



# Born On The Bayou

BY BILL O'REILLY  
Creators Syndicate

KRAEMER, La. — Roland Torres wants you to know a few things. He lives in a rural area where life is pretty straightforward. His family has been active on the bayou for five generations, witnessing a daily battle of survival of the fittest. The birds, animals and reptiles who inhabit the vast swamps of south-central Louisiana live only as long as their wits and luck hold out. They are on their own 24/7.

So is Torres. A former game warden, Torres is of Spanish descent and still speaks the language of his Cajun ancestors: French. He makes a decent living giving tours of the bayou and asks for nothing from the powers that be. What he has, he earns. He does not understand why some Americans accept government assistance. In this very poor part of America, someone who works hard can still earn a decent living.

Torres also has guns. And they came in handy immediately after Hurricane Katrina, when a horde of folks fled New Orleans about 70 miles away. Torres tells me how "the good, the bad and the ugly" flooded his zone, looking for safety from the storm that just glanced his bayou. When some city thugs began to show menace, Torres calmly produced his arsenal. The danger quickly passed.

For almost 70 years, Torres has lived on the bayou. He has never ventured out of Louisiana, yet he loves America. He cherishes the values his family handed down to him. He and his wife have been married for



Bill  
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51 years. They met in high school at age 16. Roland calls his wife an "angel."

They have three sons, two of whom work the bayou with Torres. They are entirely self-reliant. If he had to, Torres says, he could survive in the wilderness with a penknife, a spool of thread, some matches and a cache of dried rice. The rice is for luring the birds that he would trap with the thread and cook with the matches. He says he could live for years off the land, even explaining how to eat sawgrass. "That can keep you alive if you know what you're doing," he assures me.

Torres watches some of the news programs on cable TV. Almost every modest dwelling in the swampland has cable. He likes the conservative shows. He doesn't quite understand the big social changes taking place. He protects his family with guns. Why should that bother anyone, he asks. I have no answer.

To Torres, President Obama is an enigma. He doesn't understand "income redistribution." Torres charges a fair price to show you his world, and you can take it or leave it. If you leave it, he'll find other work. There's always something a man can do to feed his family.

Millions of Americans believe exactly what Roland Torres believes. But they are seldom heard. Not many live shots coming out of the bayou.

*Veteran TV news anchor Bill O'Reilly is host of the Fox News show "The O'Reilly Factor" and author of the book "Pinheads and Patriots: Where You Stand in the Age of Obama."*

# Is This Really A New GOP?

BY LEONARD PITTS JR.  
Tribune Media Services

Maybe the party is finally over. Meaning not simply the Grand Old Party, but more specifically the bacchanal of the bizarre and carnival of crazy to which it has lately devolved. So obvious has this devolution become that even Republican stalwarts have been heard to decry the parody of a party the GOP has become.

Except now we see signs suggesting maybe a corner has been turned. There was, for example, that surprising bipartisan consensus on immigration reform, which one would have thought about as likely as a Ted Nugent concert on the White House lawn. And Politico reports Karl Rove has started a super PAC whose mission is to keep the more ... ahem, colorful candidates from winning Republican primaries. Politico also quotes what it calls a high-profile strategist who said party leaders are now trying to "marginalize the cranks, haters and bigots" they until recently portrayed as courageous truth tellers.

There's more. Fox "News," for many years the communications arm of the GOP, just ditched two of its fiercest firebrands: Dick Morris and Sarah Palin, who, like Linus in the pumpkin patch, kept assuring true believers of the Great Pumpkin of a Mitt Romney victory. This comes as Fox, though it still has numbers CNN would kill for, sees its ratings fall to a 12-year low among a key demographic. A new Public Policy Polling survey finds trust in Fox at the lowest level in the short (four years) history of the survey.

Then there is Bobby Jindal. The Louisiana governor, widely considered a rising star of the GOP, has, since the election, been preaching with evangelistic zeal that Republicans must "stop being the stupid party," which could be a reference to Herman Cain, presumably still poring over a map looking for "U-beki-beki-beki-beckistan-stan;" or to Michele Bachmann, perhaps still searching out terrorists in the office of the secretary of state. Or to any of a series of GOP candidates who made statements on rape so spectacularly ignorant



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they would stun even the men in those dusty places where wives are bought like cattle.

So yes, signs are plentiful that something is afoot among the Republicans. But what does it mean?

One might hope it signifies the party's decision to abandon its alternate universe, offer reasonable alternatives to those voters not convinced that any one party or ideology has all the answers. One might hope it means an orderly retreat from the hard edge of coded racism, gay bashing, Mexican electrocuting, anti-intellectualism and fact avoidance that has been passed off as wisdom in recent years. One might hope it means a return of grown-ups, pragmatism, reason — and reasonableness.

One might hope. But one might be well-advised to gird that hope with wariness, given that this is the same party whose leaders, as reported on PBS' "Frontline," held a meeting in 2009 and chose obstructionism as a political strategy. Note that, even while repeating his "stupid party" admonition at a GOP meeting in Charlotte last month, Jindal assured his audience this did not mean rethinking or even moderating the party's hardcore — and frankly, out of touch — stands on issues such as abortion and marriage equality.

No, he explained, he's talking about changing the packaging — not what's in it. Putting lipstick on the proverbial pig, in other words.

That will inevitably disappoint those longing for a new GOP. One hopes the party's soul searching eventually leads it to understand the need for evolution. It should not — and does not need to — become simply a pale imitation of the other party. But it also should not — and better not — settle for being simply a prettied-up version of the extremist outlier it has become.

Because you know what you call a pig with lipstick on? A pig with lipstick on.

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The bottom line is this "WE" are at war! And civilians die in war!

How many English civilians died when Germany bombed London? How many German civilians died when George McGovern and other bomb crews dropped their loads on Germany?

The problem is, this in war! In World War II, we had three countries we were fighting with and fighting against. But today we have a bunch of individuals who want to play God, by using God as a excuse! War is HELL!

# THE PRESS DAKOTAN

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OPINION | OTHER THOUGHTS

## Sheehy Scandal: A Matter Of Trust

OMAHA WORLD-HERALD (Feb. 3): There are different types of trust. There's the trust we have when we shake hands on a deal — that the new house we're buying is sound, that the car we're selling runs well, that we'll repay the money we borrow, that we will do what we say we will.

There's the trust we have with our spouses — promises that are personal and private and nobody's business but our own.

And there's the trust that citizens place in their governing officials — that the public's interests must come first, that an official's actions will be open and above board, that officials will be honest and candid with voters and with one another. And that anything less is unacceptable.

Nebraska's lieutenant governor broke that trust. As a result, Rick Sheehy's decision to resign his office was the only proper course of action. The former Hastings mayor was picked by Gov. Dave Heineman in 2005 to be his No. 2, to preside over the Legislature and fulfill other public duties. It also seemed certain that Sheehy would run for governor himself one day.

But as *World-Herald* reporting has discovered, Sheehy made some 2,000 late-night calls on his state cellphone, calls to four women other than his wife, calls that sometimes lasted for long periods of time, conduct that went on over four years.

A visibly distressed Heineman announced Saturday that he had accepted Sheehy's resignation, and the governor summed up the situation clearly: "As public officials, we're held to a higher standard. Rightly so. That trust was broken, and he resigned."

Heineman will now look for a replacement. When whoever is chosen shakes the governor's hand and accepts the post, that person also will be shaking hands with every Nebraskan. The new lieutenant governor will need to remember that he or she is accepting the public's trust.

## A Show Of Bipartisanship

CAPITAL JOURNAL, Pierre (Jan. 31): How refreshing to see Gov. Dennis Dugaard, his Republican colleagues and the Democrats all working together to get things done for South Dakota. They seem to have found an issue on which there is common ground — the need to reform our justice system and save money by treating more nonviolent offenders with other means short of prison.

The House of Representatives voted 63-7 in favor of the plan, which had already passed the Senate by a similar majority of 31-2. The measure grew out of recommendations made by a panel appointed by the governor, Supreme Court Chief Justice David Gilbertson and legislative leaders.

Estimates are the bill will save perhaps \$162 million over the next decade by helping South Dakota avoid having to build new prison facilities.

Everyone likes to save money. But the real savings here is in human potential. Why send a nonviolent offender to prison? Locking him up does not keep anyone safe; it may actually make him more of an offender than he was before. It may be that closely supervised probation and parole and expanded courts to deal with drug and alcohol offenses are indeed the better solutions, as proponents of this bill believe.

At least our lawmakers of both parties seem to agree that we need to give it a try.

### OUR LETTER POLICY

The **PRESS & DAKOTAN** encourages its readers to write letters to the editor, and it asks that a few simple guidelines be followed.

■ Please limit letters to 300 words or less. Letters should deal with a single subject, be of general interest and state a specific point of view. Letters are edited with brevity, clarity and newspaper style in mind.

■ In the sense of fairness and professionalism, the **PRESS & DAKOTAN** will accept no letters attacking private individuals or businesses.

■ Specific individuals or entities addressed in letters may be given the opportunity to read the letter prior to publication and be allowed to answer the letter in the same issue.

■ Only signed letters with writer's full name, address and daytime phone number for verification will be accepted. Please mail to: Letters, 319 Walnut, Yankton, SD 57078, drop off at 319 Walnut in Yankton, fax to 665-1721 or email to [views@yankton.net](mailto:views@yankton.net).

### TODAY IN HISTORY

#### By The Associated Press

Today is Monday, Feb. 11, the 42nd day of 2013. There are 323 days left in the year.

**Today's Highlight in History:** On Feb. 11, 1963, American author and poet Sylvia Plath was found dead in her London flat, a suicide; she was 30.

**On this date:** In 1812, Massachusetts Gov. Elbridge Gerry signed a re-districting law favoring his Democratic-Republican Party — giving rise to the term "gerrymandering."

In 1858, a French girl, Bernadette Soubirous, reported the first of 18 visions of a lady dressed in white in a grotto near Lourdes. (The Catholic Church later accepted that the visions were of the Virgin Mary.)

In 1862, the Civil War Battle of Fort Donelson began in Tennessee. (Union forces led by Brig. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant captured the fort five days later.)

In 1929, the Lateran Treaty was signed, with Italy recognizing the independence and sovereignty of Vatican City.

In 1937, a six-week-old sit-down strike against General Motors ended, with the company agreeing to recognize the United Automobile Workers Union.

In 1945, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Soviet leader Josef Stalin signed the Yalta Agreement during World War II.

In 1960, "Tonight Show" host Jack Paar walked off the program in a censorship dispute with NBC. (Despite his very public resignation, Paar returned to the Tonight Show less than a month later.)

In 1972, McGraw-Hill Publishing Co. and *Life* magazine canceled plans to publish what had turned out to be a fake autobiography of reclusive billionaire Howard Hughes.

In 1975, Margaret Thatcher was elected leader of Britain's opposition Conservative Party.

In 1979, followers of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini seized power in Iran.

In 1990, South African black activist Nelson Mandela was freed after 27 years in captivity.

In 1993, President Bill Clinton announced his choice of Miami prosecutor Janet Reno to be the nation's first female attorney general, after two earlier candi-

dates stumbled because they'd hired illegal aliens.

**Ten years ago:** Addressing a historic rift within NATO, Secretary of State Colin Powell told a congressional hearing that the future of the military alliance was at risk if it failed to confront the crisis with Iraq. The al-Jazeera Arab satellite station broadcast what was believed to be a new audio statement from Osama bin Laden urging Iraqis to carry out suicide attacks on Americans.

**Five years ago:** The Defense Department charged Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and five other detainees at Guantanamo Bay with murder and war crimes in connection with the Sept. 11 attacks. (Charges against one were later dropped; the trial of the other five has yet to take place.) Yahoo Inc. rejected Microsoft Corp.'s unsolicited takeover bid. Tom Lantos, a 14-term California congressman who was a forceful voice for human rights, died in Bethesda, Md., at age 80.

**One year ago:** Whitney Houston, 48, who'd ruled as pop music's queen until her majestic voice was ravaged by drug use and her regal image was tarnished by erratic behavior and a tumultuous marriage to singer Bobby Brown, was found dead in a hotel room in Beverly Hills, Calif. Mitt Romney eked out a narrow win in Maine's Republican caucuses.

**Today's Birthdays:** Actor Conrad Janis is 85. Actress Tina Louise is 79. Actor Burt Reynolds is 77. Songwriter Gerry Goffin is 74. Actor Sonny Landham is 72. Band-leader Sergio Mendes is 72. Rhythm-and-blues singer Otis Clay is 71. Actor Philip Anglim is 61. Actress Catherine Hickland is 57. Rock musician David Uosikkinen (The Hooters) is 57. Actress Carey Lowell is 52. Singer Sheryl Crow is 51. Former Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin is 49. Actress Jennifer Aniston is 44. Actor Damian Lewis is 42. Actress Marisa Petroro is 41. Singer D'Angelo is 39. Actor Brice Beckham is 37. Rock M-C vocalist Mike Shinoda (Linkin Park) is 36. Singer-actress Brandy is 34. Actor Matthew Lawrence is 33. Rhythm-and-blues singer Kelly Rowland is 32. Singer Aubrey O'Day is 29. Actress Q'orianka Kilcher is 23. Actor Taylor Lautner is 21.

**Thought for Today:** "Perhaps when we find ourselves wanting everything, it is because we are dangerously close to wanting nothing." — Sylvia Plath (1932-1963).

### FROM THE BIBLE

*I came not to call the righteous, but sinners. Matthew 9:13.* Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis

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