



GOP Bid To Paint Mark Udall As 9/11 Truther Backfires Spectacularly

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On Monday, Republican operatives seemed to think they had a bonafide gamechanging gaffe on their hands. In a video debunked by Business Insider, Sen. Mark Udall (D-CO) appeared to endorse one of the widely discredited 9/11 conspiracy theories in 2007. "There's some evidence that were charges planted in the buildings that brought them down," Udall could be quoted as saying -- if one were to take him completely out of context, which the Insider report showed he had been.

By the end of the day, even conservative news outlets were ripping the attempted opposition research dump, which was given to the news outlet by a "conservative tipster," as bogus.

The Business Insider story made clear that Udall was simply repeating a question back to an audience member at the town hall he was holding. More than once, he dismissed the allegations. "I've seen nothing to suggests that there was that kind of pre-placed charges in the building," he said later in the more complete video.

Still, GOP officials clearly thought they had something. America Rising, a top Republican opposition research PAC, went up quickly with its own analysis titled: "3 Things A U.S. Senator Should Never Say About 9/11." Brad Dayspring, the communications director for the National Republican Senatorial Committee, urged journalists to ask Udall about his alleged "lapse" into trutherism.

But it wasn't long before even more conservative-minded figures were calling out the botched hit job. Julian Sanchez, a senior fellow at the libertarian Cato Institute, got into an extended Twitter exchange with America Rising executive director Tim Miller.

Before Monday ended, conservative outlets like Hot Air and the Washington Examiner had published their own stories disputing the claim that Udall might be a 9/11 truther.

"Indeed, based on full audio from the event... Udall is less of a conspiracy theorist and more a lawmaker who's politely trying to answer an unruly mob of cranks," the Examiner's T. Becket Adams wrote.

Hot Air's Noah Rothman went a step further in condemning the truther allegations.

"Mark Udall is not a 9/11 truther, and any conservative who seeks to portray him as such is not only misrepresenting the senator's comments but doing their own cause no good," he wrote.

Udall is of course one of several vulnerable incumbent Democrats whose race could determine control of the Senate next year. He currently trails his Republican opponent, Rep. Cory Gardner, 46.7 percent to 43 percent, according to to TPM's PollTracker average.