

'Dilbert' creator Scott Adams calls out Trump's 'linguistic kill shots'

By Alexandra King, CNN

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'Dilbert' creator on Trump's power of persuasion 06:23

Story highlights

"Dilbert's" creator says Donald Trump has full arsenal of persuasion

Scott Adams: "He has a technique of having just enough wrongness to grab your energy"

Trump's "linguistic kill shots," especially his habit of using nicknames for his political enemies -- from "Crooked Hillary," for Hillary Clinton, to "Crazy Bernie," for Sen. Bernie Sanders

(CNN) Scott Adams, creator of the comic strip "Dilbert," said Saturday that President Donald Trump is so good at persuasion that "he could get out of almost anything."

In interview with CNN's Michael Smerconish, Adams called special attention to what he dubbed

"His nicknames for those who he is mocking are so incredibly wrong in the context of things a president shouldn't be saying," said Adams, a trained hypnotist and author of the new book "Win Bigly: Persuasion in a World Where Facts Don't Matter."

"But they're just wrong enough that you can't look away. They're not so wrong that you want to impeach him for that or he doesn't start a nuclear war.

"So he has a technique of having just enough wrongness to grab your energy and put it where he wants it," he added.

Adams called Trump's nickname for Sen. Elizabeth Warren, "Pocahontas," one of his weakest but conceded it was still effective.

"It gives you a silly image of someone who is a sitting senator," he said of the moniker that some Native Americans have called offensive. "Automatically your brain goes to how seriously can I take that?"

Adams admitted he wasn't sure when Smerconish asked him if Trump himself could be vulnerable to "linguistic kill shot."

"The trouble is, he's so good at this persuasion game that I think he could get out of almost anything," he said.

Scott gave the example of Trump's September comments on the ways in which Hurricanes Harvey and Maria would likely affect economic growth.

"He said, well it was 3%, but I think it could have been 4%, except for the hurricanes. It'll probably be 4% later. In other words he's actually thinking the economy into that state," Scott said.

"The first thing you want to do, if you want to persuade, is you want to move people's attention and energy to where you want it. And that maybe because you're moving it away from something you don't want them to be talking about."