



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on December 22, 2011

Campaign Could Get “Downright Ugly” if Paul Wins Iowa

“The Republican presidential primary has become a bit feisty, but it will get downright ugly if Ron Paul wins the Iowa caucuses,” Carney wrote in Monday’s column. “The principled, antiwar, Constitution-obeying, Fed-hating, libertarian Republican congressman from Texas stands firmly outside the bounds of permissible dissent as drawn by either the Republican establishment or the mainstream media.”

Carney, who does not hide his admiration for the popular underdog, noted in the interest of “disclosure” that Paul wrote the forward to Carney’s 2009 book, *Obamanomics*. He went on to say that in a crowded Republican field, led nationally by “a collapsing Newt Gingrich and an uninspiring Mitt Romney, Paul could carry the Iowa caucuses, where supporter enthusiasm has so much value.” Given the national media coverage of the Paul campaign up to this point, Carney suggested a Paul victory might generate headlines like, “Romney Beats Out Gingrich for Second Place in Iowa.” But that would be kind, compared to what likely would be written and spoken in the weeks that follow. “Some in the Republican establishment and the conservative media will panic,” Carney predicted. “Others will calmly move to crush him, with the full cooperation of the liberal mainstream media.”

In that case, it won’t be enough to repudiate Paul’s “establishment-irritating adherence to principle, nor his hawk-angering foreign policy,” wrote Carney. “His conservative critics and the mainstream media will imply that he is a racist, a kook, and a conspiracy theorist.”

[CNN’s Jack Cafferty](#) said Paul’s rise to the top of the polls in Iowa, despite being ignored by much of the major national media, “has many mainstream Republicans positively apoplectic.”

“What’s refreshing is Paul has done it the old-fashioned way, with a consistent message and the best outreach operation in Iowa,” Cafferty said. “Andrew Sullivan writes for the Daily Beast that Paul is generating enthusiasm and support among young voters and Democrats and Independents — in other words, voters who could actually help the Republicans defeat President Obama in November.”

“Now you’d think that is what the Republican Party is looking for,” Cafferty continued, “somebody who





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could beat Obama in November. When it comes to Ron Paul, though, not so fast." Party leaders are already planning to "spin" a Paul victory by ignoring it, he said. "Iowa's governor is out saying they'll focus on who comes in second or third."

Carney compared the likely reaction to a Paul victory in Iowa to what happened 16 years ago, when political columnist and commentator Pat Buchanan won the 1996 New Hampshire primary, edging out former Sen. Robert Dole and others in a crowded GOP field.

"The GOP establishment that week rallied to squash Buchanan," Carney wrote. Gingrich, then Speaker of the House, formed a group of Republican leaders, called the Speaker's Advisory Group. According to a *Newsweek* report at the time, the group's purpose was to determine "How to deal with Buchanan." "People are panicked," said William Kristol, editor of the neoconservative *Weekly Standard*. "If they're not, it's only because they don't know what's going on."

A *Newsweek* cover story on Buchanan was titled, "Preaching Fear." Insinuations of racism and anti-Semitism cropped up regularly in articles about Buchanan. But the candidate's real sins against the political and media establishments, Carney contends, were of a different nature. "They feared Pat because he rejected a rare inviolable article of faith among the party elites: free trade. Also, in the post-Cold War era, Buchanan's foreign policy had become far less interventionist than that of the establishment."

In the case of Ron Paul, Carney wrote, the Texas Republican "holds to the professed principles of his party. He makes Republicans look bad by firmly opposing overspending and the unconstitutional expansion of federal power. He correctly predicted the troubles that would be caused by housing subsidies and the U.S. invasion of Iraq." A Paul victory in Iowa would be regarded as "an act of impudence that must be punished," Carney said.

Vilification of Paul appears the likely weapon of choice by the party leaders and media elites if Paul's popularity with voters continues to grow. A victory in Iowa, followed by a strong showing in New Hampshire could make the slender and sprightly 76-year-old retired obstetrician the kind of elephant most unwelcome in establishment Republican circles — the elephant in the room that can't be ignored.

"Whether the GOP establishment likes it or not, Ron Paul has the power to really shake things up if he wins Iowa," Cafferty said. "People in Iowa are rallying around someone who, for the first time in a long time represents change. *Real* change. And that has to scare the hell out of both parties."

Photo of Ron Paul: AP Images



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