

# LUCKY PEACH



EDIBLE TRUMP

## Something Fishy

Donald Trump in salmon, flounder, and sardines.

By LAUREN GARFINKEL

Art by LAUREN GARFINKEL

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**n July 11, 2016**, Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg called Republican nominee for president Donald Trump “a faker.” She asked, “How has he gotten away with not turning over his tax returns?” Her criticism threatened to undermine her perceived impartiality, but her question was valid.

As the months tick past, it is increasingly likely that Donald Trump will not release his tax returns before the November election. Should he choose not to,

he will become the first Republican presidential nominee in thirty-six years to keep his returns private.

Richard Nixon was the first president to release his tax returns. After he made an outsized charitable donation, the IRS audited him in 1973. In light of the tax controversy, Nixon aimed to reassure the public. "People have got to know whether or not their president is a crook. Well, I am not a crook," he said, before releasing four years of tax returns for review. This action backfired when nearly \$500,000 in unpaid taxes was found in a congressional investigation.

Donald Trump has periodically teased the release of his returns. In April 2011, in the midst of a potential run for president and while serving as birther-in-chief, Trump said that if President Obama showed his long-form birth certificate, he might release his tax returns (a demeaning challenge to which Obama obliged in an attempt to silence the matter). In October 2015, Trump again said he might release his returns after Hillary Clinton released her now fully examined emails. Since last February, Trump's excuse for deferral has been an ongoing audit, dating from 2002. Trump says that he cannot go public with the records until the audit is resolved.

In an ironic twist, after being criticized by Trump for not releasing his tax returns during the presidential race in 2012, Mitt Romney was able to return the favor this year, calling Trump's refusal to release his returns "disqualifying."

"I think he's probably hiding something. He would be embarrassed by what he showed us," said Senator Lindsey Graham of Trump's returns in February. Graham warned the party faithful, "We should not as Republicans accept this from a man who has such a tainted past and background when it comes to finances. A man who has filed bankruptcy four times. We should not accept him at his word."

In Trump's defense, Bill O'Reilly, in a friendly dispute with Lou Dobbs in May, conceded, "According to Dobbs, Donald Trump is Jesus. And Jesus never put out his tax returns!" Which is a great point.

In October 2015, George Stephanopoulos asked Trump about his tax rate. Trump replied, "I'm very proud to tell you... I fight like hell to pay as little as possible." In May, Stephanopoulos pressed Trump once again to reveal his tax rate. This time, Trump replied, "It's none of your business."

Trump says, “You don’t learn much from tax returns.” But his tax returns will put on display the incredible tax loopholes and advantages available to real-estate developers.

They will also reveal the truth behind Trump’s purported charitable giving. His campaign lists \$102 million in charitable gifts. Yet these gifts are in the form of conservation easements and free rounds of golf at his golf courses, not cash donations from Trump himself.

Donald Trump says that his returns are “beautiful.” I bet they are. It’s why we are all clamoring for them.

**DONALD TRUMP, SALMON**

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