

May 19, 2015

Stephanopoulos is still in the news. John Fund writes on his long record of loyal service to the Clintons.

*... So, to recap: Stephanopoulos first came to public attention as the relentlessly slash-and-burn Clinton communications director in the 1993 film *The War Room*, a chronicle of the Clinton presidential campaign.*

During his White House years, Stephanopoulos was always known to be among those who were most eager to discredit any Clinton critic at the first get-go. Even Rahm Emanuel, another famously aggressive Clinton aide, sometimes thought Stephanopoulos wanted to go too far.

After being hired by ABC News, Stephanopoulos used his position soon after the Lewinsky scandal broke to outline the White House's scorched-earth strategy to discredit and expose potential opponents. He then sought to avoid legal questions about his role by claiming to be a journalist. He was rebuked by a federal judge for providing "not truthful" testimony in a lawsuit.

*Now, Stephanopoulos shows up again, aggressively trying to discredit Peter Schweizer's new book *Clinton Cash* when it becomes clear that it's a threat to Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign. He chooses not to reveal his extensive ties with the Clinton Foundation, which go way beyond the mere donation of \$75,000 to include the following items compiled by NewsBusters:*

Asserted that "there is hope" donations to foundation will "lead to something"

Appeared on conference calls with Democratic strategists

Used his ABC News platform to run unofficial infomercials for Clinton Foundation

In his 1999 memoir, recounted his "love" for Hillary Clinton

Hillary's campaign manager Robby Mook interned for Stephanopoulos; thanked in memoir

In addition, NewsBusters' Geoff Dickens has compiled a list of ten times George Stephanopoulos sucked up to the Clintons on ABC's airwaves. ...

And at the Daily Beast, Lloyd Grove continues to lead the charge.

It has been a rough weekend for ABC News's embattled chief anchor, George Stephanopoulos, and an even worse Sunday.

*On CNN's *Reliable Sources* media criticism program, Stephanopoulos's former ABC News colleague, Carole Simpson, unloaded on the former top aide to Bill and Hillary Clinton that she said she likes and respects.*

*"There is a coziness that George cannot escape," said Simpson, who toiled for two decades at ABC News, notably as the weekend anchor of *World News Tonight* from 1988 to 2003. "While he did try to separate himself from his political background to become a journalist, he really isn't a journalist."*

Thus Simpson attempted to obliterate Stephanopoulos's claims of impartiality as the 2016 presidential campaign heats up, featuring Hillary Clinton's status as the prohibitive frontrunner for the Democratic nomination.

Like Reliable Sources host Brian Stelter and another former ABC News colleague, Jeff Greenfield, Simpson said she was "dumbfounded" by Thursday's revelation that Stephanopoulos failed to disclose \$75,000 in recent donations to the Bill, Hillary and Chelsea Clinton Foundation—this, as he conducted a confrontational April 26 interview with Clinton Foundation critic Peter Schweizer.

"I wanted to just take him by the neck and say, 'George, what were you thinking?' Clearly, he was not thinking. I thought it was outrageous," Simpson said. "And I am sorry that again the public trust in the media is being challenged and frayed because of the actions of some of the top people in the business." ...

Media Mash Up has more.

We don't think saying you're sorry is enough. But most media types are willing to give ABC media maven George Stephanopoulos a pass for apologizing for his ethical error, bypassing ABC News' standards and letting his liberal skirts show. At least Fox News' Howard Kurtz got it right: "For George to give money to the Clinton Foundation, out of all possible charities, knowing full well that Hillary was gearing up to run, is a grave error in judgment. For him not to disclose this to his network or viewers—especially when he was aggressively interviewing 'Clinton Cash' author Peter Schweizer about that very foundation—is unthinkable. And for ABC to brush this off as an 'honest mistake' is embarrassing." ...

Scott Johnson says Stephe's apology is a bunch of "weasel words from a weasel." ... *Stephanopoulos wraps his statement in a profession of his great generosity, of which the Clinton Foundation was coincidentally an additional beneficiary. He made the donations over the past three years only to support worthy causes: to heal the sick, protect the weak and feed the starving. Make room for the apostle George.*

Nevertheless, Stephanopoulos gave a somewhat more jaded account of contributions to the Clinton Foundations only last month to Jon Stewart. At that time, before the Free Beacon had dug out the record of Stephanopoulos's contributions to the Clinton Foundations, Stephanopoulos lucidly explained: "But everybody also knows when those donors give that money, President Clinton or someone, they get a picture with him, there is a hope that is going to lead to something." Everybody knows!

This is all before we get to the proposition that Stephanopoulos's failure to disclose the contributions in connection with the Schweizer interrogation represented a failure to go "the extra mile." It didn't represent a failure to comply with the fundamental requirements of honesty and integrity (or ABC News policy). I believe the technical term of art that applies here, as explicated by William Voegeli, is "bullshit."

Michael Goodwin says Georgie has forfeited all trust as a newsman.

My, my, the bigger they are, the dumber they think we are.

Dan Rather of CBS was toppled by a phony document scam. Lyin' Brian Williams at NBC casually mixed fact with self-aggrandizing fiction. Now George Stephanopoulos is caught in a Clinton web of deceit at ABC.

The hat trick of arrogant anchor scandals helps explain why Americans don't trust network news. With apologies to Walter Cronkite, that's the way it is, and the way it is stinks.

Stephanopoulos shares with Rather and Williams the rotten distinction of fessing up only after being exposed by real journalists. In his case, the [Washington Free Beacon](#) uncovered his secret donations to the Clinton Foundation and contacted ABC for a response.

That was the honorable thing to do — get the other side of the story before publishing it. But Stephanopoulos ditched his journalistic veneer and reverted to his Clinton White House roots by quickly leaking the info to what he regarded as a more friendly news outlet, [Politico](#).

His track record of secrecy, partisanship and dishonorable behavior blows up his claim that he made an honest mistake. He engaged in a prolonged and brazen act of dishonesty. ...

And **Erik Wemple** of WaPo is still on the warpath about the slight of the journalistic efforts of Andrew Stiles at the Free Beacon. He wants an apology or at least an explanation from ABC News.

... Unresolved by Stephanopoulos's repeated meae culpae is the conduct of ABC News's PR operation, which stands accused of "running" to Politico with the story of Stephanopoulos's donations after having received an inquiry from the Washington Free Beacon. Staffers from the Washington Free Beacon [attest that they received official statements after ABC News provided them to Politico](#).

ABC News's PR has failed to respond to inquiries from the Erik Wemple Blog on this matter.

National Review

[Stephanopoulos's Long, Long Record of Loyal Service to the Clintons](#)

By John Fund

If George Stephanopoulos had simply donated \$75,000 to the Clinton Foundation while also serving as one of its favorite media panelists, the controversy over his conflicts of interest would be much less. Stephanopoulos would be guilty of a clear error, but he also would have had a lot of media company.

What makes his scandal different is that he himself chose to interrogate Peter Schweizer, the author of *Clinton Cash*, the new exposé on the Clinton Foundation. If you watch the interview, it's pretty obvious that Stephanopoulos is playing prosecuting attorney against Schweizer while also declining to ask key questions, for instance, about Hugh Rodham, Hillary Clinton's brother and his highly questionable dealings involving the foundation. In an op-ed today in *USA Today*, Schweizer says he views himself as a victim of "hidden hand journalism" in which his work was undermined without the audience's knowing the interviewer's biases.

That is no doubt one reason that Carole Simpson, a former colleague of Stephanopoulos's at ABC News, decided to drop a bomb on him today on *Reliable Sources*, CNN's media-criticism show. "There is a coziness that George cannot escape," Simpson explained. "While he did try to separate himself from his political background to become a journalist, he really isn't a journalist. . . . And I am sorry that again the public trust in the media is being challenged and frayed because of the actions of some of the top people in the business."

Simpson also stated the obvious: "While ABC News says it was 'an honest mistake,' they don't feel that way. Secretly, they are hopping mad, I am sure."

They should be looking in the mirror. As Byron York has laid out in the *Washington Examiner*, the danger signals about Stephanopoulos were evident nearly 20 years ago when he was hired by ABC News almost immediately after he left the Clinton White House. We know from his 1999 memoir that upon his departure in late 1996, he told Hillary Clinton that he loved her. York noted that for a few years ABC News put up a pretense of calling Stephanopoulos an analyst and assuring people he wouldn't be reporting on politics: "He will not report the news," an ABC spokesman assured York in 1999. But in 2002, Stephanopoulos was named the host of ABC's Sunday-morning interview show *This Week*, and in short order he became ABC's "chief Washington correspondent."

But the real danger signal flared up in February 1998, just as President Clinton, Stephanopoulos's old employer, was in deep peril of being forced from office for his role in the Monica Lewinsky sex-and-federal-perjury scandal. The Clinton White House was desperate to discredit and intimidate its adversaries, and apparently Stephanopoulos was all too willing to serve as a conduit for that.

During an interview on February 8, 1998, Stephanopoulos appeared as an analyst on *This Week*, the show he would become host of only four years later, to announce there was an "Ellen Rometsch" strategy by "White House allies" against anyone who was trying to topple Clinton.

Here is the fascinating exchange:

Sam Donaldson: We know what the White House tactics are. I mean, they've been almost open about it. Attack the press, and perhaps with good reason. Attack the independent counsel, perhaps for some good reason, and stonewall on the central issue, which is the president of the United States. And if he has nothing to hide, why is he hiding?

George Stephanopoulos: I agree with that. And there's a different, long-term strategy, which I think would be far more explosive. White House allies are already starting to whisper about what I'll call the Ellen Rometsch strategy. . . . She was a girlfriend of John F. Kennedy, who also happened to be an East German spy. And Robert Kennedy was charged with getting her out of the country and also getting John Edgar Hoover to go to the Congress and say, don't you investigate this, because if you do, we're going to open up everybody's closets. And I think that in the long run, they have a deterrent strategy on getting a lot of . . . [FBI files].

Sam Donaldson: Are you suggesting for a moment that what they're beginning to say is that if you investigate this too much, we'll put all your dirty linen right on the table? Every member of the Senate? Every member of the press corps?

George Stephanopoulos: Absolutely. The president said he would never resign, and I think some around him are willing to take everybody down with him.

Judicial Watch, the conservative public-interest law firm, had an active lawsuit alleging that Clinton-administration aides had improperly gone through FBI files to discredit opponents. After it was revealed that the Clinton administration apparently released confidential information from Linda Tripp's Pentagon employment file in order to discredit the Lewinsky confidante, Judicial Watch subpoenaed Stephanopoulos to learn the identities of the "White House allies" he had claimed were behind the "Ellen Rometsch strategy."

But, as Judicial Watch noted: "Stephanopoulos asserted his privilege as a 'journalist' not to reveal confidential sources. . . . He appears to be a conduit of information from the White House to the public, using his mantle at ABC and *Newsweek* in part to broadcast White House threats."

Tripp, it should be noted, ultimately got the Clinton administration to admit they had leaked her personnel file, and she collected a big payout in damages.

Tom Fitton, a Judicial Watch attorney in 1998 and now the group's president, once noted that Stephanopoulos had admitted in his 1999 memoir that he was under pressure while he was a White House aide because Hillary Clinton "blamed" him for not being "as tough as Kennedy's men" in going after political adversaries.

"I think you could read the Stephanopoulos reference on ABC News to the scorched-earth 'Ellen Rometsch strategy' as an endorsement of it and an attempt to ingratiate himself with the Clinton circle as a 'tough guy,'" Litton told me.

The Clinton White House was desperate to discredit and intimidate its adversaries, and apparently Stephanopoulos was all too willing to serve as a conduit for that.

The Judicial Watch lawsuit was eventually dismissed after a series of stonewalled subpoenas failed to uncover any abuse of FBI files, but not before, as the watchdog group explained in a report, U.S. District Judge Royce Lamberth "rebuked Stephanopoulos after he obviously failed to search for documents responsive to the subpoena *duces tecum* Judicial Watch served on him, but falsely testified at deposition that he had." In a 1998 ruling, Lamberth wrote: "This leads the court to conclude that Stephanopoulos failed to conduct any search for responsive documents and did so without explanation, and that some of his deposition testimony on this point is not truthful." Indeed, Stephanopoulos was also ordered to be deposed again and to pay Judicial Watch's attorneys' fees and costs.

So, to recap: Stephanopoulos first came to public attention as the relentlessly slash-and-burn Clinton communications director in the 1993 film *The War Room*, a chronicle of the Clinton presidential campaign.

During his White House years, Stephanopoulos was always known to be among those who were most eager to discredit any Clinton critic at the first get-go. Even Rahm Emanuel, another famously aggressive Clinton aide, sometimes thought Stephanopoulos wanted to go too far.

After being hired by ABC News, Stephanopoulos used his position soon after the Lewinsky scandal broke to outline the White House's scorched-earth strategy to discredit and expose potential opponents. He then sought to avoid legal questions about his role by claiming to be a journalist. He was rebuked by a federal judge for providing "not truthful" testimony in a lawsuit.

Now, Stephanopoulos shows up again, aggressively trying to discredit Peter Schweizer's new book *Clinton Cash* when it becomes clear that it's a threat to Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign. He chooses not to reveal his extensive ties with the Clinton Foundation, which go way beyond the mere donation of \$75,000 to include the following items compiled by NewsBusters:

Asserted that "there is hope" donations to foundation will "lead to something"

Appeared on conference calls with Democratic strategists

Used his ABC News platform to run unofficial infomercials for Clinton Foundation

In his 1999 memoir, recounted his "love" for Hillary Clinton

Hillary's campaign manager Robby Mook interned for Stephanopoulos; thanked in memoir

In addition, NewsBusters' Geoff Dickens has compiled a list of ten times George Stephanopoulos sucked up to the Clintons on ABC's airwaves.

Is it any wonder that confidence and trust in major media figures have plummeted to such low levels? It's no surprise that ABC News is in cover-up mode when it comes to L'Affaire Stephanopoulos. Disciplining him would reveal just how bad a mistake they made when they so quickly transported him from the Clinton White House attack machine to the commanding heights of ABC News.

Daily Beast

[ABC Colleague: George Stephanopoulos 'Really Isn't a Journalist'](#)

If ABC's chief anchor thought two apologies over his undeclared Clinton Foundation donations would be enough to pacify his critics, he was wrong.

by Lloyd Grove

It has been a rough weekend for ABC News's embattled chief anchor, George Stephanopoulos, and an even worse Sunday.

On CNN's *Reliable Sources* media criticism program, Stephanopoulos's former ABC News colleague, Carole Simpson, unloaded on the former top aide to Bill and Hillary Clinton that she said she likes and respects.

"There is a coziness that George cannot escape," said Simpson, who toiled for two decades at ABC News, notably as the weekend anchor of *World News Tonight* from 1988 to 2003. "While he did try to separate himself from his political background to become a journalist, he really isn't a journalist."

Thus Simpson attempted to obliterate Stephanopoulos's claims of impartiality as the 2016 presidential campaign heats up, featuring Hillary Clinton's status as the prohibitive frontrunner for the Democratic nomination.

Like *Reliable Sources* host Brian Stelter and another former ABC News colleague, Jeff Greenfield, Simpson said she was "dumbfounded" by [Thursday's revelation](#) that Stephanopoulos failed to disclose \$75,000 in recent donations to the Bill, Hillary and Chelsea Clinton Foundation—this, as he conducted a confrontational April 26 interview with Clinton Foundation critic Peter Schweizer.

"I wanted to just take him by the neck and say, 'George, what were you thinking?' Clearly, he was not thinking. I thought it was outrageous," Simpson said. "And I am sorry that again the public trust in the media is being challenged and frayed because of the actions of some of the top people in the business."

Simpson added that despite Stephanopoulos's alleged lack of journalistic *bona fides*, "ABC has made him the face of ABC News, the chief anchor, and I think they're really caught in a quandary here. While ABC says this was 'an honest mistake,' they don't feel that way. Secretly, they are hopping mad, I am sure."

Schweizer himself told *Reliable Sources* that ABC had gone into "[cover-up mode](#)" over Stephanopoulos' lapse. Schweizer would like "a rematch" with Stephanopoulos, but ABC News has not gotten back to him, he said.

Notwithstanding ABC News's official statement of support, asserting that the news division management "stands behind" Stephanopoulos and he won't face suspension or other disciplinary action, "George may be in some hot water within ABC," Simpson said.

[Daily Beast contributor Greenfield](#), a former speechwriter for New York Mayor John Lindsay and Sen. Robert Kennedy in the 1960s, was hardly more charitable.

He speculated that Stephanopoulos might have donated to the Clinton Foundation in order to repair a frayed relationship with his former employers—who felt betrayed by his best-selling White House memoir, *All Too Human*, and by his early prediction on ABC that the Monica Lewinsky scandal could lead to impeachment.

Greenfield added that ABC News might be forced into the decision that Stephanopoulos must recuse himself from covering the 2016 campaign at all.

Stephanopoulos's self-made mess, Greenfield said, is "an indication that very smart people are sometimes very foolish."

Facing a rising chorus of criticism for his lapse in judgment—not just from easy-to-dismiss partisan Republicans like former Virginia governor Jim Gilmore (another guest on *Reliable Sources*), but, more damagingly, from journalists like Simpson and Greenfield—Stephanopoulos dug in his heels.

Apparently relying on whatever lessons he learned as a tough operative two decades ago in the presidential campaign and the White House, beating back the various Clinton scandals and mini-scandals with an aggressive offense, Stephanopoulos decided to avoid the political sin of rolling disclosure.

On ABC's Washington panel show, *This Week With George Stephanopoulos*—during which the Senate's Republican Majority Leader, Mitch McConnell, did him a huge favor by appearing as guest—he gave the same [word-for-word apology](#) as he did on Friday's *Good Morning America*, where he is Robin Roberts's cohost.

Even as he acknowledged error in making his Clinton Foundation donations—having been caught by the right-leaning Washington Free Beacon and Politico—Stephanopoulos continued to insist that disclosing it would have been “go[ing] the extra mile” rather than a basic journalistic requirement.

In other words—to paraphrase another famously beleaguered public figure [whose blunders](#) were inconveniently exposed—he might not have volunteered information, but at least he was legally accurate.

Media Mash Up **GEORGIE BOY II**

We don't think saying you're sorry is enough. But most media types are willing to give ABC media maven George Stephanopoulos a pass for apologizing for his ethical error, bypassing ABC News' standards and letting his liberal skirts show. At least Fox News' Howard Kurtz got it right: “For George to give money to the Clinton Foundation, out of all possible charities, knowing full well that Hillary was gearing up to run, is a grave error in judgment. For him not to disclose this to his network or viewers—especially when he was aggressively interviewing ‘Clinton Cash’ author Peter Schweizer about that very foundation—is unthinkable. And for ABC to brush this off as an ‘honest mistake’ is embarrassing.” Moreover, ABC hired Mr. Stephanopoulos to be an analyst, with promises he would not become a journalist. He isn't a journalist, but he plays an important one on TV. Shame on ABC News. For Mr. Kurtz's analysis, see <http://fxn.ws/1A38An1>

GEORGIE BOY III

ABC News chief anchor and bottle-washer George Stephanopoulos may not have put the Clinton cash scandal behind him.

Erik Wemple of The Washington Post is outraged that ABC gave the story to Politico.com after The Washington Free Beacon inquired about Mr. Stephanopoulos' \$75,000 contribution to the Clinton foundation.

Politico, however, did another story, which listed numerous contributors from media organizations to the foundation, including Comcast, NBC Universal, News Corp., Time Warner, Turner Broadcasting, Thomson Reuters and Viacom. The list also includes individuals, including Carlos Slim, the Mexican telecom magnate and largest shareholder of The New York Times; and James Murdoch, the chief operating officer of 21st Century Fox. Both Mr. Slim and Mr. Murdoch gave between \$1 million to \$5 million.

Judy Woodruff, a PBS anchor, contributed \$250. For more details, see <http://politi.co/1Fi5Zpc>

Mr. Stephanopoulos has few defenders among his former colleagues. According to a Facebook page, ABCeniors, the rather liberal bunch of former network staffers discussed the problems with his contributions. "That shows either indifference or arrogance. Or a nice cocktail of both," wrote one former ABC hand. A former producer noted: "He knew what he was doing, and he didn't want us to know. That's deceit."

Media critic Jack Shafer wrote: "One reason [Mr.] Stephanopoulos made such a graceful switch from pol to pressie is because there isn't much to making the switch. As long as you can do the work, the journalism profession doesn't care if your last port of call was a federal penitentiary. Other politicians who have successfully crossed over to the TV news racket include Mike Huckabee, Joe Scarborough, Tim Russert, John Kasich, Jerry Springer, Susan Molinari, Diane Sawyer, Mary Matalin, Chris Matthews, Bill Moyers, Bay Buchanan, Al Sharpton, Bill Bradley, Dee Dee Myers, Dana Perino, Lawrence O'Donnell, Nicolle Wallace, Karl Rove and others."

For more details, see <http://politi.co/1GewFZ2>

Former Obama chief of staff and current Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel reportedly had a daily morning briefing with former Clinton staffers, specifically Paul Begala, James Carville and Mr. Stephanopoulos, the triumvirate of the so-called "War Room." We think it's odd that the only "journalist" was the ABC anchor.

During the 15 years we worked for ABC News we remember that we had to sign a yearly disclosure of gifts worth more than \$25 and contributions. Perhaps these documents no longer exist in the muddled world of TV news.

We have frequently written about ethical standards, or lack thereof, in the media. After The Rolling Stone and NBC debacles, we emphasized the need for accuracy and transparency rather than objectivity, fairness, balance and neutrality. For more details, see <http://bit.ly/1cFZZf2>

We hope the contribution story has legs. It's time we look behind the curtain.

Power Line

Weasel words from a weasel

by Scott Johnson

ABC News anchor George Stephanopoulos failed to disclose \$75,000 contributions and other connections to the Clinton Foundation as he interrogated Peter Schweizer regarding his book *Clinton Cash*. He didn't mention his work as a campaign operative and administration official on behalf of Bill Clinton either, but ABC viewers are apparently assumed to bring that knowledge to the table. (Wrong, but who are we to judge?)

When Stephanopoulos's contributions to the Clinton Foundation were discovered by the Free Beacon's Andrew Stiles and leaked by Stephanopoulos, or on his behalf by ABC public relations, to Politico, Stephanopoulos prepared a statement that amounted to old-fashioned damage control. Paul Mirengoff subjected the heart of Stephanopoulos's statement to close analysis and declared it a "[dubious apology](#)." ABC has declared itself satisfied. His higher-ups have looked into Stephanopoulos's heart and concluded he made "an honest mistake."

Stephanopoulos read his statement in the course of his duties on Good Morning America on Friday (video below) and again yesterday on *This Week with the Democratic Operative*, the scene of the crime (video [here](#)).

The statement doesn't quite rise to the pithy level of "Good fences make good neighbors." Like the old man in Robert Frost's "[Mending Wall](#)," however, Stephanopoulos likes having thought of it so well, he said it again. Mediate has posted the video [here](#).

Something there is that doesn't love a weasel, at least out here in flyover land. Here is Stephanopoulos's statement as read out on GMA (via the [New York Daily News](#)):

Now I want to address some news you may have seen about me. Over the last several years I've made substantial donations to dozens of charities, including the Clinton Global Foundation. Those donations were a matter of public record but I should have made additional disclosures on air when we covered the foundation.

And I now believe that directing personal donations to that foundation was a mistake. Even though I made them strictly to support work done to stop the spread of AIDS, help children and protect the environment in poor countries, I should have gone the extra mile to avoid even the appearance of a conflict. I apologize to all of you for failing to do that.

Stephanopoulos wraps his statement in a profession of his great generosity, of which the Clinton Foundation was coincidentally an additional beneficiary. He made the donations over the past three years only to support worthy causes: to heal the sick, protect the weak and feed the starving. Make room for the apostle George.

Nevertheless, Stephanopoulos gave a somewhat more jaded account of contributions to the Clinton Foundations only last month to Jon Stewart. At that time, before the Free Beacon had dug out the record of Stephanopoulos's contributions to the Clinton Foundations, [Stephanopoulos lucidly explained](#): "But everybody also knows when those donors give that money, President Clinton or someone, they get a picture with him, there is a hope that is going to lead to something." Everybody knows!

This is all before we get to the proposition that Stephanopoulos's failure to disclose the contributions in connection with the Schweizer interrogation represented a failure to go "the extra mile." It didn't represent a failure to comply with the fundamental requirements of honesty and integrity (or ABC News policy). I believe the technical term of art that applies here, as explicated by William Voegeli, is "[bullshit](#)."

NY Post

[George Stephanopoulos has forfeited all trust as a newsman](#)

by Michael Goodwin

My, my, the bigger they are, the dumber they think we are.

Dan Rather of CBS was toppled by a phony document scam. Lyin' Brian Williams at NBC casually mixed fact with self-aggrandizing fiction. Now George Stephanopoulos is caught in a Clinton web of deceit at ABC.

The hat trick of arrogant anchor scandals helps explain why Americans don't trust network news. With apologies to Walter Cronkite, that's the way it is, and the way it is stinks.

Stephanopoulos shares with Rather and Williams the rotten distinction of fessing up only after being exposed by real journalists. In his case, the [Washington Free Beacon](#) uncovered his secret donations to the Clinton Foundation and contacted ABC for a response.

That was the honorable thing to do — get the other side of the story before publishing it. But Stephanopoulos ditched his journalistic veneer and reverted to his Clinton White House roots by quickly leaking the info to what he regarded as a more friendly news outlet, [Politico](#).

His track record of secrecy, partisanship and dishonorable behavior blows up his claim that he made an honest mistake. He engaged in a prolonged and brazen act of dishonesty.

Over three years, he gave at least \$75,000 to an organization that acts like a political superPAC for Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign and a tax-free slush fund for the Clinton family and their cronies.

Through their opaque foundation, the Clintons have financial ties to repressive regimes and shady individuals around the world, pocketing many, many millions for themselves. Yet apparently starting when Hillary was Secretary of State, Stephanopoulos made common cause with his former bosses and in the process destroyed any credibility he built as a news anchor and moderator for ABC.

He made two unforgivable decisions: He didn't tell his bosses about the donations and he didn't tell viewers that he had given money to the foundation even as he reported on it and the Clintons.

At most news organizations, either would be a fireable offense. Either would be a fireable offense at ABC for someone less important.

But he may be too big to fire, at least quickly, so the network's defense of him could be a trial balloon to gauge the fallout.

Even a brief tally of recent offenses makes a compelling case. On April 26, Stephanopoulos grilled Peter Schweizer, the author of the sensational "Clinton Cash," pressing him to admit the book contains no "smoking gun."

The implication was that, if it's not indictable, it's not important. That's a legal test, not a journalistic or political one, yet Stephanopoulos cleverly used that standard to give the Clintons the all-clear.

The anchor also cited Schweizer's "partisan interest," noting that Schweizer was a speechwriter for President George W. Bush.

But as a columnist in the [Washington Post](#) noted at the time, Stephanopoulos never told viewers that he had worked for the Clintons and had defended them in many scandals. Like the Clintons themselves, he acted as if the rules only apply to others.

Two days later, Jon Stewart had Stephanopoulos on his show to talk about news coverage and the Clinton Foundation. To watch a video of the segment is to wonder whether Stephanopoulos

fears Stewart knows about the contributions and will bring them up. The lack of disclosure now makes Stewart look like a chump.

Indeed, every story Stephanopoulos has ever done about the Clintons, their critics and other politicians is now suspect. What did he make of her vanishing emails? Benghazi? Her entire tenure at State? What did he say about her Republican opponents?

To suggest, as Stephanopoulos and ABC do, that disclosing the contributions would have meant going “the extra mile” is preposterous.

Disclosing something so fundamental is not extra. It’s basic. High school newspapers have stricter conflict-of-interest rules.

Almost as egregious, ABC’s “punishment” is that Stephanopoulos will not take part in a GOP debate. Big whoop. It misses the point, as does the New York Times’ coverage highlighting Republican complaints.

The breach is clearly partisan, but that is secondary. First and foremost, it is a disqualifying violation of professional ethics, and trying to remedy it by setting partisan boundaries compounds the mess.

Are we supposed to trust Stephanopoulos on some stories but not others? Will ABC put a graphic on the screen to signal when their man is playing it straight?

Hillary Clinton’s Democratic rivals also are victimized by his conflicts. All other journalists at ABC, some of whom are dependent on Stephanopoulos for air time, are tainted by his donations.

ABC needs to face the truth. Stephanopoulos has forfeited all trust as a newsman, period, end of story.

Washington Post - Blogs

[George Stephanopoulos apologizes for third time, but what about ABC News PR?](#)

by Erik Wemple

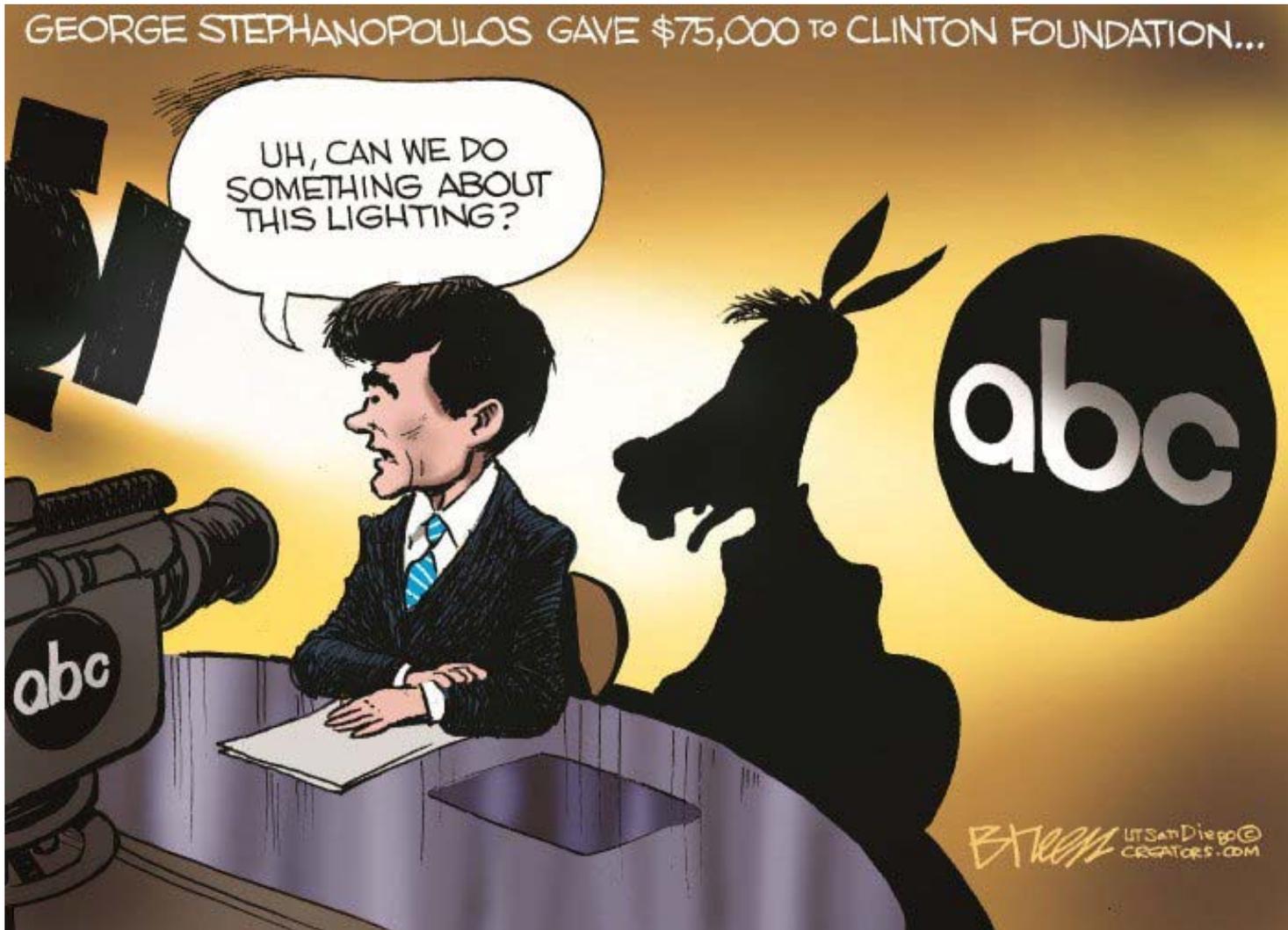
George Stephanopoulos must have liked how everyone reacted to the apology he mouthed on Friday’s edition of “Good Morning America,” because he recited pretty much the same script on Sunday’s edition of “This Week.” “I now believe that directing personal donations to that foundation was a mistake,” said Stephanopoulos, in part, as he responded to [last week’s revelations](#) that he had donated \$75,000 to the Clinton Foundation from 2012 through 2014.

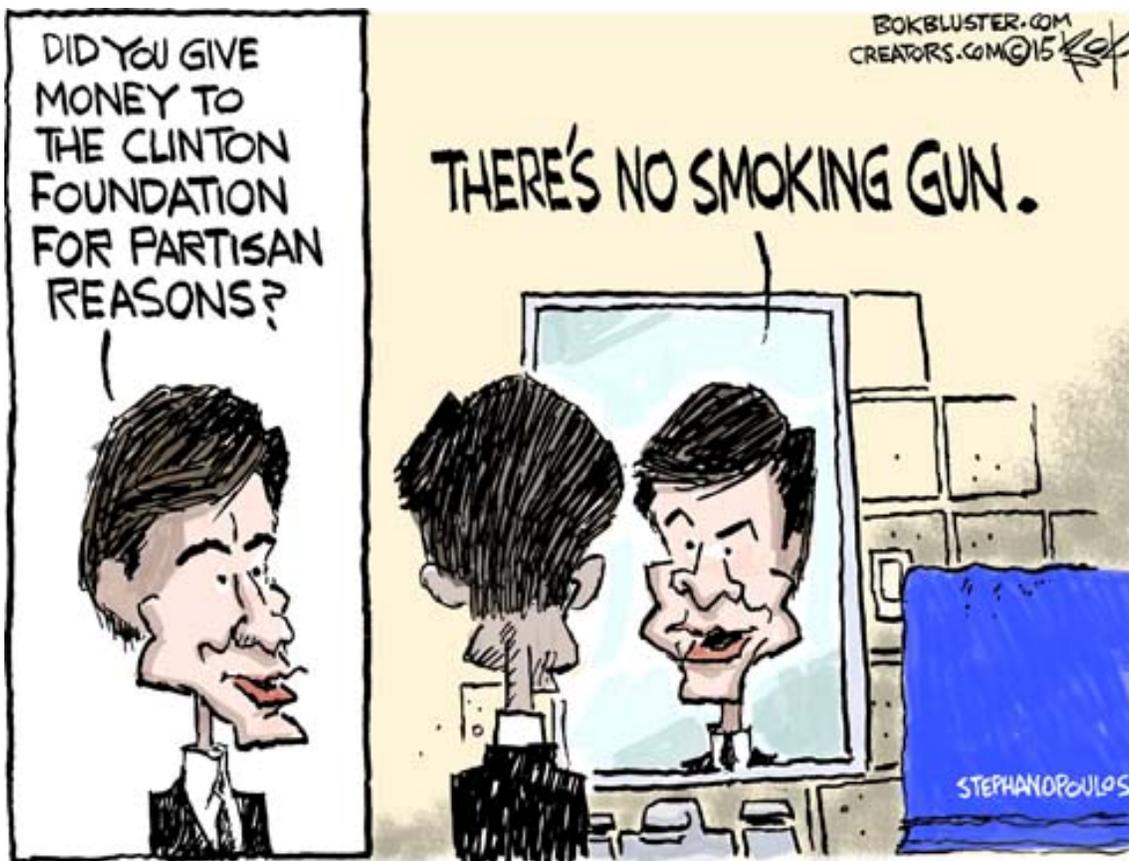
The network’s chief anchor has now tallied three apologies — one on “GMA,” one on “This Week” and another in a statement when the story first broke at [Politico](#) and the [Washington Free Beacon](#).

Unresolved by Stephanopoulos’s repeated meae culpae is the conduct of ABC News’s PR operation, which stands accused of “running” to Politico with the story of Stephanopoulos’s

donations after having received an inquiry from the Washington Free Beacon. Staffers from the Washington Free Beacon [attest that they received official statements after ABC News provided them to Politico](#).

ABC News's PR has failed to respond to inquiries from the Erik Wemple Blog on this matter.





©2015 THE AUGUSTA CHRONICLE 5/16
cagle cartoons.com
FINE...



Big Fish
THE ONION
REVIEW

abc NEWS

HERE WITH A LIST OF DERANGED CRACKPOTS WHO WE STRONGLY SUSPECT TO BE MEMBERS OF THE TEA PARTY...