

Esquire

The Friends Of Dave Brat

By: Charles P. Pierce
June 11, 2014

The most revelatory piece about how Dave Brat came to be the likely new congressman from the Seventh Congressional District of the Commonwealth of Virginia ran in *Tiger Beat On The Potomac* back on April 17. (We [noted it at the time](#).) It also undermines the emerging character of Dave Brat, Ordinary Joe. A lot of the credit for his upset is going (rightly) to various radio hosts who took the payola from wingnut sugar daddies as described by Ken Vogel and MacKenzie Weinger. Mark Levin took almost \$800,000 from Americans For Prosperity. Laura Ingraham was on the arm, too. Brat also seems [to owe his job](#) to Cato Institute president John Allison.

The funding for the program came from John Allison, the former CEO of BB&T (a financial-services company) who now heads the Cato Institute. The two share an affinity for Ayn Rand: Allison is a major supporter of the Ayn Rand Institute, and Brat co-authored a paper titled "An Analysis of the Moral Foundations in Ayn Rand." Brat says that while he isn't a Randian, he has been influenced by [Atlas Shrugged](#) and appreciates Rand's case for human freedom and free markets.

In 2008, Allison was [forced by the evil federal government](#) to take some TARP bailout money. As a devotee of the book that [Is Not About Orcs](#), this [pained him greatly](#). But he got busy and set up the BB&T Moral Foundations Of Capitalism Program, which is how Brat's gig at Randolph-Macon came to be. In brief, Brat's job, and the support he got from the Raving-Loon Industrial Complex, all was financed in some way or another by the same vast lagoon of plutocratic payola with which we've all become sadly familiar. This is not going to be prominent in the mainstream analysis of what happened.