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Controversy of the week

Arpaio: Why Trump pardoned 'Sheriff Joe'

Even in “the most shocking and awful” presidency in modern U.S. history, said Jay Michaelson in *TheDailyBeast.com*, Donald Trump’s pardon of Sheriff Joe Arpaio last week may be the “most dangerous and most terrifying of all his antics.” Arpaio, 85, is the former sheriff of Maricopa County, Arizona, where he gained national infamy over 24 years by brutalizing and humiliating prison inmates, harassing the county’s Hispanic population in a perpetual “crack-down” on illegal immigrants, and once dispatching a “Cold Case Posse” to Hawaii to hunt for evidence that President Obama’s birth certificate was forged. In July, Arpaio was convicted of contempt of court, after he defied a judge’s order to stop pulling over Hispanic motorists without cause. But thanks to his fellow birther Trump—whose campaign Arpaio heartily endorsed—he will now escape all punishment. We’re witnessing the “normalization and entrenchment of bigotry in public life,” said Michael Gerson in *WashingtonPost.com*. In pardoning the unra-



Campaigning together in 2016

charges.” All Trump has done is bring “a political end to a political case,” said Paul Mirengoff in *PowerLineBlog.com*.

The left-wing Obama administration prosecuted Arpaio to discourage vigorous enforcement of our immigration laws. By pardoning Arpaio, Trump is signaling that he’s committed to the “tough-as-nails immigration policy” that got him elected.

Arpaio wasn’t “tough” as a sheriff, said Paul Krugman in *NYTimes.com*; he was a monster who engaged in “fascism, American-style.” The inmates in his care were fed starvation rations

of spoiled food, shackled in old-timey chain gangs in striped uniforms, and forced to live in a “Tent City” Arpaio set up in the desert—“a concentration camp,” he proudly called it—where temperatures could reach 145 degrees. At least 160 prisoners died in his care, and taxpayers shelled out \$140 million to litigate and settle lawsuits prompted by his barbaric abuses. Trump’s motives for pardoning this authoritarian thug “are easy to understand.”