

# Geraldo Exposed

## An open letter to Tom Brokaw.

**D**ear Tom: According to a recent report in *TV Guide*, CNBC's house stooge Geraldo Rivera now has his eyes on your job at NBC. Though widely dismissed by intelligent human beings like you and me as a joke throughout his checkered career, Rivera has made a remarkable return from the dead in the past year or so, climbing out of the sepulcher of his slimy afternoon talk show to land a position as Bill Clinton's full-time shill on the nightly program "Rivera Live." As if this were not bad enough, his new offering, "Upfront Tonight," recently began airing. And that's not mentioning the 24 network specials NBC has paid him to do in the next six years under terms of his \$5 million-a-year contract. Clearly he is a force to be reckoned with.

In case you haven't read the interview, the man most famous for getting his nose broken on his own talk show by a bunch of Nazi skinheads (who really weren't all that much more revolting than Rivera himself) now identifies himself as "the news anchor for the next millennium." Obviously, reading this in 1998 is like waking up in 1898 and learning that Kaiser Wilhelm has proclaimed the German people "the spiritual trendsetters for the next century." Doesn't give us much to look forward to, does it?

As you know only too well, one of the vital functions of non-Geraldic journalism is to make sure that things do not simply get swept under the rug, that important facts are not conveniently buried. Alas, something like this seems to have happened during

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Geraldo's astonishing return from the grave. While reports of Geraldo's exploits regularly mention his skinhead encounter, the time he had flesh from his buttocks surgically grafted onto his face on the air, and his ludicrous hosting of the program "The Mystery of Al Capone's Vault," these reports tend to skim over the single most egregious crime of Rivera's career: his supremely offensive 1991 autobiography *Exposing Myself*. Clearly the act of a desperate man, the book provides abundant material that you could use against the pretender to the throne, should push ever come to shove at NBC. Here are a few tasty morsels:

- *Pages 46-47.* Geraldo pays for a girlfriend's illegal abortion with \$300 lent to him by a corrupt police detective. The abortionist is a Gypsy from Brooklyn recommended by the mob. Says Geraldo: "I later learned that the money had come from an A&S department store robbery committed shortly before. The rogue cop and three other bandits reportedly maced two armored-car guards in an elevator of the store, making off with approximately \$350,000 in cash. The gypsy abortionist's fee came from the detective's quarter share." Tom, whatever your failings, you have never been accused of financing an illegal abortion by a mob-recommended "cartoon witch" with money

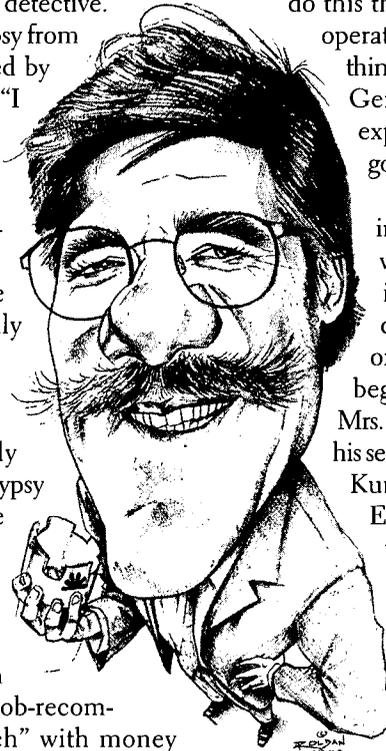
stolen by crooked cops. You might want to mention this the next time you talk contract with Jack Welch over there at NBC.

- *Pages 86-87.* Geraldo induces another girlfriend to have an abortion, then says: "I remember I paid to move her out of the apartment, but I don't remember whether or not I paid for the abortion." A random thought: Maybe Geraldo is after your job because he needs the extra cash to make good on some of these old debts. Again, I'd drop a hint to Jack Welch that this kind of behavior is just a little bit tacky.

- *Page 96.* Geraldo fakes a broadcast from the Bronx, instead filming the material in front of a tenement on 67th Street in Manhattan. Reasons Geraldo: "Obviously, in retrospect, what we did showed an incredible lack of integrity and journalistic ethics, but at the time I just figured if the guy on the assignment desk told me to do this then it must be standard operating procedure." Tom, I think you'd have to agree that Geraldo and the GMC experts at "Dateline" are going to get along just fine.

- *Pages 176-77.* At a party in honor of Marian Javits, wife of Senator Jacob Javits of New York, Geraldo disappears with the guest of honor herself, and begins a torrid affair with Mrs. Javits, almost twenty years his senior, while still married to Kurt Vonnegut's daughter, Edie. Not the sort of thing that got Walter Cronkite where he is today.

- *Page 193.* Geraldo and Marian Javits sneak off for a tryst during a book party for Rivera which also



happens to be a birthday party for Senator Javits. The guests at the party, held at the Watergate, include Henry Kissinger, Frank Sinatra, Rivera's wife Edie, Edie's father Kurt, and, of course, Senator Javits. This is the kind of behavior that should make NBC's top brass a bit nervous. Especially if they have good-looking wives.

• *Page 195.* Geraldo takes two coeds to the newsroom's basement boiler room and engages in a creative threesome. Happily, no abortions this time. By the way, Tom, does NBC have a boiler room over there at 30 Rock? If not, Rivera might go after Jennings's or Rather's job instead.

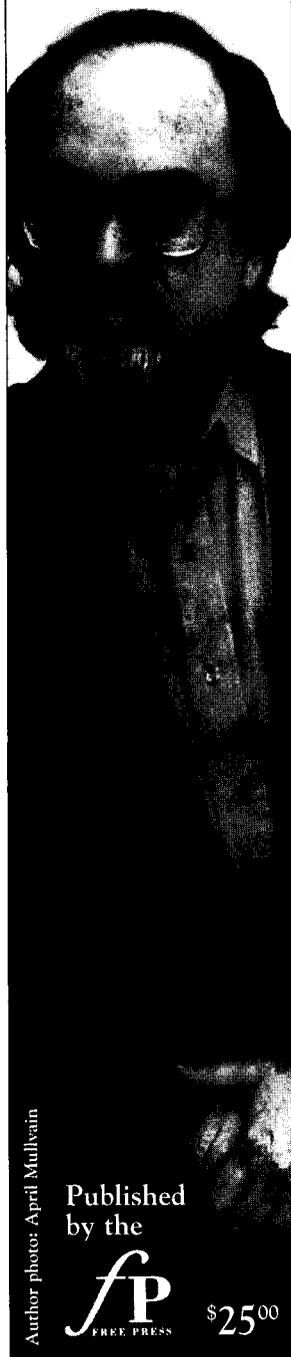
• *Page 231.* Geraldo describes beating up ABC anchorman Roger Grimsby. "Grimsby was no match for me. His attempts to fight back were feeble. He was about 15 years older than I was, and he was out of shape and unprepared for my attack, but there was no way he was getting the better of me that night; I could have done anything I wanted—I actually had my hands around his neck and I was squeezing him, and screaming, 'I'm going to kill you. You tried to destroy me. I'm going to destroy you.'" I'll level with you, Tom. If I'm in your shoes, I'm signing up for Tae Kwon Do classes right now. A guy who can effortlessly beat up a fat guy 15 years older than him is not to be trifled with. Just imagine what he could do to Willard Scott!

• *Page 308.* Geraldo shares his intimate thoughts about Barbara Walters's breasts. Again, just not the Brokaw Style.

Tom, I hope this little note has been helpful. I've always admired your solid professionalism, your quiet dignity, your commendable reserve, and your refusal to wear sweaters on the air, but what I most like about you is the fact that you've never written a book describing how much you like looking up Chris Evert's skirt. To me that shows that you're a class act, the kind of guy we want at the helm when presidents are shot, when terrorists down airplanes, when space shuttles explode. Frankly, I don't think we're ready for a guy who might be down in the boiler room with his pants around his ankles.

Best wishes,  
*Joe Queenan*

cc: Jack Welch



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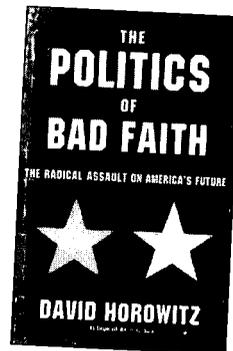
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# To Die for Kosovo

## A NATO skeptic reports from the front lines.

*The Balkans have been an ethnic cauldron for centuries. Only heavy-handed rule—by the Ottoman Empire and Tito's Communist dictatorship in Yugoslavia, for instance—has managed to minimize, though never eliminate, ethnic violence. The first round of Yugoslav secession beginning in 1989 set Slovenes, Croats, and Muslims against Serbs and each other. Round two is now occurring in Kosovo, a province largely populated by ethnic Albanians. Here, too, ethnic conflict has deep roots, but the seeds of the current fighting were planted in 1989 when Slobodan Milosevic, who used Serbian nationalism to catapult himself into control of the Serbian Communist Party, stripped Kosovo of its regional autonomy from Belgrade. Albanian resentments smoldered in succeeding years, bursting into flames earlier this year in the wake of a central government crackdown on an increasingly violent separatist movement. The following is a report from a visit to the region this past summer:*

**W**e sit nervously in our taxi at the side of the dirt road near the Kosovan village of Grabovac surrounded by members of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). Just six miles west of the provincial capital of Pristina, Serbian government authority has vanished. Even with the use of massive military force Belgrade is unlikely to win the rapidly burgeoning conflict.

Pristina is calm. Children play in the street; friends drink in sidewalk cafes; pedestrians stroll by open shops. But the

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major roads to Pec in the west and Prizren in the southwest have been blocked by fighting ("temporarily jeopardized by terrorists," explains Col. Bozidar Filic of the Serbian Ministry of Internal Affairs). Even the main road north to Belgrade is safe only during the day.

Government representatives put the best face on the situation. Goran Matic, the Yugoslav minister of information, tells me that "in the largest towns the situation is completely normal." Gen. Nbojsa Pavkovic, commander of the Kosovo garrison, points out that the fighting is occurring in "settlements of pure Albanian population."

According to one American diplomat, last fall "no one believed in the KLA much." It occasionally killed a Serbian cop, but did little more. However, last year's collapse of the Albanian government made a lot of cheap weapons available to discontented Kosovars. KLA activity increased, sparking police retaliation, which in turn helped KLA recruiting.

The KLA quickly gained control of up to 40 percent of the countryside; though a Serb offensive has regained lost ground, Belgrade's writ runs only as far as the guns of its paramilitary police. The KLA has also begun organizing in several larger cities. Several university students in Pristina tell me they know people who have joined the guerrillas. "There may be a time when we shall go and fight," one says.

Belgrade is also finding resistance at home: some 600 policemen have reportedly refused to accept duty in Kosovo. The parliament of Montenegro (along with Serbia, one of Yugoslavia's two remaining federal republics) has voted not to allow Montenegrin soldiers to serve in Kosovo.

Serbian mothers have begun protesting the deployment of their sons there.

Belgrade's last resort is the Yugoslav National Army. The well-equipped JNA could roll through the KLA barricade that stops my taxi, manned as it is by a motley squad of guerrillas bearing World War I vintage Lee Enfields. But soldiers are quick to distance themselves from police activities. Gen. Pavkovic points to constitutional limitations on the army's use for anything other than border defense. Of one village virtually destroyed during a police assault, Pavkovic says: "We bear no responsibility for the things that happened there."

Moreover, the military balance is shifting. Some of the younger KLA members in Grabovac carry modern Kalashnikov assault rifles, and the KLA has begun to obtain anti-tank and anti-aircraft weapons. Ethnic Albanians who once served in the German, Swiss, and even Yugoslavian militaries, along with veterans of the Bosnian war, are joining the insurgents. "The KLA is way ahead of the Bosnians with arms, determination, and organization," says one U.S. observer.

Belgrade has already lost the vital fight for the hearts and minds of Kosovars. Roughly nine of ten of these are ethnically Albanian, and I cannot find one who supports Serbian rule. Most probably still prefer a peaceful solution, and many resent coercive KLA recruitment tactics. But there is no doubt which side most will choose.

The rise of the guerrillas has changed the attitudes of Albanian leaders. "Rational Albanians might have accepted cultural autonomy a year ago," says one U.S. diplomat, "but we've moved beyond that now." Ibrahim Rugova, head of the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), has increasingly come under attack as a "defeatist." He now unequivocally supports indepen-