



# Akin’s Breakin’ Heart

BY KATHLEEN PARKER  
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WASHINGTON — Some days Mitt Romney must wonder how he got involved with this crew. Here he’s trying to talk about jobs, jobs, jobs — and his political colleagues keep changing the subject to a topic about which an alarming few seem to know anything at all: women.

Specifically, women’s plumbing. Introductions are no longer necessary for the formerly obscure Missouri congressman, Todd Akin, who had hoped to snatch Democrat Claire McCaskill’s Senate seat. For those who didn’t pay their cable bill, Akin recently assured Americans that in cases of “legitimate rape,” women don’t get pregnant because “the female body has ways to try to shut that whole thing down.”

To think we’ve overlooked this fail-safe method of birth control. More legitimate rape; fewer unwanted children. It has a certain Talibanesque ring to it.

All Hades broke loose, one is grateful to note, despite Akin’s lame attempts at penitence. From Romney to Karl Rove, condemnation of Akin’s remarks was stern, with many calling for him to step out of the race. Yet even Akin’s apology and self-correction were mealy-mouthed and lacking in, shall we say, remorse born of clarity.

In a hastily constructed ad released Tuesday, Akin tried to organize his thoughts: “Rape is an evil act,” he said, apparently appealing to those who still weren’t sure. “I used the wrong words in the wrong way and for that I apologize. ... I have a compassionate heart for the victims of sexual assault. I pray for them.”

Of course words were never the problem. The “thinking” was the problem. Akin’s belief that legitimate rape so scrambles the female’s signals that even biology is thwarted was born of conversations he says he had with doctors. Akin at least should surrender the names of those doctors so that they can be removed from the practice of medicine. For those still confused, raped women *do* get pregnant, which is why many who are strongly pro-life nevertheless allow abortion exceptions for rape victims. Even so, the Republican Party platform calls for a “human life” amendment to the Constitution that, strictly applied, likely would prohibit any abortion under any circumstances.

Akin’s gift to Democrats wasn’t just a probable campaign killer for him personally. It also reminded critics that Akin once co-sponsored legislation with Paul Ryan



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re-defining rape as “forcible” versus, what, voluntary? To be fair, there is a difference between morning-after remorse that some call “rape” and rape as most understand it. But for these purposes, as President Obama said, “Rape is rape.” Does a raped woman need bruises to qualify for an abortion?

More broadly, Akin’s comments furthered the perception that Republicans are waging a war on women.

The gender gap exists for a reason. Whether mandating transvaginal probes prior to abortion under “informed consent” logic or misunderstanding basic biology, Republicans have managed to alienate a fair portion of the female population. Even pro-life women will have a hard time standing by men who are so willfully ignorant.

These episodes not only are embarrassing, but they shift debate from the profound to the ridiculous.

One Catholic strategist close to GOP anti-abortion discussions put it this way to me: “Any politician is an idiot if he cannot speak eloquently on the tragedy of abortion, with compassion for women and a sense of recognition for the life of the child. ... Akin does a disservice to the cause of educating Americans about the humanity of the unborn child. Honestly, though, he is the exception.”

Perhaps so, but the cumulative effect of Republican actions aimed at limiting women’s access to abortion rather than seeking remedy through education poses an existential threat to the GOP. You don’t change people’s hearts by insulting their minds.

As GOP convention planners consider platforms and pledges, they might also contemplate a seminar for Republican men about how the fairer sex works. Recognizing that attendance could be humiliating, they could put a brown wrapper around it (note to Akin supporters: this is a metaphor) and call it something deceptively innocuous, such as: “Golf and Skinny-Dipping, from the Sea of Galilee to the Gulf of Mexico.”

Once attendees are seated, Condoleezza Rice and Darla Moore, recently named the first women members of Augusta National Golf Club, could conduct a Power-Point presentation of the female reproductive system.

Given the likelihood of a large audience, the GOP might need a bigger tent than usual.

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# Paul Ryan’s Faux Populism

BY ROBERT B. REICH  
Tribune Media Services

Last Friday, Paul Ryan, the presumptive Republican vice presidential nominee, made the most populist speech of this campaign season.

“It’s the people who are politically connected, it’s the people who have access to Washington that get the breaks,” he told an enthusiastic crowd of more than 2,000 at a high school gym in Virginia.

“Well, no more. We don’t want to pick winners and losers in Washington. ... Hardworking taxpayers should be treated fairly and it should be based on whether they’re good, whether they work hard and not who they know in Washington. That’s entrepreneurialism. That’s free enterprise.”

Sounds good, but earlier in the week — three days after being picked as Romney’s running mate — Ryan went to Las Vegas to pay homage to Sheldon Adelson, the casino billionaire who is the poster boy for using money to become “politically connected” in Washington, and getting the “breaks” that come with it. Adelson has promised to donate up to \$100 million to make sure Romney and Ryan are in the White House next year.

Much of Adelson’s fortune comes from his casino in Macau, in China, via his money-greased access to Washington.

When China’s pitch for the 2008 Olympics was endangered by a House resolution opposing the bid because of China’s human rights record, Adelson phoned Tom DeLay, then House majority whip and recipient of Adelson’s political generosity, urging him to block the resolution — which DeLay promptly did. The next day, a Chinese vice premier assured Adelson that his casino in Macau would be full of gamblers.

The money Adelson has committed to putting Romney and Ryan into the White House is a business investment. Adelson has a lot riding on the 2012 election. Last year, his Las Vegas Sands Corp. came under investigation by the Justice Department and the Securities and Exchange Commission for possible violations of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act — bribing Chinese officials to help expand its casino in Macau.

Ryan has also been courting billionaire energy moguls Charles and David Koch. Koch Industries PAC has given Ryan and his leadership PAC more than \$100,000 (more



Robert REICH

than any other corporate PAC), according to a *New York Times* analysis of campaign records.

Koch Industries spans a variety of oil and gas investments — whose value would be compromised if Congress and the White House got serious about climate change.

Small wonder that Ryan has emerged as one of Congress’ most outspoken skeptics of climate change. He has also repeatedly voted against energy efficiency standards, including a House vote to prohibit the EPA from regulating greenhouse gases.

Several months ago, when I debated Ryan on ABC’s “This Week,” he said we need to shrink the size of government because big corporations and wealthy individuals otherwise use government to their advantage.

“If the power and money are going to be here in Washington,” he said, “that’s where the influence is going to go ... that’s where the powerful are going to go to influence it,” he said.

It’s an odd argument coming from Ryan because his proposed budget doesn’t shrink government by cutting benefits and payments to big business and the rich. He increases military payments to defense contractors, for example, slashes Wall Street regulations, and gives giant tax benefits to the rich.

His budget shrinks government mainly by cutting benefits and payments to the poor and lower-income Americans. More than 60 percent of his spending cuts target programs for Americans in the bottom third of the income ladder.

Ryan is correct when he says “it’s the people who are politically connected, it’s the people who have access to Washington that get the breaks.”

But his faux populism obscures the main point. A much smaller government still dominated by money would continue to do the bidding of billionaires like Adelson, energy moguls like the Koch brothers, military contractors, and other high rollers now actively trying to put Ryan and Romney into the White House.

It just wouldn’t do anything for the rest of us.

*Robert B. Reich, Chancellor’s Professor of Public Policy at the University of California and former U.S. Secretary of Labor, is the author of the newly released “Beyond Outrage: What has gone wrong with our economy and our democracy, and how to fix it,” a Knopf e-book original.*

ensure Yankton is able to present and promote itself to the thousands of visitors who make the trip to spend time and money in our community.

To all of the other volunteers who do so much to welcome our out of town visitors, thank you for your unheralded efforts to make Riverboat Days and Yankton what it is today. Yankton has been our home for the past 18 years with previous stops in Iowa, New Jersey, Connecticut and South Dakota. Yankton is by far the best city we have ever lived in and the people have so much to do with the pride we have in calling Yankton home. Yankton has a great future ahead of itself, but can only reach its potential with the continued hard work and dedication its citizens contribute.

Thank you, Yankton, for doing all you do!

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## OPINION | OUR VIEW

# Proposed New Posts Offer Real Promise

There is genuinely a lot to like in the proposals put forth to the Yankton City Commission last week about potentially hiring an events coordinator and/or a retail recruiter for the community. The main thing to like is that both ideas would help aggressively promote Yankton as a retail and recreational destination.

The ideas received a lot of discussion from commissioners, with the possibility of combining the two positions seeming to get the most traction. And that, too, is a promising notion.

Let’s break them down separately.

The events coordinator is an idea that really sprang from last year’s 150th anniversary concerts in Yankton, which were received very well and offered promise that more such events could be held here. The coordinator, as envisioned by Parks and Recreation Director Todd Larson, would help organize events such as concerts, sports tournaments and other high-attendance activities.

Meanwhile, the retail recruiter would pursue retail operations for possible location to the city. It was noted by Mayor Nancy Wenande during last week’s meeting that Menards came to Yankton after being contacted and cultivated by the city; the company didn’t pick Yankton out of thin air to place a store. Thus, a recruiter could make such development happen by design, not by chance.

Frankly, Yankton could use positions like these on its roster. And combining the two jobs, which has been done in other communities, seems to make a lot of fiscal sense.

Yankton has a lot to offer, but it’s frustrating when little is seemingly done with these resources. Someone inevitably reasons that we’re a “best kept secret,” but that essentially says nobody knows about us and what’s offered here. And that’s not good in the long run.

An events coordinator could not only work at attracting various events to town, but he/she could also coordinate with other groups to create a steady menu of offerings in this community. Such events draw people, and people bring money to infuse into the local tax base. It also enhances the quality-of-life aspect that a lot of families look for when choosing a community in which to live, and that a lot of companies also look for when deciding where to put a new factory or store. The more Yankton can offer, the better and stronger we’ll be. An events coordinator can help make that happen, even if that person is working with a tight budget. (A coordinator could also line up corporate sponsorships for concerts, for example, which is an essential avenue for some cities in drawing such events to their communities.)

A retail recruiter could target businesses that would enhance Yankton’s overall shopping experience. This job could be a bit tricky since, for instance, some businesses here may not appreciate city personnel recruiting other businesses to come in as direct or indirect competition. Nevertheless, a recruiter would make Yankton a player in attracting new retailers, and that’s an area in which this town may be lacking in comparison with other communities. We need to remedy that situation.

Ultimately, combining these two proposals into one job is likely the best way to go. We’re not entirely sure if the community is big enough to warrant individuals in both positions, but one person having this as one job may well be worth the risk. The key is for that person to produce and for Yankton to reap the benefits; in that sense, the job would have to ultimately pay for itself via the results produced. That’s a fairly straightforward yardstick.

These proposals are worth pursuing. City officials seem inclined to wait until a new city manager is hired before moving ahead on the idea, which is fine — although, as we noted Friday, this search seems to be taking longer than expected. These are good ideas to bear in mind when the time finally comes.

kmh

## TODAY IN HISTORY

### By The Associated Press

Today is Wednesday, Aug. 22, the 235th day of 2012. There are 131 days left in the year.

**Today’s Highlight in History:** On Aug. 22, 1862, President Abraham Lincoln publicly responded to Horace Greeley’s “Prayer of Twenty Millions,” which had urged Lincoln to take more drastic steps in abolishing slavery; Lincoln replied that his priority was saving the Union, but also repeated his “personal wish that all men everywhere could be free.”

**On this date:** In 1485, England’s King Richard III was killed in the Battle of Bosworth Field, effectively ending the War of the Roses.

In 1787, inventor John Fitch demonstrated his steamboat on the Delaware River to delegates from the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia.

In 1846, Gen. Stephen W. Kearny proclaimed all of New Mexico a territory of the United States.

In 1851, the schooner *America* outraced more than a dozen British vessels off the English coast to win a trophy that came to be known as the America’s Cup.

In 1862, French composer Claude Debussy was born in Saint-Germain-en-Laye.

In 1922, Irish revolutionary Michael Collins was shot to death, apparently by Irish Republican Army members opposed to the Anglo-Irish Treaty that Collins had co-signed.

In 1932, the British Broadcasting Corp. conducted its first experimental television broadcast, using a 30-line mechanical system.

In 1956, President Dwight D. Eisenhower and Vice President Richard Nixon were nominated for second terms in office by the Republican national convention in San Francisco.

In 1962, French President Charles de Gaulle survived an attempt on his life in suburban Paris.

In 1972, President Richard Nixon was nominated for a second term of office by the Republican National Convention in Miami Beach. A hostage drama began at a Chase Manhattan Bank in Brooklyn, N.Y., as John Wojtowicz and Salvatore Naturile seized seven employees during a botched robbery; the episode, which ended with Wojtowicz’s arrest and Naturile’s killing by the FBI, inspired the movie “Dog Day Afternoon.”

In 1989, Black Panthers co-founder Huey P. Newton was shot to death in Oakland, Calif. (Gunman Tyrone Robinson was later sentenced to 32 years to life in prison.)

In 1992, on the second day of the Ruby Ridge siege in Idaho, an FBI sharpshooter killed Vicki Weaver, the wife of white separatist Randy Weaver (the sharpshooter later said he was targeting the couple’s friend Kevin Harris, and didn’t see Vicki Weaver).

**Ten years ago:** President George W. Bush proposed to end the government’s

“hands-off” policy in national forests and ease logging restrictions in fire-prone areas. A small plane carrying 18 people, including tourists from Germany, the United States and Britain, crashed in Nepal, killing all aboard.

**Five years ago:** President George W. Bush, addressing the Veterans of Foreign Wars convention in Kansas City, Mo., offered a fresh endorsement of Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, calling him “a good guy, good man with a difficult job.” A U.S. helicopter crashed in Iraq, killing 14 soldiers. Hurricane Dean slammed into Mexico for the second time in as many days. The Texas Rangers became the first team in 110 years to score 30 runs in a game, setting an American League record in a 30-3 rout of the Baltimore Orioles in the first game of a doubleheader. Poet and short story writer Grace Paley died in Thetford Hill, Vt., at age 84.

**One year ago:** Hurricane Irene cut a destructive path through the Caribbean, raking Puerto Rico with strong winds and rain and then spinning just north of the Dominican Republic. Nick Ashford, one-half of the legendary Motown songwriting duo Ashford & Simpson, died in New York at age 70.

**Today’s Birthdays:** Heart surgeon Dr. Denton Cooley is 92. Retired Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf is 78. Broadcast journalist Morton Dean is 77. Author Annie Proulx (prou) is 77. Baseball Hall-of-Famer Carl Yastrzemski is 73. Actress Valerie Harper is 73. Football coach Bill Parcells is 71. CBS newsmen Steve Kroft is 67. Actress Cindy Williams is 65. Pop musician David Marks is 64. International Swimming Hall of Famer Diana Nyad is 63. Baseball Hall of Famer Paul Molitor is 56. Country singer Holly Dunn is 55. Rock musician Vernon Reid is 54. Country singer Ricky Lynn Gregg is 53. Country singer Collin Raye is 52. Actress Regina Taylor is 52. Rock singer Roland Orzabal (Tears For Fears) is 51. Rock musician Debbi Peterson (The Bangles) is 51. Rock musician Gary Lee Conner (Screaming Trees) is 50. Singer Tori Amos is 49. Rhythm-and-blues musician James DeBarge is 49. International Tennis Hall of Famer Mats Wilander is 48. Rapper GZA/The Genius is 46. Actor Adewale Akinnuoye-Agbaje is 45. Actor Ty Burrell is 45. Actor Rick Yune is 41. Rock musician Paul Doucette (Matchbox Twenty) is 40. Rap-reggae singer Beenie Man is 39. Singer Howie Dorough (Backstreet Boys) is 39. Comedian-actress Kristen Wiig is 39. Actress Jenna Leigh Green is 38. Rock musician Bo Diddley is 38. Rock musician Dean Cain (Theory of a Deadman) is 37. Rock musician Jeff Stinco (Simple Plan) is 34. Actor Brandon Adams is 33. Actress Aya Sumika is 32.

**Thought for Today:** “Charming people live up to the very edge of their charm, and behave as outrageously as the world lets them.” — Logan Pearsall Smith, Anglo-American essayist (1865-1946).

## FROM THE BIBLE

*Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.” John 8:58. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis*

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