

Hillary Clinton hasn't held a press conference in 257 days. That's ridiculous.

By **Chris Cillizza** August 18

Donald Trump said lots (and lots) of thing during his hour-long town hall with Fox News's Sean Hannity on Wednesday night. This one — Trump talking about Hillary Clinton — stood out to me:

She is so protected. They are so protecting her. She hasn't had a news conference in, like, 250 days.

It couldn't be that long since Clinton has talked to the press, I thought. So, I went to the handy-dandy tool that some guy named Philip Bump built to track how long it's been since Clinton faced the press. And this is what I found:

Almost 258 days! Trump undersold something!

Jokes aside, it's beyond ridiculous that one of the two people who will be elected president in 80 or so days continues to refuse to engage with the press in this way.

But she does sit-down interviews! And she did a "press conference" with a moderator, um, moderating the questions!

Not good enough. Not when you are running to be president of the United States. One of the most important things when someone is offering themselves up to represent all of us is that we get the best sense we can about how that person thinks on his or her feet, how they deal with unwanted or adversarial questions. Those two traits are big parts of doing the job of president in the modern world.

There's nothing like a press conference to put a candidate for president through their paces. If you don't believe me, just watch how Clinton handled this presser — not well! — when she tried to put the email server controversy to rest.

Clinton's struggles with the press conference format are a major part of why she hasn't done one in so long. Why do something you aren't good at unless you absolutely have to? If campaigns are about downplaying your weaknesses while putting your strengths front and center, Clinton's avoidance of press conferences is "Campaigning 101."

There is also the fact that Clinton's general election opponent continues to suck all of the oxygen — and then some — out of each day's news cycle. Trump so dominates the coverage — and not in a good way — that there's not enough room for Clinton's unwillingness to face unscripted, unmoderated questions from reporters covering her to get much attention.

Put all of that aside, and think of this: The last time Clinton held a press conference was Dec. 5, 2015. That was before:

1. A single state had cast a vote in either a presidential primary or caucus
2. Major terrorist attacks in Nice, Brussels and Orlando
3. FBI Director James Comey issued his scathing report on Clinton's email practices while at the State Department

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4. The Bernie Sanders phenomenon
5. Debbie Wasserman Schultz was run out of the Democratic National Committee in the wake of a massive email hack/leak
6. [This whole Ryan Lochte international gas station incident](#)

The temperature in Washington on Dec. 5, 2015, was 44 degrees. It's 84 today. A woman who conceived on Dec. 5, 2015, would be 8½ months pregnant today. On December 5, 2015, the Golden State Warriors were NBA champs. On December 5, 2015, I was still in my 30s.

You get the idea. It's been a long time. Lots of important things — Lochte and my 40th birthday being at the top of the list — have happened. Clinton is now the unquestioned favorite to be the 45th president of the United States — [if you believe polling](#). The fact that she continues to avoid questions from the press is simply unacceptable given the office she is seeking and the stakes in this election.

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