

Yankee Steve's Column
for the Week of August 26, 2010

Is It Rangel or Wrangler?

Just the other day I witnessed a spectacle. I will never forget it. It was Rep. Charles Rangel [D-NY] at age 80 giving an impassioned speech in which he asked the U.S. House of Representatives to overlook his ethical violations that to date number as many as 13.

With arms flailing about and voice elevated you would have thought he was preaching in a revival meeting. But it was not souls that Rangel wanted to save; it was his job and a reputation that some of us think cannot be saved. Alas poor Rangel, he has committed the unpardonable sin - he was caught.

Rangel is part of that swamp that House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said she would drain. We notice that it has been rather quiet whenever the stench emanates from the left. Where are you Nancy?

Rangel even admitted that the House had the right to show him to the door which is what its members should do. So why doesn't he just quit? I will tell you why.

This speech by Rangel was covered in a lecture I attended some time ago when I studied psychological counseling under one of the great men in that field, Dr. Wilbur Gearhart. Then I gained an insight into all those hustlers that I used to see working the streets of downtown New York City when I was a boy. I used to wonder, "How do they live with themselves?"

Gearhart answered my questions about slick characters when he told us that there exists in every society the "sociopath," someone who cannot feel the shame that you and I would feel if people knew the worst about us.

Your pulse would quicken and your blood pressure would rise if you knew that the audience you were addressing was aware of the fact that you were living a lie, but the sociopath is different. He remains calm and loose in the saddle. The sociopath can as Thomas a Kempis said "define compunction," but he cannot feel compunction.

If you were facing a trial by the House ethics committee with so many charges against you, you would hang your head and resign in disgrace, but not old Charlie. He is part of a special breed. Now you know why Ted Kennedy (dead one year yesterday) could saunter in to the Senate with his head held aloft even though the whole country knew that he had deserted a helpless girl to die in four feet of water at the Poucha Pond. He even tried to run for the U.S. Presidency afterwards. And now you know why Bill and Hillary Clinton, Nancy Pelosi, Harry Reid, and Maxine Waters can smile to the cameras even though they know that you recognize that their political and personal lives are based on a pack of lies. They are different from the rest of us, and the difference is fundamental.

You see them and you want to shake your finger at them, but it would be to no avail because they are not like us. They shake off guilt like a duck shakes off water when it leaves the pond.

Not Just Politicians

After mentioning politicians, Dr. Gearhart brought up the high-powered salesman who want to sell us something they realize we will never need or use. And because he knew we were as naive as most folks he added to his list of sociopaths the religious leader who can know that you know the worst about him and yet his only concern is not what you think of him, but only that you let him “keep on keeping on.”

Of course such men and women are of the opinion that they are doing much good all the while they are dunking their hands in the cookie jar. This indicates that the firstly the con artist must con himself, or to put it another way, “The heart is deceitful above all things, who can know it.” [Jeremiah 17:9]

You may not support Charlie Rangel, but believe you me, Rangel believes in himself, even if his credibility is all but disappeared. He has learned how to hang onto the idea that he is among the pure in heart, and that his critics are nothing but a sanctimonious racists. Every time the Clintons were found out, they cried foul and blamed a right-wing conspiracy. Somewhere along the way the Charlie Rangels of our world have convinced themselves that they are doing good for people, and that this remains true even if they have to keep a lock on a closet of skeletons.

Ever yours,

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