



Ron Paul Knew All About His Beloved Racist Newsletters

By *Jim Newell*

The *Washington Post* is out with an [excellent update](#) on the history of the [racist, homophobic, survivalist, nutcase newspapers](#) that were published under his name in the 80s and 90s, which comes awfully close to confirming the most likely version of the story: He may not have written every word of them, but he sure signed off on them *and wanted* them written that way to pick up more subscribers and make more money.

The *Post* quotes Renae Hathaway, a Paul supporter and former secretary at Ron Paul & Associates, the company that published them, saying, "It was his newsletter, and it was under his name, so he always got to see the final product. . . . He would proof it." Ouch.

And who could confirm that Paul was behind the editorial decision to make his newsletters so offensive? The head of the most prominent libertarian think tank in Washington D.C. should suffice:

Ed Crane, the longtime president of the libertarian Cato Institute, said he met Paul for lunch during this period, and the two men discussed direct-mail solicitations, which Paul was sending out to interest people in his newsletters. They agreed that "people who have extreme views" are more likely than others to respond.

Crane said 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. Let's throw in one more anonymous source for kicks:

A person involved in Paul's businesses, who spoke on condition of anonymity to avoid criticizing a former employer, said Paul and his associates decided in the late 1980s to try to increase sales by making the newsletters more provocative. They discussed adding controversial material, including racial statements, to help the business, the person said.

It's a welcome reminder that the libertarian movement that's now headquartered in lush glass, brick, and steel think tanks and research centers, populated by savvy young intellectuals, made its money in the early years by pandering to deep-pocketed extremist lunatics. This history doesn't set it apart from that of many other proud American institutions, but after years of hearing petulant neener-neeners from all libertarians about how they're the only group in American politics that lives and dies by profound moral principles and nothing else, let's send a hearty neener-neener back their way.

But if you're already dedicated to Ron Paul's campaign, who cares? The goal here is to use the first viable libertarian candidacy in a major political party in some time to pick up enough delegates in nominating contests to matter, mathematically, and then leverage that into a major convention speech, insertion into the party platform, or role in playing kingmaker to the eventual nominee. The specific nominee's editorial history from decades back — which wasn't that different from the mainstream Republican party's at the time — needn't derail that. It's just an icky compromise every supporter will have to make. (Neener neener.)

[Selections from newsletters via [The New Republic](#), image via AP]