

# Conservatives Who Never Really Wanted Fair and Balanced



Let's pretend that it was MSNBC and not Fox News that hosted the first Republican primetime presidential debate.

And let's pretend that Chris Matthews started the ball rolling with a question about loyalty to the Republican Party – the question Donald Trump answered with a raised hand indicating he might run as an independent, which amounted to a threat that just might hurt him with millions of rank-and-file Republicans.

Now imagine that the next question came from Al Sharpton who asked Donald Trump about calling women fat pigs and all that – another question that could sink the front-running Trump's candidacy, especially with women who make up 53 percent of the electorate.

Then we get another question, this one from Rachel Maddow about the Donald's bankruptcies – another shot across the Trump bow.

How would conservatives – the ones who religiously watch Fox News – react? It's a safe bet a lot of them would be screaming about bias, about how those liberals were out to get the GOP frontrunner, about how the questions were crafted to not only bring down Trump but also the entire Republican Party. Guilt by association.

Those conservatives, in my view, would be wrong. Asking Donald Trump about his “fat pigs” comment strikes me as legitimate. Maybe not as urgent as asking him how he would get millions of Americans back to work, but legitimate nonetheless.

If Barack Obama had made the same comment, wouldn't conservatives demand that journalists ask him about it?

Same with the bankruptcies. If Hillary, who I suspect couldn't run a lemonade stand, had actually been in business and had a few companies go under on her watch, wouldn't Fox viewers want reporters to ask about that?

And if liberal journalists didn't ask those questions, wouldn't conservatives accuse them of bias?

So why are we seeing a right wing backlash – against what used to be their favorite place for news? Why are we seeing a segment of the Fox audience turning on Fox with the same kind of vitriol they usually reserve for the liberal media?

We don't want Fox picking our presidential candidate, was a comment from a Republican woman I heard on TV. Megyn Kelly, who asked the “fat pig” question, was a particular target.

Here's one tweet that put the Fox News star in the cross-hairs: “@megynkelly You were awful and biased. I would never watch anything that involved you again, ever.”

Here's a comment posted on the conservative Breitbart website: “Yep, about a month after Megyn got that new time slot she has turned into a smug smartass. I can't stand watching her sometimes,”

Of course, there were also conservatives who praised Kelly and Fox for good journalism. Still, how could this happen? How could so many conservatives become so disenchanted so quickly?

Here's the dirty little secret: A segment of the Fox audience never wanted fair and balanced news and opinion. They wanted a

conservative slant – on news, on commentary, on *everything*. If they could get the weather from a conservative who would bash liberals while telling us it's going to rain today, that would be just dandy with them. They don't want a bias-free news channel, no matter what they say. They want a news organization that caters to their own biases; that validates their own biases. And a lot of the time, they felt, that's exactly what they got.

But they didn't get it during the GOP debate. That's when they got real journalism. And that's never what a lot of them ever really wanted.