

# If you ever buy a bronze rat, make sure you get the story behind it



## America's Heartland

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A man walked into a small-town antique shop and couldn't help but notice a lifelike bronze statue of a rat. He asked the shop owner the price.

"The rat is \$20," the shop owner said. "But the story that goes with it is \$100."

The man handed over \$20, telling the shop owner he could keep the story.

As he walked down the street with the bronze rat, the man noticed that real rats were coming out of the alleys and sewers and following him. Before long, he had hundreds

of squealing rats trailing along behind.

The scene was unnerving to say the least. The man began to run toward a bridge over the river. The rats kept pace.

Frightened, he threw the bronze rat as far as he could into the river. Amazingly, all the rats jumped in, too.

The man then walked back to the antique shop.

"I see you came back for the story," the shop owner said.

"No," replied the man. "I came back to see if you have a bronze statue of a lawyer."

Well, lawyers certainly are the focus of lots of jokes. And they handle it well. Most of the lawyer jokes I hear are told by lawyers. I suppose it's important that we don't take ourselves too seriously.

Jesus drove that point home during his earthly ministry when his disciples came to Him to ask who is greatest in the kingdom of Heaven. Jesus called a child over and said: "Verily, I say to you, except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall

not enter the kingdom of Heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of Heaven" (Matthew 18:3-4).

I doubt that's the answer the disciples expected. They probably would have thought a full-grown man, strong and tall and bold, to be the greatest. Instead, Jesus sees the greatest person as the humble believer who understands his dependency on his Heavenly Father for everything, just as a child is dependent on his earthly father for everything.

Whether we're lawyers or doctors or construction workers or coal miners or a person of any other profession, we all must put our entire dependence on Jesus if we are to have the hope of Heaven.

Otherwise, we're kind of like those rats, racing along aimlessly on our way to destruction.

*Roger Alford offers words of encouragement to residents of America's heartland. Reach him at rogeralford1@gmail.com.*

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# AMY McGRATH

CONGRESS

## "Thank You"

**A**s we head into the final days of this election season, I wanted to say thank you for allowing me into your communities and your homes and spending a little time to listen about who I am and why I decided to become a first-time candidate for public office. And I am grateful for the chance to listen to you and your concerns and ideas for our future.

There is a lot at stake in this year's midterm elections. Some of it is about the issues that we wrestle with, but an increasing amount is how we come to grips with the overheated rhetoric that has dominated our political conversation and badly divides us as a nation.

When I decided to retire from the Marines last June after 20 years, move back to Kentucky, and run for Congress, many people warned me about the world I was entering. Things like honesty and integrity are at the heart of everything we did as Marines, but these traits don't seem to mean much in today's politics. Politicians have lost their courage to better the institutions that govern us because it's easier, politically, to demonize the concept of government itself – or to demonize their opponent.

I chose not to do that during this campaign and **I did not run a single attack ad.**

Recently, it was reported that this race has one of the most lopsided ratios of negative-to-positive ads in the nation – with more than 20 dishonest and mean-spirited attack ads launched against me. They take my words, repackaging them with a different meaning, and then cowardly hide behind their scary music and dark imagery with an ominous narrator repeating their fictions over and over again.

On issue after issue they attacked: from "open borders" (I served three tours as a combat Marine protecting my country from those who would try to harm us so, of course, I'm not for open borders), to "abortion" (I am pro-choice, but I'm also Catholic, have three small children, am firmly opposed to late-term abortions, but am tired of people trying to criminalize a woman's constitutional right to

choose), to "socialized medicine" (I am for fixing and improving the Affordable Care Act and opposed to a socialized single-payer system).

Many told me that we had to return fire with fire, or else people would just believe the lies. But that approach is precisely why we are in this mess.

Instead, there are two reasons why I have chosen to stick to a campaign that is entirely focused on my values, and the issues, and not simply attack back.

First, I fully trust you – the voters – to see through this sad, worn-out tactic that has us reaching for the mute button on our remote control at every commercial break.

But, second, we desperately need to change our politics in this country – the country I love, the country WE love, the country that I – and so many others – fought for.

The incivility. The lies. The fake news. It needs to stop. This isn't who we are as a country. Now we have to deal with lunatics who mail pipe bombs, and leaders who would rather blame the media, or the other side, than acknowledge what is happening. And it won't stop until we have candidates who refuse to blindly follow the dictates of their party leaders.

I got into politics not because it was a childhood dream – I was fortunate enough to have

accomplished those by flying fighter jets and landing on aircraft carriers. Instead, I entered this world because I believe our country deserves better leaders than we have – leaders who have the courage to tell the truth and not simply play to people's fears and continually lie about the other side.

We badly need members of Congress who thoughtfully weigh the problems our nation faces and are eager to work with anyone – of either party – to try to fix them.

I don't think the Democratic Party has all the answers. Both sides need to learn to work together again. I even have some practical experience on that issue too – my husband, Erik, a 20-year U.S. Navy veteran, is also a life-long Republican. We've managed to make our marriage work just fine, despite our occasional kitchen table differences on the issues. I was even a registered Independent for awhile. For us, we are not a Democrat or Republican first – we are Americans first.

Today, the halls of Congress are filled with too many who don't have the courage to stand up to special interests, or their big donors, or their political party, or even a president when he's wrong on the issues – like these disastrous tariffs that are really hurting our farmers, our bourbon industry, and the largest Toyota plant in the world, which is right here in our district.

If I'm elected, I will never forget who I work for. Ever. It's you, the people of the Sixth District. When I was a Marine, my oath was to our Constitution – not to a president or a political party. That's the same attitude I will bring to Congress.

I hope I can count on your support on November 6. I learned at the Naval Academy that leaders demonstrate honor and integrity, and I never forget that the American people paid for my education in exchange for my service. I'm determined to show you that your investment in me was worth it.

Thank you.

*- Amy*