



“Everybody Colludes?” Hey Dave Brat, Go Piss on Your Epistemology.

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In an interview about the revelation that Trump campaign members met with several Russians in June of 2016 under the promise of providing trash on Hillary Clinton, Congressman Dave Brat (R-VA 07) stated, “Everybody colludes.” **Hey Dave, go piss on your epistemology.**

If you listen to Dave Brat long enough, you will hear him interject into the conversation that he is an economist or that he went to seminary or that he taught ethics. I would submit to you that Dave Brat is grounded in none of those schools, disciplines or principles.

Dave Brat’s theories and opinions, I submit, are as wacky and convoluted as those of L. Ron Hubbard, the inventor of Scientology. The Georgetown University economist Harry Holzer commented on Brat’s economic hypotheses: “A good journal is not going to publish the kind of statistical work he did because it is so low in quality.” Brat believes that the role of Protestantism is the strongest factor in economic growth of a country. He leans heavily on Max Weber, a nineteenth century philosopher/economist who believed the same thing, except Weber thought that religious context was eventually drained away from capitalism. Not so Brat, who believes religion, particularly Christianity, is still the strongest factor in promoting capitalism.

Holzer goes on to say:

“[Brat’s] statistical models are very simple-minded ... In these small-sample regressions, how do we know that religion or the other variables are really ‘exogenous’ and not just correlated with other characteristics of countries that are doing well? If Christianity is so crucial, what explains the explosion of growth in China, India and other Asian countries (did they experience an explosion of Christianity that I missed)?”

So how does Brat dispute this? By going after his own field of study at the epistemological level. Essentially, Brat argues that economics is not a science at all and that mainstream economics is grounded in moral assumptions that are unexamined. In other words, according to Brat, the “science” of economics — his own profession! — is a sham. **Hey Dave, go piss on your epistemology.**

Not surprisingly, just like Paul Ryan and other far-right politicians, Brat also embraces Ayn Rand, the kooky atheist and literary champion of unfettered capitalism in the 1960’s. Rand was not an economist or even a philosopher, but her literary devotees include Milton Friedman, the

monetary economist who promoted the “shareholder value” theory of corporate America. Friedman proposed that employees and customers have no stake in a corporation since all the money belonged to shareholders. The only job of the executive, in Friedman’s view, is to maximize profits for the company’s investors. In other words, Friedman favored moneymaking and greed at all costs to employees and customers. Friedman was also one of the early proponents of school vouchers as an economic principle. Now we know where devotees like Brat and DeVos are grounded. **Hey Dave, go piss on your epistemology.**

Brat’s philosophical and ethical connection to Ayn Rand is probably more grounded in pragmatism than in belief. Ayn Rand was an atheist, unlike Brat, who went to seminary. Rand believed the source of man’s rights are derived from observed facts, which is why she called herself an “Objectivist.” For Brat, in contrast, man’s rights are derived from God. Another contrast: Rand was a huge advocate of open immigration, unlike Brat, who made cracking down on undocumented immigration a central campaign issue against Cantor. But both hate government, that’s one thing they most certainly have in common. (Ironically, Rand died of cancer and was dependent on Medicare and Social Security in her final days.) I guess for Brat, like Rand, money makes all things palatable. Enter Rand enthusiast, millionaire, John Allison, IV.

Allison, head of the large regional bank, BB&T, was such a disciple of Rand that he gave out copies of her work, Atlas Shrugged, to his executives and everyone he met. Leaving BB&T after the financial collapse of 2008, Allison became head of the Cato Institute (engineered by the Koch brothers) in 2012. True to his economic philosophy of unfettered capitalism, (wait for the irony) Allison took TARP bailout funds just before his departure!

Dave Brat received a \$500,000 fellowship from Allison “to spread the word of Ayn Rand to impressionable college students.” So much for his teaching of ethics. Moreover, Brat’s political career has been enabled by far-right talk radio host Mark Levin, himself aided by the Koch brothers to the tune of \$750,000 to promote him and other libertarian-leaning conservatives. **Hey Dave, go piss on your epistemology.**

Although Brat has pretended to run against the influence of big corporate money in politics, he has accepted huge donations from corporations and PACs like Altria, Deloitte, AKSM (medical), the Koch brothers, the DeVos family and many others. “I am running against Cantor because he does not represent the citizens of the 7th District, but rather large corporations seeking insider deals, crony bailouts and a constant supply of low-wage workers,” he wrote in the Richmond Times-Dispatch days before the primary. **Hey Dave, go piss on your epistemology.**

In sum, I say to Dave Brat: You are not a scholar or even believe in the validity of your own field of study. Quit saying you’re an economist. Quit talking about the value of Western religion. Your callous pursuit of unfettered capitalism to the detriment of less fortunate members of the society and your unwelcoming of strangers make you unfit to even bring up your knowledge of anything taught in the seminary. Stop telling us about that; we know it was an empty education. You taught ethics? Pity the fools! You are just a shill for big money interests and a morally corrupt President. You don’t care about people losing healthcare, destroying public education or

separating families who have lived here most of their lives. You sir, have no compassion; you are simply there for the highest bidder. In your own words, "Everybody colludes."
Really? **Hey Dave, go piss on your epistemology.**