

NBC News, the KKK and the State of Journalism

✘ By now you probably have heard about the MSNBC drive-by aimed at Mitt Romney; the one that said he used the same slogan on the campaign trail as the Ku Klux Klan used to use.

Well, not really.

MSNBC got the “story” from a liberal blog which claimed that Romney had used the term “keep America American” during a campaign speech. The blog said he did it twice, once last year and then against this month. The blog then said, correctly, that “Keep America American” was a phrase used by the Ku Klux Klan back in the 1920s.

Get it? Mitt Romney, a frontrunner for the GOP nomination for president, spouts the same hatred as the racists in the KKK.

What Romney actual said was “Keep America America” on both occasions, but frankly it doesn’t matter all that much. Let’s say he did use the same term as the Klan used: Are we supposed to really think he did it on purpose? Why would he do that – because he wants to be associated with the Ku Klux Klan?

You would have to be nuts to believe that. So then, how can something this irresponsible happen at a cable news network run by the once iconic NBC News.

Corruption of this type almost always starts at the top. Management at MSNBC has set the tone, which pretty much comes down to this: Progressive and liberal Democrats = good; conservative and Republican = bad.

In that atmosphere, some chucklehead anchor and his equally brainless producer thought it was okay to smear a front-

running candidate for president; he's a Republican, after all. Of course, they'd never do this to a prominent liberal Democrat. Not simply because it would be morally and journalistically wrong, but also because it doesn't fit the MSNBC business model.

MSNBC management has apologized, calling the smear "irresponsible and incendiary" and said that it "showed an appalling lack of judgment."

True enough, but make no mistake: MSNBC management created the atmosphere in which this "irresponsible and incendiary" smear was allowed to happen – because they're the ones who over the years have "showed an appalling lack of judgment."

NBC News has announced that it has formed a series of partnerships between its local stations and several non-profit news organizations.

"The partnerships will in some cases allow the stations to cover more news and conduct more investigations without adding more staff directly," according to the New York Times.

One of the non-profits NBC has aligned itself with is an outfit called Pro Publica, which the Times simply described as, "the acclaimed investigative journalism nonprofit organization."

Well, yes – and no. Despite the fact that Pro Publica has won two Pulitzer Prizes, it isn't simply a journalist organization; it has a political agenda – a distinctly liberal one which is funded by liberal money bags. On its Web site, Pro Publica explains its mission this way:

"ProPublica is an independent, non-profit newsroom that produces investigative journalism in the public interest. Our work focuses exclusively on truly important stories, stories

with 'moral force.' We do this by producing journalism that shines a light on exploitation of the weak by the strong and on the failures of those with power to vindicate the trust placed in them."

This is a variation on an old journalism theme – that our role is to afflict the comfortable and comfort the afflicted.

No. That may be the work of priests and ministers and rabbis, but not of journalists.

Pro Publica may do outstanding reporting but only when it fits its liberal agenda. Don't hold your breath waiting for Pro Publica to go after progressives and liberal Democrats – unless, perhaps, if they're not progressive enough.

In a way semi-news organizations like Pro Publica are like semi-media watchdog groups like the Media Research Center. I say "semi-" because while the MRC does great work in exposing liberal bias in the media, it goes deaf, dumb and blind when it comes to conservative bias. Fox News may legitimately have MRC guests on the air commenting on liberal bias, but it should never go into business with the Media Research Center. MRC is not made up of journalists. It's made up of conservative activists.

And NBC News shouldn't have gone into business with left-wing activists, no matter how many Pulitzers they may win for stories about the "exploitation of the weak by the strong"

I know that in this hyper-partisan media age in which we live, it sounds corny to say journalists should go after the truth, whether it helps or hurts Democrats or Republicans, liberals or conservatives; that journalists should never have an agenda. It may sound corny, but it's true.

I Thought Affirmative Action Was a Good Thing

✘ If affirmative action was such a great idea, then why is the left branding anyone a racist who might suggest that President Obama benefitted from the policy?

Donald Trump has brought the President's academic record into the spotlight by asking how he gained admittance to Columbia University and Harvard Law School after having less than a stellar academic record at Occidental.

Because of that simple query, he's now been branded by the left as a racist because he has the audacity to question the President's academic credentials.

Ed Schultz over at MSNBC called Mr. Trump a racist because "he's questioning the academic prowess of one of the smartest Presidents we've ever had."

When Mr. Trump called on the President to release his college records, Bob Schieffer, host of Face the Nation, said, "That's just code for saying he got into law school because he's black.

Then there's the Rev. Al Sharpton who's upset with Mr. Trump's statements because it suggests that President Obama got into two Ivy League schools because of affirmative action.

Well, I found all these statements very enlightening because each one firmly believes Mr. Trump is saying that President Obama had to have been admitted to Columbia and Harvard, not based on his grades, but because of affirmative action.

Assuming that's true, what makes Mr. Trump a racist? I

thought the left loved affirmative action. What's the problem with President Obama benefitting from the policy?

Rev. Sharpton supports it. So, why the outcry that the President benefitted from something Al Sharpton always supported and thinks is good for the country?

The African American Forum Policy advocates for affirmative action as does the ACLU, and the NAACP is opposed to any constitutional amendment that would do away with affirmative action programs. President Obama's own Justice Department just recently filed an amicus brief in support of the University of Texas, Austin, which includes a component that considers race and ethnicity in its admissions decisions.

So what's making the left so outraged? If President Obama gained admittance to Columbia University or Harvard Law School through affirmative action, why should that be a negative?

It sounds as if the left now views a person who gets into a university because of his skin color differently from someone who gets in because of merit. It seems a bit hypocritical for the left to be calling foul play when the African American Policy Forum, for instance, believes that "race-conscious affirmative action remains necessary to address race-based obstacles that block the path to success of countless people of color of all classes." So why's the left making such a fuss?

It's interesting to see some on the left backing up from their decades-long support of affirmative action. Maybe it's because they're starting to wise up to the fact that affirmative action isn't all it's cracked up to be. I'm in Justice Clarence Thomas's camp who believes that affirmative action has created a "cult of victimization" and implies blacks require "special treatment in order to succeed."

It sounds as if affirmative action is coming back to bite the collective left on the butt. Maybe they're finally realizing

that affirmative action makes victims of people and those that benefit from it are actually stigmatized by the policy.

It's really no surprise I don't get the left in this country. But if you do, God bless you.

The Coarsening of America

Ever since the Tucson shootings, we've heard about civility *ad nauseum*. Everyone has been calling for civility including the President at the memorial service in Tucson and during his State of the Union address.

We heard a lot about civility after 9/11 as well. People were kinder to each other – more polite, more courteous. I remember asking my husband, “how long do you think this will last?” Not very long. Eventually, people went back to their old ways and those who were kind and polite before 9/11 continued to be kind and polite. Those who weren't, couldn't maintain the façade.

A very good example are the recent remarks by MSNBC's Ed Schultz who called former Vice President Dick Cheney “an enemy of the country” who should go “to the Promised Land.” In my world, wishing someone to be dead no matter how much you might dislike that person is uncivil. Not according to actor-turned-someone-who-wants-to-appear-relevant-in-today's-society, Richard Dreyfuss, who said Schultz's remarks were not “uncivil” but rather “beautifully phrased civil discourse.”

So, if you're a liberal, you can say whatever you want and it's “beautifully phrased civil discourse,” but if you're a conservative, you're a hateful racist, homophobe, sexist, or whatever else liberals coin the label-of-the-day.

In any given week, they'll be dozens of statements made by national media personalities and pundits which are downright rude, crude and hateful. But over the years, I've seen the coarsening of human behavior in my personal dealings with others almost daily.

☒ Not that long ago, you'd never hear someone drop the "F" bomb in public. Now, waiting on line anywhere, it's a common occurrence with no apology from the user even when your head snaps around to see who used that expletive in public.

It's commonplace for people to invade my sense of privacy and peace and quiet by speaking loudly on their cell phones in public areas. People will move forward in an airplane trying to get out earlier instead of waiting at their row to exit in an orderly fashion.

My husband and I have a continuing debate about all this. I say people are "rude." He says they're "just stupid." He says being rude requires a conscious recognition of one's behavior. Being rude means one doesn't care about the needs of others. Being stupid means the person is just oblivious to his surroundings. I don't know who's right. But does it really matter?

I live on a beautiful island in the Puget Sound. There are the old timers who have lived here all their lives; there are people like us who have lived here almost twenty years, and then there are the newcomers. The old timers are old; people like us are in their 50s and 60s, and a lot of the newcomers are in their forties. It's the forty-somethings I don't get.

I could walk down the street and someone my age or older will pass me by and say "good morning." When I'm leaving a store, I'll hold a door open for the old guy behind me and he'll, no doubt, say, "thank you, young lady."

Something happened to the people raised after my generation. Perhaps they were raised in a barn or under a rock. I'm not

sure, but when I'm leaving a store and hold the door open for a younger person, I seldom will get a "thanks," "thank you" or even a grunt to acknowledge my courtesy.

Several years ago, I decided I just can't let this "incivility" go unchecked, so, I decided whenever I held a door open for someone, I'd wait a second, and if I received no response, I'd just say, "you're welcome." Only one guy, who was on a cell phone and far too busy and far too important to initially say, "thank you," actually seemed genuinely embarrassed when I said "you're welcome." He immediately took the phone away from his ear and said, "you're right, I'm sorry, thank you." Other than that one man, no one has ever acknowledged a simple courtesy with a reciprocal kindness of saying, "thank you." I can only imagine how little the fortysomethings have taught their own children and how that next generation will display their civility.

The internet has made us faceless and anonymous with people saying whatever they please without consequence. Recently, after tweeting an article of mine to about six people who were interested in the topic I wrote about, I received the following tweet from someone to whom I didn't send my article, "Stop Spamming stupid old bitch. Say something once and only once, What do you studder or something. Next time I report you." This is what I'm talking about. (By the way, his punctuation and spelling, not mine.)

Unfortunately, no matter what President Obama suggests, I think we'll continue to see incivility in the public arena. It's the nature of the beast. But when I see the absence of any manners in the people I deal with in my private life, it all becomes very disturbing.

I don't get it, but if you do, God bless you.

Random Thoughts: Election 2010

☒ When I finally turned off the tv last night, it was 12:30 in the morning here in Washington state and, despite percentage signs and other stats flashing in red and blue inside my brain, I miraculously fell asleep. Three Senatorial races were still undecided when I finally went to bed, Washington, Colorado and Alaska, and remained so when I woke up this morning.

My biggest hope in this election was for the Republicans to win back the House – which they did in great numbers – if only to remove Nancy Pelosi as Speaker. It was a wonderful achievement in my book. When I listened to Harry Reid's speech last night, I thought of a taxi ride I took in Las Vegas last year. The driver ranted on and on about Obama and Harry Reid and I told him, "all you guys have to do is vote that guy out in 2010." Well, obviously no one heeded my advice and we've got ol' Harry back in the Senate. One out of two ain't bad.

Losing the Senate is probably a blessing in disguise in light of 2012, but I'll leave the potential advantages of a split Congress to the political analysts, something I'm not. I did, however, learn a lot about the importance of the Republican gubernatorial wins, particularly in Ohio, Pennsylvania and Florida. Good job, John Kasich!

I'm sorry to see Christine O'Donnell didn't win. I previously wrote about Ms. O'Donnell and got some flack from readers regarding my concerns about her nomination. I thought she couldn't win. I'm with Bernie on this one. I'd rather have

someone who would vote my way half of the time (Michael Castle) rather than someone who'd never vote my way (Chris Coons). It's great to be an ideological purist, but, sometimes, you have to be practical. I must say that listening to acceptance speeches by Tea Party-backed candidates, Rand Paul and Marco Rubio, was a breath of fresh air.

I would've loved to have seen Barbara Boxer lose and Meg Whitman win in California, but you can't have everything. God only knows what Jerry Brown is going to do in California. He was blabbering during his acceptance speech last night but perhaps it was way past his bedtime. I sure hope he gets some rest because he's going to need it when he starts to tackle the massive problems in that state. But, hey, I don't live there anymore.

To be fair and balanced, I did switch tv coverage from Fox News to MSNBC a few times but someone would've thought they were watching election returns in a foreign country. Their coverage – if you could call it that – was laughable. When I did muster up the strength to actually watch Keith Olbermann and his three cohorts, their attempt to minimize the Republican take over of the House was pathetic. I could vaguely make out the outline of the black armbands under their jackets while they sat around like a clique of silly school girls giggling and bad-mouthing those that weren't part of their elite group. They had no one on with opposing views, unlike Fox News which had several pundits on the right and left throughout the night. Instead, Olbermann sat around with three other like-minded individuals enjoying their Republican bashing and Chris Matthews even threw in one of his sophomoric comments about Sarah Palin. Did someone forget to tell him Ms. Palin wasn't running for office? These bozos must be obsessed and afraid of this woman otherwise why bother?

We're still waiting to hear whether Patty Murray lost her Senate seat to Dino Rossi here in Washington. Knowing how

liberals rule in Seattle, I'm not holding my breath. I'd just love to see the woman who once said, "[Osama bin Laden]'s been out in these countries for decades, building schools, building roads, building infrastructure, building day-care facilities, building health-care facilities, and the people are extremely grateful. He's made their lives better," have to look for a real job like the other 10% of Americans.

Over the past several weeks, President Obama drove his analogy of the car into the ground. The Dems were in the front seat and the Republicans, who ran the car into a ditch, according to him, didn't get to drive anymore and were relegated to the back seat. Well, it doesn't matter who was sitting in the front seat or the back seat, because, last night, the American people applied the brakes!

When I watched the President speak this morning, he looked as if he would've preferred to have a root canal without any anesthetic rather than stand in front of those cameras. He's now calling for cooperation and bipartisanship, but I'll believe it when I see it. I still remember the closed door sessions during the Obamacare fiasco when "transparency" was promised. Whether he'll be able to tolerate being in the same room with John Boehner is something we'll have to wait and see.

As Mick Jagger said, "you can't always get what you want, but ... you get what you need." Well, we needed to stop Obama's far left agenda to transform this country into something unrecognizable and that's exactly what we got last night. Let's hope the Republicans will do actually what they said during the campaign, otherwise, like the Dems found out last night, the electorate will boot them out in two years.

Overall, it was a very good night. Countdown clock on my computer to Election Day 2012: 2 years, 0 months, 3 days, 3 hours..... Let the games begin!