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## Ron Paul + Potheads = Racist Dopes

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## Ron Paul + Potheads = Racist Dopes

by Michael I. Niman *ArtVoice* 2/2/12

...and I have zero tolerance for racists

Ron Paul's popularity, given his history of racism, is troubling. More troubling, however, is the willingness of his supporters, an odd coalition of one-percenter corporatists and anti-war pothead libertarians, to ignore or excuse these views.

Politically and economically multifarious as Ron Paul's posse may be, they almost all share a common trait—that's their whiteness, which translates into their historical immunity from racist persecution. This is also why their willingness to accept and excuse Ron Paul's history of racism is particularly revolting.

Potheads and CEOs unite!

Ron Paul's support comes from two distinctly different directions. On one hand, we have the ultra-rich. Their support of a man who wants to excuse them from their tax burden, while removing any consumer, worker, or environmental protection laws that stand between them and a medieval level of plunder, fits right in with their sociopathic leanings. Paul's legislative career has proved him a loyal servant to this plutocracy.

His other supporters follow him, with a religious zeal, thanks to Paul's successfully deceptive campaign to brand himself as a libertarian—a lie that his voting record defies.

Few of these folks, from either wing of Paul's support, are avowed racists, but as their continued support for Paul's hate-mired candidacy evidences, they certainly aren't anti-racists or human rights proponents.

Paul's most visible supporters are ideological libertarians who oppose the Clinton-Bush-Obama militarism as well as the drug war and, in particular, marijuana prohibition. Ron Paul is not their man, however. Yes, Paul wants to bring troops home from Afghanistan and Iraq, while keeping them out of Iran. But, while campaigning in South Carolina last month, he also called for opening more military bases here in the US, raising the obvious question: For what purpose?

And few of these supporters are apparently aware of his desire to annex Panama's cross-isthmus canal to the United States or his attempts to nullify the anti-ballistic missile treaty. So while limiting US military adventurism in certain theaters might be laudable, his threats in other regions, his desire to increase the domestic military presence, and his proclivity toward being a nuclear cowboy should certainly be troubling.

#### Ron Paul and your womb

Further evidence that he is not a libertarian comes from his legislative record. He introduced three bills curtailing reproductive freedom and signed on to nearly a dozen others, including a bill designed to stymie Peace Corps volunteers from obtaining abortions, and another that would recognize human life as beginning at conception, thus outlawing most commonly used forms of birth control.

He defends the rights of states to deny same-sex couples the right to marry, and he co-sponsored the Marriage Protection Act, which prohibits federal courts from hearing cases challenging the constitutionality of the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act, which limits marriage to opposite sex couples. He sponsored legislation to allow parents to beat their children and, in the same bill, to prohibit the federal government from funding any organization fostering a belief that homosexuality "can be an acceptable life style."

On the normally libertarian issue of free speech protection, Paul supported what would have amounted to the first constitutional amendment specifically limiting free speech, by outlawing flag burning—which is a chilling precedent that would figuratively burn the constitution in place of a few dozen flags. He is also an opponent of net neutrality, so if you're reading this online, in a Paul world, you'd likely kiss that right, and your right to respond online, goodbye.

#### Ron Paul, corporate poop boy

Paul's opposition to net neutrality might be incongruous with free speech, but it's in line with Ron Paul's near perfect legislative track record in service to corporations and the ultra-rich. This is where Paul earns his libertarian creds, and exposes the dark side of corporatized libertarianism.

Paul wants to eliminate the Environmental Protection Agency and remove restrictions on air and water pollution, as well as on nuclear and coal-fired power plants. His argument is that victims, such as cancer patients, can sue corporations for damages in court, in lieu of having their air and water protected. But a victim's ability to sue would be limited by the corporate-friendly tort reforms that Paul also supports.

He also wants to eliminate our plethora of anti-trust regulations, clearing the way for individual corporations to monopolize entire industries, thus ending any pretenses toward having a free market.

Ron Paul wants to eliminate federal minimum wage laws while eliminating tax credits for senior citizens, dependent children, and other credits working people enjoy, while maintaining various credits and breaks for corporations. He also wants to cut the top corporate tax rate by over 50 percent and eliminate estate taxes for the rich, while imposing a flat 10-percent income tax, which would translate into a two thirds cut on the highest earners, while hitting the poorest workers with a tax increase.

To pay for his tax cuts for corporations and the rich, Paul would like to eliminate the socialism of public services such as highway maintenance, sewage treatment, emergency services such as ambulance and fire service, most public education, and pretty much anything good or useful that government does, save for military and police functions. Corporations would provide these lost services, with a skim for their shareholders, to those who can afford them. Meddling government agencies charged with protecting our food and drinking water, or our consumer or human rights, would be eliminated under Ron Paul's leadership.

The list goes on. Paul doesn't dig Social Security, Medicare, or Medicaid, which he argues are all unconstitutional. He's against the Voters' Rights Act, and most federal laws protecting our human rights. The skinny is, he ain't cool. Yes, he wants to legalize marijuana. I know. But he also has admonished white folks to arm themselves for a coming race war. And he wants to eliminate birthright citizenship, creating a Kuwait-like system where the grandchildren of immigrants can still be denied citizenship rights, such as the ability to vote.

Stoned white folks

By now, most people are aware of the controversy surrounding the racist diatribes which he published in his newsletter, the Ron Paul Survival Report. We're not talking the 1950s blabber of Strom Thurmond. Paul penned his racist missives, such as one admonishing his followers to arm themselves, "because the animals are coming," or another claiming that "we can safely assume that 95 percent of the black males in [Washington, DC] are semi-criminal or entirely criminal," in the 1990s. Recently he denied that he wrote the more offensive passages, stating that they just appeared in his name, in his newsletter, which he edited, and which, we are now to believe, he never read during the years his racist writings appeared.

This isn't the song he was singing during his 1996 run for Congress when his racism first became an issue. At that juncture, rather than try to deny he was the author of his columns, he instead defended his racism, telling the Dallas Morning News that his published assertion that 95 percent of black males in DC were criminals was an "assumption" which he reached after

reading a “report” from what appears to be a nonexistent think tank. True to their leader’s form, Paul’s supporters recently, 15 years after the fact, launched a social media virus alleging that the Dallas Morning News fabricated their 1996 interview with Paul.

That same year, 1996, his campaign issued a statement to the Houston Chronicle rationalizing Paul’s racism by arguing that his “statements about the fear of black males mirror pronouncements by black leaders such as the Rev. Jesse Jackson.” The Jackson statement in question, however, was a condemnation of the effects of racism in the media, while Paul’s was a justification of such racism. In the same interview, he defended his 1992 call to codify a racist double standard where 13-year-old black boys, based on their racial identity, would be tried as adults because they “are as big, strong, tough, scary and culpable as any adult.”

Paul continued to defend his racist writings until 2001, when he finally recognized the political toxicity of his racism and pulled an about-face, telling the Texas Observer that he never wrote his columns and didn’t know who did. Still, he never actually denounced his racist columns until the 2008 presidential campaign. Last week, one of his former secretaries, Renae Hathway, told the Washington Post that Paul proofread all of the copies of his newsletter before they went to press. This would include the racist columns that he published in his own name. “It was his newsletter, and it was under his name, so he always got to see the final product,” she said. True to form, Paul denounced his former secretary, telling John King of CNN, “She made that story up.” Perhaps, but at this point her credibility is stronger than Paul’s.

An “icky compromise”

Paul’s current statements calling for the repeal of the Voters Rights Act, the Civil Rights Act, and all hate crimes legislation are in line with his 1992 statements and demonstrate an ideological consistency over the years. Ron Paul is downright fundamentalist in his opposition to human rights legislation and in his support of corporations and the super rich. His radicalism knows no bounds, with Paul willing to give corporations everything they want—the environment and society, and in turn humanity, be damned. Ron Paul hopes not just to erase the social reforms of the 20th century but to undo the humanistic evolution of society.

I may not understand the contradiction-laced political views of Ron Paul supporters, but I respect them, and I’ll engage them. What I can’t respect or tolerate, however, is their willingness to brush aside, or even excuse, his history of hate speech. This is especially repugnant from a privileged group that condones, but never suffers from, racism.

Writing for Gawker.com, Paul supporter Jim Newell argues that people who support Paul’s politics need his campaign to be successful, need him to go on to the Republican convention and hopefully play “kingmaker,” leveraging his support in exchange for concessions to his agenda in the party’s platform. Paul’s “editorial history from decades back,” Newell argues,

“needn’t derail that. It’s just an icky compromise every supporter will have to make. Neener neener.”

Forget this neenering moron and every one of Ron Paul’s pathetic supporters who squirms to excuse his racism.

Dr. Michael I. Niman is a professor of journalism and media studies at Buffalo State College. His previous columns are at [artvoice.com](http://artvoice.com), archived at [www.mediastudy.com](http://www.mediastudy.com), and available globally through syndication.