

## Trump-esque dare led me to convention floor reporting

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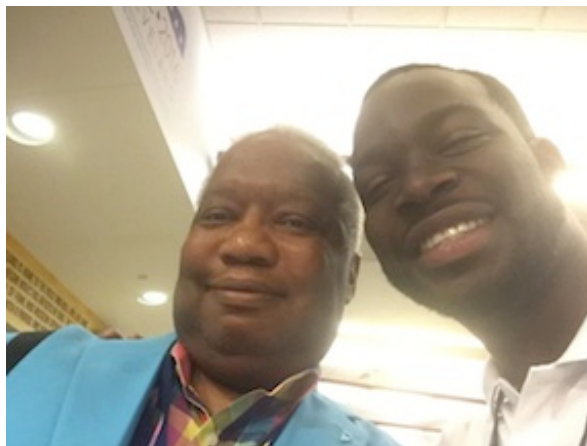
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*By Lawrence Rigby*

CLEVELAND – Political conventions are an interesting phenomenon.

The RNC convention is no exception. And, with the coronation of Donald Trump, now the standard bearer of the Republican Party, it's safe to say I've seen my share of the unlikely. It's my first convention, but I have that tingly feeling I'll be attending many more.

As a field reporter for **USA Today** covering protest on the streets of here, it was equally unlikely I would get a floor pass for the convention. Most networks do not get them, and the ones that do, don't just hand them out to any staffer, much less the new draft pick. Convention floor passes are reserved for journalism's elite. For veterans who've earned their bylines and their unnamed sources.



Well, in Trump-esque fashion, I got one.

The political editor at USA Today took his pass from around his neck, handed it to me as he said, "Go cut your teeth into some unsuspecting politician."

My strategy was simple: Gov. Mike Pence was the Wednesday keynote speaker, so I would go stand next to the Indiana delegation hoping to get commentary and video of their reaction once his address concluded. I got more than that.

Resounding boos for U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas. Interviews with Gov. Scott Walker of Wisconsin, Sen. Jeff Sessions of Alabama and Donald Trump Jr. All of it happened in the matter of minutes of each other. If only everyday reporting could move as quickly.

Between the speakers, I chatted with **Gayle King**, Lester Holt and David Muir; exchanged my fraternal grip with **Roland Martin**; and ran behind Karl Rove, twice – who noticeably picked up his pace on my third attempt.

I'll get you next time, Karl. In 2020, I'll be waiting on you at the door.

Cheers to my first convention. The 2016 RNC convention. The coronation of Donald J. Trump convention.

Oh, how unconventional.

*The writer (at right in top photo) is a 2015 **Scripps Howard School of Journalism and Communications** graduate and former Hampton University student government association president.*

