

DIGITAL JOURNAL

Op-Ed: Dave Brat must stay on-message, MSNBC's first Brat hatchet job

By Ralph Lopez
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It didn't take long, and it was right after his victory that MSNBC ran one of the most dishonest pieces of journalism in recent memory, when it interviewed Dave Brat and selectively edited it down to a gratuitous hit job.

Of the full content of a fairly thoughtful interview, MSNBC whittled it down to the final minutes of an over-tired Brat wanting to squeeze in a thanks to his campaign workers, and getting wonkish on the federal minimum wage.

Message to Brat: Don't let them "Ron Paul" you. Paul, who should have been the darling of the anti-war left, and often was despite the media, was instead stuck with what he had said a while back on the Department of Education, (that it was mostly a waste of money which is true) and on the federal income tax. Nevermind that Paul resonated wildly with an electorate weary of war, weary of its rights being attacked, and starting to suspect that Paul's economics were right after all. Paul alone said get rid of the Federal Reserve, and you'll put an end to wars, because the elites will have no way to pay for them.

When Occupy Wall Street came out against bank bailouts and "crony capitalism," Ron Paul went before them and said "psst you guys! I wrote that book!"

Fortunately, Brat only need refer to his own tweets to bone up on his own best message. His last tweet summarizing his campaign said:

"I am running for Congress to be ERIC CANTOR'S TERM LIMIT. Free Markets, Constitution, Liberty. No more Crony Capitalism!"

By free markets, Brat means no bank bailouts. Constitution, by which Brat means civil liberties as affected by the Patriot Act, the NSA, and the NDAA. The NDAA, you may recall, is that stinky piece of legislation pushed for by Obama and passed by this sitting Congress, which purports to allow the US military to hold Americans without charge or trial, forever.

No doubt Brat holds a wide array of interesting and well-developed views on a broad range of issues, but you've got to say, Look guys, I didn't come here to lower the minimum wage, or to abolish shelters for homeless kittens. I'm here to stop illegal immigration, restore the Bill of Rights of the Constitution, and end crony capitalism.

Brat's election eve tweet couldn't have been more spot-on.

Granting wide-ranging interviews to a "news" station in name only like MSNBC is probably not a good idea. The more you say, the more they can take out of context. On its website MSNBC runs the headline "Brat: I just wanted to talk about the victory," despite many minutes of Brat talking about other things, which didn't make the cut. We know this because [Newsbusters.org](#) got a copy of the entire interview, [audio HERE](#). In his interview with Chuck Todd Brat said things like:

TODD: Well, let me ask, do you believe your victory is all the immigration issue? Do you say, if people say, boy you won this on immigration, you would say yes or, you would say, well, it's more than that?

BRAT: No, I think it's more than that. I mean, I've been trying to get it through to my local press. I can give a stump speech that goes about 20 minutes, and immigration is a part of that aspect but I ran on the fiscal issues and the Republican creed, which starts off with the main thing I'm interested in, and that's a commitment to free markets. So then I went through them yesterday in the speech in brief, but the six planks in the Republican Creed are commitment to free markets, equal treatment of everyone under the law, fiscal responsibility, right, we're clearly in the ditch on that one, adherence to the Constitution...

And like:

TODD: Would you call yourself an anti-Wall Street Republican?

BRAT: I'm not anti-Wall Street, I'm anti-distortions to free markets. Anything that distorts the free market I'm against. So when Wall Street goes astray, which they often do, I'm completely pro-business, but Adam Smith, the founder of free market economics said when two or three business men get together, look out because collusion is right around the corner, right?

Fairly good stuff.

US Representative-Elect Brat, announce that you will be taking a week off after an exhausting campaign to reconnect with your family. Always a winner in America. Then sit down with your index cards and notebooks and hash out your answers to the talkingheads. Figure out how to always pull it back around to what *you* want to talk about, not what *they* want to talk about. Don't let them Ron Paul you.

Below is the full transcript of the interview published by [Newbusters.org](#), with the parts that made it onto the air in bold.

Source: [Newsbusters.org](#)

CHUCK TODD, anchor: Back now with more on Congressman Eric Cantor's defeat last night. . I'm joined now by the man who defeated him. Economics professor Dave Brat. He pulled the stunning upset, and he joins me now on the phone. Professor Brat, good morning to you, sir. Congratulations.

DAVE BRAT: Hey, morning, Chuck. Thank you so much. Appreciate it.

TODD: Well, let me ask, do you believe your victory is all the immigration issue? Do you say, if people say, boy you won this on immigration, you would say yes or, you would say, well, it's more than that?

BRAT: No, I think it's more than that. I mean, I've been trying to get it through to my local press. I can give a stump speech that goes about 20 minutes, and immigration is a part of that aspect but I ran on the fiscal issues and the Republican creed, which starts off with the main thing I'm interested in, and that's a commitment to free markets. So then I went through them yesterday in the speech in brief, but the six planks in the Republican Creed are commitment to free markets, equal treatment of everyone under the law, fiscal responsibility, right, we're clearly in the ditch on that one, adherence to the Constitution, you know, 10th Amendment, moving things that don't belong at the federal level back down to the states, and a strong defense and faith in God and strong moral character. And that's what I ran on.

Amnesty at the end was a clear differentiator between myself and Eric Cantor. So it fits into the whole narrative and it also fits into the narrative that Eric just has not been present in the district and he was out of touch in supporting the Chamber [of Commerce] agenda on that one. I was door knocking. I know what's on the mind of the folks.

TODD: Would you call yourself an anti-Wall Street Republican?

BRAT: I'm not anti-Wall Street, I'm anti-distortions to free markets. Anything that distorts the free market I'm against. So when Wall Street goes astray, which they often do, I'm completely pro-business, but Adam Smith, the founder of free market economics said when two or three business men get together, look out because collusion is right around the corner, right? And so our Founders were smart enough to know that. I'm not anti, but James Madison knew that what we want [is] a lot of competing factions, many people competing against each other so that no one becomes a monopoly and has power. Right now we have too many mini princes up there in D.C. We need more competition, not less.

TODD: Let me ask you a few other issue questions. We've talked a lot about immigration. Where are you on the minimum wage? Do you believe in it, and would you raise it?

BRAT: Minimum wage, no, I'm a free market guy. Our labor markets right now are already distorted from too many regulations.

I think [the] Cato [Institute] estimates, you know, there's \$2 trillion of regulatory problems and then throw ObamaCare on top of that, the work hours is 30 hours a week. You can only hire, you know, 50 people. There's just distortion after distortion after distortion and we wonder why our labor markets are broken.

TODD: So should there be a minimum wage in your opinion?

BRAT: Say it again.

TODD: Should there be a minimum wage in your opinion?

BRAT: Um, I don't have a well-crafted response on that one. All I know is if you take the long-run graph over 200 years of the wage rate, it cannot differ from your nation's productivity. Right? So you can't make up wage rates. Right?

I would love for everyone in sub-Saharan Africa, for example, children of God to make \$100 an hour. Right? I would love to just assert that that would be the case. But you can't assert that unless you raise their productivity. And then the wage follows. You know the --

TODD: It sounds like you're making the case against--

BRAT: -- the Left sometimes just thinks you can mandate, sure --

TODD: So it sounds like you're making a case against a federal mandated minimum wage.

BRAT: Um, I'm just making the case I just made, which is that you cannot artificially make up wage rates, they have to be related to productivity.

TODD: Let me ask you about trade agreements. There's a couple of big ones that actually [are] likely to come for you to vote on assuming you do get elected to Congress in November, a big one with Europe and a big one with Asia. In general, what are your view of trade agreements. Are you open to big trade agreements or not?

BRAT: Yeah, I'm a free trader. I mean, after World War II, the free trade GATT association brought tariffs roughly from 50 percent down to about four percent or less today. And that's been good for European trade with us. We set up our archenemies Japan and Germany after the war, started trading with them, and it enriched all of us. So I have a win-win positive view about relationships with other countries that respect the rule of law. And so we've got to move forward on that front as well.

TODD: Let me ask you about something, a foreign policy question. Arming the Syrian rebels. Would you be in favor of that? With the U.S. military helping to arm the moderate Syrian rebels?

BRAT: Hey, Chuck, I thought we were just going to chat today about the celebratory aspects. I'd love to go through all of this but my mind is just uh, I didn't get much sleep last night.

TODD: No, no, I understand that. I just want to get a sense of--

BRAT: I love all the policy questions, I'm happy to do them, but I just wanted to talk about the victory ahead and I wanted to thank everybody that worked so hard on my campaign. I'm happy to take policy issues at any time, I just wanted to call out a thanks to everybody today.

TODD: No, I understand that. Quickly on something on national security. Do you consider yourself an interventionist or an isolationist?

BRAT: I think the press is in the habit of doing juxtapositions like that that don't capture reality well. I'm a Ph.D. in economics and so you analyze every situation uniquely because every international situation is unique. So I don't have a pattern that fits every single incidence, but I think it's absolutely necessary that the United States does project its power abroad. I think our Defense Department is bigger than the next ten combined. Without that I think would you have chaos, without our commitment to rights abroad and keeping the peace. But that does not mean that we should not ask some of the European countries to pay up part of the bill now.

They've all become rich and developed and so it's time to share the burden.

TODD: All right. Mr. Brat, I will let you go. I know you're coach of your debate team there at Randolph Macon, or have been, so I figured you wouldn't mind a few extra policy questions.

BRAT: No, I mean, I love it but give me [unintelligible] next time and I'm happy to do it. Thank you, Chuck.

TODD: You got it. We'll ship more coffee. Alright, thanks very much, Mr. Brat. We'll be following your campaign very closely.