



A Private Actor—in This Case Canadian Citizens, Acting Through a Crowdfunded Corporation of Their Own Making—Could Poach Every Single Trump Organization Employee Worldwide in a Matter of Days...Just for Fun.

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The title above, like the paper that follows, describes a fanciful—and yet profoundly serious—possibility; it is not a statement of established theory or fact. The author believes wholeheartedly in the possibility described here, but does not recommend that anyone else embrace it, let alone action it, without a good ponder of their own. Nothing that follows can be understood—and no reader should think it has been—unless read together with the complete disclosure at the end of this piece.

General note

The present illustration is framed through Canada because the current Canada–U.S. dispute gives the possibility immediate practical relevance and plausibility. It is framed through the Trump Organization because its namesake, the personage marshaling the American side of that dispute, is, at least as this piece would have it, vulnerable to a seemingly overlooked form of outside influence (and because he is simultaneously a leading contender for most powerful person on earth, and a shoo-in for most avaricious). Nothing about the possibility, however, is particular to Canada, the United States, President Donald Trump, or the Trump Organization.

Various not-insignificant numbers will come up in this piece, but they must be read against numbers such as these:

Measure	Approximate scale
Canadian exports already subject to U.S. Section 232 sectoral tariffs, including steel, aluminum, copper, autos and parts, lumber and wood products, and buses	C\$150.5 billion
Canadian products newly subjected to the 50% U.S. tariff, met by matching Canadian counter-tariffs	C\$27.6 billion
Canadian tariff-response support	Nearly C\$25 billion previously, plus C\$7.5 billion newly announced
Projected level of Canadian GDP by the end of 2026, relative to the projection preceding the present trade conflict	About 1.5% lower—an order of magnitude equivalent to roughly C\$50 billion at the present scale of Canadian GDP
Share of world trade affected by recent tariff actions	About 11%

Measure	Approximate scale
Gross U.S. revenue attributed to new tariffs since January 2025, before applicable refunds	About US\$299 billion
Estimated long-run global-output loss from the recent increase in U.S. tariffs	Close to 0.5% of global output, or roughly US\$600 billion at present world-output levels

Source: Memory augmented by A.I.

In contrast, the total cost of the deliberately expansive illustration developed below—meant to establish the possibility convincingly, not to establish its most economical form—adds up to a mere billion-and-a-half.

Introduction

President Donald Trump has declared economic warfare upon much of the world, and Canada has lately found itself the conflict's main theater. Though the declaration was, formally at least, an official act, it passes for personal, and convincingly so, having been made without consulting the American people, their Congress, or their Constitution. The world need not, and Canadians ought not, declare the same upon the fine, and uniquely well-armed, citizens of the United States of America, and certainly not if the option exists to direct their response to the U.S. executive branch, and more specifically still, the personage atop it.

The possibility discussed here might offer one such form of response. It begins from the premise that, even in today's America, one hopes at least, labour remains free to leave one employer to accept employment with another under better terms of work and of pay. If that premise is granted, what stops a private actor from offering every single Trump Organization employee a temporary employment contract so generous that few, if any, could sanely refuse it? And, specific to this hypothetical, what would stop angry Canadians from becoming that envisioned private actor, their fury channeled through a crowdfunded private corporation eager to acquire the (admittedly particular) workforce necessary to destroy the Trump Organization—or, put otherwise, to bring their new service to market? *And who, as a point of free-market principle, aside from the market itself, can decide whether the Trump Organization is worth more bankrupt or not bankrupt?*

The Particulars

In this hypothetical, the corporate poacher's job offer, amounting to a temporary offer of employment, would require an employee to quit their Trump Organization employment, but would leave them otherwise free to work anywhere they chose and to keep whatever they so earned. Their sole condition of employment with the poacher—and the sole responsibility attached to their position—would be that they not work for, at, or on behalf of any Trump Organization entity or property whilst an employee of the poacher. The generous inducement for entering these contracts would be tiered according to employee station. The term of employment, and with it the poacher's contractual obligations, would, as envisioned here, end on January 20, 2029. That date is arbitrary, however, and might prove premature if the object—as entertained later—were to actually bankrupt the Trump Organization.

After seeing its existing workforce poached, perhaps but for an Ever-Trumper or two, the Trump Organization would, one assumes, seek out a replacement workforce. Yet once replacement employees had completed, say, six months of verified employment and training, the poacher would approach them too with a compelling offer to leave their newly assumed positions with the Trump Organization—albeit an offer less lucrative than that made to their first-wave predecessors. And, if these replacements were themselves poached and then replaced, the poaching would simply extend to that replacement workforce too. Offers to replacement employees could be less generous—relative to first-wave offers—for several reasons. First, the poacher's undertaking would by then

presumably have become public knowledge, and some, if not most, new hires would have entered Trump Organization employment for the sole purpose of securing the prize for quitting after a few months of paid training and experience (it goes unsaid what a disaster it would be—for the Trump Organization—not to know which of its new hires was which). Moreover, after only six months, comparatively little of a replacement employee’s value would be specific to the Trump Organization, and because they would have accumulated comparatively little firm-specific skill and knowledge, their capacity to train another generation of replacements would be correspondingly limited. They would therefore remain substantially more replaceable than the original workforce. Finally, there remains the possibility—as entertained below—that an aggressive poacher could force Trump Organization operations into permanent abeyance, making it a rather uncertain long-term employer, and thus making its employees easier to coax away. In practice, of course, any private poacher would adapt offers over time to ensure that the Trump Organization employee market continued to clear.

Employee station	Illustrative initial offer* (paid biweekly, to January 20, 2029)	Offer to a trained replacement* (paid biweekly, to January 20, 2029)
Ordinary / front-line employee	US\$250,000	US\$50,000
Supervisor / manager	US\$500,000	US\$100,000
Senior manager / director / property general manager / comparable senior employee	US\$750,000	US\$150,000
Highest organizational leadership	US\$1,000,000	US\$200,000

*As noted, an employee accepting any such offer of employment would remain free to work anywhere else they liked and to keep whatever they earned in doing so. And, they would certainly have time to do so, their sole job responsibility with the poacher being not to work at, for, or on behalf of any Trump Organization property or entity.

The corporation could be Canadian without limiting financial participation to Canadians. Individuals and institutions elsewhere could also contribute. Similarly, if incorporation or operation in another jurisdiction would materially facilitate the undertaking, the operating entity could instead be registered there, either independently or as a subsidiary of a Canadian parent.

Following the corporation’s first “Help Wanted” announcement, Trump Organization employees accepting the offer within, say, one week of the announcement would receive the full initial offer applicable to their station, paid in equal biweekly instalments through January 20, 2029. Under the arrangement, the new hires would be required to give immediate notice and to provide no further service—in duration or scope—to the Trump Organization than the absolute minimum required under law. The corporation’s legal counsel would advise what that minimum constituted, and the corporation would assume responsibility for any cost incurred in defending or remediating the resulting position. As the original announcement would have communicated, the offers available to those who remained would thereafter fall precipitously, which would tend to encourage immediacy on the part of Trump Organization employees deciding whether to accept. For the poacher, immediacy is expedient, since the principal aim of the initial assault would be to ensure that the maximum number of employees possible leave simultaneously, taking the organization’s institutional knowledge with them and leaving no one to train their replacements, thereby creating a massive logistical, financial and legal fiasco with no obvious timely solution.

Payment on a biweekly basis would ensure that the relationship between the corporation and its participants was precisely what it purported to be: an employer–employee relationship. Employees would, of course, remain free to quit their employment with the corporate poacher at any time, at which point the corporation’s payment

obligations would end. But an ordinary front-line employee accepting a US\$250,000 offer would thereby be walking away from approximately US\$4,025 every two weeks through January 20, 2029; a supervisor or manager accepting a US\$500,000 offer would be walking away from approximately US\$8,050 every two weeks.

Of the many Trump Organization properties, the two crown jewels nearest and dearest to his personage—each with a leading role in the wedding of his public and private duties—may be Mar-a-Lago and the nearby Trump International Golf Club West Palm Beach.

The figures in the cost table below should be viewed against the property values attributed to the assets. Mar-a-Lago alone has recently been valued at roughly US\$560 million, and the Trump International Golf Club West Palm Beach at roughly US\$20–50 million. Available valuations suggest a combined worldwide Trump property portfolio of at least US\$3.5 billion. The exactness of these estimates scarcely matters. Anything in the vicinity makes visible the gulf between the cost of poaching the labour necessary to sustain the labour-dependent assets and the labour-independent value—assuming that such a thing ever existed—attributed to them. One is tempted to ask which—an investment in labour or an investment in de jure title—gives de facto command of the asset.

The poacher's commitments, in this hypothetical, as to the narrow option and then the worldwide option, are as follows:

Illustrative scope	Estimated initial workforce	To poach initial workforce	To poach four successor workforces	Total through Jan. 20, 2029	Average per week
Mar-a-Lago + Trump International Golf Club West Palm Beach	~230	US\$81.75M	US\$65.40M	US\$147.15M	~US\$1.2M
Trump Organization worldwide	~2,424	US\$863.75M	US\$691.00M	US\$1.555B	~US\$12.6M

The resulting total commitment would be approximately US\$147.15 million for the two Palm Beach properties, or an average of roughly US\$1.2 million per week through January 20, 2029. Extended across the Trump Organization worldwide, the commitment would be approximately US\$1.555 billion, or roughly US\$12.6 million per week.

To take it one step further, the corporation could—or someone else might—establish a trust to finance the denial of labour to all Trump Organization properties in perpetuity, and attach that commitment to the physical assets themselves—such that even a change in property ownership would bring no relief. In so doing, all Trump Organization properties would be, for all intents and purposes, limited to future uses that require no trained labour (let them eat cake—but first let them bake it). The value of non-commercial uses might be thoroughly compromised too: even as a private home and property, Mar-a-Lago would always depend upon a trained and experienced workforce to maintain it. This last thought is awkward, since it hints at something unsettling about the essence of value, but that something is best situated as a separate matter within the broader theory, and beyond the scope here.

What buyer would wish to acquire an encumbered, toxic property of that sort?

One imagines that the immediate concern for the Trump Organization would be to prevent any notes secured against its properties from being called, as every viable use of those properties—present or future—was foreclosed.

Corporation or no corporation, trust or no trust, once the possibility is known, neither the Trump Organization nor its lenders could ever really know when such hostilities might begin and, if they did begin, when, if ever, they could be guaranteed to stop, because no such guarantee could be afforded.

To the extent that humanity, and its considerable financial means, desired to repurpose Trump Organization properties, it could promptly acquire de facto control of those properties by bidding a penny or two higher for their required labour than the Trump Organization could afford. Indeed, the best use of every Trump Organization property, from the purest of free-market positions, may be as things barred from ever seeing a single worker, once trained, set foot on them again. Nothing more or less than that might be their best use—assuming that people cannot be bound, against their will, to work on Trump Organization properties. It follows—as a matter of expectation, and expectations are what drive markets—that the properties, irrespective of book value, may have no market value whatsoever at this very moment to which the Trump Organization can lay claim, or from which a creditor enforcing judgment against it can salvage anything. Economics may destroy—rather creatively, it could be said—any value that titles once conveyed.

Summing up

The foregoing is not, and must not be read as, a how-to. For one thing, a more sensible hiring strategy would target chokepoints: the people who train others, occupy positions that are costly or slow to replace, carry critical technical or operational knowledge, exercise managerial authority upon which continuity depends, or whose departure would most severely affect service standards, event bookings, revenues, and operating profit. That would almost certainly be cheaper, faster and more disruptive than indiscriminate poaching of an entire workforce—which is precisely why the extravagant version above is useful principally as an illustration, though the same is, of course, true of the equally illustrative iteration just described. Moreover, whereas the piece defines an end date, why do so where maximum uncertainty—and thus confusion—could be maintained by offering no end date? Indeed, the budgets given here—each of which provides the funds to poach the initial workforce and four consecutive replacement workforces once they are trained—could likely be stretched several years beyond January 20, 2029, keeping operations shut down—or wholly compromising their quality—while fixed costs, from property taxes, to debt, to upkeep without recompense, to litigation for breach of contract, took their toll. Finally, the entire piece is a bit silly because, if one could paralyze a business—even the Trump Organization, the apparent leader of the free world—by denying it labour, why deny that labour unconditionally when one could instead (credibly) demand every cent but one of the business’s entire enterprise value for its negotiated return?

Complete disclosure

The possibility described amounts to a speculative extension of an unestablished theory, and should be understood as such.

The practical cross-border reach and enforceability of U.S. civil regulation, or of any potentially applicable criminal prohibitions, including novel forms that might emerge in response to investment activity of the sort described, remain open questions; this paper reaches no conclusion. As noted, it is a fanciful hypothetical with an eye to illustration.

To be perfectly clear, and at a bare minimum, if the civil or criminal legality of the possibility were in doubt in any jurisdiction, it ought not to be pursued there, even if the location of the financier could be concealed or, say, payment could be issued through cryptocurrency. For purposes of this disclosure, legality is seen to include potential liability in tort. All theoretical projections presented in this piece are assumed to arise from otherwise legal activity in a free market economy. Judgement about their moral rightness or wrongness is therefore reserved.

Nothing in the hypothetical contemplates conspiracy or coordination with other commercial actors. As envisioned, it would preclude any inducement to breach contractual notice requirements, any withdrawal of labour that would compromise security or basic services or otherwise endanger anyone, and any effort to obtain trade secrets or other advantage from prior employment. It would abide by all applicable labour, employment and business law.

All statistics, valuations, staffing estimates, costs, dates, illustrative contractual terms, and anything whatsoever of a factual nature should, without further inquiry, be presumed wrong because—in many senses—they certainly are. That being said, the numbers appear able to tolerate substantial estimation error—even additional zeros at the right end—without becoming facially nonsensical. That observation is not a recommendation.

Certain of the paper's observations might be seen to undermine any categorical claim that the piece is wholly untouched by animus. The narrower and relevant claim is that animus is neither necessary to the mechanism nor the reason the case is economically instructive or of public concern. Frankly, there are far wealthier and somewhat worse people than Donald John Trump. The relevance of his properties lies in the conjunction they present: substantial private value dependent upon labour, held by the President of the United States. To the extent that the possibility is real—and the author believes that it is—the author regards this conjunction as a matter of considerable public concern. And, let's be fair, as to the possibility under discussion, the fanciful case here is probably not the least likely first instantiation worldwide. The same possibility would apply to any U.S. president with substantial property value dependent upon labour.

The possibility could also have implications for public and national safety, in the United States and elsewhere. Those implications need not be catalogued here; a thoughtful reader could identify them in due course. This leads to another reason for airing the possibility: much of its most troubling leverage would lie in its remaining unknown to all but a few. Making the mechanism visible deprives any single actor of the advantage, in the form of leverage, of possessing it alone.

The crux of this idea, and the theory it represents, was shared with various branches, departments, and agencies of the U.S. Government in 2015.

Artificial intelligence was used in preparing this draft poem, ensuring that anything and everything can be attributed to a machine should that prove legally expedient.