

Op-Ed: Ron Paul associates claim he signed off on racist newsletters

By [William Schmalfeldt](#)
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Ron Paul supporters claim that the media ignores their candidate. Well, let's see what we can do to fix that. Of course, "media attention" includes the bad with the good. And this is bad. Quite bad.

Rep. Ron Paul (R-TX) is a Republican candidate for President of the United States. Before that, he was a doctor and a businessman. During his years promoting his business ideas and his thoughts about society, he published a newsletter. These are indisputable facts.

What's being disputed is whether or not Rep. Paul was aware of the racially-charged nature of several of his newsletters.

The [Christian Science Monitor](#) has a pretty good timeline of what was published in these newsletters.

For instance, in December 1989 Paul's newsletter contained this prediction: "Racial Violence Will Fill Our Cities" because "mostly black welfare recipients will feel justified in stealing from mostly white 'haves.' "

In another newsletter, published by Paul, someone writes:

"I think we can assume that 95 percent of the black men in that city [Washington] are semi-criminal or entirely criminal."

An August 1992 edition of the Ron Paul Report labeled former Rep. Barbara Jordan (D) of Texas "the archetypal half-educated victimologist".

That is just a sampling. Rep. Paul has consistently denied being the author of these inflammatory, racially charged comments, as well as several others that are seen as anti-Gay and anti-Semitic.

While claiming "some responsibility" for the content, Paul said on Iowa radio that "I was not an editor. I'm like a publisher.... There were many times when I did not edit the whole letter and other things got put in."

So, putting the best possible face on it, Ron Paul was a sloppy publisher who didn't properly edit the content that went out under his name. If he wasn't able to control the message of his own newsletter, one can rightfully wonder how he can possibly control the complicated job of being President of the United States.

But here's some news that might make you feel better about Paul's editorial acumen, if not his veracity.

A story in today's [Washington Post](#) quotes "people close to Paul's operations" who say he not only was aware of the racially and socially-charged content of his newsletters, he approved of them and signed-off on them before they were published.

"It was his newsletter, and it was under his name, so he always got to see the final product. . . . He would proof it," said Renae Hathway, a former secretary in Paul's company and a supporter of the Texas congressman.

Well, that doesn't sound like an aloof publisher, a faulty editor, someone who was unaware of the content of the newsletter that went out under his name as Paul and his supporters claim.

In fact, Paul told CNN in December that the racist, homophobic, anti-Semitic content of his newsletters came as a surprise to him.

"I've never read that stuff. I've never read — I came — was probably aware of it 10 years after it was written." Paul said.

Another Paul associate who spoke on condition of anonymity so as not to be placed in the position of publicly criticizing a former employer (*which strikes this writer as a shabby reason for granting anonymity, but I don't work for the Washington Post*) said the racially charged, homophobic, anti-Semitic nature of the newsletter was a move calculated by Paul to increase his notoriety.

"It was playing on a growing racial tension, economic tension, fear of government," said the person, who supports Paul's economic policies but is not backing him for president. "I'm not saying Ron believed this stuff. It was good copy. Ron Paul is a shrewd businessman."

Shrewd? How shrewd is it for a person with presidential ambitions to have statements like these associated with his name?

They claimed, for example, that the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. “seduced underage girls and boys”; they ridiculed black activists by suggesting that New York be named “Zooville” or “Lazyopolis”; and they said the 1992 Los Angeles riots ended “when it came time for the blacks to pick up their welfare checks.” The June 1990 edition of the Ron Paul Political Report included the statement: “Homosexuals, not to speak of the rest of society, were far better off when social pressure forced them to hide their activities.”

Apparently, these comments were not controversial enough. The Post reports that Paul met with Ed Crane, the longtime president of the libertarian Cato Institute, to discuss direct mail solicitations. Crane told the Post that Paul reported getting his best response when he used a mailing list from the now-defunct newspaper Spotlight, which was widely considered anti-Semitic and racist.

According to the anonymous former associate, Paul and his crew decided the best thing to do would be to combine business advice with highly-charged content designed to stoke the fears of the right wing.

The investment letter became the Ron Paul Survival Report — a name designed to intrigue readers, the company secretary said. It cost subscribers about \$100 a year. The tone of that and other Paul publications changed, becoming increasingly controversial. In 1992, for example, the Ron Paul Political Report defended chess champion Bobby Fischer, who became known as an anti-Semitic Holocaust denier, for his stance on “Jewish questions.”

Longtime Paul associate, Lew Rockwell, who was listed on corporate documents as vice president of Paul's business, is credited (if that word can be used) for writing most of the racially-charged stuff. The people close to Paul say there is no indication that Paul wrote the material. Rockwell, founder of a libertarian think tank in Alabama, did not return phone calls and e-mails from the Post seeking comment, but during a 2008 interview with the New Republic, he denied being Paul's ghostwriter.

Paul had to walk a tightrope to keep his Libertarian supporters happy while throwing red meat to racist, homophobic and anti-Semitic readers, according to another associate. The Post quoted Eric Dondero Rittberg, a former longtime Paul aide who says Paul allowed the controversial material in his newsletter as a way to make money. Rittberg told the Post he personally witnessed Paul proofreading, editing, and signing off on his newsletters in the mid-1990s.

“The real big money came from some of that racially tinged stuff, but he also had to keep his libertarian supporters, and they weren’t at all comfortable with that,” he said. Dondero Rittberg is no longer a Paul supporter, and officials with Paul’s presidential campaign have said he was fired. Dondero Rittberg disputed that, saying he resigned in 2003 because he opposed Paul’s views on Iraq.

The Post story shows how the concept of advertising and race-baiting merged in the July 15, 1994, issue of Survival Report.

It contained a passage criticizing the rate of black-on-white crime when “blacks are only 12 percent of the population.” That was accompanied by two pages of ads from Ron Paul Precious Metals & Rare Coins, a business Paul used to sell gold and silver coins.

“The explosion you hear may not be the Fourth of July fireworks but the price of silver shooting up,” said one of the ads.

Hathway, the former Ron Paul & Associates secretary, said: “We had tons of subscribers, from all over the world. . . . I never had one complaint” about the content.

For his part, while disavowing the content of these newsletters and saying he was unaware of what was contained in them, Paul says he "abhors" the viewpoints expressed in the publications that went out under his name.

Sure. **Now** he does.

But at least he's getting media attention.

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