

MCGRATH BEGALA

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GRETA VAN SUSTEREN, FOX NEWS HOST: The brother of the alleged architect of the anti-Rush campaign is speaking out. To take you back, after talk show host Rush Limbaugh spoke at CPAC, GOP head Michael Steele called Rush an “entertainer,” and added that Rush’s remarks are “incendiary and ugly.”

Rush quickly swung back, and Michael Steele quickly apologized.

Then President Obama’s former campaign manager wrote an op-ed called “Minority leader Limbaugh.” And the DCCC launched a Web site called ImsorryRush.com, mocking Republicans who have insulted Rush and then immediately rushed to apologize to him.

“Politico” says it is all part of a larger effort by big name Democrats like Paul Begala, James Carville, and even White House Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel to paint Rush Limbaugh as the face of the GOP.

Now, Paul Begala’s brother Chris Begala, who is a media and political consultant and is a partner of Begala and McGrath is taking a stand.

It’s nice to see you again, Chris. And, Chris, just to get things straight, are you the good Begala, or the bad Begala.

CHRIS BEGALA, POLITICAL CONSULTANT: Well, you know, I am honored to be able to work with President Bush 41 and his office here in Houston. And many years ago he dubbed me “the good Begala.” So I wear that moniker proudly.

VAN SUSTEREN: All right. I knew that. That’s why I wanted to tease you about it.

All right, now, first of all, do you think your brother and James Carville—I know them both very well. In fact I worked with Paul over at CNN. Our paths crossed quite a bit.

Have they teamed up with Rahm Emanuel, and have they targeted Rush Limbaugh?

BEGALA: You know, I do not know, Greta, if they have teamed up with Rahm Emanuel, or not. Obviously, they are good friends. I love my brother, have always loved him. He is a great brother, great bother, all of that.

But our politics are diametrically opposed. I am a conservative, he is a devout liberal. And this is nothing really new. Paul hates Rush. That is not exactly a news flash. But to take it to this level, I think, is interesting, and, in the end, I think it very well could backfire.

VAN SUSTEREN: Does he hate Rush, or does he disagree with him strongly?

BEGALA: The story is that James Carville had Democracy Corps with pollster Stan Greenburg, who was Clinton’s pollster even during the first campaign.

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They ran a poll out there, and lo and behold, big surprise, they found out that Rush Limbaugh was a polarizing person. About 40 percent of the people didn't like him that much, and about 45, 50 percent loved him.

Then Rush went into the statement which is now famous, he wants Obama to lose. Yet he wants him to lose if he follows with liberal policy.

Now, that caveat will not be included in this attack. So Paul and James have gone out, and they're having fun, and they're diverting, and their attacking Rush, and they want to put a wedge in between conservative Republicans and moderate Republicans.

The want Rush Limbaugh's statement of "I want Obama to fail," which is a mischaracterization, but they want to draw out conservative Republicans, the back brush, and they want to draw out moderate Republicans to shy away from him.

It is all diversion. Rush is an amazing genius. I think he's arguably the most important and influential broadcaster in our nation's history.

But here is where the backlash, Greta, could occur. Right now they are having fun. But as you've been talking, and everybody around this country knows, this is scary times. We are absolutely frightened—eight percent unemployment at least, 650,000 Americans lose their job in February. The stock market has dropped 25 percent this year alone.

And Paul and James and the Democrats are beating up on an iconic talk show host. That does not sit well with Americans who really need to find a job, who really need things to turn things around. And Rush will take this and constantly remind people.

And if things don't get better economically, American voters just might vote in 2010, the midyear election, with their wallets, and say, "You know, while I am hurting, the Democrats have been beating up on Rush Limbaugh." And it could backfire.

VAN SUSTEREN: What's Thanksgiving like at your house, Chris?

BEGALA: You know what, as I said, I love Paul. We spend more time talking about, sports, kids, Texas, other things like that. We do not talk that much politics.

But when we do, it's fun, and it is a lot of fun. This Thanksgiving we may raise some money, have a little debate, and give it to charity.

VAN SUSTEREN: What is the age difference between you and Paul? Who is the older, and what's the age difference?

BEGALA: He is two and a half years older than I am. And he is third of five, and I'm the fourth of five.

VAN SUSTEREN: Do you think he is watching right now?

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BEGALA: I don't know. Maybe he is. He works on, I think, some other network. I'm not really sure. But if he is not watching, we will get the clip to him.

VAN SUSTEREN: And so what are you going to say to him when you talk to him next?

BEGALA: Oh, heck, what's new?

As I said, I am a devout conservative. I believe in smaller government. I believe in less taxes, stimulate the economy, give entrepreneurs with a 100 employees and less the opportunity to create jobs.

And he wants to grow, grow, grow. They're happy right now. Democrats own the White House, the Senate, and the Congress. But here is the caveat—they also own the economy, and we will see how that goes in the midterm elections.

VAN SUSTEREN: Chris, thank you, and enjoy Thanksgiving. I would love to be the fly on the wall for that one. Thank you, Chris.

BEGALA: All right, Greta, thanks.

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