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THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY GUARDIAN, OCTOBER 29, 1976

Bob Dole is still a hero in Kansas

The publisher of Dole's hometown paper defends the senator after the Guardian's "How Clean is Bob Dole?" story; our reporter responds.

By Russell Townsley
Russell, Kansas

How clean is Bob Dole, candidate for vice-president on the Republican ticket?

Far cleaner, apparently, than the smog-filled coastal cities, cleaner than today's grandsons of the ward-heeling politicians at the turn of the century, and cleaner than the modern breed of young writers dare believe.

Bob Dole, 53, is an enigma to liberal writers who haven't learned the difference between investigative reporting and muckracking. There isn't much to be found detrimental to Dole, even in Dole Land in central Kansas. The story of another "good guy" makes dry reading—even for the Bay Guardian.

I've known Bob Dole since my partners and I bought a weekly newspaper in Russell in 1947 and made a daily of it in this wheat, cattle, oil and trade area in central Kansas. We are still a country daily, 3,950 circulation, in a town of 5,549 people, a county of 9,661, 235 miles west of Kansas City, 375 miles east of Denver, 155 miles northwest of Wichita and located on Interstate 70 between Salina and Hays. We've had Bob Dole under a microscope for nearly 30 years.

Dole lived across the intersection from my home for many years. My wife is godmother of his daughter, Robin. His former wife, Phyllis, now Mrs. Lon Buzick, lives in Sylvan Grove, 38 miles northeast of Russell and is a visitor in our home at least once a week.

Although Dole and I are of the same political party, we remain friendly adversaries. I've never asked him for a favor, and he's never asked one of us. Editorially, we've supported him on issues we felt important to our readers and have fought him on others.

As a Canadian writer said to Mollie Krug, Republican Women's Club president in an Oct. 10 telephone interview, "No one can be that clean." The implication that Miss Krug may have been somewhat careless with the truth shattered her day.

The fact that Dole doesn't own a couple of sections of farm land, directorships in corporations, a partnership in a major law firm or stock in hundreds of corporations tells more about him than can come from headlines.

The eldest son of the late Doran R. Dole, and Bina Dole, he was reared in Russell, Kansas, where his mother still lives. His parents operated a cafe after their marriage following World War I. As Dole was growing up, his father opened a feed and seed store where he bought milk, cream and eggs from farmers and shipped them to market. He sold feeds, seeds and farm supplies. The small store, typical of rural agricultural communities, was a gathering place for farmers and their friends. Later, Dole's father managed the Norris Grain Company grain elevator. In the years before his death, which occurred last December while he was in Washington attending Sen. Dole's wedding, he was an employee of the local cooperative elevator and farm supply, Agco, Inc.

Russell Townsley is the publisher of the Russell Daily News in Russell, Kansas.

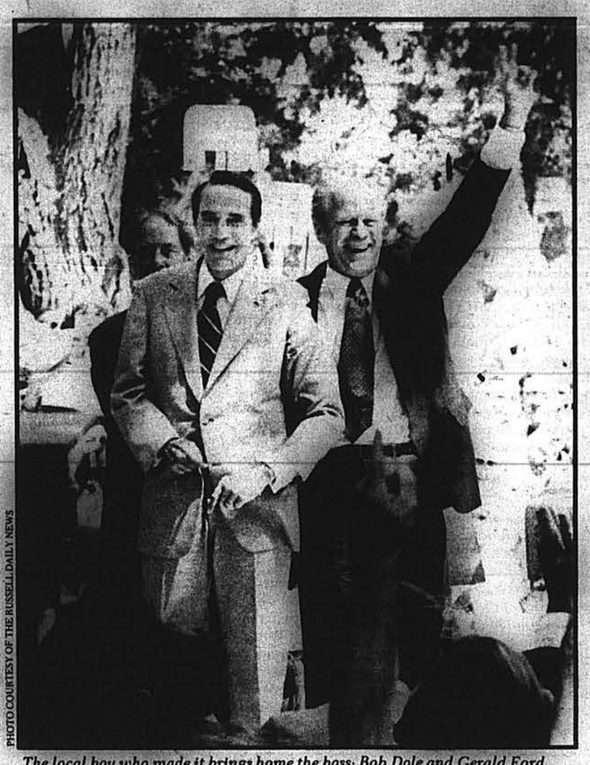

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE RUSSELL DAILY NEWS

The local boy who made it brings home the boss: Bob Dole and Gerald Ford on the courthouse lawn, Russell, Kansas, Aug. 20, 1976.

A sidewalk on the north side of town near the Dole home still bears Bob's and Kenny's names, scratched there years ago when the boys were small—and the concrete freshly poured.

While still a student at Washburn, Dole was elected state representative for Russell County. At the end of his two-year term, he was elected to Russell county attorney, a post he held from 1953 to 1961.

His decision to run for Congress was made in 1960. By this time, he had become an experienced campaigner, versed in the discipline necessary to mount an effective campaign.

His strength, then and now, is in working with people.

In that first Congressional election, Dole defeated Keith Sebelius, Norton, Kansas, the man who took Dole's congressional seat in 1968 when Dole moved across the hall into the Senate.

It was in this campaign that Dole, a nondrinker for practical purposes, realized the need for an identity. He made arrangements—and used—the Dole pineapple tag.

"We are good friends," Sebelius said in Russell Sept. 25, 1976. "Believe me, I know what it is to swim upstream in a river of pineapple juice."

Another trademark of Dole was the enlistment of hundreds of volunteers, singles and couples, young and old, recruited from the ranks of those not usually associated with political campaigns. Often they made up in zeal what they lacked in political strategy. Dole's tight rein on county-by-county activity turned the lack of experience into an effective fighting force.

Even the abortion incident in the 1974 senatorial race, unfairly charged to Dole, failed to mar a typical Dole win, close but avoiding deep-seated scars which hinder party and political unity. In that race, Dr. Bill Roy, Topeka physician, claimed last-minute flyers on the abortion issue unfairly influenced voters in his Topeka area.

It has been proven the flyers were independently produced with responsibility later assumed by Dole's campaign staff to avoid what could have been misinterpreted in campaign spending. Dole disavows responsibility for the content of the flyers, a fact which has been verified by the faction that ordered them.

The air has been cleared in Kansas, at least.

Dole's divorce was a communication difficulty which may be difficult for those who work from nine to five and go to the lake on weekends to understand. With Robin, born in Russell and growing up in the Washington area, Dole and his wife, Phyllis, had typical political communication problems. The senator's hours are from early morning until late night. Speaking engagements, functions at which one or both were required to attend, a continually hectic schedule, are not conducive to a normal family life. It was in January 1972 that Dole announced there had to be a parting of the ways.

The divorce, in February 1972, was granted in Topeka, Kansas, under the emergency clause in Kansas law. Although not often requested, the emergency provision permits immediate hearings when problems of residence and travel can cause hardship for either or both parties. Mrs. Dole was represented by Bernard Fensterwald, Washington attorney, and by Sam Crow of Topeka, the local counsel as required in Kansas. Crow, the Doles, even the judge were friends and associates from law school days.

There's nothing to be read between the lines. On Dole's busy schedule and work regime, there isn't now, nor has there been, time to travel the legs of a triangle.

How can one make something out of a divorce these days, when about one out of every three couples go through it?

Another fact that helps explain the enigma that is Dole is his canny operation as national Republican party chairman until after the 1972 elections, January 1971 to January 1973.

Early in the campaign and before Watergate, he told friends in Russell of difficulty in reaching President Richard Nixon. Because of internal problems and tensions which became so clear a few months later, Dole switched the operation of the Republican party to separate it from the Committee to Re-Elect the President, an organization of White House insiders so aptly named "Creep." If not because of Dole, then largely through Dole, the lack of involvement of the Republican party in Watergate is a plus to the Dole story which can't be overlooked.

The matter of a Gulf contribution has already been settled. A report about $3,000 from Creep, dealing with millions, hangs on although Dole's records do not show the transfer and, on the basis of his own gut feeling which later proved to be correct, if it had been made, a record of it would have surfaced months or years ago.

At The News in Russell, we've opened our files, made any and all kinds of information available about Bob Dole, his family, friends and his home life. Except for those writers who have had a taste of Midwestern life, we've been met with blank, unbelieving stares.

"No one can be that clean," they tell us. The fact is they can be—and Bob Dole is. Jayhawkers may not be all that different but Bob Dole is one of us—instead of another of "those."

Tim Miller replies: There is no one better situated to make a response to my article about the private and public life of Bob Dole (see "How Clean is Bob Dole?" Guardian 10/8/76) than Russell Townsley, who by his own account has known the senator for nearly 30 years. Townsley is respected in Kansas journalistic circles, and certainly his own integrity is not under question. But I am quite disappointed in his supposed rebuttal of my article.

Townsley claims that the infamous flyers showing pictures of fetuses in garbage cans were "unfairly charged to Dole." But the Dole organization did in fact accept responsibility for them as a campaign contribution, and they were distributed by Dole supporters (although of course Dole cannot be held responsible for improper zeal on the part of his backers). Off the record, most ranking Kansas Democrats believe that Dole was aware of the content and distribution of the flyers, and that belief contributes to their overwhelming dislike of the senator, a dislike that is unmatched in the ordinarily congenial, easy-going world of Kansas politics. Moreover, Dole made overtures for support to Kansas Right-to-Lifers just before the brochures were distributed, and it seems strange that for all of his associations with them he claims to have known nothing of what their tactics might be.

Townsley suggests that Dole is untainted by big business since he doesn't "own a couple of sections of farm land, directorships in corporations, a partnership in a major law firm, or stock in hundreds of corporations" (sic). What

continued next page

continued from previous page

he doesn't mention is that much of Dole's financial support in his campaigns has come from the oil industry and big medicine, to name only two groups for whose interests he has regularly voted.

"How can one make something out of a divorce these days, when about one out of every three couples go through with it?" Townsley asks. In fact I never wagged my finger at Dole for divorcing his wife; that's his own business. All I did was quote Mrs. Dole's own dismayed comments about how it was handled, and note that some close observers of the matter through that it bordered on unethical conduct for the lawyers involved. Townsley has, in the main, supported my own observations on the matter.

The largest single point I raised in my article was the situation in which Dole maintained a girlfriend on his congressional payroll, and I think it very telling that Townsley has not even ventured to comment on it. He blithely dismissed the entire matter with the comment. "There isn't now, nor has there been, time to travel the legs of a triangle." On that matter he is simply uninformed. Obviously Dole kept his private life clean in Russell, a classic small town in which lethal gossip would certainly spread rapidly, and I doubt that he ever bothered to detail his liaisons to Mr. Townsley. But his associates and observers in Washington note that he never made any real attempt to hide the fact that he enjoyed private female company. Again, I have no quarrel with Dole in such matters; his private life is his own business. But sweethearts on the payroll are, as Wayne Hays discovered too late, of legitimate interest to the taxpaying public.

Townsley defends Dole's Watergate purity by claiming that "Dole switched the operation of the Republican party to separate it from the Committee to Re-Elect the President." Actually, CREEP was founded by Nixon people; the fact they set up shop outside Dole's RNC operation was their decision, not Dole's. If Dole really saw the nature of the dirty tricks and shady deals emanating from the Republican-controlled White House, why did he stay with the RNC until Nixon forced him out after the election?

Finally, Mr. Townsley apparently claims that Dole never received the infamous $3,000 in cash from CREEP, despite the fact Dole has never contradicted sworn testimony that it happened and, in fact, tried to justify it by claiming it was used for a trip to Vietnam.

Townsend claims, "The matter of a Gulf contribution has already been settled." Not so. There are still matters left up in the air, such as the missing ten pages from Dole's campaign ledger, which was reported by Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein in the Washington Post earlier this month. The illegal $5,000 Gulf contribution allegedly was made during the period that would have been covered by the missing pages in his ledger.

Interestingly, when Woodward and Bernstein were breaking the Watergate story during the 1972 presidential campaign, Dole displayed his respect for investigative reporting: "For the last week, the Republican Party has been the victim of a barrage of unfounded and unsubstantiated allegations by George McGovern and his partner-in-mudslinging, the Washington Post," Dole told a group of black Republicans at the time. "Mr. McGovern appears to have turned over the franchise for his media attack campaign to the editors of the Washington Post, who have shown themselves every bit as sure-footed along the low road of this campaign as their candidate."

Another item: on Oct. 20, columnists Jack Anderson and Les Whitten wrote of Dole's pressuring the Nixon White House on behalf of dairymen who offered some $2 million in exchange for a boost in milk subsidies. According to the Anderson column, the milk scandal was explored during the House Judiciary Committee's impeachment hearings, but Dole's role in it was not pursued. Hardly a clean bill of health.

I am glad to see someone close to Dole responding to the charges I have made, but nothing Mr. Townsley has written has in the least refuted them. Instead, he has confirmed that Dole has always been exceptionally astute in handling the press, such that neither Kansas nor national media have probed his career as one would expect them to. ■

1 Chicago Tribune, Sunday, October 31, 1976

Dole rejects label of 'hatchet man'

By Bill Neikirk
Chicago Tribune Press Service

SACRAMENTO, Cal.—This presidential race has been one of the nastiest of modern times, and Sen. Robert Dole [R., Kan.], President Ford's running mate, makes no apologies for his controversial role in it.

While denying personal attacks on Democrats Jimmy Carter and Sen. Walter Mondale [D., Minn.], the Republican vice presidential nominee conceded in an interview that the campaign sank to a low level partly because the Ford-Dole ticket had to go on the attack.

"When you're 35 points behind and you look at the surveys showing Carter at the time being perceived as liberal by only 9 per cent of the people, when you're trying to run against their platform and their statements, then you've got your work cut out for you. You've got to be tough," he said.

DOLE SPOKE slowly and cautiously as his jet, "The Bob Dole Campaign Express," flew across California. With the polls suddenly showing a tight election, he has toned down the ferocity of his attack with the campaign in its final days.

"I don't know who fired the first shot," Dole said in reflecting on the bitter campaign. He added that Democrats, Mondale in particular, had some nasty things to say, too, including likening Ford and himself to dogcatchers. The Kansas senator made it clear that if he had sat back and talked only "about all the great things that happened," the GOP ticket would still be far behind.

Although several polls showed that Dole has become something of an issue himself because of his slashing campaign style, the senator rejected the notion he is hurting the GOP ticket. He said when he was named by President Ford the gap was massive.

"Now we're even. I think I had a part in it. I think I get some of the credit, if there's any credit due," he said.

THE SENATOR will make an Illinois campaign stop Sunday, spending the night in Peoria. He said GOP polls show the Republican ticket has moved slightly ahead in Illinois.

Dole maintained that the American people want what he calls a "give 'em hell, Bob" style to attack head-on the Carter-Mondale economic program and its implications for inflation.

But he's sensitive about charges leveled at him by Mondale in their debate that he's the GOP hatchet man. "I am maybe perceived that way because Mondale said I was. Everybody now asks me at every stop if I'm a hatchet man, but I don't accept that."

It has been hard for Dole to cope with this image. He said he tried to use ridicule and humor, but still the label hangs on.

The hatchet-man charge came up when Dole suggested that if Democrats were going to blame all Republicans for Watergate, then Carter and Mondale ought to be responsible for the "Democrat wars" of World War II, Korea, and Viet Nam.

DOLE BACKED away from that characterization last week when it became an issue. Later, he said he didn't recall making the quotation. The senator added that Ford had not ordered him to backtrack on the "Democrat war" theme.

FAMILY WEEKLY 10-31

Could You Picture These Men In the White House?

UPI

President Dole?

UPI

President Mondale?

By Peter MacDonald

When the last speech wound drearily to a close at the Republican National Convention, I showered and made ready for what I thought would be a well-earned sleep.

But I soon was awakened by a telephone call from an East Coast friend, who asked:

"What about Dole? What do they think about him in Kansas?"

My mind, dulled by repetitive rhetoric, shook itself awake, and I realized for the first time that Senator Bob Dole might become our next President, if the law of averages has not been repealed.

President Dole? Somehow, the question didn't track.

How was I to answer my friend? After all, for more than 20 years our newspapers had, for the most part, opposed Dole every time he ran for office. Sometimes damning him. Sometimes damning him with faint praise—a more subtle attack.

Why did we oppose him? On philosophical grounds, mostly. To us, he represented the school of thought which teaches that the Puritan ethic is the ultimate answer to the fate of the nation. It seemed that he blithely disregarded the fact that, as the nation grew, the heart of the Puritan ethic—equal opportunity—vanished.

With that basic disagreement established, it was no chore to fault Dole on other counts. He gave the impression that to question the integrity of the President was at best unpatriotic, despite growing evidence that there was little integrity left. That those who opposed the war in Vietnam were Communists or traitors or both. That opposing Right-to-Work laws meant one was the tool of the Unions (color them pink), but there was no thought given to the opposite proposition—that to support such laws made one the tool of Big Business.

In sum, we opposed him for all the reasons that moderates oppose the ultraconservative.

This was reasonable in weighing a candidate for legislative office. But what of the executive? Isn't that a dif-

Continued on page 8

By Al Eisele

A smiling Senator Walter Mondale flashed the thumbs-up sign at a bevy of anxious aides gathered in his New York City hotel room last July 15 as he heard Jimmy Carter asking him on the telephone to be his Vice-Presidential running mate.

For the 48-year old Minnesota Democrat, who has led one of the most charmed lives in contemporary American politics, it was a gesture appropriate to the occasion.

Since his first involvement in politics as one of Hubert Humphrey's college-student allies in the late 1940's, the strait-laced son of a poor country preacher has displayed an uncanny knack for being the right person in the right place at the right time.

Mondale was a struggling young attorney less than four years out of law school in 1960 when then-Governor Orville Freeman, ignoring the warnings of party leaders that Mondale was too young and inexperienced, appointed him Attorney General of Minnesota.

Four years later, when Senator Humphrey was elected Vice President, then-Governor Karl Rolvaag resisted the temptation to appoint himself and gave the Senate job to Mondale. Now, with Carter's decision that Mondale would provide the best balance for the 1976 Democratic Presidential ticket, he has been placed, once again by appointment, on the road history shows is the surest path to the White House.

Given his friendship with Lady Luck and his meteoric growth curve, the odds are good that Mondale someday will succeed where a long line of fellow Presidential aspirants from Minnesota, including Humphrey, Eugene McCarthy and Harold Stassen, have failed.

If that should happen, the American people may be in for some surprises from a man whose image is that of a devout believer in big-spending Democratic liberalism.

During his almost 12 years in the Senate, Mondale has become one of the foremost Congressional advocates of social reform and defenders of the disadvantaged. A self-styled "pragmatic liberal" who says he believes in "re-

Continued on page 8

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