



Written by on March 16, 2009

The Flap Over Rush Limbaugh

That attitude can also be found in his 1992 book *The Way Things Ought to Be*, where he stated, "I do not look upon my show as a chance to advance an agenda.... I also do not believe I should use my show for activism. It is after all still entertainment. I want it to be that way. I am not into demonstrating my influence in politics."

That was long ago. Has much changed? Not really, although Rush likes lately to have things both ways — as both entertainer/businessman and political leader. A lengthy article in the July 6, 2008 *New York Times Magazine* quotes him telling author Zev Chafets that conservatism didn't buy his sumptuous Palm Beach mansion, his private jet, his half-million-dollar automobile, and more. No, he insists, "First and foremost, I'm a businessman. My first goal is to attract the largest audience possible so I can charge confiscatory ad rates. I happen to have great entertainment skills, but that enables me to sell airtime."



Yet, in that same lengthy puff piece, Chafets pointed to the other side of the radio star, the side where Limbaugh claims, "But in my heart and soul, I know I have become the intellectual engine of the conservative movement." If that boast is accurate, one need not search any further to understand why the conservative movement is in disarray. So bereft of principle has the conservative movement become that old-line conservatives no longer admit to being conservative, choosing rather to be known as constitutionalists. After all, the Constitution sets a standard against which anyone can be measured. Not so with ever-shifting conservatism.

Democrats like the idea of Limbaugh becoming their leading adversary. White House Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel delightedly labeled him "the voice and the intellectual force and energy behind the Republican Party." That prompted newly elected GOP National Chairman Michael Steele to protest, saying he was the Republican leader and Limbaugh was merely an "entertainer" whose show is frequently "incendiary and ugly." Steele later apologized to Limbaugh but the Democrats guffawed. Newt Gingrich even weighed in with a claim that the flap involving Rush was merely a way for Democrats to deflect attention away from their \$410 billion spending bill that included thousands of earmarks, their tax-cheating nominees, and more.

Rush brought himself a lot of attention by claiming of the new president, "I hope he fails." He explained that he only wanted the Obama *policies* to fail in his raucous speech to conservatives in Washington. But he has surely enjoyed the controversy that finds him at its center, and gets him media attention he



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loves. It may even mean greater ad revenue for the man who insists he's just an entertainer but who likes also to be known as a political table setter and a GOP kingmaker. As for the Constitution, it is doubtful that Rush has ever read it.

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