter what happens, no matter how much damage he leaves in his wake, he will be okay . . . Claim that a failure is a tremendous victory, and the shameless grandiosity will retroactively make it so." Knowing ahead of time that his father's money would bail him out if he failed, Donald had no concerns about taking risks. He had become the Golden Boy of real estate, largely through his own conceit and by a complicit media that loved to chronicle his every move. The wealthy elites in Manhattan never accepted Donald, regarding him as "the court jester from Queens." But they still invited him to their parties and their exclusive clubs because of all the attention and controversy he brought with him. He became part of the scene.

In his personal life, Donald acted like a playboy. Having adopted his father's chauvinistic attitude towards women, he embarked on a series of failed marriages and extra-marital affairs with beautiful women and celebrities. Could any one woman satisfy Donald's bottomless need for the love and approval he lacked as a child? Apparently not. When married to Ivana, the mother of his three eldest children, he carried on a very public affair with Marla Maples. After divorcing Ivana to marry Marla, he started a relationship with a 28-year-old model named Melania, whom he later married. Curiously, Melania fits the same pattern as Donald's mother: a poor immigrant looking to improve her situation in America, and then not daring to upset the apple cart. Melania has apparently chosen to treat his repeat behavior as a mere peccadillo, including, but not limited to, his affair with pornographic film star Stormy Daniels.

The Patriarch's Estate

When Fred Sr. began to slide into dementia in the early 1990s, Donald treated his father with contempt, as though he had brought it on himself. Mary Trump says she wasn't surprised to see Donald act this way. It replicated how Fred Sr., had reacted to

Freddy's alcoholism. The patriarch died of Alzheimer's disease in Long Island Jewish Medical Center in 1999. His wife died a year later in the same hospital.

At one point, Donald tried to take advantage of his father's dementia by attaching a codicil to his will that would have effectively cut out the other children. On that day, by chance, Fred Sr. was lucid, and he refused to sign it. When the other Trump children found out they put a stop to it. Maryanne later exclaimed, "We would have been penniless We would have had to beg Donald if we wanted a cup of coffee."

After Fred Sr.'s death, the children of his deceased son Freddy (Fritz, born in 1953, and Mary, born in 1965) were shocked to learn that they were not included at all in the patriarch's will. As their uncle Robert Trump explained, "As far as your grandfather was concerned, dead is dead. He only cared about his living children." So Freddy's son and daughter filed a lawsuit against the Trump estate. After numerous non-productive court appearances, they eventually settled for 20 percent of what Freddy's share would have been had he lived, with the stipulation that the four surviving Trump children—Maryanne, Elizabeth, Donald, and Robert—could buy their shares of the assets.

The family drama over the spoils might have ended there. But in 2017, Mary Trump was contacted by a *New York Times* reporter, Susanne Craig, who said she was working on an investigation into the Trump family's finances. She asked Mary Trump for copies of tax returns and other documents that had been produced before the lawsuit was resolved. Mary Trump had been told at the time that her grandfather's estate was worth only \$30 million. Even her grandmother and namesake propagated the lie that Fred Sr. "didn't have two nickels to rub together" at the time of his death. But during the course of the *Times* investigation, which demonstrated that Donald had received more than \$400 million from the estate in support of his many failed ventures, it turned out that the actual value of Fred Sr.'s estate was closer to \$1 billion. Fred Sr. and his wife, moreover, had distributed hundreds of millions of dollars amongst their children while he still lived so the children could avoid paying inheritance taxes they would have otherwise owed.

In the end, Donald sold Trump Management for \$700 million, ignoring his father's wishes that the real estate empire bearing his name continue in perpetuity. The siblings acquiesced, as they received a substantial sum from the sale—more than \$170 million each. And while Freddy had shared in the family wealth earlier on, Mary says that she has no idea what happened to her father's portion from this sale. On September 24th this year, she filed a lawsuit against Donald, Maryanne, and the estate of Robert Trump (who died just a few months ago) for fraud and a civil conspiracy to cheat her out of her rightful inheritance.

Too Much and Never Enough has been called a "tell-all" book, a blistering memoir, and a scathing indictment of the Trump family. In fact, the author does have many harsh things to say about her uncle: he is a pathetic narcissist, racist, sexist, illiterate, psychopath, and akin to a child who lives in the disapproving shadow of his dead father. And yet, for all that, the book maintains a calm, analytical tone that makes it easy to read, aside from a few outbursts. Americans have become accustomed,

habituated, even inured to Trump's abnormalities as broadcast daily on TV. They are both compelling and revolting. Had he remained a showman, a con man, a failed builder, and a boor, he could easily be tolerated within the daily spread of entertainment in the media. But as his former "fixer," attorney Michael Cohen, jokes about 2016, everything was going great, the plan was working. But then something unexpected happened: he won!

Without that win, the story of a money-grubbing family that acquires all the crudities and few of the niceties, and the spoiled brat who grew up with millions of dollars to play with, would be limited in the scale and scope of misery they could inflict on others. Part of Mary Trump's great despair when Donald was elected was that she feared her uncle's cruelty and incompetence would cause people to die. In the fourth year of his presidency, unfortunately, her fears have come true. The corona virus pandemic brought forth his "grotesque indifference to the lives of other people." True to form, he began playing down the threat of the virus with the "toxic positivity" he learned from his father, Fred Sr., who would often tell his ailing wife to buck up, because everything was "great," "beautiful," and "perfect!"

In the last chapter, Mary Trump observes that "for Donald, there is no value in empathy, no tangible upside to caring for other people." Donald touts stock market gains while tens of thousands die because he is "fundamentally incapable of acknowledging the suffering of others."

Mary Trump managed to survive the experience of being raised in the Trump family. But she does not think America can survive the re-election of her uncle come November.

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