

“Only an Iowa Victory Can Revive Walker's Campaign”
by Mitch Henck
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Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker promised to "wreak havoc" in the second nationally televised debate. He tried to take on Trump head on when he said 27 minutes in, "We don't need an apprentice. We have one now." Whoops. On his show the "Apprentice" Trump was the boss. He fired the people who tried to be the Apprentice.

During the same sequence, Walker attacked Trump for driving four of his projects into bankruptcy. Trump grabbed the floor like a character on *The Sopranos*. He counter attacked Walker on his Wisconsin record. Walker then had his strongest moment when defended himself on balancing the budget and cutting taxes. Then he was gone.

Governor Walker didn't get to speak again until 40 minutes later. He wasn't called on by the CNN moderators but the others jumped in repeatedly out of turn. Walker had 11 fewer minutes of talk time than Trump. Throw in the face time Trump was getting with split screen shots and cutaways. It was the Trump Show all night.

Walker spoke again 36 minutes later to answer a question about his statement that raising the Federal minimum wage as "lame". Moderator Jake Tapper then turned to Dr. Ben Carson accusing Walker of not answering his question. In a rare display of determination, Walker returned to the fray a few minutes later saying the idea was for people to get the skills and education necessary to earn more than the minimum wage.

Perhaps aware that his time was woefully short, Walker spoke in a hurried cadence that sounded like he was giving a speech at a rally in Waukesha. Washington became "Washing" as he tried to cram in as many words as he could. He worked in his record on lower property taxes during his answer on the minimum wage. He didn't mention Federal unions all night either. The issue must not have tested well with pre-debate focus groups.

Walker is watching his falling polling numbers and the clock. He confessed to reporters after the debate that he is focusing primarily on the first Caucus state of Iowa. The Governor has canceled appearances in other places in recent days in order to put the Hawkeye State higher on his priority list.

Democrat Dick Gephardt did that in 1988. He put all his eggs in the Iowa basket only to edge Illinois Senator Paul Simon by a hair. In so doing he had too little money left to answer attack ads by Mike Dukakis on Super Tuesday in March.

Walker's room for error has narrowed as well. Iowans vote on February 1st. Governor Walker may have to camp out there until he's back in the game. He has 99 Iowa counties to visit and organize. For the man who won three Wisconsin elections in four years, the longest slog of his life is just beginning.

Only an Iowa victory can revive Walker's campaign. The Preacher's son has to win conservative Christians the way Huckabee did to win there in 2008...and the way Rick Santorum did to win four years ago. To do that he has to catch Ben Carson and hope the brash and often vulgar Trump fades before the voting begins. Some of that old time religion may just be what Walker needs.