



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on November 9, 2015

## Is Ben Carson's Campaign "Over"?

Ben Wright of CNBC [thinks](#) Republican presidential candidate Dr. Ben Carson's campaign is done, toast, over after several attacks leveled against him by the mainstream media, particularly calling into question Carson's honesty regarding events in his book *Gifted Hands*. Calling one of the attacks a "devastating blow to Carson," Wright asked, "The main question now is whether the revelation(s) will quickly drive Carson out of the race. And if it does, where will his cadre of supporters go?"



Wright claimed that Dr. Carson's pushback, blaming the attacks on "media bias," was unwarranted: "Saying you received a scholarship to West Point when you really did not has nothing to do with media bias. Who knows how many more things in Carson's book will turn out not to be true? His campaign is over. The question is whether Carson knows it yet, and where his many supporters will turn next."

Wright was referring to the article in Politico that appeared late last week, charging that Carson lied about receiving a scholarship to West Point. But Politico wasn't the only member of the national media that took aim at Carson's credibility and character. CNN questioned Carson's characterization of himself before he became a Christian as having a "pathological temper" which was illustrated, says Carson, when at age 14 he attacked one of his friends with a rock, breaking his glasses and putting a gash in his nose.

CNN poured significant resources in its attempt to verify and validate Carson's story, but could find none. Reporters interviewed nine of Carson's school classmates but none could confirm Carson's story, and some expressed surprise, said CNN, that he even had a temper.

The obvious conclusion according to CNN is that the incident never happened, that Carson fabricated the story out of whole cloth to generate sympathy from his readers. CNN said Carson's campaign staff was unhelpful when they sought additional sources they could check, quoting Carson's business manager, Armstrong Williams, as responding via e-mail with: "Why would anyone cooperate with you in your obvious witch hunt?"

When one of CNN's sleuths, in his search for truth and justice, confronted Carson personally about the unprovable incident, Carson responded: "I didn't want to expose people without their knowledge. But remember, when I was 14 ... that's when I changed. That's when most of the people ... began to know who I was. They didn't know me before then."

Taking a softer approach but with the same goal in mind — questioning Carson's credibility and character — the *Wall Street Journal's* sleuths interviewed more than 50 people who had been at Davenport College while Carson was a student at Yale, trying to confirm, or deny, any of the suspected embellishments, omissions, or inconsistencies. The lack of anyone's confirming or denying led the *Journal* obliquely to suggest that Carson was again lying to gain sympathy for his lowly upbringing and how he managed to extricate himself from a background that ground so many others into dust.





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The *Journal* complained that Yale couldn't prove that Carson attended a class called Perceptions 301 in which the final exam papers had been "inadvertently burned," requiring all the students to retake it. The new exam, according to Carson, was much tougher and, in protest, all the students walked out.

All except Carson: "The professor came toward me. With her was a photographer for the Yale Daily News who paused and snapped my picture. ['It was] a hoax,' the teacher said. 'We wanted to see who was the most honest student in the class.'" Carson then wrote that the professor rewarded him for his honesty with a \$10 bill.

But the *Journal* could find no record of any such event, or any such class, or any such picture being taken: "No photo identifying Mr. Carson as a student ever ran, according to the Yale Daily News archives, and no stories from the era mention a class called Perceptions 301. Yale Librarian Claryn Spies said there was no psychology course by that name or class number during any of Mr. Carson's years at Yale."

The *Journal* further distinguished itself by replaying a story which others in the media had "uncovered," suggesting that Carson was somehow intimately "involved" with a controversial multi-level marketing company by making some speeches for the company and appearing, until recently, in some company videos appearing on the company's website.

The big story — the one that most of the media focused on — came from a piece by Kyle Cheney that was published by Politico last week proclaiming in its headline that Carson lied about receiving a scholarship to West Point. The headline, "Ben Carson admits fabricating West Point scholarship," was followed by this opening sentence: Ben Carson's campaign on Friday admitted, in response to an inquiry from Politico, that a central point in his inspirational personal story was fabricated: his application and acceptance into the U.S. Military Academy at West Point."

Cheney then expounded upon the theme:

According to a story told in Carson's book, *Gifted Hands*, the then-17-year-old was introduced in 1969 to Gen. William Westmoreland, who had just ended his command of U.S. forces in Vietnam, and the two dined together. That meeting, according to Carson's telling, was followed by a "full scholarship" to the military academy. When presented with these facts, Carson's campaign conceded the story was false.

When bloggers began to raise substantive questions about Cheney's claims, Politico revised the original article (which can no longer be found either at Politico or at backup internet archives) and added this disclaimer to the revised edition:

Editor's note: POLITICO stands by its reporting on this story, which has been updated to reflect Ben Carson's on the record response. The original story and headline said that Carson's campaign admitted he "fabricated" a "full scholarship" from West Point, but now Carson denies that his campaign's statement constituted such an admission, and the story and headline were changed to reflect that.

After looking into the matter, Mollie Hemingway, writing at the *Federalist*, had major problems with the revised Politico article:

There were at least five major problems with the story:

The headline was completely false

The subhead was also completely false





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The opening paragraph was false false false

The substance of the piece was missing key exonerating information

The article demonstrated confusion about service academy admissions and benefits.

Carson himself had serious problems with the media attacks and finally pushed back. On Friday night, speaking at the Black Republican Caucus of South Florida, he said, "A lot of people think that I'm soft because I'm quiet. I think they're starting to find out that I'm not soft. And that I can be loud, particularly when injustice is being done."

Taking on the CNN article, Carson said: "This is a bunch of lies, that is what it is. This is a bunch of lies attempting to say I'm lying about my history. I think it's pathetic, and basically what the media does is they try to get you distracted."

Regarding the Politico article, Carson told reporters the piece was a "bold-faced lie." Further unburdening himself on Sunday, Carson told the *New York Times* in an interview: "It was, you know, an informal 'with a record like yours we could easily get you a scholarship to West Point.'"

Later that day, on NBC's *Meet the Press*, Carson decried the double standard the national media is applying to him with its attacks, especially when compared to the media's soft-glove handling of Obama's birth certificate and his questionable eligibility to be president. He said the media perceive him to be a threat that must be neutralized: I'm a threat to the progressives [and] the secular progress movement in this country. I'm a very big threat. They can look at the polling data, and they can see that I'm the candidate most likely to beat Hillary Clinton."

As far as Ben Wright's prediction that Carson's campaign has ended on the rocks of these disclosures, that flies in the face of his remarkable fundraising that took place last week as those attacks were being leveled. In a tweet on Sunday, Carson thanked the biased media for giving him all the attention: "We the People have made 10,000 donations each day this week, raising \$3.5 million this week alone. Thank you, biased media."

*Photo: AP Images*

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