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To: Oscar Flores

Subject: Fw: Defending Limbaugh's Right to His Despicable Speech

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From: Lanny Davis [mailto:
Sent: Monday, March 12, 2012 10:41 AM
To: H
Subject: Defending Limbaugh's Right to His Despicable Speech

Purple Nation

March 12, 2012

Defending Limbaugh's Right to His Despicable Speech

By Lanny J. Davis

<http://thehill.com/opinion/columnists/lanny-davis/214837-rushs-right-to-despicable-speech>

<http://dailycaller.com/2012/03/08/defending-limbaugh-s-right-to-his-despicable-speech/>

<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/lanny-davis/rush-limbaugh-speech-b-1332893.html>

As someone who has been personally attacked by Rush Limbaugh many times, I yield to no one in my strong disagreement with Limbaugh on virtually everything. I consider his opinions too often hateful, inaccurate and despicable. That is my opinion.

What Limbaugh said about Sandra Fluke — calling her a "slut" and "prostitute" because she supports mandatory healthcare insurance coverage for contraception — is so stupid and insulting that even Rush had to apologize ... in his non-apologetic kind of way.

He apologized only for his "choice of words" — not for his insulting ideas and assumptions, repeated over several days, that any woman who uses contraception and supports mandatory insurance coverage under the Obama-Democratic national healthcare legislation is sexually promiscuous.

Since over 90 percent of women use contraception, and polls show a substantial majority of women support coverage for contraception under the national healthcare law, that makes Limbaugh look even more extreme and whacky — all these women are sexually promiscuous, Rush?

That's not being a conservative. That's being a disrespectful boor to women.

OK — there, I did it. I broke my usual rule and used lots of adjectives and name-calling about Limbaugh.

I just exercised my First Amendment rights. So now, please, Rush — attack me back. Let's have it out — in the marketplace of ideas and words created and protected by the First Amendment.

So why don't I feel good about all my fellow liberals' piling on Limbaugh's misogynist comments?

Because of the First Amendment.

We liberals are supposed to be arch-supporters of First Amendment free expression — the right of anyone, anywhere, to say anything he or she wants, at any time. That is America. If you don't like the speech, then counter it with more speech. Duke it out — with words.

But when I hear liberal commentators calling for boycotting any business that advertises on the Limbaugh show, or calling on radio stations carrying the show to cancel it, I start to get nervous — as a First Amendment liberal, that is.

I remember my dad telling me stories about the danger of Joe McCarthy in the 1950s — when Sen. McCarthy would cause actors to be blacklisted, and executives to be fired, and boycotts of businesses to be organized, because he had labeled someone a “pinko” or, worse, a “liberal.”

I remember the Tea Party shouters who wouldn’t let their members of Congress speak about President Obama’s healthcare plan, who shouted others down, prevented debate and discussion because they disagreed with the president’s and liberal Democratic ideas.

I remember students at liberal universities shouting down conservative speakers with whom they disagreed — taking over the podium and blocking controversial conservatives from speaking on campuses.

I remember seeing my friend, John Mackey, who wrote a column in *The Wall Street Journal* opposing President Obama’s national health insurance legislation, as a thoughtful libertarian whose company, Whole Foods, pays for its employees’ health insurance and is one of the most progressive companies in the nation — and I remember liberals trying to organize a boycott of his stores because Mackey chose to exercise his First Amendment rights.

And I remember wondering at the time, how does it help the workers at Whole Foods, whom liberals are supposed to care about, by boycotting the stores because the CEO happens to express an opinion?

I worry about thought police, ideas police, people who decide they don’t like your opinion and rather than making a counterargument and fighting it out in the “marketplace of ideas” — as liberals have long believed the First Amendment is all about — they try to get you fired, or boycott your business, or boycott those who do business with you, or those who do business with those who do business with you, etc.

You get my point.

I hope.

So Rush — I strongly disagree with your politics, your ideas, and especially with the disgusting and disrespectful way you described Sandra Fluke.

But I defend your right to be wrong — and hope my fellow liberals resist acting like a liberal version of the McCarthyism my dad deplored

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Mr. Davis is the principal in the Washington D.C. law firm of Lanny J. Davis & Associates, which specializes in strategic legal crisis management. He served as President Clinton's Special Counsel in 1996-98 and as a member of President Bush's Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board in 2006-07. He is the author of the forthcoming book to be published by Simon & Schuster, "Crisis Tales -- Five Rules for Handling Scandals in Business, Politics and Life." He can be found on Facebook and Twitter (@LannyDavis).

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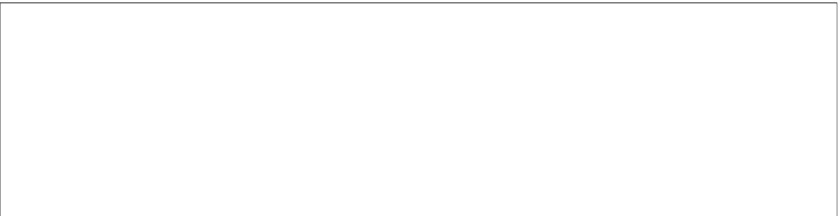
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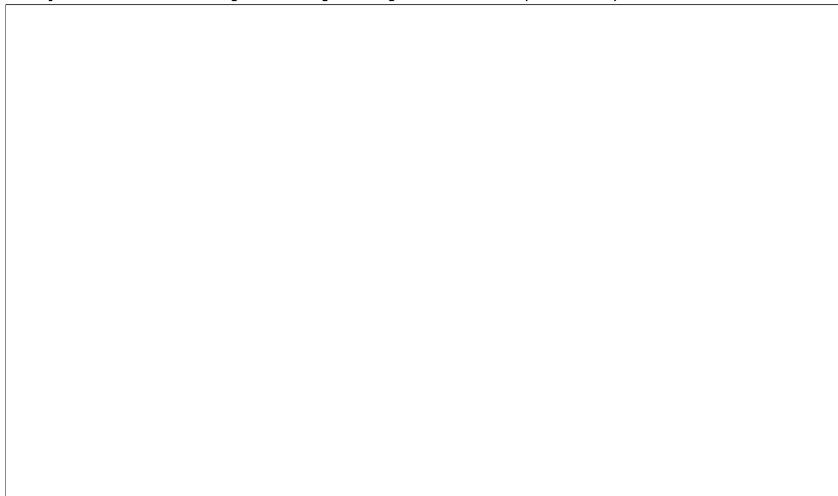


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