

Bernie's Q&A: Shepard Smith, Bryant Gumbel, the Democrats and More (3/8/19)

Welcome to my first **Premium Q&A** session for *Premium Interactive* members. I appreciate you all signing up, and joining me. There were some duplicate questions this week, so I've condensed a couple.

Let's get right to your questions (and my answers):

Please kindly describe your relationship with Mr. Bryant Gumbel? – Matthew Q.

Bryant and I go all the way back to our days at CBS News. I was a correspondent on his magazine show. I didn't have HBO at home at the time (the late 1990s) and while I was on vacation in Colorado I stumbled onto HBO and Real Sports. I thought it was a strong, real journalism show and when I got home I called Gumbel to tell him how much I liked the show. He immediately recruited me – and I've been there for about 20 years. Bryant and I don't socialize though I was at his surprise birthday party recently. Our relationship is professional mainly. Our politics are quite different – and he's told me as much before adding with a smile that he likes my work. One more thing: Gumbel knows every joke ever told. If I start to tell him one I just heard, he's likely to jump in with the punchline before I get 2 words out of my mouth.

Just wondering if you could answer a question I have always wanted to ask. Could you refuse to appear on someone's show (like Hannity or Tucker) while under contract with FOX NEWS?

-Rick

Glad to answer this one Rick: Yes, I could refuse to appear on any show at any time for just about any reason. And I did more than a few times. The reason was usually the same: I didn't respect the person hosting the show. I don't like appearing with ideologues, especially ideologues, especially sycophants for Donald Trump. I should add, I only got paid when I was on the air. No show no money. And that was fine with me. At this point in my life my reputation is more important than money.

What news organizations do you believe are really trying to play it down the middle and not favor any one side? I read the Daily Mail a lot and it seems like its writers take shots at everyone pretty equally. What do you think? – JM

I think the straight news people at Fox do a good job. I have no idea what FNC's White House correspondent John Roberts' politics are. Can't say the same for Jim Acosta at CNN. When it comes to opinion I think just about everybody is pandering to the audience – and that goes for the New York Times as much as CNN, MSNBC and Fox.

But for straight news, I like Special Report at 6pm ET with Bret Baier. Best you could hope for, I think, is to read more than one paper and watch more than one newscast – and then try to decipher the truth as best you can.

Shepard Smith is not a fan of president Trump. How do you think Fox feels about that? – George V.

I once heard that Roger Ailes said Shepard Smith sometimes goes "where the buses don't run." Great line, meaning Smith at times is off the Fox News reservation. I think he's a very interesting broadcaster, but I'm not a fan. Way too much opinion for what is billed as a news program. I know Fox gets calls from viewers when he's on – and they're not calls from fans. Since everything is about ratings and since some viewers tune in to hate him, he'll be around for a while. If his

ratings go south ... anything is possible.

Hello Bernie: I have enjoyed reading all of your books, by any chance are you working on another one? – PJ

A big fat ... NO. Writing books is lonely. And then hawking the book on TV and radio is a form of torture. You have to go on radio shows all day long saying the same thing, often to some guy who has no clue as to what the book is about. I used to tell friends if I ever write another book, do me a favor and shoot me. After saying that, I did a few more books. As you can tell, they didn't hold up their end of the deal – lucky for me. But no more books are in my future. For now. LOL

Mr Goldberg, what are your comments and observations regarding the present Dominion Crisis in Canada, ie the affair with SNC-Lavalin, the demotion and subsequent resignation of Ms Wilson-Reybold, resignation of Ms Philpott, etc.? If PM Trudeau makes a 'statement of contrition' how do you see it being received? How successful would a 'statement of contrition' play in the present US political arena? (Yes, I know US politics is a cage match, but humor me with an answer, please!) – Gregg Harr

Gregg, just about the only thing I know about Canada is that whenever I'm there, I like it – except in the winter. The people are nice and friendly. But I know nothing about Canadian politics. As for a "statement of contrition" ... that's not in the American DNA ... or more precisely, it's not in Donald Trump's DNA. He's never contrite about anything. I did have a Canadian girlfriend many moons ago, if that helps.

Mr. Goldberg, which democrat do you think has the best chance at unseating Mr. Trump from the Oval Office? – Terry & Kathi

Good question: Joe Biden. He's a moderate, relatively speaking and so could win independents, a group that anyone running for president needs to have. If enough voters are fed up with Donald Trump even a progressive might be able to beat him. But

if Dems want to play it safe I'd go with Biden and a progressive on the bottom half of the ticket, someone like Kamala Harris. Man-Woman ... Old-Young ... Moderate-Progressive ... White-Black.

How is it possible to trust the mainstream media product? Is journalism dead? – Geoff

It's very difficult to trust the media because too much of it is aimed at pandering to the audience. Cable panders for ratings. But the New York Times is no different on its opinion pages – and too often on its Front Page.

Journalism may not be dead – but a lot of it is on life support. Do I trust FNC's John Roberts when he reports from the White House? Yes. Do I trust CNN's Jim Acosta? No. So there are journalists who keep their biases out of their reporting but too many don't. The old networks still have their biases but they're a lot better than cable, which I have said is not a journalism model so much as it is a business model: Give the audience what it wants. Validate their biases. Keep them riled up and coming back for more.

Thank everyone! You can send me questions for next week using the form below!

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