

Counter-Coulters React to Anti-Gay Slur

Right-wing pundit met with criticism, public outrage after slandering of John Edwards

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Daniel Zarchy
National News Reporter

Ann Coulter has never been interested in making friends among the Democratic Party. Luckily, she's in no danger of that.

Coulter, an infamous right-wing columnist and political personality, made a splash last Friday when she referred to former U.S. senator John Edwards, a 2008

presidential candidate, as a "faggot." Coulter's speech, a feature at the annual Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC), was met with shock and awe that broke into raucous applause.

Dan Wirls, politics department chair at UC Santa Cruz, does not count himself among Coulter's sizable fan base.

"She is the epitome of all that is wrong with what often passes for journalism or political debate in this country," Wirls said. "Her comment about Edwards is merely the latest in a nearly countless string of vicious yet brainless sound bits."

Coulter, a syndicated columnist and frequent guest on Fox News and CNN since being fired from MSNBC for insensitive comments, has

written a number of books, including *How to Talk to a Liberal (If You Must)*, and most recently *Godless: The Church of Liberalism*.

In her comment at CPAC Coulter stated, "Oh, and I was going to have a few comments

Verizon spokesperson said in a CNN report.

Wirls believes that these ads should have been pulled long ago.

"It is a travesty of human decency that anyone was willing to commercially sponsor her

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on the other Democratic presidential candidate, John Edwards, but it turns out that you have to go into rehab if you use the word "faggot."

Coulter was introduced at the CPAC by Patrick X. Coyle, director of campus programs for the Young America's Foundation (YAF).

According to Jason Mattera, spokesperson for YAF, Coulter's remark was a reference to the show "Grey's Anatomy," in which one of the cast members reportedly referred to another cast member by the slur, and was harshly reprimanded. In the context, Mattera says, the joke was very funny.

"In context, the joke was well-crafted and had nothing to do with gays and had everything to do with political correctness," Mattera said. "Ann Coulter is a fabulous tool for the conservative movement. She's the most popular speaker on college campuses, by far. People should jump off the criticism bandwagon."

Within the last week, several advertisers, including Verizon, Sallie Mae and NetBank, have pulled their ads from AnnCoulter.com in response to consumer criticism of Coulter's remarks.

"[AnnCoulter.com] could be considered an extreme political Web site, should be off the list, and now it is off the list," a

website at any point in her sordid and sad career," Wirls said.

Still, Mattera believes that everybody is taking Coulter's comments much too seriously.

"I'm surprised Verizon was even advertising with her. We're definitely not [pulling our advertising]," Mattera said. "Ann is Ann. She's funny, she's controversial, and she doesn't abide by politically correct agendas. If you expect something different from what you get, you miss her point."

Jim Wagstaffe, a San Francisco-based attorney who specializes in media law, explained that Sen. Edwards could have a case to sue Coulter for slander, but that these lawsuits rarely happen during political campaigns, and that, "If he sues, people will see him as thin-skinned."

Wagstaffe added that Edwards ironically might benefit from Coulter's comments in the form of increased attention and sympathy, and that Coulter's reputation for insensitive comments has kept people from taking her comments seriously.

"Mr. Edwards has gained a good deal in terms of attention," Wagstaffe said. "John Edwards got more attention in the last 48 hours than in the last 48 days. There are some politicians who would like nothing more than for Ann Coulter to criticize them."



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