

Strange political bedfellows *in flagrante*

by Julian Sereno

If politics makes for strange bedfellows, this peculiar presidential election is resulting in some bizarre liaisons in the political boudoir. Here are a couple of doozies.

Let's start with Hillary and her recent dalliance with the Neo-Cons. Neoconservatives, the wing of the Republican establishment that championed the invasion of Iraq in 2003, have abandoned the Republican candidate. Many are embracing Hillary. Robert D. Blackwell, former top Iraq adviser on the National Security Council; Kenneth Adelman, former Director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency; and Richard L. Armitage, former Deputy Secretary of State, all are voting for Hillary. They are among 26 prominent Republicans to announce their support of Clinton, out of 110 big name Republicans who have denounced Trump, according to the *New York Times*.

It makes sense if you remember that Hillary voted to allow the Iraq invasion when she was Senator from New York. That vote cost her big time when she was running against Obama in 2008. When she was Secretary of State, Hillary went for regime change in Libya, much as her new Neo-Con admirers had done in Iraq. The effects of both regime-change campaigns have been drearily similar -- the tyrants, Saddam Hussein and Muammar Qaddafi, were deposed and executed. But the subsequent governments are weak and corrupt and the states are failing, beset by Islamist insurgencies the ineffective governments have been unable to subdue.

Trump, meanwhile, denounced the Iraq invasion during the Republican debates, the only one of the multitude of Republican candidates to do so. He went

after Jeb by denouncing W., earning the enmity of the entire Bush clan as well as their acolytes and apparatchiks. He claims to have opposed the Iraq invasion from the outset, although these claims are false.

More peculiar yet is Donald Trump's rendezvous with the Fundamentalist Christian right. This group, of course, claims to adhere to a literal interpretation of scripture. It forms the hard core of the social conservative movement, opposing Gay rights, legal abortions, birth control, sex education, doctor-assisted suicide, medical marijuana and many more secular liberties and causes. Their champion, Donald Trump, in their own argot, is an unrepentant sinner -- a profanity-spewing adulterer and fornicator who not only doesn't repent his sins but boasts about them. The thrice married septuagenarian playboy was born, raised, and is a life-long resident of Manhattan (read Sodom and Gomorrah).

It's not surprising that they would support the Republican candidate over the thoroughly secular Hillary, who supports abortion rights and other causes inimical to Fundamentalists. What's really weird is why they supported Trump over Ted Cruz, a professed true believer who talks the talk and appears to walk the walk, when Cruz still had a chance at the nomination.

Ralph Reed of the Faith and Freedom Coalition, Tony Perkins of the Family Research Council, Marjorie Dannenfelser of the Susan B. Anthony List, among others, all support Trump. Why?

Trump is an authoritarian and so are they. They tell people what is right and wrong, and don't hesitate to judge others. Trump mistrusts Muslims, and wants to restrict their ability to come to the United States. They loathe Muslims and their faith. Trump has promised to allow churches to actively campaign for political candidates without losing their tax exempt status. And of course he has promised to appoint judges, including Supreme Court Justices, that want to restrict or

eliminate a woman's right to an abortion, *de rigueur* for all national Republicans these days anyway.

Of course there is a price to pay. By supporting Trump they have lost any claim to the moral high ground. They have no more moral authority.

To which I can only say, "Amen."

Julian Sereno is editor and publisher of Chatham County Line.