

Hi Hillary - don't miss this one, below:-- Purple Nation - The Paul-Maddow Interview -- A Liberal's Second Thoughts

From: Lanny J. Davis

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To: Hillary Clinton HDR22@clintonemail.com

Subject: Hi Hillary - don't miss this one, below:-- Purple Nation - The Paul-Maddow Interview -- A Liberal's Second Thoughts

Believe or not, Rep. Ron Paul just called me to thank me "as a dad feeling my son's pain."
Amazing.
Hope you are well -
Best to President Clinton too-
Lanny

From: Madelene Melendez
To: Lanny J. Davis
Sent: Wed May 26 11:06:55 2010
Subject: Purple Nation - The Paul-Maddow Interview -- A Liberal's Second Thoughts

Purple Nation

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The Paul -Maddow Interview -- A Liberal's Second Thoughts

By Lanny J. Davis

I have to admit, for a while I enjoyed watching MSNBC's Rachel Maddow humiliate and embarrass Rand Paul when he tried to explain why he did not support the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the seminal legislation that forbade racial and other discrimination in restaurants and other businesses and facilities that were open to the public.

For days afterward, I continued to enjoy the media and political piling-on of Paul. I am sorry to admit I was actually enjoying his discomfort. But then after a while, it was I who started to feel uncomfortable — especially when Maddow's co-hosts at MSNBC, and Maddow herself, seemed to relish playing and replaying Paul's humiliation just a little too much.

That's when I decided to read the Libertarian Platform, the one adopted at the May 2008 convention in Denver that nominated Rand's father, Ron, for president. I wanted to understand better why Rand Paul was taking what seemed to be such a politically suicidal set of positions. It explained a lot ... including about why my and my fellow liberals' sanctimony about Mr. Paul might have been somewhat misplaced.

Under its "Statement of Principles," the Platform states: "Since governments, when instituted, must not violate individual rights, we oppose all interference by government in the areas of voluntary and contractual relations among individuals." Under "Property and Contract," the platform states that "property rights are entitled to the same protection as all other human rights. The owners of property have the full right to control, use, dispose of, or in any manner enjoy, their property without interference ... "

So there it is: If you believe in that principle, you wouldn't agree with government compelling a private restaurant owner to serve anyone he or she doesn't want to, regardless of the reasons. (The fact that Rand Paul was forced to flip-flop and several days later said he would have voted for the 1964 Civil Rights Act might have been affected by another libertarian platform plank, this one titled "Rights and Discrimination": "We condemn bigotry as irrational and repugnant. Government should not deny or abridge any individual's rights based on sex, wealth, race, color, creed, age, national origin, personal habits, political preference or sexual orientation.")

Ms. Maddow also failed to elicit from Mr. Paul, much less credit him, with clearly liberal positions on the major issues, also consistent with libertarian principles, such as the fact that he is unambiguously pro-choice ("government should be kept out of the matter, leaving the question to each person for their conscientious consideration"); pro-civil liberties ("we oppose reduction of constitutional safeguards of the rights of the criminally accused ... the Bill of Rights provides no exceptions for a time of war"); and pro-decriminalizing victimless crimes, such as the use of drugs for medicinal or recreational purposes.

For the same philosophical reasons, he and fellow libertarians also oppose the draft and the use of the U.S. military for any purpose other than "in defense of individual rights ... The United States should both abandon its attempts to act as a policeman for the world and avoid entangling alliances." For this reason Rand's father, Ron, strongly opposed the Iraq war during the presidential campaign, alienating many conservatives. Yet the outspoken anti-war Maddow did not ask him about this issue.

On the other hand, what giveth also taketh away: The same libertarian principles opposing governmental power over individual freedom also lead to such non-liberal positions as opposition to government placing controls on "wages, prices, rents, profits, production, and interest rates" (no anti-usury laws!!!), favoring abolition of the income tax and the IRS and the absolute protection of an individual's right to own and bear arms.

We liberals can and should strongly disagree with Rand Paul and libertarians on the positions they take on various issues, especially their belief in the lack of governmental power to ensure racial and economic justice in this country. But mocking him and trivializing a man who is so intellectually honest in applying his libertarian principles does not feel right to me anymore.

Maybe too many of us have grown so cynical with today's political culture that we have a hard time coping with, much less believing in, someone who is running for political office who is actually authentic and sincere, even if it means he or she is taking positions that offend, at times, both the left and the right.

Shocking, just shocking, that Rand Paul may actually be a real, authentic "Mr. Smith" who is ready to come to Washington to stick to his principles, come what may. Come to think of it, he does remind me of Jimmy Stewart and Mr. Smith. He certainly talks like him.

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This piece appears today, May 27, 2010, in Mr. Davis's regular weekly column in The Hill "Purple Nation" and "The Daily Caller" an online political website.

Davis, a Washington lawyer and former special counsel to President Clinton from 1996-98, served as a member of President George W. Bush's Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board in 2006-07. He is the author of Scandal: How 'Gotcha' Politics is Destroying America (Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).