

A Few Words About a Friend Who Changed My Life

☒ On February 8, 1996 I got a phone call that changed the course of my life.

The call was from a fella named Jerry Kelley, a building contractor who was born and raised in Enterprise, Alabama and made Gomer Pyle sound like Laurence Olivier. Jerry had repaired my house in Miami after Hurricane Andrew blew through the area. We became friends, two boys from the South: Jerry from South Alabama, I from the South ... Bronx.

As I wrote in *Bias*, "Jerry Kelley saved my family and me. He repaired the damage the hurricane had done to our house. He was always there when we needed him. And we became friends, a kind of odd couple. We talked often, mostly about politics and current events, which he loved."

When he called that night he was pretty upset. "Did you see that 'Reality Check' story on Dan Rather tonight?" I told him I missed the CBS Evening News and asked what the problem was.

"The problem is that you got too many snippy wise guys doin' the news, that's what the problem is." He asked me to look at a videotape of the show.

The next morning, I looked at the evening newscast that had Jerry so worked up. After I watched the tape, I was as angry as Jerry was. It was a story that shamelessly made fun of GOP presidential candidate Steve Forbes and ridiculed his key proposal, the flat tax.

The flat tax? Not exactly a sexy subject but as I wrote in *Bias*, "... the more I watched the more I saw that this story wasn't simply about a presidential candidate and a tax plan. It was about something much bigger, something too much of big-

time TV journalism had become: a showcase for smart-ass reporters with attitudes, reporters who don't even pretend to hide their disdain for certain people and certain ideas that they and their sophisticated friends don't particularly like."

And Steve Forbes was an easy target. He was a white, male conservative Republican.

I was so fed up with complaining about bias privately at CBS News that I decided to go public. I wrote an op-ed in the Wall Street Journal about liberal bias in the mainstream media – an op-ed that touched off the media version of World War III.

I had become radioactive at CBS. Colleagues didn't want to be seen with me, fearing that Dan Rather might see us together. Four years later I quit and wrote *Bias*.

So you see how that phone call from Jerry Kelley changed the course of my life. If he hadn't called, I wouldn't have written *Bias*, a book that became a #1 national bestseller. I wouldn't be on Fox, giving my version of the truth about the media and American culture. Jerry changed my life – for the better.

I mention all this now because I just came back from Enterprise, Alabama where I delivered the eulogy at Jerry's funeral. A few days ago he passed away in his sleep. He was only 71.

I told his friends and family in the chapel that *Bias* changed the American culture because now even some liberal journalists admit that bias is real and not some delusion of nutty conservatives. And I said, "Let's be clear: Jerry Kelley, a blue collar guy from Enterprise, Alabama ... Jerry Kelley changed the American culture."

Jerry knew more about bias and fair play than any of those journalistic "geniuses" did who put that piece of garbage about Forbes on the air back in 1996. And Jerry was a building

contractor, not a journalist. Still, he saw the bias that the CBS News Washington correspondent who reported the Forbes story didn't; that his producer didn't; that the senior producer in Washington didn't; that the top evening news producers at CBS News in New York didn't; that the president of CBS News didn't; and that Dan Rather, the anchorman and managing editor of the broadcast, didn't.

Jerry Kelley, in no small way, is responsible for holding powerful people accountable.

Ordinary Americans – and I use the word “ordinary” as a high compliment – can make a difference. Jerry did. We all can.

Rest in peace, my friend.

Journalists Who Don't Even Try to Hide Their Bias

☒ The Washington Times ran an interesting tidbit the other day about those right-down-the-middle objective journalists who covered the second presidential debate at Hofstra University a few nights ago. This is how the story began:

“The room set aside for reporters to watch Tuesday night's debate erupted into applause after President Obama ridiculed the size of Mitt Romney's personal wealth.

Mr. Romney was trying to make the point that both his and Mr. Obama's investment funds probably include investments in China – something the president has attacked Mr. Romney for.

“‘Mr. President, have you looked at your pension?’ Mr. Romney said.

“‘You know, I don’t look at my pension. It’s not as big as yours, so it – it doesn’t take as long,’” Mr. Obama retorted. His reply prompted laughter in the debate hall where the two men were squaring off – but across the way in the separate room where the press was stationed, a brief round of applause broke out.”

Reporters who cover baseball games aren’t allowed to cheer for their team while in the press box. It’s just not tolerated. Even journalists who dwell in the world of sports know that reporters aren’t supposed to take sides.

But here we are – not at a baseball game – but at a presidential debate and the reporters are clapping for their guy. Memo to so-called mainstream media: Umpires can’t root for one of the teams.

As for the president: He’s never come right out and said “Romney is a rich bastard who doesn’t care about regular folks and would just as soon see them die, if he could make a few bucks off of it.” But he’s come pretty close.

He’s made Romney’s wealth a major issue in the campaign, trying to turn Romney into the little guy with the monocle on the Monopoly board – a plutocrat not only hopelessly out of touch with everyday Americans, but someone who is so insensitive that he’d shut down a steel mill and not care one bit when its workers lost their medical insurance and the wife of one of them died of cancer.

Remember that ad by a Super Pac supporting the president? The one that left out the fact that the worker’s wife had her own job and her own medical insurance? And that she died seven years after Romney left Bain Capital, the company that shut down the unprofitable mill?

And Team Obama’s relentless attacks on Romney as that heartless rich guy were taking a toll. Most Americans didn’t know much about him and as much as we say we don’t like

negative ads, they work. Romney, remember, was trailing in the polls for much of the campaign.

But then a funny thing happened on the way to the election: the first presidential debate.

That's when 70 million Americans got to see Mitt Romney *unfiltered* – with no Obama attack ads to get in the way and with no supposedly objective journalists to distort the picture of Romney either. *And now, according to Gallup, Romney is leading Obama nationally by six points.*

This is the same MSM, remember, that gushed over candidate Obama's overseas trip four years ago, and was relentlessly negative about Romney's supposedly gaffe laden overseas trip this year.

This is the same MSM that blasted President Bush for signing the Patriot act and locking up terror suspects at Guantanamo – but when President Obama extended the Patriot Act and broke his promise to shut down Guantanamo, what we mostly got from the press was silence.

This is the same MSM that ran Page One stories about Romney's dumb stunts in high school, but has shown no curiosity about Obama's years in college. Why are his records under lock and key as if they were gold at Fort Knox? We don't know and the media don't care.

Oh yeah, and this is the same MSM that cheered in the press room when Barack Obama took a shot at Mitt Romney's wealth at the debate the other night. Good thing those reporters weren't covering something really important, like a ball game. They would have been kicked out of the press box.

Archbishop Lori and the First Principle

Confronted with a “train wreck,” the new archbishop of Baltimore implores us to “pray diligently as communities, as families, and as individuals.”

Coming from clergy, this wouldn't necessarily be breaking news, except the train hurtling toward us is driven by the current president of the United States and his secretary of Health and Human Services, Kathleen Sebelius. Under Obamacare, the secretary has unprecedented power to make health-care decisions affecting every American. The recent HHS mandate – requiring all employers, regardless of moral objections, to offer health-care coverage that includes contraception, sterilization, and abortion-inducing drugs – is the poisonous fruit of that power.

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Attacks on Bain Could Backfire

The ham-handed attack ads from Obama's campaign on Mitt Romney's former firm Bain Capital have drawn a lot of ire from other Democrats – and not only because they were sloppily fact-checked (the ads hit Romney for layoffs that happened long after he left Bain) and because a leading Obama money

bundler is a Bain executive himself.

Chiming in with various degrees of disapproval were Newark's Mayor Cory Booker (who called the attacks "nauseating"), former representative Harold Ford, Obama car czar Steven Rattner, Senator Mark Warner, and former Pennsylvania governor Ed Rendell.

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Christie Is Not One of Us

I feel something washing over me. I'm standing in New Jersey, so it's probably red ink. No, wait a minute – it's *glowing* ink! It could only be one thing: more conservative hagiography about the Garden State's GOP governor.

Chris Christie is so *not* one of us that articles like "Christie Is One of Us" – a new contribution to the genre, from National Review's Noah Glyn – are churned out regularly as the governor's smitten admirers, from Ann Coulter to NR staffers, labor to convince us of what they've convinced themselves of: that an ostensibly gruff, internally milquetoast, progressive-lite, pro-Islamist Republican must be the second coming of Ronald Reagan because he has managed to make a basket-case blue state marginally less of a basket case. And "marginally" is the operative word. Glyn's valentine to Christie is unfortunately timed. It was published just as Moody's declared that Christie's claim to have put New Jersey's fiscal house in order is grossly overstated. More on that in a bit.

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