

A Short History of Conservative Trolling | Intelligencer

By Rick Perlstein

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[David Frum](#), the former George W. Bush speechwriter and current never-Trump conservative, [recently wrote](#), “The post-Trump right has a style as distinctive as its authoritarian substance: trolling, ironic, evasive.” But that ain’t so. On the right, trolling has been part of the story from the beginning.

The first instances of the right-wing practice we now call “trolling” that I can positively identify come from the madcap four-way presidential election in 1948 won by Democrat [Harry Truman](#). In 1947, a rally in New Haven for Henry Wallace of the left-wing Progressive Party was visited by a 21-year-old [William F. Buckley](#) and several associates, who dressed up in fake bohemian kit — the girls wore mannish slacks, the boys greased down their hair — and carried signs reading “Let’s Prove We Want Peace/Give Russia the Atom Bomb.” Their plan to release a covey of doves was foiled at the last minute.

[...]

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