



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on April 26, 2023

## Vanity Fair: Murdoch Fired Carlson Because of Prayer Speech

Most leftist media speculated that [Fox News fired](#) Tucker Carlson for three reasons: a sexual harassment lawsuit; his commentary about the mostly peaceful protest at the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2023; and the network's almost \$800 million settlement with Dominion Voting Systems.

But [Vanity Fair has offered](#) a different one: During a speech on April 21 at the Heritage Foundation's 50th Anniversary gala, Carlson urged his listeners to pray for the future of the country.

Religious talk, the website reports, "freaks Rupert out." And so Carlson had to go.



AP Images  
Tucker Carlson

Source: Rupert's breakup with his fiancée Ann Lesley Smith may have led to Carlson's firing. Carlson was her favorite host <https://t.co/ZfTgCGToZ5>

— Gabriel Sherman (@gabrielsherman) [April 25, 2023](#)

### Carlson's Speech

Murdoch should probably be more nervous about an unavoidable meeting with his Maker, but anyway, Carlson certainly stepped in a cow pie before the worthies of Conservatism, Inc. He not only mentioned prayer, but also ridiculed the Episcopal Church and bashed the "debate" about "transgenderism" as absurd.

Just 50 or so seconds into the talk, Carlson thanked Father John Scalia, son of the late U.S. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, for reminding him to pray. "That really got me," he said:

It reminded me that I don't pray enough for the country and I should. I'm upset. But the answer is to include the country in your prayer. So thank you for reminding us of that.

Carlson also recalled the "rational" political debates of yore, when two sides debated tax rates, for instance, and whichever side won, the debates sought the same object: "We all want the country to be more prosperous and free and people to be less oppressed."

That's no longer the case, he said, with the "debate," for instance about "transgenderism." That's where he knocked the Episcopal Church:

I've come to this conclusion, and I should say at the outset, I'm an Episcopalian, so don't take any theological advice from me because I don't have any. I grew up in the shallowest Faith tradition that's ever been invented. It's not even a Christian religion at this point, I say



with shame.

Carlson said one cannot discuss “transgenderism” with traditional assumptions about political debate. Such a debate is irrational because the outcome one side seeks is absurd:

If you have people who are saying, “I have an idea, let’s castrate the next generation, let’s sexually mutilate children.” I’m sorry, that’s not a political debate. What? There’s nothing to do with politics. What’s the outcome we’re desiring here? An androgynous population? Is that, really, are we arguing for that? No, I don’t think anyone could defend that as a positive outcome. But the weight of the government and you know a lot of corporate interests are behind that. Well, what is that?

It’s irrational.

If you say, “Well, you know, I think abortion is always bad; well I think sometimes it’s necessary,” that’s the debate I’m familiar with. But if you’re telling me that abortion is a positive good, what are you saying? Well, you’re arguing for child sacrifice, obviously.... [W]hen the Treasury secretary stands up and says you know what you can do to help the economy? Get an abortion. Well that’s like an Aztec principle.

“Conventional political terms” are useless these days because one side in these “debates,” the Left, is trying to destroy the country. “What you’re watching is not a political movement. It’s evil.”

It’s time, he concluded, “to stop engaging in these totally fraudulent debates,” and “maybe we should all take just 10 minutes a day to say a prayer about it”:

I’m serious, like why not, and I’m saying that to you not as some kind of evangelist. I’m literally saying that to you as an Episcopalian, the Samaritans of our time.... I’m literally an Episcopalian, OK. And even I have concluded it might be worth taking just 10 minutes out of your busy schedule to say a prayer for the future, and I hope you will.

When Carlson broke for questions and answers, foundation President Kevin Roberts offered him a job if “things go south at Fox.”

### **Religion’s the Reason?**

Things went south that night. And, according to *Vanity Fair*, not for any of the reasons thus far reported: again, Carlson’s J6 commentary and the lawsuits by former employee Abby Grossberg and Dominion Voting Systems.

“None of these potential reasons fully add up,” the [magazine reported](#):

Fox News anchor Maria Bartiromo hyped Dominion conspiracies far more than Carlson did, and yet she remains on the air. Fox had access to Carlson’s texts and emails in the Dominion lawsuit for months, and didn’t punish him for it. Fox hosts sued for sexual harassment in the past were fired publicly for cause, but Carlson wasn’t. According to a source, Carlson wasn’t even fired and remains on the Fox News payroll.

That leaves just one explanation: Carlson’s Heritage Foundation speech was over the top, at least for



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the elder Murdoch. “That stuff freaks Rupert out. He doesn’t like all the spiritual talk,” a source told the magazine:

Rupert Murdoch was perhaps unnerved by Carlson’s messianism because it echoed the end-times worldview of Murdoch’s ex-fiancée Ann Lesley Smith, the source said. In my [Gabriel Sherman’s] May cover story, I reported that Murdoch and Smith called off their two-week engagement because Smith had told people Carlson was “a messenger from God.” Murdoch had seen Carlson and Smith discuss religion firsthand. In late March, Carlson had dinner at Murdoch’s Bel Air vineyard with Murdoch and Smith, according to the source. During dinner, Smith pulled out a bible and started reading passages from the Book of Exodus, the source said. “Rupert just sat there and stared,” the source said. A few days after the dinner, Murdoch and Smith called off the wedding. By taking Carlson off the air, Murdoch was also taking away his ex’s favorite show.

Vanity Fair also speculated that Murdoch is senile. That claim makes sense, if he indeed — as the magazine surmises — dumped his network’s most popular personality because he advised people to pray.



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